

Case Study

Dr. Rob Brown's Recipe for Academic Success: **Prioritizing Parent Communication**

The Lumpkin County School District in Georgia, led by Superintendent Dr. Rob Brown, significantly improved their family-teacher communication with SchoolStatus. With over 6,600 students, the district faced challenges managing and tracking communications across channels.

Lumpkin County needed a solution to streamline communication, overcome language barriers, and monitor conversation quality. Integrating student data with communication tools, SchoolStatus enabled proactive collaboration between schools and families. After implementing SchoolStatus, the district achieved 72,000+ family engagements and improved communication efficiency, transparency, and organization.



Challenge

Tools for streamlining attendance management & communication



District Size

6,600+ students



Products Used

SchoolStatus Connect



Finding the Clear Path Forward

When Superintendent Dr. Rob Brown joined Lumpkin County School District in 2016, he made parent communication a central component of the district's strategic plan. "When we developed our school system strategic plan, we wanted to include the necessary components that would help every student in our district have an avenue for success," says Superintendent Dr. Robert Brown. "Because we believed that Parent and Community Engagement was such a critical piece, it became one of the four pillars of our plan.



He tasked Jason Lemley with finding a new tool that gave leaders the ability to stay informed and develop better communication. But in the beginning, there were challenges to overcome. "There was no clear plan in place," says Director of Community Engagement, Jason Lemley. His North Georgia school district wasn't always as well-positioned for parent engagement as they are today.

Existing Solutions Didn't Fit All Their Needs

Some communication tools were already active throughout the district but were not providing the details Brown and Lemley wanted. "Of course, you also had teachers who weren't doing any of those things," says Lemley. "They weren't using any specific tool." Lemley will tell you that none of those solutions quite fit the bill. "There was no oversight."

With hundreds of conversations taking place each week between the school and home via teachers, principals, nurses, and more, Lumpkin County Schools needed organization and transparency.

“Parents send us the most important piece of their lives each day: their children,” says Superintendent Brown.

“We need parents to see our schools as their partner in, not the owner of, their child’s education. Our efforts to be proactive with purposeful communication is to develop that collaborative mentality.

We believe our students have the best chance for success when their parents and the school have a positive relationship. All relationships need effective, frequent communication to thrive.”

Finding the Right One-Stop Solution

With a vision in place, Lemley and his team began searching for a tool that would show where communication with parents wasn’t happening, where it was, and what was being said. “We needed a way to evaluate and measure engagement with parents,” shares Lemley. “We were going to do our due diligence for what we were looking for, which at the time was just two-way communication with some oversight.”

“What we found was that SchoolStatus would provide that solution with the oversight and the measurements that we were looking for.”

— Jason Lemly

Lumpkin County School District soon found that SchoolStatus Connect delivered even more than the district was originally looking for. “What was more impressive was that SchoolStatus [Connect] provided us with a method for informed conversation.”



Leveraging Data-Driven Conversations

SchoolStatus Connect integrates assessments, benchmarks, and more to put student data on the same screen as parent communication tools. Each communication whether a call, text, email, or video chat becomes a record in the digital student profile.

The combination of traditional student data and parent communication data creates a comprehensive view with a whole-child approach.

Boosting Compliance Through On-demand Data

K-12 educational institutions must follow laws, regulations, and internal policies to ensure the smooth running of activities. That means providing proof that parents have been informed on things like Special Education measures. "Our Special Ed Department, our Special Ed Director, and our Special Ed Coordinator, they love SchoolStatus [Connect]," shares Lemley. "They're able to go in and see the conversations. Record keeping and communication is such a big deal in special education."

Indeed, documentation is essential so parents know what to expect, know their rights, and also so information isn't misconstrued.



