

Details

Using Technology to Make the School Day Smoother - Bonus Episode with Pikmykid

In this episode, Saravana Pat Bhava, Founder & CEO of Pikmykid, joins to discuss this dynamic communication and school safety platform. You'll also hear how this powerful digital tool can make the school day smoother, safer and save precious instructional time.

Show notes: <https://classtechtips.com/2022/08/07/school-day-smoother-bonus/>

Introduction

Hello there and welcome to today's episode of the Easy EdTech Podcast! If we haven't met before, my name is Monica Burns. I'm a former NYC public school teacher and I've been out of the classroom for a few years leading professional development for teachers, and writing about all things EdTech on my blog [ClassTechTips.com](https://classtechtips.com)

You might be used to joining me on Tuesdays for new episodes of the podcast, and today is a special bonus episode in partnership with Pikmykid, I'm excited to bring you another special bonus episode on a Sunday.

Before we jump into today's episode, a quick reminder — you can head to my website classtechtips.com/podcast for all of the show notes and resources from today's episode, and if you're listening to this episode on a podcast player like Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or Google Podcasts, you should see a link in the description that you can click on as you listen today and it will take you to all of the resources I mention.

Promotion/Reminder

This episode is sponsored by Pikmykid. Many schools struggle with dismissal processes that waste time and leave students vulnerable. Pikmykid empowers schools to simplify dismissal, engage parents, and keep students safe with their easy-to-use platform for both dismissal and emergency management. That way, everyone has peace of mind and can focus on what really matters, learning. Get started transforming your school safety on the platform used by over 2,000 schools in all 50 states at www.pikmykid.com by requesting a demo.

Today's Intro

Today's episode is titled *Using Technology to Make the School Day Smoother - Bonus Episode with Pikmykid*.

Episode Transcript

Monica Burns:

Welcome to the Easy EdTech Podcast. I am very excited to chat with you today about a topic that's important to me, you know, making things smoother and easier and safer for students and for teachers and educators at all levels. So before we jump in, would love to hear a little bit about your role in education. What is your day to day look like?

Saravana Pat Bhava:

Sure. I'm my name is Saravana Pat Bhava. I go by Pat because that was my call sign while I was flying in the Navy Ys back. I'm the founder of and CEO of Pikmykid. It's a, it's a kind of a, a platform which encompasses everything about safety in K12 schools today. If you can think of it like the entire chain of custody management solution, right from the time when a child is dropped off in school till the time they're picked up late evening. So the entire chain of custody and the safety and accountability of the children can be tracked on this platform. And that's what that's my day to day. I'm not traditional ed tech person I, I happen to get into this space because we tried to solve a problem in my daughter's school and more on that later. But, but that's what I do on a daily basis makes school safer.

Monica Burns:

Yeah. Well, just like you mentioned, right. Sometimes we walk into different industries because we're called to it, right. We see a problem. We wanna solve it. We have an idea that we know can scale and probably help other people right outside of our own situation, too, you know, and today we're talking about using technology to make the school day smoother. And I often talk about this topic from more of the classroom logistics, like how to save time or boost productivity, you know, but when we're talking today, I'd really love to start off with some of the ways that the school day isn't smooth. Right. To kind of talk about that problem that you mentioned, right? Absolutely. What are some of the challenges school face that get in the way of having a smooth school day?

Saravana Pat Bhava:

Absolutely. I'm, I'm glad you asked this question because this is the biggest problem facing educators today and the least talked about and the least solved problem. Right? so if you look, if you think about it, you know, teachers love teaching and they hate anything which

keeps 'em away from their core focus, which is teaching and interacting with their students. Right? So we put all these barriers and it just adds friction to them interacting with their kids. So that is at the core of what we try and solve at Pikmykid. Right. Mm-hmm <affirmative> so let me give you a scenario, you know you as a parent or if you have to change your dismissal mode for your child the only way you have is to pick up the phone, call the school, the school verifies who you are, the front desk is taking a two, three minute phone call from you.

