

Rapid Application Development Solutions with FirstClass

**School District 23
Kelowna, British Columbia**



Organization School District 23, BC
Industry K12 Education
Application District-wide communication, collaboration and integration to key databases

Results

- Database connections to current student information system (CIMS)
- Seamless collaboration across multiple platforms
- Communicate with parents and community with collaboratively managed web sites
- Greater access to information and collaboration within the school environment and community

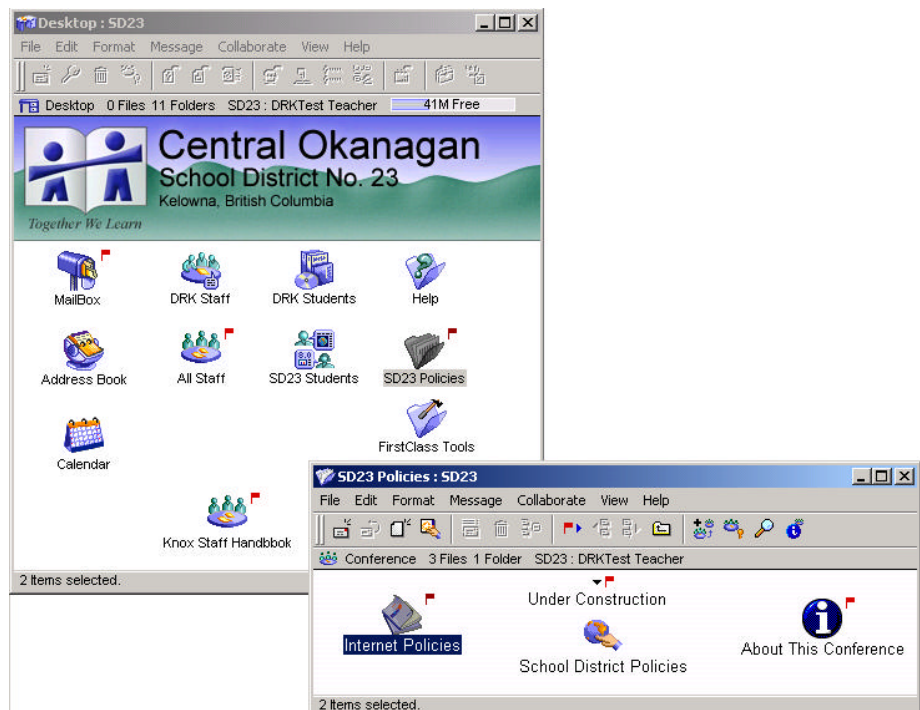
FirstClass – A Customized Solution for a Geographically Dispersed School District

In Kelowna, British Columbia, School District 23 is using FirstClass to communicate and collaborate over their 140,000 square kilometer region of 22,000 students and 3000 full-time staff. Here is their story.

Historically, Kelowna’s SD23’s network topology included the use of multiple email systems that were not connected or integrated. These system included UNIX POP mail, Netscape, Eudora, Outlook, and Lotus Notes.

There were many problems with this type of communications topology however – the School District was left to support multiple systems, with few easy and accessible email options for students. Because the products used were not collaborative in design, mail lists were used creating a great deal of time-consuming maintenance activities.

Blair Hope, FirstClass Administrator for School District 23 remarked, “*mail lists were being used for everything, and everyone – they were 100’s of name’s long. Moreover, collaborative discussion groups were prohibitively difficult to use*”.



To solve all of these problems, Juleen McElgunn, the current Assistant Superintendent for the Central Okanagan School District #23 introduced FirstClass to this school district.

She had used FirstClass in other educational settings and knew that FirstClass would provide an easy to use collaborative environment, with rich features such as calendaring, group conferencing, and database content integration.

"I wanted something extremely easy to use, that would be quickly adopted and used, and FirstClass has an advantage because it is icon-based. We have a real mix of technical abilities at our school district and we needed to implement a product that had a simple learning curve, but had powerful features. We needed a strong collaborative product that would appear completely transparent for staff and students to use".

