

**District:** Chico Unified School District, CA

**Enrollment:** 12,389

**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment

Hi Todd:

This is our first year of implementation of the Data and Assessment component of Illuminate. Overall, we are happy with the product and the service. We use Aeries for our SIS (for past 4 years) and the initial set-up of Illuminate using their scripts to pull data from Aeries did have some glitches back in the fall, but it seems to be pretty stable since.

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**District:** Monterey Peninsula Unified School, CA

**Enrollment:** 11,705

**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment, Student Information System

Hello Todd,

I've been using Illuminate since coming to Monterey in July and I would have to give them very high marks both for the functionality of the tool and the service.

The product is very user friendly and intuitive.

The two trainers / reps that we work with most often, Spencer and Melissa are both former teachers which I believe is part of the reason that the functionality is so strong, people with real school experience helping guide product development.

By far the biggest plus is the customer service they provide. They provide excellent onsite training, they are accessible, and work with your staff to tailor the product to meet your individual needs.

While doing training they are taking notes and suggestions to take back to product development to further improve the product. (Melissa happens to be here the next two days to lead training for office support staff)

The Illuminate staff is also available when any problems arise.

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**District:** Pittsburg Unified School, CA

**Enrollment:** 10,381

**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment

Hi Todd,

We started using Illuminate last July after using Data Director for a number of years. We had a slow start, but are happy with it now. I would be more than happy to speak with you if you have any questions. I am running to a meeting but will be available tomorrow. Also, our SIS system is Aeries not Illuminate so most of our problems were connected to the upload of that data. Hope this helps!

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**District:** Bonita Unified School, CA

**Enrollment:** 9,847

**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment

Hi Todd,

We do not use the SIS side of Illuminate, we are an Aeries district for SIS and use an extract to upload data nightly to Illuminate.

This is our districts 3<sup>rd</sup> year with Illuminate as our Data and Assessment Management System.

The first year I kept it away from sites and worked on bringing over data, I still see this as the biggest issue. Pulling info from our old system (Data Director) over to the new system was tedious and pain full. I hired in hourly folk who I trained to push data in from a data dump that was provided, this was absolutely insane work, but it gave me the ability to hang onto all the data I had so far. I was able to get them to split the cost into a two years for the price of one for those first two years. I cannot say I recommend this approach, because it meant I was maintain two systems. It did give me the opportunity to get to be very familiar before introducing to admin and teachers.

This makes it our second year of full implementation.

We use it for:

- All state assessment data: CST , CELDT, CAPA, CAHSEE, etc
- Local Benchmarks- scanned grades 2-11 Math & ELA, grade 4-HS Science, grades 6- HS History-Social Science
- Writing Assessments Kinder- grade 5 CCSS rubrics
- Summary Assessment data- Math fluency results K- grade 5, REN PLACE STAR Reading data and DIBELS data
- Kinder and 1<sup>st</sup> grade Report Cards (great for gathering data at lower grades)
- Reports- tracking subgroups at all grade levels
- We are piloting the grade book next year (We currently use another grade book)
- STUDENT Profile- is used for IEP, teachers love this feature

I find it intriguing that they give my name out as a reference, I am a pretty honest and realistic user. I am not going to tell you things are perfect, but here are some pros and cons. After you read my pros and cons please understand, would I do the switch again? Absolutely. I believe that Illuminate is responsive to my district's needs, constantly working to improve the system, and is building a system with more options than I could have put on a list 3 years ago. That is my biggest pro-they have not stopped building it, it continues to improve and grow, just as we are all growing with SBAC, Common Core and the challenges of a digital age.

Illuminate	
Pros	Cons
The best support I have ever had	I need that support often
System is very sophisticated	Sophisticated can often seem complicated to teachers and Admin
Scanning in the Classroom is brilliant	Filters are cumbersome in Assessments and Reports
Online testing is very good and timely	2 years in we are still underutilizing the system lots left for PD
Dashboard has been a great help	Find it does load a little slow during certain times not consistent
It is professional looking	With all of the updates, sometimes I will train and the next week it is different- hard to give this a positive spin with teachers, although usually it is better
Reports are very useful	

I hope this helps with your decision. I know this is a big decision, good luck. I would be more than happy to set up time to talk to you if you have questions about any of my answers.

