



# Use Visualizations to Make Pro-Active Decisions for Students

## Galena Park ISD Case Study



**80%** of students in Galena Park ISD are economically disadvantaged and almost 1/3 are ELL. Galena Park's 3200 staff members work diligently to ensure that this generation of kids can become productive citizens and lifelong learners regardless of their starting circumstances.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Galena Park ISD is a diverse school district outside of Houston, Texas serving over twenty thousand students. Despite collecting large amounts of student data in multiple systems, Galena Park had been unable to combine their student data into a single view. Now the district integrates all their student data with SchoolStatus and uses the combined visualizations to make proactive decisions for their students.

Additionally Galena Park leverages the communication functionality within SchoolStatus to engage parents using calling, text, and e-mail—all without giving out the educator's personal contact information.

## THE PROBLEM

80% of students in Galena Park ISD are economically disadvantaged and almost a third are ELL, so Galena Park's 3,200 staff members work diligently to ensure that this generation of kids can grow to become productive citizens and lifelong learners regardless of starting circumstances.

Elizabeth Lalor, associate superintendent at Galena Park and a self-described "data nerd", knows how important data can be to achieving this vision: "If the right person has the right data at the right time, then a child's struggles can be a teachable moment rather than a series of lost opportunities."

Gathering the data wasn't the problem. The district had several systems—a SIS, an LMS, and others—each with their own set of student information. The time and effort involved in cross-referencing the information in these disparate systems usually meant that it didn't happen at all - and sometimes meant that student information which would have been helpful yesterday wasn't actionable today. "We had stuff in Skyward, our Student

Management System, and Eduphoria for testing and Renaissance learning, Teams for employee data, iStation and some others. But if you wanted to get a one-kid view you were going to lots of different places to pull it together.”

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Galena Park had tried multiple times to bring its data together. In fact, one Texas initiative involving five other districts was funded for that very goal. Unfortunately, even after a number of meetings involving Lalor and other Galena Park staff to frame requirements, this initiative didn’t produce an integrated view of Texas data for any of the districts involved.

## FINDING SCHOOLSTATUS

Lalor came across SchoolStatus at an education technology conference. She was immediately interested, and a little skeptical. SchoolStatus claimed it could integrate Galena Park’s data into a single view, but other solutions had claimed that in the past.

Over the next year, Lalor worked hand in hand with Darlene Lovingood, Galena Park’s technology director, to evaluate whether SchoolStatus would meet their requirements.

## RESULTS

Galena Park was the first school district to use SchoolStatus to integrate Texas student data sources. This process was challenging because of the new data sources, but the SchoolStatus team delivered on it’s promise to offer a combined, visualized view of all the district’s data.

### SINGLE VIEW OF ALL DATA

Getting a single view of student data has proved to be only the beginning. Lalor receives a daily data digest from SchoolStatus by e-mail and uses the information to highlight and address issues - absences, assessment trends, discipline - before they become problems.

“We have a complete student data picture, finally. It has everything in one place their testing data, their attendance, their behavior, their grades, all in one spot”.

Lalor can now see data trends affecting the entire district, but each of her principals and teachers now also has a scoped view of student data for his or her own students. Additionally, educators and administrators at



all levels can now access an integrated view of individual students using the SchoolStatus Student Card - a complete data picture for each student.

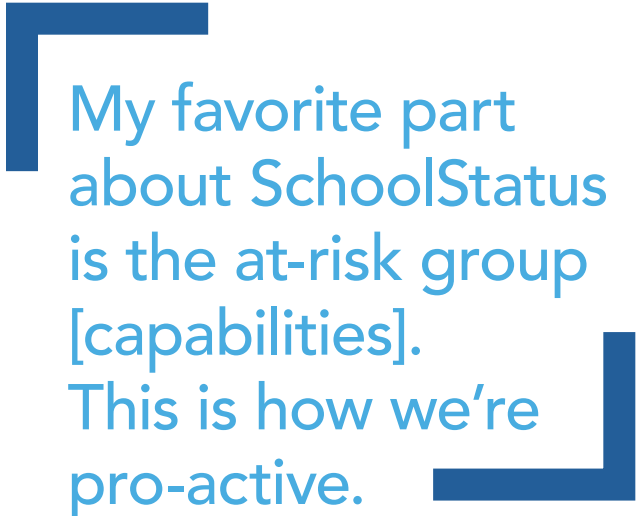
### **PRO-ACTIVE VS RE-ACTIVE**

One particular area where Galena Park has put integrated student data to effective use is in transition planning. For example, separating students who have struggled with discipline into different classes or shuffling the schedule of students who are frequently tardy can help foster a better learning environment for everyone.

“My favorite part [of SchoolStatus] is the At-Risk Group [capabilities]. This is how we’re pro-active. We got to choose what was important so, for us, we set that if:

- Kids have five or more infractions;
- Their average daily attendance (ADA) is less than 95%;
- They failed their last STAAR Test (the Texas Assessment);
- They have a D or F on their last report card.

Each one of those is one point, so I can pull a list of all of the kids who have three points or four points, and monitor them. Especially during the transition years, we can roll this over to the school they’re about to go to and say, ‘OK, here are your kids that are the most at-risk.’ Put them with the best teachers, don’t put them with the new teachers because we don’t know. If they have bad attendance, don’t put their first class to be reading or math, put it as an elective, try to get them there. We use this for taking action with our kids.



