



Fresno Unified
School District



Humanize Your District

Council of Great City Schools – Public Relations
Executives

7/15/2023

Learning Outcomes:

1. Learn why it is SO important to put faces and names to every one of your communications – and HOW to do it!
2. Gather strategies and ideas to put into action immediately to start humanizing your district
3. Improve your consistency without losing precious time
4. Grow your media relationships simply and quickly
5. How to develop advisory committees to deepen your understanding of your audiences



Fresno Unified's Current Reality & Results

- Incredibly high-need district
- Only 1 in 3 students meeting or exceeding in ELA, only 1 in 5 for math
- Historically negative narrative of underperforming district

And yet, a statistically significant and representative survey of our parents in June/July of 2022 showed:

- More than 8 in 10 parents and 3 in 4 staff members are satisfied with communication from Fresno Unified (more than 1 in 3 parents and 2 in 5 staff members are VERY satisfied!)
- About 3 out of 4 parents and staff view Fresno Unified's communications as TRUSTWORTHY, understandable, accurate, and timely



Why Should I “Humanize” My District?

- Engagement thrives on human relationships and relationships build from knowledge, familiarity, and trust
- Student, family, and employee engagement all contribute to improved outcomes
- Familiarity with leaders, teachers, and communications staff provides calm in a storm
- Without your voice, negativity will fill the void
- Media partners will be more likely to include a district perspective in stories
- Gives your students, families, staff, and community an opportunity to be ambassadors for your district



How Fresno Unified is “Humanizing” Our District

1. Daily Social Media Highlights

- Every single school and department gets a chance throughout the year to be highlighted
- You provide the ask, they provide the content
- Students, families, staff, and community get to see sites and people they know personally – increases engagement

Tips & Tricks:

- Keep all videos less than 60 seconds for better social media engagement
- Give examples to site/department leaders to get ideas
- Write your own captions and tie back to your district goals

Kratt Elementary School Highlight



[Link to video](#)

Share through ParentSquare!



How Fresno Unified is “Humanizing” Our District

2. Weekly Superintendent/Deputy Superintendent Messages

- Every 1-2 weeks with a message directly from Bob or Misty
- Allows audiences to see and hear the personalities of our leaders on a regular basis
- Allows us to highlight key messages that might not be seen or heard otherwise

Tips & Tricks:

- Include important information, especially if it’s tough information
- Include celebrations and recognitions
- Point back to other content to encourage further engagement

Share through ParentSquare!



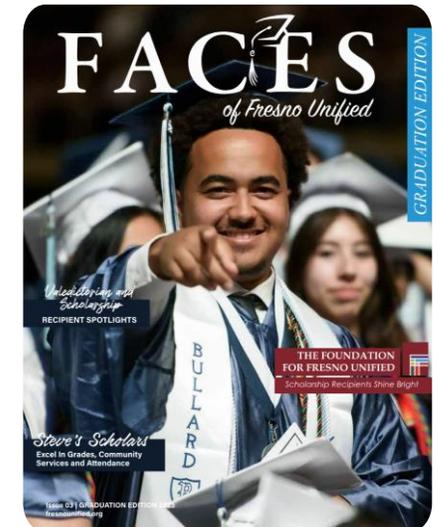
[Link to video](#)

How Fresno Unified is “Humanizing” Our District

Share through ParentsSquare!

Faces of Fresno Unified magazine

- Repurposing and streamlining several series of content
- Authentic, deep storytelling that brings to life the work of the district
- Multiple uses for evergreen content
- Advertising fund generation
- Moving digital vs. huge printing and mailing costs for district newspaper
- **Tips & Tricks:**
 - Ask staff to nominate others for features to increase engagement
 - Use the nominees and awardees from your “educator of the year” programs



