

Challenge & Solution

Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD needed to replace existing classroom apps with a platform that could streamline operations, provide oversight of all communications, and meet district privacy requirements. The district adopted ParentSquare to unify phone, text, email, and app notifications, and integrated volunteer background checks, attendance notifications, and electronic forms into one system.

Results

- Close to 100% parent contactability, with over 4,000 volunteer background checks processed through the platform
- Twice-daily absence notifications replaced end-of-day alerts, with parents excusing absences directly via the app
- Eliminated a third-party volunteer management platform, reducing IT support burden and data sync requirements

One platform for communication, compliance, and community

In 2017, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD (CFBISD) began looking for possible replacements for existing classroom apps in use, ones that could streamline their operations, provide oversight of all communications, and also adhere to their district's privacy requirements. In 2018, CFBISD adopted ParentSquare.

CFBISD, as well as their individual campuses, departments and teachers, send phone, text, email and app notifications to parents through a single platform. Parents have one place to go for school-to-home communications, while CFBISD gains oversight of communication from the district to the classroom, ensures compliance and saves time.

Simplifying background checks for parents, schools, and the district office

Before ParentSquare, CFBISD used a separate volunteer management platform to handle the many volunteer background checks that need to happen every year. The process was time-consuming for both staff and parents. Staff needed to manually verify who was background

checked and who wasn't. Parents had to not only figure out one more system, but also had to print out and bring their background check confirmation with them to school when they volunteered.

ParentSquare worked with CFBISD to fully integrate the background check process into their parent platform. Parents now go to their existing ParentSquare account to start their background check—no additional login required. Their background check form is prefilled with existing information, if they are listed in the SIS. (Community volunteers not listed in the SIS need not worry. They can still use ParentSquare for background checks with a custom form.) ParentSquare handles submission of the form to the background check provider, and when results come back, the volunteer record is updated immediately.

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The same ParentSquare platform handles volunteer sign ups: only those parents and volunteers who have completed their background check are allowed to volunteer—for everyone else, sign ups are greyed out.

Benefits for CFBISD:

- School administrators and teachers no longer have to manually verify volunteer status
- Parents save time and have less paperwork to handle during their yearly background check process.
- The CFBISD tech team was able to remove a 3rd party platform, eliminating ongoing IT support and data synchronization work.

Improving attendance notifications

Before syncing their attendance information with their ParentSquare platform, CFBISD's system was only able to notify parents of unexcused absences at the end of the day. This meant a considerable lag for both parents and the school to determine if any students

skipped class or missed school for a legitimate reason.

Using ParentSquare, unexcused absence notifications are sent out twice a day, and parents can excuse an absence immediately via the app or web portal, saving time for school staff who don't have to clear voicemail messages and manually update student records.

Saving time with electronic forms

CFBISD sends forms to parents using ParentSquare, whether it's a permission slip, media release, or address verification form, making it easier and faster for both parents and staff.

Recently administrators came to the CFBISD tech team, requesting help getting parent permission for Avant Assessments, a language proficiency test. Using ParentSquare, it was straightforward to set up a new form and get it out to the right parents. CFBISD delivered it both electronically and as a form to print, sign and bring in — parents could choose whichever method they preferred. The tech team delivered quickly, staff had less administrative overhead, and the CFBISD was able to get replies back from parents faster than with traditional means.

Increasing oversight and flexibility

CFBISD also makes full use of ParentSquare metrics and dashboards, permissions and delegations, and custom group functionality.

As of January, 2020, CFBISD reported 74% of parents opted in for email, 26% for text, 30% for the app, and close to 100% parent contactability. Over 4,000 background checks have been processed through ParentSquare. Since the beginning of the school year, about 80 district messages, 1,850 school messages, 10,055 classroom messages, 1,825 group messages and about 140K direct messages were generated across the district.

Through ParentSquare, CFBISD expanded their commitment to parents and the community, while delivering the oversight and metrics schools need to continuously improve their parent engagement efforts.

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