

The Challenge

In an emergency, terror can easily set in and drive a situation completely out of proportion. Fear nearly overtook one mother in the Rialto Unified School District in Southern California when she heard from a coworker that a man with a gun was shooting students at the school her child attended. She had already lost one child in a car accident and was left with only her 7-year-old that attends a local elementary school in the District.

The Solution

As this mother sat paralyzed at the news she had just heard, the sound of her cell phone ringing pulled her from the seemingly endless outcomes that ran through her mind. When she answered, a familiar voice instantly lulled her concerns. Syeda Jafri, Rialto USD's Communications Director informed her of the situation and said the police were in control, no one had been hurt, the school was in lockdown and her child was safe.

"I knew my son was okay. I've gotten calls from Syeda before for other things; I know her voice and **she has never lied to me."**

Parent of Student
Rialto USD



The Result

After a botched robbery near a freeway, the fugitive sought refuge at a local school after exiting near a school campus with the police hot in pursuit. The school promptly went into lockdown as soon as news of this encounter reached the administrators. When word came to Jafri, she promptly sent a message through ParentLink to the school's parents/guardians alerting them of the lockdown. "ParentLink is a thorough system and contacted all parents/legal guardians within ten minutes," said Jafri. "The panic ended and calm set in within

minutes. It was like clockwork."

The day after sending parents a message alerting them of the situation, Jafri received a phone call from one of the mothers at the school. "I could tell through the emotion overwhelming her speech that she had thought she had lost her child because of what her coworkers were saying," said Jafri.

"I knew my son was okay. I've gotten calls from Syeda before for other things; I know her voice and she has never lied to me," the parent testified to the power of the phone call. She related to Syeda the reassurance

it was for her to receive the call from the District.

“As I was listening to this parent,” Syeda recounted, “I realized ParentLink really works. She didn’t know about our District procedures and she didn’t know anything specific about what happened; but she knew her child was safe and that was what mattered.”

“That’s when this type of communication matters. When it’s a possible life or death situation, you want to know you hit every door, every teacher, and every parent.”

Syeda Jafri
Public Information Officer

Communication in a crisis can establish order or induce chaos. School districts need to quickly take control of such situations. Delivering information to all affected audiences before details get altered or blown out of proportion is critical to effective communication at Rialto Unified.

Since the District purchased ParentLink in 2008, Jafri is a firm advocate of ParentLink and the solutions it provides. Jafri also knows that when she uses ParentLink, she is sending more than messages; but comfort and reassurance also. Schools are tasked with the safety of their students, and parents want to know the school does not take such responsibility lightly.

“That’s when this type of communication matters,” said Jafri. “When it’s a possible life or death situation, you want to know you hit every door, every teacher, and every student and every parent.”



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Our Account Teams and our award-winning support staff will help you with everything from sending a message to total system administration. Our service team is ready to help you 24/7 to communicate more

effectively with parents, students, staff, and the community.

Through this communication ParentLink helps districts increased funding. For example, our attendance messaging strategy improves attendance, resulting in millions of dollars in increased funding. ParentLink also helps increase enrollment in the Free & Reduced Lunch Program, decrease past-due lunch balances, and more.

At ParentLink we take pride in the fact that, for over 20 years, we have been working with school districts across the nation to generate proven communication strategies to target pains their district may be going through.

Five of the ten largest school districts in the nation have chosen ParentLink to help them improve their communication and we are looking forward to working with you.