

## Case Study

# Connecting to People, Not Paper: How One District Dropped Chronic Absenteeism to 10%

About halfway between Dallas and Waco, Texas, you'll find Corsicana. Dr. Margie Boulware, the district's Executive Director of Special Programs, describes the city as a "relatively big city with a small town feel." No doubt, the small-town feel is in part due to the large number of children who grow up in Corsicana and stay in the city to build their own families.

A large portion of the employees at Corsicana ISD are former students.

Dr. Boulware and Assistant Superintendent of Facilities, Operations, and Student Services, Shade Boulware don't take this fact lightly. The students they educate today will be their colleagues tomorrow.

So, when they noticed an uptick in community violence and a downturn in assessment scores, they knew it was time to make a change. With the blessing of Corsicana's new Superintendent, Stephanie Howell, they led a charge to redefine attendance in the district.

Their bet was simple: better attendance would unlock every other district goal, from increasing academic progress to improving career readiness.

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**"All of the systems, procedures, and partnerships are irrelevant if kids aren't here."**

**Dr. Margie Boulware**, Executive Director of Special Programs

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To bolster their new approach to getting kids back to class, they adopted SchoolStatus Attend.



CORSICANA ISD

## Corsicana Independent School District



### District Size

8 schools; 6,000 students



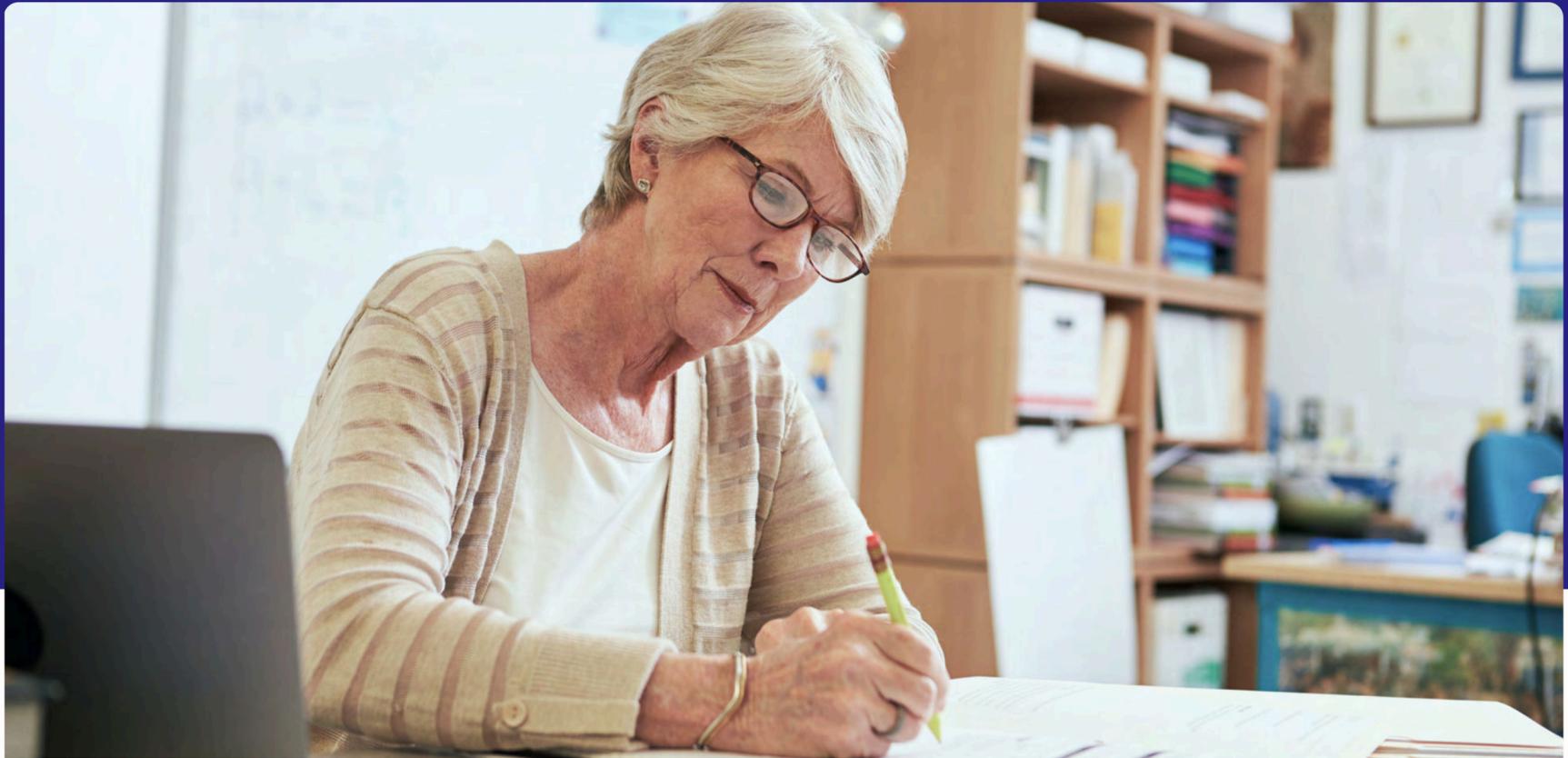
### Location

Texas



### Products Used

SchoolStatus Attend



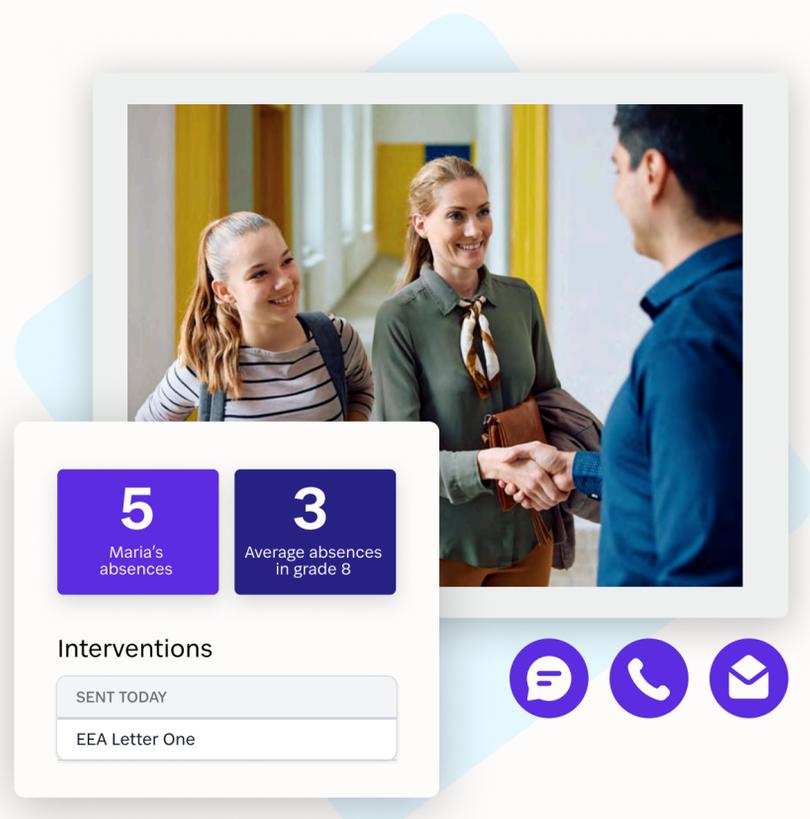
## From Paperwork to **Authentic Connections**

Before Corsicana started with SchoolStatus Attend in the 2024-25 school year, attendance interventions were handled by principals. Now, when a student qualifies for an intervention, it's generated and sent by SchoolStatus.

For Mr. Boulware, that change has made all the difference. "SchoolStatus ensures that communication—whether it be through calls or letters—is happening. When a person is responsible, that person inevitably gets busy, and then communication becomes hit or miss," he said.

