

## CASE STUDY



THE EMILY WARREN ROEBLING SCHOOL

# How Creating One Single Source of Truth Transformed Operations

**GRADES:** K-5

**STUDENTS:** 700

**LOCATION:** Brooklyn, NY

The Emily Warren Roebling School—otherwise known as Public School 8—is an elementary school in Brooklyn, which operates as part of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE). At PS 8, fewer than 60 staff members are responsible for just under 700 students from kindergarten through 5th grade.

As the neighborhood demographics changed and the school population grew, the office staff struggled with the increasing strain of managing manual, paper-based processes. Principal Trish Peterson understood that to keep pace with NYCDOE compliance requirements, keep her students safe and engaged, and keep the school's resources and staff focused on achieving excellent educational outcomes, she needed to find a way to streamline and optimize operations.



## The Challenge:

# The Unreliable & Repetitive Nature of Paper-Based Processes

Because every form and associated workflow was paper-based, PS 8's processes were not only resource intensive, they lacked consistency and reliability. This was especially concerning when it came to student Blue Cards, NYCDOE's emergency contact and medical management document.

"Prior to Operoo, parents had to complete three copies of every student's Blue Card at the beginning of each year," said Peterson. "One for the main office, another for the nurse's office, and a third for the classroom teacher. And Blue Cards represent just one form type for student onboarding and registration!"

Plus, the physical nature of Blue Card completion, collection, and collation was extremely limiting. "The compact amount of space dedicated to each section of the Blue Cards meant that we couldn't always read or fit in all the required information," explained Peterson. "In addition, the system was vulnerable because it was possible that, in an emergency, someone might not have physically filed the Blue Card in its correct spot after previous use."



**The avalanche of paperwork often resulted in imperfect tracking and incomplete data collection at an individual teacher level, which meant imperfect record-keeping at the school level.**

**TRISH PETERSON, PRINCIPAL, PS8 THE EMILY WARREN ROEBLING SCHOOL**

## **Eliminating antiquated paper-centric systems**

A paper-centric system also meant more work for both teachers and parents—especially at the start of the school year.

“For kindergarten students registering for the first time, NYCDOE requires 17 separate documents to be completed,” Peterson said. “For registered or returning students, there are all of the usual onboarding forms the school needs for the year ahead—from Field Trip permission slips, Google Classroom usage agreements and Media Consent Forms, to Student Onboarding documents, Discipline, Cell Phone and Class Contracts.”

Parents provided the same information again and again. The manual nature of form distribution and collection also meant a lack of uniformity: teachers didn’t always collect all the necessary information in the right way.

“The avalanche of paperwork often resulted in imperfect tracking and incomplete data collection at an individual teacher level, which meant imperfect record-keeping at the school level,” said Peterson. “In fact, in my conversations with our teachers, some admitted that they were unfamiliar with the school administration’s regulations and requirements for form types. At that point, it became clear we needed a way to automate this process in order to remove potential for human error.”



## The Solution:

# Automated Processes, Digital Distribution, Reliable Data

Peterson shared that digitizing the distribution of forms and collection of data via Operoo's School Platform enabled PS 8 to easily establish a single source of truth for reliable, up-to-date student information—for the first time.

“With Operoo, we know that the right forms are being sent directly to parents,” said Peterson. “We also know that the right information is requested of all parents, responses are tracked and returned data is made universally accessible to authorized staff—at any moment, through any device. It would be so hard to go back to how things were before Operoo.”

## Embracing organization-wide participation for compliance and participation

Peterson shared that PS 8's Parent Coordinator, Eileen Carrier, also uses Operoo to correct and update student data in other NYCDOE systems. “We use Operoo as our primary source of data and truth for student information, school operations and anything the NYCDOE mandates—from parent consent through Proof of Immunization,” said Peterson.

“It's so easy for staff to update data as things change. And, because Operoo is forward-facing, even parents can directly update student information, with relevant staff immediately notified of those changes. With Operoo, we know we always have the best student information on hand.”

Automating these recurring processes was also critical for reducing staff workload—particularly during student registration and onboarding.



