

A young woman with long dark hair is smiling and looking at a tablet computer. She is wearing a light-colored sweater. In the background, a male teacher is leaning over a desk, looking at a tablet, and another student is also looking at a tablet. The scene is set in a classroom with bookshelves visible. The entire image has a yellowish-green tint.

MESSAGE RECEIVED:

A Guide for Building a Successful K-12 Communication Strategy:

Engage parents, empower students
and foster community relationships

Blackboard®

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Introduction

Message Received: A Guide for Building a Successful Communication Strategy will help you discover new ways to ramp up your communication strategy by hearing from some of our customers who are effectively engaging their parents and community. When it comes to home-to-school connection, going mobile, safety, security and your investments we want you to be equipped. Our customers have shared their expertise on these topics so you can learn how to keep everyone more informed, involved, and working together to increase student achievement at your school and/or district.



CHAPTER 1:

Construct a blueprint:

Essential components of a
strategic communication plan

Create an emergency notification plan

Communication is the foundation of any crisis planning, response, and recovery effort. The essential element to crisis communications—in addition to clear, accurate, and consistent messages—is the need for rapid delivery of critical information to large numbers of people.

A crisis communications plan outlines the process of rapidly and effectively sending credible information to key stakeholder groups by employing multiple and layered methods of communication.

Today’s technology keeps stakeholders informed and in touch like never before, and it can save lives during an emergency. So it is critical that a crisis communications plan includes an emergency notification system, like Blackboard’s, to deliver key messages over any device or platform to inform large groups of people about an emergency and its impacts.

Even the best crisis management plans and personnel are playing catch up when their organization has no crisis communication infrastructure in place.

“Even the best crisis management plans and personnel are playing catch up when their organization has no crisis communication infrastructure in place.”



Rick Kaufman, *Executive Director of Community Relations and Emergency Management, Bloomington Public Schools*
rkaufman@bloomington.k12.mn.us

Establish your district's brand

Lowell Public Schools determined that better communication for parents, students, and staff was a top priority for the district. We knew that we needed to build a strong brand for our institution while allowing the personality of each school in the district to shine. Our webmaster designed new logos for the district site and helped each school create mascot logos and choose color schemes. This branding was carried through to our letterhead, email signatures, websites, social media sites, and mobile app. We chose a uniformed template for each of our schools to promote a consistent brand that strengthens ties with staff, students, parents, and the entire K-12 community.

Our branding strategy has been successful. Our analytics show a huge increase in the use of our website, which jumped from 90,000 visitors per year to more than 400,000 visitors this year. The branding and marketing of the site played a very large role in the overall success of the implementation.

“Our analytics show a huge increase in the use of our website, which jumped from 90,000 visitors per year to more than 400,000 visitors this year.”



Bill Silver, Information Communication and Technology Services Director, Lowell Public School District
wsilver@lowell.k12.ma.us

Build your district website presence

The primary goal for our web presence is to provide relevant and accurate content to our staff, students, and community. The structure of the file system for our new website matches the organization of our district departments. The content originators retain control of curating it. When the content needs to appear in other areas, hyperlinks are used to eliminate redundant information and reduce the possibility of outdated or incorrect information. This structure, along with the low point of entry of a content management system allows us to de-centralize the authoring of the sites. Putting the responsibility on each department to maintain their own content reduces administrative overhead and ensures that the most accurate information reaches our end users.

During the initial design phase, we collected feedback from school and district administrators, allowing us to design a template that would meet the needs of a wide range of applications. The same template will work for our smallest elementary school and our largest post-secondary institution. In production, we are utilizing a form-driven feedback system, which allows us to react quickly and improve the quality and presentation in response to the needs of the community.

Secondly, we want to provide content in a consistent, navigable, and aesthetically pleasing package. It was important for our district to update our public image, and in part, this is being accomplished through the creation of a new set of design language guidelines and posting procedures for our district departments. To foster a sense of unity and consistency, many of these design elements have been integrated into our school sites as well.



“The same template will work for our smallest elementary school and our largest post-secondary institution.”



Ryan Bremer, IT—Senior Web and Media Developer, Manatee County School District

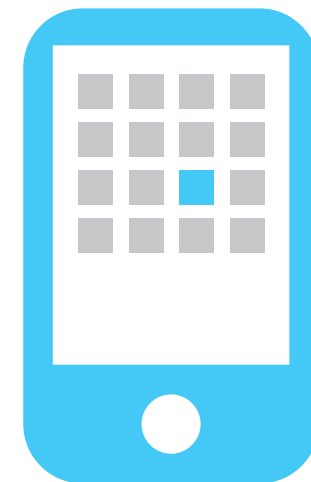
bremnerr@manateeschools.net

Build a district/school app

At Lowell Public Schools, better communication for parents, students, and staff is our first priority. While we didn't have solid data on parent and student mobile device ownership, we did have website analytics which showed that a 15% segment of visitors were viewing our websites via mobile device. This was a 300% increase in mobile viewing, and we knew we needed to find a way to better serve those users. Viewing a mobile site isn't always ideal, but accessing website information through an app gives a much more pleasing end-user experience.

