Blackboard Connect 5 Guidelines

Blackboard Connect 5 (formerly ConnectEd) is the district's system for communicating with families through automated phone calls, email and text.

Every school community responds differently to various communication methods and frequency. Please consider what your school community expects and meet their needs with this great communication tool combined with outreach through your school website or social media.

Family contact information is downloaded nightly from the district's Campus system. It's important to regularly update family contact information, including phone numbers and email addresses, in Campus.

Contact Information in Infinite Campus

Family contact information is downloaded nightly from the district's Campus system. It's important to regularly update family contact information in Campus. Choose the parent/guardian file under the student whose information needs updated. The **Household Phone Number** in Campus is used for **Attendance** and **Outreach** Connect 5 calls. Under **Demographics > Personal Contact Information >** you can update the parent/guardian's **Cell Phone, Other Phone, Email and Secondary Email**. These fields will allow families to receive text, email and emergency messages. Please note that each parent's contact information may be different. This ensures both parents are notified.

To Get Started

Designate at least two staff members to become your school's Connect 5 messenger. Then contact jerry.skelly@spps.org to obtain a username and password or to request staff training on Connect 5.

Log in

Log in to blackboardconnect.com *Continue →*

Select a Message Type

1. Click **Message Center** at the top of the page.
2. Choose **Message Type** (Outreach, Emergency)
   a. Choose **Outreach** for normal messages.
   b. Choose **Emergency** for Late Buses.
3. Type a **Title** for your message on the **Send a Message** page.
   a. Please choose an appropriate title. In some cases, your title will be visible to recipients.

Add Recipients

1. Click on the [To...] button to enter your contact type
2. You can filter your message recipients by **Type** (such as **Student or Staff)**, **Group** (bus routes), **Grade Level, Language** and **Gender**.
3. Use [+] to expand each selection and click on the checkboxes to choose your recipients.

Create a Phone Message

1. Click the phone tab on the Send a Message page.
2. Select your school's phone number from the Caller ID drop-down list.
3. Check the TTY checkbox to send the message to TTY-enabled devices (for speech and hearing-impaired recipients).


For Voice (use a phone to record your message):
1. Click the **Add Audio** button, and type your script in the text box (click "Save Script" to save your script for later use). *Continue →*

2. Dial the toll-free number listed on the right side of the screen.
3. Provide the **User Number** and **Message Box ID** (located on-screen) when prompted.
4. The message should be no longer than 30 seconds (as is it well get longer once translated)
5. At any time, you may click **Save as Draft** on the bottom of the page, to save the work you have done.

Create an Email

1. Click the **Email tab**.
2. Type a Subject in the Subject field.
3. Compose your message in the text box.
4. You may also attach a file, such as a pdf, to the email message with the **Select files** button at the bottom of the email composer screen.
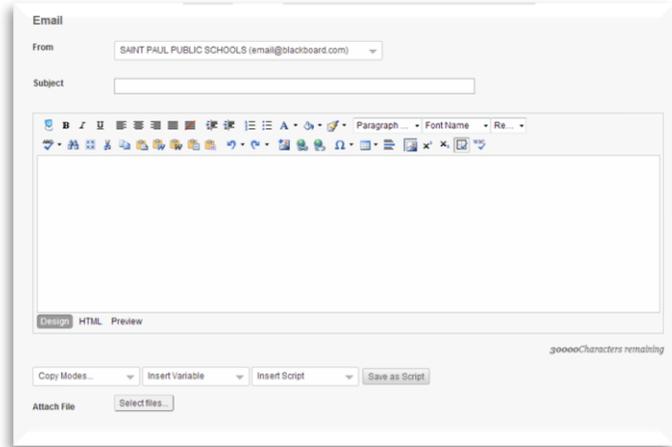

Create a Text Message

1. Click the **SMS tab**.
2. Type your text in the **Text box**. There is a **160 character limit**.
3. All text messages are sent from the Blackboard Connect 5-digit short code, **23177 or 63079**. Be sure to include your school or site name that families will recognize and abbreviate if needed.