## OVER 80 AUTOMATED

School forms  
and workflows



## 10 STEPS TO 1 STEP

One-step teacher  
reimbursements



## 1 SINGLE SOURCE OF TRUTH

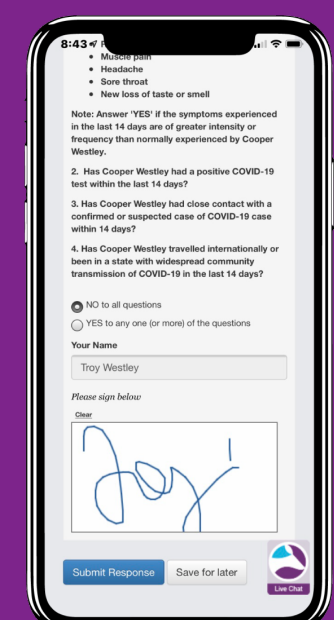
For all student data,  
consent, payments, and  
school operations

“Operoo does all of the distribution and chasing for us until everything is signed and returned,” said Peterson. “The platform eliminates wasted time, paper and human error, while delivering better and faster response rates. Parents are more engaged, student participation is up, and our staff can concentrate on delivering a better school experience rather than inefficient admin tasks.”

Peterson added that it wasn’t just the automation of student registration and onboarding processes at the start of the school year where Operoo saved the day.

Operoo also helped PS 8 facilitate ongoing communications and processes to keep staff and parents informed throughout the year. “The ability to quickly send messages to parents, and then copy staff, has been amazing,” shared Peterson.

While Operoo had quickly lightened the load on staff, dramatically streamlining many of its school processes in one place, none of that would have mattered without parent uptake of the system.



## The Results:

# Consolidating School Processes for Better Administration-Parent Collaboration

“Parent buy-in was absolutely critical to Operoo’s success,” said Peterson. “No matter how beneficial school staff found it, that view needed to be shared by parents—and it is.”

The ability to integrate a variety of payment mechanisms into the one form type was particularly important to avoid confusion and arduous volumes of additional paperwork.

“Parents have always wanted to pay via credit card when submitting consent for trips and activities,” said Peterson. “Operoo is a lifesaver and eliminates an incredible amount of back-and-forth.”

“As soon as parents submit online consent, we know that we’ve received secure electronic payment as well. And, if we get last-minute permission and payment, we can let those kids board the bus with confidence,” Peterson added.

PS 8 staff have also directly benefited from the overhauled payments capabilities. “Teacher reimbursements used to be a nightmare,” said Peterson. “It was something like a 10-step process. Now, it’s one step with Operoo.”



### 100% PARENT ADOPTION

Of Operoo across PS 8’s 685 students



### 100% STAFF ADOPTION

Staff rave about Operoo and the amount of time the platform saves them



### 139 KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATIONS

In the first month of PS 8’s new digital-only registration process

## The Bonus:

# Online-Only Kindergarten Registration and Onboarding

While using Operoo to streamline forms and workflows related to Blue Cards, parent consent, payments and school trips was always on the agenda, an unexpected use case dug PS 8 out of a sizable potential hole.

“Prior to the pandemic, children had to be physically seen in order to be registered for the new school year. The NYCDOE then mandated that, due to the pandemic, schools had to establish 100% digital methods of registration, which meet all the same information requirements and compliance standards,” Peterson shared. “I can honestly say that Operoo was a lifesaver here—I’m not sure what we would have done without it.”

Using Operoo and its best-practice templates, PS 8 seamlessly replicated, distributed, and collected mandated forms digitally and automatically, then mapped them back to NYCDOE-issued PDFs for record keeping.

“Operoo delivers all forms straight to the cell phones of incoming parents, which they can complete, sign and return with ease in any language and from any device,” said Peterson. “From an administrative perspective, it gives the school the ability to track exactly what has and hasn’t been returned for each prospective student.”

“It’s all going so well, we now have a waitlist for our kindergarten program. And, we are able to move forward with registrations with no meetings or home visits, and no paper or photocopies. After this, it’s hard to see us going back to the old way of doing things.”

Buoyed by their experience, PS 8 is now using Operoo to fully digitize its onboarding processes for returning students for the new school year.

