

Project 2013 Customer Solution Case Study



Georgia School District Runs More Smoothly with Better Project Management



Overview

Company: Gwinnett County Public Schools

Company Website:
www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us

Company Size: 22,000 employees

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Education—K-12

Company Profile

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS), located in the Atlanta area, is the largest school district in Georgia and the fourteenth largest school district in the United States, serving more than 169,000 students.

Business Situation

The GCPS IT organization manages hundreds of projects and work requests each year and needed better insight into anticipated workload, resource availability, and potential risks.

Solution

GCPS deployed Microsoft Project Server 2013 as its central project and portfolio management solution.

Benefits

- Save time, better allocate resources
- Proactively identify project risks
- Help school district run more smoothly

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Jo Carlton, Project Manager, Information Management and Technology Division,
Gwinnett County Public Schools

Gwinnett County Public Schools in Georgia is one of the largest school districts in the United States. The IT staff executes hundreds of IT projects and smaller work requests each year. It uses Microsoft Project Server 2013 to gain centralized visibility into all work underway, to better allocate limited resources, and to identify risks. This helps the district run smoothly and ultimately helps students get a better education.

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Jo Carlton, Project Manager, Information Management and Technology Division, Gwinnett County Public Schools

Situation

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) is the largest school district in Georgia, with 132 schools. In the 2013–2014 school year, GCPS served more than 169,000 students and was the largest employer in Gwinnett County, with more than 22,000 staff members.

GCPS maintains state-of-the-art technology for both instructional support and administrative efficiency. From math applications to adaptive technology, from language arts programs to digital projectors, and from bus-routing software to lunch ticket sales, the Information Management and Technology Division (IMT) supports GCPS every day.

Ensuring a seamless delivery of IT tools and solutions required a lot of behind-the-scenes coordination and effort. With no central project management system, IMT employees got work done and met deadlines through sheer heroism. “Our project managers were using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, SharePoint sites, emails, and whiteboards to manage their projects,” says Jo Carlton, Project Manager, Information Management and Technology Division for Gwinnett County Public Schools. “We didn’t have an enterprisewide view of our projects, and teams didn’t know what work was coming down the road so that they could allocate resources efficiently. People were working like crazy to get tasks done, and projects were sometimes delayed because of resource scheduling problems.”

GCPS was also overwhelmed by work requests—tasks too small to be projects but that still had to get done—such as provisioning a new user, changing an email address, and backing up a database. IMT did not capture work requests in an

organized fashion, and some “fell through the cracks” or weren’t addressed.

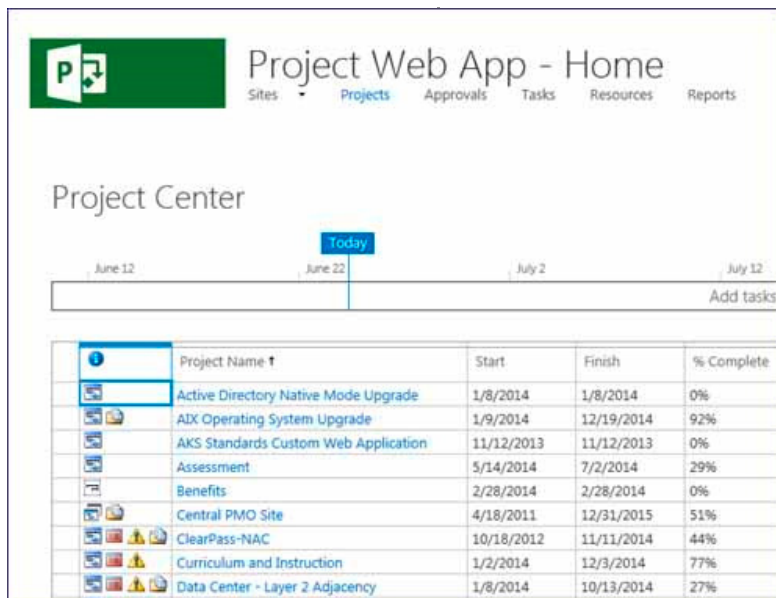
Solution

Gwinnett County Public Schools IMT already used Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 to store and organize team documents and used Microsoft Project Professional 2013 to plan some projects, so it decided to deploy Microsoft Project Server 2013 as its central project and portfolio management solution. Project Server 2013 is integrated with SharePoint Server to help organizations prioritize investments, align resources, and execute projects efficiently.

