TalkingPoints and Syniverse Partner to Enhance School-Family Messaging

TalkingPoints and Syniverse Collaborate to Improve Educational Communication

About Talking Points

TalkingPoints is a nonprofit education technology organization on a mission to unlock every student's potential by activating effective family engagement. It believes that when families and schools work together with trust and intention, incredible things happen.

The platform enables educators to send messages about school events, student progress, and district-wide alerts back home to families. It's designed to make communication consistent and strengthen relationships, and with built-in translation for more than 150 languages, it ensures every family receives information in its preferred language.

One in four U.S. school districts trust TalkingPoints, which Common Sense Education named "the best overall family communication platform for teachers and schools." Research shows that using TalkingPoints leads to higher test scores and lower absenteeism, especially for underserved students. It connects more than 9 million educators, students, and family members each school year and has exchanged more than 1 billion messages since 2015.

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> Trevor MacDonald, Sr. Director – A2P Commercial Operations and Compliance at Syniverse

The challenge: Ensuring urgent messages reach families

Family engagement drives student success. Research shows it contributes to better academic and socio-emotional outcomes. But not all families can engage equally.

Families that struggle to communicate with educators may have trouble understanding the curriculum, accessing services, or advocating for their child. In addition, one in 10 public school students is an English learner, and 69% of Spanish-speaking parents who tried to participate in scholastic activities reported difficulty due to language barriers. Schools that invest in multilingual communication present an opportunity to address inequities.

Reaching these families requires meeting them where they are. SMS works on virtually all mobile phones without requiring data or Wi-Fi. Industry data has shown texts are opened 98% of the time and 95% are read within three minutes, compared to much lower engagement for email or other channels. For many of these families, text messages are the most immediate and dependable way to get important information from schools.

Routine teacher-parent messages and urgent districtwide alerts must be delivered reliably. These messages must be secure given the sensitive nature of communications involving minors. And this must happen against the backdrop of FCC rules, carrier codes of conduct, and aggregator vetting procedures that can delay or block messages.

TalkingPoints faced challenges on all these fronts.

It used 10-digit long codes (10-DLC) to reduce messaging charges but faced limitations when sending critical texts. Messages could be overlooked by parents, mistaken for routine updates, or delayed during high-volume events. Alternatives existed, but as a 501(c)(3), TalkingPoints wished to avoid costs that could divert resources from its educational mission. Balancing security, reliability, and affordability was proving difficult.

TalkingPoints needed a partner with messaging expertise and carrier relationships that could address the specific needs of a nonprofit.

The solution: Purpose-built messaging architecture

With nearly four decades of experience and now more than 2 billion messages delivered around the world every day, Syniverse was the right partner to help. Its initial assessment quickly uncovered ways to restructure TalkingPoints' messaging setup to improve efficiency and compliance. Plus, its deep industry expertise and direct carrier relationships, as well as a hands-on approach tailored to a nonprofit's needs, extended its value well beyond technical fixes.

Syniverse began by helping TalkingPoints understand how to optimize 10-DLCs, including guidance on structuring campaigns, balancing message volume with number pools, and tightening opt-in/opt-out practices so they understand what types of messages they will receive and where they come from. Syniverse also offered recommendations for monitoring delivery and error rates so TalkingPoints can reduce disruptions.

After improving TalkingPoints' 10-DLC setup, Syniverse suggested implementing short codes for emergency and time-sensitive communications. Carriers prioritize messages sent via short codes, leading to higher delivery rates, but they come with high fees. Syniverse leveraged its carrier relationships to procure nonprofit exemptions for two short codes, guided TalkingPoints through the verification process, which it would have found difficult to navigate independently, and recommended reserving the short codes for urgent alerts and using 10-DLCs for everyday interactions.

Rolling out these solutions within TalkingPoints' operational constraints required tight coordination and careful timing. But Syniverse was up to the task.

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The results: Secure, scalable educational messaging infrastructure

Although discussions began in 2024, implementation couldn't start until the following June to avoid disrupting school-year communications. Syniverse and TalkingPoints had just two months to finalize program briefs, secure approvals for two short codes, complete the rollout, and bring the system online, but by the start of the 2025-26 scholastic year, a new, reliable, secure, cost-effective, and scalable messaging platform was ready for nationwide use.

TalkingPoints has achieved near-100% delivery rates through its 10-DLC and short code channels — and with the new short code program in place, it can send emergency alerts to all families across a school or district in seconds. In addition, by providing clearer expectations about opt-ins and message sources, TalkingPoints reduces confusion between emergency alerts and routine broadcasts, which supports stronger trust between families and schools and has been shown to increase student success.

"Families feel better equipped to support their children's academic success and development when they can have a meaningful relationship with their teachers and schools," said Stephanie Kaufman, Head of Product at TalkingPoints. "But without the skills and tools to support that relationship, it can begin to break down. That's why Syniverse has been such an effective partner: Its considerable messaging expertise and technical know-how help us ensure families can effectively partner with their child's teachers and schools, regardless of their background or the language they speak at home."

Syniverse provides ongoing guidance and remains committed to supporting TalkingPoints as it expands its reach.

"When communication must be both inclusive and urgent, architecture matters," said Trevor MacDonald, Sr. Director – A2P Commercial Operations and Compliance at Syniverse. "We aligned strategy, compliance, and carrier collaboration so essential messages arrive every time, turning complex requirements into a simple, trusted experience for schools and families."

Whether your organization is a nonprofit or commercial, a small business or an enterprise, messaging systems can be optimized with easily replicated solutions. Syniverse can assess your messaging infrastructure to ensure it meets your needs. Contact us today to learn more.

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