

# Enterprise Excellence

## Jamestown, NY, Public Schools use Laserfiche to run smarter district-wide

Located on the southern shores of Chautauqua Lake, Jamestown, NY, is the largest city in picturesque Chautauqua County. The Jamestown Public Schools serve approximately 5,000 students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade at six neighborhood elementary schools, three middle schools and one comprehensive high school.

In 2004, the district received funding from the New York State Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund to hire a records management expert to examine the feasibility of implementing document management in the HR department. By 2005, a selection committee of the district's HR director, IS director and records management coordinator were interviewing document management vendors.

"Although another vendor's 'unlimited user licenses' offer was attractive from a fiscal standpoint, our selection committee was concerned that if the product wasn't user friendly, unlimited licenses would not make the HR staff, or any other department's employees, more willing to use it," says Director of Human Resources and Records Management Officer Karen Briner-Peterson. "After a lot of research, we decided Laserfiche would best suit our needs."

Once Laserfiche was installed, staff began with a pilot project to scan all personnel files into Laserfiche, with plans to eventually expand the project to other administrative areas and school buildings as resources and time allowed. The need for multiple file cabinets was immediately eliminated: staff designed their file structure to include five sub-folders (personnel, payroll, training, insurance and medical) set up so they could place security tags on confidential files. "Because all this information is confidential, we had to restrict access

to everyone except the district superintendent and two of our assistant superintendents," Briner-Peterson says.

And just as important is the peace of mind Briner-Peterson and her staff enjoy knowing Jamestown's records are finally safe—come what may. "9/11 and Hurricane Katrina just proved the need to be able to continue running a business or government office immediately after a crisis," she says. "Our largest concern was that we had no disaster plan in place. If water pipes broke or a fire started, we had no ability to recreate documents that could not be easily replaced."

All of the district's documents are retrievable through WebLink so that, in case of disaster, district maintenance employees, administrators and local police, fire and emergency personnel can immediately access information. In fact, Briner-Peterson is so confident in Laserfiche that she's begun moving original hardcopy personnel files offsite to the district's new records storage facility. "Laserfiche is the foundation of our district disaster recovery plan," she says. "Combined with our HR and payroll software, Laserfiche hasn't just saved us time and money, but has also enabled us to be up and running at an offsite location within a matter of hours after a disaster."

### Unexpected Benefits

While the district initially planned only a small pilot project to scan personnel files, staff soon found new and unexpected benefits from their Laserfiche system.

"Our reseller General Code provided us with a modular, scalable system we could build on as time and resources allowed," says Briner-Peterson. "In our estimation, the

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most unexpected benefit of Laserfiche is that we've been able to use it for reasons that our selection committee could never have envisioned."

- **Managing the maintenance department's documents.**

Formerly disorganized architectural drawings, schematics and operations manuals are organized chronologically by school, so they're easily accessible to maintenance employees, administrators and first responders in the case of a disaster.

- **Creating paperless Board of Education meetings.**

Meeting packets frequently ended up being several hundred pages long. Now, staff uses Laserfiche Plus to create CDs of documents for each board member. Not only is less paper wasted, confidential information is more secure.

- **Simplifying the legal process.** The district's HR director uses Laserfiche to easily store, present and disseminate information during legal proceedings. Documents are easily searchable, and are presented to opposing counsel on CD. "We were able to import documents into Laserfiche, bringing more than 500 pages of documents to court for dramatic effect," says Briner-Peterson.

- **Tracking provision history during collective bargaining.** All collective bargaining agreements between the district and its seven unions are stored in Laserfiche. When a provision is questioned, applicable contract provisions are easily located in minutes, instead of hours. "Last year, I was asked by our Assistant Superintendent to determine a history on a particular contract provision," Briner-Peterson says. "By doing a word search in Laserfiche, within twenty minutes I'd printed out the appropriate pages of the contract provision as the language evolved from 1973 to the present. Before Laserfiche, this would have taken several hours, perhaps even longer."

- **Handling FOIA requests.** Sometimes documents must be disclosed under FOIA, but contain information that is confidential and can't be disclosed. Instead of redacting paper documents by copying a document, blacking out information and recopying the document so redacted information can't be seen, staff simply uses the redaction tools in Laserfiche. Using the whiteout redaction tool means that readers don't see how many words or letters were removed. "Although it may seem trivial to anyone who doesn't handle FOIA requests, using Laserfiche to store and redact our documents helps us prove that we used our best efforts to comply with the law," Briner-Peterson says.

- **Searching multiple documents.** Instead of manually searching 580 personnel files for requests to transfer, a simple search for the word "transfer" pulls up a list of teachers willing to transfer—in just a few minutes.

- **Accessing permanent student record cards and transcripts.** Once permanent student record cards and transcripts are transferred to the District's Records Center, they are scanned into Laserfiche. The information is burned to CDs and sent to the High School's Guidance Department, which receives the majority of these records requests.

Briner-Peterson and her staff have been so inspired they've come up with even more ways to use Laserfiche throughout the district. "Our confidence in Laserfiche enables us to reach out to other departments—so we continue to find new and innovative ways to use it," she says. In fact, in recognition of its innovative and creative use of their Laserfiche system, the Jamestown Public Schools HR team was recently awarded with the Laserfiche community's prestigious Run Smarter Award.

"Once you've had successes in one department and can prove to others that the system is user-friendly, functional and dependable, you'll have departments knocking on your door," Briner-Peterson says.

## About Laserfiche

Laserfiche creates simple and elegant agile enterprise content management solutions that help organizations run smarter. Since 1987, more than 28,000 organizations worldwide—including federal, state and local government agencies and Fortune 1000 companies—have used Laserfiche software to streamline document, records and business process management.

## Your Next Step

For more information on Laserfiche solutions for education, visit [laserfiche.com/K12](http://laserfiche.com/K12).

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