

KEV GROUP

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

John Musso, Business Manager at Zachary Community School District, implemented SchoolCash Management shortly after joining the district. He was searching for a better way to manage activity funds, and despite some resistance from veteran bookkeepers, successfully implemented the system, along with SchoolCash Online for contactless and payments, and SchoolCash Forms. The result has provided benefits to all involved - district staff, schools staff and parents/guardians. John spent some time with us to discuss what led to his decision to make the change, and what positive impacts he has seen in implementing the SchoolCash platform.

Can you tell us a little bit about your role with the district?

For the last 7 years I've has been the Business Manager at Zachary Community School District. At Zachary, I manage the district's financial operations, physical plant operations, fixed assets, risk management, insurance, Child Nutrition Program, and the school's activity funds.

How long has your district been using the SchoolCash platform?

We've been using SchoolCash since 2017.

What challenges did the district experience that led to the adoption of the SchoolCash platform?

What led us to seek out a new solution was that our previous, free solution, that many schools in the state use, was not meeting many of our needs. We found that we were still performing many tasks manually with limited visibility and productivity was low. Many bookkeepers commented that they didn't have enough time to do what they needed to because of the extra steps required. For example, during athletic events we were receiving \$30-40k in sales every week for 7-8 weeks, but there was limited visibility as to which event the funds were coming from, as it was all lumped together. This took an additional 3 weeks to cross-reference and calculate. Just the task of depositing cash daily put us at risk as the cash flowed through the hands of many staff, and the effort to count, re-count, and travel to the bank to make the deposits was extremely time-consuming.

We also encountered poor reporting, as many of these transactions and reports could only be reviewed by checking the register in our previous system.



By the Numbers



Number of Schools

7



Number of Students

4,069



Funds Managed Annually

\$4.2 MILLION

SchoolCash Solutions

- SchoolCash Management
- SchoolCash Online
- SchoolCash Forms

Why did the district choose the SchoolCash platform?

We implemented the SchoolCash platform after intensive review. We had key requirements that needed to be met, including the ability to automate paper-based processes and reduce cash in schools, increase productivity and bookkeeper satisfaction and provide transparency of internal spending. We were looking for a system to standardize school finance & reports to meet district-level requirements, and SchoolCash provided that. Reducing the amount of cash moving through the schools to avoid misplacement or errors was also a priority, and SchoolCash provides this as well while seamlessly integrating our accounting and online payments.

In what ways has the SchoolCash platform improved the way your district manages activity funds?

The SchoolCash platform offers many benefits to users at all levels. It provides transparency for district and school staff to see live and up-to-date information, it provides stronger controls for internal spending, mitigates fraud, allows for visibility to parents and guardians on what they've paid for, and the automation eliminates timely processes apparent with multiple systems. capabilities allows us to quickly generate detailed school-level financial reports and easily consolidate reports.

What was the reaction of the bookkeepers upon implementing the change in operations, and how did you alleviate any resistance?

Some of the more senior staff members showed a little resistance to the change. They were comfortable in how things were done, not realizing that the new system would have so many benefits to their jobs.

When we went to the initial presentation, I took along one bookkeeper who had strong reservations, and someone who wanted change. Just seeing how the workload would be significantly lightened on a daily and weekly basis was enough to move the opinions in the right direction. The increased organization,

improved record keeping, and reporting were all benefits that appealed to the bookkeepers. All it took was one bank reconciliation to give any remaining naysayers that 'aha' moment. Reconciliations can now be completed by the second or third day of the month, saving so much time.

What contributed to the success of SchoolCash Online with your district?

We saw a high adoption rate of 65% right after implementation due to a few factors. Parents/guardians and principals were already asking for an online solution to use and COVID lockdowns highlighted the need for a contactless payment solution.

We did a district-wide implementation, meaning everything was available online immediately, including spirit wear and all fees. High schools have an average of 150 fees set up and posted on SchoolCash Online. The system helped a great deal in a lot of areas, but especially with the before and after school care programs, where there was a lot of cash and cheques being handled and as previously mentioned, with athletics.

We now have an adoption rate of 92%, with the goal of achieving that last 8% and being fully cashless.

What is your favorite thing about the SchoolCash platform?

Overall, the ease of the system and the way it works. I really can't say enough positive things about the program – it's wonderful. Watching the progression of the staff when they use it for the first year – it gives them such confidence in their job and abilities. It's also great that you don't have to have someone with a financial background to do the books. The process is so simplified that you just need someone who can use a computer.

Second to the ease of use would be SchoolCash Forms. It is a great product to have to help streamline and simplify the collection of information.

You mentioned that you enjoy SchoolCash Forms, can you talk a little bit about how implementing this optional product has been beneficial?

We use SchoolCash Forms for everything including all the beginning of the year paperwork, permission slips, before/after school care, health/allergy information and parking permits. The process is so simple, and once the bookkeeper creates the form, it can be emailed directly to the parent to be completed. We see 50% of forms returned within a week when made available on SchoolCash Forms, and the processing time for the bookkeepers is only about 25% of what it used to be. It also removes the responsibility from the student. It also removes the responsibility from the student to deliver the forms to their parent/guardian and then back to the school.

The final reporting on SchoolCash Forms is by far the best thing. Principals are set up so they can run their own reports when they need them. They can run allergy report/health information before heading on a field trip, and the field trip report even includes the parent's signature.

Do you have any final thoughts you would like to share for anyone who is considering implementing the SchoolCash platform?

The SchoolCash platform is reasonably priced, does everything you need, and the support and training provided by KEV Group is second to none. Quite honestly this is the smoothest transition I've ever experienced with financial software. SchoolCash Management keeps records in order and neat, which is great during audit time, and SchoolCash Online benefits everyone involved. Automated payment reminders are a huge help to the parents/guardians and the convenience of paying online is extremely beneficial. Our deposits were reduced by half in the first year, which lowers hard risk when you're not handling so much cash. Even our NSF's dropped significantly. In the past 5 months, we have only had to deal with five NSF's – before SchoolCash Online we were looking at handling about that amount per month. Simply put, implementing the SchoolCash platform is just a smart decision, with benefits for all.



letstalk@kevgroup.com

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, our solutions provide real-time visibility and control over how districts and schools create, collect, manage, track, and reconcile school activity and district fees. Parents/guardians benefit from an easy-to-use solution that offers convenience and supports all payment types. More than 25,500 schools across North America rely on KEV to manage over \$4 billion in activity funds annually, and over 40% are members of the Council of the Great City Schools. Visit kevgroup.com to learn more.