



Visalia Unified School District sees increased transparency and savings with Diligent Community



Visalia Unified School District, located in central California, **serves around 32,000 students** from pre-kindergarten children to adults.

The district needed a board management solution that would streamline the creation process for agendas and board packets, while cutting down on printing costs. They also wanted to enable greater transparency among board members and the community.

Company: Visalia Unified School District

Industry: Education

Location: Tulare County, CA

The challenge

Delia Smart, Board Manager, struggled alongside the administrators to get board meeting agendas finalized in time for the printer. Adding to their frustration were last-minute additions and revisions to the agenda, as well as having to handwrite enclosure numbers for each agenda item.


With each successive addition to the agenda, the board packet preparer had to redo the handwritten numbering all over again, which required erasing and re-writing the numbers.

They also had to set early deadlines for submissions, because it was taking at least a week to prepare board packets. Added to the difficulty of controlling various versions, was the potential for human error. While the school district has the benefit of having its own print shop, board packet printing was often held up waiting for those last-minute additions.


Printing was onerous because of the many copies needed for board and community members. The PDF packet also had to be bookmarked, causing another time burden due to the size of the packet. Between scanning the paper copies and creating an electronic copy, the board packet process was tying up the print shop causing delays for other departments and schools.

A staff member had to hand-deliver the packets to board members to ensure it was received on time and for security reasons, adding even more time to the process.

Community members shared concerns that they could not find information easily, and the Board and Communications team also felt that transparency to community members around district decision-making could be improved.

 The task was time-consuming and required a lot of patience, especially since we work with many departments who need to get items on the agenda for board approval.

Delia Smart
Board Manager, Visalia Unified
School District



The solution

After researching available options, Diligent Community emerged as the preferred solution for Visalia School District. This decision was further reinforced by positive feedback from other districts, where administrators referred to Diligent Community as "life-changing for the better."

With Diligent Community, the district can now create agendas and board packets electronically, and quickly make additions without the hassle of redoing the entire packet. As an added bonus, they no longer have to hand-deliver board packets as they can share them digitally through the highly secure platform. Board members have easy access to documents any time they need them, saving lots of time before, during and after board meetings.

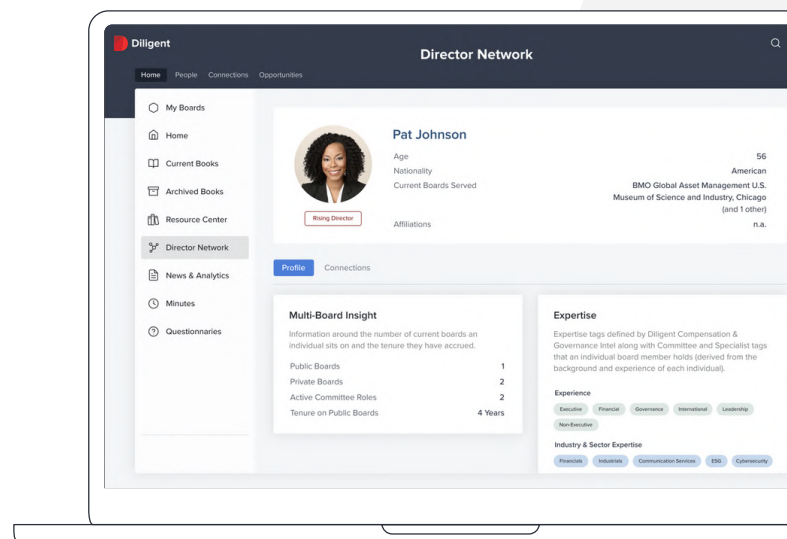
The Communications team's transparency initiatives — which include sharing agendas and meeting minutes from the district's public transparency site across social media and providing meeting notifications — have not only enhanced transparency, but also actively engaged the community.

By using the solution to upload meeting recordings and allowing community members to follow along with time-stamped minutes, the district can encourage active participation. Engagement isn't just about providing information; it's about facilitating interaction and making community members feel connected.

The results

The adoption of Diligent Community has delivered significant benefits, cutting board packet preparation time in half, reducing printing costs, and eliminating the time and effort required to assemble physical board packets. Trustees can now access their board books and other documents using any device at any time, eliminating the need for hand delivery.

With Diligent Community, the district has gained the flexibility to add or edit items in board packets up until the moment of publication, reducing stress and facilitating more effective decision-making. If a bid or contract is late coming in, board managers can give them extra time — often up to a few minutes before publishing to the community.





The district has transitioned from bi-monthly meetings to monthly meetings. Board meetings are more streamlined, and the Board and district leadership team are grateful for the added transparency and the hours of staff time being saved, in part made possible by Diligent Community. Board members are doing amazingly well with adapting to the platform, and are now reviewing and annotating documents with ease. Meetings run efficiently and there are no longer stacks of paperwork to either shred, throw away, or file at the end of each meeting.

Since Visalia Unified School District started using Diligent Community, engagement and trust within the local community have improved significantly, which aligns with the district's commitment to transparency. If community members are unable to attend meetings in person, they can access the livestream from home on any device, or watch the recorded meeting at their convenience and follow along with the time-stamped minutes.

In addition, the user-friendly interface of Diligent Community makes it easier for board members to locate agenda items, dispelling previous misconceptions about information being buried in PDFs.

Delia's final thoughts:

"Diligent Community allows community members to see the board function as **a well-oiled machine**. No one thinks we've buried something deep into the pages, and we've received positive feedback publicly and privately."



Board meeting preparation time halved



Printing costs reduced significantly



Meetings run more efficiently



Streamlined communication to board and public

About Diligent Community

Diligent Community is the next-generation governance solution designed to enhance effectiveness and efficiency for public boards and leadership teams. Tailored to cater to the unique needs of diverse public organizations, Diligent Community empowers streamlined decision-making, ensuring transparent and effective governance. As a trusted offering from Diligent, a leader serving over 14,000 mission-driven organizations globally, Diligent Community is your essential tool for driving impactful governance, fostering better communication, and achieving shared success.

Learn more

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