

East Central Independent School District



How a fast-growing San Antonio district turned one-way notifications into two-way relationships, and turned attendance into opportunity.

At a Glance: 11,497 Students • 18 Schools • 13.7% English Learners • 21+ Home Languages

The Challenge

East Central Independent School District (ECISD) was over-relying on phone calls, emails, and one-way automated notifications. For families, it became white noise, easy to miss and easy to ignore. Parents weren't answering calls. Letters came back when contact information changed. At the same time, the district's multilingual population was growing, making communication even harder. The real problem wasn't getting a message out. It was giving families a practical way to respond.

A New Approach

ECISD adopted [TalkingPoints Foundations](#) to build a districtwide channel for two-way communication. Teachers and administrators could send messages in families' preferred languages and get responses back in real time.

In practice, that meant communication that was:

- Two-way, via simple text
- Translated into families' preferred languages
- Real-time
- Actionable

The goal was simple: reach families where they already are.

“A working parent may not be able to answer a phone call. But they can often look at a text message and respond much more quickly.”

— SHANE MCKAY, Assistant Superintendent, East Central Independent School District



Attendance improved not because the district sent more messages, but because families became more connected to what was happening with their children each day.



That shift showed up fastest during the school day. When a student was marked absent, staff could notify families in real time.

Those quick check-ins often led to:

- A parent calling their student
- A corrected attendance record
- And any potential problem caught before it became a pattern

“What do you mean he’s absent? I dropped him off at school today.”

The Power of 32,000 Days

The return on two-way communication, measured in learning and dollars.

Over two years:

- Districtwide attendance rose from **91.55% to 93.1%**
- Nearly **32,000 additional instructional days** for students
- An estimated **\$1.25 million** in annual operating revenue through Texas's attendance-based funding model
- On average, each student gained approximately **2.6 additional days** of instruction per year

Beyond the Numbers

The real shift wasn't the volume of messages. It was what those messages cut through: assumptions, replaced with direct answers from families about what was actually happening – they were getting to the root cause of absenteeism. That visibility let staff catch problems early instead of guessing.

Missed school adds up, and the longer a student is away, the harder it is to catch back up.

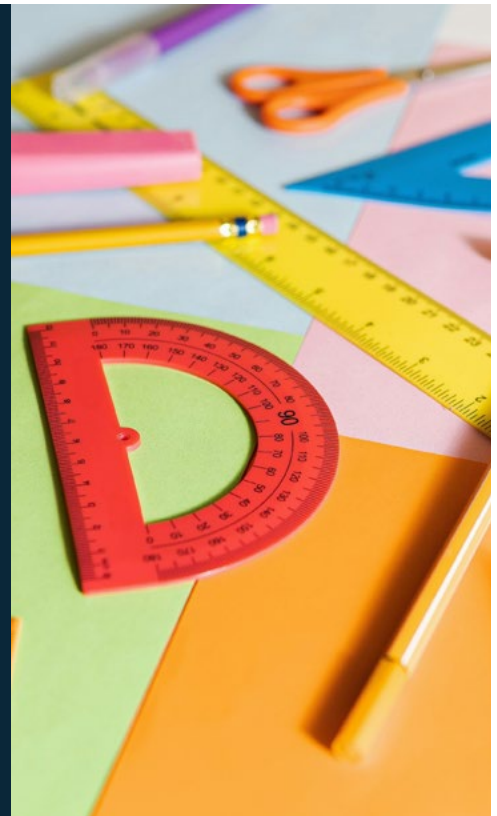
“I think about it like quicksand. The deeper the hole gets, the harder it becomes to get out.”

— SHANE MCKAY, Assistant Superintendent, East Central Independent School District

What's Next

For ECISD, attendance isn't just a school metric. It's a community investment strategy. Students who stay on track are more likely to graduate, pursue further education or employment, and reinvest in their community, building a stronger local economy along the way.

In the 2025-26 school year, ECISD began piloting TalkingPoints Attendance Improvement, layering more targeted, timely outreach onto the communication foundation already in place. Early signs from participating campuses are promising, and the district is continuing to track results as the pilot grows.



Read the full ECISD story [here](#).