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**District:** Ingham Intermediate School District, MI

**Enrollment:** 43,708

**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment, SPED Component

Hello Todd,

We have been using Illuminate Education's Data and Assessment and Special Education modules in our county since August 2012, so we are still in the midst of our first year, and really feel like

we are still in the implementation phase. Our eleven local schools districts (total student population approximately 31,000 students) have continued to use their current SIS systems (Skyward or Powerschool), so I have no feedback to offer on the Illuminate SIS module. Understand that since we are not using their SIS, we have to upload data sets from Powerschool and Skyward, and there have been some issues making that conversion. As a result, our experiences and need for support are probably very different than what you would encounter if you used both their SIS and DnA. We have been given direct access to their developers and have conference calls with them every other week. They have been working hard to resolve our issues.

Our implementation has been difficult, but we are the first consortium in the country to try and use both the ISE and DnA modules, and Illuminate has had to work out numerous bugs. They have been very professional and acknowledged our issues and concerns. Some of our minor problems have been addressed very quickly, but we have some long-standing issues that are still awaiting resolution. For example, our locals all give the ACT Plan and Explore assessments to their students, and we've been waiting since August for Illuminate to create the import formats to allow us to upload the data into the system. Those formats were completed in the past month. We are still waiting for some of our Michigan-specific state assessment formats for special education students to be completed. You would want to check their completed import formats to ensure that all the California assessments you use have been created.

DnA has worked well for our districts that are using the assessment features. We have been able to use summary assessments effectively, and several of our locals are using the standard assessment features for their district and common assessment needs. The Gradecam scanning has worked well, although you do need to set up your scanning environment (lighting) carefully to ensure you are getting accurate results every time. Illuminate has uploaded all the standards sets we need for item alignment, and we have some districts loading their own custom standards. Overall, the assessment module works very well for authored assessments; we have had some issues loading assessments from other vendors. Those issues have included the delay for Illuminate to develop an import format that I have already mentioned, and the difficulty in assigning cut scores to those assessments. If the score file includes pre-calculated performance levels, then reporting is fairly easy. If your data set only includes a score (i.e. AIMSweb, ACT), it can be a challenge to generate reports based upon score profiles. Illuminate has been working on improvements in that reporting, and the most recent release had some enhancements to make that easier. There is more to be done, however.

When we first started our implementation, it felt as if Illuminate lacked the resources to address our issues quickly and effectively. Since that time, they have added staff and re-organized some of their processes, and response has improved dramatically. There are still some outstanding issues (mostly import formats) that are awaiting resolution. Overall, the implementation of this complex product has proceeded about as we expected: not as smoothly as we had hoped, but not as poorly as we feared. I hope this information helps you in your decision-making process.

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**District:** Victor Elementary School District, CA  
**Enrollment:** 11,633  
**Illuminate Product:** Student Information System

Hi, Todd. We started using illuminate at the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year. We cut over cold turkey from SchoolMax. We migrated in less than 2 months. We do use both the SIS and the Assessment component, and we love them both. I can't think of anything that I would point out as a weakness. The only thing that I would say is that we are a K-6 district, so we don't deal with things that a K-12 would, like scheduling. Having the SIS and Assessment in one database with a single screen view that provides all of the student's pertinent data ("Student Profile") in a web browser from anywhere in the world without me having to merge any data is worth the price of admission. Feel free to give me a call if you would like to discuss specifics. I am an open book.

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**District:** Rialto Unified School District, CA  
**Enrollment:** 27,026  
**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment

Hi Todd,  
We have been with Illuminate for 2 years. We use the Data and Assessment component. The product is very good and it is an easy system to learn. The customer service is fantastic. They listen to concerns and recommendations and you will see enhancements in the newly released versions. We were with them when they were Data Director and were very happy. When Data Director changed hands the first thing to go was the customer service. They assign an implementation manager to work with you and they are your go to person. They respond very quickly when you have questions. They bring real clarity to the situation. I would highly recommend them. Our teachers love that the testing can be pushed to the grade book and report cards. They have really thought of time saving steps and products. We are under contract with another SIS so I cannot speak to that product. However our eschool SIS system is a pain and they have diligently worked with our IT department and myself to make it work. We do automatic nightly uploads to their system.  
Hope this gives you a snapshot.

