



Case Study

Edmonton Catholic School Division Serving School Communities through SchoolEngage



45,000
Students



96
Schools



Many
Languages

ECSD serves over 45,000 students in 96 schools. ECSD offers Immersion and bilingual programs in French, Ukrainian, Spanish and Polish as well as language and culture programs in Filipino, Italian, Spanish, Ukrainian and Nehiyaw Pimatisiwin Cree.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

ECSD provides families with the opportunity for their children to seamlessly obtain Edmonton Public Library (EPL) cards. In the past, this process involved families completing a paper application form with personal information (e.g. child's name, address, contact information), returning it to the school whereupon the administrative assistants at each school would collect the forms before sending them on to an administrative assistant at ECSD central office. The program manager would review each form for errors and omissions, upwards of 3,000 forms, then contact each individual family to correct the information. Next, the forms were sent on to EPL and their staff would review the forms, input the data into their system and generate the cards.

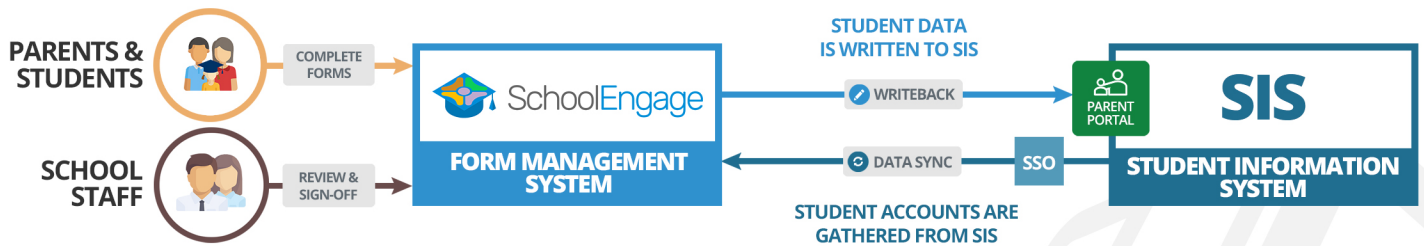
"Edmonton Catholic Schools has been working with and using SchoolEngage's programs for several years and with good reason. Their staff willingly works with our own experts in developing software that both meets our needs and is easy to use. They are adaptable, responsive, versatile and are true partners as we work together to integrate SchoolEngage with PowerSchool to enhance the end user's experience."

Robert Martin, Chief Superintendent

This labour-intensive, inefficient and insecure process occurred once a year. Students who joined the division during the school year would not have the opportunity to receive a library card through ECSD until the following fall. The process was logistically cumbersome, especially for immigrant families, prone to error and heavily reliant on staff time.

ENTER SCHOOLENGAGE

New Student Registration and Existing Student Verification



School divisions welcome families from other provinces and countries throughout the school year. Families must complete a registration form for each child which is then entered manually into the Student Information System (SIS). ECSD has converted the paper-based registration process and is now using SchoolEngage to allow families to complete the Registration Application Form online, including the attaching of supporting documentation. Each school is able to review an Application and enrol the student into the SIS with a single click, saving the manual enrollment step and eliminating data entry errors. Now, all students, current and new, register through SchoolEngage using the same process.

Ensuring student information is current and accurate is essential. School divisions must verify student information annually and report to Alberta Education in order to secure funding. In ECSD, families receive a message, through SchoolEngage, in September to validate the information, such as phone numbers or addresses, in the SIS. Families can quickly review the information, verify or make changes to update the SIS with a single click. Administrative Assistants review and accept updated forms and SchoolEngage flags any missing forms and sends reminders to families. This process has allowed ECSD to reach a response rate of over 94% which is excellent.



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SCHOLENGAGE SUPPORTED STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS

