

Urbana School District #116

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When you're responsible for several hundred personnel files, a few thousand student records and all of the documentation for a vendor list that seems "almost endless," you want to be certain you've put the right document management solution to use.

Urbana School District #116 in Urbana, IL chose docSTAR for the job. According to Data Processing Supervisor Elaine Windingland, who has worked with the district and watched it grow over the past 22 years, it has been a perfect match.

"docSTAR has made it so easy," she said. "We have all of our accounts payable and all of our personnel files in docSTAR, which has allowed us to clear out one whole room of file cabinets."

"Now we're doing all of our records for about 3,900 students in the district," she added. "Within another year or two, we'll probably have another room cleared out."

Having 35-40 fewer file cabinets to contend with may sound like benefit enough, but the Urbana School District has realized multiple advantages from moving its document management systems over to docSTAR. The public has noticed a dramatic improvement in the ease of access to existing student records.

"That has been our biggest win so far," Windingland said. "When people come in to get their transcripts, they don't have to go through a lot of file cabinets or search through boxes of microfilm any more. We can find them so easily in docSTAR!"

The district has students spread across six elementary schools and an early childhood learning center. Once the word got around about the speed of using docSTAR, the interest moved across one department after another. In response, the data processing staff granted viewing rights for specific types of documents to those departments who need to access them most often.

"Now they can look them up themselves," said Windingland, who manages a staff of seven employees who handle payroll, purchasing and accounts payable for the school district. "They can actually go in and get their own documents in docSTAR."

Does that mean less frantic phone calls and last-minute document requests for her staff? "Yes, it does," she said. "We joke that the only reason people come to see us any more is if they just want to stop by for a visit."

"The diverse user groups across the district currently have a wealth of data available for immediate retrieval," she noted. As the data processing group begins to leverage the power of importing its electronic files directly into docSTAR, that storehouse of information is growing quickly.

"I'd say we have at least a couple hundred thousand documents in the system," the supervisor said. "Probably more, because now we directly import all of our financial records - things like spreadsheets and the other files you need to save for board packets - so we don't even have to scan them."

"docSTAR has moved into every area of the district," she continued. "Just recently, our Special Education department found that they can save documents from docSTAR on their hard drives and then upload them to Social Security, so they're in the process of getting all of their records in the system."

Urbana School District #116 has said that, through active engagement of the community, it "seeks to provide a quality education by vigorously fostering high expectations for individual growth within a nurturing environment, enabling each student to become a self-sufficient, productive, caring and responsible member of a changing world society."

Certainly, expectations have been raised for these dedicated educators. They are required to access key information in an instant. Despite their demanding and dynamic environment, docSTAR has increased productivity and reduced the stress of managing the data that keeps the district running.

"I think it's definitely the way to go," Windingland said. "I can't even tell you how nice it has been to have this level of flexibility and convenience."