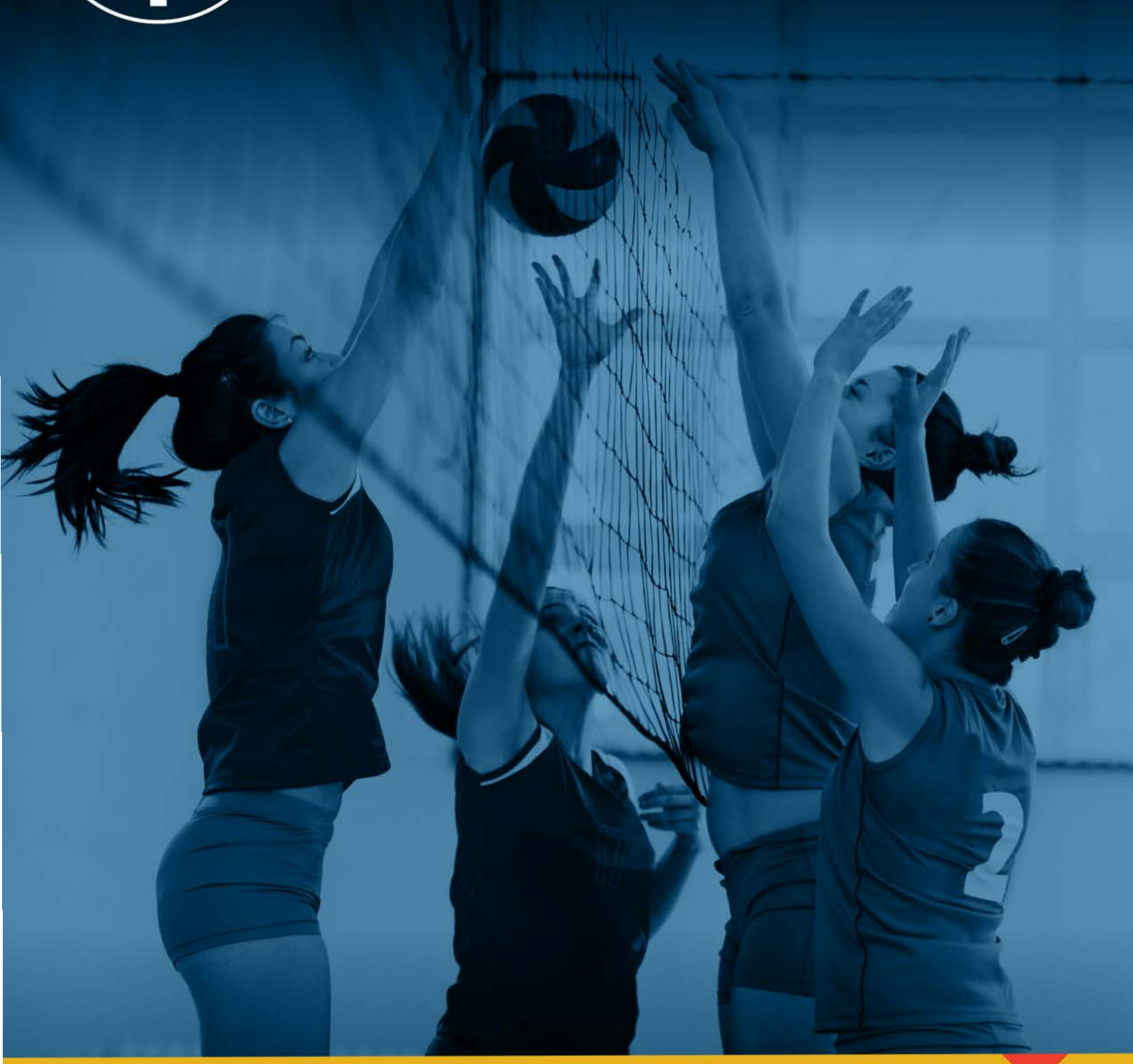
USING AFTER-HOURS EVENTS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

HOW TO RECOUP COSTS AND DELIVER MORE VALUE TO YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT



SCHOOLDUDE

eBook

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INTRODUCTION

Schools are a prime location for after-hours community events, and supporting these events is often an important part of how small school districts interact with the close-knit community they support. After-hours events can also present challenges to your team in terms of staff hours required to support these events, continued running of utilities including HVAC and electricity, and wear and tear on facilities. Recouping these event costs can positively impact your budget.

