

The 'Jefferson Experience'

CREATING A CULTURE THAT FOSTERS EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE THROUGH A UNIFIED TALENT MANAGEMENT SOLUTION



Educational barriers and challenges often vary by region, yet at some districts odds seem disproportionately stacked against student success—such as Jefferson County Schools (JCS) in rural West Virginia.

Because a lot of their students have high Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) scores, JCS leaders know that delivering excellence in education requires vision, strategy and, sometimes, complete process overhaul.

"Our area has the highest percentage per population of opioid addiction in the country, so a lot of our students come to us with high ACE scores," said Bondy Shay Gibson, Ed.D., Superintendent at JCS. **"We are wholly committed to helping every child reach their potential and recognize that this can only be accomplished through relationships and connections with our staff."**

JCS is pursuing an excellence-in-education initiative, which includes talent management goals to build the "Jefferson experience"—positive applicant, new hire, and employee interactions that improve job satisfaction and instructional effectiveness.

Joseph Pettiford, Chief Human Resources Officer at JCS, started by improving hiring.

AT A GLANCE

Challenge

Student population with high ACE scores; Exorbitant amount of paper records; Arduous new employee onboarding; Manual processes

Solution

PowerSchool Unified Talent™ solution (Applicant Tracking, Candidate Assessment, Employee Records, Perform)

Results

Identifies top candidates faster; Better-aligned professional development; Eliminated space-consuming paperwork and filing systems; Increased time-savings; Improved relationships across ecosystem



High-Impact Hiring

"The best thing to do when you're looking for strategic improvement opportunities is to look at what you have and ask yourself if you're using it to the fullest extent," Joseph said. "We have a great tool in PowerSchool Unified Talent™ Applicant Tracking, so we explored what else it could do."

PowerSchool's K-12 education-specific applicant tracking system delivered on the three capabilities Joseph deemed most important: integration, scalability, and reliability.

Applicant Tracking's anytime, anywhere accessibility and intuitive, user-friendly features for large districts make it convenient to review applications at home, school, or elsewhere. Yet for positions that receive many qualified applicants, this review process can be very time-consuming, making it difficult to maintain objectivity. But, as Joseph said, "we have a better way."

The "better way" is made possible by pairing Applicant Tracking with PowerSchool Unified Talent™ Candidate Assessment (formerly EPI)—a predictive analytics tool

“Now we can very quickly identify top candidates based on impact, performance and opportunity.”

JOSEPH PETTIFORD
Chief Human Resources Officer,
Jefferson County Schools, WV

that allows district leaders to objectively assess the future impact of candidates and provides a roadmap for their professional learning.

"Now we can very quickly identify top candidates based on impact, performance, and opportunity," Joseph explained. "The idea is that hiring stronger teachers will impact student achievement. You can't just hire people because of their educational background. You have to make sure you're hiring candidates who can contribute to a collaborative, collegial environment."



“Our strategy is to meet people where they are and help them fulfill their potential.”

BONDY SHAY GIBSON, ED.D.
Superintendent, Jefferson County Schools, WV

Creating A Roadmap For Success

Using Candidate Assessment’s Professional Development Profile (PDP)—an 18-page report that identifies candidates’ strengths and opportunities for growth, along with a template for preparing a personalized professional development plan—**JCS drives impactful professional learning starting on day one.**

"Our strategy is to meet people where they are and help them fulfill their potential," said Bondy.

"A principal or building leader can sit down with a new teacher and say, 'Let’s map this out now that we’ve got a plan, and let’s talk about how we’re going to invest in you and help you grow,'" Joseph said. "That’s something we didn’t have before, and it allows us to engage with new hires on a much higher level."

A Better Environment For New Hires and Seasoned Veterans

The Jefferson experience also extends to the onboarding process. Using PowerSchool Unified Talent™ Employee Records—PowerSchool’s recordkeeping and processes management solution—JCS delivers a much more engaging, positive new hire experience.

"Onboarding shouldn’t be painful. We want to create a situation where people say, ‘Wow! I can’t believe how easy that was!’" Joseph said. "Once people experience that, they’ll share that experience with others, which will attract strong candidates to our district."

Joseph says Employee Records also created a better work environment for him.

"Before, when I would walk into my office, I had walls literally lined with filing cabinets," he said. "Now, we have none of that. **By the end of the school year, we will have digitized over 1.7 million pages, and we’ll have them available online in Employee Records.**"

Developing An Atmosphere of Performance

A key part of developing a positive culture for K-12 employees is finding the best way to manage performance evaluations.

JCS uses PowerSchool Unified Talent™ Perform—PowerSchool’s performance management product—to streamline the evaluation of service employees and identify opportunities for professional learning.

"We are the first in the state of West Virginia to roll out this scientific tool, and we’re very proud of that," Joseph said. "We’re no longer waiting months for paper performance evaluations to get checked off, bundled, put in inter-office mail or dropped off and mailed back to us two or three months later. **Now we can deploy instantaneously and see the status of where we are and what remains to be completed on a daily basis.**"

Creating the Right Culture

Simplifying hiring, onboarding, recordkeeping, and performance management processes is part of JCS' overall strategy to empower employees to make an impact at a personal level.

"Some people dislike or fear automation because they think it depersonalizes things," Bondy explained. "Joseph is focused on how automating repetitive functions actually allows you to interact with each other. When someone stops by the office unexpectedly because they're worried about retirement or their job in general, you can take the time to have a conversation. In essence, **it helps you personalize the experience more.**"

Creating that personal experience and nurturing a culture of individual empowerment contributes to employee retention and supports student achievement.

"It's about developing an atmosphere of performance," Joseph added. "And ultimately, it's about seeing better measurements from the students, as well. It takes time to evolve, but that's what we're moving to, and we see PowerSchool as part of that strategic partnership to help us move in that direction because we have more tools at our fingertips."

“Ultimately, it's about seeing better measurements from the students.”

BONDY SHAY GIBSON, ED.D.
Superintendent, Jefferson County Schools, WV



Make talent processes more productive with PowerSchool today!

Visit www.PowerSchool.com or call 1-877-873-1550

