

SchoolOne is working with today's Catholic schools to impact learning at all levels

Bob Longo, President of SchoolOne, explains how the company's expertise, partnerships with other software companies, and willingness to work collaboratively with schools, is transforming 21st Century Catholic education.



CEDN: Why do today's Catholic schools need a more sophisticated school information system?

BL: School information systems began as stand-alone applications (i.e. electronic gradebooks) intended to save time, reduce human error and increase productivity. De-evolution of these systems added more applications, like attendance modules, but took giant leaps forward when they added advanced databases and became available on the web. Until recently, the value was primarily aimed at administrator and teacher productivity. What has become truly transformative, and is a 21st Century educational requirement, is the integration of formative and summative testing and assessment data with other data analytics that not only inform better school administration, but more importantly, inform better teaching, learning and overall academic improvement. Our work with the

California Bay-area dioceses is a great example of this transformation.

CEDN: How can these school information systems affect student success?

BL: It is imperative that the systems Catholic schools use are flexible and work with other applications. No one vendor is expert at EVERYTHING. This means the provider of the Student Information System (SIS) must integrate with 3rd party test banks, standards-based content, data management and virtual learning environments (VLE). "Playing nice in the sandbox" isn't optional, as most dioceses and districts now demand vendor cooperation. The

time of the monolithic "One-Stop Shop" vendor is over. Schools have learned the hard way that this model usually hides weaker capabilities bundled with ones that are often over-marketed. The ability to aggregate data, align it to standards and other metrics, apply analytics and disaggregate for the purpose of improving teaching and learning at the class and student level drives success plans for every student. SchoolOne's SIS is integrated with advanced analytic and assessment tools geared to meet these needs to create student success.

CEDN: What is the most challenging technology problem facing today's Catholic schools?

BL: The greatest challenge is not the technology itself but rather the effective integration of the technology into the daily activities of a modern education delivery system. To accomplish this, schools need a "Service-Oriented Partner" like SchoolOne that understands the goals and day-to-day operations of a Catholic school. It further requires the ability to deliver great training, a successful implementation, an in-depth knowledge of complex data systems, an understanding of IT platforms, responsive client support, and constant attention to continuous improvement, in order to optimize the value for students, teachers, parents and administrators.

CEDN: How can Catholic schools afford to provide sophisticated software systems to Catholic students?

BL: Catholic schools are creative fundraisers, especially at the parish level. Today's economics demand smarter planning and execution to allow Catholic schools to compete with their public and private counterparts. First, Catholic schools must understand they have the greatest buying power at the diocesan level. This ability to leverage aggregated purchasing provides academic and administrative value to schools. Second, Catholic schools must understand the availability of funds from public and private sectors. Federal initiatives like the FCC E-Rate Program or select diocesan subcontracts of the wireless spectrum can yield significant dollars. Major, private foundation money is available for projects aligned to the priorities of specific funders. And the opportunity to more aggressively focus Catholic philanthropy on Catholic K-12 education promotes not only Catholic schools, but acts as a feeder system for Catholic faith formation. SchoolOne has successfully matched funding sources to dioceses to embark on bold initiatives.

For details on how SchoolOne can help transform your school or diocese, stop by booth #533 or visit them at www.schoolone.com.