

CASE STUDY

# How **SchoolStatus Forms & Flows** Brought a School Community Together

*Editor's note: This case study was written while the product was named Operoo. It has since been renamed SchoolStatus Forms & Flows. The product name has been updated accordingly.*

Located in the Borough of Staten Island, Elias Bernstein Intermediate School 7 is a New York City school spread across three grade levels—sixth, seventh, and eighth.

With staff at Elias Bernstein striving to ensure its 1,200 students participate in its large range of events, field trips, extracurricular activities and support programs, Principal Dr. Nora De Rosa said that managing those services—and school trips in particular—had become exhausting for administrators, teachers and support staff alike.

With an innovative vision for Bernstein Intermediate, Dr. De Rosa and Assistant Principal Dina Testa were keen to embrace technology-led solutions to this challenge.

## Elias Bernstein I.S. 7



### Challenge

Improve inefficient, paper-based processes



### District Size

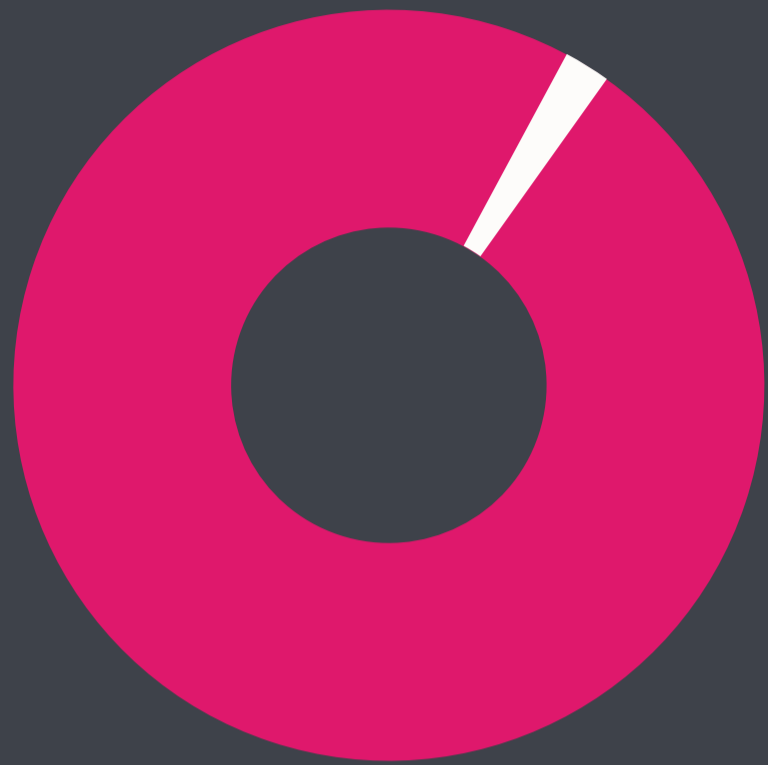
1,200+ students



### Products Used

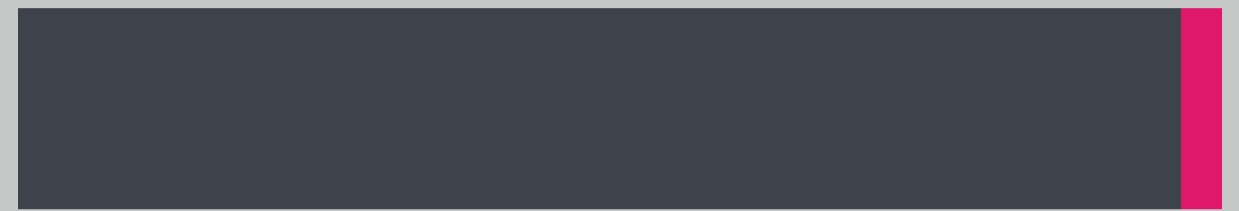
SchoolStatus Forms & Flows





**98%**

of forms and payment requests are returned without any manual follow-up



fewer than **10** of the school's 1,200 students have yet to sign up

**15**  **0**

parents no longer have to complete 15 paper forms on the first day of school

## The Challenge

Paper-based and disparate processes to approve, plan and manage school trips were massively inefficient for staff, while negatively impacting student participation and parent engagement.

## The Solution

SchoolStatus Forms & Flows streamlined and digitized the whole end-to-end trip management process in a single automated workflow, including permission slips, integrated payments, and anytime access to Blue Card emergency contact information.

