



# Skyward's School Management System proves successful in one of the largest districts in America

CASE STUDY

## **“THEIR SUPPORT DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION WAS PIVOTAL TO OUR SUCCESS.”**

### CUSTOMER PROFILE

STATE: Utah  
ENROLLMENT: 75,000  
SCHOOLS: 91  
IMPLEMENTED: 2005

### SOLUTION

Skyward's School Management System

### BENEFIT

The affordable system has given Jordan School District far greater functionality and a whole new way of doing business.

### THE CHALLENGE

75,000 students across 91 buildings—one of the largest districts in America. Jordan School District, located outside of Salt Lake City, has a lot to manage. In addition to typical challenges like budget constraints and analyzing student performance levels, this mega-district faced the daunting task of managing a technology infrastructure capable of meeting the needs of tens of thousands of teachers, employees, students and parents.

For nearly 12 years, Jordan had relied on one system to manage most of its operations. When support for the legacy system was no longer available, the district realized it needed to search for a new, Web-based system.

### THE SOLUTION

Jordan set out to find a system that would best suit the district's large-scale needs. "The process we faced was no small task," said Cindy Nagasawa-Cruz, director of information systems for the district. "Our legacy system ran all of our applications that were at the enterprise finance, human resources and student levels, including budget, general ledger, payroll, purchasing and student management. The system we chose would essentially run all of our operations and affect our entire user community."

The district hired an independent technology consultant group to help with the needs assessment process, formulate an extensive request for proposal (RFP), and identify potential software providers. To ensure the system would meet the needs of users across the entire district, Jordan also formed a committee

# **“THE PROCESS WE FACED WAS NO SMALL TASK. OUR LEGACY SYSTEM RAN ALL OF OUR APPLICATIONS... [AND] THE SYSTEM WE CHOSE WOULD ESSENTIALLY RUN ALL OF OUR OPERATIONS...”**

Cindy Nagasawa-Cruz, Director of Information Systems

with representation across all functional areas including accounting, insurance, payroll, district and school administration, school office staff, counselors, and teachers.

Nagasawa-Cruz said Jordan scrutinized each vendor’s history and customer base as they searched for a system that would support both the business and student management areas. “We really did our due diligence when it came to researching potential vendors. Once we narrowed down the pool of applicants, we talked with references, conducted customer site visits and invited the vendors to demonstrate their solutions in person. We had representatives across the district attend these demonstrations and asked for their feedback. Throughout the process we were careful to continually strike a reasonable balance between functionality and cost. This entire process led to our decision to choose Skyward’s School Management System™.”

## **THE RESULTS**

Jordan began implementing Skyward in 2005. The district was dedicated to ensuring that every employee felt comfortable and empowered working with the new system. Jordan and Skyward teamed up to run two to three training sessions per day for three months.

“Without Skyward’s Project Management we would have never made it,” said Nagasawa-Cruz. “They did an excellent job with the data conversion. Their knowledge of the product coupled with our knowledge of the existing systems made for a great team and played a huge factor in our success. In fact, we beat our expected production schedule deadline by approximately 15 percent.”

Mike Heaps, the district’s support services manager, said Skyward stood by them each step of the way. “They took the time to talk with us about our different options for converting the data and made suggestions and recommendations on how best to move forward. By the go live date we were well trained, familiar with our data and worked through any possible issues.”

Since switching to Skyward, Jordan has achieved numerous benefits and has changed the way it does business—all without the addition of any new staff.



**SINCE SWITCHING TO SKYWARD, JORDAN HAS ACHIEVED NUMEROUS BENEFITS AND HAS CHANGED THE WAY IT DOES BUSINESS - ALL WITHOUT THE ADDITION OF ANY NEW STAFF.**

#### Increased Web presence

“Increasing our presence on the Web was a significant and positive change for us,” said Nagasawa-Cruz. “Having a user friendly, graphical interface, Web-based solution is what most users expect and are comfortable with. And through the Internet we have been able to extend system access to teachers, parents and students.”

#### Employee forms available online

Jordan’s employees can view their own information online, including HR and payroll details. They can view their paychecks in advance and use Skyward’s check estimator tool to see how various changes to their benefits could impact their pay.