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**District:** Inglewood Unified School District, CA  
**Enrollment:** 14,275  
**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment

We have been using Illuminate for the last two years and I love the product. It is fast, easy for teachers to use, affordable and very helpful.

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**District:** Murrieta Unified School District, CA

**Enrollment:** 22,318

**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment

Good afternoon Todd,

I have not used the SIS from Illuminate. We use Aries. We do use the Data Management program and will again be using the program next year that includes INSPECT and gradecam. This will be our 3<sup>rd</sup> year with them.

Good company and very reliable service.

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**District:** Grossmont Union High School District, CA

**Enrollment:** 24,224

**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment

Hello Todd,

We have been using Illuminate since the beginning of the current school year. Our district purchased the Data and Assessment module to replace the Edusoft system. Implementation of the product to our school sites was carried out through my office and we continue to support teachers and administrators with the system. Illuminate's support system (implementation team, and Help Line) is one of the best I have encountered. They are constantly enhancing their product and they really value feedback from districts.

Overall, I would say that we are very pleased with the product and I would recommend it.

Let me know if you have any further questions or need assistance.

Thank you.

Maria

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**District:** Glendale Unified School District, CA

**Enrollment:** 23,500

**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment

Hi Todd,

We transitioned to Illuminate last year and are happy with both product and service. The person who works with it most regularly is Bonnie Gould, Assessment and Evaluation Coordinator. I have copied her on this reply should you have any additional questions.

Good luck with the process.

Kathy

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**District:** Etiwanda School District, CA

**Enrollment:** 12,882

**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment

Hi Todd,

We have been using Illuminate this school year. We began using it in transition since about this time last year.

We were dissatisfied with the customer service at Data Director. We were with DD for about 5-7 years.

We only use Illuminate for assessments (not for our gradebook, student info, or sped needs).

I think the jury is still out with regard to Illuminate. The customer support is mainly cordial, expert, helpful, prompt, and readily available. The transition has not been easy or seamless. Adjusting to a new system is challenging for our staff, particularly as we do not have a large district support staff. Also, in an effort to improve their services, Illuminate is continuously upgrading their system. This makes it even more difficult for staff to become acclimated with a new system that is sufficiently different from Data Director to present a learning curve.

Illuminate seems to push better and newer services for a growing customer base. I hope there is sufficient focus on doing the basic things really well now, and they do not overreach or exceed their capacity to meet their existing customer needs.

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**District:** Saddleback Valley School District, CA

**Enrollment:** 26,000

**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment

Todd,

It has been one year now. We are overall very pleased with the move from Data Director to illuminate ed.

We purchased iPevo camera's for all teachers and made them go through a certification class in order to get the camera for scanning.

There are some data issues here and there but the team at illuminate is responsive.

I would recommend it to other districts.

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**District:** Apple Valley Unified School District, CA

**Enrollment:** 14,000

**Illuminate Product:** Data and Assessment

Todd,

We have been using Illuminate "D&A" since September. Our district has not yet moved to the SIS system, however it will be a consideration for transition during the upcoming school year. We have been with AERIES SIS for over 10 years and in the spring of 2012 were struggling with DATA Director's support and program changes for our data. We made the decision to convert and pilot AERIES Analytic with the thought that having the DATA and SIS in one system would be the best decision for our users. That being said, AERIES was not able to work on our issues with ANALYTICS, and we called Illuminate. From that first call forward, they have been attentive to our needs (we may be on record as the quickest conversion to date- two weeks from first call to data loaded), I have yet to call and get a recording in which they are too busy to answer my calls. We have been extremely happy with the product.

It is the desire of site administration to consider an SIS conversion. If we do so, the plan is to run dual systems for several months to allow for "gearing up staff" appropriately. For our district, SIS conversion could not be done as quickly, and we want to make sure that our master scheduling process is not impacted.

If you need more information please feel free to contact me.

Trenae