Once our app was published to the App Store and Google Play, the next step was to spread the word. We bannered our website to advertise the app, pushed out the news to our social media sites, sent a mass email, and made a call to homes using Blackboard's mass notification solution. We had hundreds of downloads within the first few weeks. We plan to put up posters at each school that will include QR codes linking to the app so parents and students can easily download the app using their mobile device.

“...accessing website information through an app gives a much more pleasing end-user experience.”



John Overton, District Webmaster, Lowell Public School District

joverton@lowell.k12.ma.us

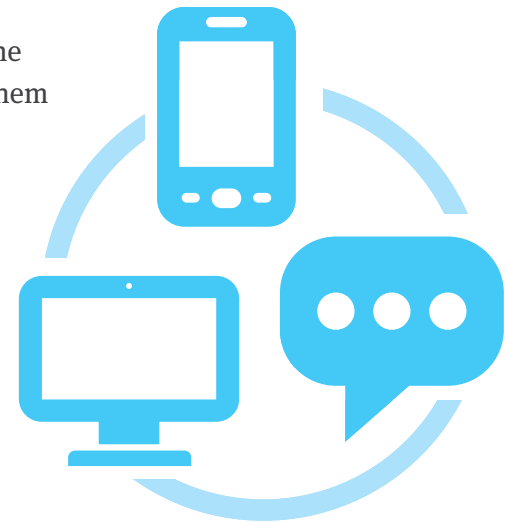
Integrate your mobile, notification, and web strategies

The decision to integrate mobile communications must be part of a comprehensive plan. Nixa developed guidelines for schools regarding when and how often to make rapid notification calls, texts, and emails powered by Blackboard. This keeps schools and the district from overwhelming parents. The district is incorporating push notifications on the app based on these guidelines.

Along with the notification schedule, the district made sure that information is placed in consistent areas of the website so that it is easily pushed to the app for parents to access. This required additional training in some schools, and we provided assistance so that all of the pieces of going mobile were in place. With effective communication, parents have the information they need right away.

Districts can monitor app runs, link clicks, and the impact on the number of calls to school offices. The communication strategy will be adjusted periodically to effectively engage the community and keep them fully informed.

“The decision to integrate mobile communications must be part of a comprehensive plan.”



Zac Rantz, *Chief Communication Officer, Nixa Public Schools*
zacrantz@nixaschools.net



CHAPTER 2:

Reach your community on the devices they prefer:

Steps to take your district mobile

Gather community feedback

When a district or school considers adopting a mobile communication strategy, an important consideration is the district's current method of reaching its audience. This will determine if the district is providing something that people need, want, and are ready for, or if more education is needed before a mobile strategy is to be implemented. The answer could very well be a combination of the two.

Simple questions about Internet access and smartphone and tablet use will shine a light on the community's current situation. Comparing this information to previous data (or local data) will show how quickly mobile access is growing.

Data usage is a key factor. If a district chooses a mobile communications plan but families in the community have limited data plans, the participation rate will be low.

The age of parents in the district is another consideration. Younger parent populations are more likely to be more active with mobile and mobile apps. If many of the parents are older, then more education and demonstration will be required, and they will be slower to access mobile sites.

A survey of parents should include questions about what information is most important to them. This could include calendar information, lunch information, and most-used links on the website. Understanding what parents want will help in developing a useful mobile app.

The student population should also be considered. They are more likely to use the app as well, so ask them what they would like to see. At Nixa, we found out that students wanted to use the mobile app to see their grades easily. This was great feedback that we had not anticipated.

Families are more and more likely to be mobile, but we learned that many of them no longer have printers at home. Districts will need to plan for this either by offering more digital work or by providing access to printing stations for families.



Zac Rantz, *Chief Communication Officer, Nixa Public Schools*
zacrantz@nixaschools.net

Identify and analyze your needs

Blackboard used a 3rd party independent research firm to launch a nation-wide survey to parents in the U.S. with school-aged children. Of those contacted, 604 parents completed the survey. The following stats may help you develop your mobile and communication plan. We also highly recommend surveying your parents and community for results specific to your school or district. Once you've gathered feedback, it's important to draw a conclusion for each question. Identifying and analyzing your parent and community needs is an important second step when taking your district mobile.