Saravana Pat Bhava:

Then they write a sticky note. Then they call a runner, they tell their runner or a kid like, Hey, go to miss Johnson's class and hand this over. So the front desk is wasting five minutes. The runner is wasting their time. The teacher is interrupted in the classroom. And in a typical school, they receive about 40 to 70 phone calls a day. Yeah, this just, this one process alone. The amount of time interruptions in the daily process is mind boggling. And it is least solved problem today, right? From there, you move on to tardies tracking tardies, right in the physical manner and go to the front desk and get your name written and take the chip, go to your classroom teacher. She makes a record of it. Time suck, right? Yeah. And then early releases, Hey, I have a dentist appointment, I have this.

Saravana Pat Bhava:

So, so the moms today put a little note in the in Johnny's backpack, which the teacher is supposed to check <laugh> and then if they don't, everything gets messed up or they send an email to the teacher and the teacher has we constantly on the email trying to, you know, keep on top of things. So all these mundane and day to day, you know, admin problems get in the way of teachers being efficient, right? So Pikmykids solve for all these time sucks. And the biggest thing we solve for when the buildings at two 30, there's absolute chaos, which, which happens in every school, right? Kids running health desk, <inaudible> teachers with walkie-talkies, you know dodging traffic and about, it's almost all hands on deck with teachers. And that is the time they're supposed to be focusing on prepping for the next day or winding down and getting those notes in place.

Saravana Pat Bhava:

And here you are, you, you know, putting walkie, talking in their hand and telling them to go Dodge, traffic and manage something. Yeah. Which see, I'm never train to do <laugh> mm-hmm <affirmative> we take that all off their hand and put a seamless solution in place, which uses technology in a very non-intrusive manner, easy to use. And it starts from the time the child is dropped in the school until the time all these backend processes manage the custody issues, the delegation, the car afterschool program, all those management issues is

gone. And we have so much anecdotal evidence from schools who use our product, that they're able to focus more and interact more with the parents when they show up and, and they connect in a meaningful manner rather than kind of, you know, shepherding through the line. So, and, and we have third party studies and I can touch upon that later, but, but that's that's at the core of what we do. You know, we take the mundane work out, so teachers can focus more on what really matters, which is teaching and learning the more so in today's post COVID post pandemic, when we gotta make up this learning loss, we gotta, you know, do much more and we're putting our teachers in additional stress, but if we don't give them technology, we are not setting them up for success. Mm-Hmm <affirmative> so,

Monica Burns:

Yeah. You know, and, you know, Pat, I really appreciate you using the word friction because I think that's a great way to describe some of these pieces. And I know when I talk about using technology tools or just making sure you know, that things are working in a smooth way, that word friction comes up a lot, because doesn't mean we won't get to where we wanna go, but yeah. Is there a way to remove some of these frictions, right. That make it hard or painful or just right. Taking out these pieces where we can reallocate our time and our energy to what is priority a high priority. Right. Some things need to happen, and that's why they become top of the list. Right. You know, but we have these other action items that we know are high priority too. So I really like that you use that word because I think it helps just demonstrate what gets in the way of some of the things we know right. Are barriers for, for having a smooth day. So, you know, as we jump into this idea of making the school day more streamlined, right. That smoother school day, what are some ways, and you alluded to this a bit already, but what are some ways that technology can help make the school day smoother? Maybe we can start again, kind of at that start of the day <laugh> to think through the day of like, what would those tech friendly touchpoints be throughout the day that can help things be more streamlined?

Saravana Pat Bhava:

Sure, sure. So for example, you know, arrivals, right? It's, it's, it's arrivals and attendance, that's the first thing which happens. And when the arrival in attendance happens a lot of teachers wished they had an automatic way of a questionnaire or a reminder to parents, which can, you know, hit them up before they drop the child off. Say, for example, Hey, we have dancing class today. So bring your dancing shoes or, you know, Hey, don't forget your dos or whatever the case may be. So it starts there a reminder can be pushed to parents' phones to start with backing up Pikmykid. Whenever it goes into any school, we have almost 80 to a hundred percent parent adoption on a daily basis. So it starts with that parental

engagement, a communal engagement to a common platform is have the problem solved, right?

