



Working with Skyward to boost operational efficiencies

CASE STUDY

“IT’S ABOUT TEAMWORK, WHICH IS HOW IT SHOULD BE BETWEEN THE VENDOR AND CLIENT.”

CUSTOMER PROFILES

DISTRICT: Seminole County

STATE: Florida

ENROLLMENT: 64,000+

SCHOOLS: 63

IMPLEMENTED: 2010

DISTRICT: Dixie SD

STATE: Florida

ENROLLMENT: 2,044

SCHOOLS: 4

IMPLEMENTED: 2009

SOLUTION

Skyward’s Student Management Suite

BENEFIT

Skyward provides a collaborative partnership, increased efficiency, and improved communication

REPORTING IS A BREEZE IN SEMINOLE COUNTY

THE CHALLENGE

Florida’s Seminole County Public Schools (SCPS) had used the same student system for over a decade. When Tim Harper, the district’s chief information officer (CIO), learned that the system had reached the end of its life, he was understandably concerned. SCPS, located 25 miles northeast of Orlando, serves 64,000 students. Harper realized he faced a tall task in finding a system that would be easy to learn, could manage such a high number of students, and would be efficient when it came to state reporting.

THE SOLUTION

SCPS decided to implement the Skyward Student Management Suite. They chose the system because of its real-time monitoring capabilities and the improved home-school communication it offered.

THE RESULTS

Helpful and timely information

It didn’t take long after implementation for the district to be impressed by Skyward’s ability to both monitor state requirements and notify staff of changes in a timely manner. Harper noted the importance of this capability. “I think most people in other states would agree that we have the most complete state reporting system. We send data all 12 months of the year,” he said. When a change does occur, **“Skyward gets back to us in a very reasonable amount of time with solutions and a realistic timeline for implementing the necessary changes.”**

“IT’S ABOUT TEAMWORK, WHICH IS HOW IT SHOULD BE BETWEEN THE VENDOR AND CLIENT. WE DIDN’T GET THERE WITH OUR FORMER VENDOR BUT IN LESS THAN TWO YEARS WE ARE THERE WITH SKYWARD.”

Tim Harper, CIO, Seminole County

Outstanding service

Harper said his staff “absolutely loves the product.” The district benefits from both the student information system itself and the service that Skyward provides. **Harper is pleased with what he refers to as Skyward’s key strengths: personal attention, a collaborative partnership, and a streamlined process.**

Increased efficiency

Implementing Skyward has allowed SCPS to greatly increase its efficiency. **The eight-person team devoted to reporting has been cut nearly in half.** The three programmers who used to build workarounds to make up for the previous vendor’s inadequate fixes are no longer needed. Today, these repurposed staff members focus their efforts on other areas, such as web development.

A lasting partnership

“We’re pretty good about monitoring the state’s changes together,” said Harper. **“It’s about teamwork, which is how it should be between the vendor and client. We didn’t get there with our former vendor, but in less than two years we are there with Skyward.”**

DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT AUTOMATES PROCESSES AND IMPROVES COMMUNICATIONS

THE CHALLENGE

Around the same time SCPS began implementing the Skyward Student Management Suite, 170 miles away on the state’s gulf side, a 2,000-student district began its search for a new student management system. Dixie School District in Cross City, Florida, was still on a mainframe. Karen E. Sapp, the district’s management information specialist, knew it was time to develop a Web presence. She wanted to pull the various programs the district used into one cohesive package.

THE SOLUTION

Dixie chose the Skyward system and went live on the Web in 2010. Each year, the district added additional applications to the system. In 2012, for example, they added Response to Intervention (Rtl), which the district’s elementary school teachers and guidance counselors love. **“Everyone loves being able to look at grades, discipline, and attendance in one place,”** Sapp said. “Before implementing Skyward Rtl, teachers created Excel spreadsheets and printed out mailing labels for the letters that were sent home to every student who had to be tested. Now, Skyward generates forms to email; if there’s no response, they send a letter. Best of all, teams of teachers have access to all of the data so they can figure out what each student needs.”

THE RESULTS

Helpful applications

Dixie is pleased with the multitude of Skyward applications that allow a variety of staff to complete student-related processes efficiently. Skyward Food Service, another newer application for Dixie, allows

THE NEW FAMILY ACCESS IS JUST ONE MORE EXAMPLE OF THE INNOVATIVE AND INDUSTRY-LEADING SERVICES SKYWARD PROVIDES.

administrators to handle payment processing and reporting seamlessly. It integrates with all Skyward applications, so parents can check balances and pay for meals online through the parent portal. Teachers enjoy using the Skyward Gradebook to enter grades in one place for automated posting. They are also able to create online tests. Teachers can track benchmarks, goals, assessments, and resources without having to sign in to multiple systems. With the online exams, “[Teachers] have a test bank to pull questions from, and students will have everything they need to be productive,” Sapp said.

Satisfied users

Teachers aren’t the only happy Skyward users within the Dixie School District. Parents enjoy being able to login to Skyward Family Access and check their children’s grades, assignments, standardized testing information, and discipline. During high-stakes testing, the guidance counselor can use the system to call parents to ensure their students get to school. “We’ve had lots of success with that calling program,” Sapp said. “In the past, letters would go home after 15 days, and that was too late.”

Improved communication

Perhaps the biggest way Skyward has impacted Dixie School District is by improving communication. Guidance counselors can send emails to parents of students who are skipping classes or doing poorly. Teachers can collaborate on student progress. Parents can find everything from test scores to missing assignments through Family Access.

A lasting partnership

Sapp said that the new Family Access is just one more example of the innovative, industry-leading services Skyward provides. She looks forward to a continued partnership and to delivering high quality education for students of the district.

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.

To learn more, visit www.skyward.com, or contact your local office.

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