



## **Integrating the Hiring Process in K-12 Education with Oracle HR**

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### **Introduction**

Douglas County School District is presently the third largest school district in Colorado. The district has over 52,000 students and continues to grow with student enrollment increases of 2,000 new students annually. The county spans over 900 square miles with much schools in densely populated areas as well as many rural zones. Before the economic and real estate downturn, the Douglas County was seeing 300 new home permits issued monthly. There are currently 69 schools to serve the educational needs of the district and 4 new schools are to be opened this calendar year. Even with the substantial growth, the budget is limited and much of the expenditures is allocated to educating students not building and buying expensive software.

The district employs over 6,500 employees. The staff is made up of the following 6 job types: licensed teachers, school administrators, district administration, classified, professional/technical and substitute teachers. There are typically over 1,000 change of status, transfers and updates processed monthly in the Oracle HR module used at the district.

The current Oracle configuration at Douglas County Schools includes the usage of Oracle E-Business Suite version 11.5.10, Red Hat Linux, Oracle 10g database with RAC option, Oracle Application Express version 3.0, and VM ware on HP Blade servers.

### **Managing the Growing Number of Employees**

The districts rapid growth rate historically has not been met with process improvements. The process of managing the incredible amount of Human Resource data has been done via volumes of paper. There were countless forms and documents to be filled out by the applicants that were then saved and sometimes scanned and saved on network file shares. Reams of paper were used to keep track of the various applicant types. Each type of job required variations of forms to be filled out. The Human Resource department at the district is a very siloed organization and has become very entrenched in this method of handling applications. The department was resistant to changing their processes.

This project was as much about integrating the people in the Human Resources department as well as integrating the Applicant and Human Resources system. Recruiting had no conversations with Human Resource specialists around the district, job transfers were not closely monitored, and there was no concern for EEOC procedures.

The main goal of the project was to replace a system Douglas County had in place. The web based applicant application custom was built in 2000 just for teacher applicants. No other categories of jobs were processed with this application. The system incorporated a document management system, java, Unix, Perl, PL/SQL, html. In other words, it became very difficult to maintain as staff changed as the skill-sets of new employees did not match the requirements of this system. The Human Resources department wanted a system that would handle all applicant types.



Human Resource staffing spent a tremendous amount of time reconciling issues with lost applications rather than in the hiring process and finding top notch employees.

### **Build vs. Buy decision**

There were many things that had to be considered by Douglas County Schools prior to moving forward to replace the legacy systems and processes. There is a very high cost of purchase for an applicant tracking system. Many of these systems are not tailored to Education market. There was great need for integration of processes with HR module in Oracle E-Business Suite. By integrating, HR resources would be freed up to spend more time finding and screening viable candidates for jobs rather than processing documentation created in the application process. The K-12 sector is a complex business model and involves managing many critical processes. Because of this, the project had requirements to allow for a "punch out" to other 3<sup>rd</sup> party education related services like Gallup.

The benefits of building our own system to handle the hiring process included no the fact that no new E-Business licenses were required, applicants rather than HR staff could manage their own portfolio, the Oracle database stores all documents and data, the application automates data transfer to HR via standard API's

### **Why Oracle Application Express (APEX)?**

Cost. The product is free and available from Oracle via download. The development tool has a very short learning curve. There is a vast body of knowledge know as the product matures. OTN and APEX blogs are readily available. The product licensing is done through the database. If your database is licensed, you can have APEX. Douglas County had investigated a number of other development tools including J Developer, C, and .Net. The APEX tool provided a quick ramp up and quick deployment of prototypes and samples that could be used to promote the project. Our staff had no formal training on using APEX. Knowledge of SQL and PL/SQL are essential but if those skill sets exist, using APEX to develop the web based front ends was a very wise solution.

The development tool provides wizards to speed up the development cycle and prototyping. There is a vast collection of online code samples accessible through the Oracle OTN site. The code is very flexible, exportable, and transferable and can be used by the development team simply by exporting files and importing them into another database. This provides for a consistent design standard with extensive code reuse. Ultimately, the APEX tool allowed Douglas County to create an intuitive and consistent web based application while using the existing skill sets of the development team.

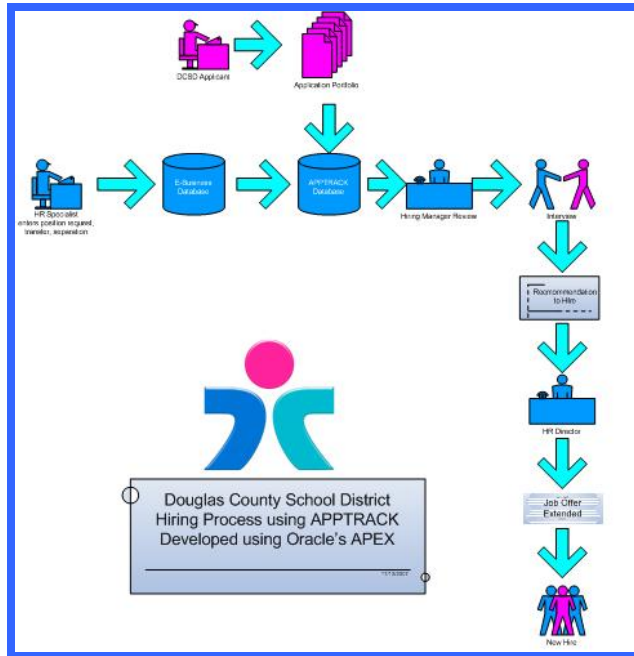
### **What Did We Need?**

Our existing process consists of a great number of steps to complete the transaction of applicant interest to hire. The hiring process encompasses a great number of staff members that all play a part in the final select of the applicant. The processes are similar for each job type but do include differences that had to be accounted for and designed into the application.



The Douglas County hiring process is illustrated in the figure 1.0 below.

Figure 1.0



The application was broken into two modules: Applicant and Recruiter. The key features of the applicant module included an Intuitive navigation so that HR did not have to spend time training the public on using the system to apply for jobs. In addition, the application needed to put ownership of managing the application documents in the hands of the applicant rather than the HR staff. It needed to provide email notifications to the applicants to limit the amount of manual communication to the applicants.

The recruitment module needed to provide managers around our 900 square mile district the ability to review applicants, resumes and job postings online. The module also needed to allow HR directors to review and maintain assessment scores, produce mass communications to applicant pools and transfer data from the application to the Oracle E-Business Suite.

Phase II of the project includes integration with Position Control for job postings, interview comments online, electronic versions of all EEOC forms, integration with Document Management and in-district transfers

## Conclusions

The project presented many challenges and continues to do so as processes are reviewed and revised and the application adjusted to meet the changing requirements. There are many upcoming systems planned at Douglas County Schools which will also automate processes and integrate with many of the Oracle E-Business Suite modules. Plans are made to use APEX to develop Online Benefits (Oracle HR), Food Service Requisitions (Oracle Purchasing and Order Management), Balance ScoreCard (Oracle Financials and Oracle HR).