

Real-Time Insights, Real-World Impact: CCR Success in Milwaukee, WI

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Success in Community

St. Augustine Preparatory Academy is a K4-12 school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The school opened in 2017 and currently serves 2,200 students across PK4-12th grades. The school's mission statement describes that "our graduates will go on to achieve their highest potential and make our city, and ultimately the world, a better place." In other words, postsecondary aspirations and success are fundamentally tied to the core values and philosophies of the school community. With this, school leaders and staff share a deep and profound commitment to preparing their students for college, career, and life readiness beyond graduation.

Alison Jacobsmeier serves as St. Augustine Prep's Director of College Advising and Alumni Engagement. In this position, she leads a team of professionals focused on supporting "both postsecondary matriculation and persistence by ensuring that all students graduate with a clear plan, a sense of purpose, and the practical tools to navigate the next steps." When Jacobsmeier took on this role three years ago, she immediately sought thoughtful and open feedback from the team of secondary educators and advisors at the school about what was working well and the major challenges they felt were getting in the way of maximizing student

postsecondary potential. The team resoundingly shared that the college and career readiness (CCR) platform the school had previously been using was not effectively serving the students or staff in providing an engaging, user-friendly, and comprehensive system to guide college and career readiness processes.

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SchoolLinks Implementation was Key to Shaping a Comprehensive CCR Program

With this knowledge, one of the first initiatives she undertook was to identify and implement a CCR platform that was student-centered; user-friendly; provided access to real-time data and analytics; and could support the full breadth of college and career exploration in a single place. SchoolLinks offered all of these features and more.

Educators and advisors at the school were immediately impressed with its functionality and ease of use for all stakeholders—from school leaders to counselors to teachers and students and families. Jacobsmeier noted that this was a key differentiator as none of the other CCR platforms they considered offered this level of support across users. She also noted that SchoolLinks seamlessly integrates with other critically important resources needed for the college and career exploration and application process. These integrations include both the CommonApp and Parchment, which made implementation smooth while amplifying overall engagement and efficacy with CCR programming.

INTEGRATIONS



SchoolLinks is the Hub for All CCR Activity

Jacobsmeier explained that SchoolLinks quickly became the foundation for all CCR activity within the school. She noted that students know that “anything they need related to their CCR journey is on SchoolLinks.” This includes exploring careers and colleges, setting postsecondary goals, and making a personalized plan for reaching those aspirations.

With the SchoolLinks implementation, she described that the school has been able to increase the breadth and and depth of its CCR offerings. Middle school students now start career exploration in the fall of their 6th grade year. They both discover potential career options while also using the platform’s self assessments so students can “get to know a little more about who they are and how those interests and skills connect to potential career paths.”

This early exposure to career exploration and consideration means that students can smoothly transition to CCR activities in high school, deepening their engagement with the platform. Students use SchoolLinks for creating resumes, finding work-based learning opportunities, exploring colleges, comparing costs, scheduling one-on-one meetings with their advisor, identifying scholarships, and completing college applications. With the support of the platform, Jacobsmeier and her team have also launched a senior seminar course to support college, career, and life readiness in the final year of high school. SchoolLinks has become the backbone of CCR processes, resources, and postsecondary preparation in her school

Advisors and educators have been thrilled at the efficiency SchoolLinks has added to their tasks, enabling them to focus more on direct student support. She shared that SchoolLinks has automated many time-consuming processes like data entry and reporting, issuing transcripts, and tracking student progress. This allows them to “do their best work,” as Jacobsmeier described, spending more time on deepening relationships with students and working on meaningful initiatives.

Data-Driven Decision-Making That Catalyzes Student Opportunity and Success

SchoolLinks has completely transformed and dramatically improved the way the school collects, analyzes, and leverages data to drive decision-making. Staff can now pull key insights in seconds across a wide variety of metrics including how many seniors have been accepted to a particular college,

the total scholarship dollars earned, or how many middle school students are participating in a specific program. What once required manual data gathering from disparate systems is now available at the click of a button from a single, user-friendly interface, giving school leaders, advisors, and teachers real-time access to the information to best meet the needs of their students. Jacobsmeier explained that this data means that school leaders and advisors “know that every student is being supported, how they are being supported, and when they are being supported.”

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With real-time CCR data at their fingertips, the leadership team can see everything from meeting notes and FAFSA completion rates to college visit attendance, internship placements, and pre-college program participation. This ensures that staff can monitor who is utilizing resources and making progress in post-secondary preparation and who is behind in that process. High-level analytics along with key trends can be pulled directly into board reports and marketing campaigns. This is all able to be done without compromising student privacy as SchoolLinks offers customizable permissions that protect individual data while still sharing powerful impact stories. The access to this powerful data has also strengthened the work of the school’s data team, allowing deeper analysis of trends and student outcomes over time. By replacing cumbersome, isolated spreadsheets with a centralized, dynamic system, SchoolLinks has streamlined operations and created new mechanisms to identify patterns, measure progress, and refine strategies for individual student and school-wide success.

The platform’s alumni network has also deepened St. Augustine Prep’s connections with students well beyond graduation, providing valuable insights into

their postsecondary journeys. All graduating seniors complete a senior survey, enabling the school to monitor college enrollment, persistence, and career milestones over time. This ongoing data collection allows the school to identify trends, celebrate alumni achievements, and make changes to their programming as needed based on alumni feedback.

Trust, Transparency, Growth

The school has seen incredible engagement and success in its first eight years. Because of that, they are in the process of opening a second campus in the 2026-27 school year and will be adding an additional 1,000 students to their student body. And SchoolLinks is a key piece of that growth. The platform has allowed the school to have a systematic and comprehensive approach to CCR support and advising that can scale with the additional students and families. St. Augustine Prep can feel confident that they are able to extend their high-quality CCR support and impact to every new student and family who becomes part of their growing community.

Jacobsmeier explained that sustained student success “depends on deep, trust-filled relationships with families.” School staff has “strengthened those relationships by involving them earlier and more meaningfully in the college and career planning process.” The SchoolLinks platform has been a key mechanism to do so. They are bringing families into conversations about college and career readiness early so that they are already a part of the process by the time students reach high school. Parents are invited to engage with the SchoolLinks platform, see where their students are in terms of their progress, and understand the steps necessary to reach goals.

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In addition to supporting engagement with current families, she explained that the access to data and information has made conversations with prospective students and families and community partners far more meaningful. The school is able to share detailed data about the kinds of pre-college and career exploration activities students are completing and what goals they are pursuing after graduation.

As the school grows, Jacobsmeier and her team remain committed to making sure every student is

successful both while in school and after graduation. She explained that “this means building a supportive ecosystem where every student—regardless of whether they plan to pursue a 4-year degree, a technical certification, enlist in the military, or directly enter the workforce—feels seen, supported, and prepared.” With this unwavering focus, St. Augustine Prep is fulfilling its mission statement by cultivating capable, purpose-driven alumni who are ready to lead and thrive in whatever path they choose.

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