SIMPSON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Simpson County Schools has been using SchoolCash Management since 2010. After trusting KEV Group with their activity fund management for so long, it was a natural fit to implement SchoolCash Online when looking to achieve the district's goal of becoming 'contactless and cashless.' With only a few months into the new school year, Simpson County has already achieved an impressive 49% parent/guardian online payment adoption rate and are on pace to be at their goal of 65% by the end of the school year.

Amanda Spears, Chief Financial Officer at Simpson County Schools, has been a long-time user of the SchoolCash platform, having deployed the solution previously when she was the internal auditor at Warren County. Amanda took some time to chat to us about why she is such a supporter of SchoolCash.

Can you provide us with a brief description of your role with Simpson County Schools?

I'm the CFO zfor the district. We're a smaller district, so we only have one person in accounts payable and one payroll individual, and they handle those responsibilities. Everything else, from budgets to deposits, falls into my bucket.

How long has your district been using SchoolCash Management and SchoolCash Online?

We started using SchoolCash Management in 2010 when I joined the district. I had helped convert my former district to using the software with such success that I was excited to bring the same results to Simpson County. We added SchoolCash Online this year.

What processes did your district use before implementing SchoolCash Management?

We used a well-known competitor that many districts in the state use. To be honest, it was archaic. I hadn't been here 30 days before I started the process of switching over to SchoolCash Management. It was an easy choice.

By the Numbers

Number of Schools
102

Number of Students
52,400

SchoolCash Solutions
- SchoolCash Management
- SchoolCash Online
- Donations Module

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What improvements have you seen from switching to SchoolCash Management?

The biggest difference between our previous solution and SchoolCash Management is that SchoolCash is web based. At the time, the other system was not. I now have easy access to all the information without leaving my desk, and have been able to implement important controls. Now, school bookkeepers can't just enter new vendors or accounts – I can control all this from one central location. I can login at any moment and see what the schools are doing, what their balances are, and am able to help them without having to go to the schools. It has also been beneficial when it comes to 1099 reporting at the end of the year. It has really made the whole process so much more consistent.

Our auditors and finance staff appreciate all the transparency, automation, and consolidated reporting that adheres strictly to Redbook Compliance standards. My year-end closeout and GASB 84 reporting time was cut by 80% this past summer.

Can you tell us a little bit about your experience with implementation, and how KEV Group supported you in this?

Our initial implementation in 2010 was the best implementation of a software I have ever experienced. This is entirely because our trainer was wonderful; my bookkeepers all said that this was the best training they had ever had. Having trainers who are excellent at what they do makes the rollout so much easier. Twelve years later we experienced the same thing with the rollout of SchoolCash Online. This is what makes a system successful from the very beginning. When you have trainers who are so good at what they do it makes the bookkeepers feel empowered and buy into the process.

How did you ultimately get the buy in from your staff to add SchoolCash Online to your system?

I did a demo first, to make sure it fulfilled our needs, because I am fairly hands on in the day-to-day activities of our bookkeepers. I then introduced it to them and explained how it integrated seamlessly with our SchoolCash Management software and the benefits that provides. Since the bookkeepers were already using the accounting side of it, and liked the software so much, it was very easy to get them on board with SchoolCash Online.

I was also clear that it didn't have to be all or nothing right now. Get comfortable with the system. I didn't want them to be overwhelmed with something new.

How has the software improved productivity and saved time?

The seamless integration between the software makes accepting payments a breeze. We aren't just collecting payments online, having to go do journal entries, and get it all into the software – it's already there. That's what we love about it the most. Our goal is to not accept cash. Teachers aren't financial people by heart. They mean well, but they don't understand the gravity of handling the funds until they lose them. They certainly appreciate the reduced cashflow into the classrooms as much as we do.

You have had great success with your adoption rates right out of the gate – achieving 49% in just 4 months. How did you engage parents and encourage them to register?

We put notifications on our website and Facebook page and utilized our messaging system to push the registration information directly to parents. We have also activated the auto-subscribe a few times since starting.

What saw the biggest uptick was doing a big push at our in-person District Registration and making student fees available to pay online. We had signs and information promoting it to get parents registered, and all they had to do was scan the QR code right on site and register.

What advice would you give other districts when choosing to implement SchoolCash?

Just make sure you have the buy-in from your bookkeepers beforehand. As much as we as the decision makers are involved in the system, if the bookkeepers aren't on board it's not going to be successful.

Take advantage of the trainings and training materials. I obtained the PDFs of all the training materials and made each bookkeeper a quick reference guide to help empower them and ensure they have the information right in front of them. Our training was a month or so before the school year, so this was extremely helpful as a refresher for when they started using the system.

I would also suggest taking advantage of the webinars provided by KEV Group. It's a great opportunity to learn more about new products and features or learn something new about a product you're already using.

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KEV Group provides the only unified school activity and district fee management solution that enables K-12 schools to manage every dollar accurately, consistently, and efficiently. By seamlessly integrating and automating all activity fund management processes, the SchoolCash platform provides real-time visibility and control over how districts and schools create, collect, manage, track, and reconcile school activity and district fees. Parents benefit from an easy-to-use solution that offers convenience and supports all payment types. More than 22,000 schools across North America rely on SchoolCash to manage over $4 billion in activity funds annually. Visit **kevgroup.com** to learn more.