

Supporting the village: Tips for improving customer support in K-12 schools



While 2020 proved schools can be agile, it also exposed systematic weaknesses-- leading the education industry to confront its operational efficiencies head-on. The stakes are now much higher, as students and parents expect to be met with constant communication and support, no matter the circumstances.

In the webinar [“On Campus to Online,”](#) Zendesk sat down with Shylene Sanchez, Director of Technology Support at Grapevine Colleyville ISD, a K-12 school district near Dallas, Texas. Shylene clued us into how her school handles both in-person and remote learning. Although she touched on how her team initially struggled to manage the influx of support tickets, Shylene’s main focus was on maintaining their core values-- rolling out an approach equally focused on efficiency as it is quality communication and empathy.

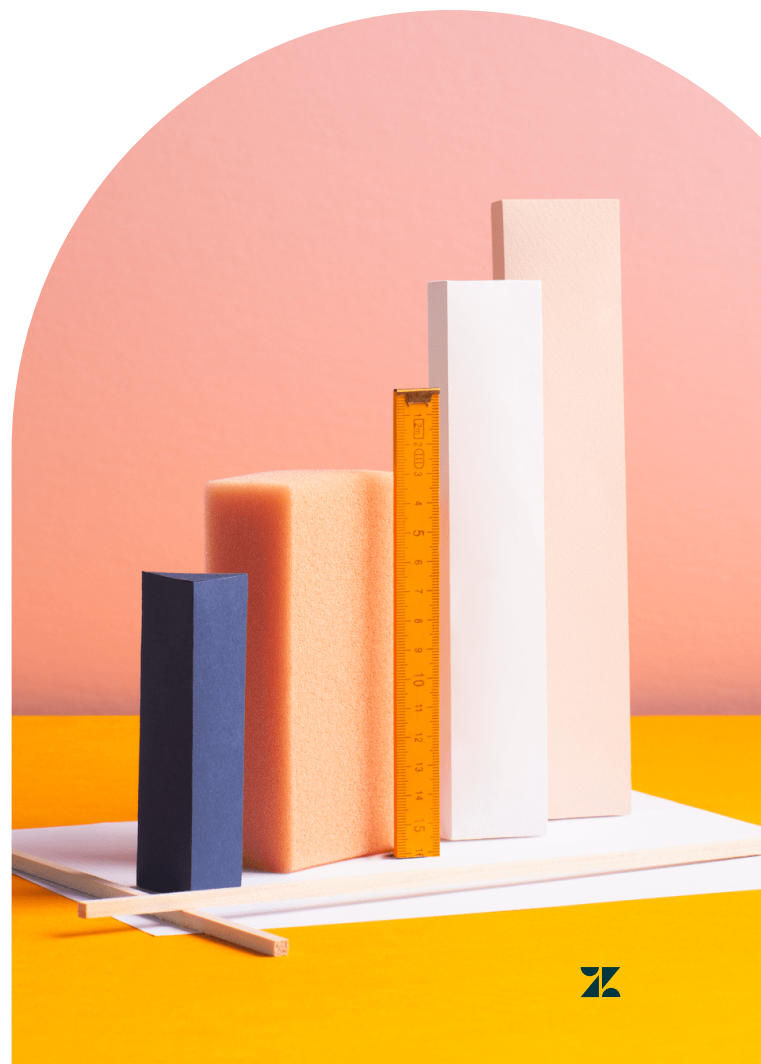
Read on to learn how to take your customer support strategy to the next level, ensuring that as a school administrator, you too, can prioritize both people and problem solving.

Design a solution you can scale

In an effort to reduce call and ticket volume, one of the first things your support team can do is focus on existing resources. Promoting self-service as the first line of defense will free up agents to focus on more complex cases while guiding your community of students and parents towards a more sustainable solution. Here are a few ways you can make sure your knowledge base gets an A+.

- ✔ **Use prime real-estate:** Push frequently asked questions and breaking news to the top of your website. [Promote articles](#) and use [Contextual Help](#) to get your return to learn protocol front and center.

- ✔ **Design with your audience in mind:** Define your information seekers. Are they students? Parents? Faculty? If you are navigating multiple audiences, it might make sense to tailor your knowledge base. When Grapevine Colleyville ISD went remote, they decided to leverage the internal and external versions of their Guide. Technicians had one platform dedicated to sourcing repair information while students and parents were directed towards a separate one, filled with go-to resources and step-by-step tutorials.
- ✔ **Put the answer bot to work:** Leveraging a machine learning tool like [Answer Bot](#) can help provide support in that “in-between phase,” catching someone as they are struggling to self-serve but before they loop in a technician for support.



Keep communication personal

Finding ways to retain personal connections is one of the biggest challenges schools face when transitioning operating remote or hybrid learning environments. If an issue can't be resolved using the knowledge base and Answer Bot's striking out, it definitely requires some 1:1 support. Below are a couple simple changes your team can make to ensure that once that person reaches an agent, they are met with the personal touch they deserve.

- ✔ **Rethink automated replies:** When providing customer support, the first engagement is always the most important. Kicking things off with an automated reply is impersonal and can be ineffective and frustrating for the recipient. Try swapping automated replies out with the use of a chat function or link to a place where people can get fast and direct support.
- ✔ **Turn on call-backs:** Waiting in line is never a fun way to spend time. Give your students and faculty the choice to [request a call back](#) instead of staying on hold. This sends the message that you value their time.
- ✔ **Leverage skills-based routing:** Automatically route tickets to bilingual agents or those that are ADA certified. By matching customers with agents that have the necessary skills to solve a request from the get-go, students and parents can get personalized support without the added wait time.

Whether you are working with parents that are balancing full-time careers with the need to support their kids' education, or students trying to keep up coursework, school administrators need to remember that the K-12 community is juggling a lot right now. By investing in a support strategy designed with people at its core, administrators will not only be taking an effective course of action but also an empathetic one.



Zendesk for Education

Technology is the key to unlocking educational opportunities that support students, parents, and faculty. With all parties expressing the need to engage more informally and on the channels they are already using, it is critical that we continue to meet our community where they are.

At Zendesk, we provide schools with the right solution for all departments, whether it be IT, transportation, childcare, or counseling. Developing a single, comprehensive support strategy not only promotes operational efficiency and cost savings, but is the best way to provide an A+ customer support experience your students and staff are bound to rave about.

Join these [K-12 schools and higher ed institutions](#) in transforming their student experience today!

