Belleville Township High School District 201: Parchment at the District and the School Levels

**Challenges:**
- Lack of efficiency when processing transcripts
- Unhappy parent and student calls and emails due to delays in transcript delivery

**Solution:**
- Parchment Award - District Records Services
  - Current Student and Alumni Transcripts
  - Third Party Ordering

**Results:**
- Modern, efficient digital transcript platform
- Timely transcript delivery to receivers
- Great student experiences
- More productive staff

You could say that BTHS 201 has looked at Parchment from both sides now (with apologies to Joni Mitchell). Turns out electronic transcripts are a hit at both the district and high school levels.

**Recognizing Challenges**

For Melissa Taylor, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services for the district, all kinds of programs or services — from special education to curriculum and course offerings — fall under her umbrella. In addition, the district office handles alumni requests for transcripts.

“We knew that our system was not really efficient,” she explained. “However, we also had a really knowledgeable registrar who liked the system. When she retired, it was time to look for a system that was more up to date than the existing way we were handling transcripts. That led us to Parchment.”

According to Danielle Koeneman, Counselor at Belleville West High School, the efficiency of their transcript process was lacking. It was taking too long for students to get their transcripts and for the documents to arrive at colleges.

“With the amount of calls and emails we were receiving about the delays, I realized that we had to do something that was faster and more involved with technology,” reported Danielle. “I’ll be honest. We were mailing transcripts for every kid.” And that included current and past (for 1 year) students at 2 high schools, plus those at the district’s alternative and night schools.

“I entered education to make an impact in student's lives, and if we can make sending transcripts easier, then they can spend time finding colleges or applying for scholarships. Parchment has changed the efficiency of our office and also reduced stress for our students.”

— Danielle Koeneman, Counselor
Selecting Parchment

Danielle was tasked with researching solutions and had been looking at a couple of different systems. “Because of Parchment’s partnership with the state of Illinois, we felt their solution was really a good fit for us, she explained. “We were late to the game and had already heard from other districts that Parchment had a really good reputation. So, we were confident in recommending the change.”

She started by looking at all the options. Plus, as a member of a state school counselor association, she was able to pose some questions to other schools in the organization that were the right size and demographic. “Their feedback was all rave reviews,” she said. “Everyone was very impressed with Parchment. I didn’t get a single negative comment. But there were lots of complaints about some pricey competitors out there regarding their customer services and how non-user friendly their services are.”

A Fun, Creative Way to Help Students Get on Parchment

To facilitate student registration, Danielle came up with a great idea. The high school held a Parchment drive and made it a competition between the Counselors. Each Counselor has a portion of the alphabet they are responsible for. For Danielle that’s T-Z. There was a thermometer on each Counselor’s door, and they would color in the thermometers as their students signed up. The prize was a gift card for the Counselor who filled in his or her thermometer the fastest.

“We also had a giant thermometer for our senior class of over 500 students,” Danielle explained. “We have a dress code, and we got permission from the principal that if we got 80% registration, we could have a jeans day. We ended up with over 90%. It took a month from start to finish.”

“[Parchment]’s made us much more efficient, so our alumni have a much smoother process to get transcripts in a timely way. Ultimately, that’s our goal, to provide good service to our community. Parchment helps us do that.”

— Melissa Taylor, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, BTHSD

Rolling Out Parchment District Wide

According to Melissa, each school campus deals with current students and first year. Then it all comes to the district office. Before Parchment, they had one person trying to chase down all those transcripts. Alumni of all ages would come here, or the office would mail the documents. Then, those who ordered transcripts would call to see where the credentials were.

“Now, it’s really great that we don’t have near as many people coming to our office,” she said. “Plus, the system is so much more efficient for the alumni. If they request a transcript through Parchment, they can track it through Parchment. They don’t have to call us.”

And Parchment has provided great customer service, according to the district-level person handling the alumni records. The questions that she had were answered or figured out quickly. “So, we appreciate that,” said Melissa.

Students were impressed as well. “For example, I had a student come in who was on campus for the day and needed to send his transcript to 3 colleges and 2 coaches,” Danielle shared. “He logged in to his Parchment account and was able to send his transcripts everywhere they needed to go. He marveled at how quick and easy the process was.”

Over 90% learner adoption in the first month
Managing Change
Change is always hard for anyone, according to Danielle. The message she delivered to the department was that this was going to be a learning curve and transition, but in 5 years, every student on campus will be using Parchment. So, it will seem very seamless and an accepted part of the registration process. It won’t take as much effort as it did the first year when it was brand new. “They are all absolutely loving it now,” she said. “The registrar has taken it and run with it. By sending as many transcripts as we can through Parchment, we’re on our way to a paperless process.”

Reaping the Benefits
Every year, high schools have to create a school profile that’s distributed to colleges when requested, according to Danielle. “We were able to pull the information about last year’s senior class as far as what % is going to 4-year universities, in or out of state, 2-year or military,” she explained. Parchment has a very quick, simple, and easy way to gather information.”

“It’s made us much more efficient, so our alumni have a much smoother process to get transcripts in a timely way,” said Melissa. “Ultimately, that’s our goal, to provide good service to our community. Parchment helps us do that.”

“Also, the third-party verification process is much easier because it’s more efficient,” Melissa added. “Our administrative assistant who handles these said she would get multiple calls regarding the same request. Now, she does it one time and is done with it.”

“I entered education to make an impact in student’s lives, and if we can make sending transcripts easier, then they can spend time finding colleges or applying for scholarships,” Danielle concluded. “Parchment has changed the efficiency of our office and also reduced stress for our students.”

About BTHSD
• Location: Belleville, IL
• Part of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) Transcript Exchange
• Parchment Member Since: 2019
• Learners: 4,610
• Location in Belleville, IL
• Schools: Belleville East, Belleville West
• SIS: Tyler
• Parchment Products: Parchment District Records Services Parchment Records Digitization

Want to increase your efficiency at the school and district levels?
Visit www.parchment.com or email us at info@parchment.com