## The Results

Elias Bernstein has completely transformed the way it plans, communicates and manages field trips, resulting in superior parent engagement, equity and access for students, and reduced administrative demands on school staff.

## **The Challenge: Trip Management Had Become a Nightmare—For Everyone**

Working with paper-based processes to approve, plan and manage school trips was increasingly inefficient and had begun to consume an unsustainable number of staff hours at Elias Bernstein.

“Collecting parental consent and payments was particularly time-consuming,” said Assistant Principal Dina Testa. “Staff had to issue multiple manual reminders, telephone parents, and follow-up with kids who had left paper permission slips and payments at home. In fact, most of the time, students simply left them crumpled at the bottom of their school backpacks, never making it home in the first place.”

On top of this, the school struggled to manage all the payments for every field trip. Testa said the school had no systemized mechanism for tracking payments.

“Children would often arrive on the morning of a trip and state that they had paid,” said Testa. “But, we had no record of payment or an accessible method of verification,” said Testa. “Additionally, parents would frequently say that they never received payment requests, leaving them equally exasperated.”

The inverse problem was also common. While parents could pay for some field trips through the school website, consent could not be given as part of that same process. Additionally, staff were left trying to match payments to specific trips and parent consent.

“Inevitably, parents often thought that submitting payment through the website also counted as consent,” said Testa. “Kids would frequently arrive for a trip in the morning, only to be told that they had no permission slip so could not attend.”

**“Simply put, parents and staff just didn’t want to deal with all this paper, and the associated manual processes, to try and track all of our events. We needed a solution that could automate and track all our school trip processes in one easy-to-use, mobile ready platform.”**



## **The Solution:** Automating Permission Slips, Payments—And Everything In-Between

For Testa and Elias Bernstein Intermediate staff, discovering SchoolStatus was a little like love at first sight.

**“Previously, we’d never been able to find anything that met our needs,” said Testa. “Then we found [SchoolStatus]. There was no other system out there that could take the whole trip management process online in a single automated workflow.”**

Now, teachers don’t have to produce, manage or chase endless paper forms. SchoolStatus Forms & Flows takes care of it all: From internal trip approvals, to creating, distributing and automatically following-up permission forms, collecting consent and payments, taking roll call, and securely accessing students’ emergency contact cards (Blue Cards) from any device—even when offline. And the parent community sees the benefits too.

“Parents love it,” said Testa. “Parents can give permission for their children to attend trips with a couple of clicks, and sign with a swipe of the finger via the mobile app. Even if it gets to the morning of an outing and parents have forgotten to give consent, teachers can call their cell and stay on the line while they submit permission in under a minute.”

Elias Bernstein also chose to add payment submission as a compulsory step within their trip consent forms. That way, both the school and parents know that when permission is given, payment has been too.

But the benefits of streamlined, digitized and integrated permission and payment workflows extend beyond field trips—for both parents and teachers.

