FINALFORMS

Sycamore Community Schools Uses FinalForms to Increase Data Integrity, Reclaim Time, and Improve the Educational Experience

INTRODUCTION

Sycamore Community Schools is a K–12 district that serves 5,600 students in the greater Cincinnati area. A top-10 school district in Ohio, Sycamore has 1,200 staffers, 61 sports, 178 clubs, and 20 extracurricular activities.

For five years, the district has been using FinalForms—a platform that helps schools bring their forms online to boost safety and compliance—and it hasn't looked back.

In fact, over the course of their relationship, Sycamore and FinalForms have worked together to improve FinalForms by adding more functionality to the platform.

Prior to moving to FinalForms, Sycamore found itself facing an all-too-common problem: The district was using a paper-and-pencil system to keep track of student and athletic forms in a process that was inefficient, complicated, unsecure, and prone to error.

"Secretaries had to figure out what somebody wrote on a form because their handwriting was illegible, and they needed to get that information into a student information system," explains William Fritz, the district's director of technology. "It was a hassle. Contacts never got updated. Things never got transferred into the right systems."

Making matters worse, parents had to do the same drill year in and year out, filling out the same forms over and over again. The situation was even more annoying for parents who had multiple students in the district.

The whole process was incredibly inefficient—which created a suboptimal experience for parents.

In the age of disruption, Fritz knew there had to be a better way forward, so he began looking for an online platform that could streamline the form distribution and collection processes.

At first, he was having difficulty getting colleagues to come on board with the idea; people were set in their ways and were hesitant to change processes they were already familiar with.

But around the same time that Fritz was exploring the idea of moving to a new system, the district's athletic department came forward and expressed its desire to start using online forms.

According to Fritz, that development sent more people to his corner—but he wanted a system that did more than just digitalize athletic forms.

"I needed a solution that wasn't fragmented; I needed a one-stop shop for all of our forms," Fritz explains, adding that the last thing he wanted was for teachers, parents, and students to have to jump from one platform to the next to fill out or access forms.

Fritz—who initially considered using Registration Gateway—approached FinalForms and asked if its product supported academic forms, too. At that point, it did not, but the FinalForms team was eager to deliver a product that would meet all of Sycamore's needs, so they worked quickly to add academic forms to the platform.

"We pushed [FinalForms] outside of their box, and they excelled there," Fritz says.

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The process of moving from paper forms to digital forms went smoothly. In fact, Sycamore didn't have to do much heavy lifting at all due to the top-shelf support that the FinalForms team delivered.

> " "FinalForms did a very nice job of supporting us, listening to our processes, and listening to our needs," Fritz explains.

For example, somewhere in the ballpark of 50 or 60 languages are spoken in the Sycamore district. FinalForms made it easy to move forms online and convert them into the languages the district needed to serve all stakeholders.

Fritz was particularly impressed with FinalForms' pricing. Other comparable platforms allowed districts to manage something like 10 or 12 forms, according to Fritz.

"With FinalForms, you can manage as many forms as you want," Fritz says. Fritz also enjoyed FinalForms support, which he believes is "second to none."

"They're very focused on the customer—down to tweaking the forms the way we need them and specifically listening to our challenges," he says.

Most other solutions are cookie-cutter, Fritz explains. Vendors expect districts to take their systems as they are and conform their processes to the technology—not the other way around.

FinalForms does it the way it should be done, Fritz says. When the district and company were collaborating on the academic form component, FinalForms listened to Sycamore explain in detail the process of registering a child.

"They walked that path with us—Mack spent many, many hours with us," Fritz continues, referring to Macklin Chaffee, FinalForms' Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer. "FinalForms provides a value-add that other vendors don't."

Beyond this high-end support, Fritz was also drawn to FinalForms' ability to integrate with many leading systems, including DASL (or ProgressBook/FrontLine Education) and leading student information systems (SIS).

As a result, the district is now able to register a child with a form and push that data directly to the SIS—reducing errors and saving time along the way.

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5 More Benefits from FinalForms

Thanks to its decision to move to FinalForms, Sycamore has enjoyed a number of additional benefits, including:

- **Greater consistency:** Before FinalForms, the district collected data in a variety of ways. With FinalForms, the district collects all data the same way, increasing data integrity.

- **Increased efficiency:** Because they no longer have to deal with paper forms, secretaries are able to spend their time focusing on other tasks that are more meaningful, which increases productivity.

- **More cost savings:** FinalForms' digital nature means that Sycamore doesn't have to spend money on ink and paper, and they don't have to devote employee time to distributing and collecting forms. Add it all up, and FinalForms delivers significant cost savings to the district.

- **Added transparency:** Thanks to FinalForms, everyone in the district is on the same page. No one has to worry about two different teachers, for example, collecting or accessing data in different ways.

- **Better scalability:** FinalForms' support team is able to easily add new forms to the mix and otherwise update the system as the district moves into the future. "Online workflows aren't going away," Fritz says, adding that Sycamore has the peace of mind that comes with knowing the system can grow alongside the district.

Looking ahead, Sycamore hopes to incorporate additional functionality into its FinalForms system. In particular, the district is looking to start bringing staff forms online, too (e.g., emergency contact forms).

"There's an opportunity to grow internally with more forms," Fritz says.

In any case, Fritz and the rest of the district are happy with FinalForms and are looking forward to growing with the system in the coming years.

> " "FinalForms has done a really nice job growing the platform. They keep investing in it."

Schedule a demo today to learn more about how your district can increase efficiency, security, and compliance with online forms.