



# Equity and accessibility



A common priority we've seen throughout the submissions is creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for every student and family. Districts have identified the most-needed equitable and accessible initiatives, including:

- offering multi-lingual translation for all district communications,
- hiring bilingual secretaries for buildings,
- expanding interpretation services to real-time, live events,
- providing closed-captions in target languages for videos,
- hosting bilingual workshops and events.

Beyond just removing the language barrier, a school district from Washington took an extra step to make sure that their most underserved families are not falling through the cracks. In this district, there are many families who are new to the area or even the country. They may not be native English speakers or struggle to access district communications, hence they are not aware of the resources available to them and their children.

This prompted the district to create the Family Support Partners (FSP) program, aimed to connect underserved and hard-to-reach families with school and community resources. At least one parent volunteer is available at each campus. They work to connect individually with staff-identified families, making phone calls, following up, and encouraging them to take advantage of resources like technology support and language assistance.

Through this proactive outreach, they formed long-lasting partnerships in supporting student learning and prepared them for a stronger 2022-23 school year.

# Social emotional learning and mental health



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The pandemic has presented a plethora of challenges that can be stressful, overwhelming, and cause strong emotions in adults and children alike. Districts see the broad impact that social isolation and family instability have on their communities, and have initiated programs and resources to support mental health and social emotional learning, including:

- partnering with mental health professionals to provide family workshops that cover high-interest topics like student motivation, low self-esteem, and child anxiety,
- providing individual student and family therapy as well as group counseling,
- training on Youth Mental Health First Aid that teaches parents the signs of mental illness and what options are available,
- opening a social emotional learning library and removing the stigma on mental illness,
- starting an art project that youths and their guardians collaborate on to strengthen family relationships, with the help of an art trainer and trauma-informed staff,
- facilitating Parent Cafés, a safe space to self-reflect, heal, and develop peer-to-peer relationships.

In addition to those wonderful ideas above, we want to highlight a particular program that stood out amongst the submissions. An all-girls public high school in DC created the CARE Initiative to provide wrap-around social emotional services to their community. The team is overseen by a nationally board-certified counselor, and includes a wellness specialist, a licensed clinical social worker, and a behavioral therapist, providing social emotional and mental health support to students and families through a trauma-informed lens.

Students were divided into Advisory Groups that meet daily to check in on their social emotional wellbeing and focus on a different theme each day. The school also holds Weekly Community Meetings, which students progressively took on more ownership of leading. Each meeting centered around a deep-dive topic (e.g. effects of social media on Black girls, bullying prevention, celebrating cultural diversity, etc.) and included an activity that brings the community together and fosters sisterhood.

Through restorative practice, partnerships, and varied counseling modalities, the CARE Initiative created a safe space for students, their families, and the community to heal and grow together.

# Family education programs



Engaging in a process of learning, unlearning, and relearning puts people on a path to continuous improvement. Districts are not only cultivating lifelong learning in their students, but also their families. We are happy to see many education programs dedicated to equipping families, and how they in turn strengthen family-district relationships, help students excel, and bring the community together as a whole.

## Parent University

- Partnering with the local State University, this Central California school district offers courses in English, Spanish, and Punjabi and had over 200 parents successfully complete their studies in digital literacy, financial literacy, conversational English, and/or social & emotional wellness. One parent, upon receiving his certificate, became emotional and said he had never completed school, that this was one of his proudest moments since moving to the US from Peru.
- Seven years and running, the Parent University at this Texas school district has set a record number of 298 graduates this year! Collaborating with multiple departments within Teaching and Learning, the district offered a variety of courses that are relationship-driven, culturally-responsive, and seek to build a strong network of stakeholders. Some example courses include:
  - ✓ **Academic:** core content areas, college & career preparation, whole student wellness, and other resources to support student learning.
  - ✓ **Skills for living:** cold ceramic, edible arrangements, Cricut printing, etc.
  - ✓ **Personal growth and development:** nutrition, financial planning, digital literacy, adult ESL/ GED, college-level classes, and fine arts.

## Jacket Parent Academy

This North Carolina school district invited families to attend monthly, equitable classes to understand particular academic elements to help combat learning loss. The program also provides opportunities to learn other skills, such as financial literacy, self-empowerment, or mental health awareness. Families are also encouraged to volunteer alongside other community members. The academy was designed to serve as a stress-free outlet by increasing parent involvement and encouraging parental importance, self-care and confidence while assisting their children academically.

# Partnerships with local organizations and businesses



A district with strong ties to its local organizations and businesses become more integrated into the community. Many submissions also mentioned the importance of proactively reaching and engaging local taxpayers not directly tied to the district, so they can make fully-informed voting decisions come election years.

