A Bark for Schools
Case Study

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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 Dan Lauletta, IT Director of Plum Borough School District, to find out how Bark has helped his district confront the challenges facing students today.

Lauletta was the director of technology at Deer Lakes School District before transferring to Plum Borough last year, where he is now the IT Director. "I live here, so it was a nice opportunity to make an impact on my community, to try to give our students the best opportunities for the 21st century."

With so many young families in the district, Lauletta is thinking about how to prepare them for the future. He believes that digital technologies are amazing tools, **but they come with some serious risks**. "Security is the number one thing that every school district should be looking at, especially with technology, so that every student is safe."

Plum Borough School District Profile

Location: Plum, PA
Students: ~3,900
Schools: 5

> It's good to see a company that continues to care, and also grows the product to accommodate the students to keep them as safe as possible at all times.
>
> — **Dan Lauletta**
> IT Director
> Plum Borough School District

Challenges

Social media provides a bigger platform for everyone, including bullies, which sets today's schools apart from those of the past. "When I was in school, we didn't have these devices to constantly nag and pick on each other," says Lauletta. "The bullying is beyond what I was used to when I was growing up."

Lauletta also sees bullying as **a gateway to more serious issues like depression, self-harm, and even suicidal ideation**. But students often don't understand the scope of the problem, and it's essential to include them in discussions about school safety. "We as elders have to make sure our [students] are good digital citizens."

Solutions

Lauletta takes a proactive approach, building teams to help everyone understand the need for monitoring. And through his experiences with Bark's alerts, **he is able to use stories to engage his students**. "Once I tell stories, they understand where we're coming from as educators, people who are trying to help them be safe and practice safe digital citizenship."

Lauletta's openness is a great way to promote trust between students and the administration. "I make sure that in the classroom, students are aware that we're using [Bark for Schools] to monitor them, and that if something harmful does come up it's addressed in an appropriate manner."

4/5

Four out of five teens who attempt suicide have given **clear warning signs**.

2nd

As of 2016, suicide is the second-most common **cause of death** for kids aged 12 - 19.

1.1M

Each year more than a million students in grades 9 - 12 **attempt suicide in the U.S**.

A Deeper Dive: The Impact of Bark for Schools

Could you tell us about any specific incidents that Bark helped you to manage?

"I put Bark in place to make sure our students were safe, and at one point in my career, I was able to help save someone's life because of it.

I received a flagged email regarding a student, and I was able to reach out to our guidance counselor and principal to make sure they knew of the situation. They then called the family, and **we were able to get that student help prior to anything happening** … This is just one example, but I've seen a lot of cases like that, where we can step in and nip it in the bud before it grows legs.

That's the most important part, and I think that's what Bark does great. I always brag about how Bark can detect when someone writes on an image or if there's a word inside an image — **it just makes you aware of what's going on in that digital world**. So for a school district not to take advantage of it is, I think, ridiculous. If you have this tool, and it's free, and it's keeping our students safe, it's a no-brainer to me.

I always say to parents that **[students] are safer on our devices at school than they are on their own cell phones**. We're watching, seeing what they're doing, monitoring our devices. If there's an issue that arises, then we handle that issue."

Powerful Product

What role does Bark play in keeping your students safer?

"How it goes about monitoring, how it looks at images and content, how it lets you flag certain things and look at user histories … That's just an example of how powerful Bark is. We use it in combination with Lightspeed Relay to help us with Google Classroom. The new **Parent Portal** is great, too. Any time you get families involved with helping monitor their students' devices, it's a good thing … It's an exciting product to me, and I can't wait to see where it goes in the future."

Smart and Agile

Why did you choose Bark?

"What makes your company invaluable is that you continue to grow and adapt to the real world, especially in the K-12 space, to make sure that your product is on the leading edge … What I got out of it — the pie charts, the reporting, how I could drill down on an individual student — exceeded my expectations. It's good to see a company that continues to care, and also grows the product to accommodate the students to keep them as safe as possible at all times."

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

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