

Success Story:

Fowler Unified School District

Fresno County, CA

District Overcomes Persistent Shortage with Cost-Effective Online Speech Therapy Services

The Challenge

Fowler Unified School District serves 2,347 K-12 students across six school sites in the rural communities of Fowler and Malaga in California's Central Valley. The district promotes a clean, peaceful atmosphere and a curriculum that is centered on state content standards. The district also focuses on providing the most recent technology including extensive integration of interactive whiteboards with instruction.

While they were located just 15 minutes away from a speech-language pathology program at Fresno State University, the district was unable to pay newly-minted SLPs as much as nearby districts, resulting in few applicants for the district's SLP positions. Fowler Unified was struggling to provide appropriate services to its students and decided to seek an alternative solution.

Choosing PresenceLearning

After hearing about PresenceLearning at a professional development event, Eric Cederquist, Superintendent at Fowler USD, was intrigued. "I encouraged Dustine Borges, our Chief Psychologist and Director of Special Education, to see if they would be a good solution to solve our SLP shortage issues," said Mr. Cederquist. "We needed a solution to provide quality services to our students and Dustine's research confirmed that PresenceLearning was the solution for us."

Ms. Borges offers her insight on the decision to use PresenceLearning, "After looking at all of the factors—cost, flexibility, quality of therapists, and the ease of implementation—I felt that PresenceLearning would more than provide for our needs," she continued, "At first, our staff was a bit reluctant and concerned about technological glitches but PresenceLearning's staff has been incredibly helpful in preventing and resolving issues. Now that we have fully implemented, we no longer worry about any issues and our conversations have become focused on the results."

To create an optimal speech environment at Fowler USD, they utilized a central coordinator. "Our central coordinator was present for the therapy sessions and handled any troubleshooting or technical glitches, communication with teachers, and ensured that students were making it to and from therapy sessions," said Ms. Borges.

Ms. Borges states that since Fowler began using PresenceLearning the feedback from staff, parents and students has been positive and excited, "Students have expressed a lot of enjoyment in using telepractice and our parents are very impressed. We have some parents who log in live and see how excited their student is, which makes them excited!"

(continued...)



District Profile:

Fowler Unified School District Fresno County, CA

Fowler Unified School District provides high quality educational and co-curricular experiences to students to make them college- and career-ready. Fowler's six school sites serve approximately 2,325 students in grades K-12 in communities near Fresno in California's Central Valley.

"We have seen a lot of growth in our dismissals, better than we had with live therapy."

Dustine Borges,
Chief Psychologist

"PresenceLearning has turned out to be a great resource for our district."

Eric Cederquist,
Superintendent

PresenceLearning

580 Market Street, Sixth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104-5417
Phone: 415.512.9000
Toll Free: 877.410.5418
Fax: 415.520.5444
schools@presencelearning.com

Benefits & Outcomes

Fowler USD focuses on improving students' speech so that they can progress out of the program. The district has found that after using PresenceLearning more students are testing out of speech therapy than with traditional live therapy. "We have seen a lot of growth in our dismissals, better than we had with live therapy," Ms. Borges adds, "Our teachers and parents are very happy with the progress the kids are making and the feedback they get about the students."

Since Fowler USD began using PresenceLearning, Ms. Borges has received a great deal of interest from surrounding districts. "We have had a lot of interest from surrounding districts who are facing the same issues that we were. When they come to see how we have implemented this service, the joy on the kids' faces tell the story. It has been amazing—we love it, our kids love it, and our parents love it." Mr. Cederquist adds, "PresenceLearning has turned out to be a great resource for our district."

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