



Keller District Depends on StudentTrackerSM to Benchmark Student Achievement and Anticipate Key Trends Following the Great Recession

Keller serves a variety of ethnicities and backgrounds of 33,000 total students in their district, including 19% economically disadvantaged students. Located in a suburban community that has educated parents, Keller has held a long-standing tradition in college readiness success, ensuring that their graduates go to college. With 32 out of 38 campuses receiving recognition as top rated in Texas, Keller sought to better understand their students' potential for success in higher education.

After years of using surveys, Keller identified the growing need for a more reliable source of data. StudentTracker for High Schools, a nationwide research service provided by the National Student Clearinghouse, provides Keller with real-time student data that they can use to benchmark student success for their district. After the changes brought on by the economic downturn, the service enabled them to track the recent trends in college enrollment in the U.S. Unlike surveys, StudentTracker is able to keep track of students as they enroll, drop out, transfer, take a break, and graduate from college.

With the student-level detailed data from StudentTracker, Keller is able to provide insight on the rates and locations at which their graduates are enrolling. This valuable student outcomes research tool not only helps to set a fundamental benchmark for success, but also gauge why more students are not enrolling, and what campus efforts can be made.

Comparing Survey Data to StudentTracker

The Keller Independent School District in Texas, through their own survey, thought that 90% of past graduates were attending college when actual enrollment showed only 65-70% had done so.

"We've long gathered and reported the percentage of our students going on to postsecondary work using surveys. But nearly as long, we've wondered about their accuracy," commented Scott Kessel, the director of Guidance and Counseling. Their district contracted with a firm that would survey their seniors before, one year following, and five years after their high school graduation.

The initial survey results were skewed, in part, because the district was unable to keep up with individuals as they moved, took a year off, transferred, graduated, or dropped out. During the 2008-09 economic downturn, the Keller district thought their survey figures might be too optimistic. Over years of time and due to the changing market, for instance, their demographics had significantly changed. However, the surveys were showing little to no changes over that same period of time, confirming their suspicions of inaccurate data.

Actionable Data That Impact Future Policy Decisions

Along with more than 3,000 U.S. high school districts that participate in StudentTracker, Keller receives an annual report with 32+ color charts and graphs. Due to the rich breakdown of data in each report, Keller is able to share valuable student figures that can better inform district decisions on improving student programs and resources in the future.

For instance, Keller is able to examine a wide range of important college enrollment facts, including:

- Names of the top colleges and universities where their students enroll
- Percentages of students who hold a degree, drop out, or persist into their second year
- Overall college enrollment and persistence statistics, broken out by campus

StudentTracker also provides qualitative knowledge that is beneficial for counselors, teachers, and other campus staff to communicate to specific student groups regarding college preparation. This real-time research tool answers several significant questions, such as whether high school students enroll in the immediate fall term following graduation, if more students are attending two-year or four-year institutions, and so on. Using this approach, Keller may be able to improve how school counselors could connect strategically with individual students in preparing for their futures.

"With the downturn in the housing market and overall economy, we unfortunately discovered that our surveys were no longer reliable. Ultimately, the StudentTracker service has eliminated any doubt about what our students are doing and helped provide a true picture of our graduates' postsecondary education achievements."

- Scott Kessel, Director of Guidance and Counseling, Keller ISD

"Personally, I find the tool invaluable," said Kessel. "Part of our mission is to ensure the success of our students in future life endeavors. To that end, we would never know if we were accomplishing that goal without some reasonable and reliable measure of that future success. The StudentTracker service provides us with exactly that."

STUDENTTRACKER SUCCESS STORIES

Read other case studies and discover how StudentTracker helps U.S. school districts better understand and improve student achievement for future graduates: <http://research.studentclearinghouse.org>. To learn more about how this student outcomes research service can empower your school district, please email studenttracker@studentclearinghouse.org.