

Top twelve Florida school district simplifies scheduling to educate all students for success

How Martin County empowers counselors by aggregating and visualizing data using Mesa Cloud

Executive Summary

Problem

As a top twelve county for academic performance in Florida, Martin County needed to ensure equality of opportunity for all students. But with only six counselors per high school, the demands of fixing human error in schedules, assessments, and transcripts was impeding the critical socioemotional counseling that students needed.

Solution

Martin County adopted Mesa Cloud to provide a digital safety net that ensured these data errors did not cause students to fall through the cracks. By integrating with their existing SIS and automatically flagging schedule issues that could impact graduation, Mesa Cloud simplified Martin County's data processing so counselors can resolve errors faster and focus more attention on student progress.

Result

Martin County's counselors used Mesa Cloud to resolve more than 200 errors in the first month of usage. Improvements like these should not only reduce schedule disruptions and confusion in all three high schools, but also improve graduation rates. Administrators have also increased their data visibility to make better decisions across the district. Finally, Mesa Cloud automatically scanned for discrepancies in SIS data, creating a positive feedback loop that improves not just the Mesa integration, but adjacent systems that depend on that data.

Snapshot of a high-performing school district

Martin County Gets Things Right

"Educate all students for success."

This mission statement captures the dynamic vision of equal opportunity education that makes Martin County exceptional. Martin County's 19,000+ students in Florida, and it is consistently recognized for high academic performance. **As Superintendent Laurie Gaylord put it:** "Our competitive academic achievements, industry-driven Career Academy curriculum, and outstanding cultural arts and athletic programs are among Florida's best."

But with accomplishment comes responsibility. The administrators and educators in Martin County take seriously the mission of educating all students for success—not just the economically privileged and academically gifted. As Martin County's Director of Assessment and Accountability Nicole Fisher said: "When we say 'educate all students,' all means all. We have undergone a lot of demographic changes in the last decade, with a higher free and reduced lunch population. **It's really important to make sure we help every kid get across the finish line.**"

About

Martin County School District

- + **19,000+** students in total, including more than 5,500 in high school
- + **87.4%** graduation rate
- + **65%** college and career ready
- + **Top 10** district in Florida for academic performance
- + **43%** of students receive free or reduced lunch
- + **2nd** largest employer in Martin County
- + **FOCUS**
SIS: Focus



Too much scheduling data, too little time for student counseling

Martin County's three high schools each have six counselors who lead the way in keeping 5,500+ high school students on track for graduation. These counselors do not have an easy job. "They are pulled in an amazing amount of directions," Director of Assessment and Accountability Fisher said. "Counselors figure out who needs to be tested for the PERT, ACT, and SAT. They're working on students' financial aid applications, scholarships, personal statements for college, college counseling, and career counseling. And then also, scheduling of students, grade changes, and transcript changes."

In a district of 5,500 high school students, these 18 counselors could not be everywhere at once. The sheer volume of manual audit tasks sapped time that counselors needed to devote to supporting students emotionally and socially. But without counselors fixing schedule, transcript, and pathway errors, students would inevitably stumble on the way to graduating. This increased demand put school counselors in a tough situation. "The hardest part of a counselor's job is all the things they're trying to keep track of in the high-stakes situation of students on the finish line to graduation. You're basically the steward of it," Director of Assessment and Accountability Fisher said.

Martin County had adopted a variety of education technology to manage student data, but their solution was not doing the job. After relying on internally-developed student

"Manual processes breed data errors. We needed a more streamlined, efficient way for counselors to be able to correct issues for students, so they could spend more time on other things."



Nicole Fisher

Director of
Assessment and
Accountability,
Martin County

information systems for years, Martin County transitioned to a web-based SIS called Focus. However, this SIS still required significant customization to provide accurate reporting and insight into scheduling and grade issues. Even after these changes, too many students were mistakenly scheduled in classes they'd already completed or did not receive an earned credit when internal grade averaging requirements were fulfilled. This led to a slow process of manual changes and paperwork that further ate up the time counselors needed to spend advising students.

How Mesa Cloud simplified data processing to give counselors better insight

To increase graduation rates and make better use of counselor time, Martin County had to find a way to efficiently organize student data and resolve scheduling issues. When their Accountability team learned about Mesa Cloud, they knew they'd found a digital safety net to quickly fix transcript problems for all students. As Director of Assessment and Accountability Fisher described, "I know how much data is inaccurate in Focus, so the idea of a 'digital safety net' rung true to me. **When I saw Mesa Cloud, I remember asking my business intelligence analyst 'How long would it take you to do this, if this was your only job?' And he responded with 'a solid year.'**"

After demoing Mesa Cloud to all Martin County counselors and administrators to gain their approval, the county used Title IV funding to deploy Mesa Cloud across their district. Within the first month of usage, Mesa Cloud helped Martin County counselors find and resolve more than 200 scheduling errors. "The flags make it easy to locate scheduling errors even when you weren't searching for them. They literally tell you what the problem is, with what student, and with what course," Director of Assessment and Accountability Fisher said.

Because of Mesa Cloud simplifying data processing across Martin County, counselors throughout the district have the insight they need to rapidly resolve issues. "Mesa Cloud started funneling student data to us during testing and QA. One of our counselors was able to say to all the others, 'OK, here's all your kids that are scheduled wrong.' They could make those changes before we had our full implementation," Director of Assessment and Accountability Fisher said. "On the administration side, it's nice to be able to look at data in the aggregate, like how many kids were scheduled in two classes? We can also provide logic for more flags for us to better isolate students' issues."



Mending the graduation cracks with Mesa Cloud

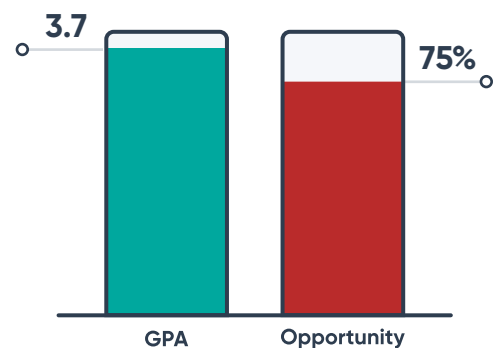
With Mesa Cloud in place to resolve schedule and transcript errors, Martin County counselors have the time to provide the academic and emotional support all their students need. Beyond better graduation rates, Martin County administrators expect that having fewer schedule changes will lead to a better educational experience for students and teachers alike. As Director of Assessment and Accountability Fisher said, "Making schedules more accurate means less kids sitting in guidance to fix their schedules and less changes for teachers in the first weeks of school."

The result? An academically high-performing district has the educational technology in place to ensure all its students are in the classes they need to succeed. "We don't want any kids to slip through the cracks," Director of Assessment and Accountability Fisher said, "And sometimes it's those kids in the middle whose transcripts don't get looked at, because they're not applying to an Ivy League school, and they don't have a 1.9. They have a 3.0. All those kids deserve to have their transcripts made sure they're perfect."

How Does Mesa Cloud Promote Equitable Scheduling?

Accurate, real-time reporting that creates visibility.

Fact: Students of color with a commensurate GPA of 3.7 or higher are 25% less likely to be placed in advanced classes – AP, IB and DC.



Learn more about how Mesa Cloud can simplify data insight in your district at [mesacloud.com](https://www.mesacloud.com)