

CASE STUDY

Unifying Community Engagement at Fort Mill

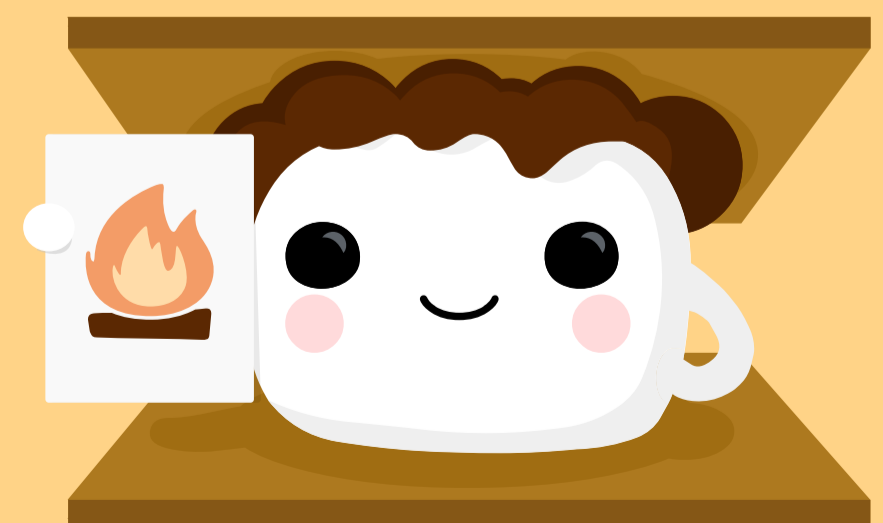
with Smore for Teams



Size: 18,430 students

Products Used: Smore for Teams

Location: York County, South Carolina



Introduction

Fort Mill School District, the largest in York County, South Carolina, was in an enviable position: the community was engaged, families regularly checked for updates, and many school Principals were proactive in sending out communications.

But there was one big challenge—messages were going out through a patchwork of platforms, without a centralized system.

“Everyone was using their own thing, or nothing at all. We wanted all Principals to have access to the same solution, and we needed district-level flexibility to communicate with students, families, our broader community, and even prospective teachers during recruitment.”

—Joe Burke, Chief Communication Officer at Fort Mill School District

Adopting a unified platform in Smore for Teams

Finding a platform that met everyone’s needs wasn’t simple. School Principals wanted something user-friendly with multimedia capabilities. The recruitment team needed a tool that supported on-brand visuals. And the district office needed a scalable, cost-effective way to reach a large audience.

With unanimous buy-in, the transition to Smore was fast and impressively painless.

“It was a quick rollout. The platform is intuitive. People were creating custom backgrounds and experimenting with content blocks right away, no training needed,” said Joe Burke, Chief Communication Officer at Fort Mill School District

Smore for Teams checked all the boxes

- ✓ School Principals could easily embed videos from YouTube to enhance their newsletters
- ✓ The recruitment team used Canva integrations and custom backgrounds to create polished, on-brand communications
- ✓ District staff could send mass newsletters without worrying about extra costs

Using analytics to craft messaging

Fort Mill's community is deeply engaged, and they take pride in staying informed. Thanks to that strong connection, the district's newsletter creators didn't have to worry about open rates. They were already above average.

Instead, the team focused on deeper questions like, **"Are people truly engaging with the content, or just skimming the headlines?"**



With Smore's built-in analytics, they found the answers. Click-through rates revealed which stories were capturing readers' attention. The "average time spent reading" metric showed how people were actually engaging with the content. These insights have become valuable tools for Fort Mill's twelve creators—now they know they're sharing the content readers really want.

And while open rates weren't a concern, they still told an important story. The richness of Smore newsletters, with video, custom graphics, and links to other platforms, helped establish Smore newsletters as the go-to source for updates. Families know that whatever is happening in a school or across the district will be included in the newsletter.



The numbers speak for themselves. In April 2025, **Fort Mill's team published 27 newsletters, averaging 667 readers each**, demonstrating just how well everyone in the district is able to craft messages that resonate.

Getting answers to the community—quickly

For Joe Burke, one of the most powerful advantages of using Smore for Teams is speed. With a library of templates and a menu of tools, Fort Mill can create and distribute polished newsletters in minutes. **When important news breaks, they don't have to wait—they can respond almost instantly.**

"Just 10 years ago, social media was in its infancy. Now, it's one of the primary tools for sharing information, and it's only going to get bigger. Unfortunately, some of the information that spreads there can be inaccurate, incorrect, or incomplete."

—Joe Burke, Chief Communication Officer at Fort Mill School District

Sending out quick communication is the difference between being the news source and just trying to keep up with the news for Joe.

Whether it's clarifying a headline on education, keeping parents informed on safety updates, or disseminating the latest information on weather events, the **Fort Mill team can make sure families and community members hear the facts directly from them, a trusted source with complete information.**



Looking ahead

Fort Mill is already doing incredible work keeping community members, families, and prospective employees in the loop with Smore newsletters.

When asked about the road ahead, Mr. Burke hopes it will include an even bigger commitment to communication.

"Gone are the days of educational systems working in siloes. Everything in schools has become community-oriented, and you want to keep people involved and informed so that they're positively participating in schools."

—Joe Burke, Chief Communication Officer at Fort Mill School District

With a deep commitment to strong communication and community engagement, **Fort Mill School District** may soon have another enviable problem: organizing the influx of community members clamoring to be a part of school communities.

Ready to engage your community? [See how](#) with a demo of Smore for Teams.

