

## A Board-Readiness Guide for District Leaders In This Guide

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### What School Boards Are Asking Now

At large districts around the country, school board questions are converging around a common theme. *Can the district demonstrate control over communication and its outcomes, especially during moments of risk, complexity, or public scrutiny?*

Boards are examining school-home communication as a strategic district system — one that shapes operational clarity, community alignment, and institutional stability. They increasingly evaluate communication as:

- A risk-management lever for compliance, safety priorities, cybersecurity, and emerging technologies like AI
- An equity mechanism that supports multilingual families, newcomers, and special education
- An operational system tied to attendance, staffing changes, and tiered interventions

- A governance signal that reflects tool consolidation, policy adherence, and transparency

This kit is organized around seven communication questions that frequently surface in board discussions. Each section outlines what boards are asking and what board-ready communication looks like in practice.

### 1. Can we reliably reach every family? What boards are really asking

Does the district know which families it can and cannot reach, and is there a plan to close those gaps?

What boards expect to see

- A districtwide contactability rate across SMS, email, and voice
- Evidence that contact data aligns with the student information system
- A defined approach for reaching the last 5–10% of families

What board-ready looks like

One unified communications platform connected to the student information system:

- Automatic account creation for parents and guardians
- Ongoing contact verification instead of periodic cleanups
- Administrative dashboards that monitor reach throughout the year

With ParentSquare, most districts start at 30–60% contactability and reach over 90% within a few weeks of implementation. In addition to allowing families to verify and correct their own contact details, administrators have dashboard views to monitor overall contactability throughout the school year.

Osceola County School District, FL — ~80,000 students

Within five months of implementation, the district reached 98% family contactability:

- 76% of parents actively engaging on the platform
- 84% opted into email notifications
- 95% opted into text messaging
- 41% downloaded the district's branded app
- 32,000+ posts and 819,000 direct messages in the first three months alone
- Automatically translated for a diverse community representing 140 countries and 98+ languages, with ~25% of students enrolled in ESOL programs

*Sources: Citizen Portal AI; Osceola County School District Overview*

## 2. How fast can we communicate during a crisis?

What boards are really asking

Can the district deliver accurate information quickly to limit confusion or rumors?

What boards expect to see

- Benchmarks for time to send urgent messages
- Redundant delivery channels (SMS, voice, email, app)
- Pre-approved templates and escalation paths
- Defined authority for who can send which messages

What board-ready looks like

- Urgent messages integrated into the daily communication system (not a standalone tool)
- Clear authority for who can send which messages
- Post-incident review and documentation
- Visibility into delivery and response metrics

The most prepared districts avoid standalone alert systems and instead rely on the same platform families already recognize and trust. ParentSquare allows districts to send urgent messages through familiar channels while maintaining consistent permissions, templates, and documentation, supporting faster response times and clearer accountability.

Clarksville Montgomery County School System, TN — ~40,000 students

Clarksville Montgomery County School System (CMCSS) transitioned from using a standalone mass notification system to ParentSquare as its central communication platform to give families more control over how they receive information and to support two-way, translated communications across schools and the district, even in time-sensitive situations.

“Smart Alerts and Urgent Alerts have helped us get critical information out to families quickly and efficiently,” said Anthony Johnson, Chief Communications Officer. By consolidating communications into ParentSquare, which integrates with the district’s student information system, CMCSS can deliver emergency alerts, schedule updates, and routine messages from a single system, while preserving choice and accessibility for families.

*Sources: Clarksville Now, district announcement on ParentSquare adoption*

### 3. Are we communicating equitably with multilingual and newcomer families?

What boards are really asking

Can every family understand critical information, regardless of language or familiarity with district systems?