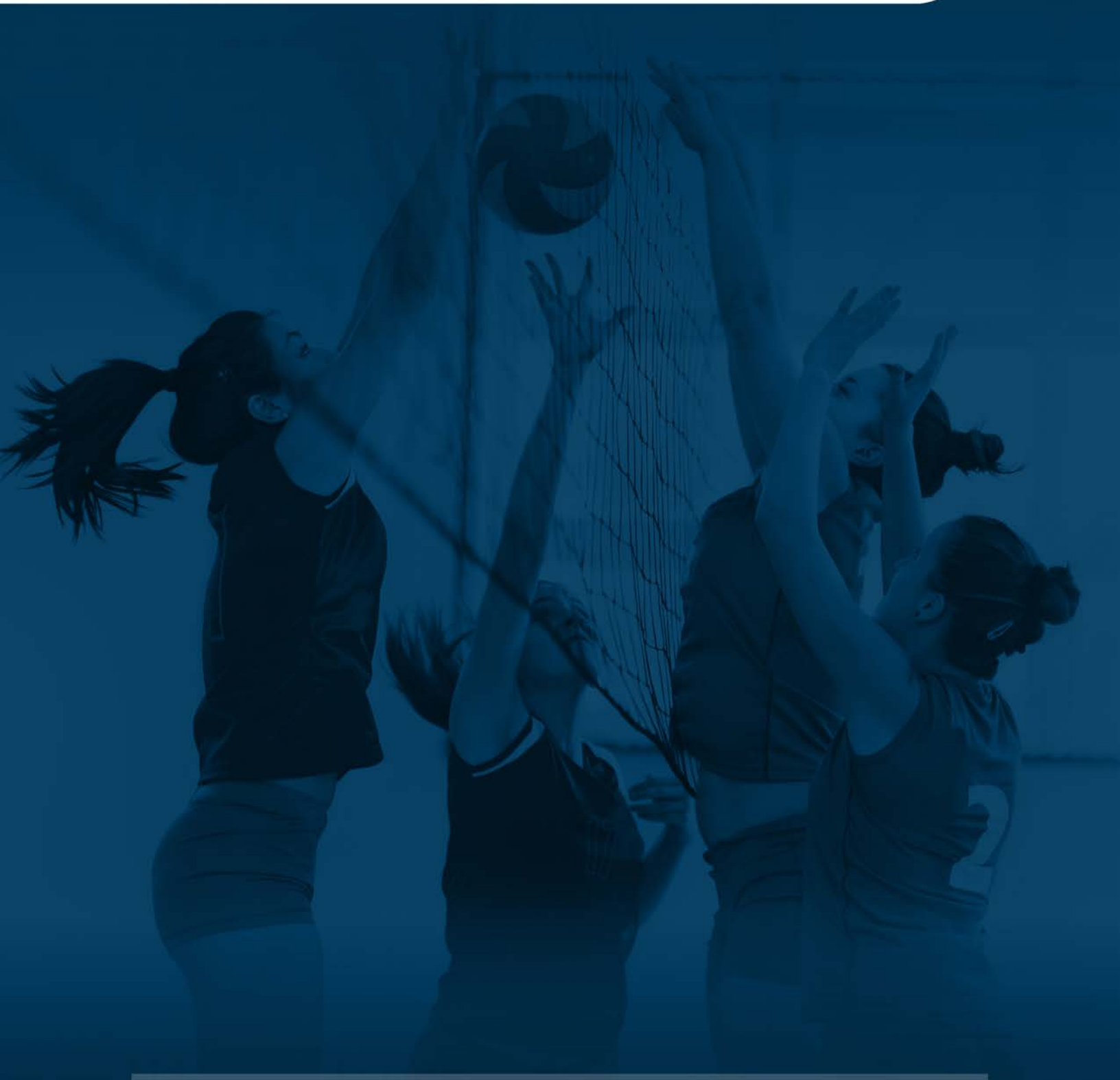
> ***"...are you getting the ultimate value from your cost recovery program?"***

Implementing an effective cost recovery program hinges on having a solid infrastructure in place for tracking expenses, billing users, logging maintenance & operations staff hours, and effectively following up post event. Cloud-based operations management software makes it possible to track the necessary information and develop an efficient cost recovery program. If you're already using software to manage your operations, you're one step ahead of the game. But are you getting the ultimate value from your cost recovery program?

