

# How Kent School District Streamlined Operations and Eliminated Manual Processes

A Washington district with 25,000+ students eliminated manual payroll processing, freed staff from overtime weekends, and built the operational capacity to weather \$35 million in budget cuts.

72→3

Hours per pay cycle

\$0

Overtime pay

0

Union grievances

## At a glance

### CHALLENGE

Manual timesheets, Adobe Sign bottlenecks, lack of form status visibility

### SOLUTION

Informed K12 digital timesheets with flexible routing, real-time tracking, and implementation support

## The Innovation Imperative

Raul Parungao has spent 28 years in school finance, 24 of them in California, where he led an Escape Technology implementation for Fremont Unified's 36,000 students and oversaw ERP operations across 18 districts in Alameda County. When he arrived at Kent four years ago, he recognized a familiar pattern: a capable team buried under manual processes, with budget pressures mounting.

Every month, Kent's payroll team was printing every timesheet, manually entering data into Excel spreadsheets, then uploading to Skyward. Multiple people worked overtime—including weekends—just to close payroll on time. The district was paying for inefficiency twice: once in the labor and again in rectifying the errors that inevitably crept in.

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## The Real Price of "Making It Work"

The problems went deeper than wasted hours. Victoria Morrison, Assistant Director of Payroll, described the entire process as a nightmare to manually track different contract hours, calculate overtime, and ensure compliance with Washington State Department of Retirement Systems requirements. Since a single miskeyed number could ripple into someone's paycheck, the margin for error was nonexistent, and the tools they had offered no safety net.

The district had tried Adobe Sign for digital forms, but the tool's rigidity created new frustrations. If an employee made a single error after signing their section, no changes could be made—the entire timesheet had to be denied and restarted from scratch. There was no way to correct a field mid-process or route a form back to a specific step. Adobe Sign offered no centralized dashboard for tracking where forms were in the approval chain. "People call and they're like, can you tell me where this is?" Raul said. "How many times have we been blamed? A billion, probably a billion."

"The process was challenging. I would have to get up and write down my steps to make sure I did what I thought I did."

—Victoria Morrison, Assistant Director, Payroll

## The Stakes Beyond Payroll

For Raul, fixing payroll was about efficiency, but also about institutional trust. Kent's community contributes \$80 million to the district through local levies. When employees don't get paid accurately or on time, trust erodes with the union, with the community, and with the board. The domino effect touches everything from labor relations to future levy votes.

He was equally focused on his own team. "My goal as a district leader is to ask 'what do I need to do to make my staff successful?' If I don't provide the resources, then I fail them. You expect them to perform, but you're not giving them the tools, and they can only do so much in eight hours."

## Navigating Multiple Systems

Kent was still cleaning up a Skyward Qmlativ migration when implementation began. While Skyward handled core ERP and student information, it didn't address the workflow automation, form routing, or process visibility Kent needed for timesheets and approvals—that gap was exactly what Informed K12 filled. Raul chose not to wait: "If you wait one more year, that's time you cannot take back."

The implementation started with overtime and extra time timesheets—processes that directly affected employee pay and classroom operations. Informed K12's team built the forms, configured workflows with dropdown menus and automatic validations to eliminate common errors, and provided training with minimal lift from Kent's staff.

"I told payroll, don't you worry, I'll take care of it. I'll spend whatever 45 minutes every payday to run all the necessary tables and prepare the materials. By the time it gets to payroll, it's ready for upload." Payroll closed on time with no surprises, no overtime, no lost weekends, and no scrambling before the holiday break.

**72→3**

Processing time per pay cycle—from three full days of manual entry to a few hours of review and upload

"This is the best December we've ever had. On time, no hiccups. And we're still doing some of the bridging manually—it's already achieving a significant amount of savings. It's not even the full product yet."

Kent Payroll Staff

## A Partner, Not a Vendor

The district also streamlined vendor contract approvals, routing them automatically through procurement, HR, risk management, and legal with real-time visibility into status. For Raul, the quality of the relationship has been as important as the product. When issues arise at unexpected times, Informed K12's team responds immediately—or within minutes. "It's being present when needed. That's very important for us. If you think about the alternative—when you're in the midst of troubleshooting and there's nobody on the other line to answer—that's a bad sign."

"I don't need a vendor. I needed a partner. A partner is somebody who comes in and doesn't leave after you the sale is made. Informed K12 comes in and maintains the relationship. It's why I've been so impressed.

—Raul Parungao, Executive Director of Finance

## What Time Makes Possible: Building Leaders

With hours freed up, Raul charged the team with something they'd never had bandwidth for: building capacity. He pushed the assistant director to cross-train staff so payroll could run even when key people were absent. Before Informed K12, there was no time to think about succession planning—everyone was just trying to get through the next pay cycle.

“The team wanted to make positive changes previously, but there was just never enough time. If you empower people, you'll be surprised how much they deliver.”

—Raul Parungao, Executive Director of Finance

## What Comes Next

Raul is direct about what made Kent's implementation successful: the tool alone won't save you. "You can't just rely on Informed K12 to make the project successful. It requires commitment from within. You need a strong team, cabinet buy-in, board buy-in. You have to make the case."

But when that commitment meets the right platform, the results compound. Kent went from overtime weekends and risk of union complaints to clean payroll closes and a team with the capacity to cross-train, plan ahead, and lead. And for Raul, the clearest sign of progress was the impact on his team:

"For the first time since I joined the district, my payroll team got a real summer break. It showed me what's possible when we give people the tools they deserve."