Cedar Falls Community School District

CASE STUDY

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The Challenge:

Cedar Falls Community School District takes pride in being one of the best in the state and is dedicated to its vision of academic excellence for all students. Relying on collaboration with the community, parents and all stakeholders, Cedar Falls schools provide outstanding learning environments and create caring, responsible citizens.

The business office plays a vital role in supporting school staff behind the scenes, ensuring that the spotlight remains on student achievement. Success for students depends on having the right people on every campus, from the classrooms to the cafeterias. Considering that recruiting, hiring and retaining qualified candidates are top priorities, the difficulty of managing the endless paperwork from job postings to payroll was taking too much time away from implementing a more strategic approach.

The Results:

Known for their competence and attention to detail, the Cedar Falls business office and human resources teams work together to keep the focus on providing an excellent education for students. After a meticulously planned transition from paper to online data management, they now depend on the smooth integration of Frontline's solutions to provide real data that keeps all systems working like a well-oiled machine.

- Frontline Absence & Time has reduced the time spent on payroll from three or four days to mere minutes.
- Frontline Recruiting & Hiring has eliminated the need for manually posting jobs and managing paper applications, providing more time to find quality candidates.

The ease of both systems working together as one has been a game changer, permitting different departments to easily access shared data and stay ahead of the curve. Office procedures have shifted from data entry to auditing for accuracy and reporting, and the benefits of using Frontline's solutions have extended well beyond the central office and into the classrooms. For teachers and support staff, having access to attendance records at their fingertips makes leave requests for personal obligations far simpler and less time consuming, allowing them more time to focus on their students.
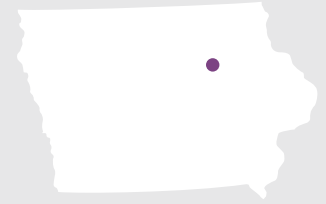
District Background

LOCATION: Cedar Falls, Iowa

ESTABLISHED: 1922

K-12 ENROLLMENT: 5,513

FACILITIES:

- 6 elementary schools (grades Pre-K-6)
- 2 middle schools (grades 7-9)
- 1 high school (grades 10-12)

STAFF:

- Certified: 420
- Classified: 400
- Administrators: 30

DEMOGRAPHICS:

- Hispanic: 2.7%
- Caucasian/White: 84.0%
- African-American/Black: 4.6%
- Asian: 3.6%
- Pacific Islander: 0.2%
- Native American: 0.2%

Solutions Used

- **Frontline Absence & Time**
- **Frontline Recruiting & Hiring**

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The Solution:

Access to data at the touch of a button saves time and increases accuracy.

EFFICIENT HIRING

The primary responsibility of the Cedar Falls HR department is to recruit and hire quality staff for every position in the district. Finding the right candidates starts with posting positions and tracking the openings to make sure qualified applicants are filling the pipeline. Screening applicants for teacher and principal openings guarantees that administrators are interviewing only the top candidates for their schools.

Before using Frontline Recruiting & Hiring, HR specialists like Lori Bruns had to post job openings in multiple locations, a time-consuming and cumbersome task. When the team learned that postings would automatically link to the recently updated and refreshed Cedar Falls Community Schools website, they were delighted with the efficiency of the new program. Not only have they eliminated the need for paper applications, but the numerous features of the system also allow them to set up users with different viewing capabilities. HR specialists can quickly revise or update postings and customize applications for internal and external applicants. Applicants for open positions at all levels find navigating the system and uploading documents to be much easier than in the past, and the district staff can search the applicant pool for specific skill matches — making it much simpler to find the perfect candidate.

Frontline Recruiting & Hiring isn't only for hiring regular staff members — the district hires substitutes through the system, too. Applicants are carefully screened to ensure that only the most qualified candidates end up in the district's classrooms, and are easily transferred into Frontline Absence & Time once hired. Teachers can request their favorite subs, knowing that those subs will be familiar with classroom procedures and dedicated to teaching students. *"That translates into a better student experience when a substitute has to be in the room,"* said Lori Bruns.

TIME-SAVING SYSTEMS

Thanks to extraordinary support from the community, there is no shortage of specialists willing to serve students as athletic or cheer coaches, band directors or drama coaches. Representatives from local businesses mentor students in journalism, marketing, entrepreneurship, leadership and community service. Managing all of those supplemental positions in addition to keeping track of regular full and part-time staff can be a challenge.