**Another benefit:** principals now have more time to solve the real problems affecting attendance.

Dr. Boulware explained, "When we took away the clerical piece of attendance interventions, principals became more connected to students and families. They started to recognize the real-life barriers to attendance. Now, they're connected to people and not paper."



**5**  
Maria's absences

**3**  
Average absences in grade 8

Interventions

SENT TODAY

EEA Letter One

A real-life example of this was a principal recognizing that a student's housing status changed. The principal was able to offer the student more services, which changed their relationship with school and improved their attendance. These discoveries just weren't possible when principals spent hours printing and stuffing letters to meet compliance requirements.

When it comes to assessing the effectiveness of this new approach, Mr. Boulware jokes, "the proof is in the pudding."

**In just one year, Corsicana has seen significant improvement:**

- Chronic absenteeism is down from **19.7%** to **10.7%**
- High school attendance, historically the toughest group of students to improve, has increased from **92.3%** to **94.4%**
- Overall attendance across the district has improved from **93.7%** to **95.6%**

**95.6%**

Overall district attendance



**10.7%**

Chronic absenteeism



**94.4%**

High school attendance



**Shade Boulware,**  
Assistant  
Superintendent of  
Facilities, Operations,  
and Student Services

**“ We're forming relationships,  
we're helping people, we're  
making people want to come  
to us and our building for help.”**

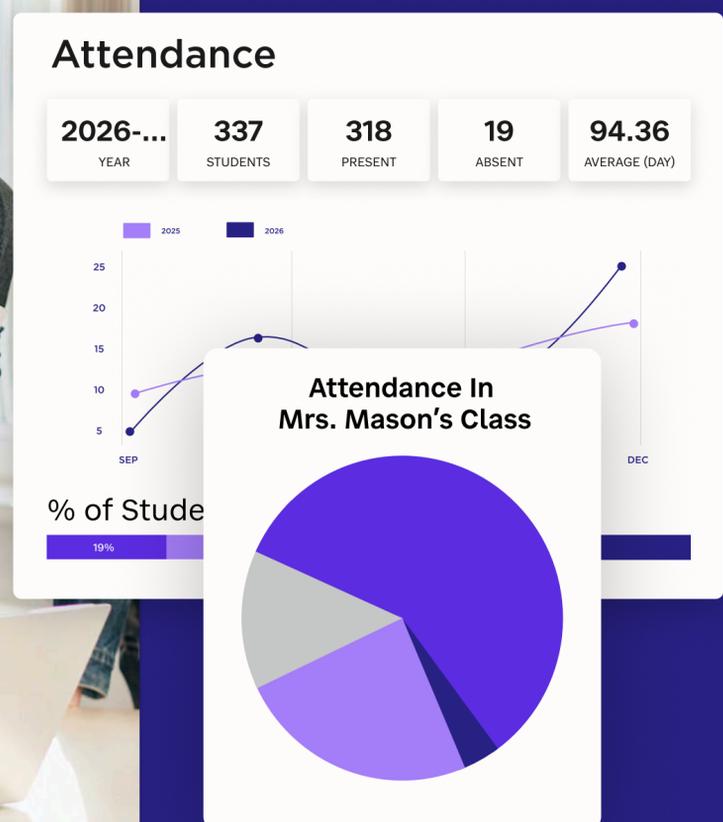
# Attendance as the Foundation for Student Success

When students are in school, they're on their way to lifetime success.

Dr. Boulware put it this way: "If we can get kids to be here, be invested in here, and into their pathways, by the time they graduate, they're set up to go out into the workforce."

Corsicana is uniquely set up to help. The district offers advanced placement classes, dual credit options, and unique career pathways that set students up for jobs in the region. But to get students on the track that's right for them, they have to show up first.

With attendance trending in the right direction and educators having conversations that matter with families and students, the Boulwares believe this work will extend beyond the district and have a real impact on generational poverty in the community.



