

Proc case delivered an award winning financial information system for Government of Ontario

Ontario Government Ministry of Education

Client since March 2001
Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Industry: Government



Client Overview

The Ministry of Education is responsible for funding 72 separate school boards across Ontario. These are primary and secondary, English and French, Catholic and public boards, each with its own specific needs.

Funding for each school board is based on a defined set of rules. Each board makes critical decisions based on the government funding. Funding calculations and “what if” scenarios to predict the outcome of various funding decisions were done using spreadsheets with embedded calculations. These spreadsheets were often used many times, modified, and emailed back and forth. The users liked the look and feel of spreadsheets; however this presented a number of difficulties for the Ministry:

- The data was not easily accessible for analysis and reporting which the ministry needed to do on aggregated school board data.
- Managing multiple versions of files and modifications to formulas could lead to errors.
- Privacy and security issues were encountered, resulting from the proliferation of data and spreadsheets.

Client Objectives

The Ministry of Education planned to build an integrated, web-based, database-driven application Education Finance Information System (EFIS). The Ministry was looking for an IT services vendor to develop an application that would meet the complex business requirements, while allowing school boards the flexibility and confidentiality to perform what if scenarios remotely.

Proc case Contribution

As a vendor of record under the task based and solutions based contracts for Ontario government projects, Proc case won a public bid to deliver the solution for the ministry. Proc case proposed a design that was able to combine the spreadsheet look and feel that the users preferred with the technical superiority of a relational database. The design was also based on web access to a centralized application. This alleviated the problems related to multiple versions and security issues. Throughout the development process, the ministry staff had expressed their deep satisfaction with the technical excellence and dedication of the Proc case team. A consultative and collaborative approach with the systems staff and end users resulted in a robust application that exceeded customer expectations.

The EFIS application enables all 72 school boards in Ontario to perform “what if” scenarios for education programs to identify the optimal blend of programs and funding. The final decision is submitted annually and funding transfers tracked, all in the same application.

The EFIS application was developed in a generic manner, and has been successfully re-implemented at the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities as the Colleges Finance Information System (CFIS). The Generic design and ease of re-implementation of EFIS has led the Government services division to consider it a “Common Component”, or an application or component that can and should be re-used where possible to reduce development and support costs.

Technology

Oracle Database, Microsoft .Net and Microsoft Windows

Results

Procace had successfully delivered an enterprise web-based solution to manage education funding. The scalable component-based architecture was compliant with the government's common component strategy. The web processing model, essentially "Excel on the Web", could be extended to meet the business needs of other Ontario government ministries. The highly successful application has been a spectacular success, and won a coveted Government of Ontario **Showcase Ontario Award 2003 Diamond Award** under the "Business Solutions through Information Technology" category.