Saravana Pat Bhava:

And then you can go and build on that. So Pikmykid when they're installed in E school, we start with almost a hundred percent parent engagement, right? So based on that engagement, we start on, when they drop the child off, any reminder needs to be done. Any questioning needs to be filled up is it happens. And then the attendance, sorry, attendance automatically triggers the moment they enter a geofence within the school. So they're there to drop off Johnny. They can check one button on their phone, they, you know, drop them off. And then and now we'll get into the eventualities, right? So what if they're 30? What if, you know, early release, all those things can be handled seamlessly through their phone app. Okay. Without having to call somebody without trying to prove who they are or even those emergency contacts, this all seamlessly handled the certifications that are, are handled in the backend out of our system automatically.

Saravana Pat Bhava:

And then you move into attendance. Like I told you, it seamlessly integrates with your SAS. So it is, you know, you exactly know who's there at school at any point in time. So that part is taken care now throughout the day, what happens is not every day is a doomsday scenario where an emergency occurs, right. Mm-Hmm <affirmative> for any one of those scenarios. There are us teachers we know for sure that there are a hundred other emergencies which happen on a daily basis. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>, which require the same level of urgency, but not call 9 1, 1, like right. You know, a brawl in the, you know, corridor in high school, or, you know, Johnny fell off a slide or whatever, be the case. Yeah. They are real emergencies, but they don't need us to push a panic button on the wall. Right.

Saravana Pat Bhava:

Right. But you need to react the same way you need to call the doctor in the same emergency. You need to call the nurse in the same way. So what we do is our platform also enables these customized so to speak emergency management protocols in place where in each emergency has a special call group. And only those people will be alerted and with the same emergency, you know, it's handled. Right. and then you roll towards the end of the day. And of course, I just told you the, the, the dismissal management, the change management, which keeps the phone calls, and then you go to the end of the day, right. From your call line to your buses, to after school programs. And sometimes it is a chain of custody, which happens from the school to an afterschool program, to football practice, all the places.

Saravana Pat Bhava:

Right. So it's a, it's a chain, it's a, it's a logistical nightmare, which I don't know how, but teachers manages every day without technology, by just their sheer grit, willpower and stress levels. Right. Mm-hmm, <affirmative> so all that can be managed seamlessly without without as much work using a platform like this. And, and what is even more better is that the admins can sit back and actually pull reports of last day, last month and last week. And you can see who the patrol late S we all have parents like those. Yeah. So they can have a conversation with, you know, with reports, which you can pull and rather than, oh, no, no, no. I was there, Ms. Johnson, you just didn't see me. <Laugh> mm-hmm <affirmative> but, you know so, so these are very powerful outcomes of actually using a system like us and, and, and anecdotally a few years ago, we did work with an academia.

Saravana Pat Bhava:

I think the University of Florida, they did a research on one of our schools. They actually came up. They, they're tasked with quantifying these savings. Mm-Hmm <affirmative> they actually came up with about \$40,000 worth of teacher's time. Yeah. Saved in an average per school per year. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>, that is that's \$40,000. That's almost an, an additional teacher being on premise whose work is being saved, like, you know, and there was another study conducted by you know, saying Pete there's a doctoral level study. They just focused on the carbon footprint implications and how the efficiencies in car line have managed not only time, but the gas savings, they came up with 20,000 pounds of carbon footprint save per school per year. So these are really powerful savings, but using a seamless technology to backend, you know so yeah, there are a lot of outcomes. We're really proud about the impact, but, but the focus has to be on the school, has to be on the teachers, has to be on the students and trying to maximize their time and outcome there and everything else will fall in place, I think.

Monica Burns:

Yeah. And I, I really, I really like that connection you just made to even the carbon footprint, right? Like I visit school, I taught in an urban school here in New York city. So, you know, it, wasn't the ki quite the same, you know, pickup line, you know, where there was surely, you know, school, dismissal barriers <laugh>, you know, or friction as you were talking about, but not the car rider line. And, you know, when I travel and visit schools in different parts of the country, right. Everywhere is a little bit different. But one thing that is often the same, right. Is that challenge with that car rider line where people are showing up so early, it's hot, you know, it's hot today as we're recording this, right. Yeah. Yeah. And it stays warm in September

and October and a lot of places that might get real cold, but either way you're running your car for that whole time. So, you know, I'm, even as you were talking, I was thinking about just like the project based learning connection for a group of high school students. Right. To, to think about the impact here from an environmental perspective. So yeah, just so many things that technology can do. And I love the parent buy-in that you mentioned. Yeah.