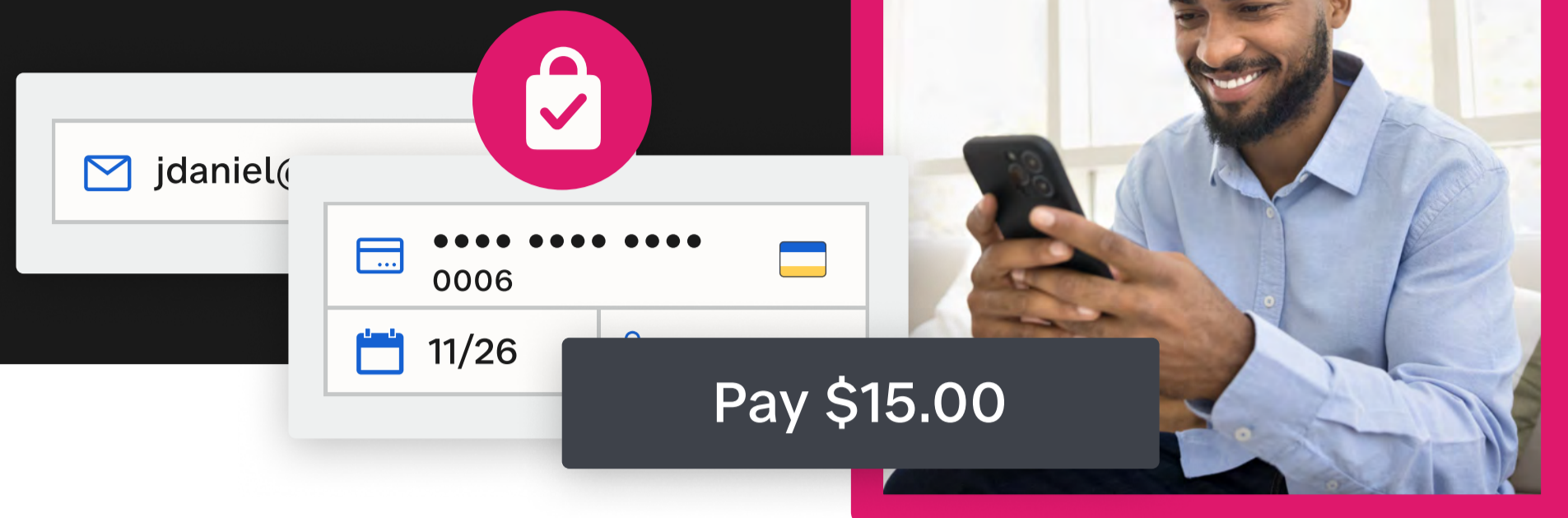
“Now, with [SchoolStatus Forms & Flows], it’s basically just one click for all the consent forms and contracts for parents,” said Testa. “Previously, the first day of school used to mean fifteen pieces of paper for parents to wade through. As a parent, not just an administrator, I see how much easier [SchoolStatus] makes things on both sides of the fence.”

Testa said that the impact of SchoolStatus Forms & Flows’ permission and payment workflows could be evidenced throughout a range of school programs—from extracurricular study groups and basketball sign-ups, to parent volunteering, student-teacher contracts, as well as collation and access to Blue Card information.

“We run an after school test-preparation program at a cost of \$155 per student,” said Testa. “For the last few years, I’ve got 80 kids involved.”

“This year, using [SchoolStatus Forms & Flows], we’re already up to 128 kids and we haven't even hit the due date—so I know there'll be more!”





“Last year, we had a poor turnout for our basketball program. Now, the amount of interest is overwhelming—we almost had too many registered! We’ve also consistently asked for parent volunteers, through our PTA, to help out at school events. Previously, we’ve been lucky to get a dozen volunteers. Today, we have more than 200.

“We also distribute our student-teacher contracts via [SchoolStatus Forms & Flows], which ensure each child brings the classroom supplies they need to participate,” said Testa.

“There’s no more begging students. [SchoolStatus] automatically identifies and sends out reminders to parents until each student comes to class fully equipped. Automated follow-ups are amazing.”

SchoolStatus Forms & Flows also provides streamlined workflows for the collection, updating and access to digital emergency contact Blue Cards. Authorized staff know exactly what to do, and who to call, in an emergency.

“We manage and update Blue Card information for both students and staff with [SchoolStatus Forms & Flows],” said Testa. “Previously, teachers had to physically go to the main office to request files.

**“Now, staff have anytime access to emergency information for all their students, straight from their phone—even when offline.**

**And, parents no longer have to stay up all night filling-in traditional Blue Cards, and providing repetitive information for every field trip their child attends.”**