How Fresno Unified is “Humanizing” Our District

4. Consistent Media Relations

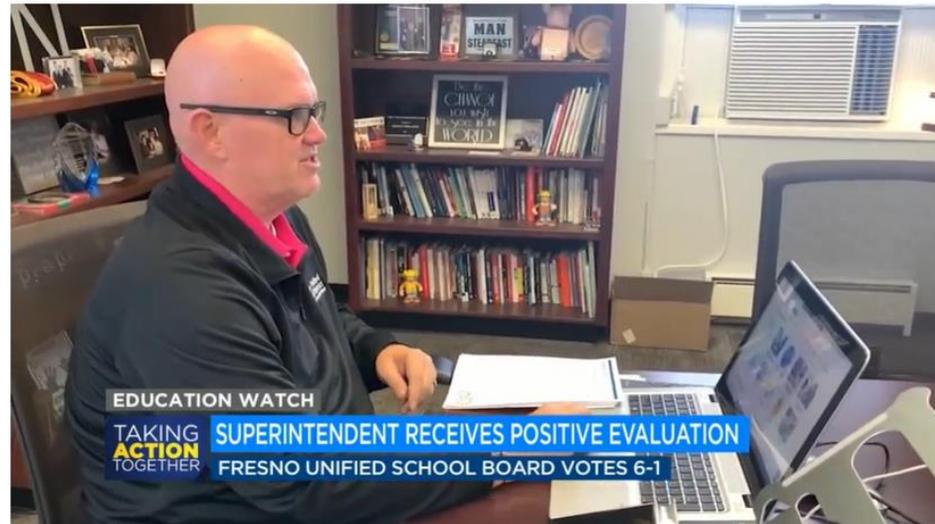
- Regularly pitching and providing positive stories
- Providing interviews as often as we possibly can
- Offering exclusives on tough subjects for balanced stories

Tips & Tricks:

- Prioritize and provide exclusives for media outlets where your audiences watch/listen/read the most
- Share their positive stories on your social media to “reward” with your followers

FUSD Superintendent receives positive job evaluation from school board

Friday, October 28, 2022



EMBED <> MORE VIDEOS ▶

Fresno Unified Superintendent Bob Nelson will stay on the job, running the massive district. The school board voted 6 to 1 to approve a positive job evaluation for Nelson this week



How Fresno Unified is “Humanizing” Our District

5. Audience Advisory Groups

- Developed 3 advisory groups:
 - Student
 - Parent
 - Principal
- Gather feedback on communications plans, hot topics, improving services
- Student advisory includes time with Superintendent, learning opportunities with staff, and a culminating group project

Tips & Tricks:

- Ensure the majority of your meetings are focused on their input to you – not the other way around
- Work with Principals and VPs to recruit students



[Link to video](#)

Use Groups in ParentSquare!

Things You Can Start NOW!

1. Bring a face and name to EVERY one of your communications – especially through ParentSquare!
2. Don't be afraid to be out there! Especially Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Cabinet Members, and Communications staff
3. Consistency is key – everything doesn't have to be elaborate
4. BE WITH YOUR AUDIENCES
5. Be authentically you and lead by example





Brainstorming Exercise

ParentSquare - Before & After

- Spring Climate and Culture Survey
 - More than DOUBLED parent/family participation year over year
- Summer Camps Enrollment
 - 30% increase in unique student enrollments
 - 135% increase in foster/homeless youth enrollments
 - 109% increase in students receiving specialized services enrollments
 - 94% increase in EL student enrollments
 - 23% increase in African American student enrollments
- Scholarship Applications
 - 114% increase in completed scholarship applications year over year



Questions?



