



## Case Study

---

# ***Richland USD educators boost student learning with 24/7 tutors***



Our mission is empowering every student to pursue excellence every day. Our partnership with Paper gives them the opportunity to do that.

— Brandon Bailey, Director of Educational Services, Richland SD

# Key takeaways and results

Richland School District (PA) administrators needed a solution that students could access at their convenience, that would be an avenue for self-advocacy and would help them think through problems rather than just giving them the answer. They chose Paper's unlimited 24/7 tutoring platform.

Students got help where, when, and how they needed it. Teachers were freed up to focus more on content, individualized instruction, and relationships. Administrators used data to enhance curriculum and instructional practices.

In just the first few months after launch:

- ✓ A majority of all students in the district were active on Paper;
- ✓ More than 77% of all high school students making use of the service;
- ✓ Students engaged in over 3,000 learning moments with Paper tutors.

# About Richland SD

Resilience. It's a characteristic ingrained in the history of Richland School District's surrounding community.

In 1889, the region was devastated by a flood that, at the time, was the largest natural disaster in the history of the United States. But in one month, the local mills were up and running once again—and within a few years, the region was more prosperous than ever before.

In 2003, after decades of decline for the local steel industry, the U.S. Census ranked the locale as "least likely in the U.S. to attract newcomers." By 2010, however, the community had bounced back stronger than ever. Today, it's a medical, educational, cultural, and communications center.

Standing at the heart of this thriving community, Richland School District is ranked in the top 25% of school districts in Pennsylvania, and in the top 15% of districts with the best teachers in the entire state (source: [Niche](#)).

## Richland School District at a glance

|   | Enrollment   | English Learners | Socioeconomically Disadvantaged |
|---|--------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
|  <b>Richland School District</b> | <b>1,524</b> | <b>0.9%</b>      | <b>31.9%</b>                    |

"Our mission is 'empowering every student to pursue excellence every day,'" says Brandon Bailey, the district's Director of Educational Services. "Every single one of those students—we want to see them have great success."

# The Dilemma

## The pandemic exacerbates long-standing challenges with academic support

When the pandemic hit, Richland SD and its leadership were determined not only to bounce back quickly: they didn't even want to skip a beat. But the complications of remote learning and social distancing exacerbated long-standing challenges that Richland and many other school districts face when it comes to supporting students academically.

**When the pandemic hit, Richland SD and its leadership didn't even want to skip a beat.**

Richland had "challenges that weren't just unique to the pandemic," says Kelly Lashinsky, Assistant Principal of Richland Elementary and Federal Programs Coordinator for the district. For starters, the district needed more avenues for "students to self-advocate, to be enabled to ask questions and seek out their own answers," according to Lashinsky.

"We needed something more than 'just Google it,' and more than just asking someone at home. A lot of families aren't able to help. And if they are, they spend an hour to an hour-and-a-half just learning what the lesson was to then help their child with a couple of problems," says Lashinsky. "It's just not efficient."



**We needed something more than...just asking someone at home. A lot of families aren't able to help.**

— Kelly Lashinsky  
Assistant Principal, Richland  
Elementary Federal Programs  
Coordinator, Richland SD

"Mom and dad may not have had calculus in 20 or 30 years and can't jump in and help," says Mike Oravec, Algebra and Calculus Teacher at Richland High School. Even the most capable parents simply didn't learn math the way it's being taught now.

"I know students can't contact me in the evening once I leave the building, except for maybe sending me an email. But over an email, either the notation I'm trying to write isn't clear, or I've had to write it on paper and then send a PDF to them to try to explain things. It's just not convenient," says Mike Oravec, Algebra and Calculus Teacher at Richland High School.

For students, "it's easy to get frustrated when you're not in the school building. And honestly, I'm not available 24/7," adds Oravec.

# The Dilemma

## Teachers challenged to deliver individualized instruction

In keeping with the school's mission, Richland strived to give every single student the opportunity to excel. "Empowering students to pursue their own excellence every day—that's a lot of individualized instruction. It can be really challenging for teachers to meet all those needs of an entire class all at one time," says Lashinsky.