Identify and analyze your needs

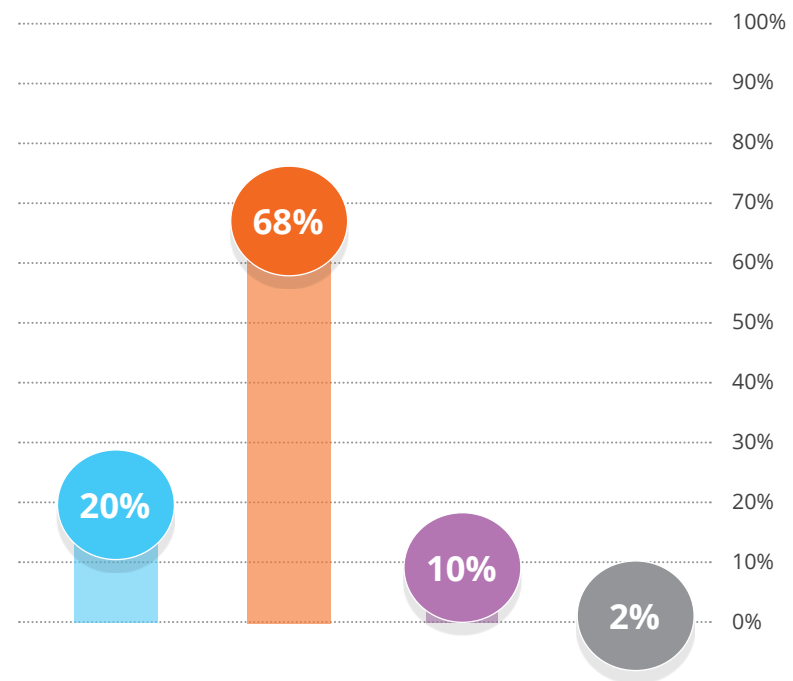
QUESTION:

Which of the following best describes your proficiency with technology such as smartphones, apps, and the web?

- **TECH EXPERT**
- **INTERMEDIATE**
- **BEGINNER**
- **ZERO PROFICIENCY**

CONCLUSION:

Parents are comfortable with technology. It's no surprise that parents and students are driving change in their schools, demanding that education keep up with the ever-changing world of technology.



Identify and analyze your needs

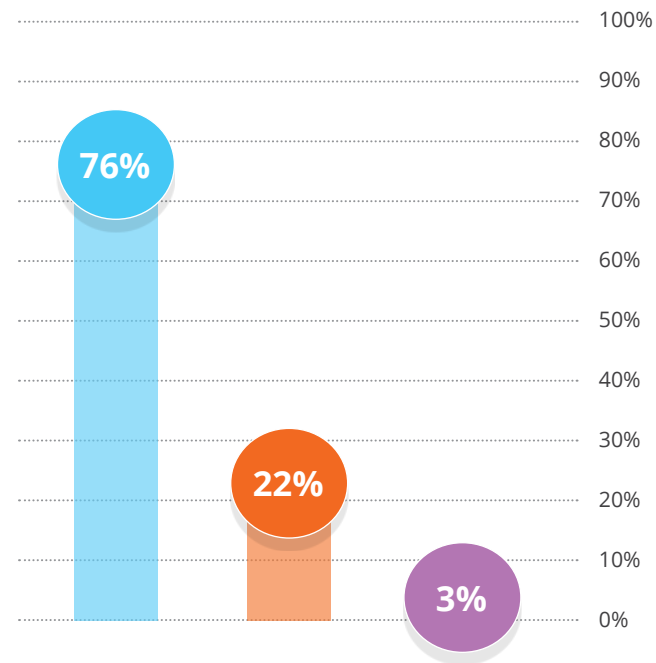
QUESTION:

Do you know what digital tools your child's school uses?

- YES
- NO
- NO DIGITAL TOOLS ARE USED

CONCLUSION:

Parents are involved with the use of digital tools. Therefore, it's more important than ever to keep parents informed about the digital tools you are offering at your district and schools.



Identify and analyze your needs

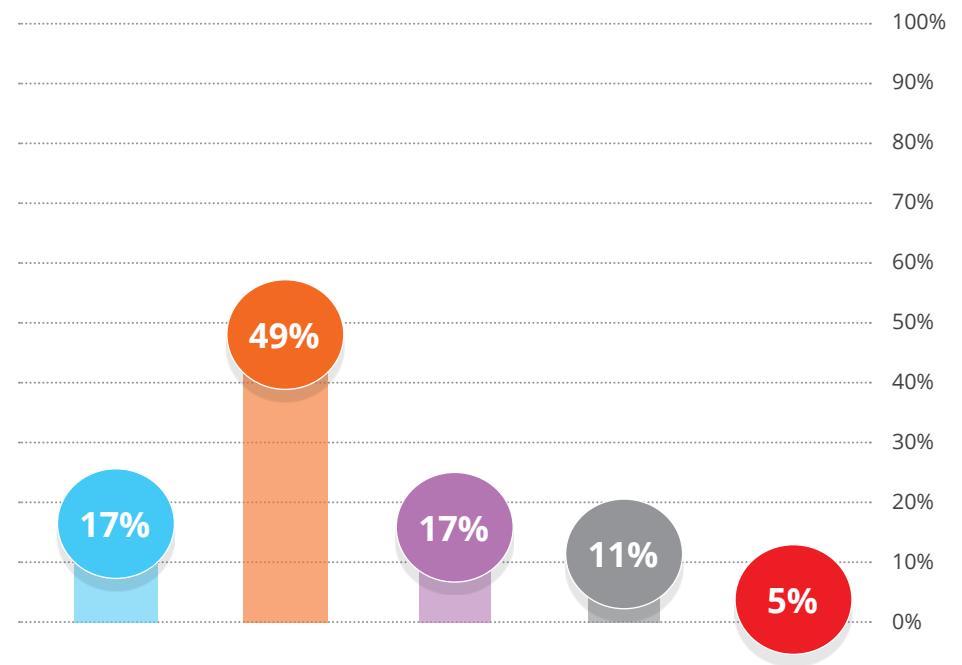
QUESTION:

How often do you access your school mobile app?

