

## Decision-Support Tools

**WE'D HAVETO** fill this entire magazine to list every technology solution you could use for data-driven decision making. Instead, we've focused this roundup on K-12 decision-support tools in the areas of data warehousing, data mining, learning management, and assessment. Armed with this guide, you'll be able to find your own D3M solution. **BY PAMELA WHEATON SHORR**

PRODUCT	DESCRIPTION	USER COMMENTS	PLATFORM	COST
<b>AIMSweb</b> Edformation, Inc. <a href="http://www.edformation.com">www.edformation.com</a>	<b>AIMSweb Benchmark tracks student benchmark data and charts the results to users in real time. AIMSweb Progress Monitor is a reporting system designed to aid in frequently measuring student progress over a specific amount of time.</b>	"The AIMSweb assessment probes give information about the students' basic literacy skills. No child is left unnoticed, and if intervention is needed, I have the information to do so. Even when intervention is not needed, I can monitor all students to assure progress is continuing. It is the most practical assessment tool I've ever used to generate instructional changes as needed." — Marilyn L. Smith, CBM educational diagnostician, Hamilton County (TN) Department of Education.	The vendor hosts the system as an Application Service Provider. Users access the system through a web browser.	<b>AIMSweb Benchmark, \$4 per student annual license. AIMSweb Progress Monitor, \$3 per student annual license.</b>
<b>ConfluentEDU</b> Confluent Technologies <a href="http://www.confluentasp.com">www.confluentasp.com</a>	<b>ConfluentEDU is a data warehousing and data mining solution that pulls together data from sources such as student information systems, test scores, cafeteria management databases, accounting systems, and special education records. A data mining tool processes, analyzes, and visualizes the data, allowing users to create customized pie charts and bar graphs.</b>	"ConfluentEDU will revolutionize the way we make decisions in our district. We will be able to spot trends earlier, find correlations between test scores and student achievement, and monitor No Child Left Behind subgroup performance to head off problems before they adversely affect our district." — Dan Ioe, director of technology, Alexandria-Monroe (IN) Community Schools.	The vendor hosts the system as an Application Service Provider. Users access the system through a web browser.	<b>\$2.50 to \$4.50 per student.</b>

**NOTE:** A modern Student Information System (SIS) is a necessary prerequisite for any school district's complete D3M strategy. We will be devoting significant space in our October issue to that topic. In the context of this Buyer's Guide, it's worth noting that many SIS solutions offer built-in decision-support features. For example, Chancery DataMiner—a component of Chancery Software's SMS 4.0 solution—allows administrators to analyze trends and spot factors affecting student performance. Similarly, SASxp from Pearson Educational Technologies offers the ability to produce reports on test results, grade-level performance, key assessment indicators, and more.

