

## The Challenge

The Albuquerque School District's lunch program was in debt \$140,000. In addition to reducing the debt, Albuquerque needed to enroll students in the reduced or free lunch program. Before ParentLink, Albuquerque was limited in their ways to inform and communicate with Parents about the debt and lunch program.

## The Solution

Albuquerque developed a new lunch policy to reduce the district debt. Students beyond a threshold debt would receive a courtesy lunch, as opposed to the standard hot lunch. To notify the parents of the change in policy and reminders on past due accounts, the district turned to their ParentLink service as the way to perform this task. They began sending reminders one month before the change.

During the first week of calling the district's debt was reduced by \$28,000—that's \$5,000 a day! Since the program's inception, debt has been reduced to \$90,000—a reduction of \$50,000!

Mary Swift, Director of Food & Nutrition



## The Result

Mary Swift, Director of Food & Nutrition, compiled a database of students that would be affected. Using ParentLink's automated cafeteria calling, Mary promptly set up a calling schedule. By scheduling calls on Saturday mornings, Mary took advantage of a key opportunity to reach parents while at home. Once notifications began, and the new lunches were received, many of the students who had delayed in paying, paid, and enrollment in the reduced and free lunch program increased. "It's been very successful," says Swift.

Mary then started calling parents to remind them when their free or reduced lunch program needed renewing. "After each one of these messages goes out, the office handling meal benefits gets quite a few calls." Since using ParentLink to communicate the change in policy, Albuquerque has enrolled 2,000 students in the free or reduced lunch program. Enrolling or renewing students in the free or reduced lunch program is important as it increases Title 1 as well as E-Rate funding.

Success is also shown in the quantity of cold “cheese sandwich” lunches being served. The first day of the change, 500 of those lunches were served. By the end of the first week it was down to 200. It’s now down to between 50 and 60 a day.

Tracking chronic users of the courtesy lunch can also help enroll new students

program. After the success of generating \$50,000 dollars in revenue and 2,000 new enrollees to the free or reduced lunch program, Albuquerque plans to continue using ParentLink’s proven service for school-to-home communications.

The change in lunch program policy, combined with ParentLink and other district communication methods, has had a **dramatic impact on the Albuquerque School District’s cafeteria program.**

Mary Swift, Director of Food & Nutrition

into the free lunch program and can alert the school to other possible problems in the home.

The change in lunch program policy, combined with the ease of use of ParentLink and other district communication methods, has had a dramatic impact on the Albuquerque School District’s cafeteria



Contact ParentLink for a FREE consultation  
1-800-735-2930  
[www.parentlink.net](http://www.parentlink.net)

ParentLink is a complete two-way communication service that helps districts by improving attendance, increasing student achievement, and enhancing parent involvement.

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 out 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.