- DAILY
- WEEKLY
- MONTHLY
- RARELY
- NEVER

CONCLUSION:

Most parents access their school's app weekly. Mobile technology provides the flexibility for your families to engage with the information and resources they want from your district - when and where they want it - whether at home or on-the-go.



Identify and analyze your needs

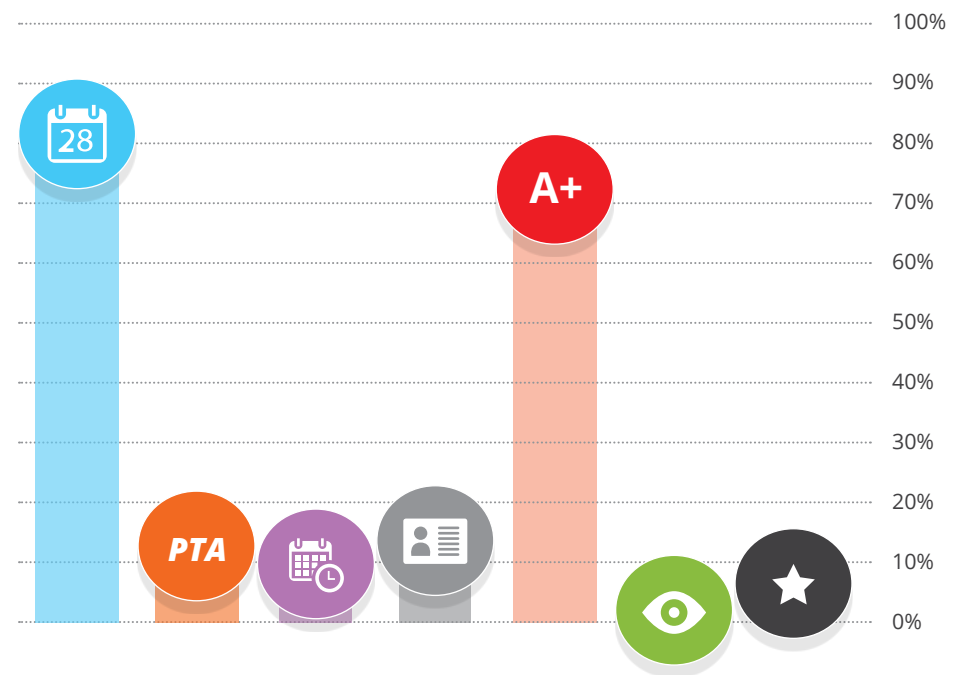
QUESTION:

What are the top two reasons you access your school's mobile app?

- CALENDAR/SCHEDULES (81%)
- PTA INFO (12%)
- ATTENDANCE INFO (10%)
- CONTACT INFO (13%)
- ACCESS GRADES (73%)
- REPORT BULLYING (2%)
- OTHER (8%)

CONCLUSION:

Academics and calendars were the top two reasons parents gave for accessing their school's app. Making many different resources available through your mobile app allows parents to choose how and why they access it and creates a more powerful communication and academic tool for your district and schools.



Identify and analyze your needs

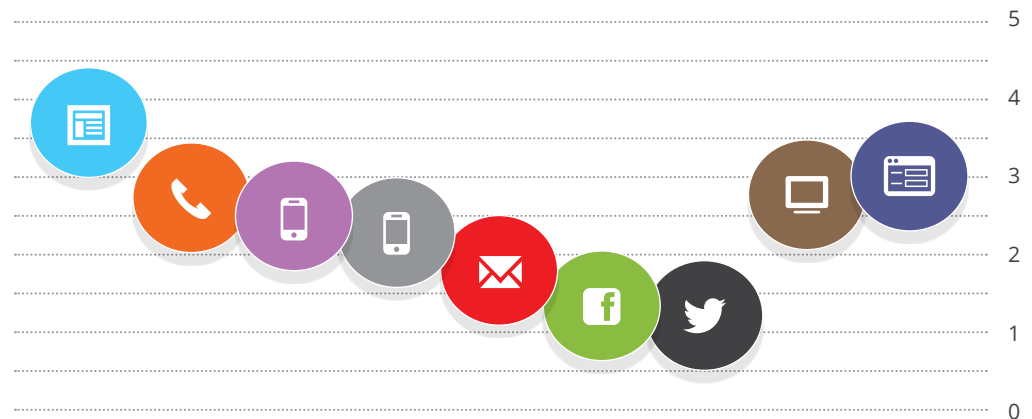
QUESTION:

Please specify your communication preferences for receiving information that will keep you involved with your child's school and classwork.

