

# San Diego High School Students Plan for Their Future with the MBTI® Assessment

## San Diego Unified School District Sparks Interest and Motivates Students by Teaching Them About Themselves and Others



### CASE STUDY AT A GLANCE

#### COMPANY OVERVIEW

The San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) serves more than 135,000 students. It is the second-largest district in California and the eighth-largest urban district in the United States. The student population is extremely diverse, representing more than 15 ethnic groups and more than 60 languages and dialects. The district's educational facilities include 119 elementary schools, 24 middle schools, 30 high schools, 37 charter schools, and 15 atypical or alternative schools.

#### CHALLENGE

The district must find a way to serve students from a variety of backgrounds and ability levels who are often overlooked by a system that focuses on students with special needs and those demonstrating accelerated performance. Few resources and little structure are available to help the majority of students in the middle of the pack.

#### SOLUTION

Using the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®) assessment and an innovative six-step implementation program, Steve Baker, a grant coordinator for the school district, has engaged students academically and in planning for their future after graduation.

#### RESULTS

Enrollment in advanced placement courses has increased dramatically. Both students and teachers are more engaged, and students are showing greater interest in their academic and work lives.

How many high school students do you know who have a plan for their future? Many never have an opportunity to explore what the future might hold for them. Steve Baker, an advanced placement (AP) incentive grant coordinator for the San Diego Unified School District, is determined to do something about that. He thinks the MBTI® Career Report holds the key.

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Baker is working on a collaborative grant project for the U.S. Department of Education in partnership with universities, community organizations, and business partners to boost participation by low-income students in AP courses and tests. The grant, according to Barbara Pflaum, SDUSD's AP incentive grant director,

*is being provided to five of the district's high schools (Crawford Educational Complex, Morse High School, San Diego High School Educational Complex, and Lincoln High School) to help increase and expand access to advanced placement programs that will provide more disadvantaged high school students with the opportunity to take challenging courses so that they will enter college or the global marketplace ready to excel. The focus is on students who normally would not have these opportunities—the underserved population in our district.*

Baker is making the MBTI assessment and MBTI® Career Report critical components of his program.

The MBTI® Student Development Program is designed to assist schools through the implementation of strategies and activities using the MBTI assessment, including the MBTI® Career Profile, to support and maximize every student's ability to learn, make a successful transition from high school to college to career, and promote his or her personal growth. The MBTI program meets many of the national standards for academic, career, and personal development as outlined by the American School

Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Standards for Academic Development.

According to Baker, the MBTI program is one of the reasons Crawford Educational Complex has seen a 62.5% increase in the number of AP subjects offered on campus since 2007. "We have also seen a 21.75% increase in the number of our students taking advanced placement courses, including online AP courses," said Baker.

*Because of this growth we are also experiencing professional development opportunities across the board. Many of these trainings are focused on the development of a strategic plan around student readiness and preparing students for more rigorous course work. Since [we began using] the MBTI instrument at Crawford, we've seen over 600 students participate in career development activities just in this past year alone and another 1,700 students participate in college preparation activities. Students are exploring careers, discovering the workplace has changed, and beginning to realize that meaningful career paths will require rigorous and challenging course taking.*

Crawford began implementing the Myers-Briggs® assessment in 2007 with the expectation of rolling out the program to other schools beginning in 2009, including a possible Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) partnership. AVID is a national program designed to increase school-wide learning and performance. Its mission is to ensure that all students—especially the least-served students in the middle tiers of achievement—are capable of completing a college preparatory path and succeeding in a rigorous curriculum, enter mainstream activities of the school, and increase their enrollment rate in a four-year college, as well as become educated and responsible participants and leaders in a democratic society.

Baker holds a master's degree in educational psychology and educational counseling from Azusa Pacific University and a bachelor's degree in business marketing from Fresno State University. He has worked with the San Diego Unified School District for the past seven years preparing students to reach their optimum performance levels. He has been increasing student achievement through intervention and accountability programs and has designed and facilitated a variety of workshops for students and teachers. Before coming to education he spent more than ten years as a small business owner and has experience as a financial consultant working for several Fortune 500 companies, including Wells Fargo Bank and Wells Fargo Securities.

