

Snapshots

RESEARCH REPORT



Communication Upgrade for Parents

Now that technology is an integral part of our classrooms and schools—think 1:1 devices, class apps, and other digital tools—schools and districts are changing the way they communicate with parents. In order to effectively keep parents in the know, principals and administrators must understand exactly how parents prefer to receive information.

According to the 2016 “Speak Up Research Project for Digital Learning” (which surveyed more than 38,000 parents), parents and principals agree that email and auto phone messages are the top two most effective forms of school- or district-to-home communication.

Data

Eighty-seven percent of surveyed parents indicated that personal email is the most effective vehicle for communicating with parents, an increase of 36 percent since 2010. Similarly, with emphasis on timely and easily read information, 55 percent of parents would like their child’s teacher or school to simply “text them” when they want to communicate information.

Additionally, 50 percent of the parents noted that a face-to-face meeting was the most effective way to communicate information—a significant decrease from just one year ago, when 64 percent of parents valued this type of communications approach.

There is a disconnect regarding the effectiveness of website and social media communications. Nearly half of principals said websites are effective for teacher communications, but just 19 percent of parents agreed. Also, while more than half of principals said Facebook is an effective means of communication, just 24 percent of parents agreed.

Across the board, tech-savvy parents favor digital communications by a ratio of almost 2 to 1 compared to parents with beginner tech skills. Thirty-six percent of parents with advanced tech skills endorsed the idea of a mobile app as an effective communication tool, compared to 27

MYTWOCENTS

What is your best health and wellness tip to help principals improve work-life balance?



Joe Sellenheim (@MrJSellen): Phones stay down on week nights from 4:30–7:30 (most of time) and start early to be productive and leave early(ish) #ThankAPrincipal



Jim Hirz (@Jim_Hirz): I’m willing to commit to using my vacation days each year to force some down time. #ThankAPrincipal

percent of parents with average tech skills and 16 percent of the parents who said their tech-savviness was at the beginning level.

Parents of Elementary Students

There are also different communication preferences for parents of elementary-aged children and parents of students in secondary and high school. Adults who are under 40 years of age and parents of elementary students are the most supportive of the use of emerging digital tools to support school-to-home communications.

Seventy-one percent of parents of elementary school-aged children indicate their frequency of Facebook usage as “often” or “all the time,” while only 53 percent of the parents of students in grades 6–12 report that level of regular usage.

Forty-five percent of elementary school parents are more interested in face-to-face meetings, compared to 30 percent of high school parents.

Although there is no rush to remove all traditional school-to-home communications, including face-to-face meetings, hard-copy flyers, and/or parent association meetings, the data suggest a demand for digital tools to more effectively disseminate information to parents. With technology rapidly changing, schools should continue to upgrade their communication methodologies to help parents aid in the overall success of their students. To view the full report, visit <http://bit.ly/2yFsgCc>. 

Principals Need Support for SEL

School principals across the United States believe social and emotional learning (SEL) is essential, but they want more guidance, training, and support to teach these skills effectively. This is according to a national survey of nearly 900 principals of elementary, middle, and high schools.

School principals believe there are strong benefits associated with teaching SEL in schools, according to the 2017 report for the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), “Ready to Lead.” The survey found virtually *all* principals believe a stepped-up focus on SEL would positively impact school climate, build citizenship, improve

relationships between students and teachers, and decrease bullying.

Survey Findings

- 83 percent of principals consider SEL to be very important for schools.
- 35 percent of principals report having a plan for teaching SEL and are systematically implementing it schoolwide.
- 60 percent of principals point to a lack of teacher training to support students’ social and emotional development as a big challenge.
- 71 percent of principals agree that SEL skills can be measured and assessed.
- 38 percent of those using assessments of students’ SEL competence in their schools say they’re useful.
- Nearly three-quarters of principals say the development of SEL skills should be spelled out in state education standards.
- 49 percent think states should hold teachers accountable for developing SEL skills in children.

To view the full report, visit <http://bit.ly/2zoUOiF>. 



Jenny Nauman (@PrincipalNauman): I've taken email off my phone and that is even helping me sleep better. I also try to read for fun every night b4 bed! #ThankAPrincipal



Dan Butler (@danpbutler): Each morning I capture three things for which I am grateful in my journal. Rewiring my brain for positive. #ThankAPrincipal

What’s one self-care tip that helps you balance work and personal time? Share your thoughts on Twitter via #NAESPChat.