

Five Strategies to Start the Year with Your Family Engagement Plan Done

For administrators: put your year-long family engagement plan together in just a few easy steps.

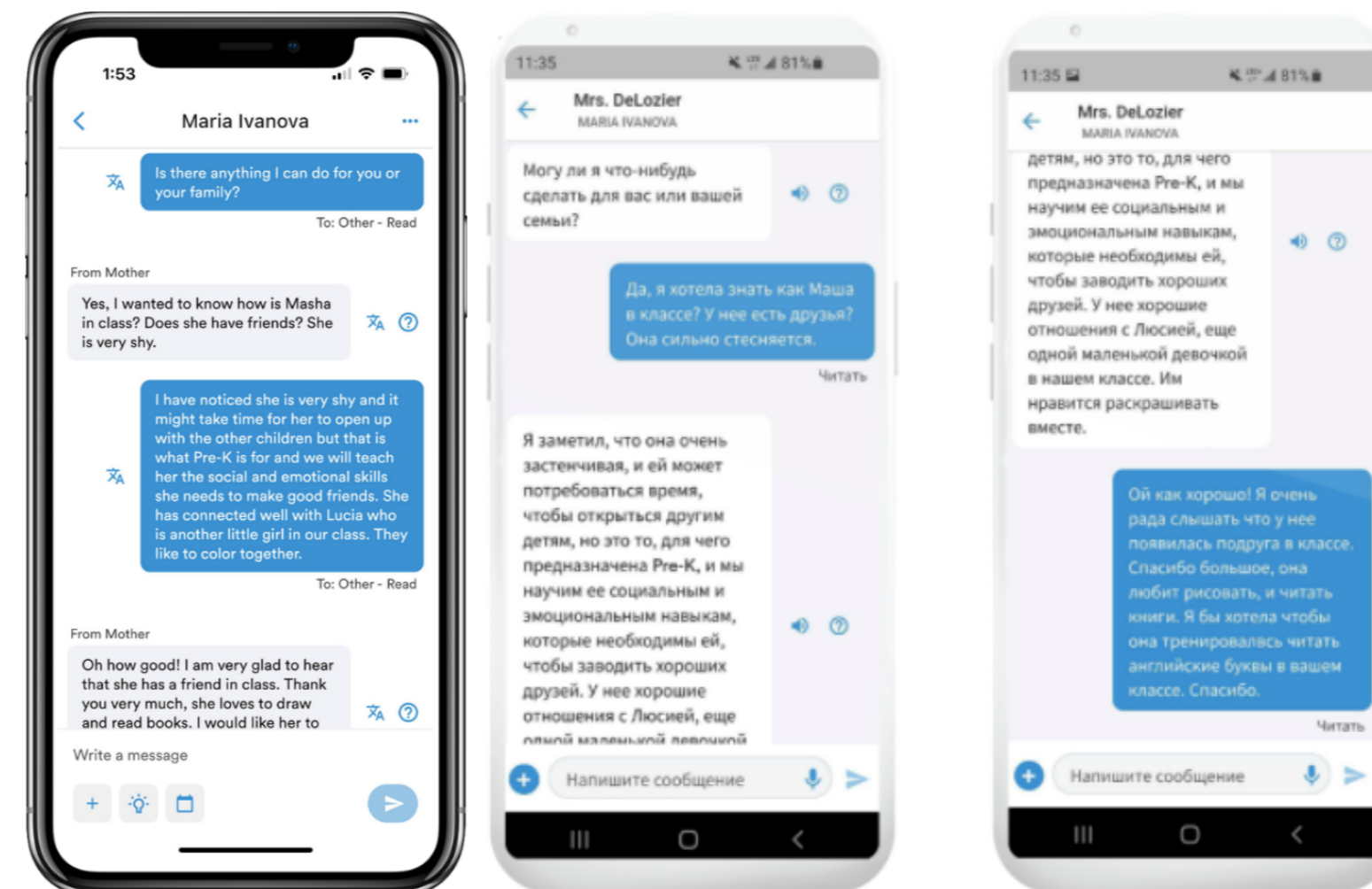
Step 1 Create Your Calendar

Use the Calendar Audit Template, if helpful, to complete the following steps

- Document each month's events/happenings, using your calendar for last year (and maybe 2018)
- Audit your list of events/happenings; evaluate them based on these criteria:
 - O = Over-communicated
 - W = Well-communicated
 - U = Under-communicated
 - S = School-centered (information created or driven by the school)
 - F = Family-centered (information requested by families)
 - A = Asset-based
 - D = Deficit-based
 - N = Neutral
- Gather information from your families about the events/happenings they care about (family, school, and community based)

Helpful TalkingPoints Tips and Tools: Real-time and scheduled messages or announcements via quick, easy, text messages

Two-way translated text messages are a great fit for communicating in real-time with families. Many families don't use email, and phone communication can be intimidating or ineffective, especially for non-English-speaking families. Teachers, staff, and administrators can send messages to individual families, groups of families, or send whole-class or school announcements.



Communicate in real-time, or pre-schedule messaging. Create and share templates with administrators and teachers to facilitate coordinated communication around important school- or district-wide events and priorities.

Step 2 Teach Families and Learn from Them

Code your list of communications with “T” and “L”

- Teaching families
- Learning from families

Identify your “dream state” of school-family partnership from the school’s and then from the families’ perspective.

- What would your families need to know about school to reach this?
- Develop one communication per month to move toward dream state.

