

Clover School District Implements a Teacher-Approved Plan to Support Student Achievement

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—Dr. Millicent Dickey, Chief Academic Officer

Clover School District, located in South Carolina, is a highly rated public school district with seven elementary schools, two middle schools, a high school, and a Grades 3–12 Virtual Academy. There are more than 4,000 elementary school students, 2,100 middle schoolers, and 2,700 high schoolers in the district. As a consistently top-rated district, leaders understand that achieving high state scores in math and reading is the result of a sustained focus on improving instruction. They are always on the lookout for technologies that can enhance and integrate learning objectives while remaining easy for educators and students to adopt.

With pandemic-related school closures occurring during the latter part of the 2019–2020 academic year, the district recognized a unique opportunity to get a head start on improving instructional practices through the addition of a combined learning and data tool that would benefit students at all levels when they returned. They also realized that the program must operate smoothly in remote settings. Responding to teachers’ requests to improve personalized learning with the help of easily understood data resources, the district started the journey to find a program with the right fit.

Dr. Millicent Dickey, chief academic officer, took the initiative to start reviewing available options during the pandemic. “I asked teachers to come to the school in small groups and listen to presentations from companies and explore what was available,” Dickey said.

In the past, the district had struggled to find an assessment solution that would directly enable and enhance data-informed instruction. Administrators and teachers alike focused on finding a solution to improve on this practice.



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A Teacher-Approved Solution to Seamlessly Support Students in Multiple Learning Environments

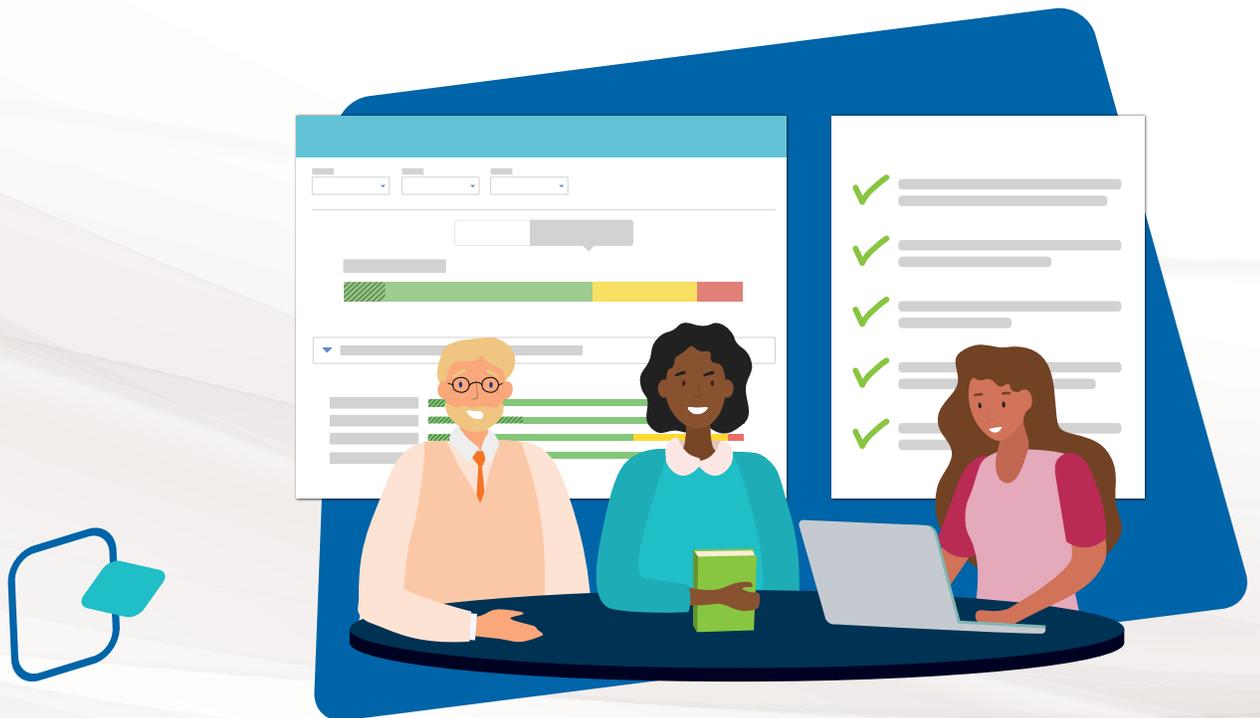
After reviewing the options, district administrators and teachers determined that *i-Ready* was the best choice. Part of the decision to go with *i-Ready* was the seamlessness with which it enables students to learn in both virtual and in-classroom setups.

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In many ways, the final decision rested on teacher approval. “It’s always better when teachers can say that they were a part of the process,” Dickey added.

Casey Lefler, a personalized learning specialist who was involved in the decision-making process, listened to teachers about why *i-Ready* seemed like a good choice. She found teachers were interested in doing something with assessments that would enable them to differentiate their instruction. The use of the Teacher Toolbox for *i-Ready* linked to Diagnostics made it appealing to them in the end.

