



## HOW 3 LOW-INCOME SCHOOL DISTRICTS EFFECTIVELY USE PEACHJAR TO ENGAGE WITH PARENTS



## Executive Summary

Contrary to what school districts have long assumed, parents in districts with low median household incomes (MHHI) and a high percentage of families on free and reduced meal plans actually do have access to the internet, and improved parent and student engagement is seen when digital communication tools are implemented in the district. In this report, you will learn how Peachjar helps 3 school districts stay better connected with their parents and students by providing them with access to enrichment resources, but also by enabling them to view all school communications digitally - not just what makes it home in their child's backpack via paper flyer. The result is that school districts feel more confident in their ability to successfully communicate with parents, and parents feel better informed by their child's school.

## Background/Problem

Use of technology is a way of life for households across the nation, but the assumption has long been that low-income households do not have access to the internet. While it's true that as many as 1 in 4 households do not have access to high-speed internet in their homes<sup>1</sup>, only 13% of parents in the US do not own a smartphone<sup>2</sup> with the ability to go online. By not implementing new technologies based on outdated assumptions, a school district does the opposite of what is intended, and further expands the digital divide for parents and students in their community.

## Solution

One such school-to-home communication technology that districts can use to improve parent and student engagement is called Peachjar. Peachjar enables schools to send both school-related and afterschool-related information directly to parents via email. School administrators and community partners simply upload digital flyers to Peachjar, and the flyers are approved at the district level. Parents then receive these digital flyers in a consolidated email and can access them via their email on a smartphone, personal computer or at any resource center in their community. The result is that parents feel more informed than with paper flyers, which don't always make it home. With so many options for ways to get online, low-income school districts find that parents are, in fact, able to receive these communications, and they are finding increased engagement as a result.

### References:

1. EveryoneOn
2. Pew Research

# CASE STUDY

## National School District

National School District in Southern California has been using Peachjar in their 10 elementary schools since July of 2013. With a median household income of \$37,181, the district has qualified for Provision 1 from the Department of Health, and offers 100% of their student's free breakfast and lunch. Despite its Provision 1 status, Director of Educational Services Cindy Vasquez states that, "We surveyed parents last year and found that while not all households have high-speed internet, the majority of our parents do have access to the internet via their smartphone. The response to Peachjar from our community has been very positive, parents are happy to get the digital flyers and they find them easy to check."

Since implementing Peachjar, National School District is now effectively reaching even more parents.



