

The logo for PAPER, with the word in a bold, blue, sans-serif font on a white rectangular background that has a slightly torn edge effect.

Case study

State test prep gets a boost in **Mississippi** district with an Educational Support System

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We do an accountability calculator with our benchmarks. And right now, we've trended higher than we were at this point last year. We feel Paper™ is one of the reasons that has happened.

— Nicole Menotti, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Bay St. Louis-Waveland School District, Mississippi

Key takeaways and results

Mississippi's Bay St. Louis-Waveland School District (SD) wanted to find new ways to engage students and provide more enrichment opportunities both inside the classroom and beyond. In particular, the district wanted to provide more individualized support to its learners outside school hours. However, many students could not access traditional in-person tutoring programs, either because they worked or because they were involved in extracurriculars or athletics.

After learning about Paper's on-demand Educational Support System, the district's leaders decided it would be an ideal fit. In addition to the chance to get personalized feedback on writing assignments and opportunities to practice essential reading and math skills through interactive challenges, the district was impressed with Paper tutors' 24/7 availability.

Following the platform's successful rollout, Paper has been a hit with all of Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD's constituents—from students and caregivers to teachers and administrators. The district also credits Paper with helping push academic achievement trends higher. Since adopting Paper, Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD students have:

- ✓ Engaged in 3,937 Live Help tutoring sessions.
- ✓ Submitted 4,920 written drafts to Paper's Review Center.
- ✓ Engaged in 44,260 interactive math challenges on Paper Missions.
- ✓ Sought help most often in math, English, and biology.

About Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD

Located on the Gulf of Mexico about 30 miles west of Biloxi, Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD encompasses the coastal towns of Waveland and Bay St. Louis. The district services more than 1,750 students from pre-K to 12th grade across four traditional schools and one alternative school. Roughly 27% of its students are minorities, with around 16% identifying as Black and 6% identifying as Hispanic or Latino. Additionally, around 1 in 3 students at Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD are economically disadvantaged, and 2.4% are English learners.

“We are a smaller district, and that allows us to know each kid almost personally,” says Nicole Menotti, director of curriculum and instruction at Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD. “This is a community-based area where the students get a lot of attention from the administrators, from the teachers, and even from the central office.”

“I think those personal relationships help our students academically,” says Tiffany Maddox, the district’s instructional technologist. For example,

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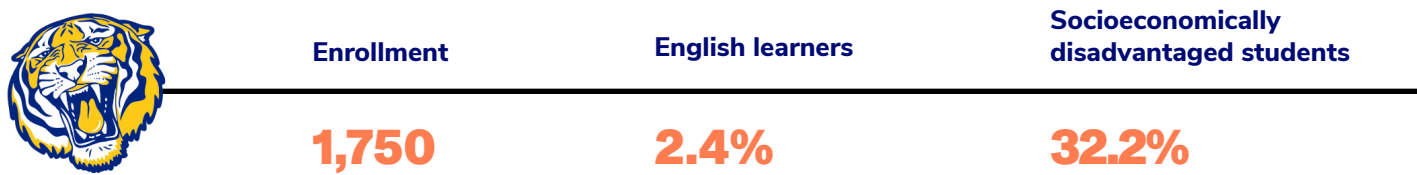
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— Nicole Menotti, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

high school graduation rates at Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD are consistently above 90%, and its students regularly perform in the top 20% on state exams.

Menotti is particularly proud of the fact that the district also has among the highest graduation rates in the state of Mississippi for students with disabilities. “We’ve put a major focus on that area,” says Menotti.

Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD at a glance



The dilemma

A shortage of individualized help at home and a need for learning enrichment tools for core skills

Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD wanted to find new ways to engage students and provide more enrichment opportunities both inside the classroom and beyond. In particular, the district wanted to provide more individualized support to its learners outside school hours.

In addition, Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD was searching for engaging ways to increase proficiency and confidence in key subject areas such as math and reading. Similarly, they wanted to minimize stress levels—especially in the time leading up to standardized testing, a challenging period for students and teachers alike.

Often, parents and guardians weren't able to provide that support on the home front, according to Menotti. "Many of our parents work long days, and evenings too," she explains.

And even when caregivers were available to help, they weren't always up to speed on the material; curriculum and teaching methodologies have changed since they were in school, according to Menotti.

Besides this, traditional in-person tutoring wasn't always accessible to the district's busy students, either because of extracurricular commitments or because they must assume adult responsibilities after school hours.

"We have student athletes, students involved in extracurricular activities, and students who work," explains Maddox. "So, they often don't have the opportunity to get to their homework or their assignments until much later in the day."

Educators in the district also knew that students often hesitate to ask questions or seek the extra help they need because they don't want other students to think they've fallen behind.

"We wanted to give students the opportunity to reach out to a tutor for help without any stigma attached," says Maddox.

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The solution

Enabling students to take ownership—whenever and wherever they're ready

Recognizing that districts around the state were facing many of the same challenges as Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD, the Mississippi Department of Education decided to offer its districts the option of adopting Paper.

Paper provides 24/7 academic support that allows learners to seek help across subject areas, practice essential skills through interactive challenges, and explore college and career options. That was exactly the kind of support district leaders wanted to provide students.

When it learned about Paper, Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD's leadership immediately saw the value it could offer students. For example, Paper's 24/7 availability would enable busy learners to get help whenever they're ready and able to access it. The fact that Paper provides Spanish-speaking tutors (as well as tutoring in French and Mandarin) was also important.

