



Improved IEP Quality and Special Education Teacher Satisfaction in Massillon City Schools



Massillon City Schools are in northeast Ohio, approximately 50 miles south of Cleveland in Stark County. Around 4,000 students are enrolled. The district is home to eight schools: three elementary schools and a preschool, intermediate school, junior high school, high school, and career tech center. Special services in Massillon City Schools believes that:

- All students can grow
- Collaboration among parents and educators is essential to student success
- When high expectations are set, students will meet them
- Students with disabilities will be educated in their least restrictive environment along a continuum of services
- Students with disabilities require intervention, specially designed instruction, and core content instruction in order to demonstrate growth and close the achievement gap

The Story of Massillon City Schools

Massillon City Schools district believes in educating all students, including those with disabilities, in the least restrictive environment. To do this, Massillon leadership allocates IDEA-B and ARP IDEA-B funds to maintain and/or increase related services and support personnel, purchase appropriate instructional supplies and materials, and provide family and community engagement activities. These resources ensure that unique learners receive the Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) detailed in their IEP.

At the district level, [Rebecca Moore, District Student Service Support Specialist,] felt that goal writing had “become very repetitive.”

The Challenge

Rebecca Moore, District Student Service Support Specialist, stated that her district “constantly seemed to struggle with new goal” writing or writing meaningful goals for students’ IEPs. At the district level, she felt that goal writing had “become very repetitive.” To combat this and ensure that IEPs were impactful to each unique learner, Rebecca provided professional development to teachers twice a year as well as weekly updates. Even with training, IEP writing is stressful and time-consuming for educators, taking away valuable time that can be spent teaching students. Massillon City Schools sought a solution that would support IEP writing, incorporate student data, and save teachers time so they can focus on what they love: teaching, not paperwork.



IEP WRITING GUIDANCE

With embedded IEP writing guidance, teachers would have the support they need to write accurate and compliant present levels statements and high-impact, high-quality IEPs. These types of IEPs must include individualized SMART goals and have present levels statements that teachers create based on student data.

SMART IEP GOALS BASED ON DATA

To write appropriate IEP goals for each learner, teachers at Massillon City Schools knew they needed a variety of data, including performance data and information from other IEP team members like parents or caregivers. What's more, they could save significant time writing goals if they had an IEP development solution that recommended unique and specific SMART goals based on already collected student data.

[Teachers] could save significant time writing goals if they had an IEP development solution that recommended unique and specific SMART goals based on all the student data collected.

PROGRESS MONITORING, REPORTS, AND VISUALIZATIONS

In addition, Rebecca Moore wanted her IEP teams to have access to simpler, more streamlined ways to monitor progress, as well as easy-to-read reports and visual representations of student data. She knew IEP teams were spending substantial time not only monitoring student progress but translating the data into easily understandable reports and visuals.



Why Massillon Chose Polaris

Massillon City Schools already had positive experiences using other n2y solutions. They use Unique Learning System as the primary curriculum for moderate to severe learners, News2you to provide meaningful connections to the outside world, L³ Skills to promote lifelong learning with academic and skill-building games, Positivity to provide self-regulation strategies and behavioral data, and SymbolStix PRIME to assist with communication, engagement, and expression. In their RTI program, Massillon City Schools use n2y's newest solution, Inspire, for students who need intensive, teacher-led instruction in reading and math to acquire grade-level skills.

After careful review and evaluation, the district added Polaris to its suite of solutions.

The Solution

Polaris enabled Massillon City Schools' IEP teams to develop high-quality, high-impact IEPs. Teachers at Massillon completed online professional learning provided by n2y twice per year, and they ensured service providers were prepared for and at ease with implementing Polaris starting on day one.

POLARIS PROVIDED:

- Step-by-step IEP writing guidance to ensure IEPs are based on student data and input from teachers and families
- Recommendations on compliant SMART goals based on student assessment and performance data
- Streamlined reports and visuals, making communicating student success and growth easy

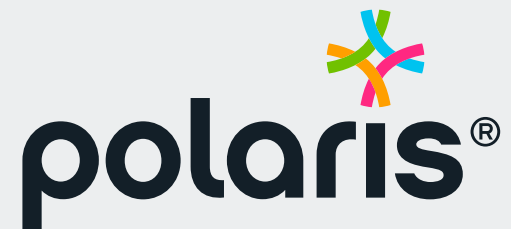
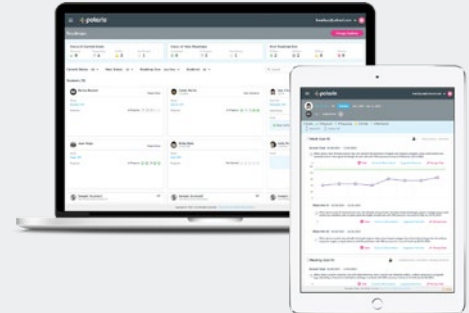


The Results

Rebecca Moore recently assisted a teacher in writing an IEP and was impressed with Polaris' ability to generate the next steps and SMART goals. In fact, the quality of the IEP was evident to the student's parent, who reported that "it was the best IEP [my child] ever had, and she's been on an IEP since preschool." The teacher also saw the value of Polaris and appreciated that "it didn't take eight hours to write the IEP."

"Rebecca Moore reports that she's seeing compliant IEPs being written and improved teacher satisfaction."

The partnership between Massillon City Schools and n2y continues to strengthen, with a dedicated n2y Customer Support Advocate completing regular check-ins. In these ongoing communications, Rebecca Moore reports that she's seeing compliant IEPs being written and improved teacher satisfaction.



Polaris is an online IEP development and progress monitoring solution for teachers and service providers to plan, write, execute, and report on IEPs for pre-K–transition students on general education or extended learning standards. Polaris provides IEP writing guidance, SMART goal recommendations, and easy-to-interpret data visualizations for high-impact and high-quality IEPs.