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### **CENTRAL OFFICE HELPS CAMPUSES SUPPORT THEIR KIDS**

Our homeless liaison at our district can monitor their [selected] group. We have threat assessment monitors monitoring their groups of kids, as well as the kids that are high discipline numbers. From my report I can send a communication to a campus and say, ‘What are you doing for these kids and do they have a behavior intervention plan?’ Most of the time they do but every once in awhile it’s time to get them on a plan or a contract. This is how a central office person can use this to make sure all of our kids are being monitored.

## AN UNEXPECTED BENEFIT

Lalor brought SchoolStatus into Galena Park to integrate the district's view of data - and it's done just that. However, in the process, Galena Park has also begun to use SchoolStatus for parent communication.

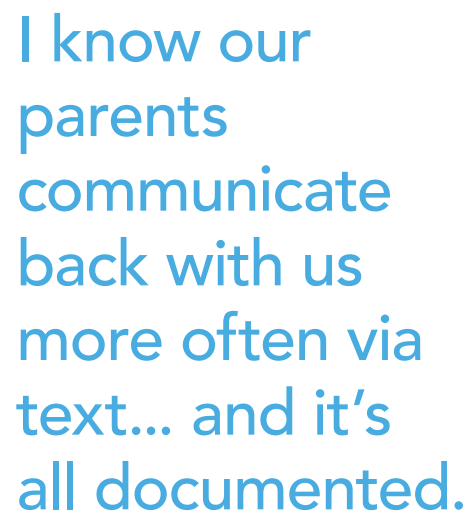
"Parent Engagement is probably the most impressive part of this. It used to be that they [teachers] just did the phone call through the system. But now, as of two weeks ago, we've had 234,762 texts, to and from parents. And teachers can use their own cell phones, but it masks their number so they don't have the teachers personal text or our personal text. And it transcribes it and does a translation...we're 79.9% Hispanic, one third English language learners so it will translate into multiple languages and once parents know this is how I can get in touch with a teacher, they're texting back on that and it's all documented.

Parents don't like phone calls [for our district] and frequently don't answer the phone. Some of them have jobs and they don't want to take the phone call but they'll say, please text. I think our parents feel a whole lot more comfortable. I know our parents communicate back with us more often via text. And once they have that number, they can always get back in touch with that teacher.

Because teachers use that engagement daily, they are in front of the data more often because it's all housed in one place. A text from a parent about a student forgetting their backpack can prompt the teacher to respond meaningfully about anything that is related to grades, attendance, or discipline. Lalor emphasizes, "When you get on SchoolStatus you get all the information at the same time and you can give a bigger and broader picture of the student and where they are."

Before SchoolStatus, Galena Park communicated using whatever means was available—e-mail, phone, texting—but didn't have any way to manage or record the process or ensure that communication was consistent or even that it was happening at all. Additionally, teachers and administrators often ended up giving out personal contact information in an effort to connect and then regretting it later when texts and calls started to come in over the weekend.

Since SchoolStatus allows Galena Park to record all communication, it enables Lalor and other administrators to manage both engagement frequency and quality. Records of text conversations, e-mails, and even automatically transcribed call recordings all add to a student's educational record and fill in the details of a child's struggles and achievements.



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This can make a vital difference. In one story, Lalor tells of a boy who kept walking out of his tutorial sessions: “The principal at North Shore Middle School stands outside at dismissal time. He sees Danny walking off and he knows he talked to the boy’s Mom yesterday and that Danny is supposed to be going to tutorial so he just texts the boy’s Mom on the School Status app to let her know what was going on. After his Mom got that message, she immediately contacted the boy and he was walking back into his tutorials a few moments later. That’s just one example, but with SchoolStatus, our communication has increased and become more effective”

Educators at Galena Park use SchoolStatus to communicate frequently. Since SchoolStatus combines communication and student data into a single application, this has the added benefit of increasing the frequency with which the district’s educators study student data. According to Lalor: “having a student’s data and parent communication on a single screen means that we’re seeing issues sooner, and then can address those issues immediately.”

## ABOUT GALENA PARK ISD

Galena Park ISD consists of two high schools, five middle schools, fifteen elementary schools, two alternative programs, and one early college high school staffed by approximately 2,000 teachers, administrators, classified and auxiliary personnel making us one of the largest employers in east Harris County. The District includes 34 square miles outside of Loop 610 East and has a student enrollment of approximately 22,522. The student population is 15.6% African-American, 4.9% White, 0.7% Asian, 77.9% Hispanic, 0.4% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.3%, and 0.6% Two or More Races with an economically disadvantaged status of 80.3%. The district serves 32.5% English Language Learner students, 8.5% of students served through special education. 62.7% of GPISD students are identified as at-risk. The average daily attendance rate for students in 2017-2018 was 95.7%.

## ABOUT SCHOOLSTATUS

SchoolStatus is the only data analytics platform turning student insights into parent conversations. Through powerful reporting tools, automatic integrations, and customizable data points, educators easily identify students most in need of engagement. Then using the communication tools built right into the platform, instantly connect with guardians through calls, texts, or e-mails to reach families where they are. We focus on the data, so educators can focus on education. Contact us at [schoolstatus.com](http://schoolstatus.com), like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @schoolstatusapp.

Learn more about how to make your data work for you  
Turn your [student data](#) into [parent conversations](#).



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