



Norland Elementary is one of 197 elementary schools in the Miami-Dade County School System.

Quick Facts

- Fourth largest public school district in the U.S.
- Contains urban, suburban, and rural areas
- 346,726 students
- 61% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch
- 64% of students speak a language other than English at home
- 197 elementary schools
- 9 K–8 combo schools
- 54 middle schools
- 37 high schools
- 70 alternative/specialized centers
- 57 charter schools

Snapshot

When the state of Florida placed the Miami-Dade County Public School System under intervention, it required the district to provide monthly reports. Since the district began using *Edusoft*, it has moved off the state watch list and raised its own grades to high Bs.

Miami-Dade County Public School System

“We literally teach the world,” said Director for Instructional Technology Linda Trupia as she described the student body of the Miami-Dade County Public School System. In this K–12 district, which is the nation’s fourth largest district, English is a second language for about 64% of the students. More than 100 different languages can be heard in the hallways and playgrounds.

Such great diversity poses special challenges. A few years ago, the state of Florida put the district under intervention and required it to provide student data reports on a monthly basis. So the district acquired the *Edusoft*® *Assessment Management System* to help create the individual, class, and school intervention plans that were part of the state-mandated continuous improvement strategy.

At about the same time, district educators began to design a strategy of data-driven instruction. Because *Edusoft* was so simple for classroom teachers to use, many adapted the system for all kinds of assessments from spelling tests, to chapter reviews, to midterm exams. *Edusoft* showed them where they needed to refocus their efforts to help students master the standards.

The new teach-and-reteach strategy is clearly working for Miami-Dade. Since the school system began using *Edusoft* and practicing data-driven instruction, it has moved off the state watch list and raised its own grades to high Bs.

Challenges

- Provide quality education to all students in a large, diverse, mobile population
- Support the district's continuous improvement strategy
- Raise the district's state-determined grade scores

Solution

Edusoft Assessment Management System modules:

- Benchmark Exams
- Teacher Tools
- Curriculum Management
- State Analysis
- *Edusoft*-Supported Content Offerings

Benefits

- Supports continuous improvement by allowing educators to immediately reteach areas that need improvement
- Provides results in a matter of minutes, not in weeks or months
- Provides disaggregated reports that meet NCLB requirements and that are easily read by all levels of educators
- Highlights critical data using color-coded bar charts that clearly illustrate results
- Uses common, nonproprietary equipment—plain-paper answer sheets and inexpensive scanners that are easy to use and keep costs low

Needed: A fast and easy assessment platform

The Miami-Dade County Public School System was failing in the eyes of the state. Its poor performance on state assessments led Florida to put the district on watch. Monthly progress reports were mandated, so the district needed an assessment system that would provide student data instantly. County educators didn't have weeks or months to wait for results. And because tests had to be administered so frequently, the assessment system also had to be easy for educators to use.

When the district discovered *Edusoft*, it expected the system would meet its needs of providing monthly data to the state. After all, the system provides immediate student performance results via the web and it works with plain paper and common scanners, so it's both fast and easy. "With a few tweaks," said Sylvia Diaz, Administrative Director for Instructional Technology, Instructional Materials, and Library Media Services, "the data is ready to send directly to the state. We no longer have to spend hours manually sorting and disaggregating data."

Bringing continuous improvement to life

Soon after implementing *Edusoft* in the schools, the system's role rapidly expanded. The district was implementing a new strategy for data-driven continuous improvement, and educators found *Edusoft* to be the perfect tool to bring that strategy to life. And at the school level, the progress-monitoring model is being used.

With *Edusoft* as part of its new teach-and-reteach program, Miami-Dade rose from a failing school system to earning B grades two years in a row. In the most recent report, the Miami-Dade County Public School System fell just seven points short of the cutoff score for an A.

Helping educators act on the data

How did *Edusoft* contribute to Miami-Dade's fast turnaround? The *Edusoft Assessment Management System* is a standards-based assessment tool that makes it easy to collect, report, and analyze student performance data. But its real power comes from the way it simplifies the connection between assessment results and real instructional decisions. The system provides relevant data to teachers quickly so they can improve student performance.

Norland's dramatic progress

This method of teaching and reteaching has worked well for Miami-Dade. Since using this data-driven continuous improvement approach, the district has steadily increased its overall scores on the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)*. Most recently, a majority (53%) of the schools received an A grade.

