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*Key points:*
● **Be able to easily pull IEP progress data for parents, IEP team**
● **Host 'Data Day' where teachers have time to analyze multiple measures of student performance**
● **Consider adaptive programs that allow student to work at his own pace**

**Technology, data help Missouri district provide 'engaging, relevant, personal' education**

Data in K-12 education is abundant and growing. It's on devices, in spreadsheets shared between teachers, and following students from grade level to grade level.

Even so, schools often struggle with what to do with all that raw information.

"We're very data-rich in many areas, but also analysis-poor," said Phyllis Wolfram, executive director of special programs at Springfield Public Schools.

At SPS, a large district in Missouri with about 26,000 students, Wolfram and others are working to change that.

In pursuit of the district's mission to provide "engaging, relevant, and personalized" educational experiences to all students, staff need to be able to quickly analyze student data to make decisions about instruction, Wolfram said.

The district uses technology to gather and collate data in several different ways.

For instance, teachers use adaptive reading and math programs to pinpoint specific skills that are giving students trouble and assign independent practice that fits each student, she said. The district uses a special education software that makes it easy to input and track the progress of IEP goals and objectives. In addition, the district's data and analytics office is working on a district data dashboard to provide administrators with real-time information on multiple student measures, Wolfram said.

"It's very exciting some of the things that are happening," Wolfram said. "We're starting to see gains."

Below, take a closer look at how SPS uses technology and data:

● **Monitor IEP progress, provide alternate curriculum supports.** Using Rethink, a special education program, staff input and monitor progress toward IEP goals and objectives, Wolfram said. The software communicates with the district's electronic IEP system, SpedTrack, so staff do not need to re-enter IEP information, Wolfram said.

"Parents also have access to view their child's progress," she said.

Rethink includes an alternate curriculum that special educators in the district use with those students with the most significant disabilities who will take alternate assessments, she said. Having an alternate curriculum that addresses alternate standards has been critical, she said. In addition, the program provides parents and teachers with video models of other educators using certain instructional methods with students. Administrators can also see which training modules and lessons teachers have accessed through the program, Wolfram added.

● **Track behavioral supports.** "The No. 1 concern we hear from our building principals is dealing with behaviors of students who aren't

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**-- Q&A transcript**

coming to school ready to learn with appropriate social skills intact," Wolfram said.

The district uses behavioral tracking within the Rethink software to gather data on the use of behavioral supports for students with and without disabilities, she said. The district is in the process of training its Teacher Support Teams, which are problem-solving teams within the district's MTSS, to track BIPs and other behavioral interventions using the program.

• **Pinpoint specific skill gaps with universal screening tools.** SPS uses i-Ready from Curriculum Associates as a universal math and reading screening tool, Wolfram said. The tool allows staff to see which standards or specific skills a student has trouble with, Wolfram said. Principals hold "data days" where teachers work in groups to analyze individual student information and identify learning gaps.

"We have some principals who, as a result, are able to do some flexible grouping of students, outside their grade levels," she said. "That's also allowed the school to be as efficient as possible with their teacher resources."

By providing teachers with the time to analyze multiple student data points during the school year rather than waiting for the results of end-of-year tests, school staff can be more responsive with instruction, Wolfram said.

• **Conduct formative assessment while providing independent practice.** Teachers in SPS use Lexia Learning, an adaptive reading program, Wolfram said.

"It's teacher-led so the teacher can put students where they need to be in the program," she said. "They can see how the child is progressing, and based on that, give them independent work."

This program works well in a blended learning setting where students are rotating around the classroom at different stations, Wolfram said. Similarly, teachers use DreamBox Learning for Math, an adaptive math program, during instructional rotations, she said. These programs adapt to the learner's reading and math levels so that students can work independently at their own pace, Wolfram said.

"We want that to be very relevant to the learner and not to a grade-level that they may or may not be on," she said.

• **Hold fast to expectation that staff learn new technology.** Stakeholder input and phased training helped gain teacher buy-in, Wolfram said. In the end though, the district expects teachers to learn how to use these tools, she said.

"It's not an option to teach curriculum for Algebra 1. Just like it's not an option that you don't take data in this system," she said. "It's OK to say to teachers, 'You have to learn the technology behind this because it's efficient, effective, and gives parents access, and it's a better way to analyze your data then looking at multiple pieces of paper.'"

*See also:*
• Make most of data-analysis strengths to improve student learning *(Jan. 12)*
• Facilitate educators' data-collection efforts *(Aug. 15)*
• Administrator: Dive into assessment data to improve special ed practices *(Nov. 2, 2015)*

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