Baker also has experience in needs-based evaluation and assessment, planning and conducting successful financial health seminars, and building profitable relationships with diverse individuals and a variety of businesses. He is certified to administer a number of psychological assessments, including the MBTI tool, which he first encountered in the business arena. According to Baker,

*Coming into education from the business world has given me an appreciation for the value of having a clear understanding of one's learning styles, and how to interact and communicate with others based on one's personal strengths and weaknesses. As I stepped into this new world of education, I realized that students*

*should have the same kind of understanding about their strengths and weaknesses, their learning styles, and how to better communicate with others.*

"I also discovered that too few students were graduating from high school prepared for college and careers," he notes. According to data taken from the American Diploma Project, 40% to 45% of recent high school graduates report significant gaps in their skills, both in college and the workplace; 30% of first-year students in postsecondary education are required to take remedial courses; and employers estimate that 45% of recent high school graduates lack the requisite skills to advance.

About a year and a half ago, Baker decided that something needed to be done to help students get more inspired about who they are and what they want to do in life.

*I felt that if we could help facilitate that process, if we could get them even just a little more excited about career possibilities, then maybe we could just spark all sorts of things. If students can discover something that they are really interested in, they are more likely to be motivated academically as they begin to visualize a clearer picture of the pathway they need to take in order to get to their career choice. They will become more involved in knowing what courses they need to take, they will be more involved in volunteer/extracurricular activities, and they will stay on track for college.*

Baker established partnerships with the American Management Association and CPP, Inc., to expand training on administering the MBTI assessment and negotiate discounts on materials for his district. He got the ball rolling and has since developed a six-step process for implementing the assessments and begun to roll out the program.

## WHY THE MBTI® ASSESSMENT?

Considered by many the gold standard of psychological assessments, the Myers-Briggs assessment is a personality inventory designed to give people information about their psychological preferences. Originally developed in the early 1940s by Isabel Briggs Myers and Katharine Cook Briggs, it was designed to make Carl Jung's theory of human personality understandable and useful in everyday life. Today, the MBTI tool has become the most widely used personality assessment in the world. More than 2 million assessments are administered to individuals annually.

One of the goals of the MBTI tool is to create an atmosphere of understanding and improved communication—it is not designed to label people or to assign good and bad characteristics. The use of a four-letter type indicates an individual's preferences for Extraversion or Introversion, Sensing or Intuition, Thinking or Feeling, and Judging or Perceiving. Though many factors combine to influence an individual's behaviors, values, and attitudes, the MBTI descriptions summarize underlying patterns common to most people of a given type.

The MBTI® Career Report shows students how their type affects their career exploration and discusses the benefits of choosing a job that is a good fit for their type. It also

explores preferred work tasks and work environments—as well as most-popular and least-popular occupations—for any type, and offers strategies for improving job satisfaction. The report includes information about popular fields such as business, health care, computer technology, and mid- and high-level management.

### THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE: OVERCOMING INERTIA AND GETTING STUDENTS MOTIVATED

If students aren't required to do something, they probably won't do it. Baker says that's a big challenge with high school students—keeping them motivated and inspired is critical. As he explains, “Research says that students are motivated to learn when they are interested in the subject and they can see how the class relates to their career interests. My whole strategy in using the MBTI tool revolves around its ability to be incorporated into a system that's already there, like our advisory or AVID programs. The MBTI instrument can open the door to a whole new way of benefiting students.”

Baker hopes the initial rollout with the MBTI assessment and Career Report will provide some solid evidence on how this program can benefit students, especially if it's integrated into an advisory or AVID program. He's mapped out a six-step process that includes taking the assessment, understanding the results, and introducing activities that will engage students in looking more closely at college and career options. “We're hoping to spark student interest in career exploration and discovery and believe this is a great first step.” The initial program will take 1,500 students through the MBTI assessment.

Recently, Baker took the first group of high school teachers and about 350 students through the program. He says even the teachers are getting a kick out of taking the assessment. Some have learned that their career choice of teaching matched the results of their MBTI assessment, while others have discovered that teaching was not a top career choice for them, which has provided them with a great opportunity to think through the process of self-discovery and look at why their results came out the way they did.

