



Solving oversight and compliance in School Districts

How Wilson County Schools gained
transparency and reduced risk





The Challenge



Like so many K-12 school districts across the country, Wilson County Schools in Tennessee was struggling with oversight of fundraising dollars across the many school support organizations (SSOs) within the twenty-two schools in their district. While some of the SSOs were accepting payments through online services like Venmo and PayPal, others were still relying on cash transactions, unable to collect in-person card payments due to their lack of a payment processing platform.

For Wilson County Schools, the lack of oversight and transparency around the collection of funds left the district exposed to elevated risk of misappropriation or malfeasance of those untracked funds. With so much at stake, the district recognized the urgent need to find a solution to enforce compliance among school support organizations and reduce the dependence on cash transactions so that funds raised could be easily accounted for and tracked.

Furthermore, those collecting payments were using various point-of-sale (POS) devices and fundraising platforms with high fees, as much as 45% of funds raised in some cases, making oversight of the funds being collected and the fees being charged nearly impossible at the district level.



In Tennessee, the state comptroller provides clear and specific guidelines around monies collected by school support organizations. Wilson County Schools recognized that the lack of oversight at the district level meant that the groups collecting money downstream may not be doing so in compliance with the state guidelines. Those campaigns typically use the name, image, and likeness of a school, so their actions are ultimately a reflection on the school district and its reputation.



What are school support organizations?

School Support Organizations, also referred to as SSOs, are organizations who exist to support a school district, school, school club, or school activity and collect or receive money for that purpose. They include:

- Booster Clubs
- Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO)
- Parent Teacher Associations (PTA)
 - Foundations
- Parents/Partners in Education (PIE)





The Solution

Throughout their research to find a solution to address their payment and compliance challenges, Wilson County Schools prioritized having the ability to provide an avenue for cashless transactions through online payment options and a way to streamline workflows around annual registrations and fundraiser requests.

The Givebacks platform exceeded Wilson County Schools' evaluation criteria with its comprehensive offering of a storefront with an easy-to-build online store and cost-effective mobile POS solution, automated compliance management, approval workflows, and a full suite of fundraiser options with the lowest fees in the industry. Additionally, the district was pleased to receive white glove service from a dedicated Givebacks Customer Success Manager who serves as a support channel, identifies areas of opportunity, and helps maximize the tools available within the Givebacks platform to best serve their needs.

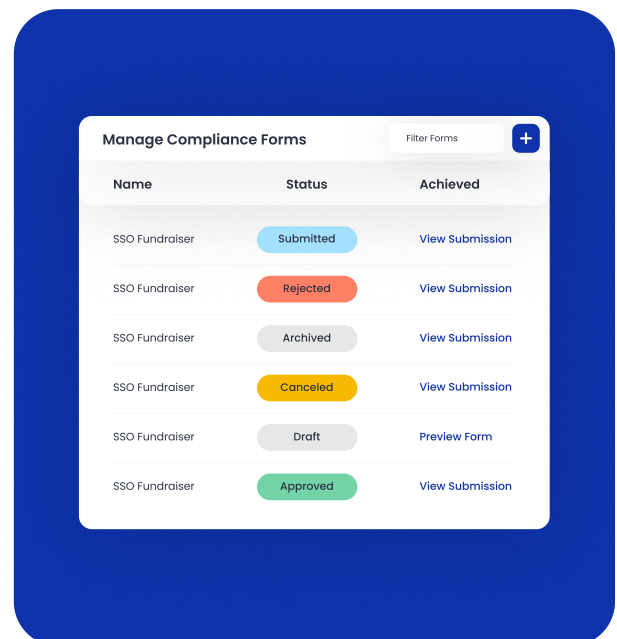
In the implementation phase, Givebacks partnered with district leaders to:

- Map ideal procedures for compliance
- Build online stores for SSOs
- Set up mobile POS for cashless transactions
- Train platform users



“I love that Givebacks offers so many different fundraisers through their platform while also helping us make sure our SSO groups are in compliance. It’s a one-stop shop.”

–Kristen Riemann, Internal Auditor,
Wilson County Schools





The Outcome

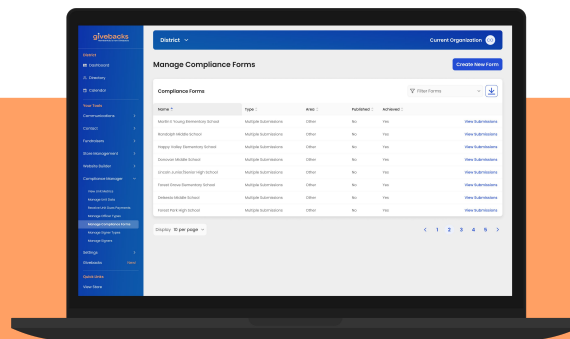


With all the necessary tools in place, Wilson County Schools was able to mandate the use of Givebacks for all online payment options including fundraising, online store, and mobile POS among the SSOs within the district. Additionally, the district mandated compliance requirements around annual registration processes, monthly financial reporting, and fundraising requests.

By requiring SSOs to adhere to compliance procedures around annual registration, fundraiser requests, and financial reports, the district now has oversight and trackability into all online payments made through fundraisers, online store sales, and point-of-sale. In addition, the district has the ability to audit all live fundraisers, account payouts, deposits, orders, and items sold.

The positive impact of the implementation and mandate of Givebacks in Wilson County Schools was immediately clear. School support organizations across the district are fully compliant, giving district leaders complete transparency into the flow of funds and reducing risk of misappropriation. In addition, school support organizations are keeping more of what they raise with significantly lower fees.

District leaders no longer fear the uncertainty of how school support organizations are raising and managing funds. Now Wilson County Schools is confident their district is compliant with state regulations and thrilled to be in partnership with Givebacks.



Find out how Givebacks can help your district.

Email us at districts@givebacks.com

