CASE STUDY

How District 21 Redesigned Its Central Office to Strengthen Accountability and Accelerate Decision-Making

BACKGROUND

Community Consolidated School District 21 is a public district in Wheeling, Illinois made up of 13 schools serving grades Pre-K through 8th.

> "The information, insight, and out-of-the-box thinking from our work with EAB helped make a potentially controversial process much more understandable and successful. **It's paying great dividends for our students**."
>
> Dr. Michael Connolly
> Superintendent

OPPORTUNITY

District leadership recognized overlapping responsibilities and unclear decision authority were creating organizational inefficiencies.

District 21 knew their central office organization could be more optimally structured to better advance priorities and support student outcomes. The superintendent wanted a more intentional leadership structure that preserved cross-functional collaboration while creating more clear accountability mechanisms.

SOLUTION

An EAB diagnostic revealed improvement opportunities within the district's leadership structure and decision practices.

The district completed EAB's *Central Office Assessment* to evaluate how effectively their central office structure supported their priorities. This surfaced areas that they could better clarify ownership and management of key initiatives. An EAB expert worked with district leaders to interpret the findings and develop an organizational structure tailored to the district's needs. EAB also worked with the district to establish decision-making frameworks that clarified expectations around decision authority, accountability, stakeholder involvement, and responsibility management.

IMPACT

Within 4 months, a new leadership structure improved accountability, and speed and quality of decision-making.

Using EAB's assessment findings, District 21 created a smaller senior leadership team and a broader district leadership team, assigning one accountable executive to each district priority. In just four months, leaders reported feeling like a highly aligned group with reduced ambiguity around ownership, faster, higher-quality decisions, and fewer challenges caused by overlapping responsibilities. The district is now developing a scorecard to maintain focus and accountability.



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