Seamless access to Edmonton Public Library Cards enable through SchoolEngage

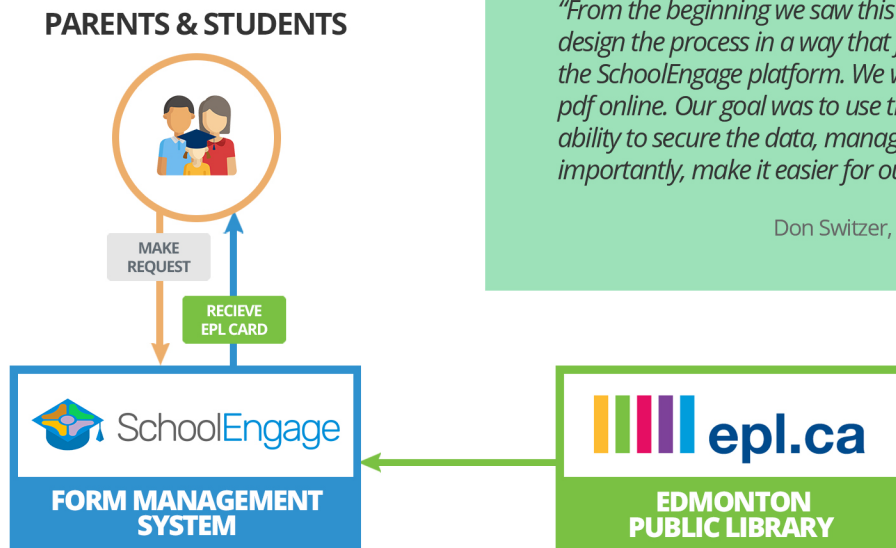
In the spring of 2019, the division began investigating the possibility of digitizing the EPL card process due to the significant administrative burden it added to each staff member involved in the process. In addition, it was apparent a relatively low percentage of students were benefitting from the EPL card program. The process itself was a barrier to all students engaging in the many learning experiences and resources offered by EPL.

First the Technology Services team identified the technical requirements as well as the data security consideration. The ECSD team then engaged EPL to explore the possibilities and map out how the two organizations could coordinate the data sharing at a system level. EPL was highly supportive of the project as they too found the current process inefficient.

“SchoolEngage made many people’s lives easier. In a complicated world we want to make things easier for our families”
J. Thompson, Manager of Programs and Athletics

The Technology Services team focused on leveraging SchoolEngage to create new ways to collect and manage the data rather than simply replicating a paper process which would only result in a digital version of the paper forms.

“From the beginning we saw this project as an opportunity to design the process in a way that fully utilized the capabilities of the SchoolEngage platform. We weren’t interested in putting a pdf online. Our goal was to use the technology to enhance our ability to secure the data, manage it efficiently and most importantly, make it easier for our families to access.”
Don Switzer, Manager of Software Development



35% INCREASE IN STUDENTS HAVING EPL CARDS



ECSD leveraged SchoolEngage to facilitate the data collection, management and sharing. SchoolEngage allowed families to simply indicate their child would like an EPL card with a checkbox on the student profile page. SchoolEngage would then pull the data required for the EPL card and send the request to EPL where the cards are created for each student.

The SchoolEngage process is essentially self-sufficient which allows EPL cards to be created quarterly allowing for a significant increase in the opportunities for more students to have EPL cards. In the first year of implementation, ECSD saw a 35% increase in students having EPL cards. In addition, SchoolEngage supports accessibility by allowing families to share their information in 30 different languages and access the real aloud audio.



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EPL reports the project continues to grow resulting in year over year increases. EPL realized efficiencies and improved accuracy which has resulted in a more streamlined experience for families.

"We want to make sure no child misses out on learning experiences."

J. Thompson, Manager of Programs and Athletics

"We are seeing a dramatic increase in brand new applications compared to the previous year, as well as a 29% increase in items borrowed on those library cards, which is well above the trends for other school districts in Edmonton. We are reaching more students this year who have never had a library card in the past."

