Digital Parent Communication

Effective communication between teachers and parents is critical for student success. As we navigate the digital age, educators must leverage technology to facilitate these interactions. Various digital communication apps are available for K-12 educators to communicate with parents. These apps can help educators:

- Share important information with parents quickly and easily.
- Build relationships with parents.
- Receive feedback from parents.
- Promote parent involvement in their student's education.

Choosing the Right Communication Tools

- Step one of digital parent communication is selecting the right digital tool. Many tools are available, and educators should consider the needs of students, parents, and themselves in a digital communication platform.
- Educators should streamline communication as much as possible by limiting the number of communication applications. Multiple avenues for communication can cause frustration for parents and decrease communication efficacy.
- Only use platforms your school or school system approved to ensure privacy and security.
- There are many messaging apps available. CommonSense offers detailed reviews of apps as well.

App Name	Platform	Features	Pros	Cons
Bloomz	Android, iOS, Web	● Messaging ● Behavior tracking ● Scheduling	● All-in-one tool ● Time-saving	● Free version has limited storage
ClassDojo	Android, iOS, Web	● Behavior tracking ● Messaging ● Class stories	● Comprehensive ● Real-time updates ● Multiple languages	● Requires consistent internet
Klassly	Android, iOS, Web	● Messaging ● Class updates ● Events ● Polls	● User-friendly interface ● Designed specifically for K-12 education	● May require additional training for teachers
ParentSquare	Android, iOS, Web	● Messaging ● Permission slips ● School-wide announcements	● Comprehensive ● Multilingual support	● Subscription-based for advanced features
Remind	Android, iOS, Web	● One-to-One messaging ● Class announcements ● File sharing	● User-friendly ● No need to exchange personal phone numbers	● Limited message length

[Seesaw]	Android, iOS, Web	● Student portfolios ● Messaging ● Learning resources	● Parents can see student work ● Excellent for student-led learning	● Learning curve for some users
[TalkingPoints]	Android, iOS, Web	● Multilingual messaging	● Great for non-English speaking parents	● Limited features ● Focuses only on messaging
[Slack]	Android, iOS, Microsoft Store	● File sharing ● Video/audio calls ● Messaging	● User-friendly interface: simple interface, easy platform navigation ● Integration with other tools: ● Third-party integration ● Mobile app	● Cost

Best Practices
- Use the same platform(s) of communication throughout the entire school year.
- Establish how often updates will be provided (e.g., weekly, bi-weekly).
- Set specific hours of availability for digital communication.

Methods of Structuring Your Communication

- Use bullet points or numbered lists when conveying multiple pieces of information.
- Incorporate images, videos, or GIFs to make communication more engaging, where appropriate.
- It is essential to keep parents informed, but excessive communication can become overwhelming.

Confidentiality

- Never share personal or sensitive information about other students.
- Ensure the tools comply with privacy laws such as FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).
- If sending a message to multiple parents, use BCC to hide email addresses or use group messaging features on apps without revealing individual contact details.

Addressing Challenges

- Offer guidance or alternatives if parents have trouble accessing or using digital platforms.
- Use translation tools or services when necessary or provide communication in multiple languages when possible.

Additional Resources:
[Parent Engagement in the Digital Age | Edutopia]
[Apps and Websites for Improving Parent-Teacher Communication | Common Sense Education]

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