



CASE STUDY EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY

HOW THE RIGHT TOOLS MAKE BOARD WORK EASIER



USER

Tift County Schools

of Students: 7,500

of Schools: 13



CHALLENGE

Help board members get more value from their work by providing efficiencies in strategic planning, policies and meeting management.



SOLUTION

The board uses Simbli's Planning module as the foundation for their work. The Policies module and Meetings module create more efficiencies, while tight integration ensures that every effort is aligned back to district goals.

While the board at Tift County Schools functioned well, Superintendent Adam Hathaway knew there were areas where they could work more efficiently. As a Simbli user in his former superintendent position at a smaller school district, he introduced the platform to his staff at Tift County. Two years in, they've seen a positive difference in their strategic planning, policy management and meetings processes.

ALIGNING WORK TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

When it comes to school board work, Hathaway knows the importance of alignment. The Tift County Schools superintendent recalls how he used Simbli in his former role at Schley County to align every board action with their strategic plan.

"I was attaching meeting items to the strategic plan so I could show the correlation in the discussions we were having," said Hathaway. "When we got to our board self-evaluation, we would look at the data to see if we were really talking about the most important issues."

At Tift County, the ability to tie meeting agenda items back to the strategic plan has helped the board keep the focus on what's most important. By reviewing the data around meeting discussions, the board is able to see where they spent the most time, and adjust to ensure discussions don't stray from their areas of focus. Although they're in the process of rewriting their strategic plan, Hathaway plans to keep that alignment in the future.

"When we get the new strategic plan built, I intend to use it in the same way so I can keep my board focused," he said. "That means we're having conversations about the things that line up with our plan."

FINDING EFFICIENCIES IN POLICY MANAGEMENT

In his current role at Tift County, Hathaway no longer spends as much time with Simbli, but still strives for the same alignment and efficiencies. When he discovered that the board hadn't conducted a policy review in 10 years, he and his team got to work.

"Because some of the policies were so outdated, they didn't match up with what the charter said," he explained. "By uploading all of our policies to Simbli, we were able to re-read, rework and modernize them."

In addition, the ability to easily share and access the latest policies has saved the board valuable time.

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ABOUT TIFT COUNTY SCHOOLS

Tift County Schools is located in Tifton, Ga. The district is home to approximately 7,500 students in 13 schools: eight elementary, two middle, one high school, one alternative and one virtual school. The school system is governed by a seven-member board.

“THE INTUITIVE NATURE OF SIMBLI, ALONG WITH THE TRAINING MAKES ONBOARDING EASY. YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE A CODER TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO MOVE AROUND SIMBLI, AND YOU’RE NOT GOING TO BREAK IT.”

Adam Hathaway, Superintendent,
Tift County Schools

“From a communication standpoint, being able to share policies as fast as we can, with everything linked to the appropriate law has taken a load off of superintendents and secretaries as the planning happens,” he said.

With a quick click, board members can also read the policy that backs up any meeting agenda item. Because everything is one place and so easy to access, says Hathaway, members are more inclined to evaluate and research agenda topics.

EXPANDING MEETINGS TO THE SCHOOL LEVEL

With Simbli, Tift County has been able to share board documents electronically, saving on paper and printing costs, as well as cutting the time they used to spend copying and distributing paper documents.

To make meeting management easier for principals, Hathaway says he will encourage the use of Simbli for school council and other school-based meetings.

“Using Simbli at the school level provides an easier way for principals to build their meetings,” he explained. “And as I start training principals to hopefully be superintendents one day, I need them to understand the power of that platform. They have to know that when you’re trying to distribute information consistently and fairly, and you want every board member to have access to the same information so they can make informed decisions, Simbli is the best tool to help them.”

EASY TO USE AND OPEN TO FEEDBACK

Hathaway attributes the success he’s seen with Simbli to ease of use, practical training, and responsive support from the eBOARDsolutions team. Because board members change every few years, it’s important that new members get up and running fast. According to Hathaway, Simbli’s intuitive interface makes training “so very easy.”

Hathaway looks forward to building on the successes he’s seen with Simbli, and appreciates that the eBOARDsolutions team is so open to user input.

“Simbli has been very responsive to requests,” he said. “That’s one of the things I like most about the product. They listen to customers and try to make the user experience better.”

He adds that it’s this feedback loop that differentiates Simbli from other platforms. “When you look at Apple, Google, and other successful tech organizations, the reason they’ve gotten better is because they listened to user feedback and tried to be responsive,” he said. “I think Simbli does the same.”