



# Alberta Catholic School Division Leverages SchoolCash Online to Drive Online Payments and Maximize Efficiency

## The Challenge

Relying on manual, spreadsheet-driven processes and a non-standardized Chart of Accounts, St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Separate School Division (“the Division”) had to contend with inefficiencies, long reconciliation cycle times, and weak audit trails.

To overcome these challenges, the Division adopted SchoolCash Management – a cloud-based solution that automates the tracking of funds collected and disbursed at the school level. Implemented in 2008, SchoolCash quickly made a positive impact.

“SchoolCash provided us with the centralized accounting system we needed to standardize the Chart of Accounts across our 12 schools, which increased the consistency and accuracy of our financial reporting,” said Darla Schneider, Financial Analyst, St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Separate School Division. “SchoolCash also streamlined our collection processes by eliminating the need to fill out bank deposit slips by hand and allowing us to automatically combine multiple receipts into a single bank deposit.”

Although SchoolCash significantly enhanced activity fund management processes, the Division still saw room for improvement. “We made significant efficiency gains, but our schools were still devoting too much time to managing and transporting cash,”

recalled Ms. Schneider. “In order to reduce these hidden costs and achieve maximum efficiency, we knew we had to work towards minimizing the amount of cash flowing through our school community.”

With the vision of cashless schools in mind, the Division began exploring options for an online payment solution that would allow parents/guardians to pay for their school fees through a secure, web-based platform. Ultimately, the Division selected SchoolCash Online from KEV Group.

“Choosing SchoolCash Online was an easy decision given that it was designed to integrate seamlessly with the school-

## ABOUT ST. THOMAS AQUINAS ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL DIVISION

St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Separate School Division is a publicly-funded, religious-centered school division in central Alberta with more than 4,000 students and 400 staff. Established in 1995, the Division offers programming from pre-school to Grade 12 across 12 schools in six communities.

level accounting solution—SchoolCash Management—that we already had in place. This meant we wouldn't have to assume the burden of maintaining and reconciling multiple systems," explained Ms. Schneider. "Further, a fully integrated solution would provide consolidated payment reporting that would deliver a single, comprehensive view of all payments – regardless of whether they were made online or in-person."

## Results

The Division implemented SchoolCash Online across its 12 schools during the 2012/13 school year. The receptiveness of staff led to a smooth rollout that resulted in a quick uptake of the new solution.

"Prior to the implementation, we made sure to communicate and demonstrate how the solution would directly benefit school staff to encourage user adoption," recalled Ms. Schneider. "As a result, we didn't experience much resistance because school-level staff were very enthusiastic about the prospect of reducing cash-handling and the associated administrative tasks."

This enthusiasm yielded remarkable success for the Division. Since implementation, its parent/guardian online

payment adoption rate has grown to an incredible 95%. With such a high adoption rate, the Division is now collecting over \$1.2M in student activity funds online, accounting for close to 85% of all payment transactions. This has drastically reduced the time spent collecting, handling, processing, and tracking payments.

This high level of adoption can be largely attributed to the Division's outreach efforts.

"Promoting online payments at school events—such as registration nights and parent-teacher conferences—was the most effective driver of parent adoption," recalled Ms. Schneider. "During these events, schools set up iPads and laptops, allowing staff to engage parents and demonstrate how to create accounts on SchoolCash Online and pay fees using the platform."

The Division also established a self-serve model for teaching staff to access activity fund information by adopting SchoolCash Access – a module that allows teachers and other non-administrative staff members to manage activity items.

"Our teachers love SchoolCash Access because it gives them the ability to generate their own reports and view fund balances and transaction history to quickly identify which students have paid and which ones haven't," explained Ms. Schneider. "Our school-level bookkeepers appreciate SchoolCash Access because it means they don't have to constantly pull reports for teachers."

Staff have been further aided by the Division's subscription to KEV University – a learning platform designed to help users enhance their SchoolCash knowledge and skills.

"We've found KEV University to be a cost-effective, convenient, and flexible way for our staff to access the training they need all year long," remarked Ms. Schneider. "Our

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bookkeepers love the interactive nature of the training sessions that allows them to engage with instructors and ask questions.”

## By the Numbers



Number of Schools

12



Number of Students

4,490



Funds Managed Annually

\$1.3M



Online Adoption Rate

95%

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— **Darla Schneider**

Financial Analyst, St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Separate School Division



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