



Atlas Case Study: Novi Community School District

Atlas for Initiating a Curriculum Process

Novi Community School District, MI

Novi Community School District is a public-school district in Novi, Michigan with classes from pre-school through 12th grade, over 6200 students, and 8 schools. Novi is a part of Oakland Schools, which is home to 30 school districts.



What was the problem?

In order to support academic achievement of its students, The Park School affirmed that curriculum is integral to student learning. Therefore, the Park School identified a curriculum planning mission statement that included: school-wide scope and sequence for different curriculum areas, planned and purposeful conversations about what is being taught in classrooms, clearly identified expectations for students, and a smooth onboarding process for faculty, as well as seeking opportunities for cross-curricular connections and common planning.

How did Atlas help?

In order to meet the district's goal of establishing common assessments, we enabled the adopted curriculum feature, which allowed the administration to create assessments and publish them within teacher maps to ensure that students in like grade levels were encountering similar, vigorous assessments.

To further support consistency, we created a common unit planner template in Atlas across grades and subjects, so teachers were mapping in like templates. This fostered a common curricular language within the district. Uniformity in vocabulary eased communications among teachers, PLC's, and district-wide meeting, trainings, and PD.

The flexibility of templates in Atlas allowed us to also add a 'Reflection' category in Novi's site. Within it, teachers were able to capture student reactions to units, identify what worked and what did not, and form ideas for the next year. The addition of the category allowed the curriculum to grow year to year and ensured teachers were returning to curriculum and using it as a basis for instruction.

Novi also wanted to make the curriculum visible to parents, so we built a public site for the district. The public site allows for transparency into the district and the curriculum, and also extends the learning at home because parents can review topics, vocabulary, activities, etc.

What were the outcomes?

In 2010, when they started this curriculum work, NCSD was in the top third of Oakland County (30 school districts) on science, social studies, and ELA assessments, and in the top two in math assessments. Now in 2017, NCSD is the top in Oakland County in science, social studies, and math, and in the top 3 for ELA – for the third year in a row on both state and national assessments. Novi attributes much of this success to their curriculum process supported by Atlas they set in place to design and map open, clear, and viable curriculum.

Testimony

"We didn't have this where we worked before. It is so nice to come to a place where I don't have to wonder, what are the most important things to teach" - Dr. RJ Webber