Here are **7 key actions** you can take to **recoup event costs** and **deliver more value** to your school district.

Key Action #1:

START COLLECTING DATA



Key Action #1:

START COLLECTING DATA

You can't know where you're going if you don't know where you've been. If you're using paper processes and spreadsheets to schedule and manage events, establishing good data benchmarks will be a challenge. With event management software, you can begin to track all work related to facility scheduling, including:

- **Volume and type of event requests**
- **Location of event requests**
- **Staff hours logged supporting each event**
- **Custodial, IT, Security and other staff overtime**
- **Utility costs by building and location**
- **Event costs invoiced to community users versus what is received**

With this data, your department can make better data-driven decisions to improve customer satisfaction, increase event efficiency, and make them as cost effective as possible for the district, especially smaller districts with limited budget dollars.

For example, data available through event management software allows you to look at your district's after-hours events over months or years. This can tell you which school facilities are used the most so that you can better maximize space and limit the spaces available on nights or weekends based on trends in demand.

Having instant access to detailed data about the events hosted at your facilities will help your district implement a cost recovery program. This data makes proving the case for a cost recovery program, and developing a fair and realistic fee structure, much easier to both keep your budget intact and keep community patrons satisfied.

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Key Action #1: (cont'd)

START COLLECTING DATA

SCHOOLDUDE CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

"We started requiring administrators to use SchoolDude's facility scheduling solution. This allows the district to view who is using the facilities and determine if there should be rental fees to at least recover the cost of utilities and custodial services for each event. We've been able to regain incurred costs and money lost from outside agencies and groups [using our facilities]."

– Pamela White, Transportation and Maintenance Administrative Assistant, Sturgis Public Schools, Sturgis, MI

Key Action #2:

START CHARGING FOR EVENTS



Key Action #2:

START CHARGING FOR EVENTS

Once you've started collecting data (Key Action #1!), you'll be in a much better position to build the business case to start charging for after-hours events. Your requesters may not realize the core costs involved in hosting events such as: costs for staff set-up and clean-up, energy costs to keep facility space heated for a weekend event, and requirements to replace equipment sooner due to additional wear and tear. When you can explain the reasons for your event fees to a community member, and back it all up with hard data, the gray areas start to disappear.

For example, a book club wants to use one of your classrooms for their monthly meeting at 7pm. Their leader has come to the school seeking "free space" and explained that the group will only meet for an hour. With the data from your event management solution, you know the exact costs for that one-hour meeting, including:

- **Facilities and IT staff hours required to set up the space, such as roundtables, projectors, etc.**
- **Utility costs to heat and light the classroom space for several extra hours each night until the meeting concludes**
- **Custodial overtime to clean the space before classes reconvene**
- **Administrative time spent on processing the event request and submitting the work orders and tickets for set-up/clean-up**
- **Wear and tear on equipment, such as how often the projector needs to be serviced or replaced**

With this information in hand, you know how much you'll need to charge the book club to recoup the costs of their monthly one-hour event. More importantly, you can confidently go into fee discussions with the book club leader or other community members requesting space in your facilities because you've got real data to back up the district's actual costs.

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Key Action #2: (cont'd)

START CHARGING FOR EVENTS

SCHOOLDUDE CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

"We were losing money on after-hours events—particularly due to inefficient scheduling and billing. By implementing SchoolDude's [event management] software within our facility use program, we save time on revenue collection, are able to clearly define the process for renters, and increase the event revenue we are collecting."

– Kreg Wesley, Director of Operations, Sycamore Community School District #427, Sycamore, IL

Key Action #3:

MANAGE YOUR PR AND REPUTATION



Key Action #3:

MANAGE YOUR PR AND REPUTATION

Charging for events can get downright ugly if you don't equip yourself with data. Schools often hear feedback from community members that taxpayer dollars going into the school should mean the community gets free access to school facilities outside of normal hours. But you know that tax dollars don't support those after-hours, non-scholastic events.

