

YPTC INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS SPECIALIZATION

CASE STUDIES: HOW YPTC SUPPORTS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



AT YPTC, our mission is to help as many nonprofits as possible grow stronger. Independent schools are mission-driven, serving students through distinct educational philosophies—often with lean teams managing heavy, cross-functional workloads, rising costs and inflation alongside pressure to keep tuition rates competitive and affordable, and complex accounting and compliance requirements tied to restricted gifts and endowments. Through our customized and flexible financial management services, YPTC’s independent schools specialists provide expert, hands-on support. We help strengthen your accounting function to support effective governance, strategic decision-making, efficient operations, long-term stability, and compliance.

CASE STUDY: REBUILDING FINANCIAL OPERATIONS FOR AN INDEPENDENT BOARDING SCHOOL

INTEGRATING CORE ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS AND PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONTROLLER TRANSITION

THE CLIENT

A LARGE INDEPENDENT BOARDING SCHOOL where a new CFO found the business office in disarray. Financial reports were more than a year behind, bank reconciliations were six months behind and handled outside the accounting system, and core systems lacked integration, documentation, and consistent controls. The CFO needed experienced accounting support to stabilize operations and rebuild the school’s financial infrastructure.

THE OPPORTUNITY

- **RESTORING** financial reporting capability after more than a year without producing financial statements, leaving the board and leadership without the data needed for oversight and decision-making.
- **RECONCILING** bank accounts that were six months behind and managed entirely in spreadsheets outside the accounting system, creating an unreliable trial balance and significant audit risk.
- **RESOLVING** widespread system disconnects and manual processes across tuition management, donor tracking, accounts payable, and fixed assets.

OUR APPROACH

PHASE 1: ASSESSMENT, RECONCILIATION, AND AUDIT READINESS

- **ASSESSED** the business office processes, systems, and staffing. Built a comprehensive three-phased action plan for restructuring in collaboration with the CFO.

- **RECONNECTED** bank accounts to the accounting system, automated the reconciliation process—replacing the manual spreadsheet-based process, and brought six months of outstanding bank reconciliations current.
- **RECONCILED** the trial balance to the prior year's audited financials and built a month-end-close checklist to establish structure and accountability.
- **COORDINATED** the annual audit, which had been delayed because the business office was unable to provide adequate information.

PHASE 2: FUND ACCOUNTING, AUTOMATION, AND SYSTEMS INTEGRATION

- **REDESIGNED** the chart of accounts by defining fund categories, creating a fund mapping matrix, and adding validation rules to reduce misclassification, resulting in better compliance with donor restrictions and expanded financial reporting capabilities for better executive decision-making.
- **IMPLEMENTED** a digital expense management platform for accounts payable, credit card transactions, and staff reimbursements, replacing a fully manual process and strengthened internal controls through documented policies, cardholder training, and structured approval workflows.
- **INTEGRATED** the donor management system and tuition management platform with the accounting system, and consolidated fixed asset tracking into the existing software's built-in module, replacing a disconnected application, standardizing fund classifications across departments, eliminating manual journal entries, and enabling timely cross-departmental reconciliation.

PHASE 3: INTERIM CONTROLLER SERVICES AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

- **SERVED** as interim controller for several months while the CFO restructured the business office and conducted a search for a permanent controller.
- **ONBOARDED** the new controller with hands-on training, documented system configurations, and a structured transition plan designed for continuity and confidence.
- **DELIVERED** a comprehensive financial policies and procedures manual covering general accounting, revenue and tuition management, accounts payable, payroll, fundraising and donation recognition, financial reporting and budgeting, internal controls, record retention, and a detailed month-end-close checklist, along with a recommendations list for future improvements.

THE RESULTS

- **AUDIT READINESS:** The school completed its annual audit successfully, supported by a fully reconciled trial balance and organized documentation.
- **INTEGRATED FINANCIAL SYSTEMS:** Five previously siloed systems, including tuition management, donor tracking, accounts payable, expense management, and fixed assets, now connect directly to the accounting system, eliminating manual data entry and enabling timely reporting.

- **MODERNIZED FUND ACCOUNTING:** A restructured chart of accounts with fund mapping, validation rules, and documented guidelines replaced a spreadsheet-dependent process that could not reliably track donor restrictions or support compliance reporting.
- **REDUCED ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN:** Automated bank reconciliations, accounts payable, credit card processing, and expense reimbursements replaced labor-intensive manual workflows, allowing staff to focus on higher-value responsibilities.
- **TRANSITION-READY BUSINESS OFFICE:** The incoming controller started with a comprehensive set of documented policies, procedures, system configurations, and month-end checklists, enabling a confident and independent transition.

THE IMPACT:

BY REBUILDING the school's financial infrastructure, YPTC transformed a business office that had been unable to produce financial reports for over a year into a fully integrated, well-documented, and audit-ready operation. Leadership and the board now receive timely, reliable financial data to support strategic planning and responsible stewardship of tuition and donated resources. With connected systems, clear policies, and a well-prepared controller in place, the school can sustain these improvements and stay focused on its educational mission.



CONTACT US with questions and learn more about our work with independent schools at <https://www.yptc.com/independent-schools-specialization/>