What boards expect to see

- Language preference data
- Translation coverage for routine and time-sensitive messages
- Onboarding support for new families

## What board-ready looks like

- Automatic translation based on family language preferences
- Multiple delivery channels including app, email, text, and voice
- No requirement for families to manage multiple accounts

Equity-focused districts measure reach and engagement by language group, not just overall totals. Language access is treated as a systems capability, not a manual accommodation. Instead of relying on staff to translate messages or manage separate workflows, language preferences are built directly into the communication infrastructure.

ParentSquare pulls each family's preferred language directly from the student information system and applies it across all district communications. Messages are translated automatically across channels in both directions, so multilingual and newcomer families can receive and respond to information without additional steps or intermediaries.

### Orange County Public Schools, FL — ~200,000 students

Orange County Public Schools serves one of the most linguistically diverse student populations in the country, with students representing 199 countries and speaking 176 different languages and dialects. To support equitable communication at this scale, the district launched ConnectOrange powered by ParentSquare, integrating family language preferences directly from its student information system.

This approach allows district and school communications—including alerts, newsletters, and two way messages—to be automatically delivered in families' preferred languages across email, text, and app notifications. By embedding language access into its communication infrastructure, OCPS reduces friction for multilingual and newcomer families while enabling district leaders to evaluate reach and engagement across language groups.

#### 4. How do we review, standardize, and approve how staff communicate with families?

What boards are really asking

Does leadership have visibility and control over how staff communicate with families, and is there consistency across schools?

What boards expect to see

- A defined list of approved communication tools
- A plan to retire redundant or unapproved platforms
- Clear guidance for teachers on when and how to communicate
- Visibility into what was sent, when, and by whom

What board-ready looks like

- One district-approved platform for school-home communication
- Role-based permissions and central oversight
- Two-way messaging that aligns with records retention and compliance expectations
- A documented communication record for transparency and follow-up

Districts are consolidating tools not only to reduce costs, but to improve consistency, oversight, and compliance. Sharing updates across multiple tools creates confusion for families and makes it more challenging for them to engage actively. ParentSquare streamlines communication for families and meets school board oversight needs. This unified platform allows for two-way messaging among teachers and staff within set guidelines and records all communications — what was shared, when, and by whom — ensuring transparency and facilitating follow-up without adding extra oversight for school leaders or staff.

Seminole County Public Schools, FL — ~63,000 students

Seminole County Public Schools consolidated calendars, messages, forms, RSVPs,

volunteer signups, updates and websites into ParentSquare, reducing confusion, improving coordination, and strengthening message consistency, all while maintaining flexibility for individual campuses.

“ParentSquare has completely transformed the way our school communicates with parents,” said coach Charlie Negron. “Having all calendars and communications in one accessible location has been a game-changer, and the automatic translation feature is especially valuable in our diverse community.” OCPS reduces friction for multilingual and newcomer families while enabling district leaders to evaluate reach and engagement across language groups.

*Source: ParentSquare press release*

5. Are staff supported or overwhelmed by communication expectations?  
What boards are really asking

Are required communication tools reducing friction for staff or adding to it?

What boards expect to see

- Clear guidance by role
- Defined training expectations
- Evidence of adoption and consistent use

What board-ready looks like

- One unified platform to learn and use
- Short, role-based training
- Reduced duplication of effort

Boards increasingly look for evidence that implementing a districtwide communication platform improves consistency and reach while supporting leaders through change management. Across large districts, the most effective rollouts prioritize simplification over

enforcement — consolidating tools, setting clear norms, and giving principals and district leaders the resources they need to help staff transition away from legacy or unapproved apps.

Large districts usually roll out ParentSquare in stages, starting small and expanding over time. Staff learn what they need by role, at a pace that feels manageable, while reducing the number of tools they're expected to use. This makes it easier for principals and district leaders to get everyone on the same page without turning communication into a compliance issue — one reason districts continue to renew at a 99% retention rate.

Fresno Unified School District, CA — ~74,000 students

Fresno Unified focused on reducing staff burden by consolidating family communication into a single, districtwide platform. According to Celeste Corona, Communications Program Manager, the district achieved 95-98% family contactability after implementing ParentSquare and reported an estimated 25% reduction in staff workload related to communication.

