

## Connecting Your District

Blackboard's Mass Notification Solutions

Targeted, one-to-one communication is the key to engaging parents, encouraging students, and demonstrating community leadership. Yet the seemingly simple act of outreach is often anything but.

K-12 administrators face a wide range of challenges today: larger class sizes, disciplinary issues, staff reductions, shrinking budgets and ever-changing educational standards — often leaving districts short on resources when they need to reach out to families in their school community.

# Student Achievement

## Student Achievement

Districts today have fewer resources — and significantly greater demands. Increasing curriculum standards require schools to ensure continuous gains in student achievement, and yet shrinking budgets raise the ever-present question of “how”? How can we do more with less?

Streamlined, targeted communication can fill the gap. Studies show that reliable, consistent communication within families can lead to significant increases in achievement. In a study reported by Developmental Psychology, researchers found that achievement levels rose as communication within families about expectations for education increased. By messaging stakeholders via Blackboard’s mass notification solutions districts can engage both parents and students in the educational process and create a foundation for ongoing gains in student performance.

# Parental Involvement

## Parental Involvement

Regular, targeted communication is the key to keeping students engaged and parents involved. Education researchers have uncovered strong correlations between parental involvement and student achievement – some have even found that parental involvement can have a measurable equivalence to per-pupil spending.

Both Blackboard Connect and AlertNow facilitate powerful attendance programs that integrate with your district’s SIS. Sending daily attendance notifications to parents of absent or tardy children can keep classroom seats filled and students engaged in learning every day.

With Blackboard Connect for Teachers, instructors can communicate one-on-one with dozens of parents — with a few simple clicks of a mouse. More than a hundred pre-existing comments address assignments and exams, classroom conduct, and work habits. Phone messages are pre-recorded in 22 languages and are automatically sent in each family’s preferred language.

Blackboard® mass notification solutions make one-to-one communication simple, streamlined, and cost-effective. With a suite of trusted, scalable solutions, Blackboard puts districts in touch with thousands of parents, students and community members with effective, targeted messages — in minutes. Every day, school districts large and small are using Blackboard Connect™ or AlertNow® to make measurable improvements in attendance, student achievement and parental involvement.



# Leadership Communication

## Leadership Communication

To ensure continued stakeholder support, superintendents and principals must establish a proactive leadership role in their community. District leaders have to communicate strategically with parents, staff and board members, always demonstrating district accountability and positive student achievement outcomes. The key lies in consistency: robust, clear communication engenders respect and fosters community relationships over the long term. Using Blackboard® mass notification tools, administrators can ensure they are seen as the first and primary source of information about their district.