For example:
Ramsey: Come meet your new principal Thursday, Aug. 14 at Ramsey. 7-8 a.m. and 5-6 p.m. Refreshments provided.
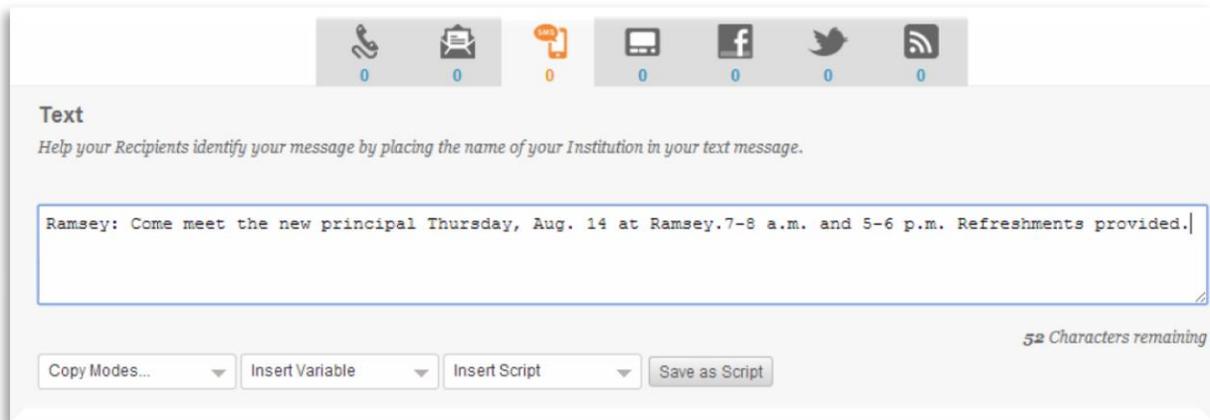
Schedule and Confirm Your Message

1. Make sure your time zone lists **Central Time** in the drop-down list.
2. Choose to send your message **Now** or **Later**.
3. If you've selected Later, type in a date and time in the **Select a date** field or use the Date and Time buttons to select your desired message send date and time.
4. Click **Add Selected Time** to continue.

Review and Finalize

1. Review your message details. If you want to return to the **Send a Message** page to make changes, click the **Edit Message** button.
2. Click the **Send** button to schedule and send your message.
3. Until your message has a status of **Completed**, you can find your message by clicking on **Outbox**. You can **Edit** your message, or **Cancel** it.
4. When your message has a status of **Completed**, you can find it and view delivery details by clicking on the **Sent tab**.

Multilingual Messages

- **Be sure to translate messages for your families.**
  - **Guideline:** Translate messages if more than 10% of your student population speaks a language other than English. You may quickly review your home language population at spps.org/datacenter. If you have the staff and resources, please translate your messages even if the home language population is below 10%.

For other languages, start a new message in the **Message Center** and repeat this process. Under [To...] select all languages you need to send the message to, **except for English**. This means you will have two separate messages in your draft folder – one for English, another for all other languages in which a message should be sent. For example: a Hmong family will receive your first message in English and another message in Hmong. Do not schedule these messages at the same time. If you need assistance setting up a multilingual message, contact pepe.barton@spps.org.

Message Types

Unless the message is urgent, you should not use all the methods below for one communication.

Different communication methods present a different sense of urgency.	
Phone	Late Buses, Emergencies[†], Student Safety, Weather[†], Open Houses, Reminders,
Text	Late Buses, Emergencies[†], Student Safety, Weather[†], Events
Email	PTO Meetings, Curriculum Nights, Carnivals, Permission Forms, Open Houses, Reminders, Events

[†] In most cases, emergencies (lockdowns, etc) and weather messages will be sent by SPPS in collaboration with the school.

Quick Tips

- The ability to contact your families is only as good as the information in Infinite Campus. Please keep their files updated.
- **Telephone messages** to families generally should not be more than 1-2 per week, but you know your school community best. Choose outreach phone calls wisely.
- **Texting** is less intrusive and may be used more often.
- In most cases, **text-capable phones outnumber email addresses** on file. Consider if texting is more appropriate for your school community.
- **Do not use** the text-to-speech feature in Connect 5. This results in a robotic voice that will often mispronounce common words. A human voice should **always** be used when calling

families.

- **Do not use** Connect 5's translation feature. It is not accurate and will result in confusion. Always have a staff member translate or interpret messages or contact *Continue→* pepe.barton@spps.org for assistance with time-sensitive messages.
- **Combine school-wide reminders** and other information into a single message.
- **Use of the system on non-essential topics will result** in fewer families paying attention.

Connect 5 Message Usage Chart			
Purpose	Comes From District	Comes From School/Site	To individual families, automated by *Connect 5*
Weather-related closing/dismissal	✔		
Emergency	✔	✔*	
Attendance	✔	✔	✔
Parent/Teacher Conferences		✔	
Non-emergency early dismissal	✔		
Meal account: low/negative balance	✔		✔
Outreach	✔	✔†	

* This is rare and depends on scope and size of event

† Use wisely to avoid "message fatigue"

Message Delivery Times

Connect 5 will make several attempts to deliver calls that initially meet busy signals or go unanswered. Message delivery could take 30 minutes to reach all families. Please schedule non-time sensitive phone and text messages **between 5 p.m. and no later than 8 p.m.** Avoid scheduling phone and text messages to be delivered between the hours of 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. Emails may be scheduled for any time. *(The district may send messages at any time if the message is time-sensitive or is related to an emergency).*

Delivery Results

After each Connect 5 message is sent, you will receive a status update by email. Log in to Blackboard Connect and click on "Sent" to review your latest sent messages. Click on "View Detailed Results" and then select the checkboxes for "Fax/Modem" and "Bad Phone Number," and click on "Export." You can then use the downloaded list to contact your families for corrections if they have email or other contact information available.