District staff attributed these gains to clearer expectations, fewer tools to manage, and streamlined workflows for classroom messaging, alerts, and translations. By standardizing how and where communication occurs, Fresno Unified improved consistency for families while giving educators back time to focus on instruction and student support.

6. Are attendance and absenteeism communication interventions impactful?  
What boards are really asking

Are we using communication to prevent absenteeism, or only reacting after students disengage?

What boards expect to see

- Automated attendance notifications and compliance letters
- Tiered outreach aligned to attendance levels

- Documentation of all outreach efforts (messages, meetings, home visits)

#### What board-ready looks like

- Timely, automated notifications
- Consistent attendance messaging across schools
- Clear records of outreach and intervention attempts

High-performing districts balance compliance and connection in attendance accountability. They document required outreach while using early, relationship-based communication to reduce chronic absence. ParentSquare Attendance Plus automates notifications and workflows, logs delivery and responses, and tracks engagement — creating a clear communication record while enabling earlier intervention.

Mansfield Independent School District, TX — ~35,000 students

Mansfield ISD shifted from a punitive attendance model to a proactive approach to recover lost ADA funding. Leaders estimated that improving attendance by just 1-2 percentage points could recoup \$2M+ annually.

By implementing ParentSquare Attendance Plus, assistant principals moved from tracking absences to engaging families earlier in the process.

Dr. Liz Russo, Director of Student Services noted that administrators are reporting a positive shift in “hearing back from families,” validating the district’s move toward a partnership-based approach to attendance rather than a solely compliance-based one.

*Source: Mansfield ISD*

7. Do we have measurable proof that communication is working?

What boards are really asking

Can leadership show outcomes instead of anecdotes?

What boards expect to see

- Evidence that districts can reach every family
- Engagement metrics such as read rates and responses
- Survey participation and sentiment trends
- Evidence of two-way communication