Helpful TalkingPoints Tips and Tools: Two-way communication & survey tools

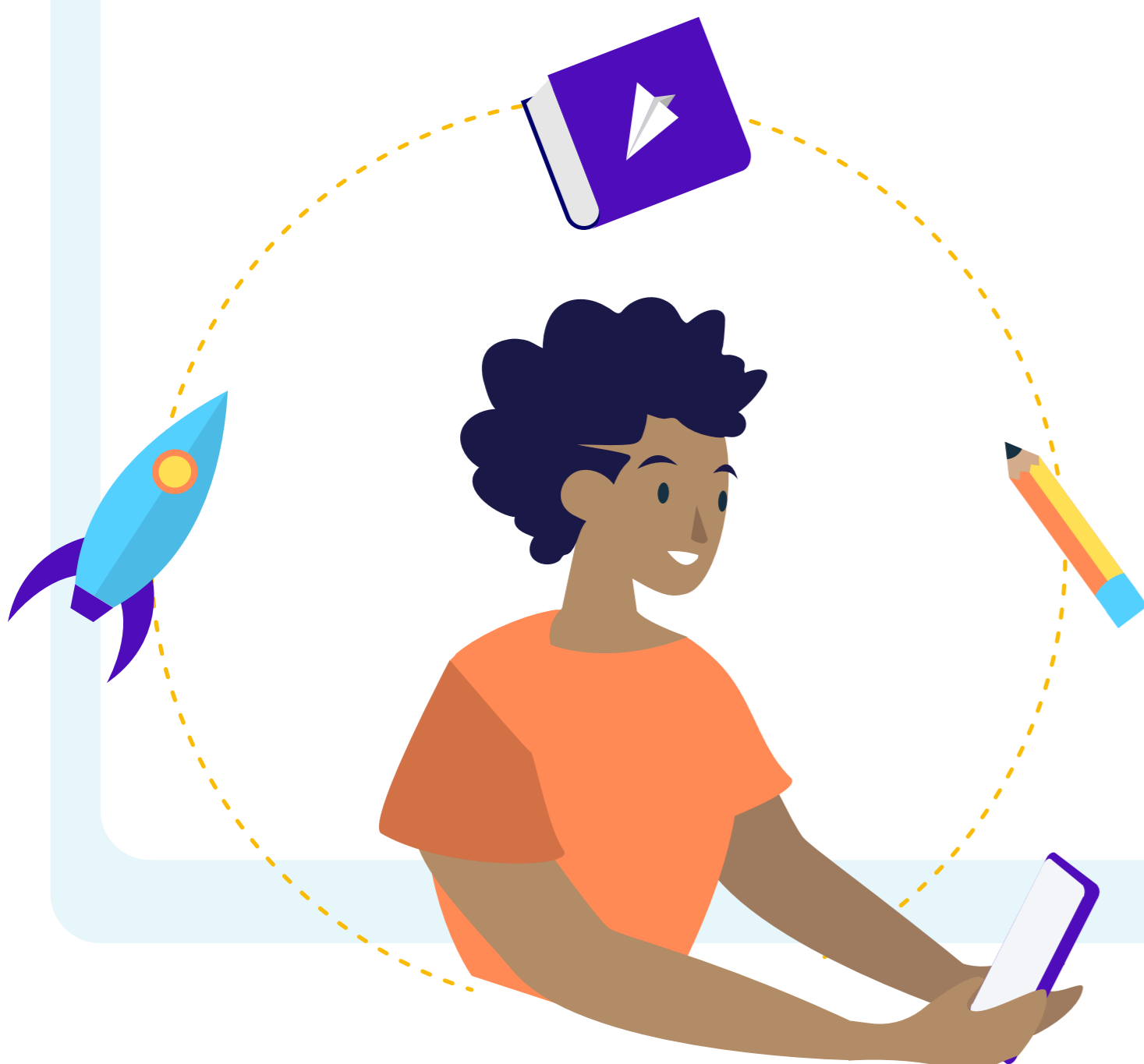
District- and school-wide polls are an easy way to quickly survey all families with simple translated poll questions. Save time by setting up auto-replies based on families’ response choices. View real-time response metrics with downloadable reports.

How is your child feeling about returning to school this year?

by Mark Payson Ferguson • April 21, 2020

RESPONSES	RESPONSE RATE
1531/1783	86%
Excited or Happy	286 votes
Worried or Nervous	513 votes
I don't know how they are feeling	407 votes
Fine or Neutral	325 votes

[VIEW RESPONSE BREAKDOWN](#)



