

Adlai E. Stevenson High School

Making a Large School Feel Personal with eSignature

For 15 years, Doug Kahler has learned his way around the halls of Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois. As the school's director of Information Services, Kahler is in charge of providing students with the technology they need to succeed. But it's not just the one-iPad-per-student policy that excites Kahler about his work. He is also driven by a larger mission: to make a big school feel personal.

That's no easy feat, especially with a student body of over 4,000 people. After all, Stevenson High is more than a school – it's also its own school district. With so many students in one place, every system and process takes just a little bit longer, which can make it difficult for faculty to give students the support and attention they need.

Digitizing the Student Experience—From the Moment They Walk in the Door

Since its founding in 1965, Stevenson has hosted orientation days, where new students learn more about what they can expect at Stevenson. As part of the process, students are asked to sign a piece of paper acknowledging that they have read and agree to the student guidebook.

But with over 4,000 students receiving the guidebook every year, this process has been historically inefficient, resulting in long lines and wait times, and even delaying other orientation activities. Staff members had to generate a sheet of paper for every student and then organize information into alphabetical folders, which proved to be tedious and time-consuming.

Kahler knew there was a better way.

Three years ago, Stevenson turned to DocuSign eSignature to help students sign the guidebook and complete orientation more efficiently. "It used to take seven staff members a week to get students through the guidebook process," Kahler said. "Now, it takes a day."

Since student orientation takes place in mid-August, Kahler sends an email to students at the beginning of the month asking them to acknowledge that they've read the guidebook. DocuSign holds students accountable by sending them reminders until they complete their signature.

Results

Before
DocuSign

After
DocuSign

A week
Time for student
guidebook process

1 day
Time for student
guidebook process

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Doug Kahler
Director of Information Services
at Adlai E. Stevenson High School

A Mission-Driven Approach

The shorter lines at orientation create a stress-free environment and enable staff to give students the attention they need, Kahler said. It's part of Stevenson's larger goal to connect with every student on a personal level.

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The impact of DocuSign eSignature reaches far beyond the technology. Instead of sifting through files of paper, staff can now have a conversation with students without having to worry about holding up the line. These types of connections and personal interactions between students and faculty are especially valuable at a school as large as Stevenson. In fact, [research from NYU Steinhardt](#) shows that when faculty form positive relationships with their students, the students are more likely to productively engage in social and academic life.

Setting the Stage for Large-Scale Adoption

Building on the successful implementation of DocuSign eSignature for the student guidebook, the school also now uses the technology to complete parent consent forms for special education. Before DocuSign, parents had to sign and mail in a paper form before they attended school meetings. Now, the entire process is completed digitally.

Kahler said he and his staff are also looking to implement DocuSign eSignature to modernize the acceptable use guidelines that all staff members must read and sign.

"We're really trying to leverage DocuSign to assist with document submission and signatures across our organization," he said. "Anything I can do to streamline processes and bring the focus back onto our students and their families, I will do that."

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