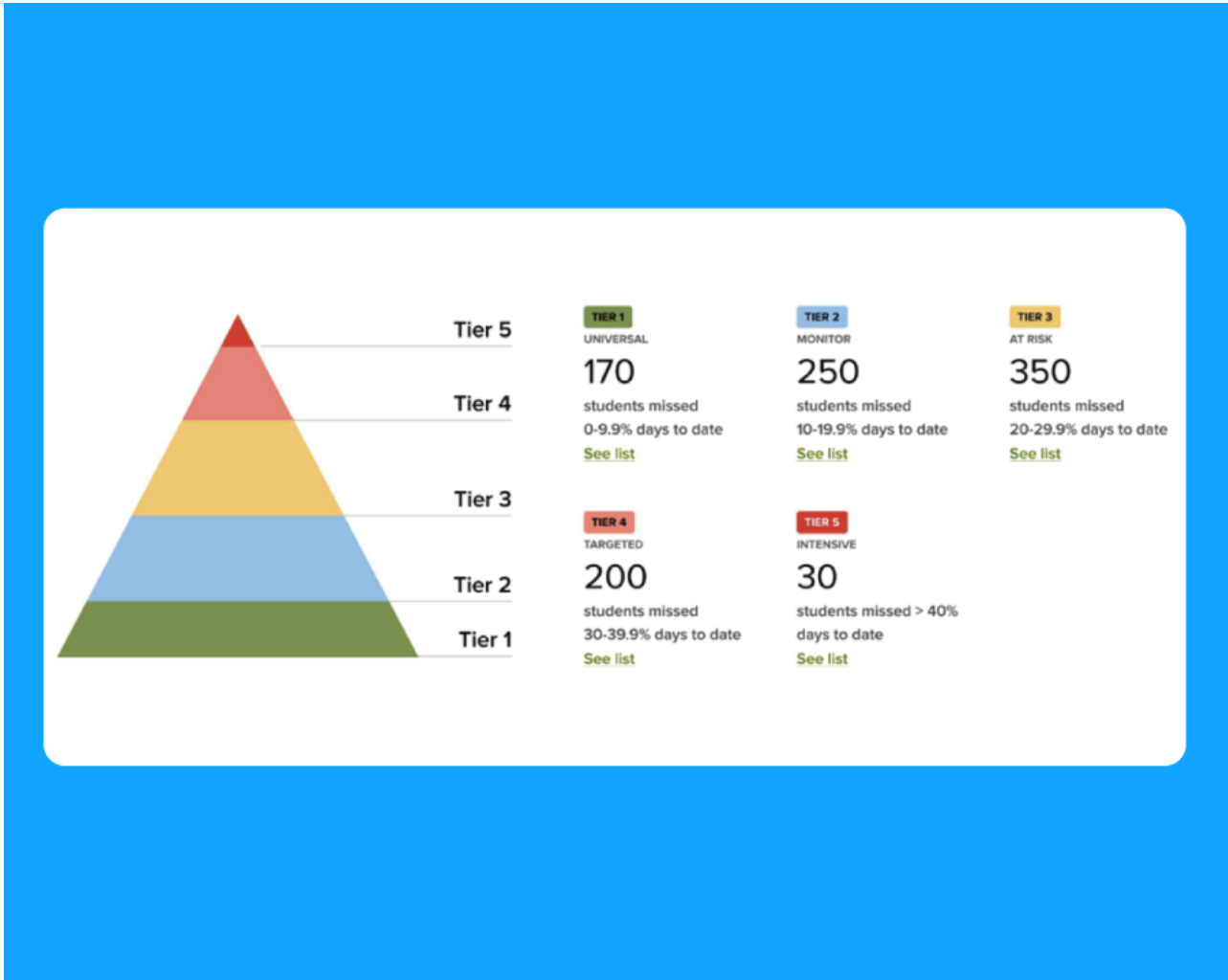
What board-ready looks like

- A dashboard showing how many families can be reached
- Engagement trends across schools and over time
- Communication patterns tied to priorities like attendance
- Clear metrics leaders can share with the board