When your school district's Business Officer or Superintendent has data on his or her side, the reasons behind charging event fees can actually create positive PR for the school. On average, a school hosts one event per student annually. Consider these talking points when discussing the thousands of events your district hosts per year with community members:

- **Schools that charge event fees take facilities maintenance seriously—and recouping costs is critical to the ongoing health and upkeep of the school.**
- **Schools need adequate staff to support events, ensuring rooms are heated or air conditioned to a comfortable level and security is present to ensure participants are safe–without recouping costs, staff support would not be possible.**
- **If a school opened its doors "for free" to every group that requested space, the drain on resources and wear and tear fees would skyrocket! (using data, you can quantify this number on an annual basis)**
- **Schools couldn't fix the wear and tear on facilities without recouping their costs, meaning children of the very organizations using school facilities would have a lesser learning experience with run-down equipment.**
- **Schools that charge event fees can still offer a discounted rate, free space, or special programs to non-profit organizations—an opportunity to create positive PR and further impact the community.**

Key Action #4:

DEVELOP YOUR FEE STRUCTURE



Key Action #4:

DEVELOP YOUR FEE STRUCTURE

Every school is unique, and developing the right fee structure for after-hours events requires a custom approach. Below are two possible fee structures that could work for your school district. With data from an event management solution, institutions can tailor their fee structures to match what best suits the types of use on their facilities and the costs they incur.

A Big Gap!

(According to SchoolDude data)

In annual income, **per student**, the average school district recovers just:



...meanwhile the cost incurred, **per student, per year** in facility use charges:



1) FLAT FEE: This type of fee structure allows schools to keep things simple. The school charges one flat fee per event, often regardless of space required, hours needed, or staff resources utilized. This option could be a good starting point if you are beginning a cost recovery initiative. It also allows for additional fees overtime for various line items as budgets require.

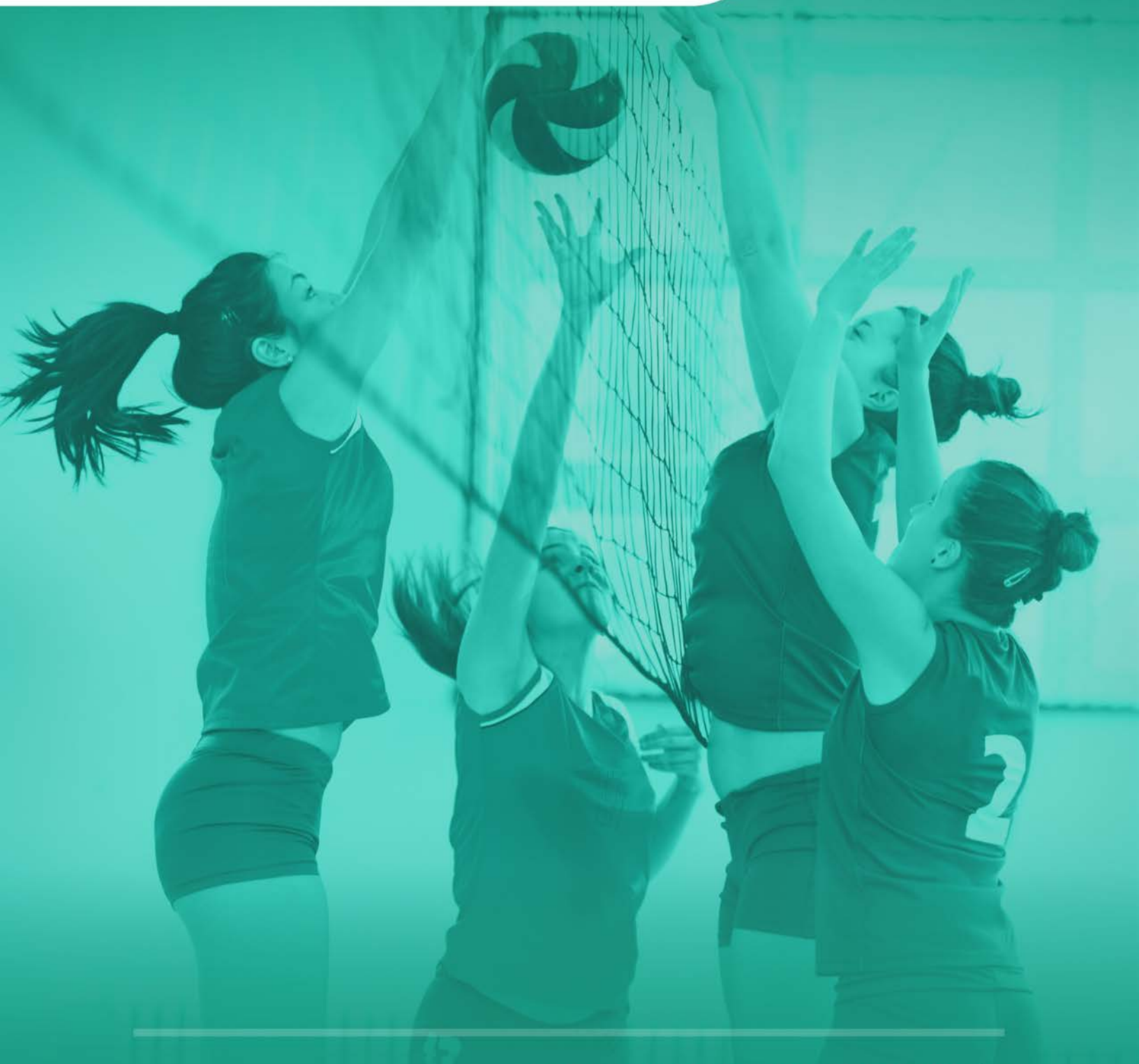
2) TIERED PRICING: This type of fee structure implements a hierarchy of pricing based on the type of organization using the space. For example, a business might pay one amount while a non-profit pays a lower rate for the same event duration and requirements. As with a flat fee structure, schools may elect to offer add-on services for additional fees, or stick to a simple flat rate with everything included.