For almost every school district, class sizes, limited teacher bandwidth, teacher shortages and the varying range of student needs make differentiated instruction a difficult proposition.

"The pandemic really just magnified the need for a solution. It was always there. But when our teachers couldn't have that daily in-person interaction with students, it [magnified] a glaring weakness that schools have," says Bailey.



**The pandemic just magnified the need for a solution. It was always there.**

— Brandon Bailey  
Director of Educational  
Services, Richland SD

# The Solution

## A vision for helping every student excel

With the pandemic raising the level of urgency to deliver a solution, Bailey and his extended team developed a set of requirements that had to be met in order to achieve their vision.

“We wanted to give our students an opportunity to self-advocate and find answers on their own with a knowledgeable resource,” says Lashinsky. “We were looking for a tutoring program that wouldn’t just provide the answer—but would walk students through the steps. Somebody who would empower them for the next problem, not just get them through this one.”



**Paper was something that was a blessing for us.**

— Brandon Bailey



**We were looking for a tutoring program that wouldn’t just provide the answer—but would walk students through the steps.**

— Kelly Lashinsky

In addition, the team sought a solution that would:

- Scale to all students
- Support individualized instruction
- Be available when learners need it
- Give students access to assistance at their convenience
- Provide knowledgeable instructors across all subjects

“We were looking at some different things where we could put teachers on kind of a homework hotline available at different points of the day. But we wouldn’t have had the resources to do that for all content areas, all the time,” says Bailey.

“Paper was something that was a blessing for us,” adds Bailey.

Paper provides learners with unlimited 24/7 homework help, writing feedback and study support at a predictable fixed cost. Specialized tutors deliver on-demand, 1:1 academic support in English, Spanish, Mandarin and French across more than 200 academic subject areas—so students can access expert extra help whenever and however they need it.

# The Solution

“We vetted the product and talked to other districts utilizing it. Then it was a matter of getting our superintendent’s approval and Board of Education approval,” says Bailey. “When we showed what Paper was and how powerful it could be, it wasn’t really much of an issue.”

To fund the project, the district allocated dollars from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, specifically ESSER I & II.

## Executing a Successful Rollout

“After Paper was approved, we really wanted to make sure our teachers, students and families were knowledgeable about this resource,” says Lashinsky.

“To get Paper into the hands of our 1,500 students—Paper was great to work with. We had a large marketing campaign,” says Bailey. The campaign spanned “all our social media platforms including Twitter and Instagram. We also had a large email campaign to parents and students. We invited them to join webinars led by the Paper team,” adds Bailey.

Partnering closely with Richland SD throughout the rollout and adoption efforts, Paper provided templates and content for use in digital communications as well as print communications. The Paper team also held training sessions designed for each specific audience including administrators, teachers, students and families.



**To get Paper into the hands of our 1,500 students—Paper was great to work with. We had a large marketing campaign.**

— Brandon Bailey

# *The Solution*

## **Integrating 24/7 tutoring into the curriculum and the classroom**

“We also had our remote learning coaches go into the classrooms to show students how to log in, and to demonstrate how Paper could be used not only at home, but also in the classroom,” says Lashinsky. “Pushing in was an important part of the rollout.”

To support individualized instruction, many teachers sought to work Paper directly into students’ work, whether in-class or asynchronous. Paper provided sample techniques and exercises for weaving Paper into every aspect of learning, from math and sciences to English language arts (ELA). Richland and its teachers took the examples and ran with them.

**Many teachers sought to work Paper directly into students’ work, whether in-class or asynchronous.**

“I actually made it a graded assignment,” says Mike Oravec, Algebra and Calculus Teacher at Richland HS.

According to Lashinsky, “once students get the hang of it from doing it in the classroom, they’re doing it in the evening. It’s a single sign-on, they don’t have to remember their password. The challenge then isn’t getting to the tutor—the challenge is understanding the material. Which is really what we want the students to do.”

