How a school district transformed its manual, paper-based Pre-K - K registration process – by deploying a seamless digital-only workflow – to enable self-service, contact-free registration all year round.

Maury County School District:
Digitizing and automating kindergarten registration

Superintendent for Maury County School District in Tennessee, Dr Christopher Marczak, embraces the 24/7 nature of his job. He's always thinking about better ways to connect Maury County's school communities and improve access to education for its 13,000+ students across its 21 schools. Dr Marczak looks for innovative, technology-driven solutions to achieve those outcomes.

In 2017, he partnered with Operoo and its School Productivity and Process Automation Platform as part of the district's Digital Integration Plan for Learning on Mobile and Accessibility (DIPLOMA). This enabled Maury County to digitize the distribution and collection of permission slips for its district-wide student laptop program, eliminating 36,000 paper forms from just one process – and a lot of stress and inefficiency – for parents and school staff alike.

When the Coronavirus Crisis hit, Dr Marczak knew Maury County's traditional paper-based registration process for incoming Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten students wasn't viable. Instead, he pushed Operoo to develop an industry leading, 100 percent digital, solution that would make Pre-K - K registration in Maury County a breeze – throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Summary of Results

100% DIGITAL	**JUST 8 DAYS** TO BUILD AN AUTOMATED SOLUTION	**0 ⟶ 450** DIGITAL REGISTRATIONS IN FIRST MONTH	**21 SCHOOLS**	**100%** MOBILE
ALL-YEAR REGISTRATION	**AUTOMATED ON-BOARDING**	**PDF MAPPING** TO TNDOE TEMPLATES	**100+ LANGUAGES** SUBMIT FORMS IN ANY LANGUAGE	**1 SECURE PLATFORM**

The Challenge
Necessity is the mother of invention

When Tennessee's Governor, Bill Lee, shut down the state in response to the coronavirus outbreak, Maury County had to freeze its Kindergarten registration; which it was on the cusp of commencing. It was at that moment Dr Marczak knew he had to act.

"Before bringing our Kindergarten registration process online, it was completely reliant on people, paper and pencils," said Dr Marczak. "Without the digital solution we now have, and without the Maury County - Operoo partnership, we'd be putting people at risk. That's not acceptable.

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The manual nature of our previous process would have been unworkable in a COVID-19 world.
"

"We would have had a person stationed at Central Office behind a plexiglass screen and a long line of parents waiting on the other side. That person would be bringing people in one at a time and physically handling a piece of paper each parent passed under that plexiglass. They would have processed that paper form, left to wash their hands, then come back to serve the next person. This process would have been incredibly slow and frustrating at the best of times. But, during a pandemic, that scenario turns from painful into plain dangerous. We simply couldn't put people's safety at risk."

Dr Marczak said that while effectively mitigating potential risks associated with a physical registration process was paramount, he added that delaying Kindergarten registration wasn't an option either.

"After initially shutting down Kindergarten registration, I was being contacted by parents telling me that we needed to find a solution quickly," said Dr Marczak. "Aside from meeting the needs of our parent community, internally

we also needed to complete the process so that we could plan effectively for the next school year, hire the correct number of teachers, and properly allocate resources."

Dr Marczak's next move was to pick-up the phone and call Operoo.

The Solution
"Operoo tailored the solution to our requirements and delivered us exactly what we needed"

"I talked to my Communications Director, set-up a call with Brad [Director of Education Partnerships] and Sam [Head of Customer Success North America] at Operoo, and started to brainstorm how we could deliver a solution," said Dr Marczak. "We needed something completely digital, independently accessible on any device, and that customized to the form types and workflows we needed."

Operoo worked with Dr Marczak, extending the capabilities of its registration features, enabling Maury County to:

• Digitize its registration forms and embed them on the Maury County website for easy access and completion by anyone – not just existing Operoo users

• Empower parents to access and complete forms online, via any mobile device, in their home language

• Automatically map completed forms back to official Tennessee Department of Education PDF templates for record keeping purposes

• Enable authorized staff to access forms and track responses anywhere, anytime, on any device

• Seamlessly communicate with pre-registered families with zero manual effort via automated group messaging

• Programmatically trigger new student on-boarding requests upon enrolment

"Operoo tailored the solution to our requirements and delivered us exactly what we needed," said Dr Marczak. "They stayed with us all the way through – from the design phase through to launch."

Dr Marczak said Kindergarten registration could be exhausting and that digitizing it using Operoo made the process easier, more efficient and secure.

"Enrolling a kid in school for the first time is intense," said Dr Marczak. "Enrolment requires providing a range of things – from Birth Certificates, to Proof of Residency, Emergency Contact Information, Certificate of Immunization and more.

" *With CareMonkey, anyone can register their children for Kindergarten through their mobile device – the process is streamlined, easy and accessible to all.* "

The mobile format is huge. Not all families have a laptop or internet access at home. But, essentially everyone has a smartphone these days.

