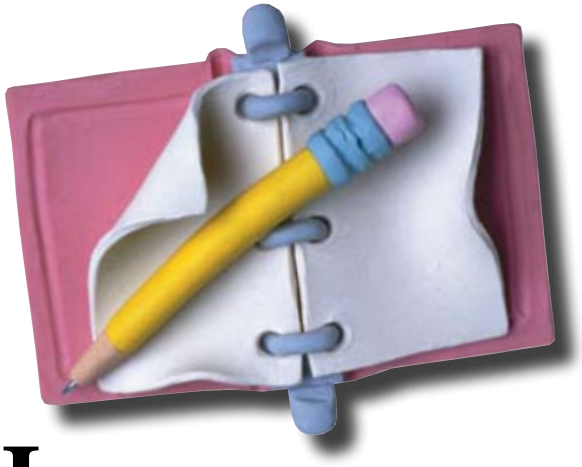
Lansing School District uses SEQUEL to Bring Data to the Desktop



Lansing School District in Lansing, Michigan is made up of over 16,000 students and covers three counties in the mid-Michigan area. They are the largest school district in the tri-county area with 27 elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools. They currently have nine magnet schools within their district and many specialty programs for children and adults.

Steve Maiville, a supervisor in the Technology Department, explains the many ways Lansing uses SEQUEL.™ "Our application software is CIMS, which has traditionally been a 5250 green-screen application. We've been using SEQUEL for about seven years now. Ironically, we originally purchased SEQUEL to allow us to format three-up labels. But we've gone way beyond the simple report formatting that labels require. Our district has started an initiative we call 'Data to the Desktop.' The goal is to make data available to the people who need it at their desktop, often in real-time. This includes people who, in many cases, have never had real-time access to this data before. SEQUEL is the tool that allows us to make this happen quickly and efficiently. We've even been able to extend data to bus drivers in our transportation department using the SEQUEL Web Interface.

"They can access information about the students on their bus routes. This includes pictures of the students, parent phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and emergency contact information, as well as information about any special needs that a student may have, such as asthma or allergies to bee stings.

"We use SEQUEL dashboards to enable administrative and support people to see student information on discipline, testing, and attendance. We integrate run time prompting into our dashboards. CIMS stores data for different years in different file members on the same file. Depending on the prompt value, we can have the dashboard automatically assign the appropriate library and members to use when opening the files. We pass the library and member names from one view to the next with the drill downs. By using this practice, we can compare our staffing this year with past years. With SEQUEL, I've been able to greatly simplify the data extraction process.

"We automated the process of distributing the monthly budget reports using SEQUEL. Previously, the staff of the Finance Department would print thousands of pages of monthly reports which they would separate and mail to different schools and departments. It was very costly and time-consuming. Now, we use the RUNCMD command in a SEQUEL script to automatically

e-mail monthly formatted budget reports, as PDF attachments, to each of our schools and departments. Each PDF report has data specific to the recipient. I have a simple file with a record for each recipient, and fields for department or school number(s), a salutation, and an e-mail address. This file drives the whole process. It has saved us a lot of time and money, and is very easy to modify.

"In our district, purchase orders normally have to be approved at multiple levels. Twice a week we run a process using SEQUEL to examine all unapproved purchase orders (POs), determine who is next in line to approve or disapprove each PO, and e-mail that person reminding them that they need to take action so that the approval process can proceed.

"With SEQUEL, I can provide teachers with real-time information on their students through a Web browser. They are really excited, using words like 'empowered', and coming up with good ideas on how to improve the system. Currently, they can access information about how to contact parents, which allergies a student may have, assessment test scores, grades—whatever they might need.

"We are also using SEQUEL to analyze data in the aggregate. Teachers and administrators can look at averages and summaries for test scores, days absent, sick days, grades, and so on. They can drill down any number of ways to see the supporting detail. Currently, our testing and research people are working with me to identify ways to streamline the data collection needs of the district.

"We use SEQUEL's date manipulation capabilities extensively. For example, we have blood drives where students, who will reach the age of 17 by the date of the drive, can volunteer to donate. SEQUEL subtracts their date of birth from the eligible date and creates letters to send to the students who qualify. The date and the age they need to be on that date are passed as run time variables. I really like the way I can use date arithmetic in my decision logic."

Steve sums up the power and usefulness of SEQUEL. "I am always looking for ways to simplify and improve things. SEQUEL is the perfect tool for the job. I have had the opportunity to call the support staff on many occasions, and they are wonderful to work with. I love SEQUEL—it lets me solve problems creatively!"

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