**10**  
SCHOOLS

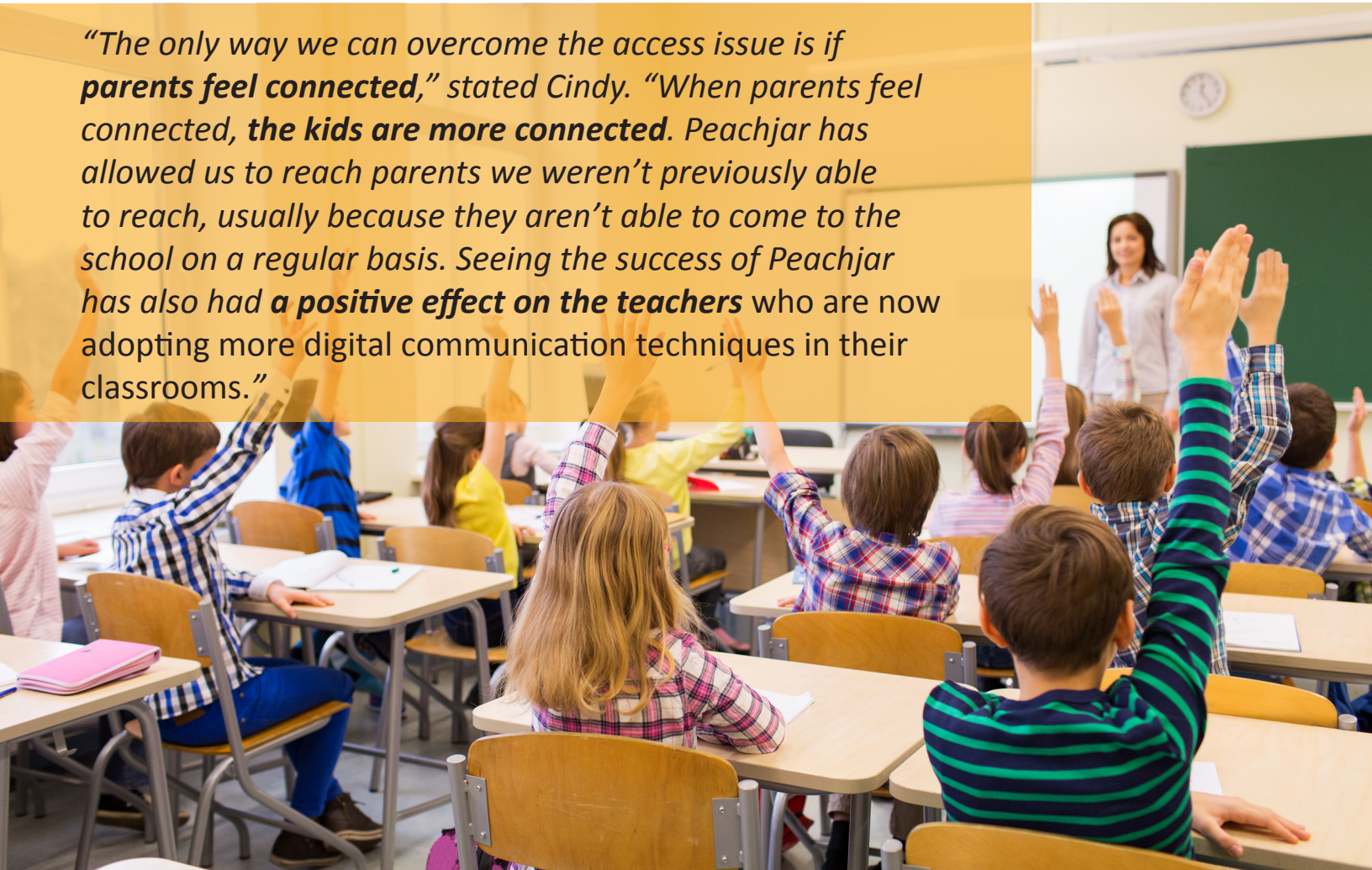


**100%**  
FRMP



**\$37,181**  
MHHI

*"The only way we can overcome the access issue is if **parents feel connected**," stated Cindy. "When parents feel connected, **the kids are more connected**. Peachjar has allowed us to reach parents we weren't previously able to reach, usually because they aren't able to come to the school on a regular basis. Seeing the success of Peachjar has also had **a positive effect on the teachers** who are now adopting more digital communication techniques in their classrooms."*



# CASE STUDY

## Lenoir School District

Lenoir School District in North Carolina has been using Peachjar in their 17 schools since November of 2016. Their median household income is \$37,068 and 100% of their students receive free breakfast and lunch. When it comes to internet access, Public Information Officer Patrick Holmes says, “If you factor in smartphones, then most of the parents in our district have access to the internet. Our district has a 1:1 program for iPads; and while we don’t require students to access the internet for any of their assignments outside of school hours, various locations throughout the city have made free internet access available for use.”

The district uses Peachjar to make parents aware of beneficial programs in the community, such as the Pink Hill Wellness Center, exercise programs and the Lenoir County Parks & Recreation Department. The district has also found that Peachjar provides peace of mind.



**17**  
SCHOOLS



**100%**  
FRMP



**\$37,068**  
MHHI

*As Patrick states, “I like that I don’t have to worry about it. I can upload my flyers, schedule them, and I know parents get the information.”*



# CASE STUDY

## Darlington County School District

Darlington County School District in South Carolina has been using Peachjar in their 23 schools since September of 2016. With a median household income of \$36,518, 84% of their students are eligible for free and reduced meal plans. Despite the area's low income, Public Information Officer Audrey Childs feels confident that most of her parents have access to the internet. In addition to Peachjar, the district utilizes digital registration for students.

***“Our schools and community love Peachjar. It’s effective and has saved the district and school staffs significant amounts of time,” says Audrey. “More importantly, I feel confident the information is making it home to the families that need it. No more crumpled papers in the bottom of a bookbag! Separated families, grandparents, and caregivers can also get the important school information, strengthening the student’s support system.”***



**23**  
SCHOOLS



**84%**  
FRMP



**\$36,518**  
MHHI



# CONCLUSION

Adopting technology is important for the success of all school districts, regardless of household income. Low-income communities are even more in need of access to free resources in their community, and Peachjar's free flyer posting program (free flyer posting for programs that are free with no enticement for a fee) provides just that. Now flyers for free programs such as parenting programs, medical care, meal programs and homeless youth assistance programs - many of which were unable to distribute paper flyers because it was cost-prohibitive, are now able to reach parents for free through Peachjar. Furthermore, digital flyer delivery helps parents feel more involved with the school, since all parents can access the flyers, not just the ones that actually make it home in backpacks.

*Lastly, by exposing both parents and students to new technology, **schools are better preparing their community for the future.***



# ABOUT PEACHJAR

Peachjar was founded on the belief that every child deserves the opportunity to achieve their full potential. We believe that school activities and afterschool programs enable just that. They help close the achievement gap, improve academic performance, instill important values, and keep children safe outside of school. Peachjar currently serves over 7 million parents and works with thousands of program providers across the U.S. and Canada to deliver amazing opportunities to children that will help them succeed in life.

With Peachjar, parents can receive and view digital flyers in their email inbox, rather than relying on the traditional backpack delivery method.

## For More Information

Please Contact

Rhea O'Connor

[whitepaper@peachjar.com](mailto:whitepaper@peachjar.com)

858.997.2117

[www.peachjar.com](http://www.peachjar.com)