Delivery Results

Back to Sent | Print

Title	PTO-FUNDRAISER
Message Type	Outreach
Site	JJ HILL MONTESSORI
Scheduled By	GAIL ROSS
Send Time	23 September 2013 5:30PM (CT)
Voice Completed	23 September 2013 5:56PM (CT) (First attempt completed at 23 September 2013 5:37PM (CT))
Selected Contacts	480 Successfully reached 442 (92%)
Languages	English*

DEVICE DELIVERIES

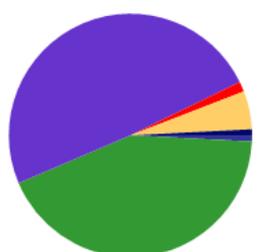91% (344)   374

⬇ View each attempt

Hide Detailed Results

DETAILED DELIVERY RESULTS

Select all

☑ 📞 Voice

☑ ⬛	Fax/Modem	3
☐ ⬛	Live Delivery	160
☐ ⬛	Answering Machine	184
☐ ⬛	No Answer	5
☑ ⬛	Undeliverable	19
☑ ⬛	Bad Phone Number	3

Export   Resend

Sidebar navigation: Send, Drafts, Outbox, Sent, Templates, Scripts

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Grade Level Codes

In addition to regular grade levels (1-12), these codes include other grades, such as PreK and Early Childhood Education listed under **Grade.**

CODE	
EC	Early Childhood Education
ECA	Early Childhood Education AM
ECP	Early Childhood Education PM
FE	Family Education
HK	Kindergarten - handicapped
KG	Kindergarten - all day
PK4	PreK – all day
PK4A	PreK - morning half day
PK4P	PreK - afternoon half day

Send Messages to Bus Routes

You may send messages to families whose children ride specific bus routes. Use the codes below to choose the correct route, listed under **Group**.
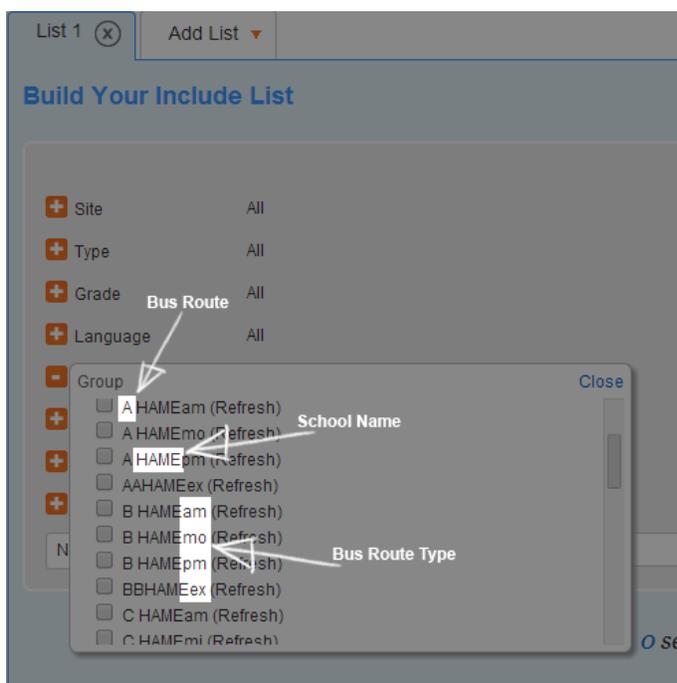
AM = Morning route traveling IN to school.

PM = Afternoon route traveling OUT from school.

MI = Midday route traveling INBOUND to school (bringing afternoon session students in).

MO= Midday route traveling OUTBOUND from school (taking home morning session students).

EX = Extended Day Learning Route taking students home after EDL (generally between 4-7 p.m.)

Support

For immediate support sending a time-sensitive message to your families, contact
Pepe Barton
Communications Specialist
O: 651-744-5660
C: 651-592-4243
pepe.barton@spps.org

If you and your staff require training for the Connect 5 system, contact
jerry.skelly@spps.org.
Office of Communications, Marketing & Development
O: 651-767-8107

If you experience technical issues, call the Connect 5, 24-hour Client Care number at 866-360-2155 or email them at connectsupport@blackboardconnect.com.