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How Polaris Transformed Progress Monitoring for the Progressive Education Program in Buncombe Schools

Buncombe Schools are in the western area of North Carolina near Asheville. Six districts and 47 schools make up Buncombe, including the Progressive Education Program (PEP) that serves 150 students with disabilities from kindergarten through transition. Those in the PEP follow extended standards that lead to a certificate of graduation. Students are served by educational specialists, job coaches, and social workers while participating in adapted physical education, pool therapy, blended art, and more.

The Story of the Progressive Education Program

Administrators are aware of the many challenges that come with serving unique learners within the PEP, and data and progress monitoring form the center of their teaching practices and collaborative vision. Data is essential to ensure compliance with IDEA mandates regarding data-driven IEPs and standards-aligned instruction. However, administrators found that data collection for Present Levels writing, progress reporting, and informing instruction was time-consuming and laborious.

The Challenge

Buncombe's Progressive Education Program had no consistent way to measure and keep data on IEP goals and academic performance. As teachers began planning for upcoming IEPs, the administration realized that data to inform those IEPs was inadequate. This made meeting with advocates and parents to ensure student success increasingly difficult over time, and tough questions became impossible to answer. The PEP needed a comprehensive IEP solution to collect data and boost teacher satisfaction.

INCREASED AVAILABILITY AND USE OF DATA

For Stacey Kingsley, an administrator at the Progressive Education Program, it was essential that the IEP solution measured and saved data to make IEP planning and reporting easier for her busy teachers. In addition, the solution needed to assist teachers in using the data to develop IEP goals specific to each of their unique learners while driving instructional decisions. Stacey said, "Busy teachers still have to ensure their goals are SMART, based on assessment data, and compliant." Finally, the solution needed to promote collaboration across the IEP team to further support student growth and success.

HIGHER TEACHER SATISFACTION

Considering the widespread teacher shortage, it was more important than ever to Stacey to retain tenured, high-quality teachers. But they were feeling overwhelmed with paperwork, frustrated with a lack of access to the data they needed, and worried about due process. Trying to focus on teaching and spending time with students while balancing all their other responsibilities and tasks was stressful.

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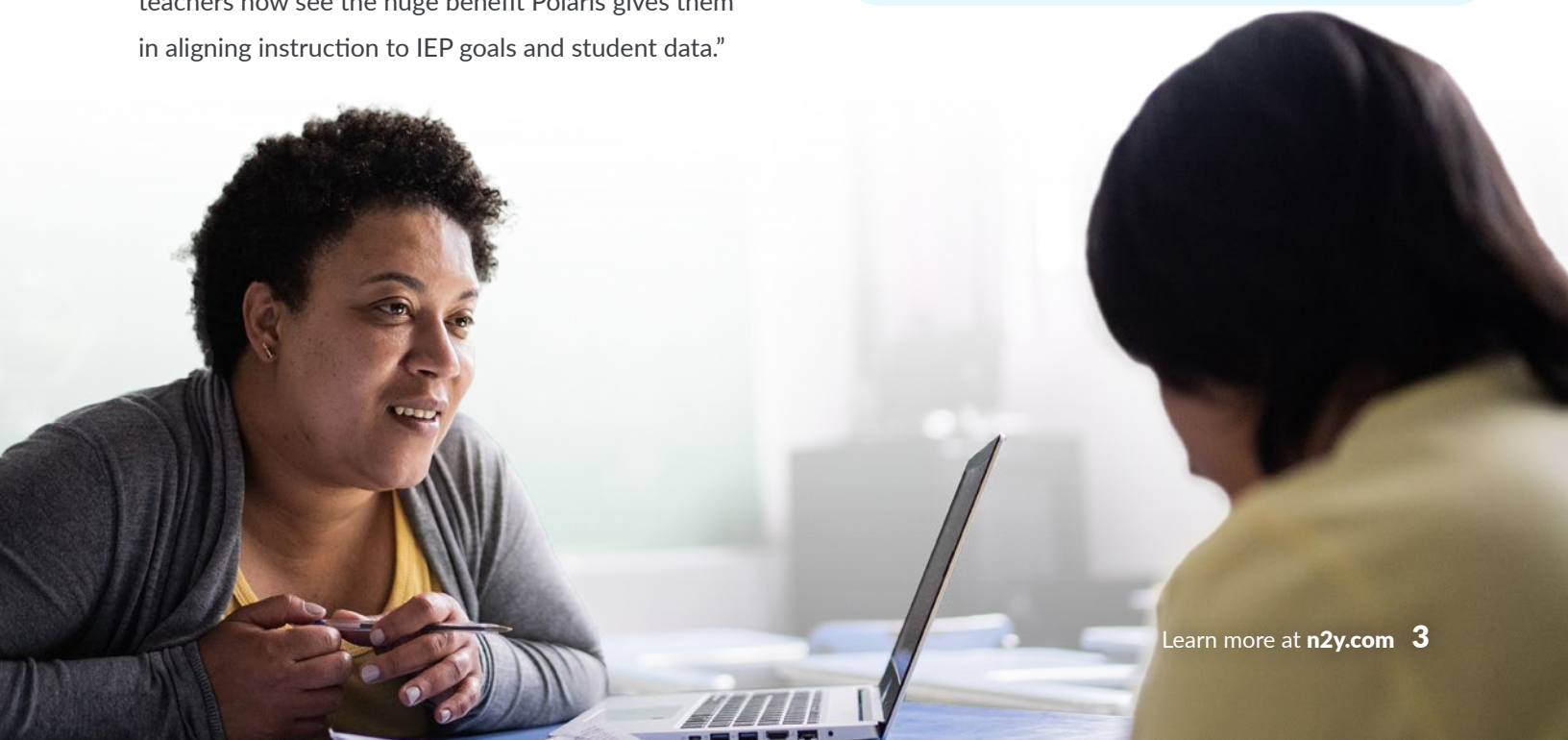
The Solution

