

CASE STUDY

# Too many tools. Too little visibility. One district's fix.

How Knox County Schools reduced financial complexity, improved visibility, and unlocked revenue by consolidating payments



## CASE STUDY: KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

# The challenge

Knox County Schools is a large school district and over time, its payments ecosystem grew just as large and complex.

Individual schools, departments, and school support organizations (SSOs) adopted their own tools for fees, fundraising, tickets, and events. **Each solution solved a local need—but together, they created a district-wide finance challenge: Payments were fragmented across dozens of systems**, each with its own login, reports, reconciliation process, and risk profile.



**Garrett Raiden,**  
Director of  
Internal Funds

"Parents need to be able to pay in one checkout rather than 80 different checkouts."

**With such a fragmented payment ecosystem, Knox County was facing:**

**Systems** requiring reconciliation

Audit prep required **manual cleanup**

**Higher processing costs**  
(volume split across vendors)

**Abandoned payments**—or turning to Venmo, Cash App, or cash

No single, trusted **source of truth**

The goal wasn't to control how every school operated—it was to bring clarity, consistency, and compliance to district payments while making life easier for families.



**Photo:** Knox County Schools

# The solution

Knox County didn't try to fix everything at once. Instead, the district took a finance-first approach in collaboration with Givebacks: Solve the most critical oversight and compliance challenges first, prove value quickly, and expand at a pace the district could support.

**They added Givebacks modules step by step, including:**

Fundraising

Online store and Point of Sale

Ticketed events

Fees management

Each added module reduced fragmentation, increased visibility, and brought more transactions into a single, auditable system.

# The outcome

The overall outcome for Knox County Schools was revenue growth driven by parent adoption of the Givebacks app. As payments were consolidated into the app, participation increased—and so did results across the district:

## \$4M revenue increase

School funds revenue climbed from approximately \$25 million in FY24 to a **projected \$28–29 million in FY25**. The roughly \$4 million increase did not come from higher fees. Instead, it was *driven by fewer abandoned payments, consolidated carts, and a simpler experience for families*.

Through the Givebacks app, parents paid multiple student fees in a single checkout and applied Givebacks Rewards toward those fees—reducing drop-off, increasing completion rates, **and offsetting costs without reducing school revenue**.

## Consolidated costs

To encourage adoption and protect fundraising totals, Knox County covered processing fees for their families.

Consolidated payments **reduced the effective cost per transaction**, turning scale into a financial advantage—without shifting costs onto families.

The result was stronger participation, higher completion rates, and more predictable revenue.

## Faster, efficient events

Knox County piloted Givebacks’ ticketed events within the app, enabling faster entry, smoother scanning, and improved event flow across the district.

Supported by Givebacks’ customer service team, issues were visible, fixable, and resolved quickly—**giving the finance team confidence without lingering risk**.



**Garrett Raiden,**  
Director of  
Internal Funds

“The larger the cart, the cheaper the processing fee.”

# The lesson !

Knox County’s experience shows how a consolidated tech stack positively effects revenue. When districts are able to spend their time on payments rather than the systems that manage them, they raise more.

With fewer systems, clearer oversight, and a single source of truth, Knox’s finance team gained control—without cutting programs or increasing parent burden.

For districts facing the same pressures, the lesson is simple: Finance teams aren’t failing. The tools are. And consolidation changes the math.

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR TECHNOLOGY



Photo: Knox County Schools