# [D3M BUYER'S GUIDE]

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<b>DataPoint</b> National Study of School Evaluation <a href="http://www.nsse.org/datapoint.html">www.nsse.org/datapoint.html</a>	<b>DataPoint is a web-based software tool for data-driven school improvement. It includes tools for mining, managing, analyzing, and reporting data.</b>	"You still need to know the right questions to ask, but this has training wheels, to the point where the people asking the questions are the people in the buildings."—Timothy L. Schapp, Township High School District 214, in Arlington Heights, Illinois.	The vendor hosts the system as an Application Service Provider. Users access the system through a web browser.	<b>\$5,000 set up fee; \$4 per student for first year.</b>
<b>EASE-e</b> TetraData Corp. <a href="http://www.ease-e.com">www.ease-e.com</a>	<b>The EASE-e suite of data analysis tools allows educators to make decisions about curricula and education programs by analyzing a storehouse of data about students and their performance. Products include a data analyzer and a data manager; services include data services and hosting services.</b>	"Everyone will have access to quality, comprehensive data for the first time with EASE-e. The use of this application will be culture-changing for the district."—Linda Murray, superintendent of San Jose (CA) Unified School District.	The vendor can host the system as an Application Service Provider, or the district may choose to host it locally. Users access the system through a web browser.	<b>Priced on a tiered, per-student basis.</b>
<b>EDexplore/EDdiscover</b> EDsmart, Inc. <a href="http://www.edsmartinc.com">www.edsmartinc.com</a>	<b>These two products are data warehouse systems that allow teachers and administrators access to educational data for flexible analysis, reporting, and data mining.</b>	"The EDsmart warehouse allows us to access relationally the student achievement and demographic data that had previously been collected as separate pieces of information and therefore of little real use. EDsmart offers greater flexibility, greater relational power, and excellent customer service." —Ann Remus, assistant superintendent, Bedford (NH) School District.	The vendor hosts the system as an Application Service Provider. Users access the system through a web browser.	<b>Startup and annual fees for hosting, support, and data updates. Fees vary with district size and range of services selected, ranging from \$2 to \$4.75 per student per year.</b>
<b>EduSoft</b> <a href="http://www.edusoft.com">www.edusoft.com</a>	<b>This web-based student assessment platform helps school districts track student performance across state exams, district benchmarks, and classroom tests. Analysis tools integrate state-wide exam data with student information and generates reports.</b>	"EduSoft is teacher-friendly, it can link test questions to multiple standards across subject areas, and it scores tests quickly. Most important, EduSoft allows teachers—individually and collaboratively—to quickly see which skills individual students or groups of students have mastered." —Mary Tribbey, data coordinator, Butte County Office of Education, in Oroville, California.	The vendor hosts the system as an Application Service Provider. Users access the system through a web browser.	<b>Annual per-student licensing fee.</b>



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<b>eScholar</b> <a href="http://www.escholar.com">www.escholar.com</a>	<b>The eScholar data warehouse and analysis solution compiles, analyzes, and reports on more than 2,000 data elements in 32 categories. School districts use eScholar to gather and integrate all the information used to track and analyze performance, allowing administrators and other educators to use this information to make data-driven decisions.</b>	"It's really exciting stuff. The data plumbing that eScholar does makes real use of data possible." —Brian Osborne, supervisor of evaluation, assessment and research, Plainfield (NJ) Public Schools.	The district can host the system locally using a Windows NT or Windows 2000 Server and a DB2 database. The vendor can also host the system as an Application Service Provider. Users access the system through a web browser.	<b>Several pricing plans are available, based on enrollment.</b>
<b>IBM Insight at School</b> IBM Corp. <a href="http://www-1.ibm.com/industries/education/doc/content/solution/309650110.html">www-1.ibm.com/industries/education/doc/content/solution/309650110.html</a>	<b>This district-level data warehousing solution helps schools make well-informed, data-driven decisions and perform analysis to meet adequate yearly progress reporting requirements.</b>	"IBM worked with us through the discovery process. It's a very mutual partnership. They really helped us develop the questions that we wanted the data to answer for us." —Robert Ewy, Community Consolidated School District #15, in Palatine, Illinois.	The district can host the system locally using a DB2 database running on S/390, RS/6000, AS/400, or Netfinity servers. The vendor can also host the system as an Application Service Provider.	<b>\$150,000 and up.</b>
<b>Quality School Portfolio</b> National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) <a href="http://qsp.cse.ucla.edu">http://qsp.cse.ucla.edu</a>	<b>This free program was developed with funding from the U. S. Department of Education. The desktop version includes a database program that allows school administrators to disaggregate data, import data from a variety of sources, and report on the data using 12 different report objects. The web-based version offers additional functionality, flexibility, and customizability.</b>	"One night, I was at a school board meeting and someone wanted to know how the kids were doing in math. With QSP, two minutes later, I had the answer!" —Raymond Yeagley, superintendent, Rochester (NH) Public Schools.	The web-based version requires the district to host the system locally using a web and database server running Microsoft Windows 2000 Server and SQL Server. The desktop version requires only Windows 95 or higher.	<b>Free download.</b>
<b>SAS Education Performance Management (EdPM)</b> SAS Institute, Inc. <a href="http://www.sas.com/govedu/education/edperfm.html">www.sas.com/govedu/education/edperfm.html</a>	<b>This business intelligence and analytical software suite provides insight to schools and districts on student achievement and areas of improvement. Easy-to-use reports and analyses can be accessed in a point-and-click format for decision makers.</b>	"With the SAS tools, we are in control of the amount of funds we spend and how PUSD staff wants the application to look. It is a custom application. We have a good product now and can wait for funding to start coming back to the district to grow the product." —Charlie Carten, Poway (CA) Unified School District.	Application runs on top of any database, hosted locally by the school district using Windows or Unix servers.	<b>Price varies, depending on configuration.</b>



