

Challenge & Solution

Portage Township Schools relied on standard mail, social media, and email for parent communications, with no translation support for its 7,200 students speaking 20 different languages. The district implemented ParentSquare after seeing it demonstrated at a conference, consolidating all communications onto one platform with automatic translation and a retained history of every message.

Results

- All district parent communications now flow through one platform with a complete, searchable history of every interaction
- Automatic translation into 20 languages replaced a manual process that left many families without clear understanding of messages Music department and other groups use two-way messaging 2-3 times per week, increasing direct engagement with families

One platform for 20 languages and 7,200 students

With about 7,200 students speaking 20 different languages, Portage Township Schools in Portage, Ind., needs technology tools that support its diverse student population and families. Up until last year, the district was using standard mail for most of its parent communications, with some announcements distributed via social media (e.g., Twitter and Facebook) and email.

Language barriers also came into play, and prevented clear understanding of the district's messaging for some families. "We needed a system that could accurately translate the messages that we were sending out," Lesich explained, "to ensure that the messages were getting home and that parents understood those messages."

It had to be one way

Wanting a more efficient, unified system for parent communications, Portage Township Schools looked for a secure, online platform that would meet its needs. After seeing a demonstration of ParentSquare's safe and secure platform for all school-home communication at a Hoosier Educational Computer Coordinators (HECC) conference, the

district decided to start using it.

“We were tired of everyone communicating in different ways; it had to be one way,” Lesich said. The district started using ParentSquare just before the pandemic emerged and saw benefits of its decision pretty quickly. Not only could it consolidate its many different communication tools onto a single platform, but that platform also catered to the diverse number of languages spoken in Portage Township Schools’ region.

“Translation services were a huge draw for us,” Lesich said. “We also liked the additional features that ParentSquare offered, including text messaging and the opportunity to have two-way communications between teachers, administrators, and families.”

“As we move forward with technology, many times that history gets lost. With ParentSquare, we not only have [one application that meets all of our needs](#), but literally have a running script that we can refer to.”

Melissa Deavers-Lowiev

Director of Communications and Community Engagement

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A running script

Today, all of Portage Township Schools’ parent communications take place on the ParentSquare platform. For example, Melissa Deavers-Lowie, director of communications and community engagement, can send out text messages, create social media posts, or use other forms of communication to reach parents.

“Some people will take screenshots and then send them out, and in some cases we can see our ParentSquare posts on Facebook,” said Deavers-Lowie, who sees ParentSquare as a long-term solution to the district’s communication challenges. The high school’s music department, for instance, uses the platform for two-way communication with parents and sends out messages at least 2-3 times per week.

Deavers-Lowie especially likes how ParentSquare retains a history of all communications, which gives parents, teachers, and administrators a chance to review the past chats and notices before responding. When one parent sounded the alarm over closed registration for returning students, the district had proof of the many notices it had sent out about the

upcoming closure.

“As we move forward with technology, many times that history gets lost,” said Deavers-Lowie. “With ParentSquare, we not only have one application that meets all of our needs, but literally have a running script that we can refer to.”

Ready for a better way?

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