

Case Study | LAUSD Baseline Automation

Primavera, Together with Parsons and Calance, Delivers Automated Baselines, Improving Construction Schedules and Saving The Los Angeles Unified School District \$60,000 Annually



93% Time Reduction in Creating Schedule Baselines

Reduced time to create schedule baselines from four hours to 15 minutes



98% Time Reduction in Creating Single User Baselines

Reduced time to create single user baselines from 40 minutes to less than half a minute



Saved \$900 per update in baseline creation



Saved \$825 per update in assigning single user baselines

Client Overview

With approximately 750,000 students, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is the largest public school system in California and the second largest school district in the United States. The District has undertaken a massive 20+ billion capital improvement program -- \$12.4 billion dedicated to new school construction and \$7.6 billion earmarked for modernization and repair of existing buildings.

The goal of LAUSD's New School Construction and Modernization Program is to provide the opportunity for every student to attend a healthy and safe two-semester neighborhood school. The Program encompasses 132 new school projects, 65 school additions, infrastructure updates and 17 playground expansions, as well as the addition of 165,000 new classroom seats.

In order to meet its strategic goals, the LAUSD augments its staff with professionals from 15 construction firms with more than 40 subconsultants. One of those professionals is Wendy Kaszycki, CCM PE, program manager with Parsons Corporation -- a construction manager for the LAUSD's capital improvement program -- and director of project controls at LAUSD. Kaszycki has been assigned to the LAUSD project since 2004 and was tasked with integrating the district's financials with Primavera solutions. In 2006, she oversaw the move to Primavera's enterprise project management system for improved insight into project and portfolio performance.



The Challenge: Maintaining 352 Baselines

The LAUSD manages its collective projects in a Primavera P5 program schedule, which forms the basis of a Strategic Execution Plan that is presented to the District's Board of Education for approval. The annual schedule baseline provides a snapshot of the status of all projects and enables the stakeholders to set goals for the coming year.

In addition to comparing the current schedule to a project portfolio-level baseline, P5 users also can add up to three user-specific baselines for a project. While the process of maintaining multiple project baselines, which the LAUSD organizes by "data dates," is quick and easy for most organizations -- go to the baseline menu, name the baseline according to an appropriate date, close it and go to the next one -- it presented an unusual challenge to the LAUSD because the organization creates snapshots of its projects every month, and in many cases, twice a month.

With 352 projects containing more than 40,000 activities, managing multiple baselines was not only time consuming, but there were often inconsistencies in the naming convention for baselines, or inadvertent keystroke errors.

A Shared Schedule

Adding to the complexity is the fact that the schedule is shared by the construction and preconstruction segments of the organization. "The Construction Department uses the schedule for managing projects, planning, historical records and reporting. The Real Estate Department, which is responsible for all preconstruction, has the bulk of activities because it uses the schedule to manage its day-to-day work," explains Kaszycki. Because it was necessary to lock the users out of the system during schedule validations, they were sometimes unable to access real-time information when needed for planning sessions. It also prevented schedule analyses for management meetings. "We have three places where we send copies of the file and all three of those have to be equal," she explains. "So while we were creating those, users had to be locked out. Otherwise the data integrity would have been compromised."

The Solution: Automating The Process

Managing several projects in which the critical path may change from day to day, depending on whether it is being governed by land or design activities, makes it particularly challenging to stay on task. It's also critical. If a school is delivered late, the

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District can face penalties. Kaszycki knew that a simple solution would be to automate the baselining process, and turned to consulting firm and Authorized Primavera Partner Calance for help. She had worked with Calance on other projects, and knew that the firm would deliver quality work, on time. In this case, the timeframe was just three months. “The preconstruction group had a series of important meetings scheduled and they didn’t want to be locked out at all during that time. We only had a one-month window to complete the ‘create integration,’ and then we knew it would take another month or two to complete the ‘assigning’ part,” says Kaszycki.

Creating an Easy-to-Use Web Application

Using the P5 Java-based API to interface with Primavera and Calance’s Dimension Integration Framework, the LAUSD/ Calance team was able to create an easy-to-use Web application that allows the District to manage its baselines simply and efficiently. “The application is integrated with Primavera’s own account security, so that users log in with their Primavera accounts and have access to different parts of the Website based on their Primavera security profile,” explains Calance’s Director of the Oracle Integration Group Dr. Daniel Williams. The Website allows users to create new baselines, assign project-level baselines, assign their own user-specific baselines, or assign the user-specific baselines for multiple users. “All the user has to do is select the projects, choose the baselines and click a button,” says Williams. “The integration engine then takes over and performs the work. The integration ensures that projects are named consistently and that no business rules have been violated. LAUSD personnel are now able to better focus their time on critical goals such as meeting project deadlines and managing project budgets.”

The Benefits: Higher Visibility, Lower Cost

“For managing a program of our size, Primavera is the only way to go,” says Kaszycki.

“Migrating to Primavera’s enterprise version enabled us to track all of our projects across the organization. The hierarchical coding structure in P5 offers us the ability to leverage so much more in terms of being able to analyze the data. And the baselining capabilities provide the preconstruction team with the ability to refer back to what they had said a month ago, or two months ago, and compare it to the current status of a project.”

It also provides a single source for scheduling information. “Previously, other departments could only see their own schedules, but not where they fit in to the larger picture. So perhaps they might have thought they had a year to complete their work, when in fact, they only had nine months for their part of the project,” explains Kaszycki.

“Now all departments are working from a single source – they have read-only access to P5 – and they are required to live by the current schedule, as well as refer to the attached baselines for comparison.”

Wendy Kaszycki, Director of Project Controls at LAUSD

The Decision to Automate

In addition to the benefits of P5, the decision to automate the baseline process has resulted in significant cost and time savings. “Now to do baselines, the users just set the data date and choose a set of projects, press a button and they’re done,” says Calance’s Williams. “We removed the data entry requirement from people who were trained to do other things, skilled engineers, for example. The project was straightforward because Primavera has an excellent API that we were able to automate.”

The saving in time has been dramatic. The process of creating baselines used to take four hours. Today it’s less than 15 minutes. Maintaining single user baselines once took 40 minutes. Today it’s less than half a minute. And the **cost savings** have been even more stunning:

- Creating baselines - **\$900 per update**
- Assigning user baselines - **\$650 per update**
- Assigning single user baselines - **\$825 per update**
- Assigning user baselines for the read-only group - **\$5,990 per update**
- Assigning project baselines - **\$300 per update**

And, says Kaszycki,

“Reduction in ‘lock-out’ time – priceless!”

About Clance

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