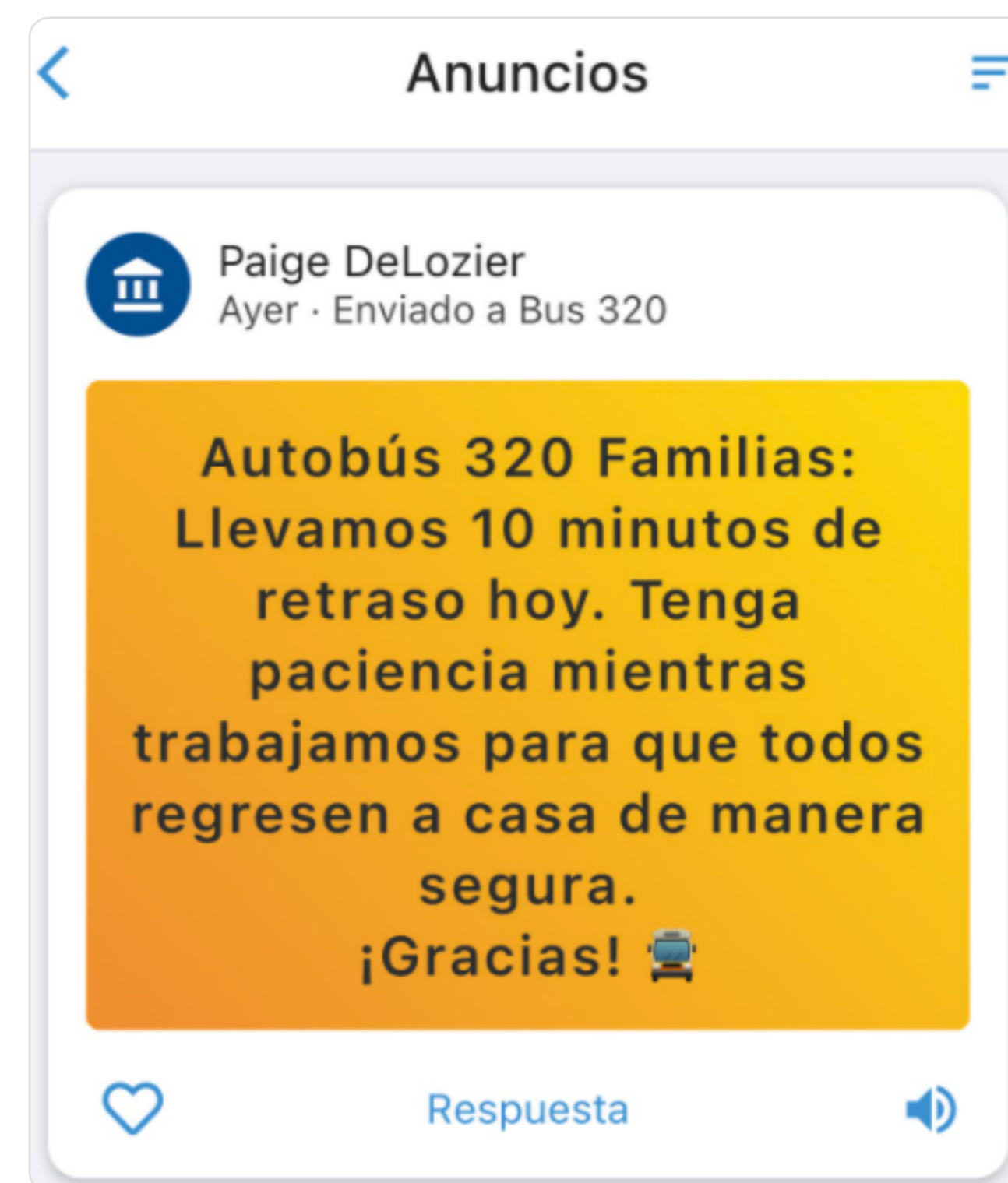
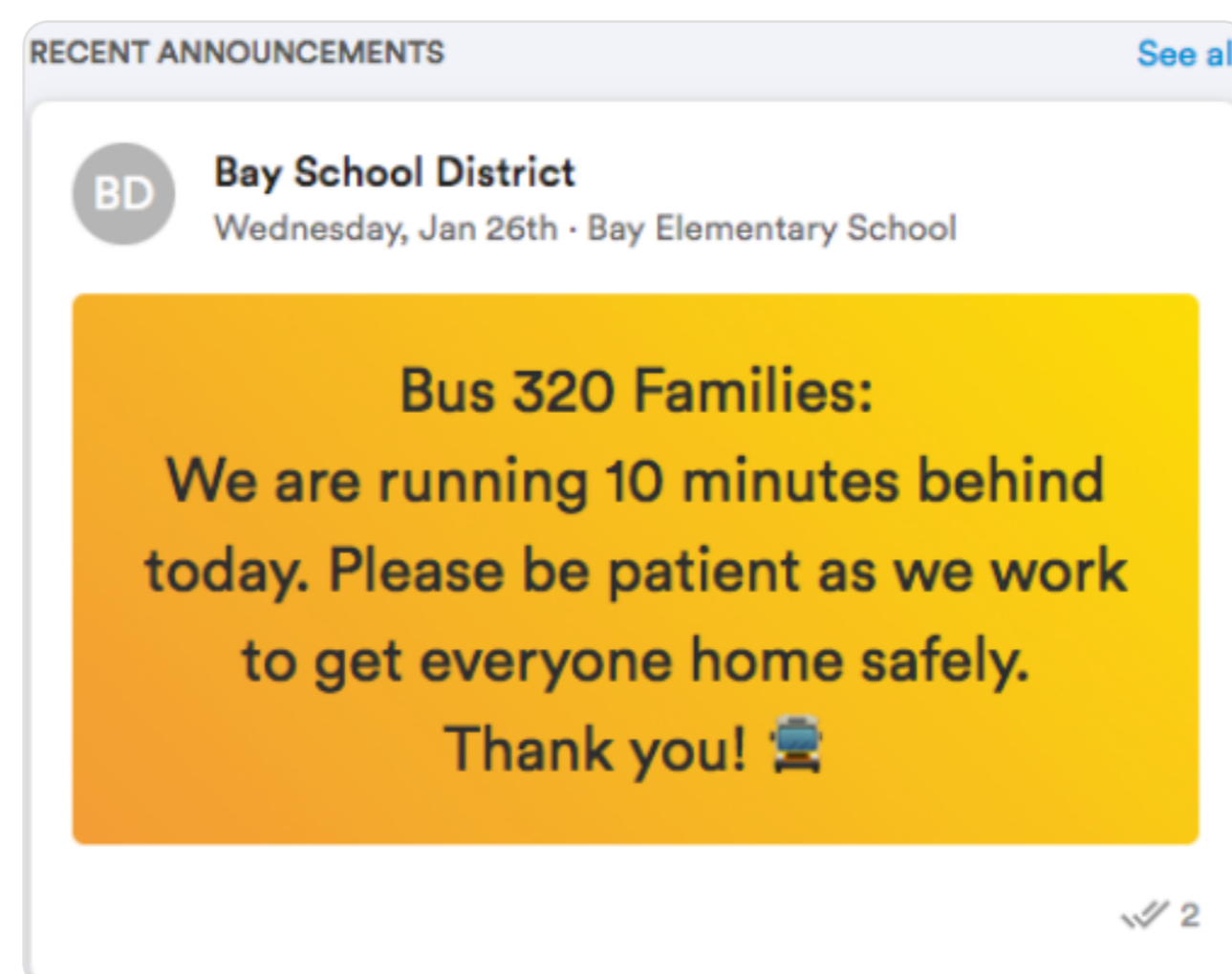
Step 3 Identify What Has Worked and What Hasn't