- EMAIL
- PHONE
- TEXT
- MOBILE APP
- POSTAL MAIL
- FACEBOOK
- TWITTER
- SCHOOL WEBSITE
- PARENT PORTAL

CONCLUSION:

Email, parent portal, school website, texts, and mobile app are the top five preferences. Parents get information about your district from many different resources. It's important when creating a communication plan to think holistically about the way you engage your parents and your community.



Identify and analyze your needs

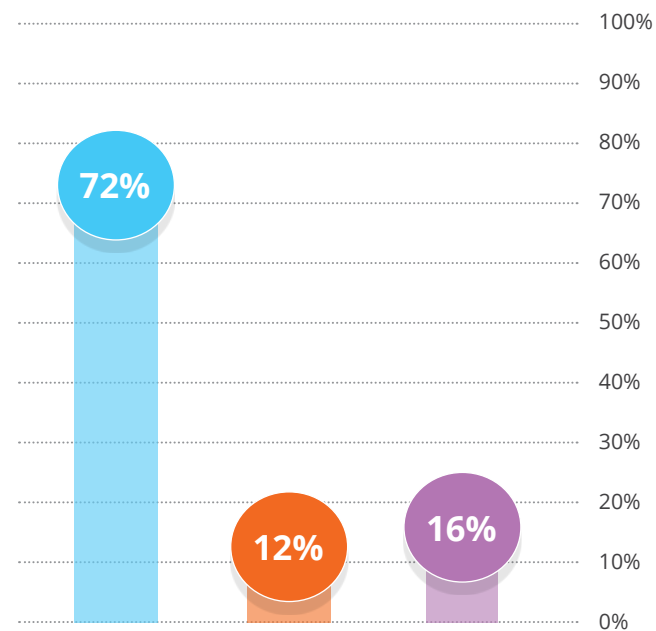
QUESTION:

Do you think technology has contributed to your child's overall success in school?

- YES
- NO
- DONT KNOW

CONCLUSION:

Yes! The classroom is evolving, with students now having the option to take courses entirely online and from home, or using a tablet from kindergarten through their senior year. E-readers, flipped classrooms, interactive whiteboards and online assignments and tests are no longer considered “revolutionary” as their presence in K-12 is truly commonplace.



Bring cross-department stakeholders together

The Public Schools of Edison Township has a progressive superintendent, Dr. Richard O'Malley, who has created a culture of innovation to support the educational process. Leveraging technology, media, and communication within the district that extends to the community is a main tenant to his educational philosophy. Dr. O'Malley charged his district team to explore different means of communication, and this resulted in the creation of the district's mobile app, My Edison.

The creation of the My Edison app was a collaborative effort between the district's technology departments, enrollment, professional development, curriculum and instruction, media team, and schools. The app is rich with information from daily lunch menus, school news, and sporting and activity schedules, and it provides access to student information via the parent portal and emergency notifications.

"It was critical to bring everyone to the table in the creation of the app. Our students, staff, and parents are continually on the go, and we want to make sure that we keep them informed," Dr. O'Malley said.

Collaboration was vital to establishing our goals and objectives, not only for the app's creation, but also for its ongoing maintenance. As with any communication vehicle, it is a work in progress. We will continue to improve the app with increased access and fresh content.

"Our students, staff, and parents are continually on the go, and we want to make sure that we keep them informed..."



Ralph Barca, *Chief Information and Technology Officer, Public Schools of Edison Township*

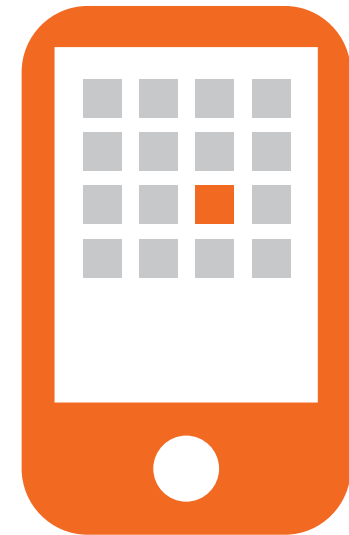
ralph.barca@edison.k12.nj.us

Define your goals

In defining our mobile goals, we looked at our strategic plan as well as our goals within it. We see the mobile app as an extension of the traditional means of communication, but in a more efficient manner. As with many, our website was our first online presence. Then we created a Facebook page, YouTube videos, Twitter feeds, etc. The app brought all the content together. It's about convenience as much as content. We want to be information rich, but not fragmented.

In measuring the success of the mobile app, we looked at a few factors. Obviously we reviewed the download numbers at the initial launch, and we looked at the ongoing downloads and associated analytics. We are considering conducting a survey to obtain more detailed data.

“The app brought all the content together. It’s about convenience as much as content.”



