

The Challenge

In January of 2009 the Elk River Area School District in Minnesota received information that there would be severe weather conditions, which turned into 82 hours of sub-zero temperatures. The superintendent wanted to relay information to parents quickly about the bad weather, possible school closings or delays, and the cold weather clothing students would need. Notifying parents quickly and efficiently was very important to the district at this critical point in time.

The Solution

Elk River, still in implementation with ParentLink, needed to send out messages immediately. With limited training, and virtually no experience, Communications Manager Casey Mahon, was able to effectively send a message that day followed by several others that week. Each message was targeted to deliver critical, time-sensitive information, advising the parents to visit the district Web site for continual updates.

The Web traffic count was at 47,000 hits. After sending three messages within a week, Web traffic had jumped to over 118,000 hits.

“We have never seen that kind of Web site traffic.”

Casey Mahon
Manager of Communications



The Result

“After we made the phone call, we had the Web statistics page open as I continued to work. Every few minutes I would hit refresh and we saw it jumping by the hundreds each time,” said Mahon. Prior to sending the phone message, the Web traffic count was at 47,000 hits. After sending another three messages within a week, Mahon said their site traffic had jumped to over 118,000 hits. “We have never seen that kind of Web site traffic!” said Mahon. He believes there was a direct relationship

between the ParentLink messages and the hits on the Web site.

“The bottom line is that it’s not instantaneous, but it’s not far from it,” said Mahon. “We had 14,157 30-second calls go out in about 10 minutes; I mean, how can you beat that? That is cost efficient and time efficient.”

Their messages also received great feedback from parents in the community, totaling 25 positive responses. Several parents e-mailed the district with

comments like these:

"I just wanted to say thank you for starting the calling system for the school district. We received the messages clearly and promptly. It seems to be one more way to help with communication within our district. So many times we hear complaints and reports of things that

"Wow! What a great system for keeping parents informed on the urgencies that arise with the school district. It shows that the Elk River School District takes the ancient proverb, 'It takes a village to raise a child' seriously."

didn't work, so I just wanted to say thank you and we appreciated the calls."

"I thought the ParentLink calls were great! It's nice to know for sure, without standing by the TV if school is cancelled or not. Thanks for this great addition to the system!"

Due to the success of their parent outreach through the ParentLink system, the district is now in the process of building options to let them send messages simultaneously to staff as well as parents, thus helping increase positive communications within the district.

Parent of Kindergartener



Contact ParentLink for a FREE consultation
1-800-735-2930
www.parentlink.net

ParentLink is a complete two-way communication service that helps districts alert their students and parents when it matters most. Weather conditions are one of the many forces that may endanger a student's safety. Parents look to their school district to notify them with timely information that can help keep their students safe.

We will work with you to identify and plan communication strategies for even the

most unexpected emergencies. With these strategies in place and the use of our massive auto-dialer system, you can rest assured come tornado, lockdown, or bomb threat.

Throughout the school year, we will work with you to measure and assess your emergency strategies. We feel that this gives you more value and control over the software you use, making ParentLink not just an auto-dialer, but a solution.

Building communities that rely on accurate, immediate communication from the school district is only part of a larger picture. At ParentLink, we facilitate communities of customers who build on the successes of one another and share the challenges of the future. As a member of ParentLink you will gain access to a family of districts working together to accomplish a common goal—endowing a future in our children.