

Case Study: Centralized System Brings Consistency Between Schools

Diocese of Erie, PA



Customer Profile

Counties in the Diocese:
13 in Northwestern PA

School Type:
Private Catholic

Catholic Population:
202,000

Number of Schools: 6

Grades: PK - 8

Enrollment: > 2,688

Implemented: 2017

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John Schroeck, Director of Technology



The Challenge

In July 2017, the Diocese of Erie launched the Erie Catholic School System as part of **Building in Truth and Love**, the comprehensive plan for diocesan schools in Erie, PA. The new system renewed focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) across the curriculum through new science labs, improved access to technology, an emphasis on problem solving, and teamwork.

No longer operating as independent, parish-based schools but as a unified organization, Erie Catholic was looking for a cost-effective school management system that would meet the needs of all the departments in each school. And, with an entirely new staff to train at each school, the new system would need to be easy to use, streamline work-flow, save time, and improve communication between all stakeholders.

As the Superintendent of Erie Catholic Schools, James Gallagher initiated a search for a new SIS (Student Information System) within months of being hired to the newly established position. But while he brought with him a wealth of experience improving schools throughout the region, and was overseeing key aspects of school operations, he turned to his new school system and the director of technology to identify potential software providers.

Solution:

AdminPlus SIS
Admissions Plus Pro
RediSite
FINACS

Benefits:

- Consistency between all schools for grading, generating report cards, attendance, and demographics information.
- Online forms make system startup a smooth process
- Centralized system improves communication between teachers, parents and administration.



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- John Schroeck
Director of Technology

The Solution

Gallagher and the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Erie formed a committee made up of principals, teachers, parents and administrators from schools within the new system. Concurrently, a search for a director of technology was underway, and John Schroeck was selected to oversee the implementation and use of technology throughout the system's six elementary schools. With Schroeck's background as a technology coordinator and a technology teacher for 25 years, he and the committee searched for an SIS that would meet each school's student data demands.

The six schools used a mish-mash of programs for their SIS system, including Excel, FileMaker Pro, Access, and others. They needed a fully integrated, centralized solution that offered web-based delivery, mobile accessibility and time-saving data automation. "At one of the first meetings with the new leadership I listed having a consistent and robust SIS as vital," said Schroeck. "We had to be able to easily share demographic information, improve school/family communication, standardize grading and report cards, and handle the finances among all the schools," he said.

While the committee met with a variety of SIS vendors, they were most impressed by the features offered by Rediker Software, including its ease of use for both teachers and parents, and the myriad components that met the needs of each school department. They were also influenced by Rediker's history as a true family-owned business. The idea that for nearly four decades Rediker Software operated as a multi-generational family business and not a faceless mega-company was reassuring. As the president of the Erie Catholic School System Damon Finazzo wrote in his welcome to the new school system, "... family is what we're all about."

Once the sale was complete, the task force was responsible for returning to the six schools and promoting the new SIS to the teachers, parents and administration. According to Schroeck, this was a monumental task, but with the assistance of a "personal" Implementation Manager at Rediker, he was guided through the process. "We were able to get each school to ask questions so when timelines came, they were met," said Sharon Swaby, Rediker Software's Implementation Manager for Erie. "Connecting the dots also helped the process move smoothly."

The different groups that worked with the program had to take responsibility for learning how to use AdminPlus and its other components. Principals and secretaries attended numerous trainings, making sure they were proficient in each module they used to ensure the success of the new school system. Teachers were trained from each of the six schools who, in turn, taught other teachers how to use the gradebook and web portals. "Sharon advised me not to funnel all the implementation to myself," Schroeck noted. This proved to be invaluable advice.

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The Results

A year and a half later, Erie Catholic Schools are a unified system of schools, with consistency between all buildings for grading, generating report cards, attendance, and demographics information. With the addition of Rediker's Online Forms, what would have taken weeks for each school to gather and input information with paper forms, now takes a fraction of the time. "The online forms made our system startup a much smoother process," said Schroeck.

The Erie Catholic Office can also now centrally manage the school RediSite websites, their finances with FINACS, and the admissions process with Admissions Plus Pro. This allows the central office to operate much more efficiently. It also allows them to offer a level of assistance to the schools that was not available before.

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The director of technology now has confidence in Rediker and knows that the company has Erie's best interests at heart. "Because of our actions, John is happy with the outcome of the partnership," said Swaby.

Improving Re-Enrollment with Online Forms

Some of the schools within the Erie Catholic School system were missing basic student demographic information. With the setup of Online Forms this year, the goal was to have 75% of the parents re-enroll online instead of using paper re-enrollment. They met that goal with close to 1,200 students being enrolled.

"We had almost 400 more students re-enroll online this year compared to last year," said Schroeck. "The school secretaries have all expressed how much smoother the re-enrollment process has gone this year compared to the past."

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