Review past practices to identify 1-2 ways to address communication barriers

- Have a conversation with staff from multiple roles focused on which families haven't been reached in the past
- Identify potential barriers to reaching those families
- Identify potential solutions to those barriers and decide on one or two solutions to implement
- Don't get overwhelmed by choosing too many solutions at once but also don't let "perfect be the enemy of progress." Do one thing well and layer in others over time

Helpful TalkingPoints Tips and Tools: Flexible tools to add and manage custom groupings of family contacts for easy targeted communication

Custom groups offer an easy way to communicate with families of specific groupings of students that do not exist within your student information system, and to better reach and engage each family based on their students' needs. Enable teachers, administrators, and key support staff - like bus drivers, coaches, counselors, nurses, and paraprofessionals - to easily communicate with the families of students they serve in their home language.



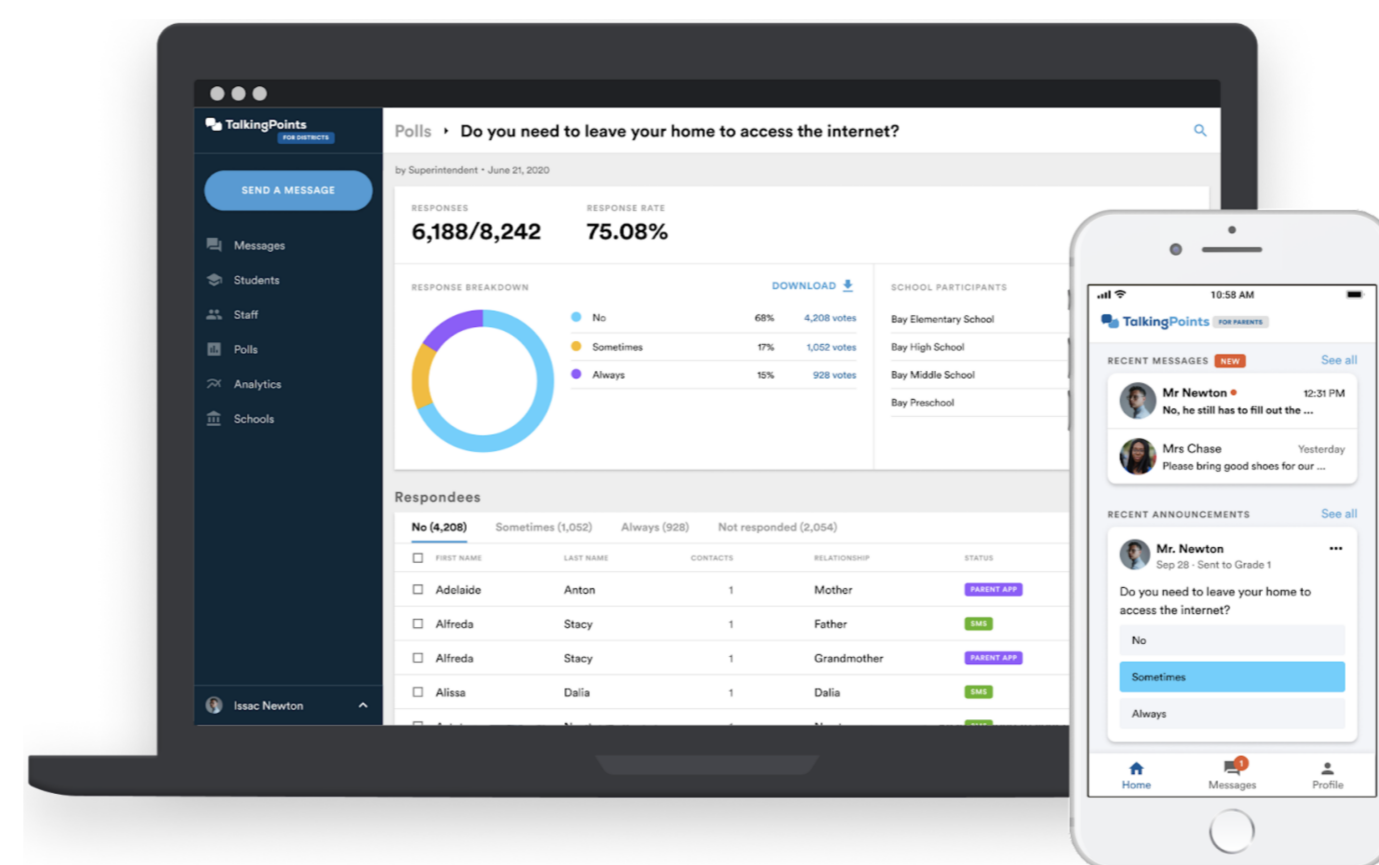
Step 4 Use Families as Teachers

Activate families as part of your school team to elevate student and family voices in school design and build collaborative culture

- Review the events/happenings that your families care about and make a list of the families you aren't currently reaching
- Find a few “golden opportunities” where these things intersect (work across multiple schools or across a district to maximize impact and minimize effort for school staff)
- Find a family member who would be willing to teach a class about that family's culture
- Seek permission to record the presentation to start to create a culture library
- Have someone make note of “ah-ha” moments during the presentation to easily share more broadly with school staff

