INFOTRONICS®
Employee Attendance Systems

School district automates time and attendance process: ensures full compliance with federally-mandated regulations

Attendance Enterprise gives educators web-based time and attendance features for full compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act and union pay regulations.

When the Grenada, Mississippi School District faced a lawsuit filed under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, the district learned an important lesson: accurate calculation of regular and overtime rates for hourly workers is vital. In such litigation, the burden is on the employer to prove actual employee hours worked. Now, Attendance Enterprise from InfoTronics, Inc. automates time and attendance processing with useful functionality such as full compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act and support for multiple job positions. Grenada School District benefits from biometric data collection and a flexible rules engine to calculate accruals, overtime, shift pay, and other federally-mandated rules.

About Grenada School District

Grenada School District serves the North Central Mississippi area with a lower and upper elementary school, a middle school, and a traditional four-year high school. The district also operates a career/technical center, Alternative Education program and a GED program based out of the Tie Plant School facility.

The Grenada Education Center is the home of the district's Adult Basic Education Program, the Parent Resource Center, and the Grenada League for Adult Development. In all, 800 district employees serve nearly 5,000 students.

Employee Litigation

Several years back, a group of Grenada School District employees filed a lawsuit that requested the school pay unpaid overtime, plus damages, attorney's fees, and court costs. The workers citied the federally-mandated Fair Labor Standards Act which requires employers to keep accurate records of hours worked for nonexempt employees and pay them time and a half for hours worked beyond 40 hours in a workweek. The law also allows public employers to offer compensatory time in lieu of overtime pay.

Grenada was not the only district to experience such litigation. According to the Mississippi School Board Association, attorneys held meetings throughout the state to recruit support personnel, such as bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, secretaries and teacher aides to file claims for unpaid overtime. In addition, the attorneys ran ads providing a toll-free number to employees who believed they were due back pay for overtime worked.

In most districts, it was unknown whether these employees actually worked overtime and were due back pay for overtime worked because the districts had no records to disprove the allegations. In wage and hour cases, the burden is on the employer to prove overtime hours were not worked. Accurate time sheets are necessary to prove actual hours worked.

Learning a Lesson

The Grenada School district, and other districts throughout the state, learned first-hand that the FLSA is a complex law. After these difficult issues were resolved, the district resolved to keep accurate time records for nonexempt employees; make sure employees were correctly classified as exempt or nonexempt for FLSA purposes; and ensure that nonexempt employees were paid overtime or given compensatory time off for hours worked over 40 in a workweek.

For Grenada District, proper compliance with FLSA regulations required moving from a manual time and attendance process to an automated calculation of employee regular and overtime rates. Thus, the District turned to Concept Electronics, Inc. (Baton Rouge, LA), who installed Attendance Enterprise™ from InfoTronics, Inc.

Attendance Enterprise is an integrated time and attendance system that automates complex pay and benefit rules to ensure accuracy and regulatory compliance. The system also optimizes employee resources and reduces labor costs with features such as flexible pay rules, employee scheduling, labor budgeting, automated benefit accruals, attendance-based merit points, web access for employees and managers, and extensive reporting and analysis capabilities. Grenada School District uses the program primarily for FLSA compliance.

The Road to FLSA Compliance

With Attendance Enterprise, the District easily set up groups for both exempt and non-exempt employees. The software automatically determines exactly what types of pay are to be included in the regular rate and applies the Fair Labor Standards Act correctly.

Employees start their shift by checking in at an InfoTronics hand reader. This biometric device eliminates "buddy punching" and accurately verifies employees' identities while protecting their privacy. The system automatically polls 12 data collection devices throughout the day, and up-to-the-minute data is available at the district office, showing accumulated hours, overtime and regular rates, and data for those employees performing multiple roles (bus driver and cafeteria duties, for example) that in the past were difficult to track manually.

At the end of each pay period, the accumulated regular and overtime employee data time is automatically downloaded into the District's payroll software for check processing via a custom routine developed by Concept Electronics.

New Methods Bring Benefits

Since switching to Attendance Enterprise, the district is in full compliance with FLSA regulations. The InfoTronics system accurately applies regular, overtime and credits to each shift, and accurately applies payment for multiple-role employees. Employee data is available instantly at the district office for departmental monitoring of overtime. Supervisors can make schedule adjustments as needed for cafeteria staff, bus drivers, maintenance, secretarial, clerical, and instructional assistants.

The new methods have also streamlined the district office operations. When employee data was tracked manually on paper time cards, district staff spent hours each month manually tabulating and verifying pay totals. Now it is a matter of minutes to compile pay period totals. Also, the district accumulates assistant teacher regular and overtime rates, which were not tracked at all in the past due to cumbersome manual methods.

Attendance Enterprise generates useful reports for the district, including overtime summaries per department that are used to determine future staffing needs; pay exceptions by job record numbers; and missed punch reports for ease of check generation. Tardy reports are also useful, and help the district monitor employee performance.

In all, the Grenada district office is confident that Attendance Enterprise provides full compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. The district has alleviated the burden of tracking employee time and attendance with biometric data collection devices, and automated processing of overtime, regular, and multiple-role pay. In the upcoming months, the district will automate employee scheduling, and implement Attendance Enterprise leave management features which makes it easier for employees and adniminitrative staff to track personal leave, vacation, and sick time.