Of the students who have taken the MBTI assessment so far, especially the younger ones in ninth and tenth grades, many are learning for the first time about careers. Baker says, “They are going through a list of potential careers, and for some of them it's a real eye-opener from the standpoint of, What does it mean to be a pharmacist? a teacher? an engineer?”

Students are already having great things to say after going through the program with their teacher:

- “Taking the MBTI assessment helped me see my strengths and weaknesses. I now have a better understanding of who I am.”
- “I can see now that what I do in my biology class is relevant to my career plans.”
- “I'm finding physics more interesting now that I see how it applies to the career I want to pursue—becoming a pilot.”

The MBTI process is really about self-awareness and self-discovery.

### THE SIX-STEP PROCESS

Step 1 is administering the assessment. Teachers trained in MBTI assessment have students take the 93-item assessment through SkillsOne.com, CPP's online assessment system—which transforms many of the training functions into Web-based activities.

Step 2 is helping students better understand their results. Teachers conduct hands-on activities including a worksheet that allows students to not just learn about, but really begin to understand, their results and their preferences. Through these interactive sessions students discover not only about their own learning styles, but the learning styles of classmates as well.

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—Steve Baker,  
AP Grant Coordinator, SDUSD

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Steps 3 through 6 are what Baker calls “action steps” that give students an opportunity to go through the Career Report thoroughly for better understanding and clarity. He says, “The action steps are designed to help students identify job families and occupations that are a good fit for their reported MBTI type. It helps students pull out valuable information about their abilities and skills, their occupational and leisure interests, and their values and goals. They also look in more detail for information about specific tasks involved in different occupations, as well as what the working environment is like for a particular job.” Students are better prepared when they've taken an in-depth look at how their type influences the career development process, as well as how their type may, at times, present some challenges along the way.

Teachers then walk students through several days of online research exploring top career choices. They look at the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Online, the O\*NET Resource Center Online, and other sources. In the final session, teachers ask the students to write a one-page summary about what they have learned—explaining why a career they have chosen would be a good or poor fit for their type—and how they

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think their learning and working styles will help them be successful in a particular area.

Baker says that he purposely incorporated various elements in the program itself to help students strengthen skills such as research, writing, and critical thinking. He has aligned those components with the ASCA National Model, which provides standards for excellence in three categories: academic development, career development, and personal/social development.

Baker has developed a teacher’s manual that includes step-by-step instructions for taking students through the program, a program outline and schedule, and an information page about the Myers-Briggs assessment, including a parent permission form, MBTI assessment instructions, a sample MBTI® Career Report, activity sheets, and a sample certificate of completion.

“This program is a good fit,” says Baker. “We’re helping people better understand the connection between their personality type and their communication style; they’re gaining insight into how to communicate with each other using type. They are also identifying the links between type and behaviors, and learning how to identify and resolve challenging situations using type insights. I believe teachers are benefiting not only personally but professionally as they develop skills to better understand their students using the Myers-Briggs tool.”

Other key issues, according to Baker, include the rapid pace of technological change, lower graduation rates, and increased dropout rates. All these factors are having an impact on education. Explains Baker, “We’re educating kids for jobs that we know about today, but we don’t know what the jobs are going to be tomorrow. Our society is changing so fast. We need to be preparing our students for jobs that may not have even been created yet. So the best thing we can do today is to make sure they have the skill set to compete in an ever-changing global economy—so they are prepared for whatever changes come their way.”

With that in mind, it is all the more reason for having a plan in place. Baker says, “The biggest thing I keep emphasizing is the fact that students need a plan, and they need to know who they are and where they’re going.” He believes the MBTI assessment can help students achieve their goals.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE PROGRAM

Listed below are the MBTI® Student Development Program’s intended learning outcomes based on standards for excellence following the ASCA National Model.