Helpful TalkingPoints Tips and Tools: Family contact groupings based on SIS rosters so admins can contact the right families quickly

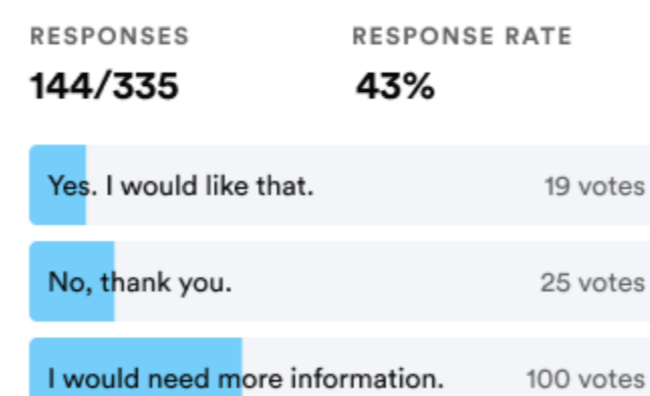
TalkingPoints' analytics dashboards offer administrators and teachers a view of family contacts based on SIS rosters so it's easy to determine which families are engaging and responsive, and which are not yet being reached and may need more follow-up.



Polls are a quick, easy way to find out which families would be willing to participate in community-building activities, such as sharing their family's culture.

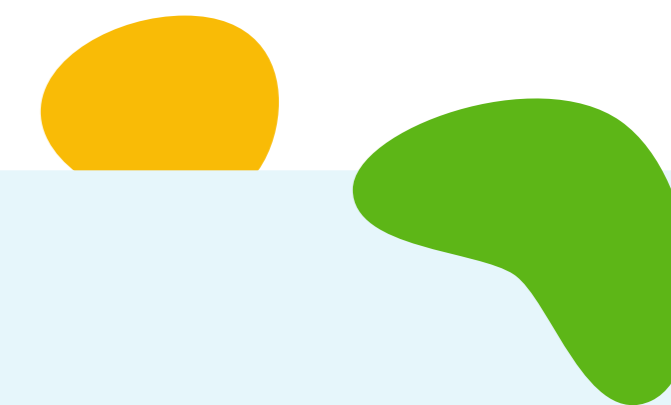
Would you be interested in teaching a class about your family's culture?

by Principal Wheeler • August 21, 2022



[VIEW RESPONSE BREAKDOWN](#)

