

HOW NORTH KANSAS CITY SCHOOLS

Exchanged Paper CCR Plans For Improved Engagement And District Success

Using technology to create a cohesive college and career readiness experience across all stakeholders



Kansas City
Kansas



21k
Students



32
Schools



2
Years with SchoolLinks

The Problem: Disconnect with Student Experience

When students were creating college and career plans, it was filled out on a piece of paper, placed in the counselor's drawer, and not consulted or utilized again for the remainder of that school year. NKCS sought a platform that could transform the CCR experience of all students, support counselors, and engage families.

The Solution: Amplifying Stakeholder Voice

As part of the decision-making process, NKPS sought the lived experience and feedback from a school district that had made a similar transition from a different CCR platform to SchoolLinks.

The Results: Productive CCR Planning

NKCS still saw tremendous usage rates from the start: NKCS had over 90% of their 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th graders submit their 4 year plans within the SchoolLinks platform. The response from parents and caregivers was overwhelmingly positive, resulting in the addition of a 6th and 7th grade SchoolLinks implementation within the year.

The Problem

Disconnect Between Student Experience & College and Career Readiness Plans

North Kansas City Schools prioritizes creating unique and high-quality learning opportunities for their 21,000 students across 32 schools. In fact, years ago, they designed a direct feeder system to ensure continuity for students by having them travel along with their same cohort from elementary through high school. As the school district continually looked for ways to optimize student success, they recognized that their approach to college and career planning was not closely tied with day-to-day experiences and decision-making of students. More specifically, when students were creating college and career plans, it was filled out on a piece of paper, placed in the counselor's drawer, and not consulted or utilized again for the remainder of that school year.

It was obvious this process needed to change. Matt Maus, Executive Director of 7-12 Academics for North Kansas City Schools, knew the students deserved a process that was engaging, interactive, truly valuable to them, and aligned with their College and Career Pathways program of choice. And, students needed access to college and career exploration resources that were not limited to the experience base of teachers, school staff, and families.

Having had a frustrating experience with a previous CCR vendor, NKCS sought a platform that could transform the CCR experience of all students, support counselors, and engage families.

The Process

Amplifying Stakeholder Voice & Learning From Other Districts to Inform Decision-Making

North Kansas City Schools began a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to source and secure a single CCR platform to meet their needs. When North Kansas City Schools sent out an RFP, they were not exactly sure what they would find. However, a move away from the inefficient systems that no longer served their student population was necessary. This process included evaluation by a wide swath of individuals across the organization from teachers, parents, counselors, and other admin staff. Retrospectively, Maus wishes they had also included student input in the RFP process, as they are the primary users of the resource.

As part of the decision-making process, NKPS sought the lived experience and feedback from a school district that had made a similar transition from a different CCR platform to SchoolLinks. The other district found that with the previous CCR platform, there was a gap in usage rates between schools of varying socio-economic rates. When they adopted SchoolLinks, the usage and engagement gap completely closed, driving home the point that SchoolLinks is a platform that can meet the needs of all students regardless of family background, postsecondary track, or other experiences.

The Result

High Rates of Usage and Engagement Catalyzing More Productive CCR Planning

NKCS administrators noted the ease of the implementation process and the ability to load students and grant access to faculty through the district's Clever platform. Though Maus would not recommend rolling out any new resource in a district during the busy back-to-school August season, NKCS still saw tremendous usage rates from the start: NKCS had over 90% of their 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th graders submit their 4 year plans within the SchoolLinks platform. The response from parents and caregivers was overwhelmingly positive, resulting in the addition of a 6th and 7th grade SchoolLinks implementation within the year.

The SchoolLinks platform has been very intuitive for the students of NKCS. They were easily able to log in, explore options, and quickly learn to navigate and utilize the various features. NKCS has deployed a broad set of the activities and lesson plans within SchoolLinks, including:

- **The Game Of Life**
- **Find Your Path**
- **Personal Assessments**
- **College Exploration**
- **Career Exploration**

This student usage and engagement has translated into more productive conversations with their counselors.

District counselors and educators have recognized and appreciated the ease of use of the platform from the start. The Course Planning feature provides a great guidebook for mapping students' futures. Counselors found the ability to sign off on every submission by their caseload of students particularly useful. This helps to ensure counselors are able to support their students and complete their work in an efficient, effective, and timely manner.

Summary

The biggest piece of advice Maus and his NKCS team offer other districts looking to elevate their college and career readiness program is to Set High Goals and Be Reasonable. Implementing a brand-new platform at a school and district level can take time, and doing so in small segments is a great idea as staff and students will need to adapt to the new experiences and processes. But, these efforts can transform the experience of students to truly engage in a college and career planning process that is closely aligned to their high school experiences and sets them up for success for many years beyond graduation.

A note from SchoolLinks

Leveraging data to support your district's college and career readiness goals is simple. See for yourself with a personalized demo of SchoolLinks' modern platform and let us know how we can help you meet your school district's goals.

Watch the video on this
case study



Request a demo of
SchoolLinks