# Results

## Seizing the opportunity to excel

The effort Richland SD put into driving adoption paid off. In the first few months after go-live, 66% of all students in the district were active on Paper, with more than 77% of all high school students making use of the service. During this time, students engaged in over 3,000 learning moments with Paper tutors. These included 2,330 tutoring sessions with basic arithmetic, equations and basic algebra as the top subjects, as well as 746 essays submitted and reviewed by Paper tutors.

“I think it’ll just continue to grow,” says Bailey.

### Learning Moments

**3,076**

Learning Moments

**2,330**

Sessions

**746**

Essays

**825 of 1,457**

Students Active

### Top Subjects

1. Basic Arithmetic

2. Equations

3. Basic Algebra

### Help at any hour

“Some of my remote students are doing work at 2 o’clock in the morning! But they’ve actually found someone available to help them any time of day,” says Oravec. “It’s nice to know there’s someone else out there who can jump in my role, and do something similar to what I would do at any moment.”

# Results

## Specialized learning tools tailored for math and ELA

Richland’s students and teachers found Paper an excellent platform for delivering academic support in math. “The students love the Paper whiteboard, where they can draw their question out and send it to the tutor,” says Mock.

The service has proven equally effective for ELA. “Our ELA teachers are having kids upload their essays to Paper for instant feedback from tutors. The teachers are taking tutors’ feedback and creating mini-lessons in areas of writing where students need more focus. So it’s really helping both teachers and students,” says Mock.

## Support for individualized instruction

Teachers and students are benefitting from Paper’s ability to assist with individualized instruction. “I was working with one group of students. I looked back to another group and they were asking the question of the Paper tutor because I wasn’t available at that moment. They just grabbed their Chromebook and had their question answered before I even had to get to them. So it’s saved me some in-classroom time as well,” adds Oravec.

## Positive feedback from students

“I use Paper a lot. At least once a week,” says Jackson, a fifth grader and a four-sport athlete at Richland Elementary School. “When my teacher is with other students helping, it’s just easier and it’s quicker. When we went hybrid, whenever I needed help and my parents couldn’t help me, I used it by myself at home.”

“I like that it’s available any hour. I like that it’s just another resource I can go to,” says Braeden, a Junior at Richland High School.

“

**I use Paper a lot.  
At least once a week.**

— Jackson  
Fifth Grader,  
Richland Elementary School

“

**I like that it’s available  
any hour.**

— Braeden  
Junior, Richland High School

“A student that isn’t a morning person can get on at 7:00 in the evening or 11:00 in the evening and they know they can find somebody that’s going to help. Even if all my students are in-class students, it’s going to be nice for them to have that extra person available in the evening,” says Oravec. “I think it’s going to be a very important resource moving forward.”

# Results

## Reporting delivers insights to administrators and teachers

“The reporting from Paper is great,” says Bailey. “As an administrator, you can see which students are using Paper, which content areas they’re using it in. We get feedback as administrators. But, more importantly, teachers can see which concepts students are having trouble with so they can refocus their energies.”

## Improving the culture of learning

Paper as an “organization has been great to work with, and we’re excited to continue our partnership,” says Bailey.

According to Lashinsky, “Paper tutoring has really been a game changer. It has changed the way our students are learning and our teachers are teaching. I think it’s something that’s going to become part of our culture.”



***It has changed the way our students are learning and our teachers are teaching. I think it's something that's going to become part of our culture.***

— Kelly Lashinsky

# PAPER

*Paper partners with K-12 schools throughout the U.S. and Canada to give every student an equal opportunity to excel academically. Our educational support system (ESS) provides learners with unlimited 24/7 homework help, writing feedback, and study support at a predictable fixed cost. Paper's specialized tutors deliver on-demand, 1:1 academic support in four languages across more than 200 academic subject areas—so students always have access to expert extra help exactly when, where, and how they need it.*

LEARN MORE