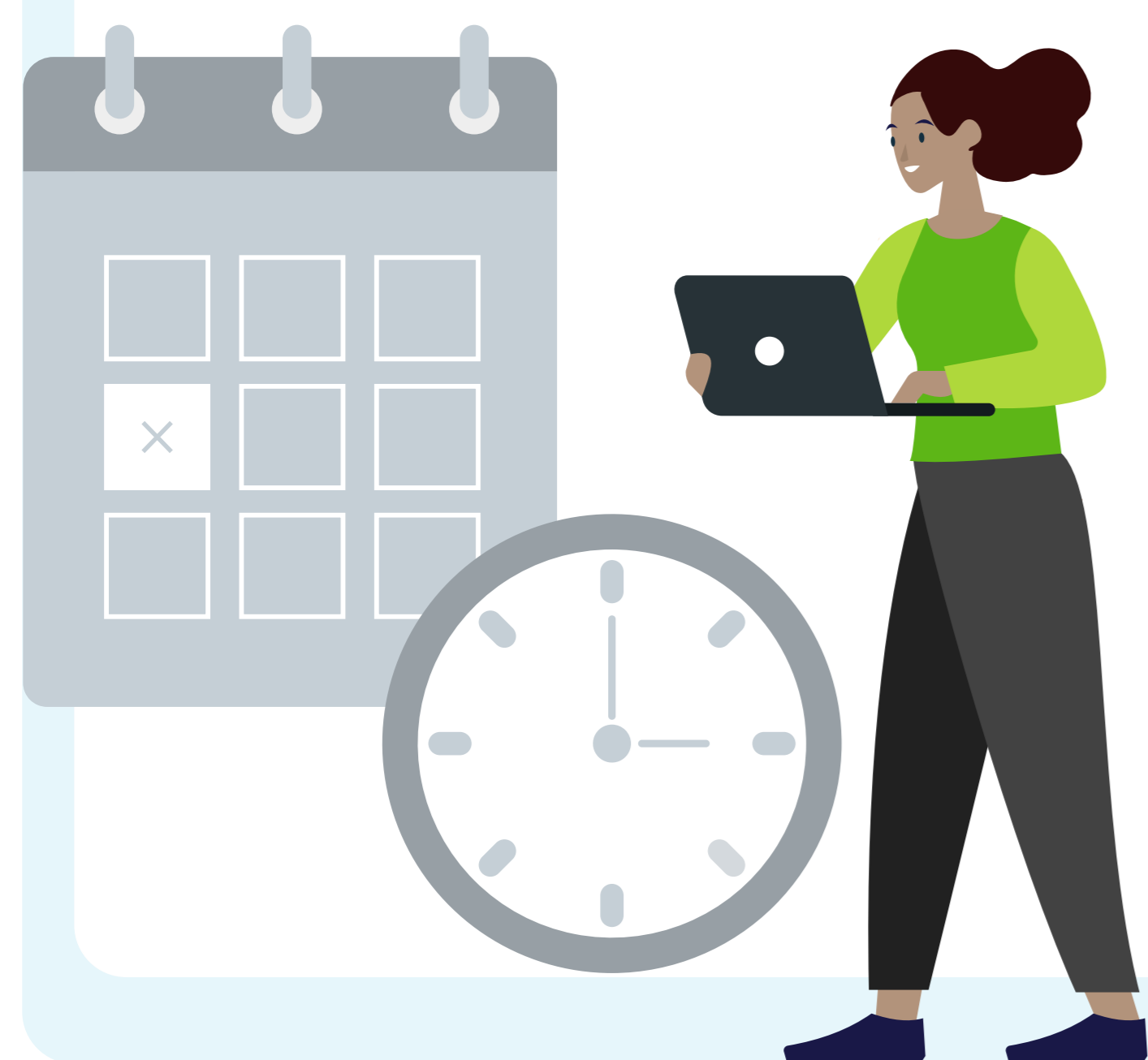




Step 5 Finish Your Grab-and-Go Plan for the Year

Steps to complete to finalize and communicate your year-long calendar

- List and audit calendar events to create your calendar
- Check for the balance between teaching families and learning from families through communications
- Identify the effectiveness of past communications to discern what has worked and what hasn't
- Find "golden opportunities" to use families as teachers
- Finalize and communicate your year-long calendar at back-to-school



Helpful TalkingPoints Tips and Tools: Create, save, and share attendance templates to support easy, consistent communication

Share proactive messaging about the importance of attendance at the beginning of the year. Engage with families to build trust and learn more about each family's situation and the specific barriers that impact attendance. Address each barrier with messages that offer support and help build a shared understanding.

Send a message

To: Whole School Filter languages

Good school attendance can help your child's success in school and can even make graduating on time more likely. Students are sometimes absent from school because of anxiety and other worries. If you think your child may be missing school because they are worried or anxious, please click on the link below for resources that can help.
<https://u.org/3fYI3PJ>

357/600

Save as template

School templates Teacher templates TalkingPoints templates

ATTENDANCE / Mental Health:
Good school attendance can help your child's success in school and can even make

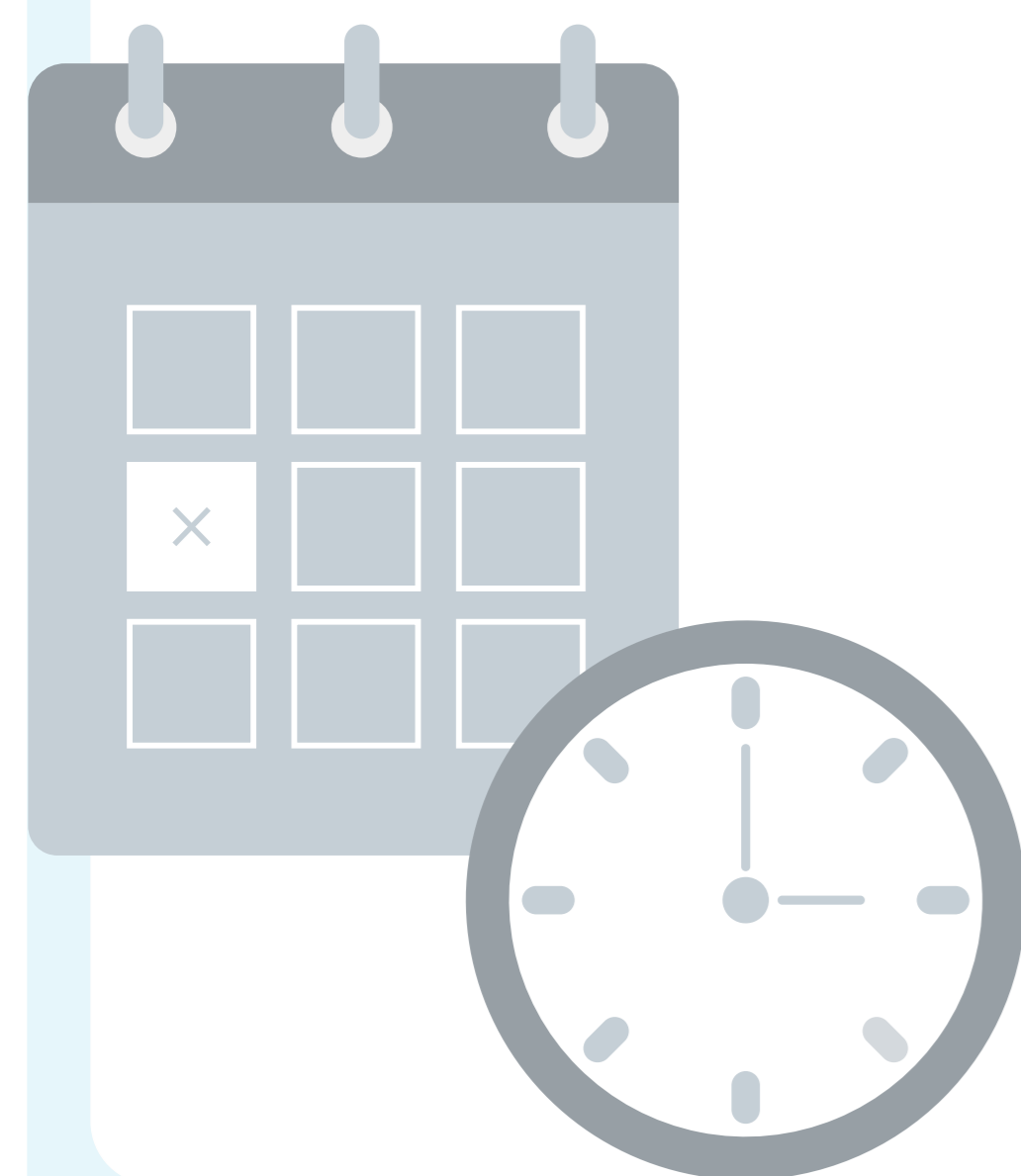
ATTENDANCE / 3 Absences
This Month: Hi [parentFullName], your child [studentFullName] has missed 3

