Located in the greater metropolitan area of Birmingham, Alabama, Jefferson County Board of Education oversees the state’s second-largest school district, educating 36,000 students. With 56 schools and a central office, 4,500 full-time employees, and 1,000 substitute teachers, the school district is designed to offer a wide range of academic, career, technical, and extracurricular opportunities to students.

**CHALLENGES**
- Manual timekeeping created compliance issues: Employees felt pressured to sign timesheets completed by supervisors, and one payroll staffer ignored paying reported overtime
- Timekeeping and payroll anomalies led to labor standards civil lawsuits
- Payroll staff needed two weeks each pay period to manually calculate employees’ time and key the data into the payroll system

**SOLUTION**
- A Kronos automated workforce management solution that streamlines time and attendance and payroll to increase productivity, control labor costs, and reduce compliance risk

**BENEFITS**
- Employees have the flexibility to punch in via laptops, mobile devices, or time clocks, and supervisors can manage employee time from anywhere with a tablet
- Accurate employee timekeeping has led to employees taking leave time if they arrive late, decreasing leave time liability by 7 percent over seven months
- All overtime is captured, reflected in the near doubling of overtime that indicates a decreased labor liability
- The automated solution can easily meet Affordable Care Act reporting requirements
- Payroll processing time decreased from two weeks to 20 minutes and requires two fewer staff members

*Sheila Jones*
Chief Financial Officer
Jefferson County Board of Education

“It would be impossible to comply with the ACA (Affordable Care Act) if we used paper timesheets. Using our Kronos solution, we are prepared to meet the ACA’s massive reporting requirements.”
Manually tracking employee time on paper timesheets created compliance issues for Jefferson County Board of Education. To be paid, employees felt pressured to sign off on timesheets completed by supervisors, and one payroll staffer ignored paying reported overtime. A labor-related civil lawsuit, with another in the wings, spurred change.

“Based on potential liabilities, I convinced the board to go with electronic time management,” says CFO Sheila Jones. “We wanted employees in charge of their time, so no one could change collected time. If an employee forgot a punch, we wanted the employee entering the missed punch, with the supervisor accepting or rejecting it. We also wanted to eliminate timekeepers editing timecards at our 60 sites.”

Following bids and product demonstrations, Jefferson County chose an automated Kronos workforce management solution. The move has mitigated compliance issues and streamlined the payroll process.

Well-planned rollout enhances acceptance
During a phased rollout, the district provided hands-on solution training on laptops, mobile devices, and Kronos InTouch clocks, so employees could practice punching in and out, correcting missed punches, and approving time. Training videos and custom job aids with screen shots and instructions on all transactions boosted employee and manager comfort levels.

Solution tracks all employee time and duties
All employees except bus drivers use the solution. Teachers and administrators punch in and out for attendance purposes, while hourly employees punch in and out to start and end their days and for breaks. Remote employees, such as IT and maintenance staff, track their time using mobile devices, and bus drivers may move from timesheets to the mobile solution. Using a tablet, supervisors can manage employee time on the fly.

Teachers who log extra-duty time for before- or after-school tutoring, detention, child care, and other activities are paid an hourly rate tied to a labor level transfer in the timekeeping module.

Substitute teachers also clock in and out using the solution. From a school’s drop-down list of teachers, a sub selects the name of the teacher that he or she is filling in for. The sub is automatically paid by the same local or federal fund that pays the absent teacher.

Reducing leave and overtime liabilities increases compliance
When nonexempt employees tracked their time on paper, some arrived at 8:15 a.m. or later but wrote 8 a.m. on their timesheets. Since adding automated timekeeping, Jefferson County has seen leave time taken increase, particularly in 15- and 30-minute increments. “Our leave time liability went down 7 percent,” says Jones in comparing the same seven-month period over two years.

Employee overtime has nearly doubled during the same period, but the district’s liability has decreased. Before the Kronos solution was implemented, nonexempt employees subject to overtime often worked extra hours but didn’t report their time.

“If an employee got upset or retired and wanted to be paid for this extra time, this became an issue,” explains Jones. “We told employees they couldn’t work off the clock anymore, which increased overtime. We see this as a good thing, considering that time-related lawsuits drove us to Kronos. Since we transitioned to Kronos, we’ve had no more FLSA or wage and hour lawsuits.”

Affordable Care Act compliance made easy
Complying with provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is on the minds of many organizations. “One of the biggest advantages of using Kronos is compliance, including compliance with the ACA,” says Jones. “As big as we are, it would be impossible to comply with the ACA if we used paper timesheets. Using our Kronos solution, we are prepared to meet the ACA’s massive reporting requirements.”

Payroll process realizes significant time savings
When payroll staff manually calculated employees’ time on paper timesheets and keyed the data into the payroll system, the process took two weeks to complete. Now it takes 5 to 10 minutes to run the interface in Kronos and another 5 to 10 minutes to import the data into the payroll system. “Within 20 minutes we can do what took two weeks before,” notes Jones. “The time savings were huge for the payroll department. As a result we could reduce payroll staff by two.”

Next steps
Down the road, Jones says Jefferson County may add biometric time clocks and move to a Kronos cloud-based solution. In the interim, the district is enjoying the compliance and productivity improvements made possible by its automated workforce management solution.