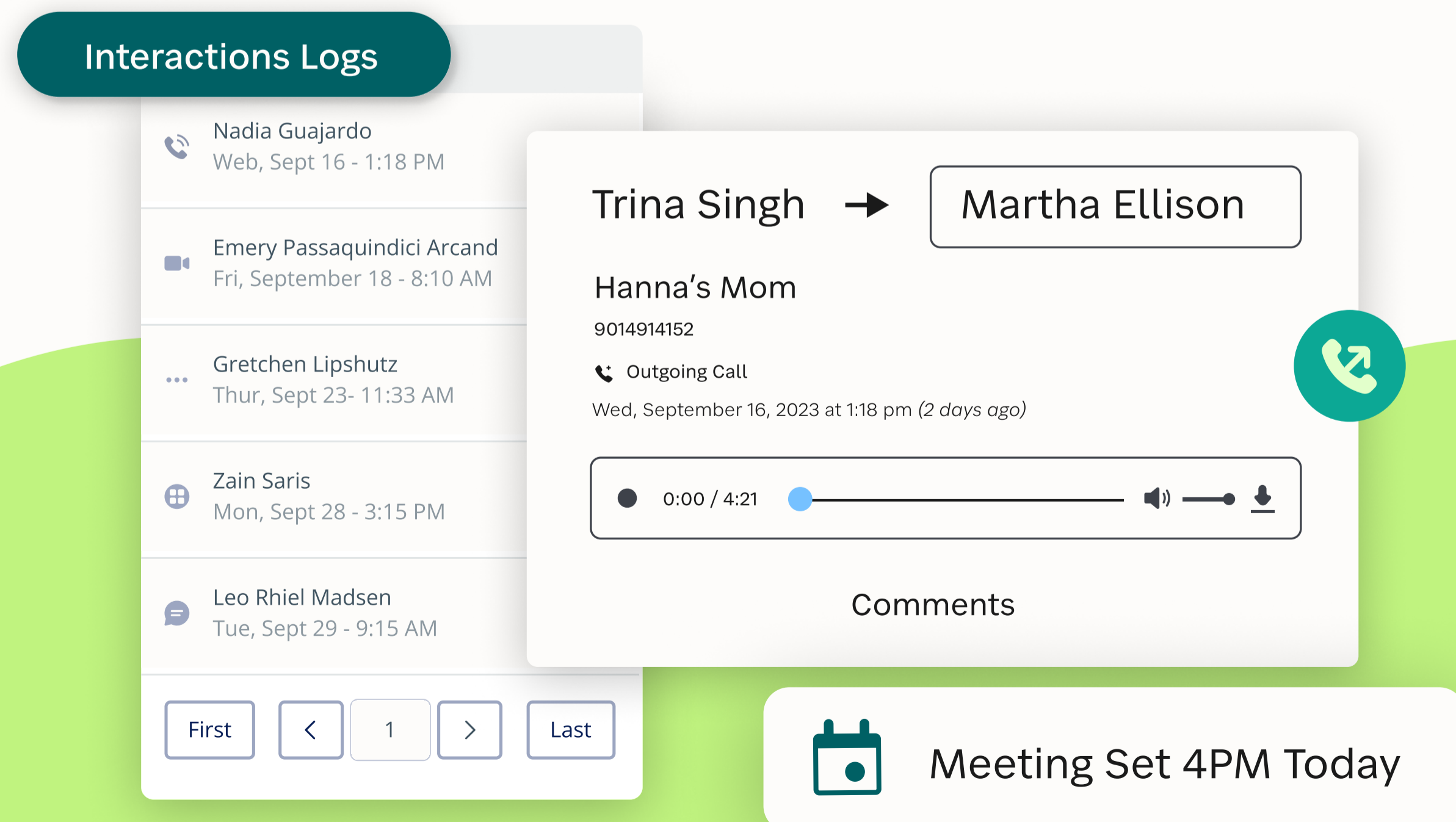
"There could be contentious conversations. And to be able to listen to those conversations is crucial."

Jason Lemley,
Director of Community Engagement

Contentious conversations occasionally happen district-wide. "Prior to SchoolStatus [Connect], it was his word against her word," says Assistant Principal Whitney McPherson. "If we had a parent that was upset about a phone call or a text message, it was hard to support your teacher because you didn't actually know what really happened."

McPherson describes an issue she had recently with a parent who was upset. "I pulled up SchoolStatus [Connect] and I hit play. Five minutes in, I hit pause, and I set up a meeting with the teacher." McPherson quickly found what she needed by listening to the original conversation instead of second-hand accounts. "They enabled us to deal with the issues directly."

Assistant Principal McPherson says it also adds a layer of protection for teachers for when a student fails a class, for example. "With SchoolStatus [Connect] we see a record of everything—every text that was sent, every phone call that was there, every voicemail that was left," she explains.



The screenshot displays the SchoolStatus Connect interface. On the left, a dark teal button labeled "Interactions Logs" is positioned above a list of interactions. The list includes entries for Nadia Guajardo (Web, Sept 16 - 1:18 PM), Emery Passaquindici Arcand (Fri, September 18 - 8:10 AM), Gretchen Lipshutz (Thur, Sept 23 - 11:33 AM), Zain Saris (Mon, Sept 28 - 3:15 PM), and Leo Rhiel Madsen (Tue, Sept 29 - 9:15 AM). Below the list are navigation buttons: "First", "<", "1", ">", and "Last".

In the center, a call log entry is shown for Trina Singh calling Martha Ellison. The call is identified as "Hanna's Mom" with the phone number 9014914152. It is an "Outgoing Call" that took place on Wednesday, September 16, 2023, at 1:18 pm (2 days ago). A progress bar shows the call duration as 0:00 / 4:21. Below the call log is a "Comments" section.

On the right side of the call log, there is a green circular icon with a white telephone handset and a speech bubble. At the bottom right, a white notification box with a calendar icon states "Meeting Set 4PM Today".

Finding Success

“We are now in year two of our relationship with SchoolStatus, and our staff would have my job if I even thought about changing! SchoolStatus [Connect] has provided us a tool to make communication easier, more transparent, and quantifiable,” says Superintendent Dr. Rob Brown.

“We have an expectation for our staff to communicate frequently and professionally with parents, and now we have a tool to monitor that expectation. The old adage that we should ‘inspect what we expect’ is now something we can do easily and without adding an extra burden on our staff to track and record each conversation or communication. **SchoolStatus [Connect] gives us an efficient and effective avenue for each employee to develop partnerships with parents.**”



About Lumpkin County Schools

Lumpkin County School District is a public school district in Lumpkin County, Georgia.

The district serves the communities of Auraria and Dahlonega. The Mission of Lumpkin County Schools is to educate and empower life-long learners. Their Vision is to prepare all students for successful and productive lives in an ever-changing world.

With help from SchoolStatus, they are meeting their goals:

- ◆ Having just one tool, all in one place to help them manage student data
- ◆ Accessing data & sharing data between administrators and teachers
- ◆ Continuing to improve transparency and communication with parents



**See how
SchoolStatus can
help your district
meet its goals, too!**

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