

“I switched from PaySchools to the competitor in August 2018. By early September, I knew I had made a huge mistake. Luckily, PaySchools welcomed me back with open arms.”

Rachel, SNS,
Food Service Director

Long lunch lines, software issues, and inferior support:

District Returns to PaySchools for Superior Software and Support

Food service director Rachel had relied on PaySchools' QuikLunch and parent portal for several years before deciding to try something new.

“I had a good relationship with PaySchools, and their system was strong, but there had also been hiccups at the time,” Rachel said. “There were some temporary support and SIS integration issues. And so I got talked into moving to a competitor. They promised me they could do everything PaySchools did, and more.”

Rachel signed a contract for the coming school year with the other lunch software company. In August, they provided her with a training module to install on 30 computers. Unfortunately, the training software didn't work on a single computer.

“I had to go to every school myself on the Friday night before school was starting on Monday to manually change all the pin pads myself,” she said.

On the first day of school, lunch lines were jammed. Cashiers found the new menu screens poorly laid out, and parent payments weren't posting quickly enough to students' accounts.

“We kept getting error messages about losing connectivity,” Rachel said. “But I know we weren't actually losing connectivity.” Later she realized that every time that error message popped up, the most recent transaction wasn't saved, and money was irretrievably lost.



CHALLENGE

At start of school year, lunch POS and payments were in disarray: glitchy software and interface, slow lunch lines, poor integration with DASL SIS, inadequate support



SCOPE

6 schools
4,471 students

Rachel stood in the serving area of one of her schools and observed. “I saw lines backed up deeper than I have ever seen them,” she said. “And this was at one of the smaller schools! If this was happening here, what was happening at the high school? But I chalked it up to normal transition headaches. I assumed it would get better.”

THE FIRST MONTH

Unfortunately, it didn't get better.

Even as her staff grew more familiar with the new software interface, lunch lines

continued to lag. The district's schools had been running double-sided lines with PaySchools but found they were limited to single-sided lines with the competitor because the software queues students by order of number entry instead of alternating between sides—a significant limitation.

"I was used to getting all my students through the lunch line in no more than ten minutes," Rachel said. "That gives them at least twenty minutes to eat, relax, and socialize. But now the seated plate time was getting cut short, and I was losing business. When students stop buying because of lunch lines, it's to the detriment of my program."

"The heartbeat of this program is how it moves kids through the lunch line."

But the lunch line wasn't the only problem. The new company's support center wasn't responsive, and reports weren't working. It took Rachel a week to do her first direct certification.

The data was also bad. "I cross-checked numbers in DASL and the new system, and the data wasn't corroborating. It turned out it didn't integrate well with DASL after all. There were inaccuracies and unreliability. I can't have that."

And Rachel couldn't sign onto the system at home, as she always had with PaySchools. "I check parent emails at night," she said, "because that's when they're emailing me. But with the new system, I couldn't do that. I felt helpless."

After a few rocky weeks, she decided to run a register herself, to understand what was happening firsthand. "At the end of that day, I was practically in tears," she said. "The new company misrepresented their product and their service. I was so mad at myself for subjecting my staff to this system and for making such a terrible decision."

RETURN TO PAYSCHOOLS

By early October, Rachel was making a plan with Rick Killian, PaySchools Vice President of Operations, and her PaySchools rep, Mena Gabra, to return to PaySchools not at the end of the school year but immediately.

The team relaunched PaySchools throughout the school district on November 6. "It went so smoothly," Rachel said. "The PaySchools people made sure everything was in place in advance, and they also were on-site here for the first couple of days, just in case."

Rachel admits she learned the hard way that there is a difference when it comes to lunch payment and POS vendors. "PaySchools is just better in every respect," she said. "But mostly it's their people. They listen to me, they help me, they get back to me. I know people by name, and I know I can call them anytime."

"I love that we have relationships with the PaySchools people," Rachel said, "and I'm never switching again."



SOLUTION

Relaunch PaySchools in early November



RESULTS

Smooth sailing, lower costs

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