

From Paper to Pixels: How AfterSchool201 Transformed Hillsborough's HOST Program



The Hillsborough County Public Schools Out-of-School Time (HOST) Program empowers students to grow and develop in a safe, caring and educationally enriched environment. Any student can take part in the HOST program which offers fee-based, before- and after-school enrichment programs to over 11,000 students in 155 elementary and middle schools.

Every HOST site has a plan of daily activities including homework assistance, academic enrichment, creative art, and structured age-appropriate outdoor activities. Meeting these needs requires an unprecedented amount of managerial coordination and expertise.

Embracing a Vision for Modernization

Paul Schale, Program Manager of Middle Schools and Technology HOST Programs, says, "I started in the mid-90s with the after-school programs. One of the things that I've always wanted to do was replace our antiquated, paper-based billing system with an online payment and registration system."

In 2010, Hillsborough's school board decided to move everything online and Paul was given the opportunity to lead the effort for the HOST program. He chose to implement TransACT's AfterSchool201 system for the HOST program.

AfterSchool201 is a flexible and easy-to-use online management system that Hillsborough uses in its HOST program to register students, take attendance, generate invoices and accept fee payments.

The system uses session enrollment and attendance data to determine the student's weekly fee and generates an invoice which is emailed to the parents.

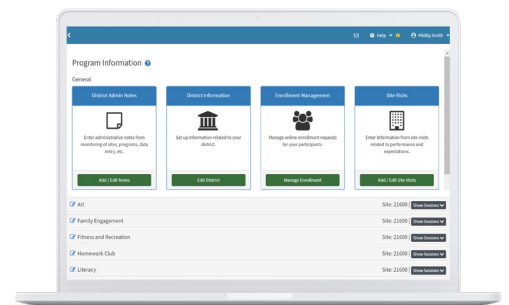
Empowering Real-Time Data Accessibility

Hillsborough uses techniques that make it easy to enter attendance data. Some of the schools have bar code kits allowing the instructor to use a printed list of students with each having an associated barcode. As a student enters the classroom the instructor simply scans the student's bar code and the attendance is recorded.

“What we have now with AfterSchool201 is 180 degrees different from what we had because the data is so easy to collect and access. It's enabling staff to become more efficient at both the individual school level and at our administration office. In addition, our parents appreciate the online registration feature.”

Paul Schale

Program Manager of Middle Schools and Technology HOST Programs, Hillsborough County Public Schools

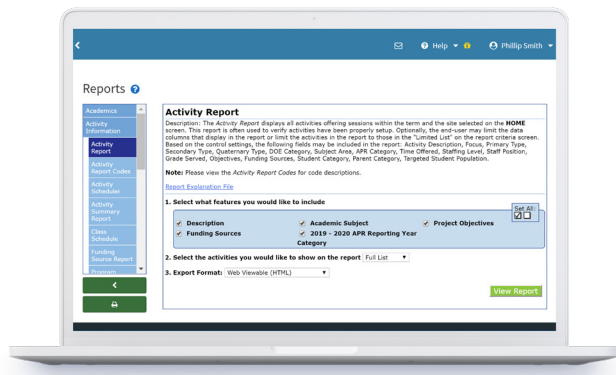


TransACT completed the payment cycle by building an interface using a third-party, online payment system which allows parents to pay their invoices online, reducing Hillsborough's outstanding accounts receivable.

Now that the system is in place, Paul attests to its benefits. "The key benefit we've received is having student data at our fingertips. In the past when we had a question about a student we would call the school and wait a day or two as they researched the answer. Having data available in real time eliminates the need to contact the school which saves us thousands of hours each year."

Benefits of Online Registration for Parents

According to Paul, parents "can go right to our website and complete [an application] from anywhere that has internet access. This increases accuracy, as we no longer have to worry about written information and trying to read it. In addition, the application is available in any language. We have a built-in Google translation, so that parents can complete their applications using the language of their choice and then printing the application in English for our use."



Improved Billings and Collections

Paul states that "the system has also improved our billings and collections. We now have a real-time report that shows which parents are behind in their payments. We can then notify them with the outstanding amounts and assess late fees as required. We were unable to do that in the past." Nearly 30% of our parents are currently using our third-part online payment vendor for their after-school services.

Paul gives very high marks to TransACT's support team. "I work very closely with a number of the TransACT people. I'm sure that everybody over there knows me by name. Having such a high level customer relationship is a key benefit to us."

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A huge benefit for parents is online registration. Parents no longer need to come in to get an application.

Paul Schale
Program Manager of Middle Schools and Technology HOST Programs,
Hillsborough County Public Schools

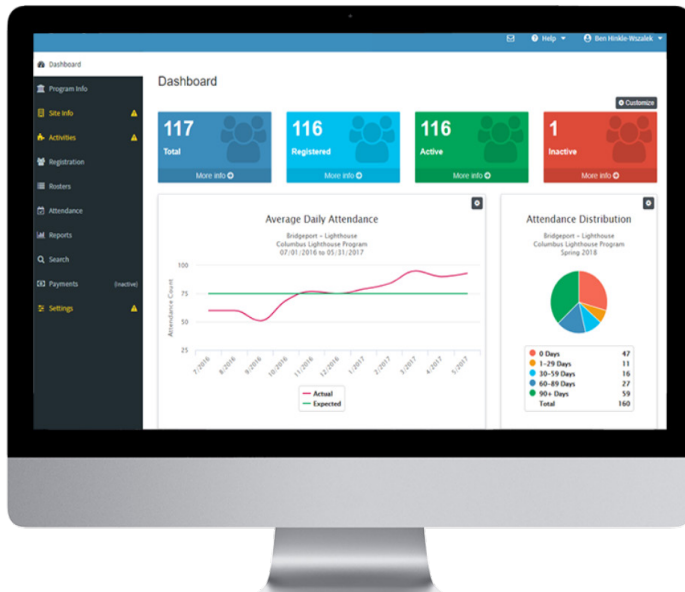
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Paul goes on to say, "One of the biggest things I like about TransACT is that they're always looking at their system internally to see how they can eliminate or avoid negative issues. That's important to us because as we move deeper into the system we know that we have TransACT staff looking for potential problems that might arise."

Building a Strong Partnership with TransACT

TransACT's implementation approach also receives high praise from Paul. "TransACT excels at customizing the system. They are very open to making changes that address our needs. That's crucial because they are giving us exactly what we need. Their ability to be flexible across the board and create functionalities that make life easier for us is really an added plus."

Paul summarizes his relationship with TransACT, "I want to thank TransACT for listening to us. The TransACT staff are always receptive and willing to work with us, as we communicate on a regular basis. It's a privilege to have an opportunity to work and develop our system with TransACT."



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