New Jersey Public School System

New Jersey public school district uses Lexmark’s Testing and Grading solution to automate testing and give teachers more time with students

Challenge

Comparing students’ academic performance, within their own classrooms, throughout each school and across the district is a centerpiece of this school district’s educational strategy. As the basis for its analysis and comparisons, the district uses a combination of test scores from scanned bubble sheets, combined with data mining techniques. A key component for maintaining benchmarking information was an Excel® spreadsheet that each teacher generated and updated manually. To obtain districtwide results, the spreadsheets from hundreds of teachers were later aggregated—also manually.

The routine was painfully slow with no safeguard against the likelihood of spreadsheet entry errors, said the district’s supervisor of mathematics for grades 6-12. This was an important, but very tedious process for everyone involved.

For the testing component, pre-printed bubble sheets were expensive to buy and costly to administer. To ensure their physical security, the bubble sheets were stored at and distributed from a central location to each school and then to individual teachers. After testing, the completed sheets were gathered and sent via interoffice couriers to the district’s science department office, awaiting their turn for processing by a single dedicated scanner. The bottleneck led to delays of up to several weeks. Incorrect batching of sheets could lead to them being scored against the wrong answer key. Even once the sheets were scored weeks later, the window for teachers to differentiate instruction or to review material had long since passed.

A better method was clearly needed, one that would automate manual processes and get results back to teachers quickly, freeing them from data entry to spend more time with students. The district’s math department turned to the IT organization for input. IT offered one recommendation: Lexmark.

Meet this New Jersey Public School System

This New Jersey school district is one of state’s largest districts, serving a culturally diverse student body that speaks nearly 30 languages. The district’s 30+ schools have a student enrollment that exceeds 20,000 and about 2,000 classroom teachers. The district operates with an annual budget of $400 million.

Products in use:

- Lexmark multifunction products
- Lexmark Testing and Grading solution
Solution
To eliminate manual data entry into spreadsheets, automate test scoring, analyze the data and generate student academic progress reports, the district installed a fleet of 36 Lexmark multifunction products (MFPs) along with the Lexmark Testing and Grading solution.

With Lexmark Testing and Grading, teachers can customize and print high-quality bubble sheet tests on demand and on plain paper using a Lexmark MFP. Later they can scan the completed tests into the same device to score them automatically. Test results are generated immediately and are available in a variety of report formats, enabling swift classroom intervention. The Lexmark Testing and Grading solution can be implemented either on-premises or as a cloud-based hosted configuration.

By placing a Lexmark MFP in each school, teachers can perform scanning themselves and receive test score results in minutes instead of weeks, an astonishing change they didn't believe was possible. With the solution, teachers can finally address the academic needs of individual students immediately, vastly improving their likelihood of success.

Results
Teachers no longer enter data into spreadsheets, saving time, eliminating the possibility of errors and shortening the time between testing and the analysis of the impact of that testing. They now print customized bubble sheets, pre-slugged with student identification information, on plain paper and on demand using their Lexmark MFPs, eliminating the expense of purchasing pre-printed sheets. After testing, bubble sheets are scanned in each school on the Lexmark MFPs and are no longer transported to a central location. With processing handled by the Lexmark Testing and Grading solution, grades and other benchmarking data are automatically handed off to Pearson Education’s PowerSchool® web-based student information system. The district is currently working to integrate its Pearson Inform® web-based K-12 achievement data analysis tool into the workflow. According to the math supervisor, the major improvement has been the elimination of time-consuming spreadsheet data entry by teachers.
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Supervisor of Mathematics
Grades 6 – 12
New Jersey Public School District

“Teachers value the Lexmark testing and grading solution, because of how quickly they can get test results and because of the variety of report types available,” said the math supervisor. “The time we’re saving through the elimination of manual data entry has allowed our teachers to spend considerably more time with their students. Working together, we customized a solution that did not exist before and Lexmark was excellent about accommodating our wishes,” he said. “Lexmark personnel stayed onsite for a week, taught us how to create tests and answer keys and still provide as much assistance as we need.”

With its Lexmark solution now fully implemented, the district is expanding beyond the math department into language arts, science and social studies. Other New Jersey districts, encouraged by the success in this district, are considering implementation of the Lexmark system in their own schools.

For this New Jersey school district, implementing the Lexmark Testing and Grading solution, along with Lexmark MFPs is saving money, saving time and supporting student achievement by providing new insight into student test scores. Most important, it is empowering teachers with immediacy and the ability to spend more time with students.

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