“There’s a purpose to the assessment,” Lefler explained, adding that teachers looked forward to using it throughout the year to target individual student needs.

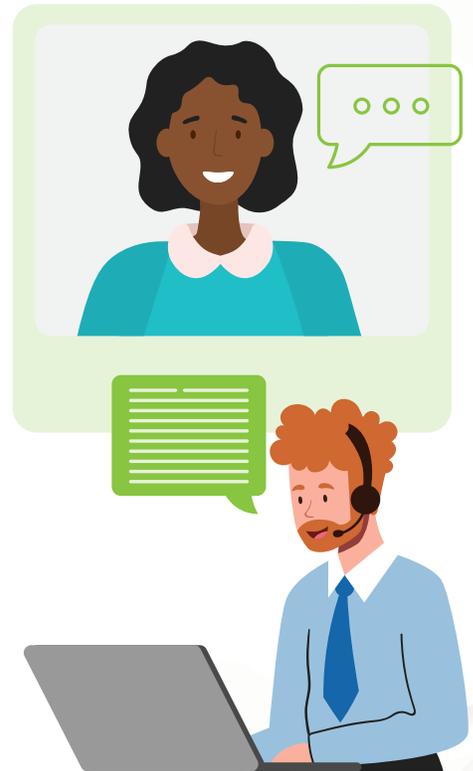


Once the decision was made, implementation ramped up quickly over the summer months, including training and professional development (PD) to prepare for the fall 2020 pilot phase. “The level of support we received in order to implement *i-Ready* on such a rapid timeline was just tremendous,” Dickey said. “It was always timely, and there was never a delay in getting what teachers needed.”

The *i-Ready* team from Curriculum Associates understood that teachers were at different places in their understanding of the program. With this in mind, they tailored the PD according to the needs of each individual school building or educator. This approach helped teachers feel connected and empowered in the implementation process and earn their buy-in for the change.

There were the obvious challenges with putting forth a new learning process during the pandemic, but when teachers recognized the connection between the Diagnostic assessment and differentiated instruction, they were excited. “The buy-in was there once they saw that the Diagnostic was personalized for every individual student to fill in those foundations that were missing,” Lefler said, noting that it helped teachers make the most of instructional opportunities for students affected by pandemic-related learning loss.

According to Lefler, *i-Ready* worked perfectly for teachers moving forward in math, providing the foundational skills necessary to continue to different levels of instruction.



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A Holistic, Collaborative Approach to Data-Driven Instruction

Teachers wanted a data-driven instructional tool that would help them fulfill their objectives of identifying students' strengths and growth opportunities, improving their teaching practice, and personalizing instruction for all learners. After using *i-Ready*, they felt it provided the right information and resources to support these goals. In addition, interventionists and teachers found *i-Ready's* built-in instructional groupings and data worked well with other assessment practices for small groups.

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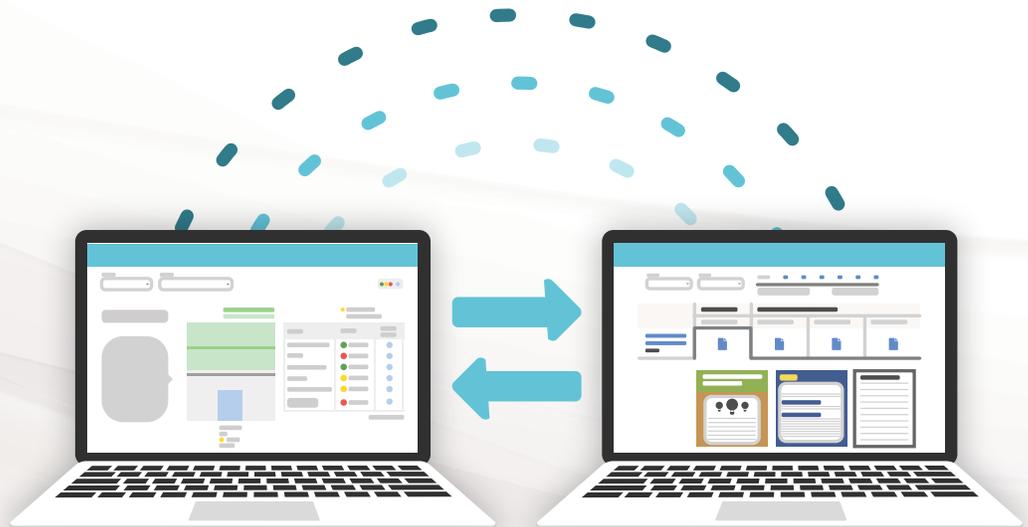
questioning types, differentiation styles, strategies, and instructional groupings.”

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The Teacher Toolbox for *i-Ready* and the resources that are tailored for every student are essential, according to Lefler. Whether in a virtual setting like last year or face to face in 2021, the Teacher Toolbox provides specific and effective teacher guidance for students. “It shows you where they're going next and where they need foundation,” Lefler added. “It gives a leveling for every student.”

