



Case study

Ascension Parish School Board

»We're saving time, we've reclaimed valuable real estate, and we are more efficient at our jobs. That allows us to fulfill our mission, which is doing an even better job of teaching our kids«

Jake Ragusa, Technology Director, the Ascension Parish School Board

The customer

Customer: Ascension Parish School Board
Country: USA
Industry: Education
Website: www.apsb.org

The challenge

A rapidly growing student body placed pressure on the Ascension Parish School Board to find a new way to efficiently and effectively manage records. The school's processes required high-quality hardware that was both simple to use and that would integrate easily with their enterprise document management systems.

The solution

The Ascension Parish School Board adopted three Fujitsu fi-series models to take on their various paper challenges. The scanners were integrated into the School Board's current software infrastructure and process to ensure a seamless end-user experience. The implementation led to significant savings in cost, time and space.

The customer

The Ascension Parish School Board is a public school district serving one of the fastest-growing regions of Louisiana. Hugging the western bank of the Mississippi River about halfway between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Ascension Parish has a K-12 school system with 28 schools, more than 20,000 students, and more than 1,400 teachers who are supported by a contingent of administrators and other personnel.

The challenge

The school district is committed to providing educational excellence while simultaneously streamlining the processes it uses to teach and manage a burgeoning student population. As part of that process, school district officials began looking for ways to digitally capture, manage, and provide wider online access to the mountain of documents generated during normal operations. These include student

assessment tests, student records, personnel records, financial and accounting documents, and payroll forms.

District administrators recognized early on that they would need reliable hardware that could integrate with enterprise document management systems to make the initiative work. But some preliminary investigations into scanner hardware were less than encouraging, says Jake Ragusa, Technology Director for the Ascension Parish School Board.

"We looked at a variety of scanner brands, but they all seemed lacking in some way," says Ragusa.

"Most of them were cumbersome to use, were not entirely dependable, and had too many proprietary technologies attached to make them a viable option for a district-wide implementation. We also needed technology that can produce very clear scans, which is critical when looking at student tests."

The district's plan called for deploying at least two scanners at every school. Reliability and ease of use was critical because district officials wanted to keep training and ongoing maintenance to a minimum. The scanners also had to integrate seamlessly into a range of software products that would be used to capture or generate data, forms, and reports.

The solution

The school district decided to standardize on Fujitsu scanners, focusing on three models: the Fujitsu fi-6130, a sheet-fed duplex model capable of scanning up to 40 double-sided sheets a minute, the Fujitsu fi-6770, a heavy duty duplex scanner that scans up to 11" x 17" wide format documents at scanning speeds up to 90 double sided pages per minute, and the Fujitsu fi-6240, which is also capable of duplex scanning, can scan up to 60 pages a minute, and can accommodate legal-size documents.

The benefit

- Valuable physical space was reclaimed, helping delay an expensive construction project
- Solution handles more than 1 million scanned documents annually, eliminating the storage and manual handling process associated with paper documents
- Saves up to \$70,000 annually by eliminating printing costs for forms
- Teachers and administrators can now view important documents immediately on the district intranet instead of waiting for physical documents to be transported around the district

Products and services

- FUJITSU Image Scanner fi-6130
- FUJITSU Image Scanner fi-6240
- FUJITSU Image Scanner fi-6770

The district deployed several software packages to work with the Fujitsu scanners including Horizon-Boss, a student database application by Northrop Grumman, used to store data obtained from student test forms – by far the largest volume of documents generated in the school system – Cardiff Teleform by Autonomy, used for designing student assessment forms, personnel benefits enrollment forms and automating indexing of financial documents, and Cardiff LiquidOffice workflow, also by Autonomy, used for routing accounting documents through the approval process.

Additionally, the district uses Alio, a comprehensive software suite that helps K-12 districts manage their finances, payroll, and human resources tasks. The district also deployed CEO Imaging Systems software, which serves as a platform for integrating all of the software applications, and is used with the Fujitsu scanners during the scanning process.

The document management solution process begins with an end user scanning a document with a Fujitsu scanner. The CEO Imaging software serves as an electronic filing system, creating the index that is used to tag the documents for future search and retrieval, scanning the documents, and filing them into the appropriate location on a central SQL database. The CEO software enables district personnel to index specific documents electronically and apply permissions to control access to the documents, which helps in securing confidential information.

The benefit

The deployment of the Fujitsu scanners along with the document management, software packages has delivered numerous cost and process-management benefits to the school district.

“We had been planning a \$2 million expansion just to deal with space issues, but have been able to delay that expensive project because of the space that has been freed up using the scanning solution,” says Ragusa.

He explains that the district was able to digitize about 100 years’ worth of historical records, freeing up a lot of floor space, and can avoid filling up more filing cabinets by performing about 1 million scans of student tests each year. The district expects the space savings over time to include at least 11 classrooms, three offices, and multiple cubicle spaces. The scanning and document management solution is also streamlining processes while saving money.

“Employee enrollment used to be a paper-intensive process, but now it’s all digital,” Ragusa says. “Because of this, we’re expecting annual savings of at least \$30,000 and as high as \$70,000 by reducing or eliminating printing costs, and have eliminated a full-time position that used to be dedicated solely to handling HR paperwork.”

The system has also made processes more efficient. For example, the district has eliminated the need for physical documents to be transported around the district, which was time consuming and always created a risk that documents would get lost or delayed. Now documents are instantly available for viewing by teachers and administrators on a secure district wide web portal. All employees except for maintenance and custodial staff—or about 2,400 of the approximately 3,000 district employees—have access to the portal.

“Of course, any solution like this costs money up front, but we think that it’s money very well spent because it pays for itself over the long haul,” says Ragusa.

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Contact

Fujitsu Computer Products of America, Inc.
Address: 1250 East Arques Avenue, Sunnyvale,
CA 94085-4701
Phone: (888) 425-8228
E-mail: info@fcpa.fujitsu.com
Website: <http://us.fujitsu.com/fcpa>

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