We've really enjoyed reading about the community service and learning programs that students and families have participated in, partnering with local organizations, including:

- Food drives with the local food banks
- Garden-to-table community gardens where produce is donated to culinary arts programs and local pantries
- Health and wellness clinics supported by local healthcare providers
- A Cultural Fair that celebrates culinary treats from different cultures, provided by community business and families
- Workshops to build strong and harmonious family relationships with a local non-profit
- Marine conservancy and shoreline restoration with the local Conservancy
- A dedicated Business Partners Program that highlights partnership opportunities and offers professional learning and networking
- Therapy animal visits with the local shelter
- “Stuff the bus” initiative sponsored by local businesses and families
- “Thank you Thursdays” to recognize and celebrate different groups like first responders, bus drivers, community/business leaders, etc.

# A unified communication system



Building a community requires transparent, effective communication. How does a school or district cut through all the noise to deliver targeted messages that are actually read and host events that are well attended? How do you measure engagement and improve upon it?

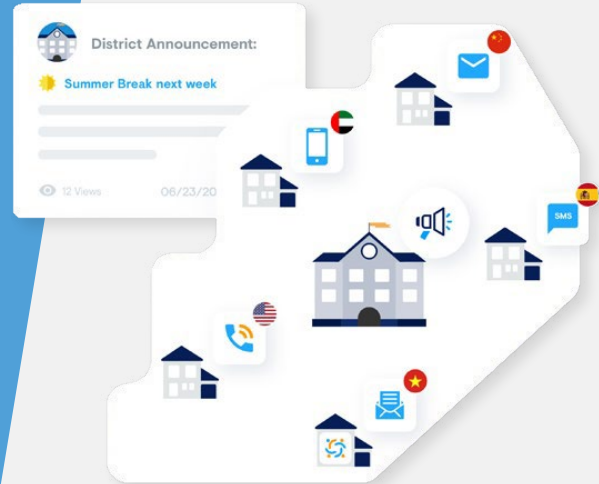
We echo many submissions on the need of understanding families' preferences and providing them with choices in terms of communication method and language. We are also elated to read about how schools and districts use ClassTag "as a place where communities are created through groups of parents that can connect with each other, their child's teacher, and the school administration all in one place."

**A New Jersey district** saw their once-welcomed superintendent communications were being saved for later, ignored, or even auto-deleted. That's why they implemented a three-pronged communication approach that separated urgent superintendent notifications from the daily, weekly, and monthly updates that are shared in a friendly, relaxed format. The plan included a weekly newsletter, supported by the website, district app, and social media platforms for more details. Since implementation, the district now know what links were clicked, what stories were read, and from what sources the families were getting their news. The data also showed that video performs better than static images, and that messages directly from a student's teacher or principal is read at a much higher rate than from the district.

**A diverse New York City community** needed a consistent communication platform that allows for instant translation into the families' preferred method of communication (email, text, calls, etc.). They turned to ClassTag Connect, an all-in-one community engagement platform for schools and districts. Since adopting ClassTag Connect school-wide, the school was able to achieve an 86.1% family connection rate in the first year. The high level of connectivity also led to higher engagement. The platform's built-in events function allowed the school to plan, send invitations and reminders, manage sign-ups, and execute both in-person and virtual events, which saw a 25% increase in attendance compared to pre-pandemic years. Families are happy to interact with the school without needing to download and learn a new app.

# About ClassTag

ClassTag is the community engagement platform for schools and districts that are looking to build a vibrant community with a vested interest in their school's success. ClassTag unites the community in their mission with consistent, accessible, and joyful communications that ignites love and pride for their schools.



ClassTag is already loved by millions of administrators, teachers and families across 25,000 schools, ensures proactive and engaging outreach, and makes it easy for the community to showcase their support.

**Ash Valley School District**

### 5th Annual Family Wellness Day

Don't miss our 5th Family Wellness Day!

**Grandparent** · 43m ago  
So great I can help out

**Parent** · 43m ago  
¡Gracias! Estoy muy agradecida por la escuela de mi hijo

**Student** · 08m ago  
It was so great to see the event live.

**Teacher** · 15m ago  
This is the kind of district I want to work in!

Synced with calendar

100% Reach · 500 · 50 Volunteers

Trusted by  
**25,000** schools

**↑42%** increase in  
community engagement

**70%** of teachers use  
ClassTag in their first year

Learn more about why ClassTag is loved by millions of teachers and families. **LET'S CONNECT!**

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