

Sunnyside Unified School District #12, Arizona

Partnership Built on Mutual Respect and Trust Delivers Results

Industry: School District

Location: Tucson, AZ

Students: 17,800+

Employees: 2,000+

Years as a Tyler Client: Since 1998

Budget: \$90 Million

Tyler Products Used: Tyler Pulse, Versatrans®

Schools: 22 (13 elementary, 5 middle, 3 high and 1 early childhood education center)

Contact:

Manuel L. Isquierdo, Ed.D., Superintendent

Edwin Dawson, Ph.D., Director of Federal Programs

www.sunnyside.k12.az.us

Sunnyside Unified School District (USD) covers 93.6 square miles in the southern part of Tucson, Arizona. The second largest district in Pima County, Sunnyside USD was established in 1921. Today, the district educates more than 17,000 preK-12 students in 22 schools. The district is recognized both in the state and nationally for its tech-savvy and innovative approaches to ensuring student achievement.

Sunnyside district also gained national recognition for its award winning program, Project Graduation: the Digital Advantage. This program significantly increased the graduation rate, while also significantly reducing the drop-out rate. The program also served as a catalyst for the district's launch of one-to-one computing in 2010, providing netbooks to every fifth grader to incorporate cutting-edge technology with learning. By 2013, the program is expected to be in place for all students in grades 5-12.

Tyler Pulse and the Power of Partnership

When it became obvious the district was facing key challenges around providing real-time access to data, and providing staff the ability to analyze information to make informed decisions to support and advance the district's initiatives and achievement goals, they reached out to Tyler, a proven and dependable partner since 1998. When Tyler demonstrated Tyler Pulse, a tool that promised to deliver the information the district needed to reach their goals, a new phase of partnership began.

Tyler Pulse is a revolutionary tool delivering fast, timely, accurate and useful information to help district staff make effective management decisions. It offers an advantage over typical

data warehouses because it's easy to set-up and use, very cost effective and provides report models that are ready to use out of the box. For example, Tyler Pulse provides a complete profile of each student or school in the district, enabling staff to proactively intervene to ensure student achievement goals are met.

Beyond this easy access to data, Sunnyside's administrators credit Tyler's dedication to the district as a key reason why Tyler Pulse will be a success. "Most data warehouses are built to provide the necessary data. What has made Tyler Pulse strategically valuable to Sunnyside is the collaborative efforts Tyler staff makes in understanding our district's unique needs and working with us to address them." stressed Manuel L. Isquierdo, Ed.D., Superintendent for Sunnyside USD.



In Their Own Words

“Teachers and administrators in our district have become extremely data savvy. Student instructional strategies and interventions are data-driven, using the various reporting features that Tyler Pulse is making easier for them to access. With Sunnyside’s customized dashboard, administrators are able to visualize student academic status and unique needs at a glance, and use this information to develop strategic plans for both their schools and their students.”

— Manuel L. Isquierdo, Ed.D., Superintendent

The Story

Accessing Data the “Backbone for Making Quality Decisions”

“Ask any school district, one of the most important factors for school growth and change is easy access to complete data ... it’s the backbone for making quality decisions,” commented Edwin Dawson, Ph.D., Director of Federal Programs.

Sunnyside USD is known throughout the state and nationally for its tech savvy and innovation in ensuring student achievement, but one area where district administration knew they had room to grow was in integrating and providing access to this complete data.

“Staff had to access multiple separate programs or databases sometimes 12 to 15 separate places to view all the data that was needed,” explained Dr. Dawson. Not only did this make daily tasks such as reviewing student academic profiles or tracking student attendance more time consuming, it also made it difficult for staff to get a full picture of a student or school in an easy-to-understand format.

Knowing how important this complete view of data is to any school district, in 2011 district administration decided it was time to invest in an information warehouse that would integrate student information, financial information, standardized testing data, quarterly benchmarks and more into one comprehensive database.

Prior to making a purchasing decision, administration gathered input from staff at all levels — from principals to teachers to data specialists — and from each of the district’s 22 schools who work with the information on a daily basis. They also closely questioned whether each system would be flexible and powerful enough to meet Sunnyside’s needs.

Sunnyside’s strong focus on achievement and student success is supported by the information Tyler Pulse delivers. Sunnyside staff — superintendent, assistant superintendent, principals, assessment directors and teachers — will benefit from the ability to easily retrieve and analyze school data. With Tyler Pulse, decisions can now be made based on accurate and current data, such as student demographic information, academic performance, standardized testing data and more ... from one central point.

It’s easy to see why Sunnyside chose Tyler Pulse and developed a unique and creative way to implement the software, train staff and provide support.

Designed specifically for school decision makers, Tyler Pulse would ultimately allow Sunnyside USD staff to access their data faster, and to interpret that data in meaningful ways. But first, the solution had to be implemented. For Sunnyside, this meant taking an active role in the process and making a conscious decision to take their time building out the system to their specifications. The goal: to create an infrastructure of knowledge and support. To reach this goal, the Sunnyside design plan is to put every piece of data needed into Tyler Pulse.



Sunnyside staff works closely with Tyler to make adjustments to the system to address their unique needs and to ensure data integrity. Once the system build out is completed, staff anticipates being able to use it for years down the road.

Sunnyside Best Practices

Through careful planning, organization and creative thinking staff developed a unique and effective implementation plan.

- Gathered input from staff at all levels and from all 22 schools who work with district data on a daily basis prior to purchasing an information warehouse
- Worked in close partnership with Tyler to configure Tyler Pulse to meet the unique needs of the district
- Created an internal team composed of users from each of the district's schools and the central office to develop a comprehensive plan for training and helping all users through the transition
- Shared best practices with fellow Arizona school districts to improve school data analysis state-wide

The system build out was just one of the pieces Sunnyside had to think about during implementation. The district also needed to develop a methodical and easy to understand approach to rolling out the new system to its users. **Enter the Tyler Titans.**

Tyler Titans

Best Practices in Action

The 'Tyler Titans' is an internal team consisting of five to seven people from each school in the district, created to champion stakeholder input and training. The Tyler Titans are anyone from counselors, to program facilitators, to technology coaches and others who work outside of the classroom who are responsible for training and helping all other users through the transition.

A point person is located in the district's central office to answer questions and resolve issues that can't be addressed at the school level. More than just a facilitator for accessing data in Tyler Pulse, this full-time information warehouse specialist is responsible for helping users analyze and understand what the data means, which in turn results in informed decision-making district and department-wide.

To make the training process even easier, the district's IT department created **Top 10** reports for principals, teachers, and district level directors and administrators. District stakeholders were concerned that it would take a lot for users to move to a new system. "It has to be as good as, if not better, than the previous system," explains one of the Tyler Titans. "For example, if someone is used to Excel® spreadsheets, we need to show him/her the report to go to in Pulse. It's the same information; Pulse simply provides richer, more up-to-date data for analysis. If users can understand these Top 10 reports, they can run any other report in Tyler Pulse."

The Value of Tyler Pulse ... The Value of Tyler

Citing the value-add of Tyler Pulse as the care and time Tyler's staff takes in understanding Sunnyside districts' unique needs, and quickly addressing these needs that will ultimately serve the classroom teacher, Dr. Isquierdo sums it up perfectly: "Tyler Pulse is affordable, user friendly and the staff at Tyler was most accommodating in helping us get the system up and running from an operational perspective as well as an end-user perspective.

For a district our size, Tyler Pulse is the perfect fit."