

Client Success Story

School District Achieves Unexpected Results for PeopleSoft HCM and FSCM



Client Profile: Pittsburgh Public Schools serves nearly 30,000 students in 66 schools, making it the largest school district in Allegheny County and the second largest in all of Pennsylvania. The district serves kindergarten through grade 12 as well as early childhood programs in classrooms across the city.

Industry: Public Sector

Geography: Headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Applications: PeopleSoft HCM 8.3 SP1 and FSCM 8.4 SP3

Technology Platform: Windows, MS SQL Server



The Pathway to the Promise.™

"We had given up calling Oracle for technical support because it was such an ordeal, but with Rimini Street we don't have to go through a laundry list of questions that don't have any application to our problem. Now it's immediate, helpful and correct."

Joe Charnock

Director of Application Development
Pittsburgh Public School District

Pittsburgh Public Schools is considered one of America's premier school districts, with a heavy emphasis on academic excellence and well-managed, innovative programs.

The Pittsburgh Public School District Challenge

In May 2006, Pittsburgh Public School District introduced Excellence for All, a program noted for its innovative approach that establishes a belief across the Pittsburgh community that every child — at every level of academic performance — can achieve excellence. Even as the academic performance of the district's students improves, however, economic challenges have grown as families move out of town or choose to send their children to charter schools. In fact, 20,000 students have moved out of the system over the past two decades.

The PPS Technology Department implemented PeopleSoft's suite of applications to help manage the personnel and financial records for its 6,500 staff members. In 2008, along with all other school district departments, Director of Application Development Joe Charnock and Chief Information Officer Bud Bergie were told to cut their budget by 15 percent.

Charnock and Bergie targeted several areas to cut. They included the annual software support fee, which provided little value since PPS was using only a portion of the licensed modules in PeopleSoft's HRMS application. Charnock contacted the software vendor, asking for the support billing to reflect only the modules that had been implemented. "They gave us a flat 'No' and told us that annual maintenance was sold as a package deal whether we had implemented the applications or not," he said.

After refusing the request to apply support charges only to software in use, the vendor went one step further and informed PPS that it was raising support fees. "They wouldn't give us any idea of how much the increase would be," said Charnock. "When you're trying to cut budgets, that's tough."

Benefits

- Met budget mandates and maintained full staffing levels by saving 50 percent in annual support fees.
- Implemented previously unused module with ultra-responsive service
- Increased PeopleSoft user efficiencies

“We don’t have anyone beating down our doors with major issues and that frees us up to concentrate on more important things, like helping the kids in our district.”

Joe Charnock

*Director of Application Development
Pittsburgh Public School District*

For More Information

To read more about Pittsburgh Public School District or to read other client success stories, visit www.riministreet.com/clients.

The Rimini Street Solution

Even with the mandatory budget cuts and the software vendor’s pending fee increase, Charnock said that moving away from vendor support was a difficult decision. “At first, it felt risky for us to leave them behind,” he admitted. “We had concerns that vendor support was our only option.”

Then, Charnock learned about Rimini Street and began speaking with Rimini Street clients about the company’s support expertise. “We consistently heard that Rimini Street was exceptionally responsive,” he recalled. “That gave us confidence in third-party support, so we signed on to the Rimini Street support program. Where we felt trapped in the past, we found a partner that could offer us the most value for our support dollar.”

Client Results

Although PPS had been paying a premium for vendor support before Rimini Street, staffers were reluctant to use the service. “We’d have to answer question after question before someone would call us back,” Charnock said. “They would constantly talk about the patches and fixes we needed, even if they had nothing to do with our issues. It got to the point where we quit calling unless it was an absolute emergency.”

Rimini Street proved its value on the first call. “We had a simple question about the numbering sequence on checks, and Rimini Street had an answer within 30 minutes,” Charnock said. “After some time scratching our heads, we realized we could call on Rimini Street at any time. To have someone who could talk us through an issue and make sure everything was resolved before closing the call was amazing.”

Encouraged, PPS staffers called Rimini Street when a payroll run was aborted after the finance department attempted to pull in the time and labor data. “We worked on it for several hours trying to identify the problem,” Charnock said. “Then we called our Rimini Street Primary Support Engineer (PSE), who walked us through the fix and took time to explain how the system works, which will help us in the future.”

PPS then tapped Rimini Street to learn how to use a module that had previously been shelved. “One of our Human Resources staffers was interested in using the Applicant Tracking piece that we had never implemented before,” Charnock said. “Again we got a call from an expert support engineer who knew the module and taught it to us. It’s clear that Rimini Street’s focus is to ensure our success, not just close cases.”

Before Rimini Street became the district’s support vendor, the department had already received funding to pay for the previous service contract, which was significantly more than Rimini Street charged. As a result, PPS was able to use the funds to extend the coverage period. “Because of Rimini Street, we have kept all our staff and maintained support for critical school programs,” Charnock said.

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