



Business challenge

Recognizing that not all school boards were funded equally, Compass for Success sought a way to make education data more accessible across the province to help schools improve student outcomes.

Transformation

The organization built a cloud-based data warehouse solution using IBM® Cognos® Analytics and IBM SPSS® Modeler software. It's also deploying IBM Watson Analytics™ technology to help educators identify drivers behind underperforming students and to support evidence-informed decision making.



Diane Findlay
Manager,
Compass for Success

Business benefits

297% ROI

for a 4-month payback
by deploying the IBM software

Cuts IT costs

using cloud technology
to deliver analytics to schools
across Ontario

Saves time

and reduces expenses
for schools and administrators by
accelerating report generation

Compass for Success

Helping students succeed and reaping significant cost returns using IBM Analytics software

Founded in 2005 in Toronto, Canada, [Compass for Success](#) is a collaboration of 50 school boards and 22 First Nation communities across Ontario working together to build capacity to use data, with the aim of improving student outcomes. Through its sophisticated software platform, the not-for-profit organization provides centralized data warehousing and analytics services so that teachers, superintendents and principals can monitor student performance, offer informed guidance and help students succeed.

"It would be impossible for anybody within the school board—regardless of their background—to do what Watson Analytics does."

—Diane Findlay, Manager, Compass for Success

Share this



Calling for equal data access

All children, regardless of where they live or the size of their school district, deserve a quality education. This is an underlying principle for IBM Business Partner Compass for Success, an organization originally formed to help nine school boards increase their capacity to use data to make evidence-informed decisions to improve student achievement.

Diane Findlay, Manager at Compass for Success, elaborates: “The Ontario Ministry of Education targeted a graduation rate of 85 percent and decided that every school board should have a data warehouse to support that goal. But funding was based on a per-person model, meaning that small school boards couldn’t afford much.”

“We’re all about making sure that every single school board has the advantage of using the most sophisticated tools,” Findlay continues, “without barriers around cost, accessibility or resources.”

Providing analytics to all

Compass for Success built a cloud-based data warehouse solution using IBM® Cognos® Analytics and IBM SPSS® Modeler software. “We looked at other products on the market and saw that they were just glorified reporting tools,” says Findlay. “We chose Cognos because it was the leader in data warehousing and analytics, and we wanted to make sure we started with the best tool possible.”

In April 2017, the organization integrated IBM Watson Analytics™ technology with the platform, a move that Findlay describes as transformative. “Watson allows us to correlate and triangulate data like never before and brings forward the unique personalities of the school boards. We can search for trends and identify the drivers behind underperforming students. It allows us to be a lot more efficient and effective so we can hone efforts and allocate our resources. To be able to stitch together data from external sources so easily has been transformational.”

Realizing substantial returns

Today, Compass for Success hosts a centralized data warehouse in Toronto and uses the cloud to deliver advanced and predictive analytics services to school boards across the province. “By offering a hosted solution as well as a non-hosted solution, we have a scalable, robust system that both the largest and smallest school boards can use,” says Findlay.

According to a 2013 report conducted by Nucleus Research Inc., Compass for Success realized a 297 percent ROI¹ in its deployment of IBM technologies, translating into a 4-month payback. Findlay states that the figures are still relevant today, adding, “The reduced IT costs by using the cloud are significant too, as well as the end-user cost savings to report to the Ministry.”

Findlay concludes, “What sets us apart is that we spent a lot of time, effort and energy working with the IBM professional group to build the framework. We contracted with the best of the best, and it has served us very, very well.”

Solution components

- Compass for Success
- IBM® Cognos® Analytics
- IBM SPSS® Modeler
- IBM Watson Analytics™

Connect with us



Take the next step

To learn more about IBM Cognos Analytics, IBM SPSS Modeler and IBM Watson technologies, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following websites:

ibm.com/products/cognos-analytics,
ibm.com/us-en/marketplace/spss-modeler,
ibm.com/watson-analytics

© Copyright IBM Corporation 2017. IBM Analytics, New Orchard RoadArmonk, NY 10504

Produced in the United States of America, September 2017. IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com, Cognos, SPSS, and Watson Analytics are trademarks of International Business Machines Corp., registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. Other product and service names might be trademarks of IBM or other companies. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the web at “Copyright and trademark information” at ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml. This document is current as of the initial date of publication and may be changed by IBM at any time. Not all offerings are available in every country in which IBM operates. The performance data and client examples cited are presented for illustrative purposes only. Actual performance results may vary depending on specific configurations and operating conditions. THE INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED “AS IS” WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING WITHOUT ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND ANY WARRANTY OR CONDITION OF NON-INFRINGEMENT. IBM products are warranted according to the terms and conditions of the agreements under which they are provided.

¹Nucleus calculated the costs of software, hardware, consulting, personnel and training over a 3-year period to quantify Compass for Success’s investment.



ASC12478-USEN-00