### Academic Development

**Standard A:** Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and throughout life.

- **Improve academic self-concept**  
Identify attitudes and behaviors that lead to successful learning
- **Acquire skills for improving learning**  
Use communications skills to know when and how to ask for help  
Apply knowledge and learning styles to positively influence school performance
- **Achieve school success**  
Demonstrate the ability to work independently as well as to work cooperatively with other students  
Develop a broad range of interests and abilities

**Standard B:** Students will complete school with the academic preparation required to have a wide range of substantial postsecondary options from which to choose.

- **Improve learning**  
Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family, and peers  
Use knowledge of learning styles to positively influence school performance  
Become a self-directed and independent learner
- **Plan to achieve goals**  
Use assessment results in educational planning  
Develop and implement an annual plan of study to maximize academic ability and achievement  
Identify postsecondary options consistent with interests, achievement, aptitude, and abilities

**Standard C:** Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work as well as to life at home and in the community.

- **Relate school to life experiences**  
Understand that school success involves the transition from student to community member  
Understand how school success and academic achievement enhance future career and vocational opportunities

### Career Development

**Standard A:** Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

- **Develop career awareness**  
Develop skills to locate, evaluate, and interpret career information  
Learn about the variety of traditional and nontraditional occupations

Develop an awareness of personal abilities, skills, interests, and motivations  
 Learn how to interact and work cooperatively in teams  
 Pursue and develop competency in areas of interest

- **Develop employment readiness**

Acquire employability skills such as working on a team, problem solving, and organizational skills  
 Demonstrate knowledge about the changing workplace  
 Learn to respect individual uniqueness in the workplace

**Standard B:** Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals successfully and with satisfaction.

- **Acquire career information**

Identify personal skills, interests, and abilities and relate them to the current career choice  
 Demonstrate knowledge of the career planning process  
 Know the various ways in which occupations can be classified  
 Use research and information resources to obtain career information  
 Learn how to use the Internet to access career planning information  
 Describe traditional and nontraditional career choices and how they relate to career choice

Understand how changing economic and societal needs influence employment trends and future training

- **Identify career goals**

Demonstrate awareness of the education and training needed to achieve career goals  
 Assess and modify an educational plan to support career goals  
 Select course work that is related to career interests  
 Maintain a career planning portfolio

**Standard C:** Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and the world of work.

- **Acquire knowledge to achieve career goals**

Understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success  
 See how work can help achieve personal success and satisfaction  
 Identify personal preferences and interests influencing career choice and success  
 Understand that the changing workplace requires lifelong learning and acquiring new skills  
 Describe the effect of work on lifestyle

- **Apply skills to achieve career goals**

Demonstrate how interests, abilities, and achievement relate to achieving personal, social, educational, and career goals  
 Learn how to use conflict management skills with peers and adults  
 Learn how to work cooperatively with others as a team member

## Personal/Social Development

**Standard A:** Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect themselves and others.

- **Acquire self-knowledge**

Develop positive attitudes toward oneself as a unique and worthy person  
 Identify values, attitudes, and beliefs  
 Understand that change is a part of growth  
 Identify personal strengths and assets

- **Acquire interpersonal skills**

Respect alternative points of view  
 Recognize, accept, respect, and appreciate individual differences  
 Recognize, accept, and appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity  
 Use effective communications skills  
 Know that communication involves speaking, listening, and nonverbal behavior

**Standard B:** Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

- **Apply self-knowledge**

Develop effective coping skills for dealing with problems  
 Know how to apply conflict resolution skills  
 Demonstrate respect and appreciation for individual and cultural differences  
 Develop an action plan to set and achieve realistic goals

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Since its founding in 1956, CPP, Inc., has been a leading publisher and provider of innovative products and services for individual and organizational development. CPP has been supplying reliable training solutions to businesses of all sizes, including the Fortune 500, for more than 50 years. The company's hundreds of unique offerings have been used by millions of individuals in more than 100 countries, in more than 20 languages, to help people and organizations grow and develop by improving performance and increasing understanding. Among CPP's world-renowned brands are the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®), *Strong Interest Inventory*®, *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument* (TKI), *FIRO-B*®, *CPI 260*®, and *California Psychological Inventory*™ (CPI™) assessments.

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