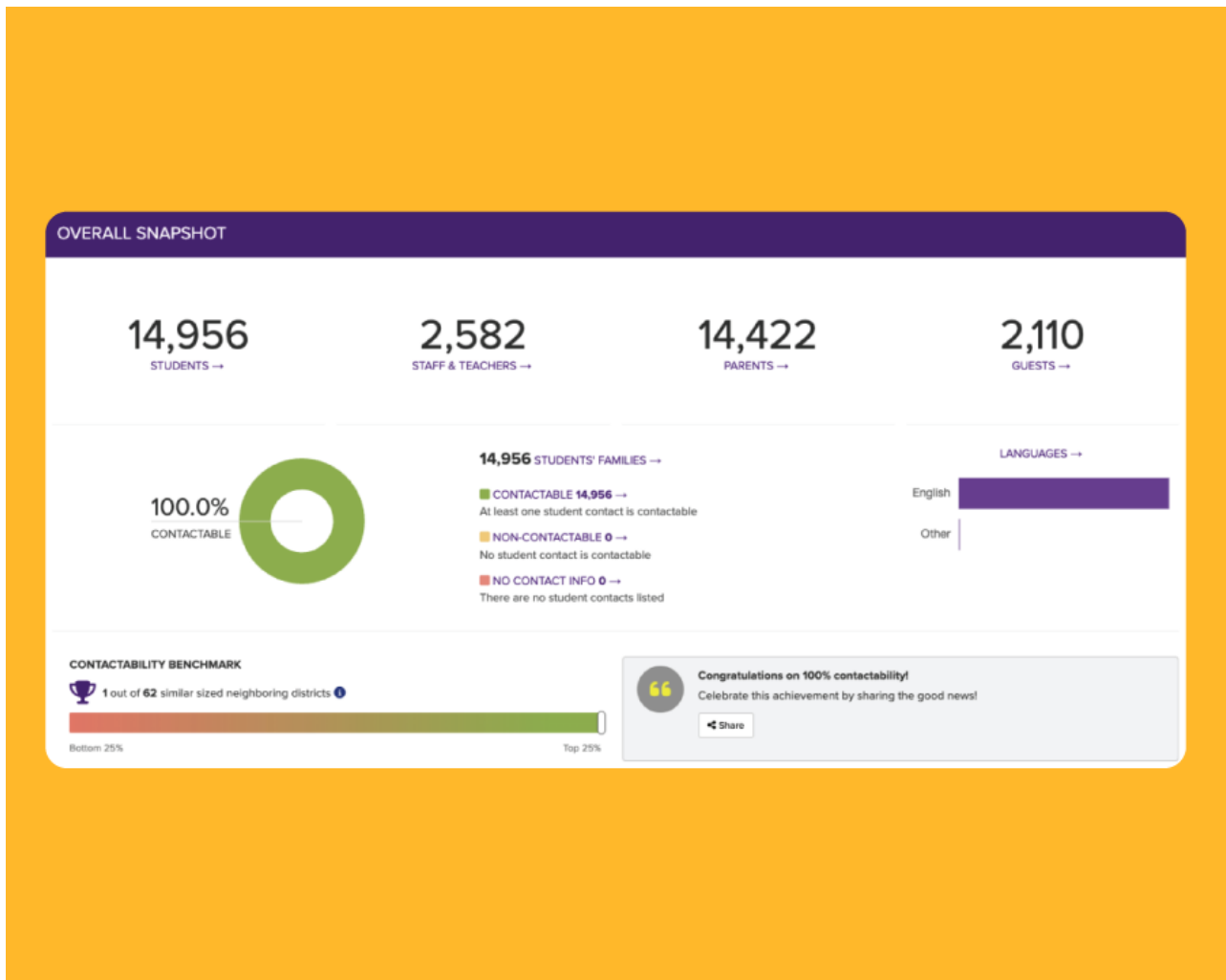
District leaders are increasingly asked to show impact, not just activity. ParentSquare Intelligence helps districts understand how communication supports district priorities and provides clear evidence to share with their boards. AI and data intelligence embedded throughout the platform improve communications, save staff time, and surface actionable insights.

ParentSquare Intelligence in action

The examples below show just a few ways districts can turn everyday communication activity into clear evidence of impact:



Provide visibility into chronic absenteeism and the impact of family engagement on attendance.



Benchmark your Contactability rate against trends and similar districts, and identify clear next steps to improve family reach.

### What Boards Reward

Boards aren't looking for perfection. They're looking for evidence of control, clarity of ownership, consistency across schools, and proof of reach and equity. Districts that can demonstrate these through their communication infrastructure are better positioned to navigate operational, political, and financial pressures.

At ParentSquare, we partner with districts to help leaders answer the questions that boards are asking about communication. By unifying school-home messaging, improving visibility and governance, and supporting equitable reach across every school and family group,



ParentSquare helps districts demonstrate control, consistency, and accountability.

22M+ families connected

15 years of school-home communication insights

Typical districts reach 99.4% of families

About ParentSquare

ParentSquare is the leading family engagement infrastructure helping K-12 districts nationwide reach every family with an award-winning, all-in-one communication platform. Reaching over 22 million students nationwide, ParentSquare helps districts consolidate disconnected tools and outdated communication systems with personalized messaging, websites, forms, payments, and more — in one easy-to-use platform. With powerful features for achieving 100% contactability, two-way translation into 190+ languages, and purpose-built AI enhancements, ParentSquare empowers districts to invite every family to be involved in their student’s education, no matter their home language or the device they use.

Recognized for growth and innovation by Inc. 5000, GSV 150, and more, ParentSquare was founded in 2011 in Santa Barbara, California. Learn more at [parentsquare.com](https://parentsquare.com).