"From my perspective, Operoo also offers superior data security, with all forms and associated information captured in one place, which is only accessible to authorized staff. It's a big step-up from paper forms and physical filing cabinets."

Having an accessible digital registration process has also enabled Maury County to promote Pre-K - K registration through a range of mediums,

including phone, text, email, social media and even the local paper.

"It's simple," said Dr Marczak. "You just point people towards the page on our website and tell them to click on the digital form links. It's that easy. Not only does our new registration process enable people to register their kids from the comfort and safety of their own home, it's also helping us make Kindergarten education more accessible than ever before."

100% DIGITAL | TRANSFORMED PAPER-BASED REGISTRATION TO DIGITAL ONLY.

100% MOBILE | THE DIGITAL REGISTRATION PROCESS IS ACCESSIBLE VIA ANY PLATFORM OR MOBILE DEVICE.

100+ LANGUAGES | PARENTS CAN EASILY SUBMIT REGISTRATION FORMS IN THEIR LANGUAGE OF CHOICE.

PDF MAPPING | COMPLETED FORMS ARE AUTOMATICALLY MAPPED TO TENNESSEE DOE PDF TEMPLATES.

AUTOMATED ONBOARDING | ONCE REGISTRATIONS ARE ACCEPTED, A DIGITAL ON-BOARDING PROCESS IS TRIGGERED.

The Results
"You've saved us jobs, improved our processes and kept our community safe"

Dr Marczak knew he needed a solution to his COVID-caused registration conundrum, which delivered immediate results.

" We went from brainstorming to delivering an operational solution in eight days," said Dr Marczak. "The whole experience was a great example of collaboration. "

"We've now had our digital Kindergarten registration forms up for a month.

" All feedback has been positive and we've already had 326 registrations for Kindergarten and 124 registrations for Pre-Kindergarten. If we weren't using Operoo, that number would be zero. "

We simply couldn't have 450 parents queuing at Central Office to slide stacks of paper under some plexiglass in the middle of a pandemic."

Aside from addressing the immediate need, Dr Marczak also wanted to treat an otherwise stressful situation as an opportunity to future-proof Maury County's Kindergarten registration process.

"It's efficient, user friendly, and even as we speak it's creating safety amidst this whole Coronavirus shutdown," said Dr Marczak. "But, it's creating efficiency beyond this point too. Now there's no going back.

"For example, we always used to conduct student registration over a specific period of time because the entire process was paper-based and manual.

We needed the manpower to support the distribution, collection and collation of those physical registration documents as well as keep track of where all the forms were.

"With Operoo, our registration can now be year-round. Once a parent submits registration information, we're immediately notified. And, that data is securely located in one, password protected, single source of truth.

"It's allowed us to be more customer friendly for parents, and more efficient at the same time. If a parent says they're moving into the community in January, they don't have to wait until April to register their kids – they can do it whenever it's convenient. We're bringing quality customer service practices into our education system."

But collaborating with Operoo to solve Maury County's Kindergarten registration conundrum became much more than a one-off technology project.

"You've saved us jobs, you've kept our community safe, and you've improved our Kindergarten registration processes – now, and for years to come," said Dr Marczak. "Thank you so much. It's a great partnership we've built with Operoo."

JUST 8 DAYS
IS ALL IT TOOK TO HAVE AN AUTOMATED REGISTRATIONS SOLUTION BUILT.

0 ⟶ 450
450 PRE-K - K DIGITAL REGISTRATIONS RECEIVED WITHIN THE FIRST MONTH OF OPERATION.

ALL-YEAR REGISTRATION
MAURY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT CAN NOW ACCEPT STUDENT REGISTRATION ANYTIME.

The Future
'Crisis' in Chinese comes from joining two symbols together: 'risk' and 'opportunity'

"John F Kennedy once noted that 'crisis' in Chinese comes from joining two symbols together: 'risk' and 'opportunity'," said Dr Marczak. "I couldn't think of a better example of that than what we've achieved here."

Maury County is now scaling its work with Operoo to reach parents, staff and use cases far beyond Kindergarten registration.

"We're now automating a range of traditionally manual or paper-based tasks with Operoo," said Dr Marczak. "From digitizing Out of Zone Request Forms – when a student is applying to transfer from one school to another – to Drivers License Applications, Athletics Permission Forms, School Trip Approvals, Incident Reports and Student Medical Records.

"We're training-up all our Principals in Operoo heading into the summer break. We want schools in Maury County to start using Operoo digital forms and workflows for everything.

"Consolidating all our digital processes and forms in one place is critical; even if you think you're already digital. Parents hate juggling dozens of apps or filling out the same information over and over again within those different apps. With Operoo, everything our parents and teachers need is in one place."

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21 SCHOOLS

OPEROO'S PROCESS AUTOMATION SOLUTIONS ARE NOW USED ACROSS ALL MAURY COUNTY SCHOOLS.A

1 SECURE PLATFORM

WILL BE USED FOR ALL STUDENT FORMS, DATA AND PROCESSES IN MAURY COUNTY MOVING FORWARD.

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