

# Improving Attendance and Graduation Rates with Data Insights and Automation



Alternative education school sees **27%** increase in graduation rate and at least **152-hour** time savings after partnering with PowerSchool



**950 students**  
in grades  
6-12 across  
Oklahoma



**1 middle school,**  
**1 high school**



**Full-time online public school**

Students at Insight School of Oklahoma (ISOK), an alternative education online school, struggled with both attendance and graduation rates. Many students also worked part- or full-time jobs, had significant family responsibilities, or were even young parents themselves—all factors contributing to missing classes.

As a result, only 30% of ISOK's students graduated on time, if at all.

**Elizabeth Britt, Insight School of Oklahoma's High School Principal**, explains that many people think of alternative education as a place to send students who are constantly suspended or have behavior problems. "But that's not us," she says, "That's not alt-ed. We have a variety of students who have made choices that are not the best, but they're not here because they have behavior problems. Their behavior problem stems from something else, so we help them find coping skills, make better choices, and build a life they could be proud of."

School staff—while passionate in their dedication to improving student's lives—lacked practical tools to address persistent attendance and graduation issues. Saddled with disparate edtech products, they were spending too much time navigating multiple, often outdated, systems and trying to pull data together to see how students were doing.

## AT A GLANCE



### Challenges

- Too many tech systems and logins
- Attendance and truancy issues
- Lack of insightful data and reporting



### Solutions

- [PowerSchool SIS](#)
- [PowerSchool Student Analytics](#)
- [PowerSchool Attendance Intervention](#)
- [PowerSchool Naviance CCLR](#)



### Results

- Consolidated, integrated tech system helps improve efficiency
- Improved attendance, leading to 27% increase in the graduation rate
- Enhanced data reporting that uncovers unknown family issues

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**ELIZABETH BRITT**

High School Principal  
Insight School of Oklahoma, OK

## Too Many Systems, Too Many Logins

With a disjointed edtech system, ISOK's staff could not see any meaningful insights in student data that would help them make informed decisions. That's when the school began switching to PowerSchool products, creating a connected system to address comprehensive student needs with single sign-on and an integrated data-sharing framework.

Insight School started with PowerSchool SIS as its primary source of truth for student data. To improve processes, the school has continually added PowerSchool products, including PowerSchool Student Analytics for data insights, PowerSchool Attendance Intervention to address absenteeism, and PowerSchool Naviance CCLR to prepare students for post-high school options.

The change to PowerSchool immediately improved automation and saved time for counselors, teachers, and staff—giving them data and insights they didn't have before.

### EXAMPLES OF HOW AN IMPROVED POWERSCHOOL ECOSYSTEM HELPED INSIGHT SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- Automated data flows gave staff new reports that enabled them to take consequential action
- Days of work were saved with the ability to quickly aggregate data between systems and stay compliant with Oklahoma reporting
- The school can discover insights based on data to help students

"PowerSchool does so much that we don't need anything else," says Britt. "We had to use a ridiculous number of platforms to accomplish what we're currently accomplishing in PowerSchool. Once we're fully implemented, I won't have to have 75 different logins to do what I do, which is exciting."

## Strategy for Addressing Attendance and Truancy

Like most schools nationwide, absenteeism and truancy are at the top of Insight School of Oklahoma's priorities. Previously, the school addressed the issue by emailing families of students struggling to attend class. Staff members had to manually send out either individual or batch emails.

"Nothing was automated," explains Sarah Laird, Special Education Manager. "We had to go in and find their student IDs and create the emails. We had different people responsible for different aspects. We had staff members devoted to just that communication. It was a half-day to a full-day process to go through the data, identify who needed emails, and send them out."

Switching to Attendance Intervention both automated and improved that process for ISOK staff. When students are absent, postcards tied to specific attendance-related intervention tiers are automatically sent to parents.

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**SARAH LAIRD**

Special Education Manager  
Insight School of Oklahoma, OK

"That's a huge time saver for us if we can automate some of those processes," says Laird. "And now we have a way to track everything and have proof that we did notify for state purposes."

With PowerSchool SIS integrated directly with Attendance Intervention, ISOK staff can even alert students late to class to encourage them to attend. Teachers take attendance within the first five minutes of class in PowerSchool SIS's PowerTeacher Pro, and that data feeds into the administrative office, which can send out notifications within Attendance Intervention.

"It's been helpful to get kids to say, 'I guess I should get up and go to class.' For students who are required to attend live, it helps us to track and communicate immediately with them instead of waiting until the end of the day when, by that time, they may have missed three or four classes," says Britt.