Ralph Barca, *Chief Information and Technology Officer, Public Schools of Edison Township*
ralph.barca@edison.k12.nj.us

A hand is shown pointing at a laptop screen. The entire image has a blue overlay. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

CHAPTER 3:

Convince decision makers:

Methods to improve student success

Monitor attendance, grades, and truancy

The superintendent has identified multiple goals for the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) including 100% attendance, proficiency for all, and 100% graduation. To monitor and improve student attendance, LAUSD has undertaken a multifaceted approach. Attendance counselors are deployed targeting areas with high absenteeism. In conjunction with community partners, LAUSD developed a perfect attendance campaign called “I’m In” to reward students who have perfect attendance.

Policy changes in the issuance of truancy-related tickets by the LAUSD police department have allowed students to return to school sooner. Restorative Justice is also being implemented to reduce suspensions. Recognizing that absences may be tied to student health issues, free health insurance is offered through LAUSD to families without health benefits. Annually, the district conducts a Student Recovery Day where multidisciplinary teams of staff, led by the superintendent, visit the homes of students who have stopped attending school. LAUSD understands the significant impact of parental engagement on student attendance and achievement. As such, a Parent Community and Student Service Division has been specifically created to improve parental engagement throughout

LAUSD. Making teacher-to-parent communications easier and more effective has also been a key focus.

Blackboard plays a pivotal role in each of these initiatives, including automatically generating two attendance calls each day, sending early morning wake-up calls to habitually tardy or absent students, sending outreach calls announcing the availability of health insurance, notifying parents of upcoming parental engagement meetings, and sending SMS (text) messages to attendance counselor teams for faster mobilization. Teachers are making extensive use of the Blackboard’s notification system for teachers to reach out to parents. Based upon information from our data warehousing systems, the combination of these initiatives, policy changes, and use of the Blackboard tools is improving student attendance, proficiency, and graduation rates.

“The superintendent has identified multiple goals for the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) including 100% attendance, proficiency for all, and 100% graduation.”



Paul Ishimaru, *Director, School Operations, Los Angeles Unified School District*
paul.ishimaru@lausd.net

Drive parent involvement using communication channels

Studies have repeatedly shown that increased parent and community involvement results in greater student success. Communication through multiple forms of media allows parents and community members to stay updated and learn how to become involved.

Richardson ISD, like most school districts, serves diverse audiences who receive information in multiple ways. Each district must carefully evaluate methods of communication to ensure that all audiences are being reached with appropriate tools to improve parent and community involvement.

Printed materials play a necessary role in communicating with the community—they can be left on a table or mailed to stakeholders to provide initial communication with a group that otherwise has no link to the district. Print can also pull individuals in to visit the website or sign up for e-newsletters and social media. Once community members are drawn to a website or social media, avenues for subscription must be available to include these individuals in communication and thus attract them to become involved with schools.

Teacher newsletters are the most-read credible sources of parent information. These newsletters drive parents to websites and social

media for more information. E-newsletters, readable on smartphones for easy access, are very effective for those digitally savvy people, but individual schools always need to look at their clientele. If parents do not have access to the Internet, then digital communication is a wasted effort.

Automated phone calls are one of the most effective ways of reaching parents. Locally, parent surveys have indicated that parents also prefer text messages, so automated phone calls go out simultaneously with texts and emails. Attendance at parent events, one metric for success, has gone up substantially since the implementation.

Districts must carefully evaluate the effectiveness of various forms of communication. Metrics for social media may include “likes” and “follows,” which districts should monitor carefully. Metrics for e-newsletters can provide information on click-throughs and forwards. Limited resources make it even more necessary for districts to evaluate tools, determine their effectiveness, and then align communication methods accordingly.



Candace Ahlfinger, *Executive Director Communications and Public Affairs, Richardson Independent School District*

Candace.Ahlfinger@richardson.k12.tx.us



CHAPTER 4:

Evaluate your options:

Top 10 factors to consider during vendor selection

Be sure to consider the following 10 factors before you select a technology partner for your district-wide communications plan and remember to keep your community members and their communications preferences as your guiding reference.

01 PERFORMANCE

What to consider:

Make sure you feel confident that the tools you purchase can perform when it matters most. This is especially true when considering SaaS or cloud-based products—a hosted solution should give you peace of mind—not keep you up at night.

Questions to ask:

How well do your products perform?

What systems or redundancies do you have in place to ensure product stability and performance?



02 RELIABILITY

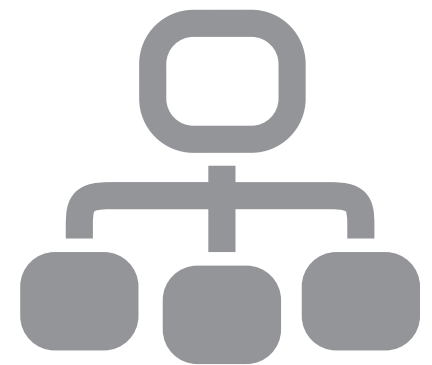
What to consider:

When it's critical to keep your community informed, make sure the tools you purchase can deliver. It's necessary that you can reach anyone, anytime—increasing your effectiveness for community outreach.

Questions to ask:

Does the product demonstrate greater than 99% uptime?

