

Frances Gage, Special Education Coordinator for the Northwest Arctic Borough School District in Kotzebue, Alaska, was faced with a tough situation when her district’s IEP company decided to pull out of her region and discontinue any future IEP and 504 support.

“We were using an IEP company that pulled out of our state and would no longer provide their services. We sampled another popular IEP platform and found that it wasn’t going to work for our district,” said Gage. Gage and her team explored a number of different IEP programs prior to signing with Embrace®. The team wanted to get an idea of how they worked and what they had to offer. They quickly learned that the other platforms were cumbersome, and because of their remote location, Gage explained that the other companies were “...way too slow for us to consider using.”

Kotzebue, known as the Gateway to the Arctic, serves as a supply hub to other Arctic Circle communities. The city, with an estimated population of 3,000 people, ran into issues with the internet, which Gage explained was a big part of the issue with her previous IEP systems. “Embrace® was very seamless and very fast. No issues from the very beginning when we were testing out our district. That was one of our big check boxes. We need it to not be such a slow process. With our other IEP companies, you could hit a button, take a jog around the campus, and it was still loading by the time you came back.”

Gage shared her experience about her district’s data transfer to EmbraceIEP® and Embrace504®: “I think the biggest part of the initial nervousness of switching to another program was around having all of our data transferred over but overall there weren’t any issues, everything went smoothly. We appreciated the way that Embrace® handled everything. They made everything really easy.”



Northwest Arctic Borough School District Youth Leaders Program

Key Facts About Arctic Borough School District:

- 2,050 Early Childhood through 12th grade students
- 15 schools and programs in the district
- Prior to Embrace®, NW Arctic Borough struggled with slow, clunky software.

EmbraceIEP® and Embrace504® also came with other pleasant surprises she hadn't experienced with previous systems. Gage stated that she enjoyed the Electronic Signature feature. "We did not have that capability before. What has been a major help is that we work really close with Embrace® on the forms to meet state requirements. We also work with North Slope, who's also on Embrace®, so transferring information makes everything really easy."

Frances shared some of her experience working through implementation. She expressed that she was appreciative of the amount of communication and feedback involved in their successful implementation, especially after her experience with the previous company. "Teachers have a way of reaching out and the Embrace® team has been very quick to respond and help, which we did not have with our [previous providers]. Any time teachers had an issue, they had to reach out to me, then I would have to reach out to the company. The fact that teachers have been able to contact Embrace® has been great."

Gage also shared some of her favorite key features about Embrace®. "The chat feature and training videos have been incredibly helpful. The videos are especially helpful because it's nice to have something to go back to. When you're in a training you can only absorb so much information. It's nice to have them to reuse and reflect on," said Gage. "Overall our experience with Embrace® has been really positive and our teachers have let us know that completing their forms, check boxes, drop down menus has been really helpful and time-saving. The fact that they worked with us to develop the forms was just fantastic. That has helped us immensely, to ensure they're aligned with state guidelines. And being able to send forms electronically versus by mail has been really helpful. I just really appreciate the responsiveness of Embrace® – just how caring and great all of the people are."



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- Frances Gage
Special Programs, Special Education Coordinator

