Garland Independent School District Improves Productivity and Labor Cost Control with Kronos Solution

Garland Independent School District (Garland ISD) includes 85 campus and administrative facilities. With a student population of 58,000, the district is the second-largest in Dallas County and the 12th-largest in Texas. Open-enrollment options allow students to choose the school they attend. The district offers traditional learning programs, as well as a variety of magnet programs that blend regular curriculum and specialized courses. With a staff of 8,200 employees, including full-time staff and substitute teachers, Garland ISD is focused on providing students with an enriching learning experience.

**CHALLENGES**

- Tracking employee time to FLSA standards while using paper timecards was nearly impossible and required extensive storage capacity
- Ensuring that teachers’ extra-duty time was tracked accurately and paid properly was difficult
- After a payroll staff member collected timesheets from across the district, the payroll process required another six hours of tedious manual tasks
- Monitoring program costs, including state and federal grant funds, to provide accurate reporting was challenging

**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**

- Hourly employee time and teachers’ extra-duty time are accurately tracked, helping to ensure that staff is paid by proper pay codes, in compliance with FLSA standards
- Capturing teachers’ exact extra-duty time has helped reduce supplemental pay costs by nearly 40 percent
- Payroll processing has been reduced from six hours to only 30 minutes
- Tracking of and reporting on program costs, including state and federal grant funds used, is easier and more precise
- Accurately tracking accrued time earned and taken helps ensure equitable leave-time taking

“To better track and reduce extra-duty supplemental pay costs, our Kronos solution captures extra duty at the department and campus levels. With the increased visibility allowing consistency and closer scrutiny, we have seen an almost 40 percent reduction in supplemental pay costs over three years.”

David Mouton
Kronos Systems Manager
Garland Independent School District
Tracking employee time at Garland ISD with a paper-based system was unwieldy and error-prone. Stacks of timecards piled up at each facility, and handwritten records were inexact. Time-related lawsuits in the industry got the attention of district officials, who wanted to stay ahead of this issue by ensuring Garland ISD could track employee time to FLSA standards.

A neighboring school district evaluated automated workforce management solutions and selected Kronos. “We drew on their experience, and the Kronos solution looked like the right fit for us too,” shares Larry Williams, former director of auxiliary personnel for Garland ISD.

The district’s RFP process reinforced this view, as did the maintenance department’s successful implementation of a Kronos solution a few years prior. Subsequent districtwide implementation has helped Garland ISD improve productivity, reduce compliance risk, and gain better control of labor costs.

**Accurate time tracking improves compliance, decreases labor costs**

The solution rollout began with hourly employees at one facility and progressed to other campuses. Then Garland ISD added an ERP system, stipulating that it interface easily with the district’s Kronos solution.

With teachers not yet using Kronos, campus secretaries manually entered teachers’ supplemental hours and costing into spreadsheets and emailed them to the payroll director, who uploaded them to the ERP system. Spreadsheet problems surfaced, as did costing and employee ID errors for supplemental hours.

Now all employees use the Kronos solution, which is interfaced with the ERP system, a substitute-teacher tracking system to import teacher absences, and a bus driver field trip time-tracking solution.

With all employees punching in and out at biometrics time clocks, the possibility of buddy-punching has been eliminated. Hourly employee time is tracked for payroll purposes. Teachers, para-professionals, and hourly employees clock in and out to track supplemental pay for extra duties, which are tracked by job and pay code and uploaded into payroll and the new ERP projects and grants module. This accuracy has alleviated FLSA and grant compliance concerns.

“To better track and reduce extra-duty supplemental pay costs, our Kronos solution captures extra duty at the department and campus levels,” notes David Mouton, the district’s Kronos systems manager. “With the increased visibility allowing consistency and closer scrutiny, we have seen an almost 40 percent reduction in supplemental pay costs over three years.”

**Solution creates districtwide consistency**

As with any new system, pushback occurred. “Some teachers grumbled, but they adapted to the Kronos solution quickly and tend to like it much more,” says Mouton. “Employees like being held to the same rules and standards, especially when they do extra things.”

The Kronos solution also has helped settle time disputes, a major problem previously with manual processes. “If an employee has a question now about time, we can quickly show it,” he adds.

**Payroll processing time drastically reduced**

Prior to implementation of the Kronos solution, a business department employee collected, cataloged, and retrieved all timesheets from across the district, before checking timesheet signatures. The district spent up to six hours per pay period preparing employee time information for payroll.

“The Kronos implementation cut drastically into that time,” says Steve Reeves, a district employee who oversees Kronos back-end operations. “We get everything completed and over to payroll now within 30 minutes.”

**Increased costing accuracy**

Public schools need to answer questions about where money is spent. The Kronos solution’s costing accuracy is a big benefit in this area, says Mouton, particularly with state and federal grant funds.

“It’s a lot easier now using our Kronos solution to justify where these dollars are spent,” he explains. “With the punch of a button we can tell where the money goes, and reports break it all out and organize the information.”

**Robust leave module helps manage labor costs**

Having an accurate view of employees’ accrued time is also important to effectively manage costs. When Garland ISD added its ERP system, the district considered moving from its Kronos accruals module to the ERP’s solution.

“After eight weeks of analysis we decided we needed to stick with Kronos and further expand our use of it,” shares Reeves. “We chose Kronos for all accruals because it is more robust and much easier to use in tracking accruals, leaves, and balances.”

**Going mobile**

To further optimize use of its Kronos solution, Garland ISD is planning to turn on the Kronos mobile solution to give employees remote access to their time information, further increasing employee satisfaction.