

90%

families connected

Passaic Public Schools

The Simplicity Shift: How One District Reconnected 90% of Families

The challenge: Too many tools, not enough connection

In [Passaic Public Schools](#)—serving nearly 12,000 students across 16 campuses—communication was happening everywhere, but not always reaching everyone. Each school used its own system. Teachers spent hours rostering classes and troubleshooting logins. Families juggled multiple apps, duplicate messages, and missed updates.

"We had families using three or four different platforms just to keep up," said Dr. Joanna Antoniou, Supervisor of Educational Technology. "It wasn't that communication wasn't happening—it just wasn't connected."

For multilingual families, the gaps were even wider. Parents wanted more personalized, consistent updates in their preferred language. Teachers wanted tools that didn't add to their workload. And district leaders needed visibility across schools to ensure messages were clear, aligned, and equitable.

The solution: Simplifying to strengthen trust

Passaic's breakthrough didn't come from adding another tool. It came from simplifying. After listening to feedback from teachers, families, and school leaders, Passaic unified communication districtwide with ClassDojo for Districts.

The rollout happened midyear—a bold move, but the right one. "We knew our families wanted this," Antoniou said. "The sooner we unified, the sooner we could build trust."

The launch followed a tiered model: district leaders onboarded school administrators first, then trained teachers with in-person sessions and building-based champions. "We knew the key to success was making sure teachers felt supported," she said. "Once they were confident, families would feel that too."

Teachers used to spend hours each fall rostering classes and chasing parent contact info. Now, rosters sync automatically with the SIS—no manual setup required. "It was like taking something off teachers' plates without adding anything new," Antoniou said. "They could just teach and connect."

"Parents love the instant feedback. It's not just communication—it's connection."



Dr. Joanna Antoniou
Supervisor of Educational Technology



Join some of the world's most innovative districts and the over 45M+ families who already use ClassDojo.

The impact: Visibility, equity, and connection

The results came quickly:

- Over 90% of families personally connected across 16 schools
- Real-time translation made every message accessible
- Teachers and admins saved significant time on communication setup
- District leaders gained visibility into communication and engagement
- Trust between families, teachers, and leadership grew measurably

Every level of leadership now has the right visibility. Teachers message families directly. Principals monitor engagement across their schools. District leaders spot trends, celebrate high performers, and support schools that need help.

One principal used the platform to share weekly newsletters with photos and updates. A kindergarten teacher used Dojo Points to reinforce positive behavior and shared progress with parents in real time. "Parents love the instant feedback," Antoniou said. "It's not just communication—it's connection."

And connection matters. "We had one mom call in tears after getting her first translated message in Spanish," Antoniou shared. "She said, 'For the first time, I feel like I'm part of the school community.'"

Why it matters: A model for more than communication

In Passaic, communication isn't just a task—it's a strategy. By simplifying systems and centering relationships, the district built a model rooted in equity, trust, and clarity.

"Our focus isn't just on sending messages," Antoniou said. "It's on creating meaningful interactions that build confidence. When families trust us, students thrive."

While cost wasn't the deciding factor, leaders appreciated that ClassDojo for Districts is free to districts—a reminder that powerful tools don't have to come with barriers.

Antoniou's advice for other districts? "Don't reinvent the wheel. Listen to your teachers. Learn from your families. Strengthen what's already working."