## Better Family Engagement

An unexpected benefit of a more consistent approach to attendance interventions has been more family involvement.

Before adopting SchoolStatus Attend, the district pushed families to sign up for the parent portal, where they can access grades and attendance information. While those efforts were mostly effective, a significant number of families still weren't logging on.

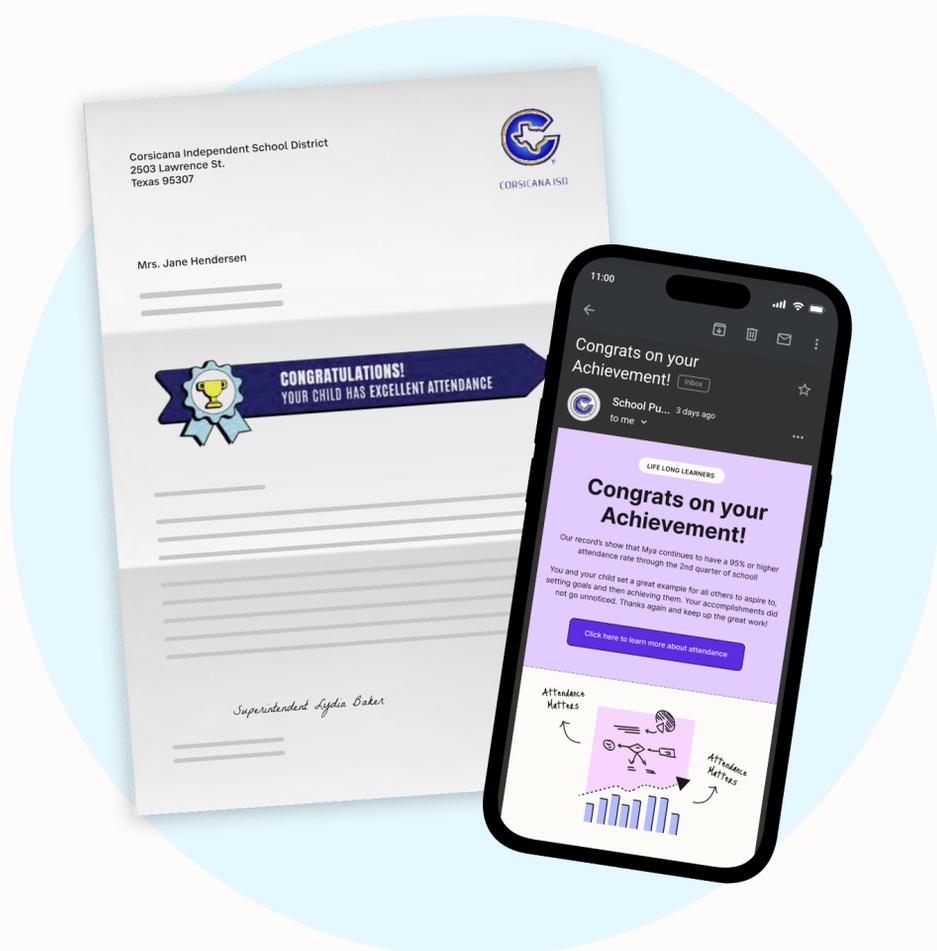
Families receiving attendance interventions in the mail changed that. Dr. Boulware noted, "Parents are bringing their letters in." And when they come in waving those letters, school staff are getting them access to the online portal where they can monitor their child's attendance in real-time.

Digital attendance interventions are also helping spur family engagement.

Dr. Boulware continued, "This year we added digital interventions, and that's had a big impact. Now our attendance interventions aren't only a snail mail letter. We have a lot of younger parents. They're getting that text message or email, which puts it at the front of their mind. It's right there on their phone."

The district has the best of both worlds. When they lack phone numbers or email addresses to reach parents digitally, letters are arriving through the mail and starting conversations. At the same time, they're reaching a new generation of families who are digital natives with messages that arrive where they're already spending their time.