ParentSquare

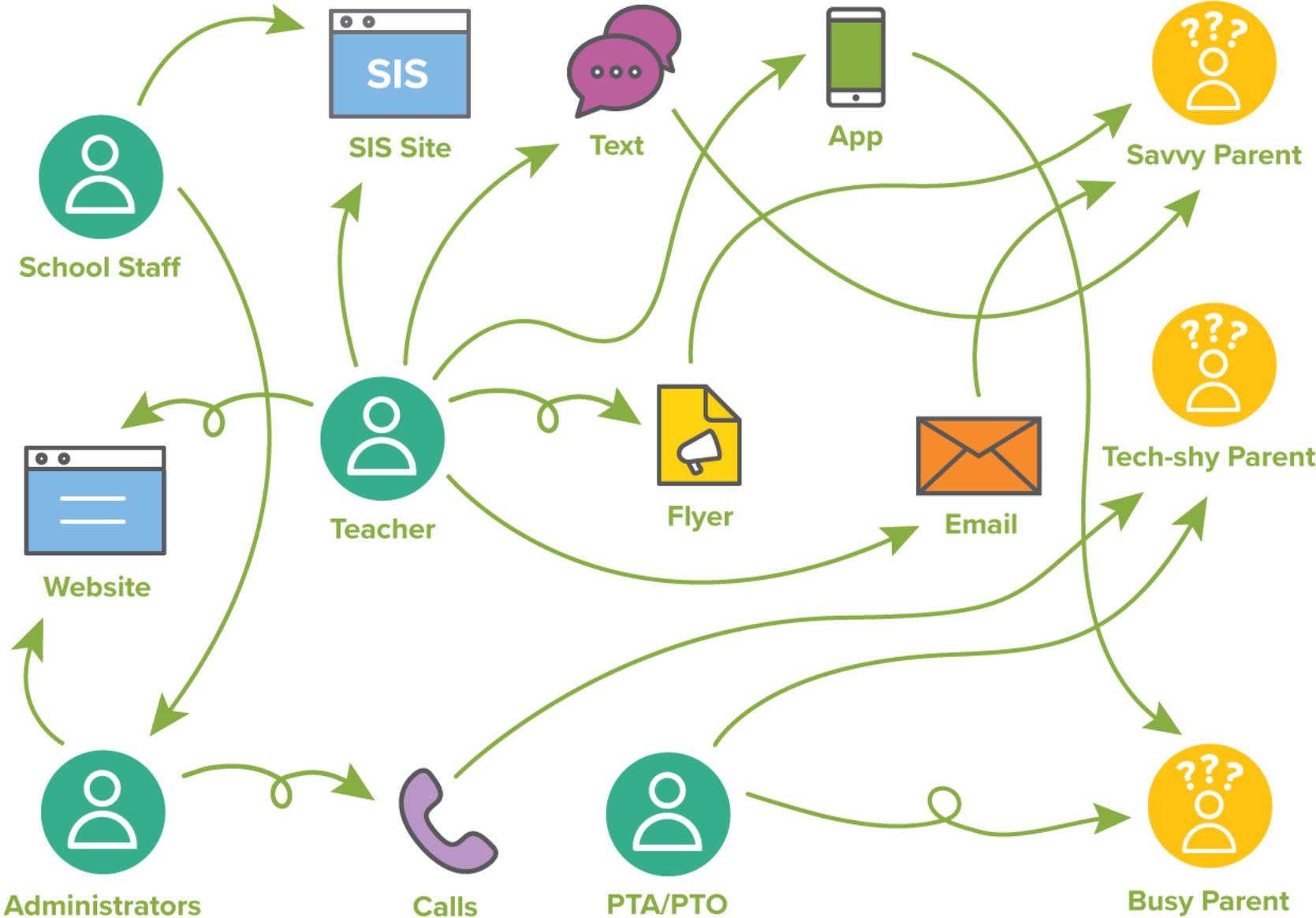
Impacting *student outcomes* by
moving districts from
Mass Communication to **Mass Engagement**

