

New Report Shows Preference for School-to-Home Communications Varies by Message, Tool and Generation

Report demonstrates opportunity for districts, school leaders and teachers to tailor communication with grandparents

Irvine, Calif. – Personalized email remains parents’ preferred method of communication from their child’s teacher on information regarding their student’s individual academic performance, behavior or progress, according to [Project Tomorrow](#) and [Blackboard](#)’s 12th annual education trends report. The study, [“Millennial, Gen X and Boomer Parents: Leveraging mobile-enabled social media for school-to-home communications across the generations,”](#) also found that 48% of parents find text message to be an effective way to deliver crisis communications, whereas only 28% of grandparents share that preference.

“This year’s report uncovers trends relative to the communication preferences across different generations of parents and guardians,” said Dr. Julie Evans, CEO of Project Tomorrow. “Given the significant uptick in grandparents serving as children’s primary education guardians, we took a close look at how their preferences differ from those of parents. For example, the study found that only one in three grandparents identify mobile apps as effective modes of communication, while the majority of parents surveyed reported that mobile apps were an effective mode of communication. This underscores the critical need for districts and schools to tailor their communications to reach this growing group.”

The report analyzes feedback from more than 20,000 Millennial, Gen X and Boomer parents and guardians nationwide to understand each generation’s preferred method of communication with their student’s teacher. The report also explores the role of mobile platforms and social media. The data, which is part of the annual Speak Up Research Project shows that it is increasingly important for school and district leaders to differentiate communication by message and communication channel when engaging with multiple generations within their parent community.

“With thousands of school district partners across the United States, Blackboard is deeply committed to facilitating communication among teachers, school administrators, and parents and guardians in an easy and effective way,” said Christina Fleming, Vice President of K12 at Blackboard. “Technologies used by parent communities are continuously evolving, so it’s critical that districts also evolve and optimize their communications strategies to reach parents in meaningful, relevant ways. The findings from this year’s report offer helpful insights that we hope will spark new ideas for strategies districts can implement to engage parents.”

Additional key findings from this year's community engagement trends report include:

- While parent access to a smartphone is now virtually universal (97% of parents of school-aged children), use of emerging tools such as a smartwatch by one-quarter of Millennial parents indicate that school districts need to re-think their communications across different platforms to accommodate new tools.
- As educators think about how to engage with parents via social media, it is advisable to look beyond Facebook or any single social media platform to meet the diverse needs of all parents in your community. For example, one-third of Millennial parents report using Instagram regularly in their personal lives but only 12% of Baby Boomer parents say the same.
- The differentiation by message type is also important for parents. While 63% say that Facebook is a good tool for the dissemination of generalized information about school events or recognitions, only one-quarter of parents believe it is an effective tool for crisis communications.
- Eighty percent of administrators and 83% percent of parents believe that personalized emails are the most effective tool for teacher communications about individual student performance. Parents are more interested today in a “push vs. pull” approach where information is disseminated directly to them rather than having to look it up on a school portal. The ultimate aspiration for 64% of parents today is for their child's teacher to text them with information about their child.

Please visit <http://videos.blackboard.com/watch/S11vGzTGLo9dxo5igTyrXS> to view the webinar recording of the report release.

About [Project Tomorrow](#) & [Speak Up](#)

Project Tomorrow is the nation's leading education nonprofit group dedicated to ensuring that today's K-12 students are well prepared to become tomorrow's leaders, innovators and engaged citizens of the world. The Speak Up Research Project is a national initiative of Project Tomorrow. Since 2003, the annual Speak Up project has collected and reported on the views of more than 5.7 million K-12 students, teachers, administrators and parents representing more than 30,000 schools in all 50 states. This represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder input on education, technology, schools of the future, science and math instruction, professional development and career exploration.

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Our mission is to partner with the global education community to enable learner and institutional success, leveraging innovative technologies and services. With an unmatched understanding of the world of the learner, the most comprehensive student-success solutions, and the greatest capacity for innovation, Blackboard is education's partner in change.

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