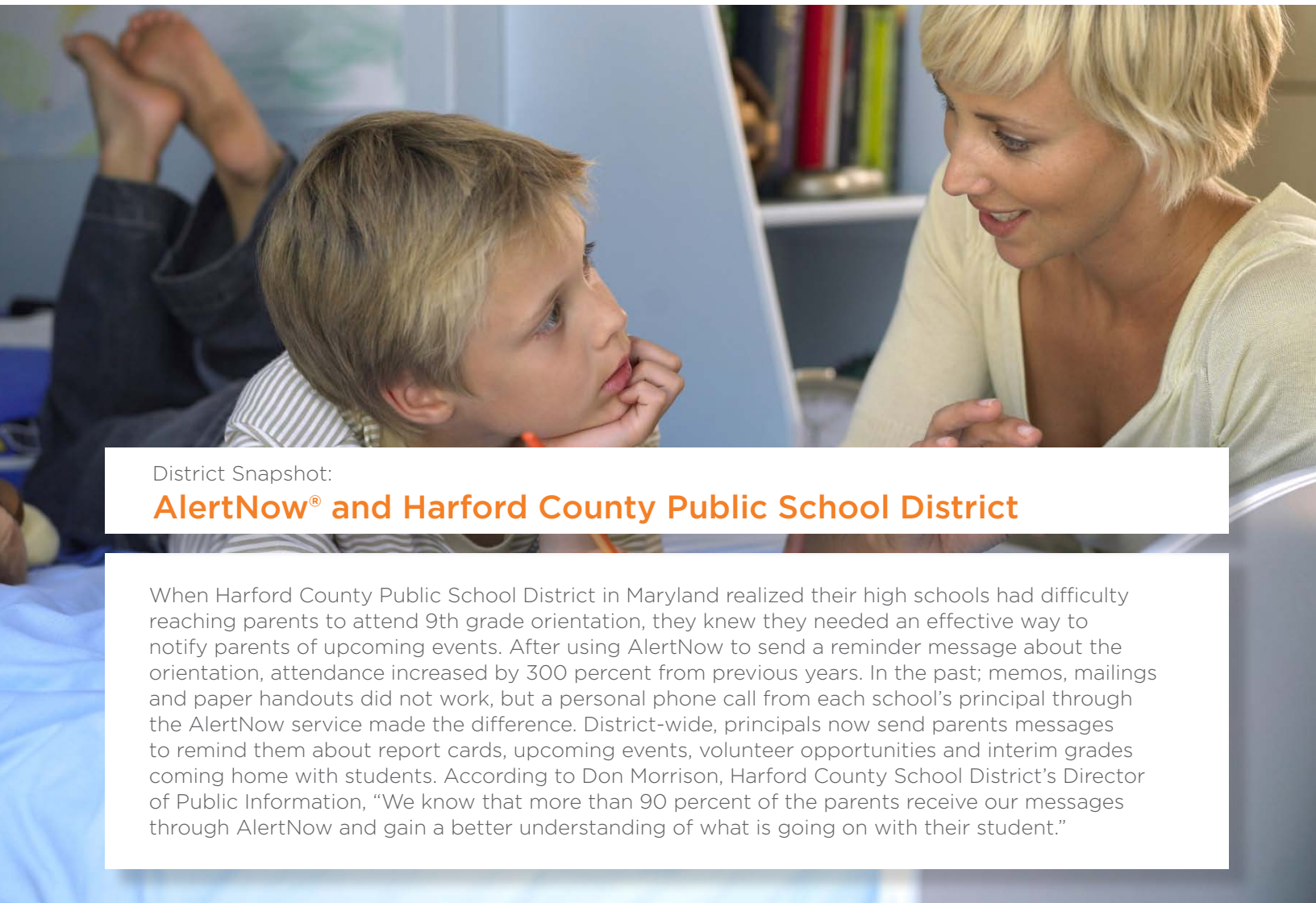
When Cecile Nedellec, a teacher at Junipero Serra High School in San Diego, uses Blackboard Connect for Teachers to deliver comments about student performance to parents, she sees immediate changes in classroom performance. “Students respond. You can tell the next day that they’re more on task. They start working a little harder,” said Nedellec. Students are also motivated, according to Nedellec. “I’ve had students who say things like, ‘no teacher ever sent something positive about me — you really made my day’ or ‘my dad was so proud of me.’ Blackboard Connect for Teachers has had an incredible impact.”

# Safety & Security

## Safety & Security

For any district's leadership, the safety and security of schoolchildren is of paramount concern. With Blackboard® mass notification services, districts can keep the entire school community informed, alert, and aware during an emergency or unforeseen event. Administrators can reach thousands of parents and staff in just minutes with critical information when it matters most.

Blackboard mass notification solutions can also help districts quickly confront misinformation with the facts. The proliferation of communication channels today guarantees that everything from fact to fiction will be disseminated during an incident. In these situations, it's critical to be the first to reach your parents, staff and the community with the right information.



District Snapshot:

### **AlertNow® and Harford County Public School District**

When Harford County Public School District in Maryland realized their high schools had difficulty reaching parents to attend 9th grade orientation, they knew they needed an effective way to notify parents of upcoming events. After using AlertNow to send a reminder message about the orientation, attendance increased by 300 percent from previous years. In the past; memos, mailings and paper handouts did not work, but a personal phone call from each school's principal through the AlertNow service made the difference. District-wide, principals now send parents messages to remind them about report cards, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities and interim grades coming home with students. According to Don Morrison, Harford County School District's Director of Public Information, "We know that more than 90 percent of the parents receive our messages through AlertNow and gain a better understanding of what is going on with their student."