Innovative FirstClass Solutions

About a year and a half ago SD23 received their first demonstration of FirstClass. It was clear to Juleen McElgunn, Blair Hope, and the District Tech Advisory Committee that FirstClass does things a lot easier - especially in the area of collaboration.

FirstClass was first piloted in six middle schools – for 4500 students and 500 faculty members. They had a teacher with a computer on each desk, and now a purpose for it – to enhance and enrich the learning community for students and staff using technology.

In the last year they have moved from a pilot project to full usage – 40 different schools and five other building sites are using FirstClass on a variety of platforms – Windows, Macintosh, Mac OS X, and others. The IT Department is very pleased that even with legacy hardware, the system has been working seamlessly.

After choosing FirstClass, the FirstClass implementation team requested some assistance from a local FirstClass Certified Reseller – Compuplan. They needed to move 22,000 students and 3000 adults to FirstClass, including all administrators, clerical workers, support staff, teachers, custodians, maintenance, and bus drivers. Using FirstClass Rapid Application Development environment, Compuplan was able to provide the RAD training and support needed to meet the School District's collaborative needs, and provided time saving automation by seamlessly integrating with their student information system. SD23 wanted to achieve some advanced goals in the areas of collaboration, ODBC database integration, and student time management.

With FirstClass, they were able to achieve the following solutions, to name a few.

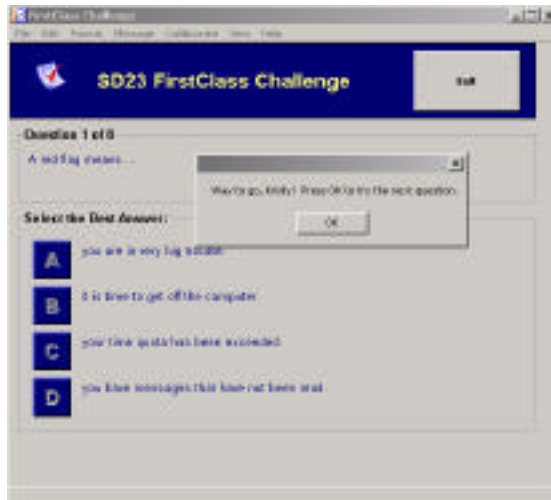
- **Staff/Faculty/Parent Login Process**

This FirstClass RAD application enables staff and students to log into FirstClass for the first time, read the Acceptable Use Policy, and agree or disagree to support it. They are then automatically added as a user in the FirstClass directory, provided with the appropriate permissions and privileges to various collaborative groups, and assigned the correct email address. Moreover, they are even automatically removed from any global mail lists if they were on a previous legacy system. Acceptable Use Policies can be signed digitally.

This is a small but powerful example of how FirstClass is being used to improve workflow and the management of information. Processes similar to this used to be completely paper and faxed based.



- **Student Login Process**



This FirstClass RAD application enables students to log into their FirstClass accounts, change their password to something secure, and performs a query to ensure a parent-signed Acceptable Use Policy is on file. They are then provided with an automatic form-based tutorial and RAD-based online quiz that gives them an opportunity to demonstrate an understanding of the responsibilities that come with obtaining a FirstClass student account. Again, easing the FirstClass Administrator's work, the student is automatically added to the user directory, assigned to all necessary collaborative groups, and provided with an email address and Internet Access (above Grade 6).

- **Club Scheduler**

This unique RAD tool offers a mini-timetable that is customized to reflect each school's unique offerings, at particular times of the week. Students and staff can log on and ensure that they have the most up to date information on today, tomorrow, or the semester!

District's Continuous Improvement Plans using FirstClass and Rapid Application Development

One of Blair Hope's philosophies is that "it's about the people, not about the computers", and his current and future plans for FirstClass and the school district reflect this. In British Columbia, Canada, parents are required to grant the school permission to provide their children with access to the Internet at school. This measure was implemented to protect students from bullying and other current safety issues related to technology.

Prior to implementing the Rapid Application Development tools, Blair Hope "spent 40% of his working day managing accounts". This year, with the automation and the ODBC architecture that FirstClass RAD provides, this complex job takes 1% of his time. His day-to-day management of the system and its 19,000 user accounts can now be completed in a few short minutes.