#### Self-service option reduces burden on district support staff

“We have eliminated the need to print direct deposit statements,” Nagasawa-Cruz cited as one example of increased efficiency. “In the past, just prior to each payday, we had to print out the statements, collate them and send them out to the schools. Today, the entire process is paperless; employees are able to access the same information with just the click of a button.”

#### An integrated gradebook accessible to teachers, parents and students

“With our previous system, if a parent had three students in the district they were required to use three different logins,” said Heaps. “The information they could access was essentially limited to grades and attendance. With Skyward’s Family Access, a parent only needs to login once to view information on all of their kids. And they now have access to more information, such as test scores, fees and immunizations.” In addition, the Gradebook allows students to login via Student Access to communicate directly with their teachers.

# **SKYWARD WORKED WITH JORDAN TO DEVELOP SBAA, SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITY ACCOUNTING, WHICH IS NOW AVAILABLE TO ALL SKYWARD CUSTOMERS.**

## [Less support required from the IT staff](#)

Skyward's data mining functionality has empowered employees to generate their own reports, giving them immediate access to information and removing the burden from the IT department. Additionally, with access to the system reporting tools, the IT group has the ability to create its own customized reports without the help of Skyward.

## [A customized system: Managing student fees](#)

Part of Jordan's original RFP included a requirement for managing student fees. Though Skyward did not initially offer this functionality, it worked with Jordan to meet their need by developing the SBAA – School Based Activity Accounting – which is now available to all Skyward customers.

"There are numerous fees that need to be managed by each school - registration fees, activity fees, lab fees, etc.," explains Nagasawa-Cruz. "The funds we are talking about are not small; a single high school may average \$2 million worth of revenue to manage. This new system has given us a true accounting system that is also able to act as a checking account for managing finances at the school level – for example keeping track of all ticket sales from a basketball game. This makes it easier for us to audit, to gather 1099 information, and it is consistent with the systems and processes used by our accounts payable at the district's main office."

## [Jordan USD found a long-term partner for success](#)

Jordan's high expectations for Skyward have been met. "Their support during the implementation was pivotal to our success, and they have continued to be very supportive and responsive to our needs," said Heaps. "I haven't met anyone at Skyward I didn't like. They are genuinely interested and concerned, and ready to listen to anything we have to say."

"They aren't distracted with multiple products, or with serving different industries and clients," said Nagasawa-Cruz. "They live and breathe K-12 and that is very apparent in the way they are organized to provide implementation and support."

**“I HAVEN’T MET ANYONE AT SKYWARD I DON’T LIKE. THEY ARE GENUINELY INTERESTED AND CONCERNED, AND READY TO LISTEN TO ANYTHING WE HAVE TO SAY.”**

Mike Heaps, Support Service Manager

In 2009, a community decision resulted in Jordan School District’s division into two separate districts, Jordan School District and Canyons School District. Both districts continue to use Skyward’s solutions to manage their finance, human resources and student operations.

#### ABOUT SKYWARD

Skyward is a leader in K-12 thought leadership, best practices, and school administrative technologies, surpassing districts’ state reporting needs, improving operational capabilities, and facilitating communication between schools and families. Today, you can find Skyward’s Student Management and School Business Suites in more than 1,800 school districts worldwide, ranging from districts with as few as 50 students to state configurations supporting more than 800,000 students. Founded in 1980, Skyward serves school districts with its integrated student, finance and human resources suite of products, and is proudly made and supported in the U.S.A. Visit online at [www.skyward.com](http://www.skyward.com).

To learn more, visit [www.skyward.com](http://www.skyward.com), or contact your local office.

Headquarters 800.236.7274	Madison, Wisconsin 608.442.3160	Stevens Point, Wisconsin 715.344.3339	Indiana 317.774.2068
Minnesota 888.753.7435	Illinois 800.685.7274	Dallas, Texas 469.524.0063	Austin, Texas 512.795.8500

Skyward and the Skyward logo design are all trademarks or registered trademarks of Skyward, Inc. All other brand and product names may be trademarks of their respective companies.

Skyward, Inc. reserves the right to make changes to any products and services herein at any time without notice.

This case study is for informational purposes only. Skyward makes no warranties express or implied in this case study.

