

Gradebook Case Study: Grand Prairie ISD



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for education

gradebook software by

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With eSembler™ for Education, Grand Prairie Independent School District is reducing time and resource demands needed to acquire, process, archive, and distribute grades. Grand Prairie ISD has thirty campus locations and is located in one of the fastest growing areas of Dallas County. The district operates 2 high schools, 2 ninth grade centers, 6 middle schools, 21 elementary schools, and two alternative campuses. Another middle school and two elementary schools are planned within the next four years. Nine hundred teachers provide a world-class education to over 20,000 students. In recent years, Grand Prairie ISD won considerable acclaim as an early adopter of new technologies. Recently, supported by Superintendent David Barbosa, Ph.D., the Technology division began the search for a new gradebook solution—one that was wholly Web-based.

The Need

One of the most frustrating problems facing the Grand Prairie ISD was related to the administrative demands of processing student grades and report cards. In past years, Grand Prairie ISD had used Excelsior Software's Pinnacle System. Pinnacle did not meet the district's needs and a new solution was sought. What Grand Prairie ISD desired was a reliable software platform designed to make life easier, enabling accurate electronic transmission of grade data while meeting the needs of teachers. The hope was that with the implementation of a new electronic system, Grand Prairie ISD could reduce turnaround time for grade transmission, improve the accuracy of information sent to parents, and reclaim both administrative and teacher time that might then be used for other tasks.

The Decision

Grand Prairie ISD began searching for a grade management system that would meet the district's pedagogical and technical goals and ultimately selected eSembler. Offered by Premio Computer, eSembler is a Web-based software designed to manage grades and attendance in K-12 school districts. "We'd used electronic grade book systems over the past four years with mixed success," said Lyle DuBus, Executive Administrator of Information Technology for Grand Prairie ISD. "eSembler offered us new capabilities that were not available in any other package we'd surveyed, like a wholly Web-based environment with an open database architecture and features galore."

Reinvention

Grand Prairie ISD works closely with the Region 10 Education Service Center (ESC), one of 20 regional service centers in the state of Texas, whose centralized Student Information System manages report cards, attendance, student scheduling, and general student information. Today, daily gradebook functions are available for teachers through eSembler, facilitated by an automated integration with the Region 10 Student Information System. At the end of each day, the Region 10 Student Information System connects to eSembler and updates teacher and student information, course data, and student schedules. These updates are reflected immediately for teachers in every school across the district.

At the end of a progress report or grading period, Grand Prairie ISD teachers use a simple administrative application to submit their grades whereupon they are automatically transmitted to the Region 10 Education Service Center for use on student report cards. "They were able to quickly integrate with our mainframe systems," says Terri Decker, Student Services Consultant for the Region 10 Education Service Center. "Good communication between all parties helped us meet the aggressive needs of Grand Prairie ISD."

In the past, Grand Prairie ISD's grade submission process could take up to eight hours and was sometimes prone to error. Today, the submission process takes only minutes and is error free. With the many other features and benefits made available through eSembler, including Parent Access, Grand Prairie's implementation has improved administrative productivity tenfold and has helped teachers by providing a system that saves time and effort while improving data accuracy.

Conclusion

Ease-of-use, a simple licensing plan, and application flexibility were the three factors that influenced the selection of eSembler by Grand Prairie ISD. Today, the district's five primary goals are realized:

- Web-based Assignment and Grade Management
- Full Integration with the Region 10 Education Service Center
- Remote Administration Capabilities
- Support for Parent Access
- LDAP / Active Directory Authentication

The implementation of eSembler for Grand Prairie ISD was an unparalleled success. The Web-based gradebook systems allow for extended capabilities and efficiencies never before dreamed possible.