Hello families, re
sent home today
know if yo
them. Thank you

CANCEL SCHEDULE SEND

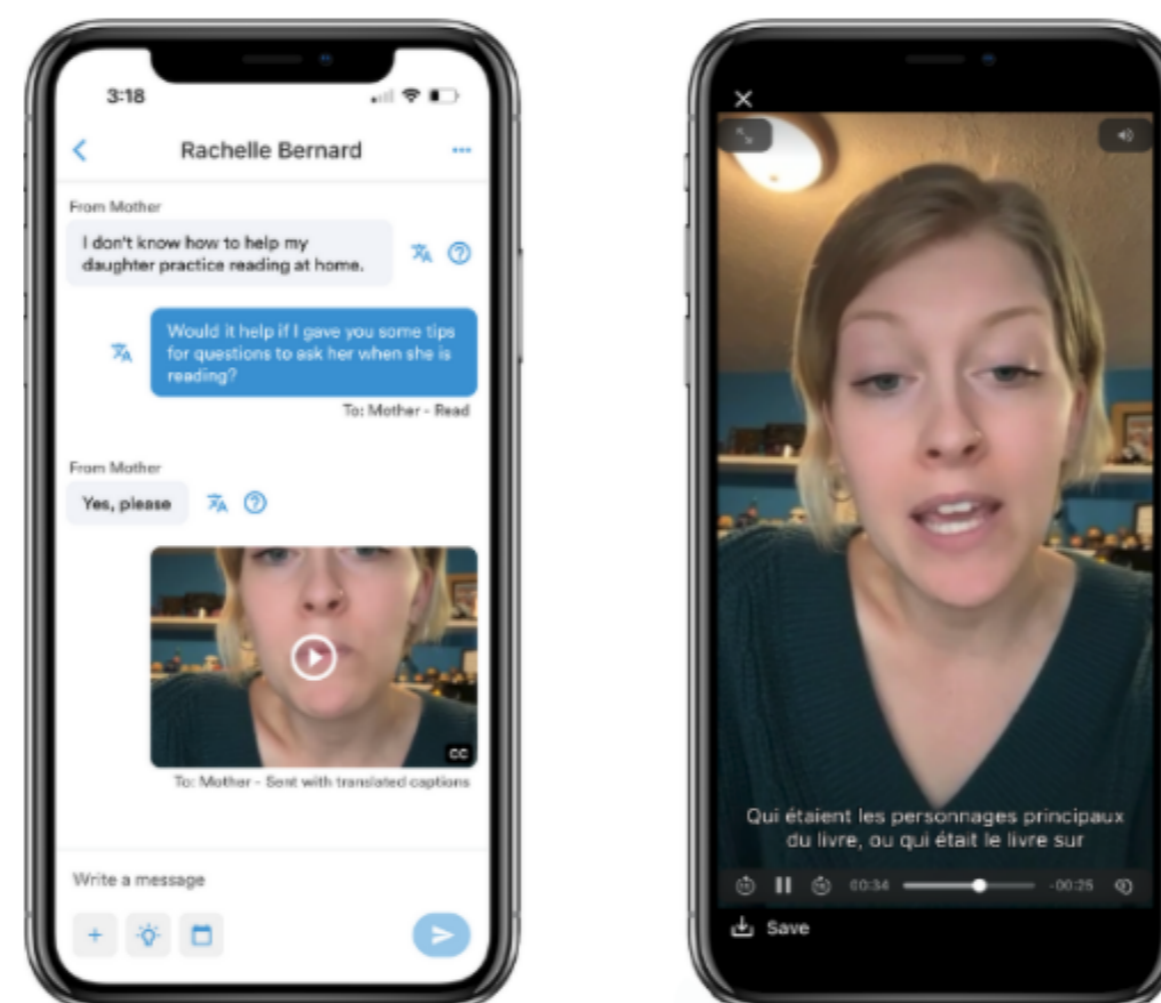
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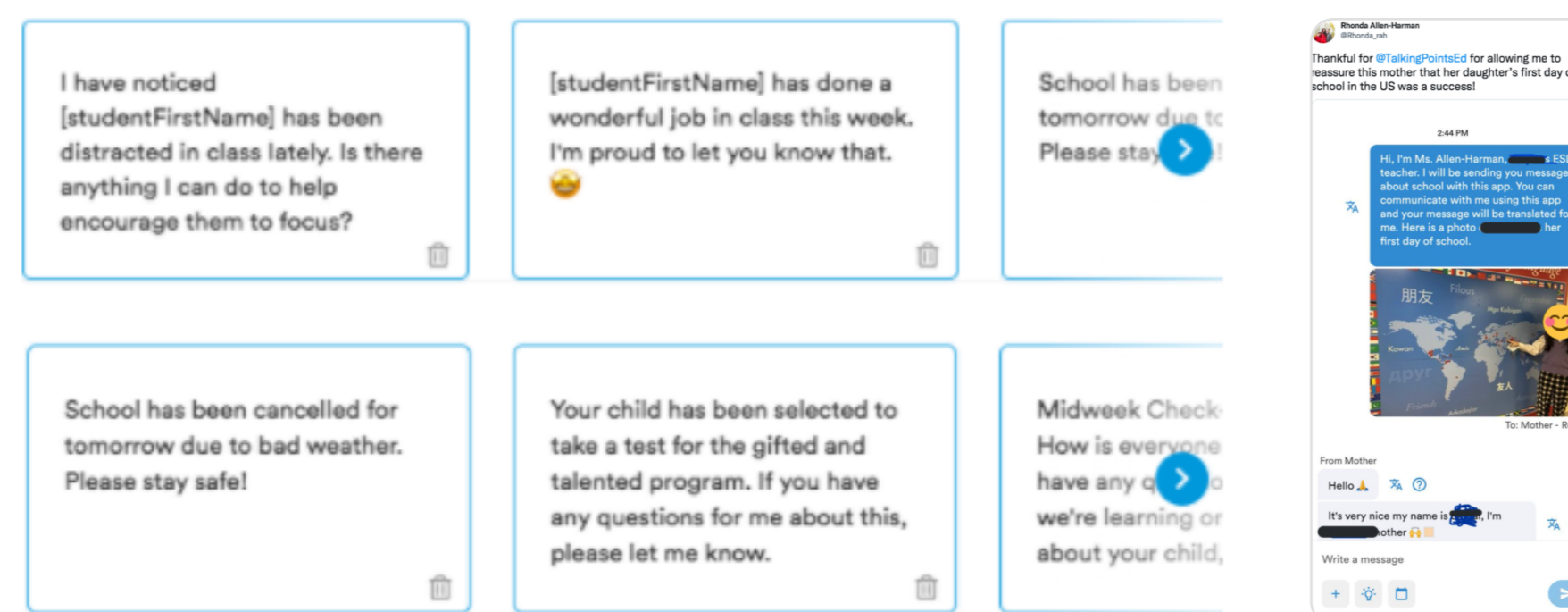
Include proactive outreach in your communication plan