Once you've started collecting data (Key Action #1 again!), it will be easy to develop a fee structure that works for your bottom line. Why? Because using your operations and event management software, you can determine the **average cost of prior events** to predict future expenditures. Simple right?

If you need help getting started, don't reinvent the wheel. Check out the SchoolDude Community to see discussions about cost recovery, event management and fee structures, including fee templates that you can customize for your school district.

Key Action #5:

STREAMLINE YOUR BILLING PROCESS



Key Action #5:

STREAMLINE YOUR BILLING PROCESS

Your school's ability to recoup after-hours event costs relies heavily on implementing a clear process for billing and accounts receivable. This will ensure a large majority of the dollars invoiced to community organizations are paid. With event management software, you can automatically send out invoices to your renters after events. You can also set up automated reminder emails and follow up invoices to renters. **On average, 80% of dollars invoiced for community use of facilities are received in your public K-12 peer group.** If your district's accounts receivable is below this benchmark, it is a good opportunity to improve your follow-up process with renters to ensure those fees are collected.

With enhanced visibility and control over your billing, you are better positioned to create your own benchmarks for cost recovery, taking into consideration items like:

- **Year over year costs recouped**
- **Amount invoiced versus payments received**
- **Number of reminder emails required to generate returns**
- **Impact of invoice timing on cost recovery**

With all this data at your fingertips, you can more accurately plan for the future in terms of how many community events your district should host annually, how much you can expect to recoup, what type of resources will be required, and whether or not you'll need to increase your fees over time.

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Key Action #5: (cont'd)