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Our kids have been excited about Paper Missions as they prepare for upcoming state testing. And it's really helping them, because it gives them the kinds of questions they need to review.

— Whitnee McKibben, Cyber Foundations Teacher at Bay-Waveland Middle School

“Our Spanish teacher at the high school who works with our Spanish-speaking English learners has used Paper quite a bit to help those students in their other courses by connecting them with tutors [who speak] their native language,” says Maddox.

In addition, the district was eager to try other interactive features of the Paper platform that help students build math, reading, and writing skills, including:

- **Paper Missions:** This tool helps students practice key skills—including math and vocabulary—by incorporating familiar video game elements. “Our kids have been excited about Paper Missions as they prepare for upcoming state testing,” says Whitnee McKibben, a cyber foundations teacher at Bay-Waveland Middle School. “And it's really helping them.”
- **Paper Reading:** This easy-to-use tool encourages students to read aloud, provides real-time insights into how well they're reading, and rewards their participation with reading coins. And as students build their literacy skills, teachers get actionable data on student usage and progress. “I really love Paper Reading,” adds McKibben.

The solution

- **Review Center:** This service offers feedback on a wide variety of written assignments and projects, from long-answer questions and book reports to résumés and college application essays. “Enabling students to have their essays reviewed before they ever turn them in to their teachers is such an advantage,” explains Maddox. “That is something that as a teacher, you don’t always have time to do.”

Rapid implementation and adoption

From a technical standpoint, the Paper platform was easy to implement and seamless for both students and teachers to adopt. “It was so simple,” explains Maddox. “We use Clever as a single sign-on tool for our students. So it was just a matter of adding Paper to our Clever portal for students to have it available.”

In addition to rapid implementation, Paper was an active partner in helping the district drive adoption. To spread the word, Bay St.

Louis-Waveland SD leveraged the promotional materials and resources that Paper makes available. And a Paper representative was always available to provide support, notes Menotti.

In fact, a Paper representative visited schools personally and made presentations at Parent Teacher Association and faculty meetings. “As soon as people learned what Paper was and how valuable it was, they were excited to use it,” says Maddox.

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Results

From increased student agency to focused prep for state testing

So far, Paper has been embraced by students across the district. “The students who have used Paper absolutely love it. They are excited because they have help on their time and on their terms when it’s convenient for them,” says Maddox. “This gives students the opportunity to take ownership.”

Parents and caregivers have also welcomed Paper. Even if they don’t have time to help or don’t understand some of the homework, they know their learner can get the support they need, according to Maddox.

Teachers are also giving Paper high marks. “The teachers love it,” says Menotti. “[They] find it [to be] a very valuable resource.”

Teachers are particularly happy with Paper’s Review Center, she says. And they appreciate the fact that Paper gives them visibility into interactions between students and tutors, which provides valuable insights that can inform their own teaching practices.

“The teachers have commented multiple times that it’s like having another teacher in the classroom because they don’t always have the time to work one-on-one with every student,” adds Maddox.

Finally, Menotti says Paper is helping district leaders deliver more resources in areas that

need extra attention, such as writing skills. “Writing is something that we have not spent as much time on as we’d like to because we’re always working on the reading standards,” explains Menotti. “I’m very excited that we have been able to do that with Paper.”

Paper is even helping with college and career preparedness. “I had a student who was applying to college, and he used Paper to help him out with his application essay,” says Menotti.

Focused test prep and measurable increases in performance

Teachers—and especially math teachers—are actively using Paper to help students prepare for Mississippi’s standardized tests. “The math teachers are using Paper for their test prep,” says Maddox. “It gives students the questions that they need to review.”

And Menotti credits Paper with helping boost student achievement overall.

“We do an accountability calculator with our benchmarks. And right now, we’ve trended higher than we were at this point last year,” says Menotti. “We feel Paper is one of the reasons that has happened.”

Results

Up next: Expand usage from early grades to elective subjects

Going forward, Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD's leadership wants to build on the successes it has already achieved with Paper by increasing usage of the platform and encouraging students to take advantage of it across a wider range of subjects.

For example, Menotti plans to reach out to social studies teachers and teachers of other subjects that require a significant amount of writing. "I think it will be very beneficial to use Paper in that cross-curricular way," Menotti says.

She and her team are also exploring ways to use Paper as a tool for learning intervention. Finally, they want to focus on increasing usage among the district's third, fourth, and fifth graders.

In each case, winning over teachers will be key. "By encouraging more teachers to use Paper effectively, everyone will benefit," concluded Menotti.

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Learning moments

53,117

Learning activities

3,937

Sessions

4,920

Essays

44,260

Missions

Top subjects: 1. Math 2. English 3. Biology



Paper partners with school systems to allow every learner to seek help, get practice, and plan for life after graduation. With 24/7 high-quality tutoring across all subjects, interactive opportunities for independent practice, and college and career resources, Paper's Educational Support System empowers students at every stage of their learning journey.

Paper's resources complement classroom instruction—expanding teachers' capacity to provide individualized learning opportunities in school and at home. Paper's equitable, scalable, and cost-effective solution meets Level III evidence requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Currently, we serve more than 3 million students at hundreds of school districts across the U.S. and Canada.

Learn more at

paper.co