

EMS Case Study *Arlington (VA) Public Schools*



Background

Opened in 1972, Thomas Jefferson Middle School and Community Center in Arlington was one of the first buildings in the country to be conceived of and constructed as a “joint use” facility. Housing both a public school and a community recreation center, it is run jointly by school and county administrations.

This model of cooperation has been applauded, studied and emulated by groups from all over the U.S. and around the world. Many courses for educational and recreational degrees in colleges have cited the facility as an example of what can be accomplished by pooling resources into a common operation.

In addition to Jefferson Middle School, a number of other facilities in the county use EMS Enterprise. Gunston Middle School, Hoffman-Boston Elementary School and Drew Model School rely on EMS to manage the use of their space.

The Right Tool for the Job

Before Arlington Public Schools (APS) implemented EMS Enterprise, Noël English, the Assistant Facility Director at Thomas Jefferson Middle School and Community Center, was using multiple tools to maintain and distribute scheduling information. “The only way to check for double bookings was to visually scan the listings, and there were definitely times when I didn’t catch something,” she says.

She goes on to describe the “heart palpitations and profuse apologies” that resulted when she had to call a double-booked customer and inform them that their space was no longer available.

Deciding that they needed a program specifically designed for room and resource scheduling, English, her APS colleagues and employees from county departments embarked on a nine-month research and review process that culminated in the purchase of the EMS Enterprise system. English explained to upper management that EMS offered “far more of what we were looking for than any other program and it would be able to accommodate our future growth” and that it was a “great value” compared to other products they reviewed.

Fast Facts

- Arlington Public Schools replaces multiple scheduling systems with EMS Enterprise; creates standard, **district-wide scheduling process**
- One of the first **Joint-Use Facilities** in the country
- **13,000** bookings each year
- **218** rooms, fields and other areas

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Challenges and Solutions

Today, Thomas Jefferson Middle School and the other APS facilities use EMS to schedule the use of 218 rooms, fields and other areas for nearly 13,000 bookings each year, including event types that cover a very broad spectrum.

Now that a comprehensive event management solution is in place, tasks that used to pose a significant challenge for APS scheduling personnel no longer do. One of those tasks is providing clients with a fast, efficient reservations process. "Scheduling an event in EMS is so quick. It's easy to make the reservation with the person still on the phone," says English.

Another task is the juggling of multiple events and the resources that are required for them. "With such a variety of events going on at the same time, it used to be difficult to ensure that all clients had their requirements met," says English. One that is especially helpful in high volume environments is the EMS "reminders" function. "Reminders can be set up to alert me in advance of things that need to be taken care of - things that might easily fall through the cracks otherwise," notes English.

As most organizations do, APS often found internal communication to be quite challenging. One of the many ways that EMS helps to simplify the exchange of information is through the variety of operational, sales and statistical reports that are available.

Another channel for the communication of schedule information is Virtual EMS, the web-based component of the EMS Enterprise system. "With Virtual EMS, anyone who has access to a computer on the school or county intranet can easily browse to see when and where an event is taking place and who the sponsor is," she explains.

APS is finding that communicating with clients is also easier now. "With just a few mouse clicks, all of the information on an event - from date, time and room, to resources and services - can be pulled into a confirmation document which can be emailed directly to a client," says English.

“ EMS offered far more of what we were looking for than any other program. ”

Looking Ahead

With four schools having successfully implemented EMS Enterprise, English and the rest of the APS staff are looking forward to two more facilities coming online in the near future.

For more information on Dean Evans & Associates, and the company's event management and master calendaring software products, go to www.dea.com or contact the Sales department at sales@dea.com or 1.800.440.3994 ext. 863.