“We just got our most recent results, and we scored an A. Getting feedback quickly lets us give students more help where they need it.”

Barbara Greenfield, Technology Facilitator at Norland Elementary

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One school, Norland Elementary School, offers an example of the dramatic progress that has been made. “A few years ago, our school scored a D,” said Barbara Greenfield, Technology Facilitator at Norland Elementary. The school then implemented a new strategy of data-driven instruction that included *Edusoft* as its assessment system. The school quickly moved up to a B grade in the next round of testing. The following year, the school’s grade rose all the way to the top.

“We just got our most recent results, and we scored an A,” said Greenfield. She attributes the rapid rise in learning in part to the data provided by *Edusoft*. “Getting feedback quickly lets us give students more help where they need it,” she said.

Part of the cycle of learning

“We used to collect data manually then tabulate it with a calculator and import it to a spreadsheet program,” said Linda Trupia. That process took so much time and effort that most schools stopped there. The data reflected the “results” at the end of learning.

But test scores are not necessarily the end of learning. They can also be considered a snapshot in a continuous cycle of learning. Because *Edusoft* gives the district fast and easy access to test scores, each test can be more like a progress report than an end result. Educators can use the data to design more effective learning environments. At Miami-Dade, for example, schools have created Saturday Academies, set up peer tutor programs, and created other interventions that have helped students grow and learn.

Plain paper to web delivery

When asked why *Edusoft* has been so effective for Miami-Dade, Trupia answered simply, “*Edusoft* works because teachers actually use it.” *Edusoft* collects data on student performance on any test. Several high school teachers use the system to grade biweekly, midterm, and end-of-term exams.

To get started, a teacher writes a test and creates an answer sheet in *Edusoft*. The answer sheets can be printed on plain paper. Students then answer the test questions by filling in bubbles on the form. The teacher scans the answer sheets into an inexpensive consumer-quality scanner connected to a PC. “(Miami-Dade uses \$350 scanners made by Brother® and maintains one scanner for every 500 students).

The scanned results are transferred to an *Edusoft* server and scored instantly. Within minutes, educators with proper authorization can view the results online. “It’s remarkable,” said Trupia, “If you can drive a car you can create a report in *Edusoft*.”

Outreach programs

Edusoft also helps make the test-taking experience consistent, which is important to a district with a 30% mobility rate. “Children that move from one school to another during the course of a school year do not have to be retested.” That saves the district a lot of time and saves students the effort of taking additional tests.

Because the system is web based, *Edusoft* has helped the district keep the students in its outreach programs integrated with the district as a whole. “We have students who may be incarcerated, in migrant camps, or staying long term in the hospital,” said Trupia, “*Edusoft* can provide tests and results anytime, anywhere.” With a laptop computer, district counselors can provide the same tests to children. Assessments are more equitable, and districtwide reports reflect the actual student population.

Phenomenal support

Miami-Dade makes extensive use of the *Edusoft* system. The district averages 100,000 assessments a month—that figure rises to as many as 300,000 assessments a week during the testing season. “That takes up a lot of server resources,” said Trupia, “*Edusoft* has the resources to support us. Other programs don’t have the scalability that *Edusoft* has proven to have.”

The *Edusoft* system can scale up for heavy use, but Riverside Publishing assists its customers with individual attention. From the start, Riverside provides its customers with dedicated and knowledgeable service teams. Technicians work to implement the system, and trainers design customized professional development.

Miami-Dade trained its staff to use *Edusoft* with a “teach-the-teacher” method. A few select educators received formal *Edusoft* training from Riverside. They then returned to their schools to share what they learned with their peers—an affordable and effective training program.

A proven winner

Edusoft is just one part of the broad strategy of educational reform that has helped Miami-Dade improve its educational quality. “Our progress is 2% technology, and 98% instructional implementation,” said Sylvia Diaz. “The real benefit is the data that is derived.” Many platforms can deliver data, however, *Edusoft* is unique in the way it helps everyone, from administrators to classroom instructors, convert that data into data-driven instruction. “*Edusoft*,” said Linda Trupia, “has proven itself many times over.”

For more information about *Edusoft*, visit www.riversidepublishing.com or call 800.323.9540.