



CASE STUDY

Parkway School District

EmpCenter fully Automates its Workforce Management Process

Customer Since
February 2004

No. of Employees:
3,200

Industry:
K-12 Education

EmpCenter Modules:
Time & Attendance Base
Accruals & Absence
Manager
FMLA Manager
Employee Self-Service

Platform:
Windows

Other ERP Systems:
Third Party Payroll System

With 14 nationally recognized Blue Ribbon schools of excellence, Parkway School District has a well-deserved academic reputation for being among the best in Missouri and the nation. The district is also “Accredited with Distinction” by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which is the highest accreditation level available in the state. Although half a century has passed since Parkway’s inception, the district’s goals remain the same: academic excellence, community involvement, and fiscal responsibility.

WorkForce Challenges & Issues

Similar to other organizations not using an automated software system for workforce management processes, the Parkway School District’s timekeeping processes were labor intensive and time-consuming. The various departments used disparate databases, which created issues with accurate timekeeping and accrual tracking, and the inability to track time to an activity.

Common to school districts, not just Parkway, is that many employees have more than one job within the district. More than likely, each job has a different pay rate, supervisor, department rules, etc., all of which creates complex, manual calculations without an automated workforce management system. It also increases the number of errors in employee paychecks, especially for those employees who hold multiple positions since there are more factors involved such as overtime pay, various pay rates, etc. Automation increases check accuracy and decreases an employer’s headaches.

Time and cost associated with the manual timekeeping process was significant, according to the technology department at Parkway School District. Payroll clerks spent hours and days completing the old process, which required non-exempt employees to fill out time cards, and then payroll clerks to manually gather and compile information from multiple systems and re-key that information into a payroll system.

Selecting WorkForce Software

Parkway knew which high-level attributes they were looking for in a new workforce management system. Their list included things like the system being user friendly, web-based, support for a SQL database and LDAP security. It also had to provide a self-service interface that employees could use to review accrual balances, timesheets, and other personal data. Parkway also wanted a system that its technical staff could easily configure and support while accommodating the district’s unique time and attendance requirements for its multiple departments.

The district formed a committee composed of representatives from key departments, including payroll, technology, and human resources. Next, the committee created a list of requirements and a request for proposal, which they sent to several software vendors. Several vendors responded and then, after a thorough review of the responses, the committee narrowed the list to three vendors. After seeing software demonstrations and a thorough evaluation of each product’s functionality, Parkway chose WorkForce Software’s EmpCenter suite.

“During our evaluation of workforce management products, it became apparent that the other two vendors on our short list would have to make several source code customizations to their products in order to meet our requirements,” said Bradley. “We didn’t want customizations

because we knew our cost of ownership would be higher as the system evolved over time, and upgrades would be too difficult. However, EmpCenter could accommodate our unique business and technical requirements through non-programming configuration options.”

Implementation

“Our project implementation methodology was good and we accomplished our goals,” said Bradley. “We understood a new system was going to require a change in the way everyone worked, so we designed a plan that eased each department into the implementation.”

During the kick-off meeting, we discussed the implementation process, the implementation plan, and the expectations of both WorkForce Software and Parkway School District. Key members of Parkway’s project team were in constant communication with the district board and departments to keep everyone up-to-date on the progress to get everyone else enthusiastic and involved.

The first phase of the implementation, and probably the most important, was one of the most challenging – getting key personnel from each department together at one time to gather requirements. Communication was essential during the requirements gathering process. The requirements document, which grew from this process, required several review-and-change steps before being finalized. After that, EmpCenter was configured from the requirements document, data conversion began, and the users were trained. It was a straightforward process to implement a system that was going to cut labor costs and increase productivity throughout the district.

“We let the individual schools and departments choose timeframes to roll-out the system to their employees,” said Bradley. “This was a good decision because it avoided making users feel forced to use the new system.”

Data Collection

“EmpCenter was designed to accommodate even the most obscure and unique time and attendance requirements we had,” said Bradley. “It also integrated with any collection device we considered. We chose to use badge readers and biometric scanners to automate the start and stop times of non-exempt employees.” These two options made it easy for employees who may or may not have easy access to computers.

EmpCenter automates all aspects of workforce management. When an employee logs time into the system, EmpCenter enforces all of the business rules and pay policies that apply to that interaction. For example, the funds earmarked for a particular employee’s time may come from a grant or some other source, so EmpCenter would apply those funds for that employee.

EmpCenter also supports the concept of multiple assignments, which allow an employee to be paid at different rates with different policies, depending on the assignments they complete each day. For example, a school bus driver may also work another position to keep full-time status and benefits. Each job pays at a different rate and has different rules that govern it, almost as if it is two different employees, but the

pay is combined onto one check, including overtime pay calculations that comply with FLSA.

School districts recognize that federal and state regulatory compliance is critical to enforce, so WorkForce Software built compliance functionality into EmpCenter. The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), FLSA, and other regulations are supported through EmpCenter, decreasing the risk of non-compliance for employers.

Customer Service & Support

“Deploying a new workforce management system was a cultural change for our organization, which presented unique challenges for this project,” said Bradley. “But the WorkForce Software team was very supportive and professional during these challenges. I think it would be hard to find a better business partner to work with.”

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Gary Bradley at Parkway School District

Results

Because Parkway replaced an old manual process with an automated system, the organization began to see a return on their investment almost immediately with EmpCenter. The biggest savings resulted from automating the collection of non-exempt employee hours, calculation of time data, and processing of reports. The process that used to take a week, now takes place instantly. The information is available in real-time and easily accessible by the payroll department.

“There was a significant cost to manually handling timesheets,” said Bradley. “On an annual basis, the process took up to 1,456 hours to key in timesheets, 5,200 timesheet reviews by managers, 40 hours for accounting to compile data and make journal entries, 4,000 employees filling out timesheets. It really was an incredible expense, but now all of these processes are automated.”

Before EmpCenter, approximately five-percent of timesheets had errors, but that figure is now less than one-percent. Employees that had been dedicated to the time and attendance process have been reallocated to other areas of the organization.

Another major benefit Parkway recognizes is FLSA compliance. EmpCenter ensures that the district complies with regulations and avoids state or federal fines and disgruntled employees. “Compliance is important to us as an organization,” said Bradley. “During the implementation, we made sure our new best practices processes included support for regulatory compliance.”