

Downingtown Area School District

Downingtown Ups the Standards on Technology in Education

Business Overview

Thirty miles from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Downingtown Area School District operates ten elementary, three middle, and three high schools, educating over 12,000 students each year. Downingtown's leadership has championed the role of technology within the school system to the benefit of staff, students, teachers, and parents. This vision extends to the technology department which applies creative and progressive solutions to common district challenges with outstanding results.

Challenges

Downingtown's technology department needed to replace its antiquated and cumbersome service desk system. The system did not allow for the changes and updates necessary to keep it relevant to its user base. It had limited reporting features and ineffective search capabilities. Also, the product's support team was based overseas, making them difficult to reach during standard hours. With over 25,000 tickets flooding in each year, it would be a vast improvement just to have a functioning, supported solution. But Downingtown doesn't think small. It had big ideas for the new system.

Downingtown wanted to replace its help desk software with a customizable solution that could expand beyond tech support to five very different request processes within the district. First, it wanted to create a service desk where both end users and staff could update the tickets, and where requests could be submitted via mobile device and chat. Then, it wanted to adapt this solution to create a service desk for parents, students, and community

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– Sue Gallagher, Tech Administrator

members to request changes to, or comment on, the district's transportation system and school buses. Third, using the same system, it wanted to create a technical project

portal that was separate from the service desk. Here, new projects could be opened, and more than eight tasks would auto-generate and begin their associated workflows. Next, Downingtown planned to extend the solution to its distinct change request process. Lastly, it also wanted to use Agiloft to



Industry

- Education

Challenges

- Five different request processes on a single centralized solution
- Workflow automation, task creation, and integrated reporting for each of the five request processes
- Customization including support chat, strict security, and more

Agiloft Solution Benefits

- Flexibility surpassed the standard offerings of similar systems designed specifically for education
- A one-stop solution where user requests and technology department tasks are centralized
- Dramatic improvement to user experience with intuitive, graphical interfaces

extend to other service departments within their organization. This would create continuity in the end user experience when working with Technology, Transportation, Facilities or the Centralized Print Shop departments.

The Search

Director of Technology at Downingtown Colleen Yenser summarized what she wanted from the search, "I was looking for an adaptive business processing software. That way, end users would have the same experience when they reached out to transportation, tech support, printing, and eventually facilities."

Downingtown's Technology Advisory Board reviewed a number of solutions and put the vendors to the test with its unique demands and requirements. Downingtown Applications and Client Services Administrator Sue Gallagher recalled, "Some of the applications we considered were geared specifically to education, but we wanted to do more than the standard. We wanted to process everything through the same interface and we wanted to bring in transportation and the print shop. We even have future plans for incorporating our student-run help desk and our facilities areas."

In the end, the Director, the Administrator, and the rest of their team found Agiloft's ease-of-use, advanced customization, and workflow functionality well-suited for their high expectations and continuing expanded use.

The Project

Downingtown decided to take advantage of the flexibility within the Agiloft architecture, using multiple tables to create customized experiences and separate workflows that satisfy its five distinct request needs.

"The more we customized, the more we wanted. We'd get together and show the Technology Advisory Board what we've done and they'd think of a dozen more great things we could do. I kept trying to stump the Agiloft team, but I couldn't do it. The Agiloft team are great to work with. I have done technology project management for over 14 years

and I've worked with lots of vendors. The weekly project calls that Agiloft still conducts are the best I've ever experienced. I would recommend Agiloft on just those calls alone," Sue Gallagher shared.

"Agiloft really worked with us. We can't recall them ever saying no. Literally anything we brought to them, they did."

– Sue Gallagher

Protecting student information was a primary concern. So, the implementation required strict security walls. The system allowed the technology department to view and manage the new processes live without displaying it to the public. In addition, the transportation request process required unique permissions to ensure that tickets could be associated with students even if they were submitted by a parent or guardian, yet never display the students' names to other users. Sue commented, "Agiloft really worked with us. We can't recall them ever saying no. Literally anything we brought to them, they did."

Solution Benefits

With the initial phase of the Agiloft solution in place at Downingtown, user experiences have improved dramatically. Students, teachers, staff and parents all have an intuitive portal for their most common needs and requests.

"In tech support, we have 186 projects and 500 daily support issues with 28 staff. We had to figure out how to focus and work intelligently to be efficient and effective. The project management portal takes our conversations and makes them content rich — all the information we need is in there. Before, I had no way of quantifying our workload or visualizing our constraints — staffing, budget or time. The data we are getting out of the solution is allowing for informed strategizing at all levels," Colleen Yenser shared.

The help desk reporting and feedback tools have also greatly benefited from the transition to Agiloft.



Integral to the Downingtown tech support desk is that users confirm when their request is satisfied. However, once the issue is addressed, most people aren't willing to respond to a phone call or email; there's just too many other pressing matters. The Agiloft team created a custom notification with a fun thumbs-up/thumbs-down graphic, allowing users to supply their response in less than a second. This is further supported by random satisfaction surveys sent out automatically. The results of the surveys

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Director of Technology

and other critical custom reports are integrated with the default district reporting systems, SunGard (PowerSchool) and Cognos, allowing for improved visibility and advanced strategizing.

Colleen summarized, “End users love the interactive experience. The solution is adaptable to everything that we need.” And Sue concluded with, “If you can dream it, Agiloft can do it. To other schools, I say, dream big and with Agiloft, it will happen.”

Let Us Show You

What Agiloft has done for Downingtown Area School District, it can do for you. Let us show you how. In a few hours, we can set up a custom proof of concept featuring your toughest business process. Give us a call to schedule a time.

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