

Kentucky Department of Education Kentucky Schools Migrate to Tyler's Cloud-Based Solution

Industry: School Districts

Location: Frankfort, KY

Number of Districts: 174

Years as Tyler Client: 18

Employees: 400 Frankfort-based employees

Tyler Products Used: Munis®, Tyler's Hosting Services

The Facts: The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), located in Frankfort in southwest Kentucky, is a long-term Munis® client. Partnering with Tyler for more than 18 years produced many benefits over the years by developing trust and effective communication channels. As Munis software grew and offered new functionality and enhancements, districts grew right along. So when the KDE recommended Munis users in 173 districts statewide migrate to the cloud and upgrade to version 9.3, Tyler was well placed to make it happen — seamlessly, efficiently, on time and on budget.

Contact

David Couch, Associate Commissioner, Office of Knowledge, Information and Data Services

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In their Own Words:

“Before we could migrate to the cloud and implement Munis version 9.3, each district had to move to a more modern enterprise-level operating system (Microsoft®), database engine (Microsoft SQL Server®) and hardware engine (Intel®) that are required to run version 9.3. These moves provide short- and long-term total cost of ownership cost savings, operational efficiency and reliable/robust 24/7 service from the Munis headquarters in Maine, and Munis business continuity service sites in Boston and Dallas.”

— *David Couch, Associate Commissioner, Office of Knowledge, Information and Data Services*

Key Challenges

- Save overhead costs as related to hardware
- Implement a state-wide disaster recovery plan and services
- Upgrade all districts to new Munis software version
- Streamline business process to free IT staff to focus on mission-critical business
- Having all of the districts on one Munis version has many advantages — information is easier to share, upgrading to new enhancements is now uniform and communication is consistent and timely
- Data security is assured with Tyler's Disaster Recovery Services
- Tyler's perpetual subscription model, Evergreen, ensures that the district will continue to have the most current software, without disruption of business or the need to purchase new subscriptions

Benefits: Financial and Beyond

- The onus of providing current hardware and servers has shifted from the districts' responsibility to Tyler, saving both time and money

...continued on reverse

Migrating 173 Kentucky districts to Tyler's cloud-based solution and a new Munis version was no easy task, but careful planning, communication, attention to detail and dedication by everyone involved ensured that the project stayed on task and goals were met. The scope of the project was significant yet achievable because of Tyler's expertise and scalability. Now complete, Kentucky is the largest P-12 cloud-based financial management system in the United States.

The project kicked off in May, 2011, with six districts volunteering to participate in the pilot as early adopters. "The early adopters, Wave 1 districts and Tyler Technologies are commended for blazing the trail and successfully transitioning to the Munis cloud-based system," said David Couch, Associate Commissioner, Office of Knowledge, Information & Data Services. The project target was the end of December 2012, to have all districts, except Jefferson County, running cloud-based Munis 9.3.

"Making the statement — 'I am on board so LET'S GO' — to David Sawyer, Tyler SaaS project manager, that first week in November 2011 was a combination of brave front, excitement and total confidence in what I was getting ready to do ... Migrate to the cloud," said Melanie Lyons, Director of Finance for Rockcastle County Schools. "The instruction and guidance given by David and Brian Pelletier, senior consultant, prior to actually moving from the Unix platform to the cloud platform gave me the reassurance that although there might be some minor bumps along the way it would still be a smooth transition."

Kentucky's move to Tyler's cloud-based solution — data centers maintained by Tyler exclusively for Tyler clients — eliminated the overhead of investing capital in hardware such as servers, and shifted the expense and responsibility of securing data, updating servers and managing the applications to Tyler instead of Kentucky districts' IT staff. This gave districts the flexibility to shift internal IT staff to other mission-critical projects.

Citing an annual security audit, the Kentucky auditor of public accounts also noted that a high percentage of districts did not have adequate business recovery and continuity plans for their on-premise Munis systems. Kentucky solved that concern, disaster recovery services were included with Tyler cloud-based solution.

Along with migrating to Tyler's cloud-based solution, districts upgraded from Munis version 7.5 to 9.3. Couch continued, "Before that could occur, each district had to move to a more modern enterprise-level operating system (Microsoft), database engine (Microsoft SQL), and hardware engine (Intel) that are required to run version 9.3. These moves provide short- and long-term total cost of ownership cost savings, operational efficiency and reliable, robust 24/7 service from the Munis headquarters in Maine and Munis business continuity service sites in Boston and Dallas."

The version upgrade is in line with Tyler's perpetual subscription model, Evergreen, that provides upgrades as part of the client's maintenance contract. The 9.3 upgrade included complete integration with Microsoft office products, as well as global changes and new features such as the dashboard, central screens, budget projection wizard, and a ribbon with a link to Microsoft Excel® for direct access to Munis files.

Adam Hooker, director of accounting for the Laurel County Board of Education said, "The migration to Munis Version 9.3 was a very positive experience for us at the Laurel County School district. The conversion process went smoothly and the support staff at Tyler was always available and eager to assist us.

New features, such as the Central Programs and the enhanced menu options, really aide our users in their daily tasks; and the ability to connect securely from a remote location allows us to work easily outside of the district. We are very pleased with Munis version 9.3."

To accomplish the delivery schedule, from the beginning of each test environment to the cut-over to live, every step in the process was managed remotely through live Webinars, email and phone, guaranteeing that the transition was live by each district's contract due date. Lyons commented, "David Sawyer and Brian Pelletier were there from the onset with the welcome kit, phone calls, emails and WebEx's making sure I felt comfortable with the change that was about to take place. Never was there a doubt in my mind that this migration would be a bad experience or that it would fail. The instructions provided and the enthusiasm on their part made me more than ready to put Rockcastle County Schools in the Cloud."

As Lyons concluded, "In this day and time change is good and is inevitable, so the move to a new platform was welcomed with open arms. Munis itself did not change it was just enhanced."