STREAMLINE YOUR BILLING PROCESS

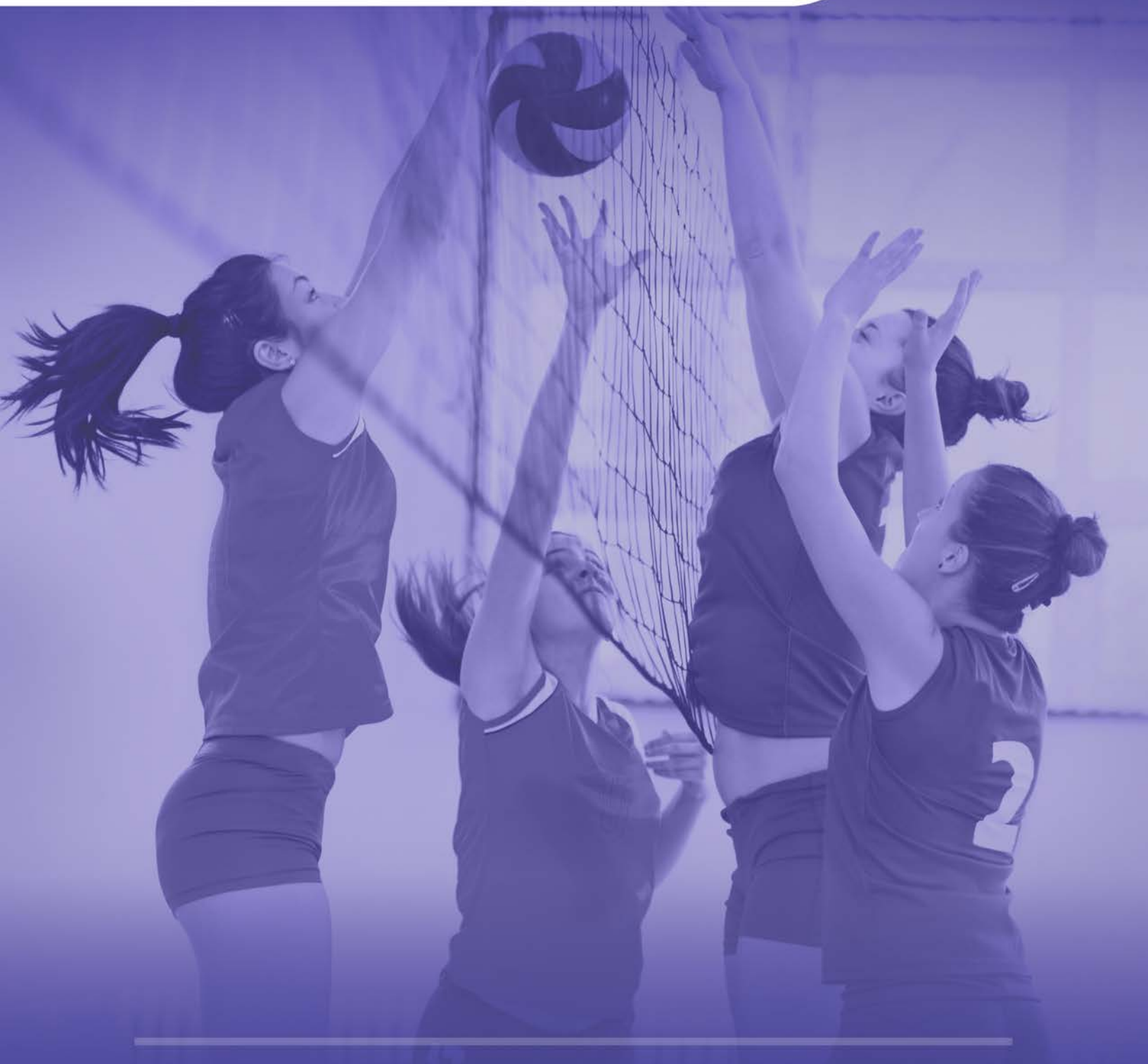
SCHOOLDUDE CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

"We were losing a lot of money due to inefficient scheduling and billing for after-school events. We chose to implement SchoolDude's billing system in our facilities—a move that's saved us a lot of time on billing processes, increased the amount of money we are collecting as a whole and helped us clearly define the process and fees for any prospective renters moving forward."

– Chuck Linderman, Director of Business Affairs, Great Valley School District, Malvern, PA

Key Action #6:

TRACK AND MANAGE YOUR UTILITY COSTS



Key Action #6:

TRACK AND MANAGE YOUR UTILITY COSTS

Keeping tabs on utility expenses is an important aspect of budget management for most schools. If not kept in careful check, these bills have the potential to skyrocket quickly. When you implement operations management software with a utility management function, you have all the tools you need to effectively track utility usage and costs. Using utilities responsibly can save your school a lot of money, both in day-to-day costs and especially during after-hours events.