Administrators and teachers at the Progressive Education Program trusted other n2y solutions and were aware of n2y's long history leading the special education field. They already used the following n2y solutions in their classrooms: Unique Learning System as the primary curriculum for their moderate to severe learners, Inspire to close learning gaps for their moderate learners, News2you to provide meaningful connections between their students and the outside world, and SymbolStix PRIME to assist with communication, engagement, and expression.

Upon review, research, and consideration of Polaris and similar competitive options, Polaris stood above the rest. It provided the IEP support and data collection components needed to measure and report student performance data while increasing teacher capacity and satisfaction. Stacey Kingsley commented, "Polaris is most valuable because of the ability it has to collect data. The adoption process was difficult at first, but teachers now see the huge benefit Polaris gives them in aligning instruction to IEP goals and student data."

ULS PROVIDED:

- Data collection tools that integrated with already established curriculum

- Seamless integration of data from Unique Learning System for IEP writing and progress monitoring

- Data collection for reporting and progress monitoring

- Guidance to ensure all goals were SMART, observable, and unique to each student

- Standards-aligned goals based on all 50 states' extended standards

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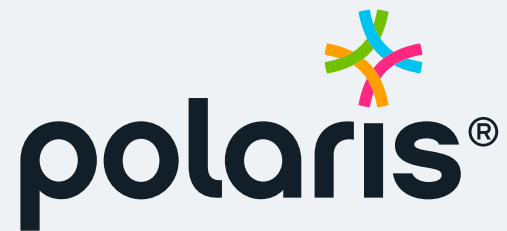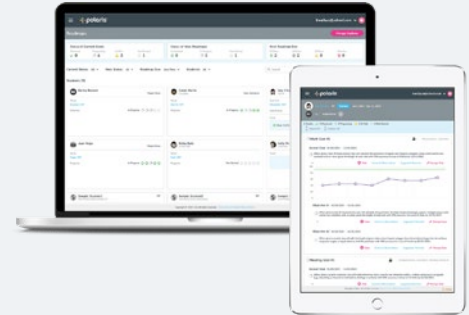
The Results

Stacey Kingsley reported that district goals always include meeting all students at their performance level and setting reasonable, data-driven IEP goals for each unique learner. Polaris has allowed busy teachers to ensure that their goals are SMART and based on student data, which ultimately means IEPs are compliant.

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The partnership between Buncombe Schools' Progressive Education Program and n2y continues to grow, helping the school report on student performance data while giving teachers the support they need to focus on student outcomes and IEP execution.

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n2y's comprehensive IEP solution, Polaris, demonstrates and maintains compliance by assisting service providers in writing meaningful data-driven student service plans. Polaris allows all members of the team to collaborate seamlessly in one online solution ensuring compliance throughout the IEP process. Seamless integration across n2y solutions allows districts to demonstrate and maintain compliance while increasing teacher satisfaction and driving positive student outcomes.

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