

A case study with
Plum Borough School District

How Bark for Schools helps protect students online and in real life



Executive Summary: Bark for Schools — Plum Borough School District

Background

Plum Borough School District serves more than 3,900 students across five schools. Like many districts, they face challenges from cyberbullying, online harassment, and mental health risks. IT Director Dan Lauletta recognized the need for proactive tools to keep students safe and promote responsible digital behavior.

Challenges

- Cyberbullying is more pervasive than in previous generations, often leading to depression, self-harm, or suicidal ideation.
- Students lack awareness of the risks and the consequences of online behavior.
- Traditional approaches to monitoring were insufficient for the scale and complexity of modern student activity.

How Bark for Schools helped

- **Early intervention:** Alerts flagged concerning behavior, allowing staff to reach students and families before situations escalated.
- **Student education and trust:** Bark's presence in the classroom is transparent; students understand that monitoring is part of digital citizenship education.
- **Comprehensive monitoring:** Beyond text, Bark identifies risk in images, emojis, and embedded content, giving staff a complete picture of online behavior.

- **Integration and reporting:** Analytics, reports, and drill-down features helped the district track trends and monitor individual students effectively.
- **Parent engagement:** Bark's Parent Portal enabled families to collaborate with the school on student safety.

Impact

- Staff were able to proactively identify at-risk students and connect them with guidance counselors and families.
- Digital citizenship awareness increased among students, helping them make safer choices online.
- The district strengthened overall trust between students, families, and staff around digital safety.

Key takeaway

Bark for Schools gave Plum Borough a practical, scalable solution to manage digital risks, educate students on safe online behavior, and respond quickly to potential crises.

Background

We spoke with Dan Lauletta, IT director of Plum Borough School District in Plum, Pennsylvania, to find out how Bark has helped his district confront the challenges facing students today.

“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.”

The online challenges facing kids today

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. Lauletta added,

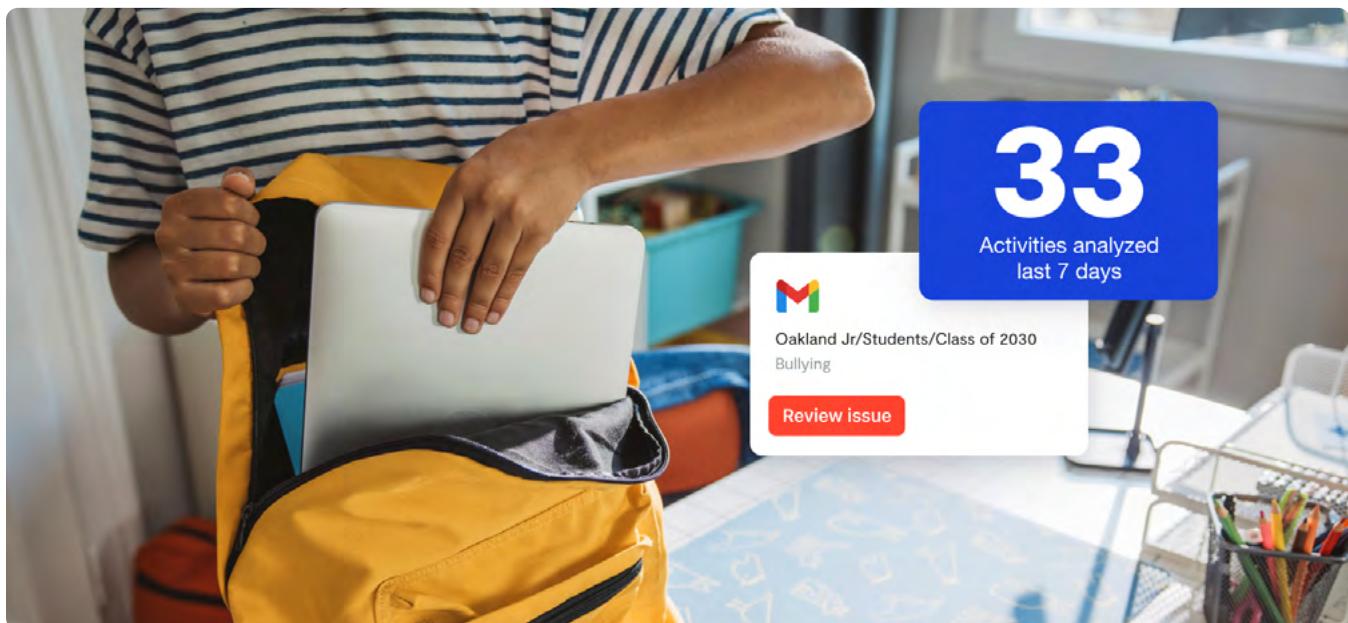
“We as elders have to make sure our students are good digital citizens.”

Apart from bullying and mental health issues, kids also face issues like online predators, extremist content, inappropriate sexual content, and porn. Everywhere kids turn, something else is popping up to prevent a danger or a distraction.

About Bark for Schools

[Bark for Schools](#) is available to all K–12 schools in the U.S., monitoring Google Workspace and Microsoft 365 accounts for cyberbullying, suicidal ideation, sexual predators, school shootings, and other digital risks. Built to give back to school communities after Parkland, the free and paid product extends Bark for Families' safety technology to schools.

Today, thousands of districts trust Bark for Schools to provide real-time alerts, actionable reporting, and tools that help educators intervene early, promote digital citizenship, and keep students safer online.



The reality for teens and tweens, according to the 2024 annual report from Bark



77% of teens

experienced bullying as a bully, victim, or witness.



40% of tweens

engaged in conversations about anxiety.



43% of teens

engaged in conversations about depression.

Insights from an IT director: Q&A with Dan Lauletta

How has Bark proven its value?

"I put Bark in place to make sure our students were safe, and at one point, 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."

What do you tell parents about Bark?

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

What impresses you about Bark for Schools?

"How it goes about monitoring, how it looks at images and content, how it lets you flag certain things, and look at user histories. 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."

The 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."

What would you tell other schools about Bark?

"What makes Bark 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 www.bark.us/learn/k-12/ to learn more about Bark for Schools.