



Urbandale Iowa Community School District – Registration Process Simplification

Background:

Urbandale is located in highly populated central Iowa. Within the Urbandale Community School District, there are six elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. There are also multiple after school programs. The system serves over 3,900 students.

Challenge:

Parents of K-12 students were extremely frustrated with the Urbandale school registration process. Parents were required to fill out multiple pieces of paper with duplicative information. With only one staff person available to process the information manually, the process took a long time and was very susceptible to errors. At times, paperwork went missing and information was not relayed to critical entities (like the school transportation service, school nurses, and the cafeteria). Parents, staff and administration knew something had to be done.

Solution:

Urbandale schools assembled a team of administrative staff, teachers and concerned parents. The goal was to build an easier, faster and more accurate process.

After learning about lean principles and techniques, the Urbandale team created a current state map of the registration process from the point at which paperwork was sent home with a student to the point at which the information was entered into the system and transferred, as needed, to other involved entities. The value of each step was assessed. The team mapped their future ideal state and created an implementation plan. Although initially concerned about cost, the workplacelean process revealed that purchasing registration software was the smartest thing to do to better serve parents and best utilize staff time.

Results:

The results of Urbandale's registration process improvements were dramatic and all stakeholders were pleased:

- Lead time for student registration was reduced from 5-6 months to 1 week.
- Registration process steps were reduced from over 154 to fewer than 10.
- Paper copies of forms went from 15,650 to 0.
- Registration printing costs of \$898.00 were completely eliminated.

“Our goal was to make our registration process as efficient as possible for our customers: the parents of our students, as well as for our staff. We eliminated over 90% of our one hundred-plus steps thanks to working with workplacelean. The simpler process allowed us to be more efficient with our time and money. Without workplacelean we wouldn't have understood what the real issues were in our existing process. We might have jumped to wrong conclusions and would have only been guessing on how to fix the problem. Because of the lean process, we found the right solution.”

- **Doug Stilwell, Superintendent, Urbandale Iowa Public Schools**