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<b>SchoolNet</b> <a href="http://www.schoolnet.com">www.schoolnet.com</a>	<b>SchoolNet is a web-based data warehousing solution for accountability, data analysis and reporting, curriculum alignment, lesson planning, collaboration, assessment, and classroom management.</b>	"SchoolNet provides us with a top-quality, dedicated team that quickly responds to our changing needs, and guides us through the process of becoming a data-driven district." —Pat Renzulli, CIO, Philadelphia (PA) School District	The vendor can host the system as an Application Service Provider, or the district may choose to host it locally using Microsoft SQL Server or Oracle database software. Users access the system through a web browser.	<b>Modular pricing allows districts to purchase any combination of features, with modules priced on a per-student, per-year basis. One-time set-up fee.</b>
<b>Socrates Data System</b> Center for Resource Management <a href="http://www.crminc.com/Socrates1.htm">www.crminc.com/Socrates1.htm</a>	<b>The Socrates Data System is a data warehouse that includes a relational database software application, a web portal providing access from any browser, and a calculator for determining adequate yearly progress. It can import data linked to a student from files exported from school and district information systems, state assessments, standardized tests, and other types of data files.</b>	"Socrates' reports show in-depth disaggregation that allows us to pinpoint what's working and where we need to focus. It's essential for staff at all levels to be able to access data easily, and this product does that." —John Linden, assistant superintendent of schools, Erie (PA) School District.	The vendor hosts the system as an Application Service Provider. Users access the system through a web browser.	<b>\$5 per student</b>
<b>SwiftKnowledge</b> <a href="http://www.swiftk.com">www.swiftk.com</a> <small>(This product is also available as Sagebrush Analytics through a distribution agreement with Sagebrush Corporation. <a href="http://www.sagebrushcorp.com">www.sagebrushcorp.com</a>)</small>	<b>This web-based software solution provides educators with query, analysis, and reporting capabilities to support data-driven decision-making. Features include the ability to assemble data views, easily create a variety of charts and graphs, create calculations on the fly, and drill down to specifics.</b>	"This is a breakthrough product. It has the potential to change the way we make decisions. Our district and school-based personnel can dig deeper into the data to look for patterns, explore connections, and draw conclusions based on timely data." —Sheldon Ramanine, assistant director, department of educational technology, Saint Paul (MN) Public Schools.	The vendor can host the system as an Application Service Provider, or the district may choose to host it locally using Microsoft Windows 2000 Server and SQL Server. Users access the system through a web browser.	<b>Pricing models include an annual licensing fee based on enrollment or upfront licensing with an annual support and maintenance fee.</b>
<b>Virtual Education</b> <a href="http://EDmin.com, Inc.">EDmin.com, Inc.</a> <a href="http://www.edmin.com/products/ved/">www.edmin.com/products/ved/</a>	<b>Virtual Education is a standards and web-based learning management system that tracks the performance of every student in a school or district. The suite of applications enable students, parents, teachers, and administrators to view student progress in real time, identify learning deficiencies, and conduct timely interventions.</b>	"The pieces that drive D3M most effectively are the performance center and multiple measures modules. These applications are critical in helping us incorporate D3M down to the classroom level and build appropriate improvement strategies at the building level." —Chip Kimball, assistant superintendent, Lake Washington (WA) School District.	The vendor can host the system as an Application Service Provider, or the district may choose to host it locally. Users access the system through a web browser.	<b>Annual student subscription pricing model. One-time installation costs and some additional costs such as professional development.</b>

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