



Love at First Click: Red Rover Helps Clarksville-Montgomery County School System Streamline Absence Management

About Clarksville-Montgomery County School System

The Clarksville-Montgomery County School System (CMCSS) is a melting pot nestled between Nashville and a major army base, Fort Campbell. It boasts a graduation rate of 94.3%, exceeding Tennessee's state average of 89.6%. CMCSS is unique—it is not only the seventh-largest district in the state but also the second-largest employer in the county.

CMCSS is committed to providing students with modern technology and pathways to future success. The district features specialized college and career academies within its high schools and has introduced a 1:1 tech initiative across K12.

- **45** schools
- **5,594** employees (including substitutes)
- **38,900** students
- **15%** students with disabilities
- **51%** economically disadvantaged
- **27%** connected to the military
- **Ethnicity:**
 - 47%** White
 - 32%** Black or African American
 - 16%** Hispanic



Overview: A Familiar Yet Modern Absence Management Solution

Like most districts throughout the country, after the COVID-19 pandemic, CMCSS struggled to fill vacant staff positions. Macro issues like a growing shortage of teacher graduates coupled with shifts that came out of the pandemic led to a depleted substitute pool by the end of the 2022 school year.

Although CMCSS tried a variety of initiatives to address the problem, including grow-your-own teacher pipeline models and increasing pay for substitutes, the district needed a more effective and cost-efficient solution to help manage its substitute teaching program. Erica Christmas, Ed.D., Director of Classified Employment, and her team discovered a promising alternative in Red Rover. “It felt familiar but was completely modern, updated, and so user-friendly,” she said. “I was blown away.”

“[The team at Red Rover is] helpful, they’re friendly, they respond in seconds, and I mean seconds. I’ve timed them.”

Erica Christmas, Ed.D.
CMCSS Director of Classified
Employment

Tailored Timing, Customized Solutions, Seamless Implementation

After conducting a thorough evaluation and witnessing an in-person demonstration, CMCSS decided to implement Red Rover in July 2022. Dr. Christmas emphasized how much Red Rover’s innovation, freshness, and relevance influenced their decision-making process. She found the text messaging and app features particularly valuable, especially when compared to the outdated systems of other competitors. Moreover, Red Rover’s ability to seamlessly integrate with other programs, such as time management and HR systems, was crucial for their successful implementation.

The transition to Red Rover implementation was seamlessly executed, starting with a summer 2022 acclimatization period followed by district-wide implementation in August of the same year. Dr. Christmas was particularly impressed by Red Rover’s flexibility in tailoring the implementation period to meet the specific needs of their district. Red Rover offered various implementation timelines, spanning from one month to an entire year, empowering CMCSS to devise a customized approach.

Red Rover’s exceptional customer support significantly contributed to the implementation process. Dr. Christmas emphasized, “They’re helpful, they’re friendly, they respond in seconds, and I mean seconds. I’ve timed them.”

A Smooth Transition to New Technology

“It’s always nerve-wracking to introduce something new,” acknowledged Christmas. “People don’t necessarily embrace change.” Past program rollouts hadn’t always run smoothly, so CMCSS management and users were skeptical about how Red Rover might work day-to-day.

The CMCSS staff appreciate Red Rover's:

- Monthly huddles with reminders of functions and new features
- Quick and helpful customer service
- The look and feel of the platform
- Easy usability and modern touches
- Reporting, including the ability to fully customizable reports
- Text messaging features that keep substitutes engaged in filling positions

To preempt any potential usability issues, Christmas and her team took proactive measures: they pinned the user videos to the bulletin board on Red Rover, sent messages to all users about the new system and training videos, and even offered opportunities for individualized training for anyone who wanted it.

Christmas even offered school visits to aid in Red Rover training. "I was nervous," she admitted. "I hit send on the message and braced myself. I didn't know how we would manage it if thousands of people wanted the one-on-one support I had offered."

To their surprise, Christmas's team didn't receive a single phone call requesting additional help. Staff across the district immediately noted and appreciated the ease and intuitiveness of Red Rover compared to their previous systems. "As a result, people were willing to get in there and figure it out—like watching a quick training video. It was incredible."

A Feature-Rich Solution Powers Streamlined Operations

CMCSS, like many districts, centralizes its employee resources through a hub. One of Christmas's priorities in switching to Red Rover was streamlining staff access to the hub using a single-sign-on process.

"I shared early on that I had clicking fatigue [with other systems]," Christmas said. "One thing I immediately noticed about Red Rover was the ease of navigating to where I needed to go without having to do a lot of clicking."

Red Rover's texting feature was another user-friendly bonus for CMCSS because it allowed Christmas and her team to quickly fill last-minute absences. With its streamlined absence recording and substitute finding features, Christmas and her team could focus on other areas of their jobs.

"That's not to say that technology doesn't let us down sometimes," Christmas noted. "It will. But the people working for Red Rover won't. There's a lot of security in that. I have yet to encounter a situation where I have something I need that Red Rover can't provide."

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CMCSS Director of Classified Employment

“It was a very comfortable approach to introducing a new program to our district that could be completely tailored to our timing.”

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Conclusion

In 2022, the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System (CMCSS) embarked on a transformative journey with Red Rover to revolutionize its substitute management system and streamline HR operations. Led by Dr. Erica Christmas and her team, the implementation of Red Rover marked a significant milestone in CMCSS’s pursuit of innovative solutions that embrace modern technology. Red Rover seamlessly integrated into CMCSS’s infrastructure by offering a feature-rich solution tailored to the district’s needs. The user-friendly interface, coupled with exceptional customer service and customization, garnered widespread adoption and appreciation from staff.

Red Rover stands as a beacon of reliability and efficiency, empowering CMCSS to focus on what it does best: providing quality education to its students and supporting local employment opportunities.

Dr. Christmas expressed her appreciation for Red Rover: “I love Red Rover, and I love the people that work there.”

About Red Rover

Red Rover’s modern, intuitive absence management and time tracking solutions simplify and improve life for administrators, employees, substitutes, and students.

To learn more, visit RedRoverK12.com or call us at (717) 897-6837.