What case studies can you show that depict your product's reliability?



03 SECURITY

What to consider:

Ultimately schools and districts need to know that their student data is safe at all times. Authentication in the form of usernames and passwords for each user is one way to protect your data. Make sure you are helping to keep your community more secure with tools you can depend on.

Questions to ask:

How can your products help ensure our student data is secure?

How can you work with us to put measures in place to ensure our data isn't being hacked?



04 COST

What to consider:

Cost is important, especially when budgets are being stretched further all the time. When considering a vendor though, the cheapest solution isn't necessarily the best or most-cost effective. Be sure the vendors you consider are the ones that can help you get the most bang for your buck, and look for vendors who can provide tools that meet all of your communication needs including mobile, web and voice tools to help you inform and involve parents.

Questions to ask:

How much do your mobile, web, and voice communication tools cost separately and together?

How can your products save me time or money?



05 CUSTOMIZATION

What to consider:

Customization should be a given in this day and age. Be sure that you can configure your website designs, templates, and mobile apps to the level you need to establish your district's brand and engage your community.

Questions to ask:

What options are available for customizing our websites, mobile app and notifications?

Are examples of the customization available?



06 INTEGRATION

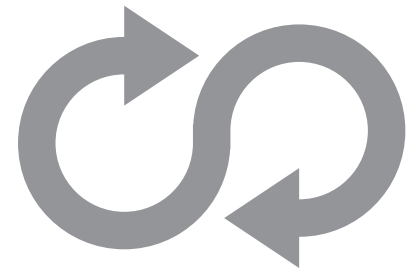
What to consider:

With districts using so many tools and systems today, finding systems that integrate is key. First and foremost is SIS integration. But you should also consider how your communications products integrate with one another to make community outreach a more seamless process for you and your users.

Questions to ask:

Do your mobile, web, and voice communication tools integrate with our SIS?

Do they integrate with one another? If so, how do they integrate?



07 IMPLEMENTATION

What to consider:

Be wary of solutions advertised as “turnkey” or “out of the box” solutions that come with no implementation assistance or kick off training. Ideally, an implementation team will be available to help your team get started and allow your users take full advantage of your technology investment.

Questions to ask:

What is the implementation process?

Is there an assigned implementation or project manager?

Are there any aspects of the implementation that our school/district will have to do by ourselves?



08 TRAINING

What to consider:

On-site and online training offerings, certifications, and materials are a few examples of how you should be supported to ensure your team has the knowledge and skills they need.

Questions to ask:

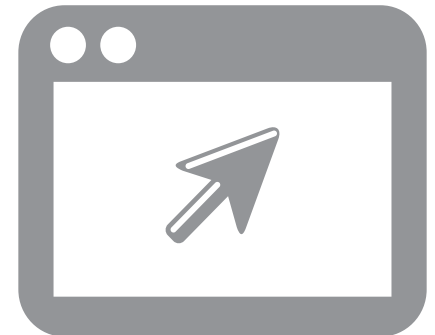
What training options do you provide?

Which options do we have to pay for, and which ones are free?

How much do custom training sessions cost?

Do you have any free resources?

Do you have training programs aligned to new, intermediate and advanced users?



09 CUSTOMER SUPPORT

What to consider:

Customer support is like an insurance policy—you hope you don't need it, but when you do you want it to be comprehensive and hassle-free. Customer Support teams should have flexible hours and be able to provide help when and where you need it.

Questions to ask:

When are your customer support teams available?

What costs money, and what is free?



10 DEVICE COMPATIBILITY

What to consider:

Ensure that your vendor's tools are compatible with iOS and Android devices.

Questions to ask:

What devices can my parents and community use to access their mobile, web, and voice communications on?

Does your company have a mobile first focus?



Blackboard conducted a survey to gather feedback from our customers about the vendor selection process for mass notification, website/parent portal, and district/school mobile app. The following stats represent the top factors and features that are considered when purchasing.

VENDOR FOR MASS NOTIFICATION

91%

91% of those surveyed indicated reliability was very important when selecting a vendor for mass notification.

Reliability, performance and customer support were the most important factors when selecting a vendor for mass notification.

75%

performance

71%

customer support

VENDOR FOR WEBSITE/PARENT PORTAL

100%

100% of those surveyed indicated integration was important or very important when selecting a vendor for website/parent portal.

Reliability, customer support, security and performance were the most important factors when selecting a vendor for website/parent portal.

98%

- reliability
- customer support
- security
- performance

VENDOR FOR A DISTRICT MOBILE APP



90%

90% of those surveyed indicated device compatibility and integration were important or very important when selecting a vendor for a district mobile app.

Device compatibility, security, and integration were the most important factors when selecting a vendor for a district mobile app.

SINGLE VENDOR



63%

63% of those surveyed indicated it was either important or very important for districts to use a single vendor who can provide an integrated website, mass notification and mobile solution for parent and community engagement.

Personalized, on-demand access to student and school data, channels for emergency alerts (voice, text, SMS etc.) and district/school websites ranked as the most important features and needs when considering technology solutions for parent and community engagement.

