



## CASE STUDY

How Loyola High School strengthened distance learning for students, teachers and parents with Studyo



Studyo

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## School Profile

Established in 1896, Loyola High School is a private Catholic Jesuit school for boys located in Montreal, Quebec. Approximately 750 students walk the halls of Loyola every year – however, in 2020, those halls have been looking emptier than usual. As academic institutions swiftly transitioned to online schooling due to the global health crisis, Loyola decided it was finally time to adopt a digital organizational platform to increase collaboration and accountability between students, teachers, and parents starting in the 2020-2021 school year.

## The Challenge

### Painting a complete and transparent picture of each student's workload

For decades, Loyola High School students relied on paper-based agendas to stay organized. These agendas had gone through many updates and iterations over the years, but according to Vice Principal of Junior Academics Annie Beland, putting pen to paper was never a one-size-fits all solution.

"We were finding that not all of our students were using [their agendas], or didn't really know how to use them," she said. Some of them were having a hard time due to executive functioning challenges, while others could not connect what was written on the board with what they should be writing down.

These inconsistencies created a disconnect between what was happening in the classroom, where students were assigned homework and projects, and what was happening (or not happening) at home. Many students would end up with gaps in their agendas – and while teachers typically conducted "agenda checks" for students who were struggling, these gaps made it impossible to paint a complete picture of their responsibilities.

As a result, parents were unable to help their children stay on top of their schoolwork and manage their time, since chunks of information were being omitted. And as a teacher herself, Beland was unable to use her students' overall workloads as a benchmark for how much homework she should assign for her own class. Everyone was fighting a losing battle.



“ The ability to see what [homework] a student had across the board was missing. ”

Annie Beland,  
Vice President of Junior Academics



Neil Houston, Loyola's Director of Technology, emphasized just how difficult it is for teachers to keep an eye on individual students when paper agendas are the norm. In order to provide effective support, they need a real-time view of how kids are progressing. Without a transparent system, students could fly under the radar for weeks: it would often take a low test score to reveal that they have not been completing their readings or homework.

Houston also saw a need for students to develop strong digital habits, since online tools are the norm in the real world. "We all use some kind of calendar app, we all use our phones," he said. "So making the students use a paper agenda seemed backwards."



The turning point occurred when COVID-19 made face-to-face instruction impossible. When Loyola adopted distance learning, teachers had a very hard time conducting their checks – asking students to hold their agendas up to their webcams just wasn't cutting it. It was time to bring their approach to organization into the digital age.

"The ability to see what [homework] a student had across the board was missing." – Annie Beland

### Loyola High School's goals:

**1.** Give teachers and administrators increased visibility into students' workloads in order to provide more relevant guidance and support.

**2.** Empower students to take ownership of their school/life balance by providing a central hub to track responsibilities like sports practice, appointments, and family events alongside their homework.

**3.** Get students and parents on the same page, and help parents better support their children at home by providing a comprehensive view of each student's workload.

**4.** Support students who struggle with keeping organized, and provide them with a new set of tools to help them stay on top of their schoolwork.

## The Solution

### A hub where students, teachers, and parents can tackle organization together

Beland explained that the rapid transition to distance learning was an important catalyst for change. "Based on years of feedback from teachers, students, and administrators regarding workload and not being able to see the overall picture, it really made sense for us to make the switch," she said. "We had been talking about it for years."

In May 2020, two months after the global pandemic took hold, Loyola's administrative team committed to expanding their digital infrastructure with Studyo. They didn't know whether they would be back in the classroom for the fall semester, so the prudent choice was to buckle down and plan for long-term distance learning.

Following an online demo with the Studyo team, Beland and the team were convinced. "It looked like a really easy user-friendly tool, and the Studyo staff were really helpful as well," she said. Two more training sessions would follow, looping guidance counsellors and after-school program specialists into the mix, in addition to a full teacher workshop with Studyo CEO Renaud Boisjoly.



Initially, some teachers were concerned about onboarding an unfamiliar system, but their apprehension quickly melted away as they became more familiar with Studyo. "The tool is so user friendly that even folks who were nervous about the change jumped on board," said Beland.

One key factor that eased the adoption process along was Studyo's ability to integrate with Loyola's existing workflows. Since teachers already used Google Classroom and Moodle to communicate with students and assign homework, the Studyo team connected both services to their platform so teachers wouldn't have to input important information twice.

For example, when a teacher posts an assignment to Moodle, it automatically shows up on each student's Studyo dashboard as well. When homework is completed, both teachers and students have the ability to check off a task, putting an important emphasis on collaborative organization.

"Studyo does a very good job of making sure it is seamlessly integrated, and it doesn't try to take over roles from other systems you already have in place," said Houston. It focuses solely on what it does best: sharpening students' executive functioning and providing an intuitive calendar environment to facilitate success.

## The results

Within a very short period of time, buy-in from teachers, students, and parents was remarkably high. Rolling out a brand-new tech solution in an educational setting can be challenging, and initiatives like this often face a fair bit of resistance. However, in Loyola's case, Studyo proved itself to be a natural fit, and implementation went off without a hitch.

The administration was a little concerned that students in upper grades wouldn't be as receptive to Studyo, both Beland and Houston remarked on how quickly and seamlessly the students took to the new platform.

80% student adoption  
within two months.

Hesitant teachers were swayed  
by Studyo's user-friendliness.

Parents can now help with  
managing school work at home.

While just 40% of Loyola students are required to use Studyo as part of the initial rollout, the school saw 80% adoption within just two months of rolling out the software.

## Teachers and staff

From an administrative standpoint, Houston highlighted how quiet things have been on the technical issues side. As a member of the IT staff, he is plugged into every issue that comes down the pipe from teachers and staff. In short, he understands better than anyone that no news is good news.



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Neil Houston  
Director of Technology



"That's a ringing endorsement: we implemented a brand-new system school-wide that affects all teachers and all students, and we haven't had any substantial complaints," he said. "They don't find it invasive, they don't find the kids trying to misuse it [...] they're engaged with it in a very positive way."

In classroom settings, accountability is airtight thanks to Studydo. Beland explained that there is no longer an excuse for not getting homework done: while paper agendas leave room for error ("I didn't write it down" used to be a quasi-acceptable excuse), Studydo clearly displays all homework assignments in a single location, so expectations are crystal clear.

## Parents

The final piece of the organizational puzzle is parental involvement in their child's education. "Parents can have access to Studydo if their son chooses to give it to them, which most of them do," said Beland. This increased transparency offers parents insight into what's happening in class, gives them the tools to help their children manage their time effectively, and facilitates a healthier family/school balance than ever before.

Taking the plunge with a whole new software can feel daunting, especially when you've been doing things a certain way for so long. But if Loyola's experience has taught us one thing, it's that you can achieve incredible success as long as you have the right amount of support and guidance.



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To learn more about Studydo and the team, visit [www.studydo.co](http://www.studydo.co).

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