The Changemakers: Henry County Schools & SRG Technology

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THE CHALLENGE:

Henry County Schools saw its student body of 42,000 diversifying in a number of ways and was convinced the traditional "one-size-fits-all" method of teaching was no longer effective in reaching different types of learners. The students deserved a more personalized approach. After much discussion, the district was ready to embrace a "Big Vision" change and adopt a new methodology in teaching and learning – one that was designed to focus on each student individually and empower students to be critical decision-makers in their own education. After all, Henry County Schools motto is "Ensuring Success for Each Student." And that is exactly what the district intends to do.

The challenges Henry County Schools faced were significant.
The following questions needed to be answered:

1. What skills do students need to be successful in college, career and life? And how can schools be redesigned to build those skills in students?

2. How can schools best engage all learners, honoring their many different interests, strengths and passions?

3. Can the graduation rate be increased?

4. Can students be encouraged to take ownership of their own learning?

5. How should educators realistically and relevantly prepare students for careers and college?

6. Can the district successfully shift to personalized learning in all of its 50 schools by 2020?
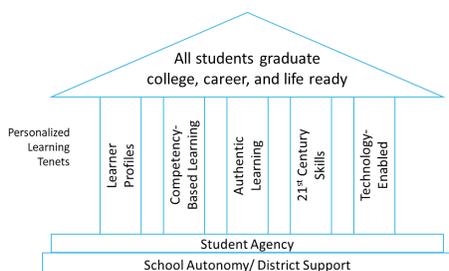
THE LEARNER PROFILE:

Henry County Schools heard of SRG Technology's (SRGT) BlenderLearn™ suite of software applications that employ enhanced data collection and analysis to promote personalized teaching and learning in order to fuel a cycle of continuous improvement. The district thought BlenderLearn was the right technology to use as a springboard for its change efforts.

BlenderLearn supports a strategic, phased approach to implementation by allowing priority needs to be met first while building torward a broader vision. Platform administrators are able to configure the software as people and priorities change -- making it easy for BlenderLearn to adapt on pace with customers' changing size and needs. BlenderLearn provides individually relevant, data-driven dashboards and reports for a personalized experience and better decision-making.

Henry County Schools found that although BlenderLearn offered much of what it was looking for, the solution was missing some important components necessary to achieve the district's vision. Early in 2015, the district worked directly with SRGT to co-design and create individual student plans and track personalized learning for each student.

By forming a forward-thinking partnership, Henry County Schools and SRGT successfully designed the Individual Learner Profiles (ILPs), an array of data sets compiled into a unique profile for each student. Because each stakeholder in the education process plays a valuable role in a student's educational success, students and parents are encouraged to contribute to the student's learner profile; take an active role in the student's individual learning plan; and become part of the educational decision-making team.

The student experience will include five essential elements:

All students graduate college, career, and life ready

Personalized Learning Tenets

Learner Profiles
Competency-Based Learning
Authentic Learning
21st Century Skills
Technology-Enabled

Student Agency
School Autonomy/ District Support

Aaryn Schmuhl, Henry County School's Assistant Superintendent of Leadership Services, summed up the goal of the project best by saying, "With the vision for the Individual Learner Profiles in Henry County Schools, kids are not having school done 'to' them, they are having school done 'with' them."

Teachers and administrators are able to gain insight into a student's thinking, capture a 360° view of students, identify students' learning styles and tailor lesson plans that resonate with individual students. This is exactly what Henry County Schools was looking to achieve.

"This was what we needed: technology in our schools that could support teachers by giving them easy access to crucial student information and support the standardization of best practices, while also increasing communication and student engagement," Schmuhl said. "We searched for years to find what we were looking for. We are appreciative of our relationship with SRGT in co-creating a platform that meets the needs of our students, teachers and parents to increase students' self-awareness, evidence of mastery of learning and ultimately, agency over their learning."

Why BlenderLearn ILP:

- Uses disparate legacy and new data including traditional and untraditional data sets to create a personalized profile for each student
- Survey tools are used to populate and refresh student profile information to foster better learners
- Facilitates insight into student learning styles to encourage substantive decision-making
- Gives insights on how each student demonstrates mastery

BlenderLearn ILP Unique Benefits:

- Enables students to set their own academic, behavior, career goals and create action plans, and track their own progress
- Students report their own interests, strengths, learning preferences in real time
- Builds students' self-awareness through inventories about academic habits, dispositions, and learning styles
- Captures student-led conference notes
- Portfolio connected to district-determined performance indicators
- Academic Journal – a space for students to reflect
- Overview of assessment history in one location
- Innovative feedback loop

THE CONCLUSION:

By spring 2017, Henry County Schools was well on its way to reaching its goal of personalizing the learning experience for all its students. To date, the usage report data numbers continue to grow and feedback from Henry County Schools' stakeholders is positive.

- As of November 2017, the ILPs program reported 17,461 student users at 50 schools

- In the 2017-2018 school year alone, the ILPs hosted more than 283,000 sessions and over 3.5 million page views

"Students building their own profiles as learners is an important foundation of student agency in Henry County. The details captured in each student's profile tells a more complete story of who they are as individuals, what they want to accomplish, and how they plan to get there," said Karen Perry, Henry County Schools Coordinator of Personalized Learning.

The process of transitioning to the ILPs has placed Henry County Schools at the epicenter of the emerging movement toward personalized learning in Georgia and the nation. SRGT and Henry County Schools have plans to continue the BlenderLearn partnership to progress on this excellence adventure.

3.5 million+
page views

283,000+
sessions

17,461
student users

ABOUT THE PARTNERS:

SRG Technology

SRG Technology (SRGT) creates cutting-edge enterprise software solutions that help people live smarter, healthier and safer lives. With enhanced collection and analysis, SRGT harnesses the value of data by making it individually relevant to encourage engagement, ignite action, promote best practices, fuel improvement and achieve meaningful results.

SRGT's flagship education suite of software BlenderLearn™ is an eco-system of innovative applications designed to drive student, teacher and school improvements by facilitating and promoting personalized teaching and learning.

SRGT has developed solutions for the Education, Healthcare and Travel and Transportation industries.

Henry County Schools

Henry County Schools in Henry County, Georgia, is one of the nation's leading districts in the movement towards personalized learning. At 42,000 students, Henry County is a large, diverse district with approximately 52% economically disadvantaged students and 66% non-white students. The wide variety of demographics within each of its 50 schools makes Henry County unique, and its schools' district mission is "Ensuring Success for Each Student," led by a vision of "Building a Culture of Personalized Learning." The goal of Henry County Schools is that each student, no matter their background, graduates college career and life ready.