

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Automates Open Enrollment with the Benefitfocus HR InTouch Application™



Nationally Recognized Public School District in North Carolina with 19,000 Employees

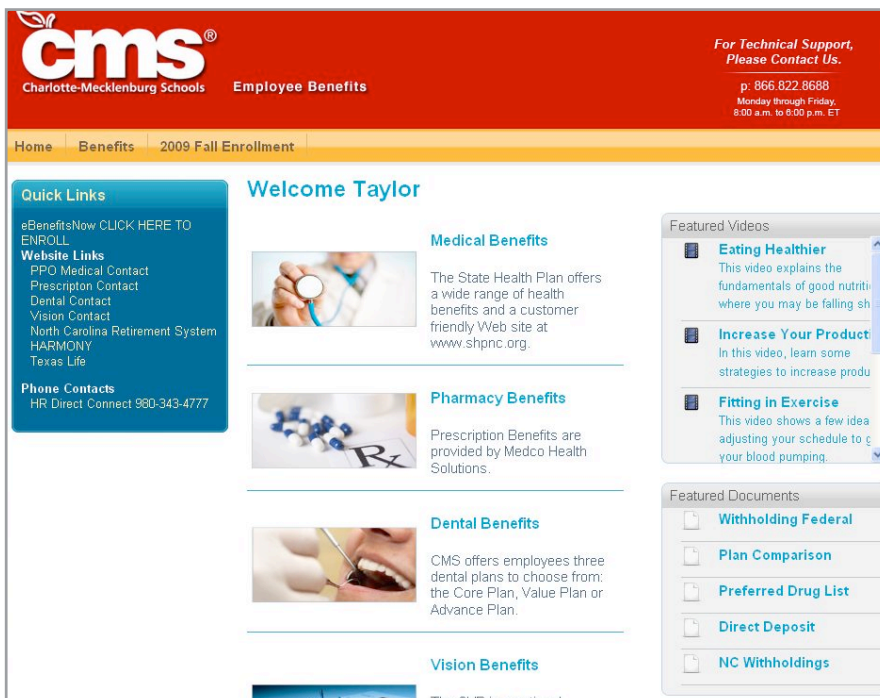
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is a nationally recognized, county-wide public school district in North Carolina. Formed in 1959, CMS has earned widespread acclaim as one of America's best school districts. The largest employer in Mecklenburg County, CMS has nearly 19,000 employees serving 134,000 students. With such a large and diverse employee population, including business professionals, teachers, bus drivers and cafeteria workers, CMS desired a more consolidated method for managing their benefits that would be easy for everyone to use and understand.

Traditional Paper Enrollment Process Laborious and Error-prone

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' previous system of benefits administration was laborious. "In the beginning, everything was paper; we would key the data into our system and send the paperwork to our vendors who would then enter the information into their own systems," recalled Carrie Miranda, director of compensation and benefits for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. "This provided a lot of opportunity for errors and incorrect entries."

Miranda and her team were performing a lot of duplicate data entry among the several insurance carriers the employer used. The company communicated its health insurance elections with the North Carolina State Health Plan and then had to key in the ancillary benefits within each system.

Within the company, CMS was experiencing a misalignment with its payroll and Human Resources technology. "We implemented an integrated system that coordinated things internally, but we wanted to better align ourselves with our vendors as well, especially the North Carolina State Health Plan," said Miranda.



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Carrie Miranda, Director of Compensation and Benefits

The Benefitfocus Platform™ and HR InTouch App Provide Online Enrollment and Communication

The North Carolina State Health Plan suggested eBenefitsNowSM, a private label of the Benefitfocus Platform. CMS also signed up for the HR InTouch App, which includes a Web portal designed for effective communication about benefits, HR policies, health and wellness, and other topics. The HR InTouch App allows Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools to push targeted messages to its employees so they only see information pertinent to them.

“HR InTouch provides a robust and integrated system through which we can centrally manage all our benefits administration,” expressed Miranda. “The applications are more encompassing than any I’ve seen before. Not only can you provide information, but you can have links to documents and Web sites and can interface with vendors so that everyone stays on the same page.”

In addition to providing more customization, the HR InTouch App simplifies benefits enrollment and administration for CMS employees by hosting informative videos to help explain benefit terminology.

“The biggest challenge for us in HR is to educate our employees and their families on which benefits work best for them. We really like having access to the short videos so that people can better understand their choices,” said Miranda.

A Seamless, Integrated Benefits Experience

CMS had only two to three weeks to get all their employees’ elections to the North Carolina State Health Plan, a process that normally takes two to three months. Since some of its vendors had made significant changes to their plans, CMS decided to align all the other benefits elections with that enrollment period. To do this CMS held a “positive enrollment” requiring every eligible employee to re-enroll in their benefits. This gave CMS the opportunity to capture dependent information they previously did not have and ensure that all employees knew exactly what benefits they had elected.

Using the new automated solutions, CMS was able to conduct the positive enrollment within the mandated time period. The company was also able to accommodate everyone, including those without computer access, by providing a call center for employees to contact with questions or issues.

“eBenefitsNow allows us to process all employees across four different lines of business without anyone keying anything in,” stated Miranda.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools received an overwhelming positive response from employees and many cited the system’s ease and intuitive nature as being especially helpful.

“With the automated systems, employees can have a seamless, integrated benefits experience. If they have a question, need to update their information, etc., they have one place to go where employee-specific information is available,” shared Miranda.

In anticipation of the fall hiring season, CMS is expanding its use of video to communicate with and train employees. “We’re really looking forward to adding more videos to our systems. Right now we’re working on an orientation video to assist our new employees.”