GCPS engaged Microsoft Partner Network member Campana & Schott, a partner with Gold competencies that specializes in project management and social collaboration, to help deploy and customize Project 2013. Campana & Schott created templates for setting up project sites, work request sites and associated workflows for the project intake process, and a series of rich management reports and dashboards.

For each new project, the GCPS project management office (PMO) provides the project manager with a project site and associated SharePoint site where the project team can store its document library, team calendar, issues and risks, project schedule, project timeline, and other items. The team can share the SharePoint site with key stakeholders and other interested members to view the progress of the project.

With Campana & Schott’s help, GCPS created a resource center where all project teams can view an enterprise resource pool—an up-to-date status of resource assignments and availability. For example, if a project needs a database administrator,



Project Web App - Home
 Sites Projects Approvals Tasks Resources Reports

Project Center

June 12 Today June 22 July 2 July 12

Add tasks

Project Name ↑	Start	Finish	% Complete
Active Directory Native Mode Upgrade	1/8/2014	1/8/2014	0%
ADX Operating System Upgrade	1/9/2014	12/19/2014	92%
AKS Standards Custom Web Application	11/12/2013	11/12/2013	0%
Assessment	5/14/2014	7/2/2014	29%
Benefits	2/28/2014	2/28/2014	0%
Central PMO Site	4/18/2011	12/31/2015	51%
ClearPass-NAC	10/18/2012	11/11/2014	44%
Curriculum and Instruction	1/2/2014	12/3/2014	77%
Data Center - Layer 2 Adjacency	1/8/2014	10/13/2014	27%

With Project Server 2013, GCPS has an enterprise view of all projects. Project managers can view all projects associated with various team members.

the project manager can see from the resource center if the district has one available on the needed dates. This prevents resources from being overallocated or demand exceeding the capacity of the resource pool.

The creation of project templates helps project managers plan the different project phases and account for details that previously could have been overlooked. Campana & Schott created several automated reports that help project managers and GCPS management stay apprised of project progress and potential interruptions through alerts and notifications. A project dashboard is published twice a month to all project managers, directors, and executive directors, showing at a glance the current status of all in-flight projects.

Campana & Schott set up a similar infrastructure in Project Server 2013 for managing work requests. Every new work request is assigned to a team site and

resource where IMT can manage these items and provide accurate, consistent communication. District employees submit a work request by email to IMT, and the GCPS PMO completes an automated form in Project Server that helps to manage the intake. Campana & Schott provided a solution where work requests from the central work request site may be viewed and edited on individual team sites. If a work request evolves into a full project, it may be promoted to a project site, with all project documentation transferred automatically. A pipeline report is published weekly to all project managers, directors, and executive directors, providing status of all active work requests.

Approximately 70 people in GCPS IMT use Project 2013 today, and other divisions in the district are evaluating it as a way to run their projects more efficiently.

Benefits

By using Microsoft Project Server 2013 to standardize and centralize project management, Gwinnett County Public Schools has been able to save time in ascertaining project status, allocate resources more effectively, proactively identify project risks, and generally help the large, busy school district run more smoothly.

Save Time, Better Allocate Resources

By centralizing project and work request sites, GCPS has reduced the amount of time and effort needed to gain visibility into resource allocations and removed manual steps from the resource assignment process. This has increased resource allocation accuracy and given the district a real-time view of resource availability. "With Project 2013, we have so much more information to work with," Carlton says. "We know what's being requested of us rather than being surprised and living in

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reaction mode. We can now see which resources and skills we have and how busy people are.”

This results in better resource management and allows existing staff to handle more work requests. “For the first time, we have transparency into which projects can be done in a given time period and with a given set of resources,” Carlton says. “Before, it took a huge amount of effort to figure this out, or we just accepted work that we really didn’t have the bandwidth to tackle and muscled our way through it.”

