



Wilmington School District's Proactive Approach to Safety

Alerts, Rosters, and Check-ins

The Challenge

In 2016, Wilmington Community Unit School District 209-U was looking to improve communication in their schools for the sake of safety. For communication between buildings in an emergency or if there was a drill happening, they had to pick up phones and call since they didn't have a convenient digital safety app. They had issues with using their red and the green safety cards and with everyone knowing what a lockdown would look like, for example.

There were several issues due to the lack of communication. Sometimes every single school building would be trying to have a drill at the same time. Other times, they would start with one building doing a fire drill, and then the fire department would stop at another building when those people were not expecting them. The district has employees who travel, going from building to building. Sometimes they would walk into a building in the middle of a lockdown drill and not know it was happening.



Customer Profile

Wilmington Community Unit School District is a four-school district located in the Kankakee River Valley, 50 miles southwest of Chicago. They serve the educational needs of almost 1,500 students in grades PreK-12. Their main focus is school and community united for excellence in education - encouraging, engaging, and empowering all students.

Industry: Pre K-12 Education

Region: Wilmington, IL

Total Schools: 4

Total Students: 1,500

Customer Since: 2016

The Solution

To improve their safety plans, Wilmington SD decided to use CrisisGo's alerts, rosters, and check-ins. By using CrisisGo, alerts for drills or emergencies can be sent to different staff members, depending on which group the principal chooses. Wilmington SD has a safety group that includes all of the building administrators, the police, the fire department, the nurse, the custodians, the kitchen staff, etc. Anybody who needs to be notified of an emergency is in that safety group. The principal will notify their building, which then notifies all the teachers, and then they'll notify the safety group, which notifies all of the administrators and managers. They are able to get the seamless communication they need.

Venita Dennis, Principal, Stevens Intermediate School, says if they have a bus accident, they have to list everybody on the bus with ages and other

information. She stated, "When we're trying to communicate with parents, I love the CrisisGo rostering because all I have to do is hold down on the name and the emergency contact pops up and we can just call from there. It's very helpful."

They have started to use CrisisGo for drills this year. Whether for a fire or lockdown drill, they use the app to communicate. They have radios that they use to communicate with each other, but if for some reason someone forgets to get on the radio to report a lockdown, the administrators still know about it because it's on the app. They have also started to use check-ins on their drills. Dennis says, "So, the last lockdown drill I did with police and fire, I requested a check-in, and I requested that the teachers do rostering. I have taught my staff and I have taught the administrators that with check-ins, you can mark where a student was last seen."



The Results

By using CrisisGo's alerts, rostering, and check-ins, Wilmington SD has developed stronger communication within the building, but also with first responders outside the building. Dennis said, "As the safety manager, I manage the CrisisGo dashboard. We have this great team, our safety committee, and we meet once a month, and that includes police and fire. When we were setting up the app, I got permission from the superintendent and the police and fire chief to add them, and to add the officers in charge of the different shifts for police and fire. So, when we send out an alert, that will go to three or four people in the police department, and four or five people in the fire department. So, whoever's getting that alert, if they're not on shift, they're aware. If they are on shift, then they can react."

Wilmington SD works closely with its police and fire departments. Lately, they have invited them to come in and take part in all of their drills. For example, in a lockdown, the police walk around the building with Dennis checking doors, which is an effective exercise for everybody. Their police department is hardworking and there are two patrol cars sitting in their parking lots at all times.

The more I work with the CrisisGo dashboard, the more I'm finding it easier to use. Now that I've worked with it for so many years, I'm used to it and I'm getting ready to update about 90% of our checklists. I started doing that with bomb threats already and it's easy to navigate. I wouldn't change anything.

Venita Dennis

Principal, Stevens Intermediate School

Wilmington Community Unit School District 209-U

Being safety conscious, Dennis has appreciated that CrisisGo is constantly updating ideas and putting new features in their app. Wilmington has now updated its server system so that the rosters and everything that is updated is pushed to the phones every three days. Dennis has also given her staff members multiple options with check-ins to say they are safe such as "I'm out of the building," "I have danger nearby," or "I have a medical emergency." She added that CrisisGo's tech support is like a team of cheerleaders, always resolving issues and very easy to work with. When asked if there were any improvements she'd request from CrisisGo, Dennis said she "wouldn't change a thing."

