

Case study Pinellas County School District

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Art Dunham, Food Service Department Director, Pinellas County Schools



The customer

Pinellas County Schools is an award-winning school district that has been recognized on the national and state levels for its strong efforts in education and leadership. The district is located on Florida’s west coast and is the seventh-largest school district in the state and the 22nd-largest district in the nation. The district has a student population of more than 101,000 at 142 school sites plus virtual school. The district is divided into five regions offering feeder patterns from elementary to secondary schools. The district offers several school options for parents to choose from, including six elementary magnet programs, four middle school magnets, 11 high school magnets, 10 career academies, five designated career technical programs, and four elementary area magnets. Pinellas County Schools is the largest employer in the county with more than 17,000 teachers, administrators and support staff.

The challenge

For years, school administrators in Pinellas County Florida’s School District have been hard pressed to bring order and efficiency to one of the most unruly and hard to manage parts of the school day: cafeteria snack and lunch lines. Pinellas County School District, the 22nd largest school district in the United States, needed a way to quickly, efficiently and accurately serve the tens of thousands of students, across all of their 46 middle and high-schools, who take part in their daily snack and lunch service program. Previous efforts utilizing punch cards, swipe cards, and even an attempt to implement fingerprint recognition, could not overcome the challenges posed when students converged on the cafeteria.

The solution

To address this challenge, Fujitsu’s PalmSecure™ biometric solution was given the opportunity to perform in a pilot program and quickly proved to be a perfect fit. The Fujitsu PalmSecure biometric sensor uses a near-infrared light scan to capture and store a student’s palm vein pattern, generating a unique biometric template. On subsequent scans it is matched against the stored palm vein patterns of pre-registered students to identify the student. Unlike other biometric systems, a PalmSecure device does not come into contact with the skin, making it extremely hygienic, non-intrusive and unrestricted by external factors such as skin types and conditions. It also makes it ideal for use with young people, who are often in a rush and were prone to forgetting, or sharing, their punch or swipe cards.

Fujitsu Frontech North America partnered with MCS Software, a software development and integration firm with a focus on school foodservice. Pairing the PalmSecure solution with MCS’s “Newton” Point-of-Sale software, as an integrated platform for managing snack and meal plans, MCS and Fujitsu conducted the pilot program for the palm vein recognition based solution from January to June of 2011 at Boca Ciego High School.

»Over

The customer

Country: United States
Industry: Education
Founded: 1912
Employees: 17,000+
Website: <http://www.pcsb.org>



Fast Facts

PCS Food Services

- Total number of breakfasts served daily – 17,451
- Total number of lunches served daily – 53,904
- Total number of after-school snacks served daily – 2,474

PCS Students

- Total number of students enrolled (K-12) – 102,672
- Total number of Pre-Kindergarten students – 1,848
- Total number of students grades K-5 – 44,056
- Total number of students grades 6-8 – 21,879
- Total number of students grades 9-12 – 30,510

The benefit

- Rapid Pilot Project Development Timeline
 - » Proven Technology
- Measurable Increases in Efficiency, Control and Reporting
 - » Improved Supply Chain Planning and Food Preparation
- Cost-Effective for Enterprise Deployments
 - » Solution Met Budgetary Guidelines

Products and services

- Fujitsu PalmSecure Sensor
- Fujitsu PalmSecure Hand Guide
- Fujitsu PalmSecure Software Development Toolkit

The benefit

Unlike a previously piloted fingerprint system, which had only a 68% success rate, the PalmSecure solution went far beyond with success rates over 30 points higher. The higher the success rate, the faster the lunch-line can move. An early performance assessment showed student wait times in lunch lines dropped from 15 minutes, down to a paltry 7 minutes. As important to administrators was the associated benefit of better and more accurate supply chain management and planning. This came with the elimination of students sharing lunch program cards, that previously caused havoc with commissary budgets and meal planning.

- Decreased wait time in cafeteria lines
- Increased accuracy in meal and supply chain planning
- Greater control over cafeteria transaction services

Conclusion

As a result of the succesful pilot program, citing the staggering increases in efficiency and control, Pinellas County School District has decided to deploy the Fujitsu PalmSecure palm vein authentication solution, starting in the 2011-2012 school year, for foodservice transactions district-wide.

“We examined several biometric systems during our review process and it was evident during our pilot phase that the Fujitsu PalmSecure solution, paired with MCS’s POS application, best met our qualifying criteria,” said Art Dunham, director Food Service Department, Pinellas County Schools. “The primary drivers for us are the students, security and adhering to our budgets. PalmSecure technology and MCS Software addressed our priorities and we are very excited to implement this solution across the district.”

The fully integrated point of sale authentication solution combines PalmSecure biometric technology and the MCS POS system to provide enhanced security without student PINs or fingerprint scanners and replaces them with a user-friendly PalmSecure palm vein authentication solution. MCS integrated the PalmSecure technology into their POS system with the development-friendly Fujitsu PalmSecure Software Development Kit (SDK), reducing the full integration and deployment cycle to less than a month.

About Fujitsu Frontech North America

Fujitsu Frontech North America Inc. offers a wide variety of products including retail point of sales terminals, self checkout systems, kiosks, media solutions, palm vein biometric authentication technology, Ethernet switches, RFID tags and bill dispensers – with sales, service and engineering support throughout the United States. Fujitsu Frontech North America Inc. is headquartered with operations and product development at 25902 Towne Centre Drive, Foothill Ranch, CA. 92610. For more information about Fujitsu products and services, call us at 800-626-4686, or visit us at: www.fujitsufrontechna.com

About MCS Software

MCS Software is a cutting-edge design firm dedicated to providing completely functional and user-friendly software for the School Food and Nutrition Service environment. As the innovators of the Scanning Process for the Free and Reduced Lunch applications, their immersion to lead the industry continues in the design and development of software for all aspects of the school food services environment. Their staff is highly experienced in their selective concentrations and is willing to address and solve any and all concerns brought forth from their clientele. MCS Software is headquartered with operations at 1133 Brook Court, Mandeville, LA 70448. For more information about MCS products and services, call us at 888-287-6416 or visit us at: www.mcssoftware.com.



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