

About Crete-Monee School District 201-U

- Suburban Chicago, IL
- Approximately 4,800 students
- Nearly 800 employees
- 10 IT staff
- Went from eight staff members dedicated to IT help requests to only four
- Expanded capabilities and project scope thanks to saved labor time

case study



information
technology

ITDirect

- Resolve IT incidents faster
- Increase IT team efficiency
- Improve customer service
- Track and report on incident status easily

SchoolDude IT Incident Management Solution Revolutionizes IT at Crete-Monee School District

When Mark Dyrek, a technology industry veteran, arrived at Crete-Monee School District 201-U in suburban Chicago, it was the first time he'd encountered a district without an automated help desk management solution. Dyrek's 15 years of industry experience told him the lack of a help desk management tool would pose serious problems for the growing district. "When I arrived," says Dyrek, "we had two buildings and our technicians were stationed in each. An ad hoc approach had been in place for years. It was clear that the district had been wasting a lot of time and resources. We had no way to track our trouble incidents, and there was no accountability. When an end user (teacher or staff member) needed technical support, they would go in search of one of the technicians, pull them aside and say, 'Hey, can you help me out with this problem?'"

The approach didn't make sense to Dyrek, and he was determined to change it. So, when Dyrek was put in charge of the technology department two years ago, he immediately took steps to implement a help desk solution that would make the IT department more efficient, accountable and proactive.

Dyrek selected technology from SchoolDude.com, the leading provider of online operations management solutions designed exclusively for schools. With the implementation of SchoolDude's ITDirect, a powerful, online IT incident management tool, Dyrek ushered in a new era of technology management at the district. The software is delivered as a service (SaaS) over the Web, which means Dyrek's already overburdened team didn't have to install new software or manage additional servers.

Report Card

Dyrek currently has four staff members attending to end users' help desk requests. With more than 2,000 technology assets, including 800 computers and countless printers, phones and routers, the team is fully engaged. The district has approximately 4,800 students and 784 employees in 10 buildings, including one central office where the 10-member IT staff is based.





On-Demand Tools for Managing Educational Support Services


Today, ITDirect serves as the management interface for the IT department. For example, the system generates a “receipt” for the end user when he or she calls in with a technical problem. “People like having a record and knowing for certain that their issue is being addressed,” says Dyrek. “ITDirect’s reporting feature has definitely helped our department to be more accountable and professional. It has also improved our efficiency.”

ITDirect provides benefits far beyond enhanced reporting, according to Dyrek. The software has also helped his department better manage their resources. Previously, Dyrek didn’t know what jobs his technicians were working on, which meant there was no way for him to gauge the efficiency of his team. Today, with ITDirect, Dyrek can see exactly how many calls and the types of calls his technicians are making. “In this manner,” says Dyrek, “we can identify ‘problem buildings’ and determine which buildings take more or less effort to manage. By doing so, we’ve been able to streamline our department. Today, only four technicians are needed to handle the incidents that come in, instead of the eight we’d originally assigned. We’ve been able to put that excess labor to work on other projects, thereby greatly expanding what our department can do for the district.”

Even with half as many technicians responding to incidents, Dyrek reports that the team’s response time has been “fantastic.” He adds, “People really appreciate how quickly we’re able to address their needs.”

Knowledge is Good

One of the essential features that Dyrek was looking for in a help desk solution was an online knowledge base. His goal was to document incidents and put the information in a knowledge base so that users could quickly and easily access the information gleaned from previous problems. It was something the IT department had tried unsuccessfully to do in the past. An ad hoc, email-based reporting system just wasn’t sophisticated enough to ensure compliance. When his team tried to customize a third-party database solution, it wasn’t user-friendly, and maintaining the system turned out to be impractical, costly and frustrating. With ITDirect’s self-help knowledge base, the IT department can now provide users with easy-to-access information.



Another feature Dyrek has found helpful is ITDirect’s routing capabilities, which allows his team to track the status of all the requests they receive from end users. ITDirect has programmable logic for managing and automating incident approval and assignment. “The system serves as a bridge between the district’s maintenance department, which uses SchoolDude’s MaintenanceDirect for work order management facilities, and our department,” says Dyrek. “Sometimes users think that the maintenance department fixes computers, and they erroneously put in a request to them for repairs. SchoolDude allows the maintenance department to seamlessly route those calls to our system.”

To further leverage the power of ITDirect's routing capabilities, Dyrek began a pilot program in one of the district's school buildings that allows people to put in their own help tickets. The routing feature makes this an easy, efficient process, according to Dyrek.

Dyrek recognized that many of the district's teachers were too busy teaching during the day to worry about calling in trouble tickets. Because ITDirect is Web-based, teachers can now send requests from home or anywhere there is a live Internet connection. "My advice for anyone considering a help desk is to choose an online system," he says. "The online capability of ITDirect saves us money. We don't have to do any upgrades on hardware or system maintenance. And, having a Web-based solution provides us with great flexibility."

With ITDirect, Dyrek is now able to provide the district's end users with excellent support. The system has improved the department's professionalism and boosted its stature among the district's leadership. "Last week, for instance, the superintendent told me that we were light years ahead of any school district in the immediate area, based on our level of IT support. We can thank SchoolDude for helping us reach this excellent level of support."

Results & Benefits:

- Reporting capabilities made IT department more accountable and professional
- Improved department efficiency
- Versatile, adaptable, easy to use, with no hardware investment
- Improved communication between IT department and end users

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Mark Dyrek
Director of Technology