Blackboard can be a one-stop-shop for the majority of your technology solution needs – a single vendor to tie multiple technology visions together. We will build the foundation and grow right alongside you and your community to ensure your school is staying ahead of technology and offering the best tools for your learners.



CHAPTER 5:

Justify your purchase:

Ways to increase your return on investment

Benefits of working with a single vendor

Working with a single vendor to meet most of our online content creation is an ideal scenario for our resource-limited district. In addition to the benefits of volume purchasing and streamlined billing, support does not rely on the ability or willingness of vendors to support another vendor's product. In a multi-vendor scenario, interoperability support today does not necessarily guarantee interoperability tomorrow. Single source vendors are inherently motivated to ensure interoperability between their own products. Furthermore, working with a single vendor removes the additional workload of ensuring that various product roadmaps are in sync with each other and our future needs.

Prior to our migration to a single platform, district and school level sites were created using a multitude of products, leaving us with a very fragmented system and an inconsistent end-user experience. In addition, this arrangement presented huge security risks, and it was nearly impossible to provide support. Consolidating

to a single vendor system has improved management and local systems support and has provided pathways to unify the design and branding—all leading to a vastly improved user experience. Ultimately, using a single vendor system has given us the ability to safely manage our online presence and improve our relationship with our students, community, and staff.



“Working with a single vendor to meet most of our online content creation is an ideal scenario for our resource-limited district.”



Ryan Bremer, IT—Senior Web and Media Developer, Manatee County School District

bremnerr@manateeschools.net

Save time by automating notifications and updates

Using an automated telephone notification system saves me time because we can schedule all “early release day” reminders at one time. We do this before school even starts each year and never have to think about them again. We record the message once, reminding parents that “tomorrow is an early release day, so remember your child comes home two hours early. We encourage you to make any arrangements necessary because of this early release.” We then use this single, generic, non-dated message to schedule multiple messages for early release days in advance. We choose the date and time (the day before each early release day) and to deliver this particular message for every early release day. We check it off the list and move on to the next issue. This process saves several hours throughout the year.

Measuring return on investment matters. When we can reduce, or even eliminate, the numbers of children left at schools because their parents “forgot” about early release, that’s the best ROI.

This contributes to student safety by reminding parents to make necessary childcare arrangements. Parents regularly thank our schools and district for these reminders.

Regarding hard numbers, a call summary of how many phone numbers (parents) received these “early release day” reminders shows that the cost is just pennies per call—or even less—based on the thousands of calls our district makes.



“We check it off the list and move on to the next issue.”



Kevin Christian, *Public Relations Officer / Coordinator of Television Media Productions, Marion County Public Schools*
kevin.christian@marion.k12.fl.us

Identify hidden costs

Since our conversion to mass notifications powered by Blackboard, Beaufort County Schools has continuously expanded our uses of this system, streamlining not only parent communication, but also staff communication. It is difficult to place a monetary value on these functions.

System policy states that schools must maintain bus rider lists for each of our 103 yellow school buses. If a bus is known to be running 20 minutes late or more, the route is called. If we have incidents like a bus accident, we are able to quickly notify the parents of the children involved. This function is a priceless relationship-building tool with parents. We also now have text groups including all staff traveling between schools. This allows us to notify them in the event of an emergency, such as a lockdown, and hopefully keep staff members from heading to the area of concern.

Monetarily focused, BCS utilizes Blackboard for cafeteria debt collection. This simple and effective means of increasing our return on investment also enhances parent relations. We remind parents about free or reduced meal applications to help cut debt. This is a tremendous time saver for staff. Cafeteria managers or principal

designees are trained to send a previously recorded call. Recipients are based on reports from cafeterias for those with debts of more than \$3 and \$10.

For example, School A in our district has 568 students, K-8, with little diversity. On average, weekly calls bring in \$40 to \$50. Their debt never exceeds \$250. School B is a 6–8 school with nearly 900 students and great economic diversity. They use our guidelines for making calls. Their cafeteria debt with three weeks remaining in the year was \$231.85. Their feeder schools that did not utilize this process had debts between \$1,590 and \$1,940 at the same point in the year.

“...effective means of increasing our return on investment also enhances parent relations.”



Sarah Hodges, *Public Information Officer, Beaufort County Schools*

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Additional Resources

- Get more information about Blackboard's parent engagement solution by visiting our [website](#).
- Is your district ready for mobile? [Take our assessment](#) to find out.
- [Download our mobile buyer guide here](#) to get tips on finding the right mobile provider.

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About Blackboard

Blackboard is a global leader in education technology that transforms the experience of millions of students and teachers every day. Blackboard works with states, K-12 districts, and virtual to expand educational opportunities, create collaborative learning communities, and increase engagement for students, teachers, parents, and administrators. With Blackboard's website, online learning, mobile, and mass communication solutions, educators are closing the gap between the way students live and the way they learn through personalized, connected learning experiences that meet the needs of the K-12 classroom and the 21st century.

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