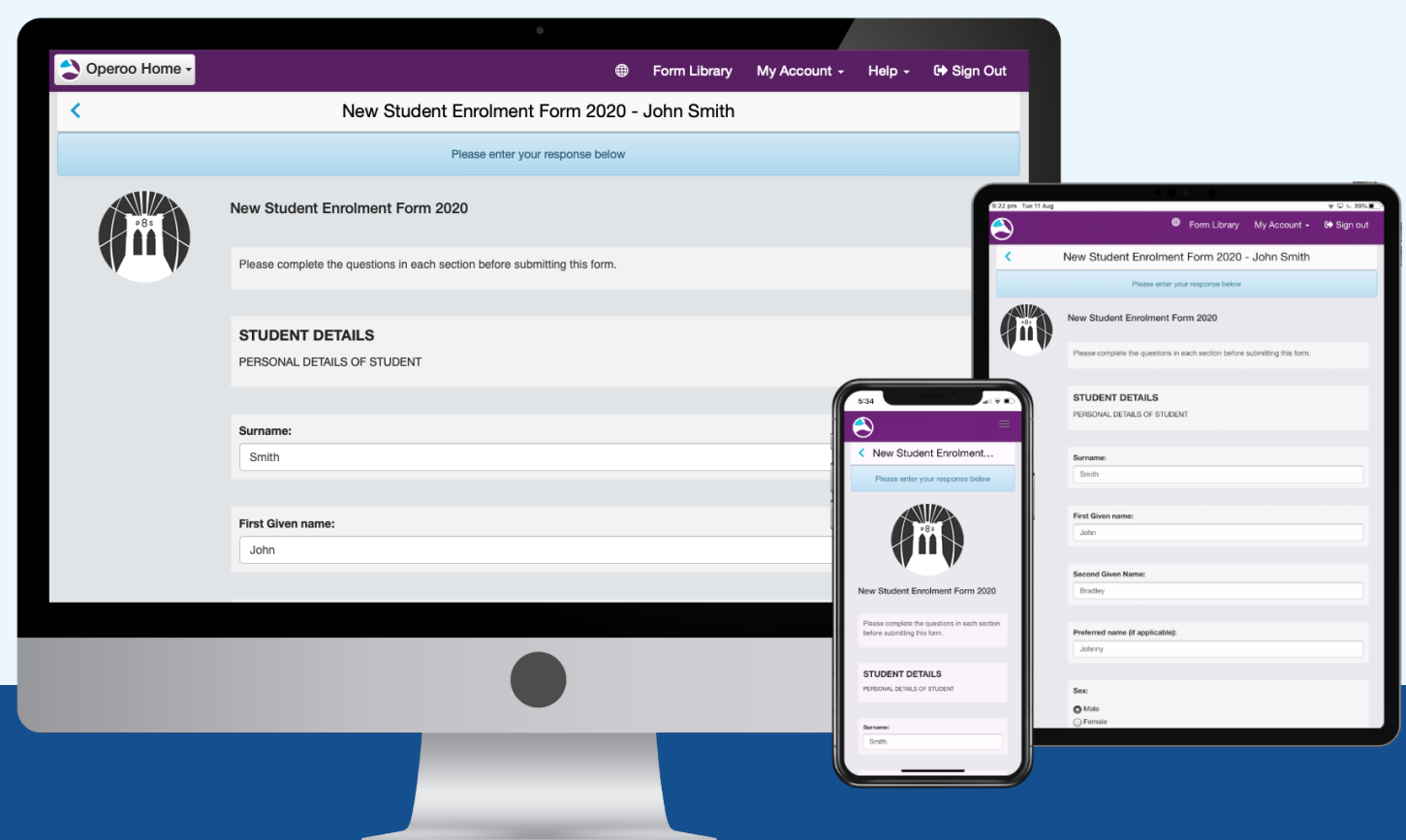
“Parents and staff rave about Operoo,” said Peterson. “From the moment we signed-on, the Operoo team has been so responsive to our needs. Everything has been amazing.”



# A New Normal

By taking the initiative to introduce a powerful digitization system that streamlined operations and better aligned administrators, faculty, and parents, the PS8 The Emily Warren Roebling School was able to supercharge imperative initiatives such as student registration, school trips, and teacher reimbursement.

Freeing school staff and parents from time-consuming and confusing manual data entry has skyrocketed levels of family participation throughout the PS8 community, leaving everyone excited, engaged and...relieved!



**Schedule a meeting to learn more about our easy-to-complete digital, customizable multi-language school forms and workflows.**

**LET'S TALK**