

Challenge & Solution

Kings Canyon Unified School District's communications were decentralized, with each school using its own channels and no district-level insight into who was receiving messages. The district selected ParentSquare to unify communications, add two-way translation for its large ELL population, and gain real-time analytics on contactability, reaching 99-100% contactability rates across most schools.

Results

- Most schools at 99-100% contactability after working with ParentSquare on accurate contact data during implementation
- Instant two-way translation supports ELL families, reducing the need for professional translators and advancing equity goals
- Real-time dashboards give staff visibility into who is not being reached, enabling targeted follow-up with disengaged families

Reimagining School-Home communication for every family

Kings Canyon Unified School District, located in Reedley, CA, knew that unifying their parent communication was essential. In August 2019, the communications officer conducted a district-wide communications audit, meeting with every principal and parent group over several weeks to evaluate how they interacted with the district and how they wanted to receive district messages.

The audit confirmed what had been predicted: communications were decentralized, and messaging was often inconsistent. Ensuring communications equity was also difficult, as there was little or no insight into who received communications and no established process to measure messaging effectiveness.

The onset of the pandemic solidified the need for a unified communications platform when students had to transition to remote learning almost overnight. And when the district was

able to file for a waiver to return to an in-person/hybrid model in October 2020, it needed a solution to safely screen students for COVID-19 symptoms each day before school.

Multiple modes of communication

With every school site using its own channels to communicate, it was difficult for parents to navigate the various tools and platforms, and the district had no administrative oversight of communications.

Additionally, Kings Canyon USD lies in the heart of California's San Joaquin Valley—one of the country's largest agricultural hubs—and many parents work in the industry, with little to no access to a desktop computer during the day.

Language barriers

Kings Canyon USD has a large English Language Learners (ELL) community, with Spanish as the most common language spoken after English. The district already had an established manual process to consistently deliver messages, PDFs, and documents in English and Spanish.

However, administrators were looking for a more efficient way to translate documents and families found it cumbersome to sift through messages to find documents in their native language. A growing number of non English-speaking parents in the school community also showed a need to communicate in other languages to ensure all parents could engage.

Need for accuracy and & insights

Kings Canyon USD knew that they needed a way to ensure contact data accuracy for its families, and to determine the effectiveness of communications, because they lacked analytics to show who they were and were not reaching. Without knowing if emails or texts were failing or if parents were simply not responding to messages, the district could not create workable strategies to fix data or reach those parents in alternative ways.

Implementing a COVID-19 screening to return to campus

Like many states, California requires that all staff and students complete a daily health screening form if they are going on site. Kings Canyon USD needed an efficient health screening process that tracked COVID-19 exposures or confirmed cases prior to bringing its

students back to school after months of remote learning.

“The [Health Screening Form has been critical](#) in the fact that it was part of a platform we were already using, which made it so much easier to introduce.”

Renee Delport

Communications Officer

01 / 01 [Previous](#) [Next](#)

Connecting every family through one platform

Kings Canyon USD selected ParentSquare’s unified communications platform to re-imagine every aspect of its school-to-home communications. The district consolidated multiple modes of communication, increased the accuracy of contact data, and added both administrative oversight and security. And when it came time to return to in-person learning, Kings Canyon USD was prepared with an established COVID-19 health screening process for a safe return.

Here’s how they did it:

- With access via text, email, a web browser, and/or mobile apps, plus the ability to customize where and when they get notifications, all parents have the opportunity to easily contact anyone at their child’s school or district through a single platform.
- To reach its ELL populations, Kings Canyon USD utilizes the instant two-way translation feature. Every parent and teacher can send and receive messages in their preferred language. Messages automatically translate, opening up a greater dialogue between parents and school sites. This critical feature plays an enormous role in helping Kings Canyon USD reach its equity goals by ensuring that every parent has the chance to engage with teachers, staff, and their home school. Furthermore, the translation feature saves the district time by decreasing the need for professional translators.
- With real-time insights and analytics from ParentSquare’s powerful dashboards and contact confirmation processes, Kings Canyon USD can see who they are not reaching to determine if inaccurate contact information plays a role. With insight into incorrect contact details, administrative staff no longer has to chase down parents to provide updated contact information, saving time for everyone.

- Dashboard analytics help promote greater equity among the school community. Staff and teachers can reach out to parents who are not engaging with messages to find out why and develop a solution.
- Unlike some other platforms, ParentSquare provides extensive administrative oversight allowing for a record of all communications. Kings Canyon USD administrators can review any messages between teachers, parents, and students if needed. Not only is this capability an added layer of protection for every user, but it also allows administrators to review the positive activity schools are a part of, such as regularly posting information and engaging with their community.
- To assist in a safe return to campus, staff and students fill out the Health Screening Form, available in English and Spanish, every morning to evaluate themselves for COVID-19-related symptoms. The district customized the form to include specific screening questions to fulfill county and state-specific requirements on contact tracing, and schools can send parents reminders to fill out the form if needed. This form helps streamline an otherwise complicated screening process, saving administrators time while providing the district with current data and clean reporting to maintain compliance with COVID-19 protocol.

The Impact Across 22 Schools

Unified communications with administrative oversight

All district and school communications are accessible via the ParentSquare website or mobile application. With a unified communications platform, parents now go to one place for everything they need. What's more, staff has new administrative oversight into all communications.

Equitable communications for all

Kings Canyon USD now knows which families they are not reaching and can take action to establish a connection. The instant two-way translation feature ensures that ELL families can receive and send messages in their preferred language, encouraging greater engagement with their child's education.

Cleaner, more accurate data for 99-100% Contactability rates

During the implementation process, ParentSquare worked closely with Kings Canyon USD to capture accurate and up-to-date contact information for all families. The district reports that most of its schools are at an impressive 99-100% contactability rate and attributes much of its success to having a solid implementation plan with the ParentSquare team.

COVID-19 compliant health screening process

Along with other district-wide safety measures, the Health Screening Form is an important way that Kings Canyon USD keeps its community safe. Students and staff feel more comfortable returning to an in-person/hybrid learning scenario, knowing that those around them do not exhibit symptoms or have recorded exposure to COVID-19. With a strong plan in place for handling pandemic-related safety guidelines, Kings Canyon USD has zero reported cases of COVID-19 transmission since returning to in-person instruction.

“ParentSquare is [the lifeline](#) between our [district, schools and parents](#). It came at the perfect time. With all the challenges we are facing this year, ParentSquare has allowed us to stay connected with our parents and created an easy way for parents to communicate with our schools and teachers.”

Renee Delport
Communications Officer

01 / 01 [Previous](#) [Next](#)
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