

identiMetrics Brings Biometrics to Wood County Schools

Wood County Schools are located in West Virginia. We have 27 schools: 19 elementary schools and 8 secondary schools - over 13,750 students. Foodservices employs 110 cooks and 9 warehouse and administrative staff serving over 1.8 million meals per year.

As the Director of Food Service, I'm responsible for following all federal laws for the Child Nutrition Program. One of the requirements is accurate student identification for reimbursement. We were using student ID cards and PINs. This was just not working.

On some days, more than 80% of students would show up for lunch without their cards. This meant that the cook had to type in every 9-digit student ID number. Lines backed up, mistakes were made keying in the numbers and each month irritated parents called claiming their children did not eat the meals they were charged for and we had to bear those costs. With all of the lost, stolen and damaged cards, sometimes I thought Food Service was in the card business rather than serving meals to students! We obviously needed a better solution.

We wanted something that students could not forget, lose, damage or steal. But it had to be compatible with our existing cafeteria software and it had to be cost-effective.

We decided that fingerprint biometrics was the solution. Students would never forget their fingers. We found several cafeteria applications that sold a fingerscan biometric device, but all of them wanted us to spend thousands of dollars buying their application and replacing our already existing and working software. Then, we found a company called identiMetrics.

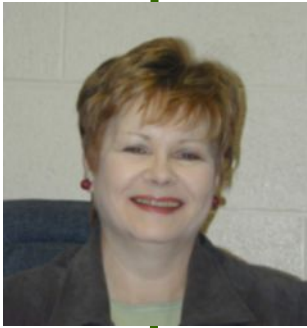
identiMetrics' solution, identiFi™, scans a student's finger for identification. It seamlessly integrates with any cafeteria application that uses swipe cards, PINs or bar codes, so there's no need to spend money to replace what you already have. identiFi can operate in a single lunch line or provide identification throughout the entire school district. There's an added bonus: once identiFi is installed in the cafeteria, it can be used to identify students in other areas of the school like classroom attendance, library, nurse's office and for security access at the front door. identiFi provides a single identification solution and integrates with the different applications you already have in place.

How's it working? Biometric fingerscan identification was well accepted by the Board, Superintendent, Principals, teachers, parents and the community. They all understood our need to correctly identify students and realized the time and money it was costing each day to administer the card program. Initially, there were questions regarding privacy. But identiFi doesn't take an actual fingerprint, just unique identifying points. Everyone felt comfortable that the fingerprints can't be recreated.

Our foodservice staff mastered the program easily. Lunch lines move quickly and account records are accurate. The cook at the end of the serving line no longer has to type in the 9-digit number for hundreds of students every day—that's 550 ID numbers if 80% of the students at Edison High forget their cards. Our foodservice staff is quite happy!

Students adapted quickly. They no longer need to look for their cards, get replacement cards, go to the end of the line when they don't have their cards, feel embarrassed if they are on free or reduced lunch, or spend time in detention for not having their cards. Now, students ALWAYS have their ID with them!

Today, biometric technology is evolving and is no longer limited to just government applications. Like the computers that have become an integral part of our schools, homes and businesses, biometric identification is the next step in making things work better, faster, safer and more reliably. Wood County Schools is among a leading group of school districts around the country using biometric student identification. In the future, we plan to expand the biometric ID program to school libraries and eventually to classrooms for attendance. We are proud to be leaders in this type of technology. Our students will benefit from our efforts to be among the best!



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