

## VENDING CASE STUDY: WINONA AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Initial Challenges

Winona Area Public Schools (WAPS) has nine facilities to clean and maintain. They had one central storage area located in the high school where they housed all of their supplies. The supply room was controlled by one employee who would distribute supplies as needed to the different buildings. This centralized, reactive system led to numerous issues, including:

- Projects not getting accomplished in a timely manner due to lack of supplies
- Maintenance employees needing to stop work to run to a local supply store to purchase needed items
- Utilizing an employee for deliveries when their time could be better spent on maintenance activities
- Lack of accountability/traceability – e.g., if an employee took a drill and forgot to return it, they had more than 200 classrooms to search

### Fastenal's Vending Solution

Fastenal supplied 10 FAST 5000 machines and 11 lockers, providing staff with controlled, self-serve access to needed supplies within the walls of each building. The FAST 5000s dispense maintenance items (e.g., razor blades, cleaning supplies, extension cords, scrapers and caulk) as well as office supplies (e.g., paper, pens, markers and tape). Employees have an individualized access code that allows them to dispense the items they need (e.g., examination gloves for nurses, drill bits and screwdrivers for Industrial Tech instructors), and each transaction is tracked by employee and department. The lockers are used to control larger items and assets that need to be checked out and returned. Because access is controlled by employee code, it's now easy to identify the last person to check out a tool and track its location in the building.

WAPS is also utilizing Fastenal's band saw blade sharpening service, and one locker is set up as a secure "will call" location for worn blades. When a saw blade needs sharpened, they place it in the locker. A Fastenal employee picks it up and returns it once it's sharpened.

### Key Improvements

- **Product availability** – Needed supplies are easily accessible to employees in each building, eliminating the need to wait for deliveries, hunt down supplies or run to supply stores.
- **Improved productivity** – By having the supplies when and where they need them, maintenance employees are able to accomplish more, faster.
- **Inventory control** – Because employees know that supplies are always available, they don't need to request more and stockpile it for future use, reducing inventory costs. When an item runs low, the local Fastenal rep receives an automated alert and comes out to refill the machine, eliminating paperwork and stock-outs. And through the consignment plan, Fastenal owns the product until the moment it's dispensed.
- **Accountability** – Every transaction is tracked by individual employee and department, making it easy for WAPS to allocate costs to the correct departments and address potential over-consumption issues with individual employees. According to WAPS' Building and Grounds Supervisor, the FAST 5000 "shows you questions you don't look for. Some people don't pay attention to what they are actually using."

"[The FAST 5000 improves] the efficiency of the employees you have working for you. They're able to have the products they need to complete their job in a timely manner."

-William O'Laughlin, Building and Ground Supervisor, Winona Area Public Schools