

School Town of Munster Discovers How to Leverage Forecast5™ Tools

THE SITUATION

School Town of Munster upholds a tradition of excellence and has received national recognition for their achievement. It is clear the staff and leadership teams emphasize innovation, collaboration, and strategic decision-making. Preparing for collective bargaining discussions can often seem like a daunting task, especially with limited access to data. It was during these discussions that administrators William Melby, Assistant Director of Financial Operations, and Steve Tripenfeldas, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, knew they needed a decision support tool to allow them to access, monitor, compare, communicate, and manage expectations of their financial story. School Town of Munster was working to improve its financial situation, and the administration knew they needed a tool to help monitor and compare their district's performance against peers. They wanted to paint a complete picture of where they were and where they were going as a district.



ORGANIZATION TYPE
K-12 Public School

ENROLLMENT
4,000

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
\$40M

The School Town of Munster is an academically high-performing public-school district in the state and country. It hosts three elementary schools, a middle school, and high school that have been providing education for the community since 1875. Indiana's Department of Education has ranked School Town of Munster with an "A" letter grade since 2012 – even in the 2014-2015 year when more rigorous College and Career Ready Standards were implemented. The district ranked above average in all performance domains that were measured by the state in 2016-2017.

THE SOLUTION

When the district attended a Forecast5 Analytics workshop, and saw the power of the data in the platforms, they knew they had found the tools to support their budgeting and data comparison needs. In 2017, the district purchased 5Cast™ and 5Sight™. With the subscription, the school receives instant information, great service, and data that has multiple uses. The school enjoys key benefits like the workshops available they attend and consistent client support.

The district has formed a strong partnership with Forecast5's Relationship Manager, Wes Karsten, who offered side-by-side support throughout the negotiations process. He helped produce analytics like salary and benefits expense per student, student-teacher ratios, average salary by position comparison, and more. "When I do not know how to do something, he is there to do it for me or – even more importantly – help me through it. He also is willing to listen to suggestions and find a way to get the information I need," Melby said.

THE RESULTS

School Town of Munster has been leveraging data in 5Sight for peer district comparison analysis, allowing them to adapt data toward specific needs. The ability to compare the district by size or location allowed them to make key decisions on related tasks and projects. The instant data has been one of the most useful outcomes of the product. "We live in a data driven world, and when I am asked a question, I usually know where I can get the information quickly and accurately," said Melby.

During negotiation discussions, the district showed accurate information to all the involved parties. Comparing the data with others in the state and modifying how the data was viewed during the presentation was a great tool for enhancing communication and understanding of the district's financial position. With the successes the district has experienced already, School Town of Munster has been open to hearing about other products that may help the school. William Melby said he has learned the value of visuals and time. "If you can find a tool that will save you time, you save your company money."