DELLTechnologies

EDUCATION
CANADA

DIVISION SCOLAIRE
LOUIS RIEL
SCHOOL DIVISION

How a school learns to be data-informed

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Louis Riel School Division and Dell Technologies Consulting Services created a self-sufficient in-house team to maximize the impact and cost-effectiveness of Microsoft Power BI.

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Business needs

Louis Riel School Division adopted Power BI to leverage its large volume of data but struggled with full implementation. The school division wanted to instill data literacy across the organization to support leadership decision-making and to generate reports for student achievement, enrollment, attendance, resources and funding.

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Business results

Jumpstart the use of Power BI to empower employees and teaching staff.

Accelerate data-informed decision-making via visualization and analytical tools.

Bolster data security with data model restructuring to protect student information.

Build capacity for data literacy and democratize access to insights.

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Solutions at a glance

- Dell Technologies Consulting Services

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Overcome Power BI deployment challenges; access customized support and ongoing, on-demand problem-solving.

The Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) in Winnipeg, Canada works to provide a safe, inclusive and engaging environment where personal and collective learning are valued. LRSD serves 17,000+ students from grades kindergarten to 12, operates at more than 40 school locations and offers one of the largest French immersion programs. The school division is unique in that it prioritizes data-informed decision-making in its day-to-day operations and promotes data literacy among teachers and staff.

Volumes of data pour into LRSD each day—related to enrollment, attendance, achievement, and program evaluation. The school division had made an investment in Microsoft Power BI, seeing its potential to inform the leadership team and get student achievement data into the hands of teachers. However, the modest but astute data team needed more support in learning to leverage and optimize the tool.

"A key enabler to LRSD's data literacy initiative has been the full support of its CEO and superintendent, Christian Michalik. It was Michalik's vision, drive and efforts to secure funding and resources that made LSRD's improved data literacy a reality."

LRSD partnered with data analytics experts from Dell Technologies Consulting to maximize the value of their data while ensuring data security. As a result, LRSD has grown its in-house capacity for data analytics and data literacy. This helps teams to find innovative uses of data to better meet students' needs and enables leadership decisions to be backed by powerful insights.

Building Capacity by Learning from Experts

LRSD's goal was to become self-sufficient with Microsoft Power BI while learning analytical skills and enabling employees to focus on providing superior student experiences. As such, they needed ongoing, on-demand problem-solving support and more robust data modeling. The data analytics experts at Dell Technologies Consulting were able to meet these needs, acting as advisors and coaches and providing custom support beyond training workshops.

This approach resonated with Clarke Hagan, Director of Information Systems for LRSD, who recognized the importance of having ongoing assistance and expertise readily available. The LRSD team set the priorities and the project scope, while the Dell Technologies team helped accelerate the school division's data journey. "We've built capacity, and we couldn't have done that without Dell's help," Hagan said. "It's almost like an apprenticeship program—you slowly work through your way up as your skills increase."

Assistance from Dell Technologies Consulting included data modeling to help with report performance, various discussions and training sessions, and assistance with visualizations and coding measures.

Bridging Data to Insights to Support Decision-Making

LRSD's journey with Power BI and Dell Technologies Consulting yielded impressive results. LRSD democratized data and insights, empowering employees and teaching staff with access to meaningful data. This has accelerated decision-making processes and helped navigate challenges, such as the impact of COVID-19 on resource tracking, attendance and absenteeism.

One of the most significant outcomes has been the transformation of LRSD's internal processes. Senior leadership now relies on Power BI reports for making informed decisions about enrollment, staffing and budget allocation. Teachers are also using the reports for insights into student achievement. The ability to view data quickly has led to more efficient and data-informed decision-making, benefiting the organization and its students.
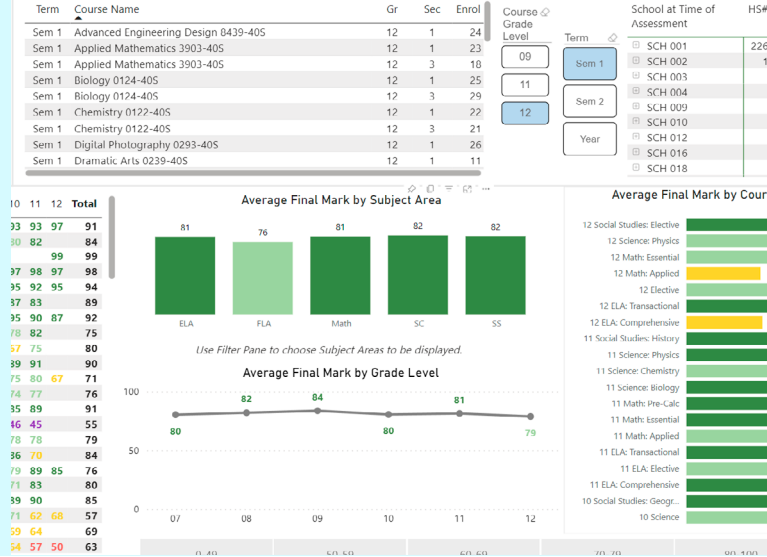
"Internally, the impact has been enormous," said Marnie Wilson, Divisional Vice Principal of Data Literacy and Strategic Analysis for LRSD. "We have our entire senior leadership team now sitting around a Power BI report to make real-life, immediate decisions about, for example, enrollment pressures in a specific school at a certain grade level." .

> **"**
> **Thanks to Dell, we can more easily and more immediately get data into the hands of people who are doing the work, making decisions and enacting the strategic plan."**
>
> **Marnie Wilson,**
> Divisional Vice Principal of Data Literacy and Strategic Analysis for LRSD

Innovating with Data to Further the Mission

LRSD's innovative approach to data has been significantly enhanced by the support from Dell Technologies Consulting and the visualization power of Power BI. The team can now uncover patterns and insights within data that would be challenging to discern from traditional tables. For instance, they could track attendance and specific student needs, such as internet service or laptops, during the pandemic, leading to more efficient resource allocation and student support.

More recently, Power BI has empowered LRSD to address various needs, such as deploying hardware and software equitably across schools. The team can analyze data related to low socioeconomic status schools versus high socioeconomic status schools, informing their decision-making about prioritizing technology deployment.

"The main focus will always be about the students and the student learning," Hagan said. "I'm creating reports for hardware deployment for computers and hardware refresh cycles in schools, and now we can use an equity lens."

Managing Data End-to-End

The 'always-on' approach Dell Technologies Consulting provides has been valuable for LRSD, providing timely assistance and ensuring that data security is maintained. This is crucial, especially when LRSD creates public-facing reports. By partnering with Dell Technologies, the LRSD team saved

> **"Dell has listened clearly to LRSD's needs. We want to develop our in-house capacity and Dell has been helpful in making sure we understand all they're doing."**
>
> Marnie Wilson,
> Divisional Vice Principal of Data Literacy and Strategic Analysis for LRSD

time, streamlined its data management tasks, and. successfully restructured its data models to maintain data security.

Support from Dell Technologies has been instrumental in helping LRSD become a data-informed powerhouse in the education sector, ultimately benefiting students, staff and communities. Overall, according to Hagan, what has 'wowed' LRSD most about the data analytics experts from Dell is "a commitment to the work, a level of professionalism, and a desire to help create something of value in the organization."