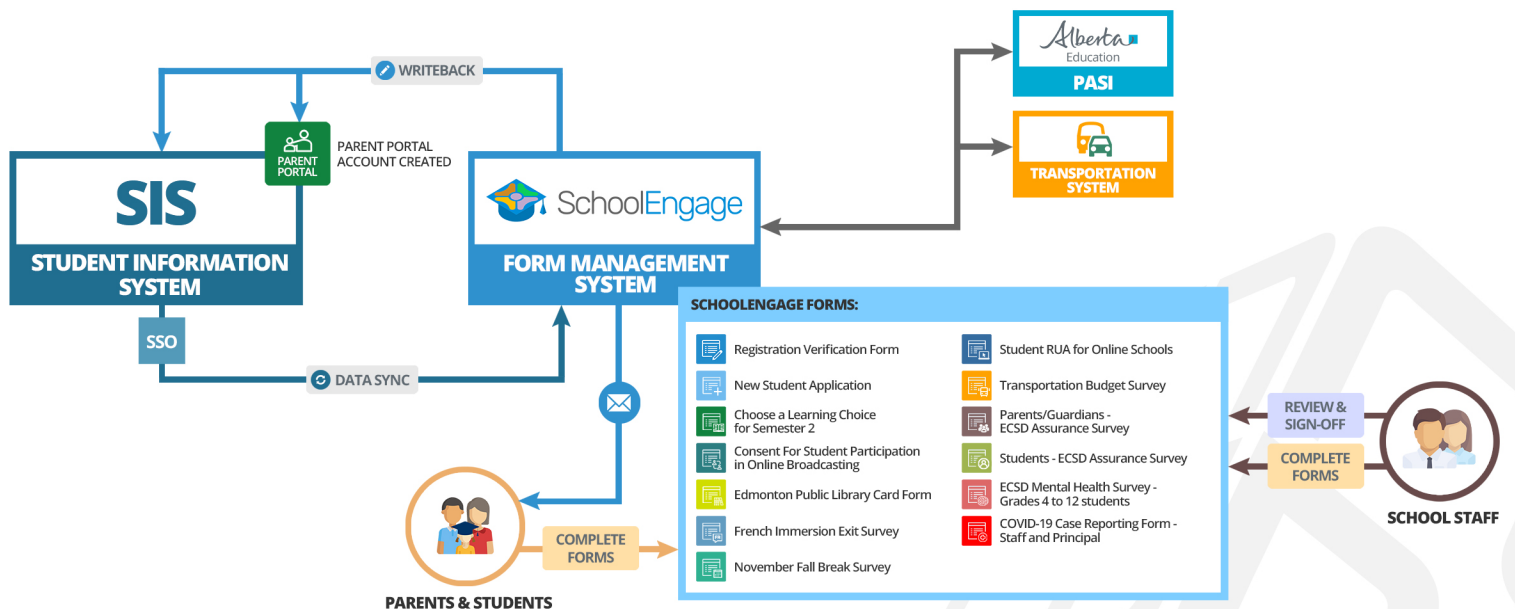
Nancy Sheng, EPL Manager, Shelley Milner Children's Library & epl2go

SchoolEngage created a way for EPL and ECSD to share data securely and efficiently resulting in enhanced service to families and ultimately, more students able to access the many programs, services and resources EPL offers to enrich learning.

"[There are] far fewer errors in the personal information received by EPL means more library cards are ready to use straight out of the gate, and families do not have to do further corrections or clarifications when at their local library branch."

Nancy Sheng, EPL Manager, Shelley Milner Children's Library & epl2go

SCHOLENGAGE FORM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WORKFLOW





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NEXT UP

Field Trip Forms

ECSD is now planning to leverage SchoolEngage to modernize its Field Trip form system which is currently managed through a paper-based process. Based on the results of the EPL card project, digitizing the Field Trip forms will alleviate significant administrative burden, enhance data security and allow easy access to essential information to teachers' cell phones. Personal, critically important health information is available to the teacher at the field trip site in realtime (e.g. allergies, emergency contacts).

Once parents provide consent for their child to participate in a Field Trip, they will be able to see the event details on the student's calendar through the SchoolEngage portal. The digitization of Field Trip forms eliminate the need for teachers to collect and track forms from every student and each field trip. This can amount to binders filled with hundreds of forms. The paper-based process dissuaded teachers from engaging in field trip experiences which are often rich, interactive learning opportunities for students.



ECSD anticipates the Field Trip forms for local educational venues will be accessible through SchoolEngage this fall. Based on the average number of field trips each year, the digitization process will result in the elimination of approximately 6000 forms being managed across the division along with hundreds of hours of staff time. ECSD envisions SchoolEngage facilitating a seamless Field Trip process with enhanced accessibility, data security and efficiencies.

Most importantly, more students will be able to participate in authentic, memorable learning experiences with their peers and teachers and parents will have the information they need at their fingertips.

WRAP UP

During the design, planning and implementation of the EPL card project, the annual surveys and the field trip forms, ECSD began by asking "How can we do this differently to better serve our community?" The team saw SchoolEngage as a platform to change the way data was collected, managed, and shared. Paper forms in binders were not simply replaced by electronic forms. Ultimately, by reimagining new ways of leveraging the platform, ECSD was able to enhance efficiency and data security while enhancing and extending service to students and families. The results - data is at the fingertips of those who need it, when they need it and perhaps most importantly more students with EPL library cards, more feedback from community members through the annual survey and soon, more students experiencing rich learning experiences through field trips.

"Not one school has one language."

J. Thompson, Manager of Programs and Athletics

ECSD has been able to leverage data securely and efficiently to enhance their service to families because of the collaborative working relationship they have developed with Intellimedia.