District Snapshot:

## **Blackboard Connect™ and St. Charles Parish School District**

When Hurricane Katrina was bearing down on the Gulf Coast, St. Charles Parish School District's Director of Public Information, Rochelle Cancienne-Touchard, turned to Blackboard in hopes of implementing the service before, during and after the storm hit. As local infrastructures failed, the district became the sole governmental source of information for the community. "Corporate and government leaders indicated our communication helped them encourage workers to return," Cancienne-Touchard stated, and the district's consistent messaging led to the district being viewed city-wide as a "catalyst for normalcy."



District Snapshot:

## **Blackboard Connect™ and Danvers School District**

When a shooting incident occurred during an out-of-state field trip, the Danvers School District used the Blackboard Connect service to let parents know all children were safe and away from the area of danger. In less than 30 minutes, the district reached over 99 percent of parents before the local Danvers media began publicizing the story. According to Superintendent Lisa Dana, "Parents place their trust in us on a daily basis. To respect this trust, we must ensure that parents will hear from us directly in case of emergency. Blackboard Connect allows us to get a message of reassurance out within minutes of an incident."

# Additional Funding Sources

Nearly every district nationwide faces severe budget shortfalls, so it has become vital to make every penny count. Many districts find that Blackboard Connect™ and AlertNow® can quickly deliver a significant and tangible impact on the bottom line. Hundreds of districts have already leveraged the services to facilitate the collection of overdue library fees, unpaid cafeteria balances, and other outstanding fees. Using Blackboard technology to address truancy — through attendance notifications, reminders and wake-up calls — can result in significant increases in state-level funding.

Additional  
Funding

District Snapshot:

## AlertNow® and Brownsburg Community Schools

Brownsburg Community School Corporation, near Indianapolis, Indiana uses AlertNow to replace paper communications with web-enabled notifications. The district now uses AlertNow to deliver newsletters and individual notices, even school lunch balance notifications. The district estimates that AlertNow has saved more than \$100,000 in paper, printing and postage costs over the past two years. "When considering the cost savings we have realized, AlertNow virtually pays for itself," notes Donna Petraits, the district's Director of Communications.

**ALERTNOW®**

District Snapshot:

## Blackboard Connect™ and Paramount High School

Paramount High School near Long Beach, California, uses Blackboard Connect for both general attendance notifications and Saturday school reminders. Daily attendance messages were instrumental in reducing truancy and opening up communication with parents. Changes to Saturday school attendance were even more significant: attendance has gone from an average of 30 students per session to 155 students. The school's overall attendance has improved from 94 percent to 96 percent, resulting in increased state funding from \$34,200 to \$176,700, based on Average Daily Attendance.

**Blackboardconnect™**

## Why Blackboard?

Blackboard has been a trusted partner in education for over a decade. The company has made a long-term commitment to meeting the needs of K-12 districts, from online learning solutions to mass notification. We continually invest in technology to meet the needs of schools, whether it's creating connected and personalized learning experiences that engage students and parents, or providing safe and secure learning environments that lead to student success. We believe that having a mass notification service provider with a commitment to education makes all the difference to our clients when it matters most.

Blackboard mass notification solutions were designed to help schools communicate with thousands in minutes. Our years of experience means we deliver more than just the capability to make phone calls. Our dedicated client care teams — available twenty-four hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year — ensure that live help is always there when you need it. We employ comprehensive security and redundancy measures — proactive analyses of threats, business continuity audits, and multiple nationwide data back-ups — to preserve the integrity of your school's data. Our call routing, throttling, and load balancing expertise, as well as our dedicated, robust capacity from multiple telco providers, means that your messages won't be dropped or delayed. We deliver tens of millions of time-sensitive notifications every month — ensuring that your messages are delivered on time, in all conditions.

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