

# Edmonton Public Schools Enhances Purchasing with Open Text Fax Server, RightFax Edition

Fax Server-Oracle Integration Provides Cost and Time Savings



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– Sultan Ibrahim,  
Manager of Financial Operations and Accounting,  
Edmonton Public Schools

Edmonton Public Schools is the second largest school district in Alberta, Canada, with close to 80,000 students in approximately 200 schools and education sites. The district motto: “Superb results from all students.”

## The Challenge

With 50 staff members, the Edmonton Public Schools finance department handles accounting, purchasing and other financial transactions for the entire district. The finance department

sends and receives up to 100,000 faxes every year. Documents include purchase orders, authorizations, invoices, RFPs, financial details and summaries, as well as reports from district schools. All data must be entered into the district financial system, Oracle E-Business Suite 11i, for recording or accounting purposes.

Previously, the faxing system consisted of several fax machines, reams of paper and manual processing requiring a lot of time and effort. Each buyer easily spent more than an hour each day managing faxes. This entailed walking to fax machines to send or receive documents, waiting for confirmations, and then, printing and maintaining hard copies in files and folders. “For each fax, they were leaving their desks and missing phone calls only to come back to voicemails and playing telephone tag,” said Sultan Ibrahim, manager of Financial Operations and Accounting with Edmonton Public Schools. “It was frustrating because of the volume of documents and the limited number of buyers on staff. Plus, we were ‘killing too many trees’ using so much paper.”

The finance department wanted to cut costs as well as staff member time and supplies. “Also, we wanted more flexibility for sending financial communications,” noted Ibrahim. This called for integration with Oracle and Microsoft Exchange for document delivery via email and the Internet. Ibrahim and his team set out to find a computer-based fax solution

that was flexible, simple to maintain and required minimal hardware costs.

## The Solution

In the summer of 2005, Edmonton Public Schools installed Open Text Fax Server, RightFax Edition for electronic delivery and receipt of business-critical financial documents at district headquarters. Fax Server allows buyers and other staff members to send, receive, store, search and retrieve faxes right from their desktops. Most importantly, with efficient integration, buyers now easily and digitally send files directly from Oracle using Fax Server.

Buyers no longer leave their desks and miss calls to fax purchase orders. Instead, they send the financial data from Oracle to Fax Server, where it is automatically over-laid onto a purchase order form. The buyer’s signature is then added and the completed purchase order is faxed to the supplier, all from the buyer’s desktop computer. Paper is avoided altogether since the overlays and electronic signatures create legally binding documents.

Receiving faxes electronically is equally convenient. When schools fax detailed or summarized financial data or other reports, the files are now automatically received via Fax Server and delivered directly to the Microsoft Exchange Inbox of





each staff member. “Instead of printing out reams of paper, we use Fax Server to receive and distribute the documents,” Ibrahim said.

Edmonton Public Schools consulted with several other vendors before choosing Fax Server. “Others were cumbersome and not as reliable as Fax Server,” Ibrahim stated. “They also seemed technically complicated for integration.” Ibrahim and Edmonton Public Schools Analyst/Programmer Les Neatby completed a smooth integration and quickly trained personnel with the technical knowledge they needed. Seeing efficiencies gained through Fax Server within its first few months, the district hopes to expand Fax Server to additional central services departments.

### The Results

Within the first few months of use, the district saved hundreds of dollars. It eliminated three telephone lines used for fax machines and reduced expenses previously dedicated to maintenance, paper and toner. “In the end, everything we do is geared toward better serving students. Any time or money we save can be used in the classroom,” Ibrahim explained.

In addition to monetary savings, the conveniences of flexibility, efficiency and ease-of-use add to the net worth of Fax Server. Effective integration with Oracle allows Edmonton Public Schools to leverage its purchasing system, enhancing Return on Investment (ROI) for both Oracle and Fax Server. Daily time previously spent on fax-related busywork has been reduced by 75 percent freeing up time to provide quicker service and performance of

more important tasks like comparative shopping. “There’s no more extra walking around fax machines, waiting for confirmations and all of that,” Ibrahim said. “Buyers now service schools faster and better.”

Not surprisingly, Edmonton Public Schools staff members “really like Fax Server. They certainly don’t want to go back to the way things were before,” Ibrahim laughed. He predicts the same response and additional savings as Fax Server is extended to other district central services departments, without additional cash layout.

### The Profile

**Customer:** Edmonton Public Schools

**Industry:** Public education

**Business Solution:** Open Text Fax Server, RightFax Edition

**Business Challenge:** Managing 100,000 faxes a year; purchasing process slowed by manual faxing system; buyers spent hours faxing daily

**Integration:** Oracle E-Business Suite 11i, Microsoft Exchange

**Results:** Saved hundreds of dollars in fax machine expenses within first few months; reduced time spent on faxing by 75 percent

### For More Information

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