A Bark for Schools
Case Study

bark
FOR SCHOOLS

Introduction

Available to all K-12 schools across the U.S., **Bark for Schools** monitors school-issued G Suite and Office 365 accounts for signs of cyberbullying, suicidal ideation, sexual predators, school shootings, and more.

Bark for Schools was developed in the wake of the tragic shooting at Parkland, Florida, as a way to give back to school communities. With the technology for keeping kids safer on their devices already in place in our **Bark for Families product**, we decided to extend our service to **all K-12 public and private schools in the U.S. — at no cost to them**.

One year later, Bark for Schools had become the trusted partner of 1,000 school districts — with more than 80 joining every month.

We spoke with Dean Mantz, Network Coordinator of Sterling USD, to find out how Bark has helped his district confront the challenges facing students today.

Mantz has been with Sterling USD for 10 of his 25 years in education. Located near the exact middle of the state, Sterling is a small, agricultural, religious community in Kansas. "In a town of 2,500 people, we've got around nine or 10 churches. Everyone looks out for each other," Mantz says.

But he recognizes that **new technologies present new challenges**. "We have security cameras everywhere, and we have access controls for all the buildings. But when you consider what technology is available, we've really got to look out for our students."

Sterling Unified School District Profile

Location: Sterling, KS
Students: ~560
Schools: 2

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With the money that would have gone to Bark, we're able to bring in real-world people to communicate with the kids and talk to them about their experiences.

— Dean Mantz
Network Coordinator
Sterling Unified School District

Challenges

Mantz says that the issues facing students at Sterling USD are not so different from what he has seen elsewhere. "We've had situations where some junior high students were talking about cutting themselves," he says. A group of girls was sharing sexually explicit photos with boys in their school. Another student had recently attempted suicide. **Depression, peer pressure, and cyberbullying exist everywhere**.

"Now we're digging deeper and looking a little further," says Mantz, "trying to watch out for the kids and head things off before something disastrous happens."

Solutions

According to Mantz, Bark has been very successful in helping his district confront these challenges. "Bark kept catching the continued conversations between the girls who were cutting themselves, and I was able to use the sharing feature to forward those to our high school counselor," he says.

"It's been extremely beneficial to take advantage of this service, monitor for safety, and **provide information to address even the most minor of situations**." In each case, Sterling USD has been in a better position to get its students the help that they need.

17%

Nearly 1 in 5 adolescents has engaged in **non-suicidal self-injury**, according to an analysis of 52 studies.

27%

Sexting is on the rise, with more than a quarter of young people reporting that they've **received explicit images**.

58%

A majority of teens disapprove of **how teachers handle cyberbullying**, according to Pew.

A Deeper Dive: The Impact of Bark for Schools

Has Bark for Schools allowed you to invest in your school or community?

"It has, and not just in being able to provide our junior and senior high school counselors with assistance. With the money that would have gone to Bark, **we're able to bring in real-world people to communicate with the kids** and talk to them about their experiences.

We've had a round-table panel discussion with people from the community — the chief of police, a woman who lost a family member to suicide, and some others — for all the students. Money invested in bringing these people in was actually **starting conversations, enabling teachers to connect with students** when they may not have had that opportunity before because it just never came up.

We're doing everything we can to try and keep everyone safe. In the social media-based world, [students] react and post, and maybe only think four steps later. So we've got to help guide them, **provide them with avenues to learn from their mistakes**, but also do that in a safe way."

Partner With Parents

What steps have you taken to involve your school community in the challenge of keeping students safer online?

"In terms of what kinds of problems we're trying to solve with Bark, we're just trying to get word out to the parents about what [Bark] provides beyond Office and G Suite at school … We sent out a newsletter to every parent in the district and included information about Bark — what it does, the **Family Alerts Dashboard**, and everything else. We want to promote Bark, to help parents monitor their children's personal accounts."

Get Ahead of Issues

Has Bark for Schools fulfilled your expectations?

"When I go into something new, I go in pretty open minded — I like to learn about it and see how it goes … And I've been very pleased. Bark has always been out in front of things. Instead of just waiting for something to happen, you're always out front asking, 'What can we do? How are things going?' You've always tried to head things off before anything even developed."

Visit our website at **bark.us/schools** for more information about Bark for Schools.

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