Proactively Identify Project Risks

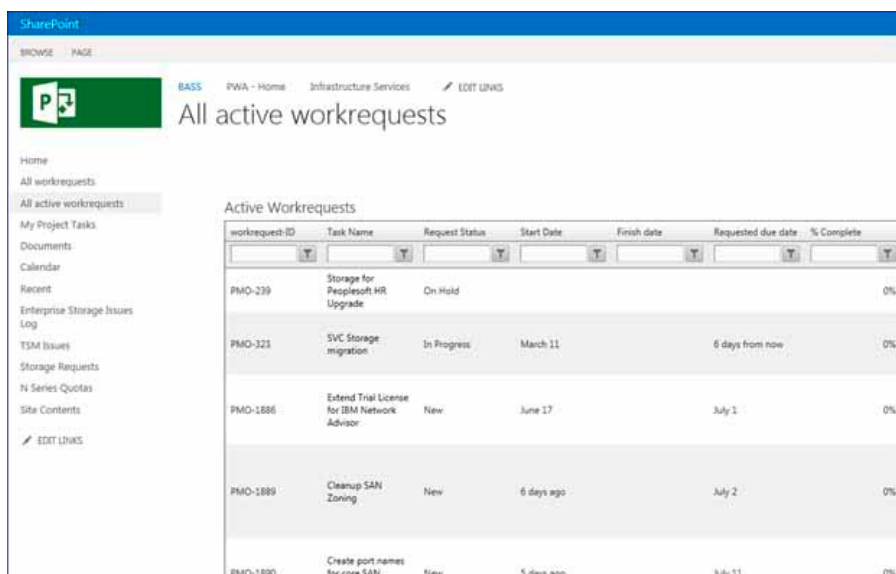
Having detailed data about resource availability and project/work request status helps GCPS IMT avert scheduling mishaps and other project risks. “In our team meetings, we’re far better organized with all project milestones and details visible to everyone,” Carlton says. “There’s far less chance that we will be blindsided by an unanticipated roadblock.”

Even when risks do materialize, GCPS usually has anticipated and documented them. “For one recent project, we identified a large risk that in fact materialized,” Carlton says. “However, the project manager was able to show our vendors and stakeholders that the risk had been documented in our project site, which helped us save face and relieved the project manager of scrambling to dig up history around the issue.”

Help School District Run More Smoothly

Smoother running IT projects support a smoother running school district. “Just about everything our teachers and administrators do during their day rests on the work that we do in IMT, but no one thinks about IT systems until they break or aren’t there,” Carlton says. “With Project 2013, we can keep all of our projects running smoothly and complete work requests on time. This helps teachers focus on the most important job in the district, which is educating children.”

A GCPS Project Server team site showing active work requests.



The screenshot shows a SharePoint page titled "All active workrequests". The page features a navigation sidebar on the left with options like Home, All workrequests, My Project Tasks, Documents, Calendar, Recent, Enterprise Storage Issues Log, TSM Issues, Storage Requests, N Series Quotas, and Site Contents. The main content area displays a table of active work requests with the following data:

workrequest-ID	Task Name	Request Status	Start Date	Finish date	Requested due date	% Complete
PMO-239	Storage for Peoplesoft HR Upgrade	On Hold				0%
PMO-321	SVC Storage migration	In Progress	March 11		6 days from now	0%
PMO-1886	Extend Trial License for IBM Network Advisor	New	June 17		July 1	0%
PMO-1889	Cleanup SAN Zoning	New	6 days ago		July 2	0%
PMO-1890	Create port names for core SAN	New	5 days ago		July 11	0%

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www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us

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Microsoft Project 2013

The new Project Server 2013 and Project Online offer flexible solutions for project portfolio management (PPM) and everyday work, delivered either on-premises or as an online service. Enable your workforce to effectively execute with the intended business value to achieve strategic priorities with Project Server 2013. For more flexibility, take your PPM capabilities into the cloud with Project Online subscriptions through Office 365 as an always-up-to-date service with simplified IT management. Project Online and Project Online with Project Pro for Office 365 help your team deliver value from virtually anywhere.

For more information go to:

aka.ms/project/success

Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
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 - Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010
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 - Microsoft Project Professional 2013

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- Campana & Schott