

How Walled Lake Consolidated Schools reclaimed 24 hours of payroll work every pay period

24 hrs

RECLAIMED EACH PAY PERIOD

3 → 1

TIMESHEET SYSTEMS UNIFIED

19

WORKFLOWS LIVE ACROSS FOUR DEPARTMENTS

CHALLENGE

Three disconnected timesheet systems — paper, Red Rover, and PowerSchool printouts — with multi-day manual uploads, approvals that had to be chased by hand, and absence balances that always lagged a full pay cycle behind.

SOLUTION

One platform replaced all three. Informed K12 digital timesheets built to mirror the paper forms employees already knew, integrated with PowerSchool Business Plus through ConnectK12 for pre-fill, validation, automated upload, and a complete timestamped audit trail.

STATE

Michigan

EMPLOYEES

1,500+

ERP

PowerSchool Business Plus

INTEGRATION

ConnectK12 API

THE STARTING POINT

Three systems, none of them talking to each other

Maintenance staff submitted through one electronic interface. Primetime and ECC paraprofessionals used complex paper timesheets, required by their split funding structure. Other departments used prefilled timesheets from PowerSchool Business Plus and submitted those. Payroll staff would then either manually enter or upload all of it into Business Plus — a process that took multiple days.

The district had tried to get everyone onto Red Rover, its existing substitute-management system. Contractual employees transitioned well enough, but as the team moved to more complex groups — paraprofessionals with variable schedules, split funding sources, and multiple building assignments — they kept hitting walls. Setting up each teacher's profile for extra duties required HR to manually configure which jobs were available per employee. If HR missed someone, that teacher couldn't submit time until the following pay period.

“We had some groups that used Red Rover for reporting time while others never did. So we were still having paper timesheets for some and Red Rover timesheets for others.”

VICKI AMORE Director of Finance

Red Rover also required constant synchronization with Business Plus. Employee data had to be manually uploaded into Red Rover so timesheets could pre-fill, then exported back out for payroll processing. “The problem is we're literally maintaining two full systems,” said Sheri Davis, Assistant Finance Manager. “As you can imagine, discrepancies between the two platforms were inevitable.” “You'd find it got updated here but not there,” Vicki added. “It became very daunting.”

The fragmentation added costs at every step. Because processing took multiple days, payroll had to request timesheets before the pay period actually ended — which meant late-breaking schedule changes couldn't be captured, and forced supplemental-pay adjustments after the fact. Approvals for supplemental and extra-duty pay, roughly 100 to 150 timesheets per period, relied on routing logic that didn't always work. When approvals were still outstanding at the payroll deadline, it took roughly four hours just to identify who hadn't acted, and chasing them could absorb a full day.

Paper hourly timesheets, approximately 425 per pay period, arrived without totals calculated, sometimes without account numbers, occasionally on blank printer paper. Payroll staff reviewed each one manually, recalculated hours, and entered everything by hand into Business Plus. "Very haphazard," said Samantha (Sam) Goodling, Payroll Specialist. Two payroll staff each spent approximately a day on review and another half day on data entry, every cycle.

Absence balances compounded the picture. Because payroll lived in Business Plus and absence data lived in a separate system, balances had to be uploaded manually once a month and lagged a full pay cycle behind actual activity. Approvers were reconciling timesheet data against a system that was always a step behind.

THE TURNING POINT

The conditions finally lined up

Moving to a single platform had been on the payroll team's list for years, but high turnover in payroll and HR had delayed it repeatedly. This time conditions aligned: the team was stable, leadership was supportive, and the business office had already been using Informed K12 for journal entries and other business forms with good feedback. "It seemed like a good time to just go ahead and make the change and move everybody over," Sam said.

There was also a real deadline. Sam was going on maternity leave at the end of the school year, and the new system needed to be in place before she was out.

THE SOLUTION & IMPLEMENTATION

Start small, mirror what they already know

The district started with a committee that included a representative from each building level — elementary, middle, and high school — plus representatives from food services, early childhood, and the prime-time programs. Those schools and programs became the pilot groups. This gave the team time to reconvene with the committee and work out as many kinks as possible while tweaking the timesheets toward perfection, or as close as possible. Once employees from the pilot schools were comfortable, the payroll team scheduled training for each remaining building and rolled out district-wide after two months.

One decision made adoption significantly easier for hourly staff: the timesheet in Informed K12 was built to mirror the paper form employees already knew.

