



South Seneca Central School District

Leverages integrated school
administration software to save time,
district resources and money

Located in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, South Seneca is a small, rural school district focused on preparing children for the future. Clearly passionate about the joy of learning, Superintendent Steve Zielinski takes pride in knowing the schools are the heart of the community. Through efficient use of time and budget, South Seneca provides a quality education for all students.

Always mindful of its fiscal responsibilities, South Seneca has combined multiple Frontline Education solutions to make the most out of the insights, cost savings and benefits that come along with their integrations.

The Challenge

"As a small school district, the challenge is to stay on top of all the data. We not only have to get it entered accurately, but we also need to be sure it's analyzed correctly and make decisions based on it. It's a tall order for a small group of administrators to do without some kind of coordinated help."

— Stephen Parker Zielinski, Superintendent

Before Frontline, constant changes in demographic data required paying clerical staff to manually enter data into IEP, 504, RTI and Medicaid records. The district didn't have an effective way to manage RTI data and Medicaid was not being tracked in a useful manner.

The staff spent a lot of time sifting through paper folders looking at mountains of data and using spreadsheets to try to capture it. They also needed to synchronize with other districts in the area and find a better way to share or transfer student records without having to reenter documents.

The Solution

"I remember having conversations with colleagues about finding some kind of tool that would track data longitudinally in a standardized format – easily searchable, easily pulled for when we need it. Frontline became our solution for that."

— Stephen Parker Zielinski

SUITE SOLUTIONS

The benefit of moving to a suite of products like Frontline is that most of the tracking is automated. Having special education and Medicaid records in the same software system helps save time, district resources and money in so many ways. They communicate. Instead of having to update multiple systems, they sync together.



District Background

LOCATION: Ovid, NY

PREK-12 ENROLLMENT: 700

FACILITIES: 2

STAFF: 190

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Caucasian/White: 94%

Hispanic: 2%

African-American/Black: 2%

Multiracial: 2%



Solutions Used

Frontline Special Ed & Interventions

- IEP & Special Education Management
- RTI/MTSS Program Management
- Medicaid Tracking & Claim Management
- Medicaid Toolkit

Frontline Professional Growth

- Employee Evaluation Management
- Professional Learning Management

Frontline Absence & Time

- Absence Management

Along with Medicaid Tracking & Claim Management, South Seneca uses the Medicaid Toolkit, an optimization tool that makes it easy for the district to ensure its reimbursements are accurate. It allows data to flow between the IEP & Special Education Management application and the Medicaid application, so administrators can see exactly where they're missing data points for collecting reimbursement. As errors surface, it's a simple process to resubmit documents and bring in thousands of dollars in found reimbursements that normally would be left on the table.

The district tracks students starting when they enroll in pre-kindergarten or as early as age 2 if they're referred for evaluation or services. As soon as student data is entered, it's available to upload for state reports. The software also makes it easy to track all the child outcome summaries and evaluations for preschool.

As students advance through grade levels each year, Frontline's RTI Program Management software is right there to support them. The system helps track the progress made by struggling learners over time. When teachers enter their interventions and data points, graphs create a clear picture of student performance. If students don't respond to interventions, the data is useful for determining whether they might be eligible for special-education services.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPTIONS FOR ALL

"We treat our people as the professionals they are, and we want them to have the opportunities that professionals in our field have. The effect on morale is very positive."

— Stephen Parker Zielinski

Frontline makes it easy for teachers to select and register for professional learning opportunities. Calendars show all offerings, not only from the district but also from the regional information center. It's one-stop shopping for anybody who's looking for a professional growth opportunity. If it's not on the menu, the system has the capacity for users to enter requests for conferences and other learning opportunities that aren't listed. Forms are already prepopulated to make entering the information simple.

Teachers and staff have autonomy in chasing down the opportunities that make sense to them in their own careers. Based on teacher evaluation results, supervisors direct some professional learning opportunities through Frontline's Professional Growth software, but most are self-selected by the users. Keeping track of professional learning helps teachers and staff stay current in their fields.

Using Frontline Professional Growth as part of the connected platform is not only efficient, but it has definitely impacted the budget. For one thing, the product itself is affordable. The fact that it saves time and money by syncing up with the New York state data warehouse for teacher certification is another advantage. District administrators are confident that since so much of it is automated, the data will get to where it needs to go without mistakes.

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT TACKLES SUBSTITUTE SHORTAGES

Remember those early morning phone calls the substitute coordinator had to make looking for substitutes? It was a full-time job for one person to arrange coverage for every open position.

South Seneca now relies on Frontline to help fill teacher absences. Every district struggles with a shortage of substitute teachers. That will always be a challenge. But because Frontline Absence Management is a regional service used by all of the local school systems, anyone who is a substitute in South Seneca schools and also in neighboring districts uses the same system.

It's great from the substitute teacher's angle and from the district's perspective, too. For substitutes, they don't have to continually log into different applications to check all the jobs available to them. And the districts benefit by the features built into Absence Management to prevent job-hopping, where a substitute cancels a job at the last minute to take one in another district.

Connecting Professional Growth with Absence & Time is another efficiency for the district. Since the system creates absences automatically when teachers plan to be out of the classroom for professional learning, it makes it easier to fill the positions in advance.