Equity, Engagement, Oversight





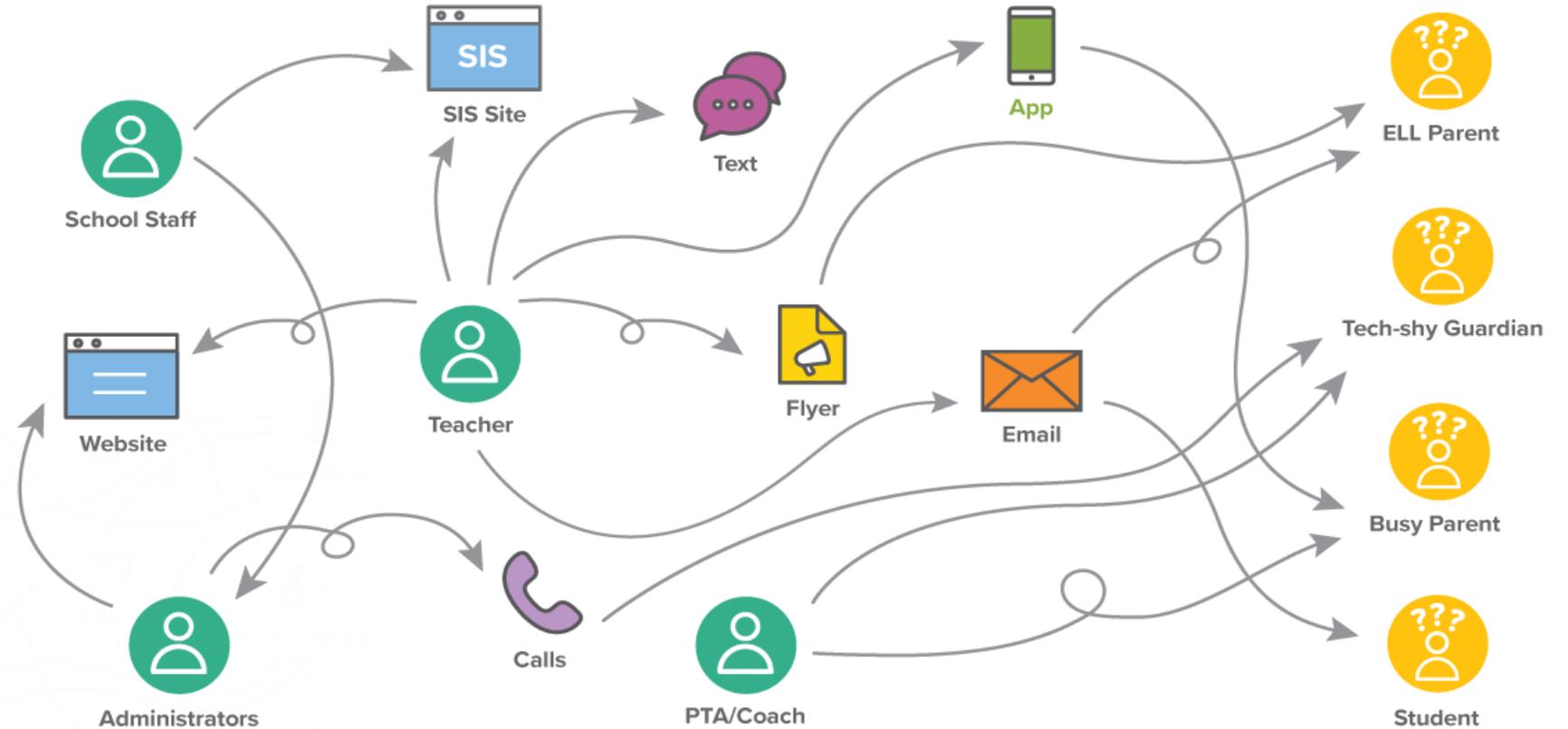
The Challenge





The Challenge

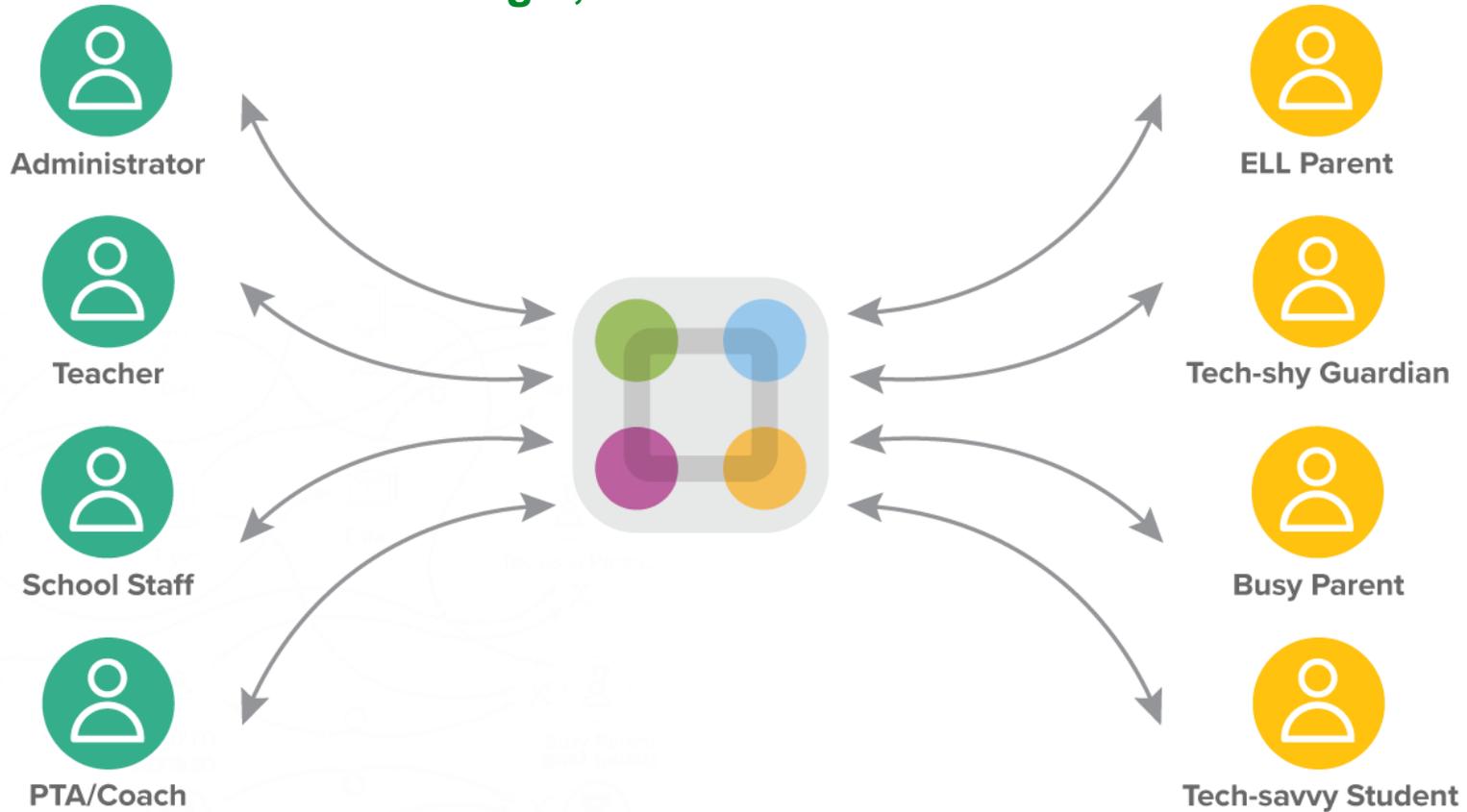
- Alerts & Notifications
- Classroom
- Language Translation
- Extracurriculars
- Internal
- Community
- Web





