

# High School Goes High Tech Through Unique ECM Partnership

Public-private partnership gives high school students a high-tech work experience.



Westlake City Schools students are getting a look at software that goes way beyond a basic computer class. And they won't just be learning about it — they'll be helping to create it. The school district, which is located about 12 miles west of downtown Cleveland, has partnered with its Westlake neighbor, Hyland Software, on a special hands-on learning project.

Hyland will involve students from Westlake High School in the creation of a new module for OnBase, Hyland's award-winning enterprise content management (ECM) solution. The students will work with Hyland staff on the software configuration process from start to finish. The school system then will be able to use the software, which will help automate the creation and distribution of meeting agendas and minutes.

Hyland has been working on a variety of projects with the City of Westlake since moving to the city in 2002. These projects focus on how OnBase can help the city work more efficiently. Superintendent of Westlake

City Schools Dan Keenan was interested in OnBase too. He and Westlake Mayor Dennis M. Clough have had numerous discussions about OnBase, including how the city uses it and how the school district could use it as well. Keenan's discussions with Hyland eventually led to the learning project.

## Learning by Doing

An independent study group of eight students will work to configure the software. "Kids think bigger than we do, and they are starving for a way to channel their energy into something productive," said Keenan. "They don't know the boundaries that adults seem to face as they get older. Kids still think outside of the box, which is why they tend to have so many great ideas."

The students will participate in software planning, design, implementation and training. They will begin by discovering how the schools currently handle agendas and minutes, what the business processes are, and how meeting information is currently

captured and distributed. Then they'll help configure the solution that will aid the schools in getting the work done more efficiently.

Students will do much of the work themselves. "That's what's really exciting about it," said Keenan. "It isn't that students will watch the Hyland team do the work and then just talk about it — it's, 'This is how you do it, now go out and do it. And as you encounter different issues and problems, this is the process we use to work those problems out.'"

Students will learn how much work goes into creating software and how many steps are involved. "It's about taking them through the processes, and showing them how everything links together," Keenan said. "It provides a great opportunity for our kids to understand what happens from software development to project management, all the way through implementing that software and training people within an organization to use it."

## Professional Partnership — and Philanthropy Effort

The project is an extension of the school district's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) program. STEM works to foster interest among students in STEM-related fields in preparation for the work world. "Kids are interested in science and technology, but they don't really see, in typical schooling, how it applies to problem-solving or a career," Keenan said. "Science fairs and contests are all well and good, but being able to work with a local successful company will really put it into perspective for them."

To bolster the project, the school district decided to extend opportunities initiated through a STEM grant from the Ohio Board of Regents. The grant was specified for this type of concept at the middle school, and this was a great opportunity to expand it to the high school. Hyland suggested the

software configuration idea as a good fit for the high school students.

Keenan said the project between Hyland and the school district has been a true partnership. That's just one reason he's excited to be planning more student-based projects with Hyland. "Hyland has made it known that they have a stake in our community," said Keenan. "Our students want to continue working with them for the valuable experience they gain. Working together is a real win-win."

#### Continued Success

The City of Westlake also continues to expand its use of OnBase to more departments. "We've realized great benefits from the implementation of OnBase, and we want to amplify those benefits," said Clough. "The system has enhanced productivity and helped us to better serve the public."

As it does for many cities across the country, OnBase helps Westlake manage its documents, business processes and historical records in a single application. It also enables the scanning of existing paper documents into the system, so that they can be managed electronically along with everything else.

Now processes are moving faster than ever across the city. Some things that once took days now take just minutes.

**"Hyland is using its software know-how for the greater good. That kind of local partnership really makes for a stronger community."**

— ANNE FRITZ, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, WESTLAKE, OHIO

Documents are easily shared and retrieved by city employees. Paper is no longer the best way to get things done — and even has been eliminated in some areas. OnBase works for Westlake.

"Working with Hyland Software, it's about, 'What do we need and how do we get there?' versus, 'This is our product, and you have to make your system work with it,'" said Anne Fritz, director of finance for the city. Fritz said that approach is refreshing. "It's different than other software vendors I've dealt with," she noted. "Hyland's philosophy seems to be, 'What can our software do to make your life and your current processes better and your organization more successful?'"

Departments currently using OnBase include engineering, planning and economic development, building, law and recreation. The fire and police departments are also considering OnBase. Fritz said the city is excited about using OnBase in more departments, which will increase the green benefits of less paper while also making the city more efficient.

The city also plans to expand the ways it uses OnBase. "We're connecting our internally developed geographic information system (GIS) to OnBase. This way, the GIS data will be available through OnBase city-wide," Fritz said. "Right now, it's sitting on one particular server, mainly used by engineering. This opens it up, both for public and citywide access."

Fritz said the city sees Hyland as a partner. "Hyland Software has been there since the beginning. They've taken the extra step to make OnBase work for us — even integrating it with all of our other technology," she said. "We look for Hyland to continue to partner with us, to help guide us through all the new technology that's coming out."

But the relationship goes beyond software. "They're working with the city and the school district. That's a good corporate citizen that wants to participate in the community," said Fritz. "Hyland is using its software know-how for the greater good. That kind of local partnership really makes for a stronger community."

## OnBase

For additional information visit  
[www.onbase.com/government](http://www.onbase.com/government)

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