How a Delaware District Improved Reunification Processes After an Exercise with Raptor
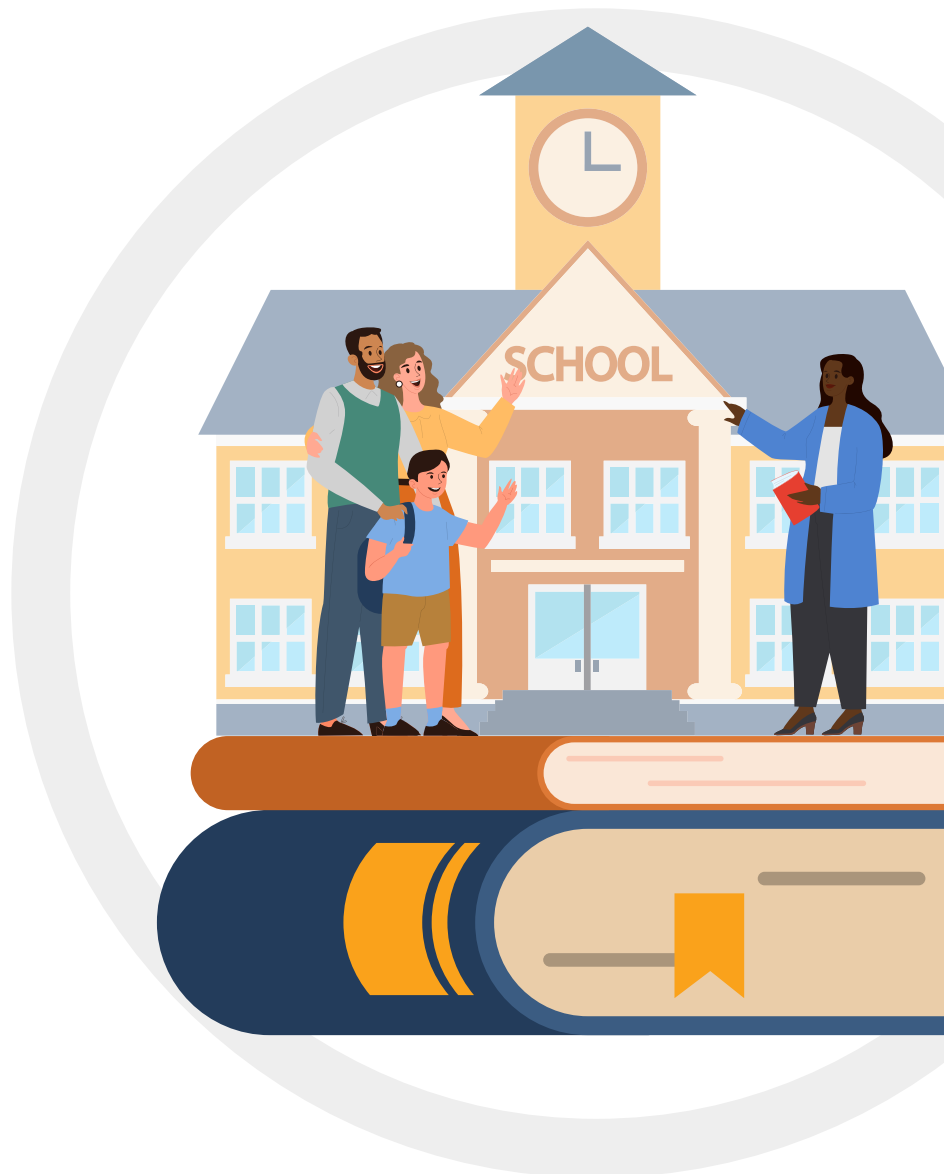
Appoquinimink School District—one of Delaware's fastest growing school systems—is a role model to other districts in the state. This is largely in part due to the district's focus on ensuring the safety and security of its students and staff.

THE CHALLENGE

After several safety issues at one of their high schools, Tom Poehlmann transitioned from school principal to the district's Director of Safety, Security, & Operations. Tom promptly began implementing technology and processes to make his district safer, but he was still concerned about one major component: how to reunify students with their guardians.

Reunification is critical to school safety, yet it can be incredibly challenging to create a process that works. "I had 20 schools, over 12,000 students, and a few thousand employees looking at me to create this process," Tom recalls.

HOW RAPTOR HELPED

Like many school leaders, Tom was introduced to The "I Love U Guys" Foundation® and their Standard Reunification Method (SRM).

"As soon as I digested their protocol, we put everything we needed together for a successful reunification." However, Tom was looking to move the process from paper-and-pencil to an electronic system. "Paper-and-pencil processes—especially at our larger schools of 1,700 students—can be incredibly cumbersome," he states.

That's why Tom and his district implemented Raptor Reunification. Aligned with the SRM and other "I Love U Guys" programs, Raptor Reunification is a trusted software that streamlines the entire reunification process and helps ensure students are only reunified with approved guardians. With over 20 years of experience, Raptor helps districts of all sizes create reunification plans specifically for their needs.

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I wanted to ensure that what our district implemented for a reunification program is something sustainable.

Raptor has been exceptional and helped me feel confident that we can reach this goal.

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THE RESULTS

As part of the implementation, the Raptor team led an on-site, comprehensive training session for the district. "The Raptor training was engaging," Tom shares, "and it was easy to get my staff on board with our new reunification processes." Tom quickly learned during that training that he needed more people on his reunification team than he originally thought. "Raptor came back and did another training to a larger audience in my district. It was extremely helpful in getting everyone up to speed."

Tom went on to say, "By doing this exercise, we learned many valuable lessons and how we can improve our procedures to keep everyone safer. My teams now fully understand their roles and responsibilities, and what is needed to make reunification streamlined and successful."

When asked what he would say to districts who are skeptical about implementing reunification software or doing an exercise, Tom advises schools to think big picture. "Having Raptor on-site showed us that there are other reasons we may need to evacuate—not just the worst-case scenario of an active shooter—and that we can use the software for these other situations." These other situations could be a bomb threat, weather-related event, or a gas leak.

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