

CASE STUDY

How Jefferson County Public Schools Built a Districtwide “Journey to Success” with Otus as Its Data Backbone

Overview

With more than 95,000 students across 168 schools, Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) is Kentucky's largest and most diverse school district. Families speak 139 languages, and district leaders are committed to ensuring every student is prepared not only academically, but as a communicator, collaborator, innovator, and globally competent citizen.

To bring their vision to life, JCPS reimagined its local accountability framework and selected Otus as the unified platform to operationalize it districtwide. The result: a consistent, student-centered system where competencies, artifacts, assessments, and progress data follow each learner throughout their K–12 journey.

District Information



95,000+
Students



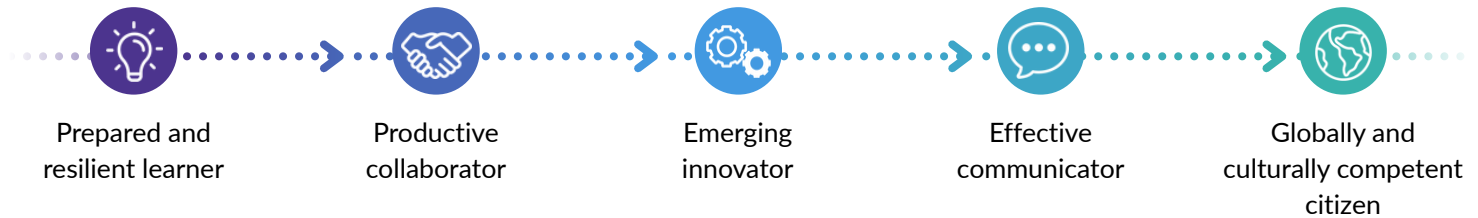
168
Schools



139
Languages

The Challenge: Turning a Portrait of a Graduate into a Living System Across 168 Schools

Since 2018, JCPS has centered its accountability approach around a locally developed portrait of a learner that defines five key indicators of success:



While the vision was clear, district leaders recognized a challenge: how to implement it consistently across 168 schools while ensuring that student progress was visible, meaningful, and longitudinal.

At the same time:

- Academic proficiency remained an area of focus
- 41 schools were identified by the state for Comprehensive Support and Improvement
- The district needed a system that went beyond one-time snapshots and standardized test scores



We wanted to make sure we valued every student's learning journey in our schools and honored who the student is as a learner – all the parts, not just their reading ability or their math skills.

Dr. DeNay Speaks, Assistant Superintendent at JCPS



JCPS needed more than data collection. It needed a platform that could:

- Align competencies across all schools
- Track growth over time
- Store artifacts and evidence of learning
- Increase visibility for families
- Adapt to evolving state requirements
- Support both academic and whole-child measures

The district named its reimagined system **Journey to Success** and began building the infrastructure to support it.

The Solution: Otus as the Operational Backbone of Journey to Success

To bring Journey to Success to life, JCPS selected Otus as its comprehensive data and performance platform — a unified system where competencies, assessments, grading, and student artifacts could live together in one longitudinal record.

The new framework retained student defenses of learning at key transition points (5th, 8th, and 12th grades) and introduced milestone checkpoints at every other grade level to ensure continuous progress monitoring.

With Otus, JCPS is able to:

- ✓ Standardize districtwide rubrics aligned to the five success indicators
- ✓ Create consistent competency tracking across 168 schools
- ✓ Centralize academic data, artifacts, and milestone evidence
- ✓ Provide real-time visibility to students, families, and educators
- ✓ Ensure data follows highly mobile students across campuses



We built out standardized rubrics so everyone was operating from the same knowledge base. We also created district-wide professional learning so the system is valued and carried out the same way in every building.

Elisabeth Read, Curriculum Design and Support Specialist at JCPS



Otus became the infrastructure that connected:



High-quality instructional resources



Progress monitoring data



Competency tracking



Grading practices



Student artifacts and milestone evidence

Most importantly, the platform ensured that the Journey to Success framework was not just aspirational but also actionable.



Otus saw the vision early on of what the JCPS team was trying to accomplish. They bought into the vision alongside of us and really walked hand-in-hand through the implementation process.

Elisabeth Read, Curriculum Design and Support Specialist at JCPS



The Results: Consistency, Continuity, and Clarity

Since implementing Otus, JCPS has seen meaningful improvements across five key areas.



Districtwide Consistency

By standardizing competencies and tracking within a single system, JCPS ensured that every student, regardless of which campus they attend, experiences the same expectations and accountability framework.



Longitudinal Student Records

Student data now follows each learner year after year. This continuity has been especially valuable for highly transient students. “Wherever that student goes, educators can access their history and see their progress over time,” Read said.



Greater Family Visibility

By centralizing classwork, assessments, and milestone progress, JCPS is building a more transparent view of student learning—making it easier to share a broader picture of each student’s strengths beyond reading and math.



Reduced Teacher Burden

Instead of manually consolidating data from multiple systems, educators now use one unified platform. Leaders report clearer expectations, simplified tracking, and reduced stress.



A Whole-Child View of Success

By combining artifacts, competencies, and performance data, JCPS ensures students are seen holistically, not just as test scores.



The data analytics that Otus provides is second to none. After our teachers collect the data, they do a very structured data analysis that helps create next steps for our Professional Learning Communities.

Megan English, Academic Instructional Coach at Barret Traditional Middle School (JCPS)

Leading with Vision, Not Technology

As JCPS created the Journey to Success, leaders intentionally started with the end in mind:
What should graduates know and be able to do?

Only then did they design learning experiences and finally implement the technology to support them.



If we lead with technology, we end up with a compliance-type situation. Journey to Success allows us to be more thoughtful about what questions we're asking to understand what our students need – and what we can do as a system to support their dreams and goals.

Elisabeth Read, Curriculum Design and Support Specialist at JCPS



A Model for Districts Reimagining Accountability

As districts nationwide move toward portrait-of-a-graduate models, competency-based learning, and whole-child accountability, many struggle to operationalize those frameworks consistently.

JCPS demonstrates what's possible when a clear vision is paired with a unified data platform. Early data both validates the work of the district and lays out a plan for what's next. By using the Otus platform, JCPS is positioned to collect, monitor, and analyze data year over year and truly capture students' Journey to Success with measurable goals, authentic artifacts, and a clear vision of the value of a JCPS education.

With Otus as its data backbone, Journey to Success is not just a framework; it is a living, visible record of each student's growth.

[otus.com](https://www.otus.com)

