



CASE STUDY

Okaloosa County (FL) School District Replaces Prior Volunteer Management Tool with Raptor® System; Staff and Community Delighted

CHALLENGE

Several years ago, Florida’s Okaloosa County School District sought to reduce its administrative burden of paper applications and manual screening for its thousands of annual volunteer applicants. The district adopted an automated volunteer management system, but the results weren’t what the district had been hoping for.

“I worked at an elementary school when we were using the other system,” says Debbie Tate, now Okaloosa’s district volunteer coordinator. “We were one of the first schools in the district to get it going. Usually, when you adopt a new technology or system, there’s a learning curve during which the staff figures out how things work, and then there’s a steady increase in comfort level. After that, things just move along smoothly.” Not so with Okaloosa’s previous volunteer management tool. “There were just a lot of issues—technical problems, connectivity issues, things like that,” Tate continues. “Instead of the system evolving and everybody learning to use it, things just went downhill. And then their customer service and responsiveness weren’t what they needed to be. When we needed help, we couldn’t get it.”

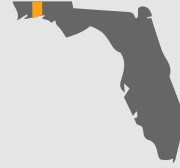


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— Debbie Tate, District Volunteer Coordinator, Okaloosa County (FL) School District



OKALOOSA COUNTY (FL) SCHOOL DISTRICT



Okaloosa County School District is located in the Florida Panhandle, with district offices in Fort Walton Beach.

- 49 schools (21 elementary, 12 middle, 5 charter, 4 alternative, 7 high schools)
- 7,827 active volunteers (2018-2019)
- 27,396 volunteer sign-ins
- 11,802 approved applications
- 46 denied applications

Okaloosa County Schools began to look around for another solution. The district had recently implemented a general visitor management system, a tool that would screen the IDs of all school and district office visitors for sex offender status, as well as for district-customized lists including custody alerts. The visitor management system was supplied by Raptor Technologies®.

SOLUTION

“The district liked the way the Raptor® software worked, and we were really happy with the quality of service we received,” Tate explains. “Raptor offered a volunteer tool as well. It just made sense to go ahead and put it in place.”

Okaloosa County Schools rolled out the Raptor Volunteer Management system in the fall of 2018. The system allows volunteer candidates to apply via a user-friendly online tool. The system checks all applicants for sex offender status and compiles criminal background results for easy district review. “We have three volunteer functions here that require a fingerprinting check: mentors, overnight chaperones, and volunteer coaches. Raptor takes care of the vast majority of the administrative and screening work, and that lets me focus on specific details like fingerprinting,” says Tate. The system organizes all applicant files for simple district approval, and approved volunteers’ check-ins, check-outs, and hours can be easily tracked with a selection of reports. “The biggest difference between our old system and Raptor is that the Raptor system is so robust and reliable.”

RESULTS

“Our school personnel really like working with the Raptor® system,” remarks Tate. “It’s straightforward and simple to use. And prospective volunteers—parents, grandparents, and community members—all like using it. They can easily apply online and monitor their approval status. And because we require volunteers to reapply each year, it completely eliminates the paperwork hassle on our end. About the only people that have any issue at all with the new system are some of our older volunteer applicants, who may not be highly computer or technology savvy. But that’s part of my job—to help them navigate the online application.”

Asked if she would be willing to recommend the Raptor Volunteer Management system to another Florida district, Tate was emphatic. “By all means!” she says. “I think it’s a great system. And I can’t say enough about Raptor’s customer service. Our rep really takes care of us!”

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EVERY SCHOOL, EVERY DAY.**

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