Remote testing opens doors for student growth worldwide

With over a hundred campuses and more than 9,000 students spread across 20 countries, you could consider OneSchool’s name ironic. With so many moving parts, people, and time zones to keep track of, how could it feel like a single organization?

While it’s true that the campuses don’t share a common curriculum, they do share one overarching philosophy: when it comes to school—and life—actively learning is far more effective than simply being taught.

The school was founded in 1994 with a single campus and a dedication to self-directed learning. There were two teachers and fewer than 60 students at the first location, a converted residential facility in Sydney, Australia. Over the next 25 years, OneSchool expanded into a collection of more than 120 campuses—without losing that single-school feel. They did it by staying true to their original vision, supported by tools that allow data to drive their decisions.

Letting learners take the lead

OneSchool’s self-directed model requires a lot of flexibility for different learning styles. Additionally, while all of the campuses have similar teaching practices, technology platforms, and testing regimes, each one is governed by its local curriculum. As OneSchool continued to expand, these variances made it challenging to track campuses at a global level.

They needed a tool to effectively track each region—and one that could test students remotely—so they turned to MAP® Growth™. And while the initial goal was to surface and compare achievement across campuses, the data quickly pointed to another area of focus: growth.

“We initially thought our community partners were all about achievement—they wanted to see the final scores and only compare student achievement across regions and campuses,” says Thomas Frizelle, OneSchool’s chief information and digital learning officer, who is based in Auckland, New Zealand. “We said to our stakeholders, while achievement is important, this tool also helps us focus on student growth. And that’s actually where we get the most benefit.”

Data points to a problem—and a solution

OneSchool built a process that includes deep dives into assessment data within two weeks of each MAP Growth testing cycle. During these learning conversations, parents, teachers, and students talk through the results to identify strengths and opportunities and develop an individual learning plan.

“We also use it at the regional level, where we look for trends and outliers,” explains Thomas. “So, if we’re seeing good performance, why is that? If we’re seeing slower growth than we might expect, why is that? And then, at the global level, we can set some pretty strategic leadership initiatives around the data.”

One pain point became clear early on. When they analyzed data, OneSchool saw that students in their lowest quartile weren’t showing growth at the expected pace. This data discovery backed the comments that administrators had heard from parents of underperforming students.

“Prior to MAP testing, we had limited evidence of how certain groups of students were being served. Most of this was anecdotal feedback from parents,” recalls Thomas. “With MAP, we could actually quantify that and track changes over time.”
OneSchool relies on MAP Growth reporting to highlight connections between the campuses while also addressing issues that are specific to each location. Given the organization’s global structure, the ability to customize their reports is key. OneSchool works closely with NWEA on customization so every region’s data can be as locally relevant as possible.

Valuable data and customized reporting led to conversations at the campus, parent-teacher, regional, and global levels about that lowest quartile. With both in hand, administrators were able to get buy-in from leadership to pursue a global initiative, with each region coming up with a targeted plan to address performance. “Having the data really helped us refocus away from achievement and more on growth,” Thomas notes. As a result, OneSchool saw an increase in growth among lower-performing students.

Building lifelong learners
The power of data to inform goal setting and truly drive learning for kids has built a strong belief in growth mindset among students, one that helps graduates in particular know they can meet whatever challenges they face next. And that’s precisely what drives OneSchool Global forward: the opportunity to instill a certainty that students aren’t just ready for the next test—they’re ready for life.

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