



Patsy Gant of Rockdale County Says of eBOARD: What More Could A Girl Ask For?

By Patsy Gant, Webmaster, Rockdale County Schools, Georgia

“In eBOARD we have found an intuitive agenda preparation tool that has amazingly streamlined our processes.”

On March 1, 2005, my life, as the creator of local board agendas, took a drastic turn. We had recently purchased eBOARD and this was the day that Mark Willis was coming to teach us to prepare board agendas. All I can say is, wow! We should have jumped on the eBOARD wagon years ago.

As the person appointed to pull all the pieces together to prepare an agenda document, I was a little nervous as I entered our training session. After all, I had been following the same steps for agenda preparation for 15 years now. When I assumed this task, the agenda was actually being prepared using memory typewriters. I was the first person in Rockdale County to begin to develop the agenda using electronic tools, such as MSWord®. After hours spent preparing multiple electronic files, there were still hours to go to get the final document printed, collated and bound. And then a staff member drove all over the county hand delivering large envelopes to each board member. So, I walked into the training session a little worried. I wasn't even sure if I would like this new method because, after all, I had developed the old method and changing to eBOARD would be something akin to abandoning a child. I worried needlessly. The four of us, Superintendent Ruel Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Management Services Bonnie Knight, Secretary to the Superintendent Donna Johnson, and I moved swiftly and effortlessly through our training under Mark's direction.

Just three short days later, it was time for me to log on and begin a whole new way of agenda preparation. Again, needless worry. Staff members submitted items and I compiled the agenda. The superintendent reviewed the agenda, added his own items, and then gave me the go-ahead to publish.

As I worked during that first month, my few questions were readily answered either by referring to the manual or making a quick call to the eBOARD support staff. These folks were always available and always had an answer. But, most important, they were always patient and never once did I feel as if I were taking up too much of their time. Our very first attempt at producing a paperless agenda went off without a hitch. But the icing on the cake was the immediate feedback from employees and parents visiting the website.

There was no learning curve. Under the excellent training session provided, we were able to jump in feet first and immediately create a very “friendly” document for our website. In eBOARD we have found an intuitive agenda preparation tool that has amazingly streamlined our processes.

Bonnie Knight produces the majority of board approval items and she found that she was able to submit items quickly and the program was so intuitive that she was able to walk through the process without even having to refer to the manual. Adding or removing approval items at the last minute is much easier than our older methods of printing and re-numbering items. Just after one month of using the tool, Bonnie is raving to everyone about the ease of use, increased efficiency as well as productivity, and, then ultimately, the cost savings to the school system.

We once printed 50 copies of every agenda. eBOARD has helped us realize quite a savings in print costs as well as employee time in generating the agenda with its supporting materials. Our board members will be receiving their laptops and training prior to the May meetings, at which time we will become completely paperless. As we have now worked through two months of agenda preparation,

I have developed a short list of “I wish I could’s.” The customer service-oriented staff just said, “Pass it on. We’ll see if we can get our tech staff to find a way to grant your wishes.” What more could a girl ask for?