DAY-TO-DAY UTILITY MANAGEMENT

Utility tracking software gathers your utility bills for operations departments to easily analyze energy trends such as times of greatest usage, your least energy-efficient buildings, your most energy-efficient buildings, unusual spikes in usage, and more. This knowledge is a powerful resource to help make decisions that will decrease your energy costs, such as justification for hiring an Energy Manager or creating a district-wide conservation program. It is often staggering when Administration, management, or the Board sees the budget dollars spent on energy alone. To learn more about how to begin your energy management program or improve upon your existing efforts, access the whitepaper, *Reducing Energy Consumption in Schools: 12 Tips for Tackling an Energy Management Program.*

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TRACK AND MANAGE YOUR UTILITY COSTS

SCHOOLDUDE CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

"We needed a way to save on utility expenses, so we chose SchoolDude's [energy management] program to track our costs and impose simple behavior modifications to reduce electrical costs. Through the program, we've saved time and money—and now, all of our data is available electronically."

– Jeff Sargent, Facilities Coordinator, Los Alamos Public Schools, Los Alamos, NM

AFTER-HOURS UTILITY MANAGEMENT

Tracking your utilities for after-hours events, like anything else, is easiest to do when you have data in your back pocket. For example, a school gymnasium is being rented on a Saturday afternoon starting at 3pm. If the school is using paper processes to manage after-hours events, staff members may decide to simply leave the HVAC units running throughout the weekend. But…

What if that same school had been tracking utility data for prior events and learned that turning the HVAC units on just a few hours before the event on Saturday could save hundreds of dollars in one weekend? Taking it a step further, what if that same school invested in software that would remotely schedule the HVAC units to turn on and off? Recovering value is the name of the game when you've got the right kind of software working for you.

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TRACK AND MANAGE YOUR UTILITY COSTS

SCHOOLDUDE CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

"We needed to know our actual per building utilities costs so that we could more carefully budget for these expenses. We began tracking [this information] with [SchoolDude's energy management solution]. Each year, we have been able to observe the effect of energy saving measures and adjust our budgets accordingly, without having to make 'wild guesses.'"

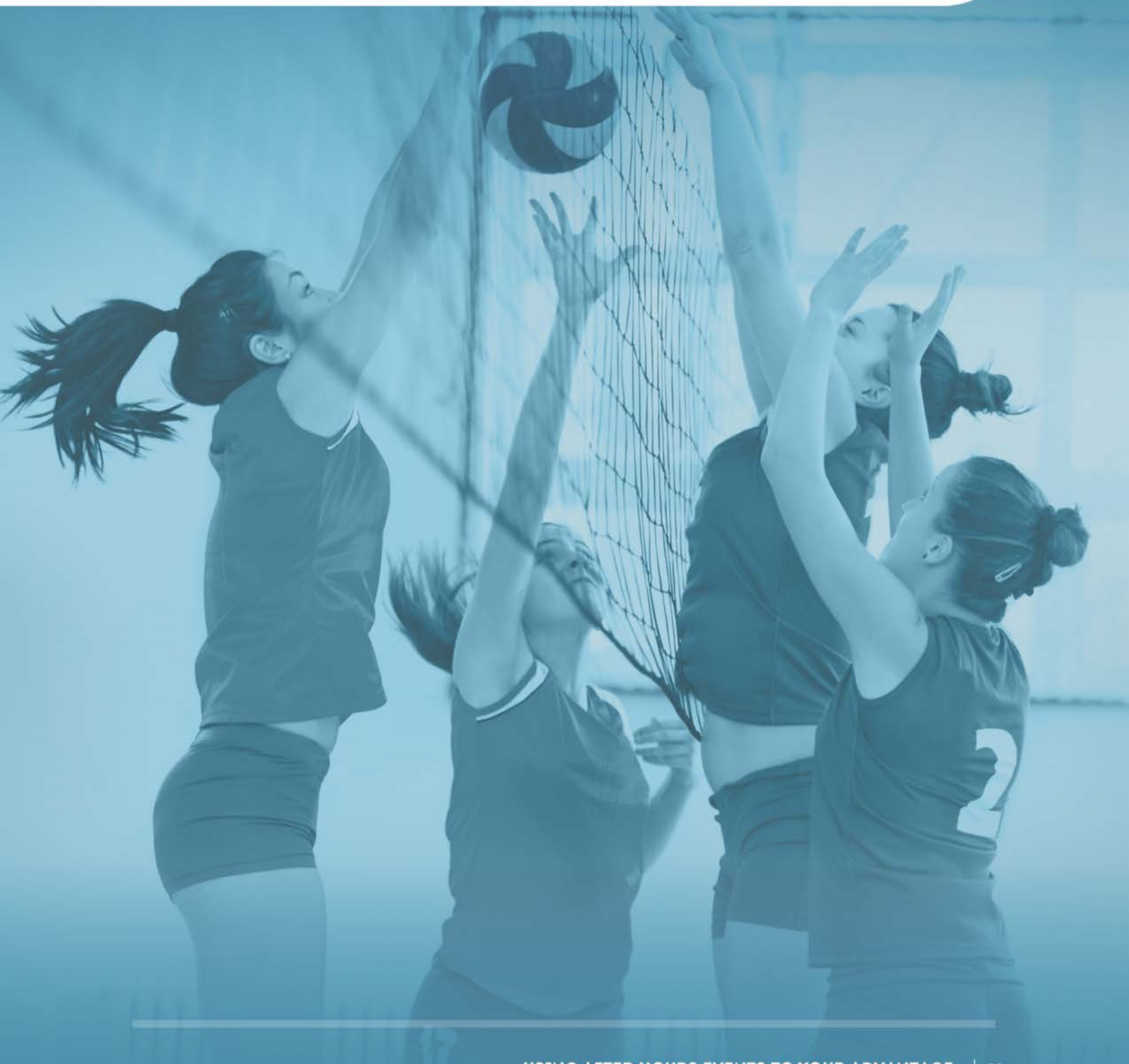
– Dale Knepper, Director of Buildings & Grounds, Northeastern School District, Manchester, PA

