

About Lakewood City Schools

- Lakewood, OH
- 5,800 students
- 60 custodial and maintenance employees
- 2,200 facility scheduling requests per month
- SchoolDude products in use: Facility Schedule Automation, FSDirect, MaintenanceDirect, PMDirect, InventoryDirect

Facility Schedule Automation Simplifies BAS Overrides at Lakewood City Schools

The numbers related to facility scheduling at Lakewood City Schools can be mind-boggling: ten buildings, available seven days a week, with building systems costing \$250 per hour to run, and a stack of 2,200 permits per month awaiting approval for facility use during the school year. Not only is it a lot of math; it's also a lot of work to organize and schedule.

In the past, Jay Roberts, manager of operations at the 5,800-student Ohio-based district, took on the additional task of manually overriding the building automation system (BAS) for the district's 2,200 events every month. This necessary extra step allowed the rooms being used to be properly maintained at appropriate temperatures to keep occupants comfortable and coming back.

Despite its importance, overrides weren't the only items on Roberts' growing to-do list and could sometimes get overlooked. The district needed a solution to relieve the heavy burden of manually overriding the BAS for approximately 75 events each day, totaling more than 20,000 permit requests every year. Lakewood City Schools found an answer in SchoolDude's Facility Schedule Automation (FSA) tool.

Since implementing FSA, Roberts no longer has this responsibility looming over him before the district plays host to 2,200 events each month. For this, he is thankful. But, it wasn't that long ago when his workday was drastically different.

A Number of Challenges

Due to the large number of requests for permits to use a district building, it would often take Roberts a week to assign a building to the permit. This was simply a continuation of a slow, paper process to request facility use. "In the past, someone who wanted to hold an event would type up a paper and send me a carbon copy to schedule heat, for example," Roberts explained. "The form would go through the school mail, and sometimes the custodian in charge of set-up would get the permit the day after the event took place."

Erin Fach, commissioner of community recreation and education, added, "Thousands of facility permits were being done by hand, which was very time consuming and costly. Relying on inner office mail and a trail of paper throughout the district led to poor communication. Sometimes facilities weren't being scheduled correctly, or at all."

To help solve this problem, the district implemented SchoolDude's FSDirect system, an on-demand facility usage scheduling tool. Roberts' tie to facility scheduling remained the same—checking whether the event needed heat or cooling. "Depending on how busy the day was," Roberts said, "I didn't always have time to look thoroughly, so I would simply extend the day and run the heat until 6:00 for an after-hours event instead of 3:00, even if the unit could have been shut down an hour and a half earlier."



facility
operations

SchoolDude's Facility Schedule Automation

- Increases efficiency
- Saves money
- Improves communication

case study



A Solution to Count On

Implementing FSA proved to be the right solution to save Roberts and his staff time—and money. FSA connects Lakewood’s BAS with FSDirect and other intelligent building technologies, providing data exchange between the systems that enables automatic coordination of events and HVAC.

Having implemented FSA just three months ago, Roberts can already see improvements district-wide. With more refined tracking of events, especially those that take place after the school day ends, the district is able to save money on energy costs.

“Because of the way the product works, the heat or air conditioning is on for just the amount of time that the event is taking place,” Roberts said. “If we have an event from 5:00-7:00, Facility Schedule Automation takes over, and I don’t have to worry about it.”

Visitors no longer walk in to cold rooms due to the heat not being scheduled to come on for after-hours events. This error, according to Roberts, should not arise again thanks to the automated linkage of facility scheduling with the district’s BAS.

“I haven’t been worrying about it at all,” Roberts said. “Every now and then, I’ll scan temperatures to make sure everything is okay, and I haven’t seen anything wrong.”

Adding Up Savings

Knowing the district is already seeing signs of success, Roberts and Fach are excited to crunch the numbers and learn their exact savings figures. For Roberts personally, implementing SchoolDude’s solutions has whittled down the time he needs to spend on facility scheduling so that he can concentrate on other responsibilities. “Using Facility Schedule Automation frees up a whole lot of time, at least 16-24 hours per month for me.”

While this time savings is also a money-saving opportunity, lower utility bills will provide the most notable monetary gains. The district will be comparing energy consumption this year, having used FSA, to last year’s numbers, without the benefits of FSA, to get a full analysis of the success. Roberts is confident the difference in numbers will be dramatic since the HVAC systems are now in use only when needed.

In general, uniting FSDirect with a BMS through FSA is projected to save an average of three- to five-percent of an organization’s utility costs. Time will tell whether Lakewood achieves this benchmark or far exceeds it. In the meantime, Roberts and Fach are pleased with the results so far—both tangible and intangible.

“SchoolDude has created a much more efficient and effective process for scheduling our facilities,” Fach said. “It has simplified my workday and has created more organization where we needed it.”

Roberts added, “I don’t know why anyone would want it to work any differently. It’s practically worry-free now.”

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*Jay Roberts,
Manager of Operations*

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