“The way we set up their timesheet in Informed K12 was exactly how it was on paper. So it was an easier and smoother transition. We didn’t have to worry about looking at something visually and hearing, ‘That is nothing at all like what I’ve had to complete in the past.’ We love that aspect.”

SAM GOODLING Payroll Specialist

The integration with PowerSchool Business Plus, built through ConnectK12 with St. Clair RESA, addressed several of the district’s most persistent friction points at once. Timesheets now pre-fill with employee data, absence balances, and pay-period details pulled directly from Business Plus — eliminating the manual reconciliation that had accumulated every cycle. Employees can submit timesheets on the actual last day of the pay period rather than days before it ends.

The integration also handles calculations that previously fell entirely on payroll staff. When it's time to upload to Business Plus, ConnectK12 generates a Business Plus-compliant upload file with transformation rules applied for split funding and multiple account codes, along with validation rules that flag formatting errors, duplicate entries, and dates outside the pay period. If a timesheet has been manually altered, it flags in bright red.

“The whole extract in itself is amazing. It literally extracts into a format that we really could just upload it. No more manipulation.”

SAM GOODLING Payroll Specialist

The integration also closed a compliance gap the team had been managing by hand. Because Walled Lake's pay periods run the 1st–15th and the 16th–end of month, overtime can span pay periods in ways that require specific W-2 coding under updated federal overtime regulations from the OBBBA. The API integration now handles that automatically.

“That's ginormous. The payroll department would have to manually calculate OT (including adding in the prior week's pay-period hours, if applicable) to determine whether the OT qualified as 'True' OT per the law that went into place last year, resulting in new reporting on W-2s for 2026. Flags have been incorporated to separate out the reportable and non-reportable OT, which is a big time saver.”

SHERI DAVIS Assistant Finance Manager

THE IMPACT

A full day of work, given back every cycle

The most direct time savings came from two places: processing paper timesheets and chasing approvals.

Before Informed K12, two payroll secretaries each spent approximately a day reviewing paper timesheets per pay period and another half day entering data into Business Plus. With the integration, uploads that previously required multiple days can now be completed across the full three-person payroll team in a single day.

We are saving about 24 hours of time for the team, which is huge.

SAM GOODLING Payroll Specialist

Where identifying outstanding approvals before the payroll deadline had taken roughly four hours — and post-deadline chasing could absorb a full day — Informed K12 now surfaces approval status in real time and routes automatically, creating additional time savings.

Audit preparation became a search, not a file-cabinet dig. “Being able now to go back to the electronic retrieval has been excellent,” Vicki said. Every submission carries a complete audit trail with timestamps.

Eliminating dual-system maintenance — no more parallel updates to Red Rover and Business Plus, no more summer configuration projects — returned hours to a team that had never had spare capacity in the first place.

The error dynamic changed, too. When a timesheet comes in with a problem, Informed K12 returns it to the submitting employee with the specific issue noted. Previously, time pressure meant payroll staff fixed errors themselves rather than sending forms back. “We just always took the liberty of fixing it here because we didn’t have time to go through all those steps,” Sheri said. Now employees learn what went wrong: “We have gotten a lot of, ‘Oh, thank you for letting me know — I didn’t know it was supposed to be that way.’” Work that used to land on payroll is now distributed across the people in the process. “It’s not just payroll,” Sam said.

WHAT THEY’D TELL OTHER DISTRICTS

Three things worth passing along

1 Visual familiarity mattered more than they expected.

Designing the digital timesheet to mirror the existing paper format made the shift feel like a format change rather than a system overhaul, and eliminated most of the resistance before it started.

2 The hidden cost of dual systems is easy to underestimate.

When payroll data lives in one place and absence data in another, every mismatch adds manual work. “Payroll struggles a lot with hunting down information,” Sheri said, reflecting on 30-plus years in district payroll. “Being able to see the form along the route helps immensely.”

3 Good support makes the difference.

“The customer service is phenomenal,” Sheri said. “Eight million stars for all of them.”

THE NEW NORMAL

Doing more with the same staff

When Walled Lake started, they were looking to consolidate three fragmented timesheet systems and give payroll back the hours they were losing to manual reconciliation, paper chasing, and parallel system maintenance. Eight months later, they have a unified platform that saves 24 hours per pay period, errors that route back to submitters instead of landing on payroll, and a business office that builds its own workflows instead of waiting on external help. The team got their weekends back, and the district can do more with the same staff. Since the timesheet launch, Walled Lake has added new-hire packets, volunteer background checks, and field-trip approvals — 19 workflows live across four departments, with ten more in development.

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