The Results

The efficiency of combining Frontline Special Ed & Interventions, Professional Growth and Absence & Time is just what South Seneca needed to meet its goals of fiscal responsibility and student support.

EFFICIENT COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY TO STUDENT SUPPORT

“One of the biggest pieces for us is the communication. Everybody who needs it has access to student information so they can track interventions and help service students.”

– Stacey Clark, Director of Special Programs

In the past, the district paid several people to enter data. Now they use the sync module that communicates with the student information management system automatically every night. There's only one point of data entry into the system. It has virtually eliminated human error in data entry and reduced the number of times staff had to enter that data into different programs. District administrators can easily monitor the system, look for errors and correct them right away.

When they have concerns about students, South Seneca teachers hold instructional-support team meetings. All data collected is tracked through the RTI system. Parent invitations are processed through the RTI Program Management software, and meeting minutes are accessible to everyone involved. Updated documents are available electronically to staff as soon as they're finalized – without the need for paper copies.

The special-education staff has access to documents 24/7. They can update reports or progress notes in a timely fashion because they don't have to wait for anything to be transferred to them. Schools save hours by not having to go out and deliver stacks of documents every time they make a change.

When a student is referred for special-education services, there's no longer a need to spend time gathering records. All related service providers enter session notes for students in either Frontline's IEP or RTI system to help track student progress. Staff can not only pull data from one system to

another, whether it's RTI, IEP or Medicaid, but they can also easily bill for approved Medicaid services if a student becomes eligible. And session notes and reports from Frontline's IEP software serve as documentation required by the county for services provided to preschool students. Having all those records available on demand is incredibly efficient.

SINGLE PLATFORM VS. MULTIPLE SYSTEMS

“When you open up a Frontline product, you're in familiar territory. No matter which module you're in, you're familiar with the way the interface looks, the way that you log in, the way that the system talks across platforms. That's kind of an underrated benefit when it comes to staff training.”

– Stephen Parker Zielinski

From a staff training standpoint, it's helpful to learn a single platform rather than requiring every user to be familiar with multiple kinds of interfaces. Plus, since Frontline solutions are popular in New York, when new teachers are hired, many are already familiar with the software.

Time is money. Because there never seems to be enough time for training, data entry, analysis or reporting, every single one of those things that Frontline makes easier reduces costs. The efficiency of having Frontline Special Ed & Interventions as part of the whole connected platform has a definite budgetary impact.

For the benefits South Seneca gets, the price they pay for the products is a terrific deal for the district. If they had to use solutions that were individual and independent of one another, there's no doubt the cost would be far higher, not to mention lacking efficiency.

ACCURACY AND TIME

“We used to have a different system for our teacher evaluations. By moving to Frontline, it's all in the same interface. We have the comfort of knowing it's all well documented and easily accessible.”

– Stephen Parker Zielinski

In the old New York state professional growth system, it was a lot of work to document attendance at conferences, workshops, and even in-house faculty meetings. Principals had to make sure teachers' records made their way to the state so professional growth and certification requirements got into the system. The process was time-consuming and not always accurate.

Now, housing all records in one simple database means the program can run reports, automatically document professional growth and sync with other systems in the same ways that the special-education modules have done. It's much more accurate and takes very little time.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

It's obvious that South Seneca is fiscally aware and responsible. Within the community, all eyes are on every penny that South Seneca spends. Discussions about the budget are public and the district is open about what goes on in the superintendent's office. Everything happening at board of education meetings is posted, and the community is kept informed about decisions they will be asked to vote on.

South Seneca works hard to be accountable for every dollar spent, and it shows. For example, when students respond to interventions tracked through the RTI Program Management system, that's a cost savings because special-education support isn't needed. Every time administrators use the Medicaid toolkit to optimize reimbursements delayed by a missing signature on a chart, it adds to the ability to recoup costs. Decisions are guided by ensuring not only that students will be supported, but that it will be done efficiently.

ONLY SO MANY MINUTES IN A DAY

In a small district, the administrative staff, teachers and support staff are expected to do everything that large school districts do, but with fewer people. There are only so many minutes in a day to do that. They need solutions like Frontline. They have to be efficient in order to cut down on the workload.

Having the same interface, the same platform and programs that communicate with each other and sync with the student information system is incredibly important to South Seneca. Without solutions like Frontline, they'd be prone to mistakes and miss pieces of data needed to make smart decisions. The efficiency of using multiple Frontline solutions is the key to having time to keep up with the demands of running a successful school district.

About Frontline Education

Frontline Education is the leading provider of school administration software, empowering strategic K-12 leaders with the right tools, data and insights to proactively manage human capital, business operations and special education.

Educational organizations representing over 80,000 schools and millions of educators, administrators and support personnel have partnered with Frontline in their efforts to develop the next generation of learners. Frontline is dedicated to driving engagement across K-12 school systems

and supporting the continuous improvement of employee effectiveness and efficiency with solutions for proactive recruiting and hiring, absence and time, professional growth, student information systems, special education and interventions, payroll, benefits and financial management.

Frontline Education corporate headquarters are in Malvern, Pennsylvania, with offices in Andover, Massachusetts; Rockville Centre, New York; and Austin, Texas.