

Challenge & Solution

Grove Park Elementary previously relied on a communication provider that lacked two-way messaging, automatic translation, and app integrations, leaving multilingual families unable to access information in their home language. The school implemented ParentSquare with seamless SIS integration, real-time alerts, two-way messaging, and automatic translation in 190+ languages.

Results

- Equitable communication with all families across 22 languages through automatic translation
- Delivery statistics confirm message receipt, providing accountability paper handouts cannot match
- Reduced paper and printing costs by shifting newsletters and event coordination into one platform

Encouraging family engagement with an equitable solution

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Grove Park Elementary School opened its doors in August 2023 as a Pre-K through 4th grade school in Charlotte, North Carolina. It was designated as a relief school for overcrowding in East Charlotte at several schools, and the majority of the new school's students previously attended neighboring sites. Grove Park added 5th grade and continued to grow enrollment to its current 770 students.

Until two years ago, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools had primarily used another vendor for its school-to-home communication platform. "It was incredibly limiting. I didn't like using it," says Megan Cahill-Clark, Grove Park's principal. With another elementary school already implementing ParentSquare, Cahill-Clark started using the all-in-one communication platform to reach out to families (whose children were enrolling at the new elementary school) with real-time alerts and two-way messaging.

"One school was using ParentSquare, and the other was still on the legacy platform," says Cahill-Clark. "How we communicated with the families coming from those schools was starkly

different depending on which communication tool we used.”

An exceptional product for parent communication

In 2022, ParentSquare won a schoolwide RFP, and the platform was implemented at Grove Park during the summer of 2023. “It was a natural transition for me,” says Cahill-Clark. “We were opening a new school community and were already familiar with ParentSquare, which I’ve found to be an exceptional product for parent communication.” The school took a direct, systematic approach when implementing the new system. This included comprehensive outreach to families through flyers, posters, and dedicated communication at open house events. At the same time, teachers were easily rostered thanks to a seamless integration with the school’s SIS and received the necessary training on the platform.

Cahill-Clark says the goal was to frame ParentSquare as a familiar tool, essentially a closed social media network for school-home communication. This eased user adoption and “demystified” the technology through connections to existing social habits. “Our staff emphasized that if users could communicate socially online,” she explains, “they could also easily use the platform for school-related interactions.”

Encouraging family engagement with an equitable solution

Grove Park’s student population is about 50% Hispanic, with about 22 different languages represented across the board. With automatic translation for more than 190 languages, ParentSquare has vastly reduced the amount of time and number of headaches involved with creating and sharing newsletters and other materials with parents. Cahill-Clark encourages staff to create their newsletters in ParentSquare versus reverting to PDFs, paper printouts, or other formats for information sharing. That way, the platform manages the automatic translation and encourages engagement with all recipients. “This is an equity issue that we have to continue working on both in our school and our district as a whole,” she points out. “It’s about making sure that all parents, regardless of their native language, have access to the same information.”

Cahill-Clark also values ParentSquare’s delivery statistics, which staff can use to confirm message receipt, a crucial feature when parents claim they didn’t receive information. The platform shows when a message was opened, providing clear confirmation that traditional paper handouts can’t match. As she explains, “Having one place where all of those

communications can be sent, seen, and delivered is extremely helpful.”

“ParentSquare is our district tool for communications; it’s [easy to use](#) and [convenient](#).”

Susan Vernon-Devlin

Executive Director of Media Relations, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

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Improving connections districtwide

Susan Vernon-Devlin, executive director of media relations for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, says ParentSquare has helped the district create stronger connections with families, and particularly those who speak languages other than English.

During last year’s back-to-school event, for example, Vernon-Devlin was chatting with a Vietnamese parent who didn’t realize that he could select his native language in the ParentSquare app. “He told me that he didn’t understand the messages that we were sending, so I showed him how to easily change that on his phone to start receiving voice messages,” she says. “He was amazed.” Individual wins like that help minimize the literacy gap from families that can quickly emerge in a diverse district where families speak almost 150 different languages across the district.

“ParentSquare is our district tool for communications; it’s easy to use and convenient,” says Vernon-Devlin, who also likes the platform’s flexibility and customizability. For example, parents can decide when and how they receive their communications, and teachers and principals can easily schedule their communications. And the school board can easily be kept “in the loop” using the platform’s data reporting features that reduce manual work and allow staff members to focus on other projects.

“I was speaking with a parent from another district that only uses phone calls for school-to-home communications, and who gets interrupted throughout the day,” says Vernon-Devlin. “I told him about how ParentSquare lets our parents schedule their incoming messages so they’re not getting bombarded throughout the day and he was pretty envious.”

ParentSquare features that make all the difference

Cahill-Clark really likes the platform’s organizational features, particularly the calendar and

post functions. “Being able to sort specific groups is really helpful,” she says. “We use it to plan events like staggered kindergarten entry and separate open houses; it helps us target communications precisely.”

For a recent fifth-grade promotion ceremony, Cahill-Clark managed RSVPs and volunteer sign-ups right in ParentSquare, rather than using an external tool like Sign-Up Genius. “Why are we creating additional stuff to do when the platform will do all of those things for us?” she asked while showing her team how ParentSquare could function as a single hub for all event coordination.

“ParentSquare streamlines everything and simplifies the process,” she adds, “while also significantly improving the experience for our families.” The platform has also reduced the school’s reliance on paper according to Cahill-Clark, who personally dislikes excessive paper use and likes being able to reference or search for information digitally (rather than managing physical flyers). The school has been able to reduce its copy paper and printing costs and operate more efficiently and sustainably.

More direct engagement, faster response times

For Principal Cahill-Clark, one of ParentSquare’s most valuable benefits is how seamlessly it connects families and staff. Parents can choose how to receive communications—via email, app, voice, or text—making it easy to stay informed in whatever format works best for them. She often uses text message reminders and finds them especially effective for reaching busy families.

Teachers also appreciate the immediate feedback loop. As soon as they begin using the platform, “they quickly recognize ParentSquare’s value,” Cahill-Clark says. “Being able to communicate with every family, no matter their native language, helps us foster deeper family engagement and bridge communication gaps we otherwise couldn’t—it’s really amazing to see.”

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Megan Cahill-Clark



Principal, Grove Park Elementary

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