## The Results: “It’s now second nature. We’ve had a huge amount of parent buy-in.”

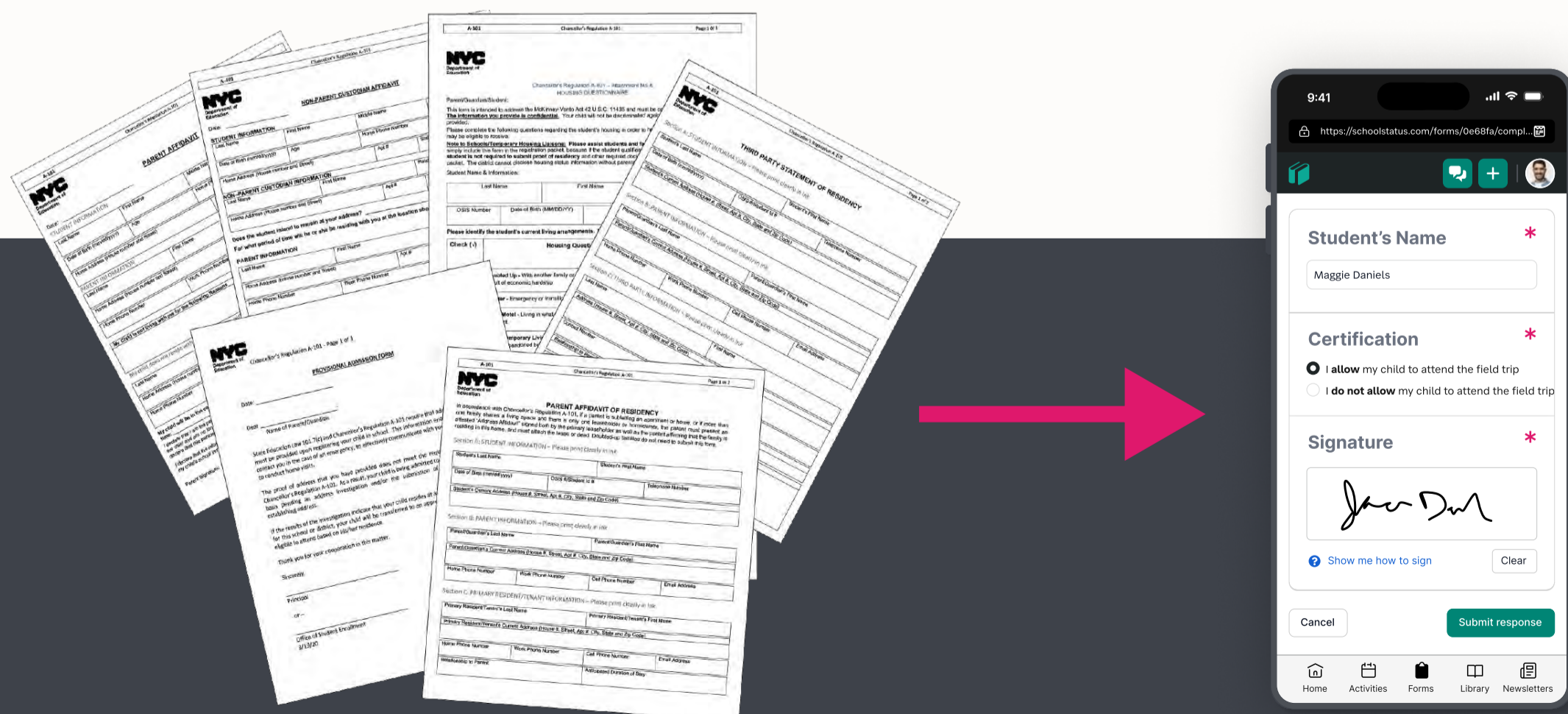
Elias Bernstein Intermediate has completely transformed the way it plans, communicates, and manages field trips, and other school processes.

Instead of manual, repetitive and disparate paper-based practices and procedures, SchoolStatus Forms & Flows’ school workflows platform automates those processes. The result? Increased parent engagement, equity and access for students, and reduced administrative demands on school staff—all while providing traceability and accountability.

Testa said that teachers now feel as though they are missing something, when on school trips, as they no longer need to carry a huge binder full of paperwork.

The transition has been extremely successful. Digital forms distributed to parents, including payments, have a 98 percent response rate—without any manual follow-up. In fact, Elias Bernstein processed over \$100,000 worth of transactions through SchoolStatus Forms & Flows’ integrated payments capability in the first three months of use.

“Of our 1,200 students, we have fewer than ten who are yet to sign-up to the platform,” said Testa. “We’ve had a huge amount of parent buy-in.”



And the benefits stretch far beyond school trips too.

**“Wherever we used to use paper—be it sports or study group sign-ups, Blue Cards, or any type of permission or approval request—we now use [SchoolStatus Forms & Flows] for everything we do,”** said Testa. **“It’s second nature for all of us at this point. Our teachers have embraced [SchoolStatus] for field trips, and its mobile app in particular. Feedback has been very positive from both staff and parents, who are now able to work together to increase the participation rates of our students, while providing excellent care. It really is a seamless system.”**

Testa added that, while implementing such a significant change had its challenges, SchoolStatus delivered the support needed to make Elias Bernstein successful.

**“The help [SchoolStatus] gave us was amazing; I’ve never before received help like that from any company,”** said Testa. **“The [SchoolStatus] team was responsive to our needs and delivered top notch support you just can’t beat. Honestly, we feel like we want to stay with [SchoolStatus] forever. Its people make it such a good experience.”**



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