

Challenge & Solution

Lenoir City Schools was juggling separate platforms for communications and its SIS that could not integrate despite months of escalating support requests. The district implemented ParentSquare with full SIS integration, automatic multilingual communication for its 38% Spanish-speaking family population, and Virtual Phone for teacher-parent calling.

Results

- 98% contactability rate, with nearly all parents and caregivers now reachable
- Seamless two-way translation supports Spanish-speaking families, eliminating manual translation
- Unified platform integrates SIS, Smart Sites, and Virtual Phone, replacing separate tools and saving money

Unifying School-Home communications to reach every family

When Lenoir City Schools found itself juggling a fragmented tech stack including one platform for school-home communications and another for its SIS, it became clear the systems were never going to work together seamlessly. After months of escalating support requests and stalled integrations, the district knew it needed something better: a single platform that could streamline communication, support multilingual families, and simplify outreach for every staff member. That search led them to ParentSquare.

“We went through tier after tier of technical support over several months with our previous communications solution, and the two platforms were just never able to fully integrate,” explains Chief Technology Officer Chris Smallen Ed.D.

“We met with ParentSquare’s team at a National CoSN conference and had some preliminary discussions with them,” says Smallen, who took the time to meet with the potential vendor due to the critical nature of the technology itself. “This was such a far-reaching platform for everyone from teachers to our administrators to our food nutrition, and attendance departments.”

Multilingual support drives equity and engagement

The platform would also be important for the 38% of students from Spanish-speaking families, who rely on translations of teacher communications, the district website, and other important materials. “While our student population may be able to speak English because they were born here, many times their families at home don’t speak English,” Smallen points out.

ParentSquare helps to bridge that gap by working in concert with Skyward, the district’s SIS, to identify families requiring translation and then automatically handling the task before sending those communications out. This is just one of many ParentSquare features that have boosted the district’s contactability rate to an impressive 98%.

“We’ve never been able to communicate directly with our Spanish-speaking families and have the messages be translated for them,” says Smallen. “Now, when someone responds in their native language, the messages come across to the teacher in English.”

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Chief Technology Officer

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Integrated tools save time and streamline communications

Lenoir City Schools is leveraging a wide range of ParentSquare capabilities including Smart Sites, Virtual Phone, and SIS-integrated messaging—all built into a single, unified platform. For example, when an administrator sends an emergency notification, that same message can be automatically published to the district website, extending its reach without requiring extra steps.

This automated process is far easier to manage than the district’s previous approach and saves the IT team time. “For years I’d receive a call at four o’clock in the morning that we were canceling school,” Smallen explains. “Then I would have to go to the website, load the information, share it across social media, and so on. It was a tedious process.”

Smallen really likes ParentSquare's speed of innovation and how they incorporate customer feedback into new improvements. "They're constantly innovating and listening, and probably more so than most companies that I deal with," he says.

ParentSquare Virtual Phone brings modern calling to every teacher

With ParentSquare Virtual Phone, districts don't need to seek out separate voice solutions for teachers—modern calling is already built into the platform. "I don't need to go out and find a great voiceover IP option for my teachers to use because I can do that through the Virtual Phone inside of ParentSquare," says Smallen. ParentSquare isn't just compatible with other tools, it helps districts simplify and consolidate their tech stack.

Using Virtual Phone, Lenoir City Schools' teachers can make a call directly from their laptops or mobile app, effectively eliminating the need for physical phones in every classroom. "We have a limited number of phones in our work rooms and office areas," says Smallen, "but we probably won't provide headsets or handsets going forward because now everyone can make all of those calls via ParentSquare Virtual Phone, which saves us money."

Why ParentSquare was the right Long-Term choice for Lenoir City

From the busy chief technology officer's perspective, Smallen always assesses a vendor's customer service offering and how it will kick in when a parent, teacher, or school leader needs support. When he assessed ParentSquare's customer service, he liked what he saw.

As he reflects on the situation his district was in just a few years ago, wondering if it would ever be able to integrate its communication system and SIS, Smallen is happy with his decision to adopt ParentSquare.

"I'd pick ParentSquare over other companies out there because of the ease of use," he says, "Not only was it easy for us to link up our existing systems with ParentSquare, but the parent resources and marketing resources they provided made the pivot very easy."

Today, Smallen visits the platform once every few weeks to view the new families that have enrolled in the school district and get them onboarded quickly. "I click a button and an email goes out to them with all of the ParentSquare information in it," he says. "That's huge."

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