Saravana Pat Bhava:

And if I may add a little bit, and you, you mentioned urban schools, and it just came to my mind, there was another study conducted by D T by the way, D O T supports and funds our project as well, based on these outcomes. Mm-Hmm, <affirmative> what they actually noticed is because our system triggers an alert back to the parent, like kind of instantly they, in the same instant, they leave the school to start walking home. At scale, what has happened is in every school, which had implemented this, they see an increased tolerance for parents who let their kids walk home from school. Oh. And so it increased, increased walkers increased bicycle rider. So parents are less likely to crowd and congregate in school during dismissals because now they have accountability, they get instant alert. They know when they leave the campus, they know when they're there and after school, there's no guesswork. So, so they feel more safe. And so we have inadvertently, this is not an intended purpose, but inadvertently we have increased healthier living. And also we increased the confidence level of the parents. So they're allowing kids to walk home from school and feel more safer. Mm-Hmm <affirmative> and all that is accountable on the system as well.

Monica Burns:

That's so interesting. And you know, it really leads us into this next question that I wanted to make sure, you know, I asked you about, which is the school safety connection, right. Because the dismissal process and tackling some of the logistical barriers and the staffing and all those other pieces, right. It's just one piece of the puzzle here, you know, for having that smoother dismissal, we know having a smooth dismissal, like you just mentioned in the urban environments where you might have students walking or doing something different because they have access to this platform, you know, they can also help kids stay safe. So what is that connection? Can you tell us a little bit more about that connection between school dismissal and then increasing school safety,

Saravana Pat Bhava:

Safety? No, that's a great point. Right? So that was something which we were dabbling with ourselves in the beginning of our learning curve with this product. What we learned is at the core of any school safety solution communal engagement is a must. You need to have all the

stakeholders involved that is parents, teachers, children, and the school staff on the same platform, talking the same language and actually getting the information from the same source. That is one key problem we need to solve. If we have to encourage a healthy community in which there's healthy exchange of information and there's confidence in there trust. So unbeknownst to us, when we started solving for the dismissal solution, even dismissal solution cannot be successful if you didn't have a buy in from the entire community. Totally. So once we had that difficult problem solve of, of the communal buyin school started asking us, Hey, we have engagement on this platform, like never before on any of other platforms, can you move some of your safety aspects or can we build some safety aspect?

Saravana Pat Bhava:

So this physicians came from the school actually. And then we started thinking, and then this was like for five years ago. And then we put so many school safety processes and, and, and, and products in there embedded within our system, it's become an, a robust collection of entire school safety product. Now it came about because for example throughout the school day a teacher is on, has logged into the SIS and they incidentally also happen to log, to Pikmykid because they don't want to receive those sticky notes. What I told you, they don't want to receive email from parents. So they have their portal open in the back end. And, and what better platform to initiate emergencies than a platform, which is already open they're used to, rather than running to some other, you know, some other third party solution, which they never use except an emergency, right?

Saravana Pat Bhava:

So we just put this one button, which actually leads into, Hey, what kind of emergency is it? Do you want, who do you want involve it's two, three clicks and it's a silent alarm internal or external or whatever the protocol is. It triggers automatically. So that is on the, on the, like a silent panic alarm part of it. And then when we roll towards dismissal what happens today is that every school by law has to have an emergency reunification plan. Mm-Hmm <affirmative> if something were to go wrong during dismissal, right? So that is a mandated by law that every school needs to have a dismissal sorry, needs to have an emergency reunification plan. But today what happens is it's all in pen and paper, it's in some, you know, checklist in a dusty corner. Teachers don't know what that is, parents don't know.

