



## CASE STUDY



# Alief Independent School District

K12 *INSIGHT* HELPS ALIEF ISD WIN BACK PARENTS AND FAMILIES IN THE AGE OF CHOICE

Across the country, public K12 school systems face intense competition from charter schools and other alternatives. The Alief Independent School District in Texas has experienced this pressure firsthand.

By listening to the needs of its “customers,” and providing exceptional service, Alief ISD is leveling the playing field, and winning market share. District officials partner with K12 *Insight* to help make this happen.

## THE CHALLENGE

Located in southwest Houston, the Alief Independent School District serves an ethnically diverse population of 47,000 students, 86% of whom qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. Like other school districts across the country, school choice is having a big impact there.

“We’ve seen a lot of new charter schools set up shop in our area,” says Kimberly N. Smith, director of public relations for the district. Alief ISD estimates that 2% of its projected enrollment left for charter schools in fall 2016.



2%

Percentage of enrollment lost in 2016



47K

Number of students enrolled



86%

Percentage of students on free and reduced-price lunch

Source: Alief ISD



## THE SOLUTION

Under the leadership of Superintendent H.D. Chambers, Alief ISD adopted a community-first mindset to win families over and keep them engaged. School leaders at every level focus on listening to parents and other stakeholders, delivering high-quality education and providing exceptional customer service.

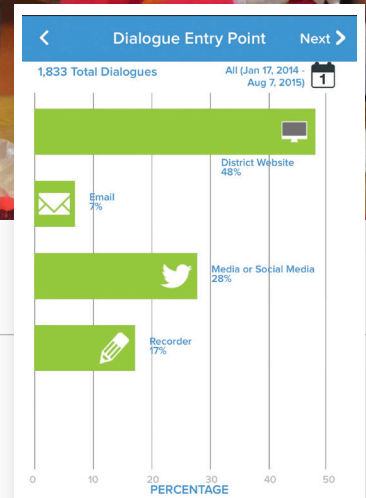
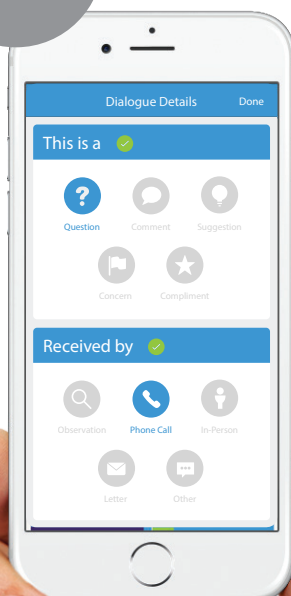
Alief uses **Let's Talk!**, K12 Insight's cloud-based always-on communications solution, to solicit stakeholder feedback on important school-related issues and topics. With Let's Talk!, community members can submit questions, comments and concerns by phone, email, social media, or the school district's website. Every message goes into a universal inbox where it is automatically routed to the right person or team to issue an accurate, courteous and timely response.

School leaders say the technology lets them collaborate on feedback and respond faster.

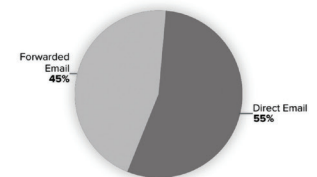
An interactive dashboard allows school leaders to track key performance indicators, identify families in immediate danger of attrition and better support individual needs.

"We get immediate feedback on how we can improve, and it makes our stakeholders feel like their opinion matters and that we care," Smith says. "We're creating a caring culture, a customer service-oriented culture, which is a rarity in public education."

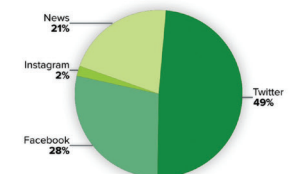
Let's Talk!®



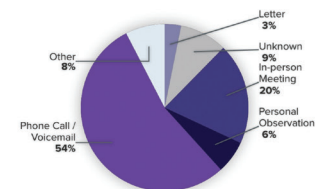
EMAIL DATA ENTRY POINT  
128 Total Dialogues



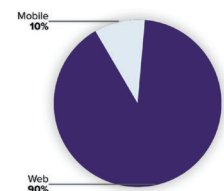
SOURCE OF MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA  
510 Total Dialogues



SOURCE OF DIALOGUES BY RECORDERS  
316 Total Dialogues



RECORDER ACCESS POINT  
316 Total Dialogues



## BE A SCHOOL SYSTEM OF FIRST CHOICE

K12 *Insight* works with more than 400 school districts nationwide. Our approach to school choice and competition starts with a 4-step strategy.

### UNDERSTAND

your competition—and resolve to be a school system of first choice

### PERFORM

root cause analysis to find out why students and families leave

### INTERVENE

with customer experience (Cx) training and practical solutions

### CREATE

a permanent branding campaign to assert your competitive advantage

For more, visit [k12insight.com/market-share-school-choice](https://k12insight.com/market-share-school-choice)

K12 *Insight* works with Alief to help school district leaders understand why parents leave through a series of in-depth surveys, or what it calls exercises in “deeper listening.”

Through Let’s Talk! and a combination of community surveys, district leaders can immediately improve customer service and family engagement, while getting the insights they need to make important reforms. The unique combination of always-on and deep listening enables school leaders to create a permanent branding campaign that builds family loyalty and asserts the district’s competitive advantage in the face of intense local competition.



## THE RESULTS

Though families began to leave the district in 2016, Smith says many have returned.

“The feedback we have gotten from the parents of returning students was that the curriculum at the other schools wasn’t challenging enough when compared with Alief, and that they were very disorganized,” Smith says. “Consumers like something new. They like having a choice. But they don’t always know what they’re getting into when they make a change.”

The ability to provide high-quality, customized educational programs has helped Alief ISD retain much of its market share. Understanding what



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KIMBERLY N. SMITH,  
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS,  
ALIEF ISD







parents are looking for has played a key role in helping the district create programs that meet those needs.

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## STILL IMPROVING

Looking ahead, Alief ISD plans to work with K12 *Insight* to develop an exit survey of parents who choose to leave the district.

“We would like to know why families are leaving our district and where they are going,” Smith explains. “Is it because they are moving out of our district due to employment issues, or is it because they feel like they can get a better education elsewhere? By having solid insight into these decisions, we can ensure that our services are up to par or better than the competition.”

“Every time we have come to K12 *Insight* with an idea,” Smith says, “they immediately work to put it into action.”

### LET’S TALK! HELPS ALIEF ISD LISTEN TO PARENTS’ NEEDS



150-300  
average dialogues  
per month



64%  
of these dialogues  
come from parents



Concerns are  
resolved within  
2.1  
business days,  
on average

Source: Alief ISD

For more, visit [K12insight.com/market-share-school-choice-landing](https://www.k12insight.com/market-share-school-choice-landing)