



Case Study | Ector County Independent School District Food Services

About Ector County ISD Food Services Department

[Ector County ISD](#) encompasses 36 elementary, middle, and high school campuses in Odessa, Texas. Approximately 28,000 students pass through the halls of Ector County schools each day. Of those students, approximately 17,100 students are eligible for free or reduced meals. That number amounts to approximately 61% of the overall Ector County student population. The Ector County ISD Food Services Department is responsible for implementing food service programs that allow every student access to nutritious and affordable meals throughout the school day.

The Mission of the Ector County ISD Food Services Department is to provide nutritionally sound, student-acceptable, and financially accountable food service programs as to ensure each child an opportunity to receive the benefits of these programs.

As of 2011, Terry Gooch has been with the Ector County ISD for 24 years. As Director of the Food Services Department, Mr. Gooch oversees more than 300 Food Services employees as they produce and serve 15,000 breakfasts, 15,750 lunches, several hundred extended-day snacks and thousands of a la carte meals at 36 campuses.

More Students, More Challenges

As Director of the Food Services Department, Mr. Gooch is tasked with improving the technology within the department, as well as managing nutrition issues encountered by school systems such as obesity and its associated health problems. He sets the direction for the department, sets policies for nutrition, and enforces those policies which touch on anything from the way food is cooked to rules on vending machines. Increases in the number of students that participate in food service programs have also created a unique challenge for the department. Program applications must be processed more efficiently so that there is minimal delay in students receiving their benefits. Mr. Gooch notes that along with managing the department, controlling department costs is one of his biggest challenges. *"It is important for the nutrition department to be self-sufficient and cost effective so as not to be a drain on the school system, which is cash-strapped like most systems."*

Application Processing the Manual Way

The Ector County ISD Food Service Department implemented the PCS Revenue Control POS software, RightTrak in 1994. As is the standard, based on information about a child and the USDA Rules, this software program determines if a child qualifies for free or reduced meals. Manually processing handwritten applications was a frustrating, time-consuming and costly process.

RocketSCAN to the Rescue

While attending a nutrition trade show, Mr. Gooch was introduced to Image One. He was looking for a technology solution that would help reduce the time it takes to process applications. Mr. Gooch comments, *"I had been doing research on this technology for two years before meeting Image One."* Image One had implemented document management solutions for other Food Services programs facing the same problems as Ector County ISD. It wasn't long before Mr. Gooch was sold on RocketSCAN, which integrates seamlessly with their existing RightTrak application. With the custom, scan-able meal application form his staff members now scan, capture, validate and export of the form directly into RightTrak, where determination is made.

Prior to the implementation of RocketSCAN in 2005, application processing would take approximately three minutes per application. RocketSCAN scans 25 forms per minute, and it now takes a human operator 19 seconds to verify one application.



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Mr. Gooch noted, *“Upgrading the technology has reduced processing time from three minutes to approximately 25 seconds maximum. This process and the INR (Intelligent Name Recognition) is amazing! There is not much operator input.”* Rocketscan has made processing more than seven times quicker with virtually NO filing time for Ector ISD.

Optimal Cost Savings and ROI

Implementing the RocketSCAN product allowed Mr. Gooch to save money in many ways. He was able to reduce the number of temporary operators needed to enter and verify data from the applications. *“Last year, we used one full time and four temporary operators to verify information. Now we are using one full time and three temporary operators for the same job. We could really get away with using two temps as opposed to three.”*

In 2004, 178 hours of overtime were clocked in the first thirty days of school. These overtime hours were dedicated solely to processing applications. *“We worked nights and weekends to stay caught up,”* stated Mr. Gooch. After installation of Rocketscan, thirty-seven hours of overtime were clocked. Mr. Gooch added, *“Our desks were clear on a daily basis. We never had to work overtime or weekends to stay caught up.”* **At \$22 per hour for overtime costs, the savings the initial year in overtime alone amounted to \$3,102.**

“The most inspiring evidence of cost savings for my school district is the money the department saved on ‘grace period’ meals. Each year when students turn in applications, their status is set to ‘no-charge.’ They are given a grace period of ten days for their application to be processed, and their status determined. During these ten days, the school district pays for their meals. In 2004, a staggering \$28,315 was spent during the 10-day grace period to provide those meals at no-charge to the students. This year, \$9,312 was spent for the no-charge grace period, because of reduced processing time for applications and increased efficiency.” said Mr. Gooch.

Those cost savings alone have allowed the department to achieve their ROI in six months. Mr. Gooch added, *“You do the math! I originally expected a two to three year ROI. I’m pretty impressed!”*

Amazing Customer Support & CRE Results

Mr. Gooch was impressed by the simple process for getting the system installed. After attending a brief training class, he and his team were able to execute the entire installation of the product via the web. He states, *“They gave me a CD. I had to insert the CD and everything else was done online”.* When asked about the level of customer support he received from Image One, he happily commented, *“The customer support was amazing. They have some truly amazing people. They all really know their business!”*

“I have also gone through a CRE since implementation. That process worked very well. I burned a CD and sent it to the auditor prior to my CRE. When they came, that part of the audit was complete with no errors or findings,” he added.

Implementation of Rocketscan Online Solution in 2009

Since the initial implementation of the scanning solution in 2005, Mr. Gooch implemented Rocketscan Online in 2009 and describes the benefits: *“We have now added online processing as well. In the 2010 school year and we have processed nearly 8200 applications. Of those, approximately 1,200 were submitted online. Online decreases the validation time tremendously. All information coming in is extremely accurate. I have also been able to process apps by using my full-time meal specialist and two temps for approximately 6 weeks when school starts. I spend exactly \$0.00 in overtime these days.”*