

# DATA BEACON GOES BACK TO SCHOOL WITH INFINITE CAMPUS

## Challenge

Bring to education the same level of data management, reporting, and analysis that industry has been depending on for years while satisfying *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation

## Solution

Web-based Education Process Management (EPM) system offering affordable and usable access to NCLB reporting and analysis

## IT Infrastructure

SQL Server on Windows

## Return on Investment

Fractional cost compared to traditional vendors

## User Population

Principals, teachers and district administrators with little IT knowledge and no previous data analysis experience

## Future Plans

Extend user population to entire state school system

## Industry

Education

## Organization

Infinite Campus Inc.

## Location

Minneapolis, MN

## Web site

www.infinitecampus.com

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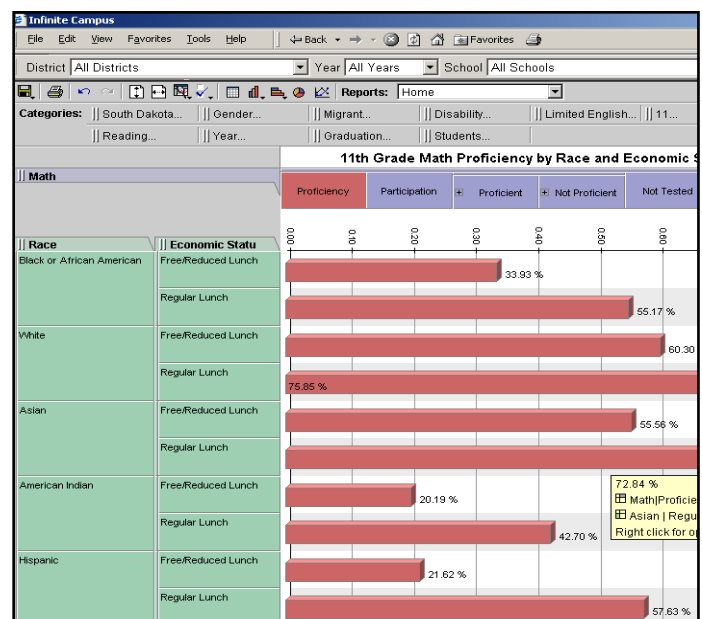
With the passage in 2001 of President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act – which requires educators to measure student progress and provide school and district and state-wide performance data broken out by race, ethnicity, gender, language proficiency, migrant status, disability status and family income – Charlie Kratsch's corporate trajectory started running on rocket-fuel.

Kratsch is founder and CEO of Infinite Campus Inc., a Minnesota-based provider of information management tools for schools, school districts and state education agencies. Well, CEO is his title. His job – more like a mission, really – is to bring to education the same level of data management, reporting and analysis that industry has been depending on for years.

“Business caught on to data analysis decades ago,” he says. “But spurred on by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), education is now starting to realize the true potential of this software.”

The Infinite Campus solutions are best described as an Education Process Management (EPM) system. Like a Student Information System (SIS), an EPM solution includes everything from grades, class schedules, attendance records and transcripts to demographic data, income level and location. But unlike a traditional SIS, the

Infinite Campus EPM system is completely web-based, built upon enterprise-class databases, and includes solutions for regions and states. It completely replaces the patchwork of unconnected, incompatible



Reports are populated dynamically with real-time student data.

“best-of-breed” record keeping applications that are, even today, the norm in most American schools.

“The Infinite Campus EPM solutions extend beyond simple school-based applications,” Kratsch explains. “We integrate traditional standalone systems – special education, food service, curriculum management, assessment tracking, NCLB reporting - with the SIS and extend these solutions to regional and state agencies. An enterprise-wide application that gathers and manages all forms of student data for all key stakeholders.”

And now, by seamlessly embedding Databeacon into its EPM solutions, Infinite Campus is adding a much-needed reporting and analysis function that gets insight out of that newly organized data.

“Everyone was asking for the same thing,” Kratsch says. “Now that we've got all this data together, how do we make sense out of it all? In the past our only answer was, 'Here's a list of third-party vendors, good luck.'”

Clearly, Infinite Campus needed a reporting and analysis solution. It had to be web-based.

It had to seamlessly integrate with the EPM. It had to be easy to use. But above all it had to be something that a school district could afford. Charlie Kratsch checked out the usual vendor suspects (Cognos, Hyperion, Crystal Decisions, Microsoft) and immediately found himself priced right out of the market.

Faced with a flat refusal by the big vendors even to explore a pricing model that would fit for

school districts (“They basically just laughed at us,” Kratsch says), Charlie went looking for someone who would and, after a little Googling, discovered Databeacon. The Infinite Campus business model impressed the Databeacon team and the company worked with Infinite Campus to create a per-student pricing structure that lets the firm include Databeacon as part of its existing fee structure. Under the partnership arrangement, Infinite Campus builds and provides a set of data reports (built in a multidimensional OLAP “cube” format), which are populated dynamically with real-time student data. Clients who wish to build their own cubes, or use Databeacon for other areas of their operation (finance, administration, and such) have the option to purchase a full license.

“It gives the school districts, regions and state agencies affordable and usable access to reporting and analysis,” Kratsch says. “As this technology goes, it's

straightforward stuff. But compared to what schools have had before, and what they would have to pay to get it from any other vendor in the space, it's revolutionary.”

Infinite Campus launched a small pilot program in early 2003 followed by a full Databeacon rollout at the beginning of the 2003/04 school year for the State of South Dakota's NCLB reporting effort. Users in the pilot program (mostly principals, teachers and district administrators with little IT knowledge and no previous data analysis experience) report that the Databeacon application is

intuitively easy to use and requires little or no formal training.

At the state-level, state administrators in the Department of Education are able to analyze the underlying data that is used to generate the NCLB report card required under federal law. This allows the state to pinpoint academically at-risk students, (say, female Native American migrant students in special education). Then state education officials can apply best practices across entire

school districts, and tailor schedules and curricula to the specific needs of individual children, thereby improving the overall NCLB related scores at the school and district level.

For Charlie Kratsch at Infinite Campus, that's just the start. He's already looking to the day when social workers use Web reporting and data analysis to locate children in need, guidance counselors use it to become more proactive, and even individual parents to discover a powerful new way to gain real insight into their child's education.

“I've seen what good reporting and analysis software has done for the business world,” Kratsch says. “Now, with Databeacon, it's finally getting to a place where it can make a difference in guiding school systems to the same kind of efficiencies and accountabilities. With Infinite Campus's use of Databeacon, there's no reason why any child is left behind.”

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