"We have saved $88,000 so far this year since starting an energy management program, and save an average of $100,000 per year over our initial benchmark year. After 4 years [of implementing energy tracking], we've saved close to $400,000."

– Tony Munson, Energy Manager, Liberty ISD, Liberty, TX

Key Action #7:

CREATE YOUR OWN BENCHMARKS—AND WIN!



Key Action #7:

CREATE YOUR OWN BENCHMARKS—AND WIN!

Tracking and managing all of your event and utility data in one place puts you in greater control of your future. Using the data available with a comprehensive operations management platform, you're able to set benchmarks by which to measure your progress against yourself, year-over-year—as well as your progress against other schools in your state and across the country.

At SchoolDude, we use KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) to help schools set higher standards for themselves, use data to make better decisions, and show the progress that their teams are making over time. Using KPIs, you can benchmark your school against peer institutions for important metrics such as:

- **Year over year costs recouped**
- **Number of events hosted per year**
- **Dollars spent on utilities for after-hours events**
- **Average cost recovered per student**
- **Average time it takes to complete a work order or IT ticket**
- **Percentage of preventive, proactive maintenance versus reactive maintenance**
- **And much more**

Your school district can only continue to improve if you know exactly where you stand, compared to yourself year-over-year AND compared to schools around you. Get to know your data inside and out, set realistic performance goals, put a plan in place to meet those goals, and crush those KPIs year after year!

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CREATE YOUR OWN BENCHMARKS—AND WIN!

SCHOOLDUDE CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

"SchoolDude has allowed us to connect facility use to actual costs to the district, especially in employee costs. I utilize the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Dashboard to compare how our district is performing in facility use to other comparable districts. [KPIs] also help with recognizing areas that need more focus."

– Renee Polly, Facility Coordinator, Orting School District, Orting, WA

CONCLUSION

Hosting community events is both an opportunity and challenge for schools, but one thing is for certain: the demand is here to stay. By making strategic use of data and utilizing operations management solutions that meet your needs, you can stay one step ahead of your community's needs and continually reinforce the value that your facilities bring to the table. You'll also be in the best possible position to justify a cost recovery program to recoup your costs and ensure that your school's facilities remain in peak condition for the students who come there to learn each and every day.

Want to learn more about cloud-based software to automate your processes and aid in your cost recovery efforts?

Learn more about SchoolDude's event management platform, or learn more about SchoolDude energy management platform.

About SchoolDude

SchoolDude offers cloud-based software solutions to streamline all areas of your operations – maintenance management, energy management, facility usage, technology management, and safety management. SchoolDude's solutions automate the work order and IT ticket request process, monitor inventory usage, schedule preventive maintenance, forecast capital needs, simplify event management, and track technology assets. Our solutions provide a global view of your organization's operations and improve communication with all departments, faculty and students at your district. Learn more at www.schooldude.com/smallschools.