identiMetrics Biometric ID Management Brings Biometrics to Schools Nationwide

When most people think of biometrics, they think about high security technology - a technology that the government will use for passports and border control, that banks will use to combat identity theft, that police will use to find criminals, that we see in the movies. But the high cost, high security, futuristic biometric technology unthinkable in everyday applications just a few years ago, is here -

it's adaptable and affordable and ready to go in your school!

Wood County Schools are located in West Virginia. They have 27 schools: 19 elementary schools and 8 secondary schools - over 13,750 students. Foodservices employ 110 cooks and 9 warehouse and administrative staff serving over 1.8 million meals per year.

The Director of Food Service, Beverly E. Blough MS, RD, LD, is responsible for following all U.S. federal laws for the Child Nutrition Program. One of the requirements is accurate student identification for reimbursement. They were using student ID cards and a 9-digit PIN. This was just not working.

On some days, more than 80% of students would show up for lunch without their cards. This meant that the cook had to type in every 9-digit student ID number. Lines backed up, mistakes were made keying in the numbers and each month irritated parents called claiming their children did not eat the meals they were charged for and the school district had to bear those costs. "With all of the lost, stolen and damaged cards, sometimes I thought Foodservice was in the card business rather than serving meals to students! We obviously needed a better solution," said Beverly.

"We decided that finger scanning biometrics was the solution. Students would never forget their fingers. We found several cafeteria applications that sold a finger scanning biometric device, but all of them wanted us to spend thousands of dollars buying their application and replacing our already existing and working software," she added.

450 miles away in Hammonton, New Jersey, Jane Cora DTR, Supervisor of Food Service, was experiencing the same headaches. "We wanted something that students could not forget, lose, damage or steal. But it had to be compatible with our existing cafeteria software and it had to be cost-effective. We also needed biometrics that worked with 4, 5 and 6 year old children without any difficulties."

And in another part of the United States, Edgefield County, South Carolina, Greg Thompson, Principal of Strom Thurmond High School, had yet another requirement. He wanted to use finger scanning biometrics as a complete student identification system throughout his entire school, beginning with the cafeteria, then migrating to the library and finally in each classroom for period-by-period attendance so he would know where his students are throughout their day.

They all decided to use identiMetrics, the leader in biometrics in K-12 schools. identiMetrics scans a student's finger for identification. The system can operate in a single lunch line or provide identification throughout the entire school district. There's an added bonus: once identiMetrics is installed in the cafeteria, it can be used to identify students in other areas of the school like classroom attendance, library, nurse's office and for security access at the front door since the students are already enrolled. And it works flawlessly with children as young as four years old.

According to Greg Thompson, "Biometric finger scanning identification was well accepted by the Board, Superintendent, Principals, teachers, parents and the community. They all understood our need to correctly identify students and realized the time and money it was costing each day to administer the card program. Initially, there were questions regarding privacy. But identiMetrics doesn't take an actual fingerprint, just unique identifying points. Everyone felt comfortable that the fingerprints can't be recreated. The students are enrolled only once so we can roll out our finger scanning identification program to different areas of the school. Now, students ALWAYS have their ID with them!" he adds.

Cost-effective biometric technology is here today with many practical uses. It's a perfect solution for schools that are dissatisfied with the current student identification systems in place such as PINs and swipecards. Finger scanning biometrics provide irrefutable proof of identification. Unlike the complicated and expensive government systems in the past, biometric finger scanning systems can be simple, cost-effective and "technology" friendly. identiMetrics makes things work faster, safer, cheaper and more reliably. If children can do it, you can, too. It's just smart business!

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