

Redefining Facility Management

The Asset-Centric Approach at San Juan Unified School District

In a discussion on facility management, the team at VM3 Consulting and San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD) shared their innovative, asset-centric approach to managing educational facilities. VM3 partners Jason Villanueva and Christine Mulholland, along with Cherie Chenoweth, SJUSD's Coordinator of Facilities, Business, and Compliance, explained how this new approach is helping to streamline operations and improve transparency.



"My maintenance and operations team was always looking for warranty information. It was like playing Where's Waldo," said Chenoweth, highlighting the inefficiencies in traditional systems.



Challenges in Facility Management

Managing a district spanning 78 square miles with 81 sites and 65 school campuses, SJUSD faced numerous challenges, including:

1. **Disparate Systems:** A mix of disconnected software prevented seamless data integration.
2. **Resource Constraints:** Limited staff struggled to keep systems up to date.
3. **Data Accessibility:** Ensuring accurate, easily accessible data became a top priority.
4. **Legislation Compliance:** California's SB 28 required comprehensive facility master plans to secure state funding.
5. **Evolving Needs:** Programs like Transitional Kindergarten (TK) demanded rapid and significant infrastructure adaptations.



Shifting to an Asset-Centric Mindset

Traditional facility condition assessments (FCA), conducted every five years, often become outdated and inefficient. The asset-centric model revolutionized this process by enabling real-time updates, ensuring decisions are based on current, accurate information.

“With an asset-centric approach, the asset is front and center,” Villanueva explained. “Maintenance workers can see all the work done in a room and to each asset. The capital planning team, when ready to modernize the room, can see what is in the room and any upcoming maintenance, allowing them to redirect funds more effectively.”

Leveraging Technology for Continuous Improvement

Kahua's platform played a pivotal role in this transformation. Its flexibility allowed system integration and the development of custom applications, such as the FCA app. This enabled SJUSD to:

- Conduct internal facility assessments.
- Update asset data in real time.
- Optimize capital planning and maintenance schedules.

"You have the base platform, and you build on it, whatever you need," Mulholland said, comparing Kahua to a LEGO set. "Over time, the house can become a mansion, then a city."



Results and Impact

The asset-centric approach not only streamlined operations but also bolstered community engagement. Up-to-date dashboards and reports foster public trust, crucial for passing bond measures. Integration with systems like ERP tools eliminated double data entry, significantly improving efficiency.

"We have over 200 projects, and with integrations, we are saving 40 hours a week in data entry across the team," Chenoweth shared.

The Future of Facility Management

This approach emphasizes the value of collaboration, adaptability and technology in transforming facility management. As SJUSD refines its processes, it sets a benchmark for other districts navigating the complexities of modern infrastructure management.

"We took an asset-centric approach to facility master planning to secure funds – changing your mindset to owning your assets so they don't own you," Chenoweth concluded.