That's where Frontline Absence & Time comes in.

The system allows the business office to differentiate between employee groups with different rules and regulations to follow. Administrators can customize the options to make it as easy as possible to use, and saving time on tracking hours gives the staff more freedom to support students.

With careful attention to detail, the business office staff keeps a close watch on the reporting of hours worked, leave requests, stipends and supplemental pay. In the past, that meant many tedious hours of combing through paper timesheets to ensure accuracy. Sometimes leave requests would get lost on the way or an employee might be out of leave time by the time the forms made it to the business office. Now, Frontline Absence & Time takes care of the paperwork, and the payroll department staff can run reports with the touch of a button to check for accuracy. Employees and their supervisors can easily keep track of hours worked and available leave time online.

> *"It's changed my job to oversee the operation rather than a busy secretary or office employee... I don't feel like I'm a secretary or a clerical worker. I feel like it is changed to what payroll should be."* – Jana Speck

Frontline Absence & Time offers tools that go beyond reports and spreadsheets, helping Jana Speck, payroll specialist, keep a virtual eye out for missing data. *"It will nudge us to put in an absence, and we can catch whether employees are over or under their scheduled hours, or missing a clock out or a clock in,"* noted Jana.

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Not only is it important to help the staff save time and effort by simplifying recordkeeping for recruiting, hiring, payroll, absence reporting and time tracking, but accuracy and timeliness in financial reporting are essential for compliance with state and federal guidelines.

> *"We need to make sure that we are keeping up with government regulations, and we're very fortunate to have systems such as Time & Attendance. We can easily create reports and then turn around, convert to our software system and submit them."* – Jana Speck

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

> *"We want to run the school district well. It is a business, and we want to make sure that we are making good use of the government money that is provided to us. There are districts that may not have the ability to put the funds towards something like this, but it's been great for us, and we would encourage others to do the same."* – Jana Speck

Ultimately, having better data supports responsible fiscal management for the district. The ability to monitor hours on the clock allows the payroll specialists to ensure they are paying staff for actual hours worked, to differentiate between part-time and full-time staff, and to treat all employees equitably and fairly.

Careful monitoring of data leads to more efficient staffing allocations for student support. Data reflects whether hours can be reduced for certain positions, or whether additional positions are required at individual schools.

Compliance with state and federal regulations is crucial for the business office and requires software that can import and sort data to run mandatory reports. Because the district was already using Absence & Substitute Management, it made sense to add Time & Attendance as well. The transition was staged in steps over the course of a school year allowing employees time to learn the procedures. The systems have worked seamlessly together, providing the team with time-saving and efficient tools.

In Summary:

> *"Before working for Cedar Falls, I came from a private company that really stressed customer service. I have to be honest in that a lot of times, I've been disappointed in the service that we get from some of our other vendors, but that has never been an issue with Frontline. They have just been tremendous, tremendous to work with."* – Lori Bruns

With the help of Frontline's client success team, the implementation of Frontline Absence & Time was launched on a carefully planned schedule to provide exposure and allow time for all employee groups to master the system. During the entire process, Frontline's client success representatives were relentless in their determination to customize the program to address the unique needs of Cedar Falls schools — demonstrating Frontline's commitment to impeccable customer service. Cedar Falls office staff members have been impressed with the way Frontline's support team has consistently gone above and beyond to exceed expectations.

Frontline Recruiting & Hiring rolled out more quickly because far fewer users have access to it. After the HR staff and hiring principals were trained on how to use it, they had fully implemented the system within two weeks.

The Cedar Falls central office staff has been extremely satisfied with the transition, integration of all systems and exceptional customer support.

> *"It seems like Frontline has been able to offer a lot of the things that you don't even think you need, but you end up needing!"* – Lori Bruns

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About Frontline Education

Frontline Education is an integrated insights partner serving more than **12,000 K-12 organizations** and millions of educators, administrators and support personnel in their efforts to develop the next generation of learners. With more than 20 years of experience serving the front line of education, Frontline Education provides actionable intelligence and insights that enable informed decisions and drive engagement across school systems. Bringing together the best education software solutions into one unified platform, Frontline is pioneering a human capital management approach that meets the unique needs of education. The **Frontline Insights Platform** makes it possible to efficiently and effectively manage the administrative needs of the education community with solutions including **Frontline Recruiting & Hiring, Frontline Absence & Time, Frontline Professional Growth** and **Frontline Special Ed & Interventions.**

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