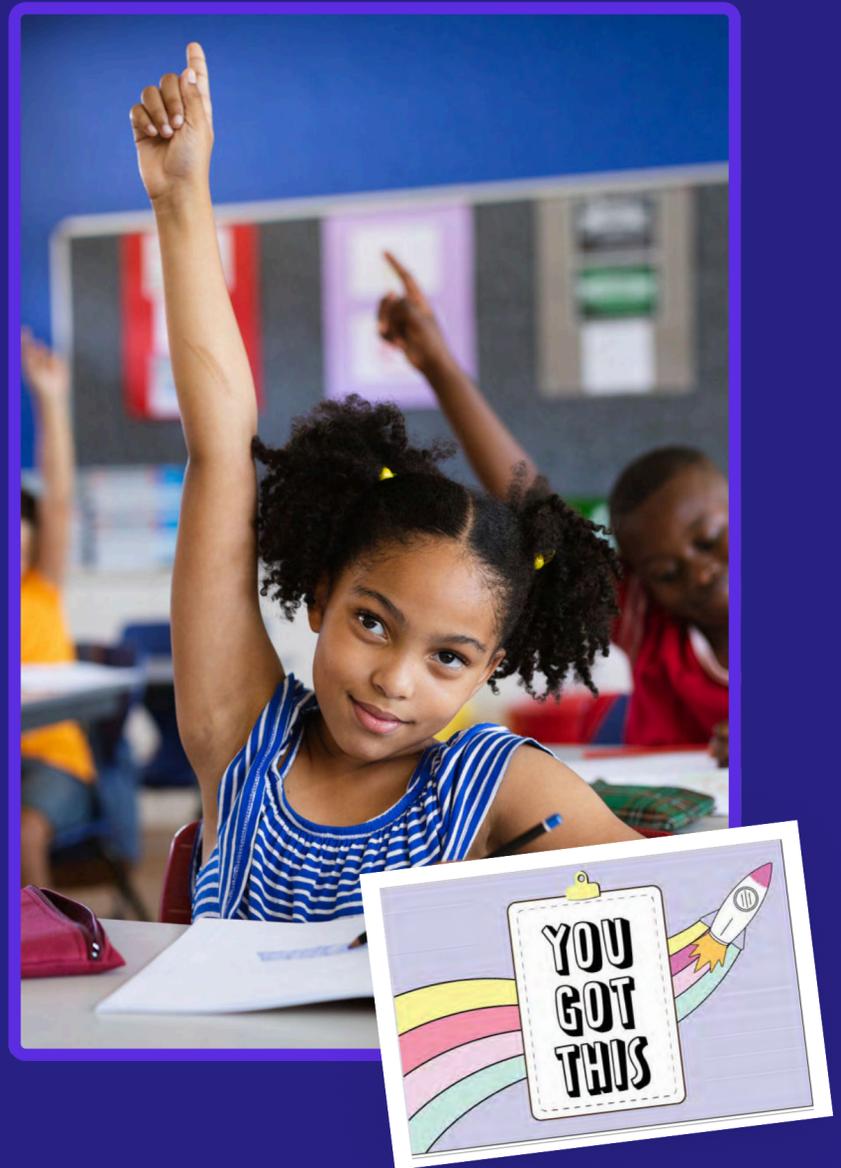
Getting in front of parents has paid dividends beyond improved attendance. Mr. Boulware notes, "Interactions with parents, mandated by SchoolStatus, have helped curb student behavior. The more involved the parent is, the more they can help with behavior issues."



## A Deep Investment in Corsicana, Texas

Getting kids back to school is important work for every educator in Corsicana. They see themselves and their community in the students they serve, making the work extremely personal.

Luckily, with systems like SchoolStatus Attend, educators willing to have real conversations with students, and growing family engagement, Corsicana is set to continue to trend in the right direction. No doubt, we'll see attendance numbers grow, and even more students find their pathways.



**Learn how SchoolStatus Attend can help you build an attendance strategy rooted in data and empathy.**

[Request a Demo Today](#)