Saravana Pat Bhava:

And, and God for forbid emergency happens. And we see that live on TV all the time. Mm-Hmm <affirmative> that the emergency unification takes up to six to eight hours to accomplish when the, when, when it needs to really work. Yeah. So when things of serious

nature happens, your emergency protocols don't work as efficiently as it should. And the dismissal or reunification to parents take inordinate amount of time. What our program does is we just take the regular dismissal, which we do from a, like, let me back up a little bit and tell you a 32nd overview, how it op, how it happens. So you can understand how the, you know, reunification works today, an emergency reunification a regular UN when a school comes on board, we set a geofence around the school, right? So virtual geo offense. So whenever a parent with a phone enters, we can recognize them.

Saravana Pat Bhava:

We know there are there custody issues and carpool issues, and they're linearly sequenced, so they can pick up their children in an orderly fashion. The only difference what happens in emergency reification is that geofence relocates to this emergency new location, and the process remains exactly the same. So the parents, they know exactly what to do. They get in. They automatically announced or recognized the system. The school knows who's in the line, who they have custody for who to discharge their children to. So there is nothing new. We're not reinventing the wheel. We're just using technology in a seamless way to empower them to do what they already do in a better and more efficient manner. So, so it, it was just a synergistic yeah. Addition to a platform, the school safety aspects while we handle dismissal. Does that make sense?

Monica Burns:

Absolutely. And I just think that, that just the seamlessness right. Of all of these connections are, are so important to think about, you know, and as we get ready to finish up here, you know, in our conversation today, I wanna make sure people understand, you know, what Pikmykid can do, how a listener can get started if they wanna bring this to their school or district. So if you, you know, they're excited about this concept, what should they do if they wanna bring this to their learning environment?

Saravana Pat Bhava:

I think the first thing is to get to know the product because, you know it works fantastic for most schools, but then it is not ideal for some schools who are really small or maybe, you know, they have their own way in which they like to do stuff. So we don't want to impose a, a, a regimented process into some schools, which already are comfortable. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. So the first step would be to go to a website. There is a, you know, a demo link in which book a time, and you can actually speak with, you know, in live 30, 40 minutes, whatever it takes to to see if this works for your school. Right. When we, when we, you know,

discover that fit and thereafter, we have we have almost 95% retention rate, which means we hardly have schools who come on board will leave us

Monica Burns:

Huge. Right. Huge.

Saravana Pat Bhava:

Yeah. Is, is huge. And we are grateful for that. But thereafter, once you discover there's a fit and, and you, you know, the it's about, you know, getting the finances in place and, and making sure, you know, we are able to pay for it talking of paying for it. I think we've discovered over the years, we are covered by so many federal grants and and, and, and title I, and title IX and cares act and Sr funds, we will find a way in which you can accommodate within your budget or find a grant that pays for it either in the state level, either in the D O T or we'll work with you to find the money. But, but if there's a need, we will be the solution. And even if you don't find the money, there is a free call line product, right. On a website, you can go, you don't have to talk to a single soul, you can click it, start using it today and be more efficient than walkie-talkies

Monica Burns:

Perfect. I, and I love that more efficient than walkie-talkies is a great way for us to, to finish up here today. Yeah. So I will make sure if you're listening in today, that you can click right where you are listening to the episode to learn more, to schedule a demo, and we'll add some more links to the show notes, but thank you so much, Pat, for your time today, and for helping give us some ideas for making the school day smoother.

Saravana Pat Bhava:

Absolutely. A pleasure chatting with you, Monica. Great. Thank you for the opportunity. And look forward to continuing the conversation later.

So let's make this EdTech easy with some key points from the episode...

Review how dismissal time is being used.
Get buy-in from your community.
Make connections to school safety goals.
Take a look at the data you collect.

Remember, you can find the shownotes and the full list of resources from this episode on classtechtips.com/podcast including all of the ways to connect with the team at Pikmykid.

Promotion/Reminder

A big thank you to our sponsor for this episode, Pikmykid! If you're ready to show your staff and parents they can be confident in your school's safety measures, get started with the leading school safety and dismissal platform today. Visit www.pikmykid.com to request a demo and walk through exactly how this affordable technology will help you transform your experience. Bonus: you'll also see the 7 grants you can use to fund Pikmykid.

Outro

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Episode Resources

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