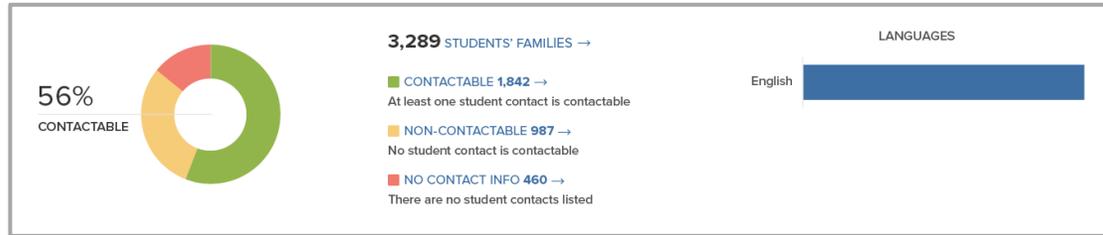
The Opportunity

**All Your school interactions in
Single, Secure Location**

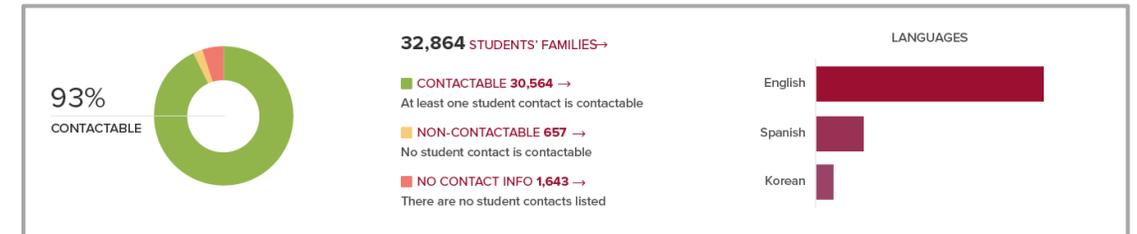
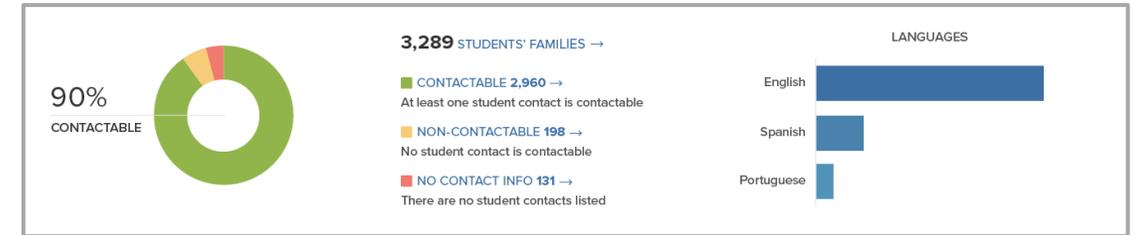


Measure & Improve Contactability

Initial Data Sync



One Year Improvement





Email, Text, Push Notifications, Voice Calls



Text



Email



Push
Notifications



Voice Calls



Social



Website



iOS App



Android App



How is ParentSquare Different?



Mass Notifications

Maximize engagement,
ensure consistency



Classroom Communications

Empower teachers,
increase reach



School Services

Embed forms and services
to increase response rates



Website CMS

Engage your community and
make your brand stand out

One Unified

Save time, gain oversight, streamline support, engage everyone.

Platform



Thank You!