**Here's the result: ISOK staff are convinced that addressing attendance has helped improve graduation rates by 27%.**

Based on the reason for a student's attendance or truancy issues, staff steer them toward either an asynchronous pathway in which the student isn't required to attend live classes or a night school pathway with live online classes.

"Attendance is our biggest behavior issue," says Britt. "And by making sure our parents, families, and students are always aware of attendance issues, and depending on the reason for their attendance or truancy, we can steer students to the right pathway and help them be successful, which increases their graduation rate. We've made huge gains in our graduation rate, and we want to continue to grow that."

## Improved Family Communication with Better Tracking and Reporting

Communication is critical for students and families in a virtual school setting. When students start losing touch with the school, their academics can suffer. ISOK staff can track students academically with PowerSchool SIS, through attendance with Attendance Intervention, and with multiple communication channels.

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"As an administrator, my biggest thing is making sure that we don't lose kids," says Laird. "With Attendance Intervention, we can run reports to see responses from students or families. It's exciting because it tells me when they're viewing our communications and when they're responding. So I can see in just a few communications I've sent through the communication portal that they respond more often and faster than they are to my typical emails."

Because of all the communication staff has provided to families about student progress and attendance, they've learned extra details—like when a student is homeless, has run away from home, has been incarcerated, or has a medical emergency. Britt says PowerSchool communication channels have opened up lines of engagement between the school and home.

"We've heard from so many families about kids who had experienced bullying at their previous school or faced mental health concerns. We had a couple of kids who tried to commit suicide, and so when they came to Insight School, we were their savior. We were their safe space, and now they can attend school appropriately and get back on track," she says.

## Helping Students Prep for Success after High School

The integration between PowerSchool SIS and PowerSchool Naviance CCLR—a product helping students prepare for their futures with personalized college, career, and life readiness planning tools—

ensures critical student data from the student information system is sent directly to Naviance CCLR, maintaining accuracy and security.

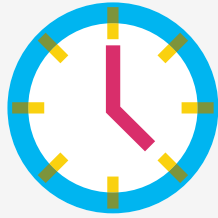
In Oklahoma, every student must complete a set of tasks within their career and academic plans before graduation. Tasks include interest surveys, career clusters for FASFA use, work-based learning videos, and service learning. ISOK has built a program in Naviance CCLR to manage all of those tasks and maintain credits for work-study programs. Staff can pull course credit into Naviance CCLR to indicate when students have completed work-based learning activities within the program.

The Student Readiness Report (SRR) within Naviance CCLR helps improve family engagement by giving families full visibility into student postsecondary progress. The shareable and personalized report outlines student progress toward college and career readiness, provides next-step recommendations for parents and guardians, and helps guide students toward successful postsecondary pathways.

"Those reports have every single thing that students need—from their graduation plan to their postsecondary plan to colleges to their career interest inventories," says Britt. "A lot of that is just fed from PowerSchool SIS. State test scores, ACT, Oklahoma State Testing, and STAR scores are all pulled into the SIS and then into Naviance CCLR and placed in this report, which is so robust."

The Student Readiness Report also builds a student's resume to take to college or the workforce. It tracks which colleges students plan to attend or to which they've applied.



**95-96%****Time Savings**

**Naviance CCLR Cuts Course Request Creation Process from 160-200 hours down to 8 hours**

"It also helps us work backward from Naviance CCLR to PowerSchool SIS. Students are going into Naviance CCLR and filling out their plans of study, which tells us how many sections of specific courses we need to offer so that we can create our course requests within PowerSchool SIS," says Britt.

ISOT staff estimate that the process of creating course requests previously took approximately 160-200 hours, with four to five staff members working for an entire 40-hour week.

Now, with Naviance CCLR, they estimate it will take one staff member a single day—a 95-96% time reduction.

**"It's bigger than keeping track of test scores. I'm keeping track of humans ..."**

The next steps for doing more with its data include using PowerSchool Student Analytics, part of the Analytics & Insights Platform. That product will provide data dashboards pulling from multiple programs to see a complete picture of the school's classrooms and students.

"We hope that with Student Analytics, we can look at the data, see reports, start tracking data, and have conversations about the data. We have a dropout truancy specialist responsible for getting kids back in class. She'll be looking at that data to see where students are failing and where we need to increase communication, have conversations with parents, or contact the authorities," says Britt.

While the data is critical, ISOK staff stress that it's important to remember what that data is helping accomplish.

As Laird says, "It's bigger than keeping track of test scores. I'm keeping track of humans and their safety, using what PowerSchool has put in place and how we've put it all together. That helps me sleep at night."

"You don't go into education to be rich or to get the test scores," adds Britt. "That matters, but people in alternative education are in it for the student's overall life outcome, so tracking those students is super important."

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