Teachers like the ability to take the scores from the Diagnostics and apply them to *i-Ready's* built-in resources to personalize, target, and improve upon the strengths and weaknesses of each student. “*i-Ready* is like an endless bank of different resources, questioning types, differentiation styles, strategies, and instructional groupings,” Lefler said.

The structure of *i-Ready's* assessments and continuity across grade levels is a major plus for both teachers and students.



"You assess the same way, and the structure and tools are the same at all grades," Lefler said. Further, Lefler explained that the user-friendly data dashboard has helped teachers with time management and efficiency. "They can get right to the resources they need to look at whole groups, small groups, or individual students," she said.

Triangulation of data has been made possible with *i-Ready* reports, providing quick access when matching against student performance. It allows teachers to dive deeper than just the grade, showing areas where improvement is needed. "All the data reports are easy to find," Dickey said. "They're all laid out, and it's easy to see exactly how a child is performing and what they're capable of achieving. I think the data piece is just exceptional."

Bringing other stakeholders into the *i-Ready* adoption is essential to a cohesive learning strategy with a segment of PD dedicated to that objective.

"We've spent quite a bit of time with people in the instructional department as well as principals at all levels to help them communicate and have a clear message," Lefler said. Using PD to inform stakeholders who are not using the program hands-on helps solidify buy-in districtwide. Conversations with parents about performance and talking to principals about the goals of PD and moving their students forward add to stakeholder participation.

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All Stakeholders Contribute to Successful Results

The district achieved positive first-year results from the *i-Ready* pilot. Importantly, students are actively engaged in their learning and are making steady improvements in proficiency.

In comparison to other products the district has tried, the support for implementation and ongoing success have been a differentiator for *i-Ready*. From the start of implementation to PD and getting things organized and rolled out for teachers, the process has been what Dickey called “a very seamless process.”

Teachers like on-point guidance and availability of the *i-Ready* team when they need help. “They didn’t leave us high and dry,” Lefler said. “There is a whole team of experts to help us in all different directions to bounce ideas. That’s been wonderful.”

Data review equally benefits from hands-on support from the expert teams. For instance, when Dickey sits down to look at how students are doing inside the data, the account manager and *i-Ready* team are there to provide support and walk through the process.

Besides teachers and administrators buying into the process, parents and students also contributed to its success. Starting implementation during virtual learning relied heavily on parents and students understanding and committing to the platform. Parents could use the dashboard easily, navigating with well-understood interactive icons.

For students, the program’s similar look and lesson planning structure at all grades brings consistency of learning to their education journey.

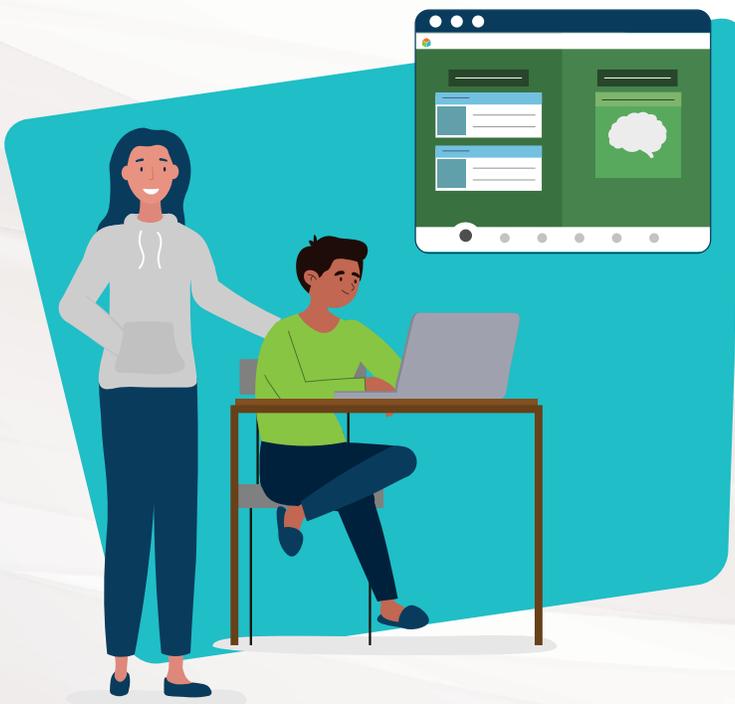
“*i-Ready* has a good blend,” Lefler said.

“Students aren’t just sitting on a lesson with *i-Ready*. It provides a good brain stretch with the lesson plans and resources.”

Moving forward, the district is focused on ensuring that teachers have deep knowledge of all the *i-Ready* tools at their fingertips to provide differentiated instruction for their students, whether in person or virtually.

“It’s about growing the depth and making sure that it has a piece within the instruction,” Lefler said.

With a dedicated team of educators from district leadership to classroom teachers, Clover School District has continued its impressive track record of supporting achievement for all students.



Want to build a data-driven culture?

Visit i-Ready.com/Empower to learn more about *i-Ready's* actionable data, easy-to-use dashboard, and robust reports.

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