Connect with families before/at the beginning of school to learn about each student to help build school-family partnerships early that will serve students well all year long. Video messages with translated captions offer a warm, inviting way to reinforce positive family-student check-in activities, demonstrate concepts families can reinforce at home with their students, and are a great way for teachers to ease back-to-school nerves by introducing themselves to incoming students with a virtual tour of the classroom.



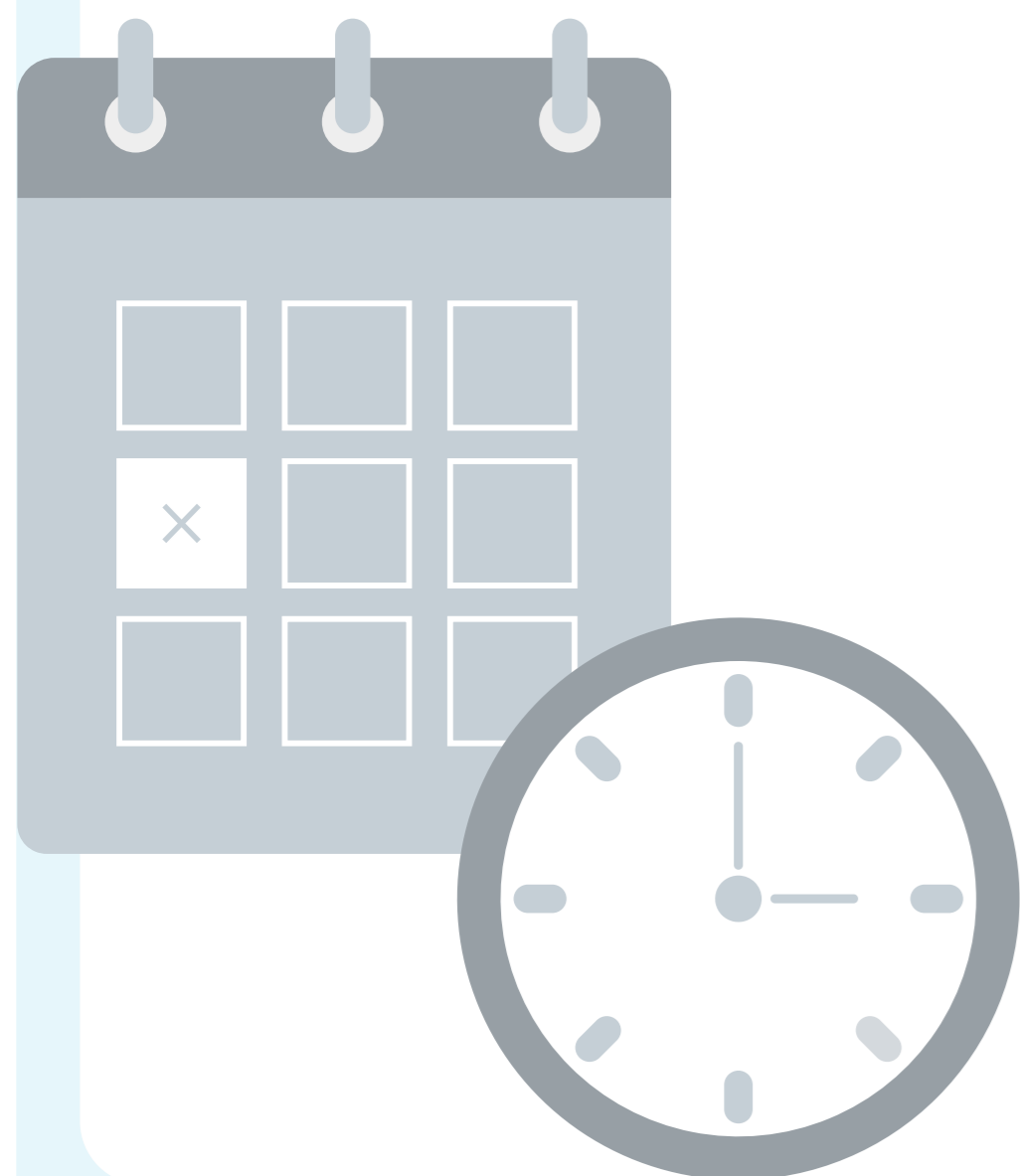
Send frequent, quick, positive messages home to build relationships with families

Reassure and welcome families regardless of barriers of language, literacy, or understanding about how American schools work. Save templates to make it quick and easy to send positive messages that are mindful of limited literacy levels.

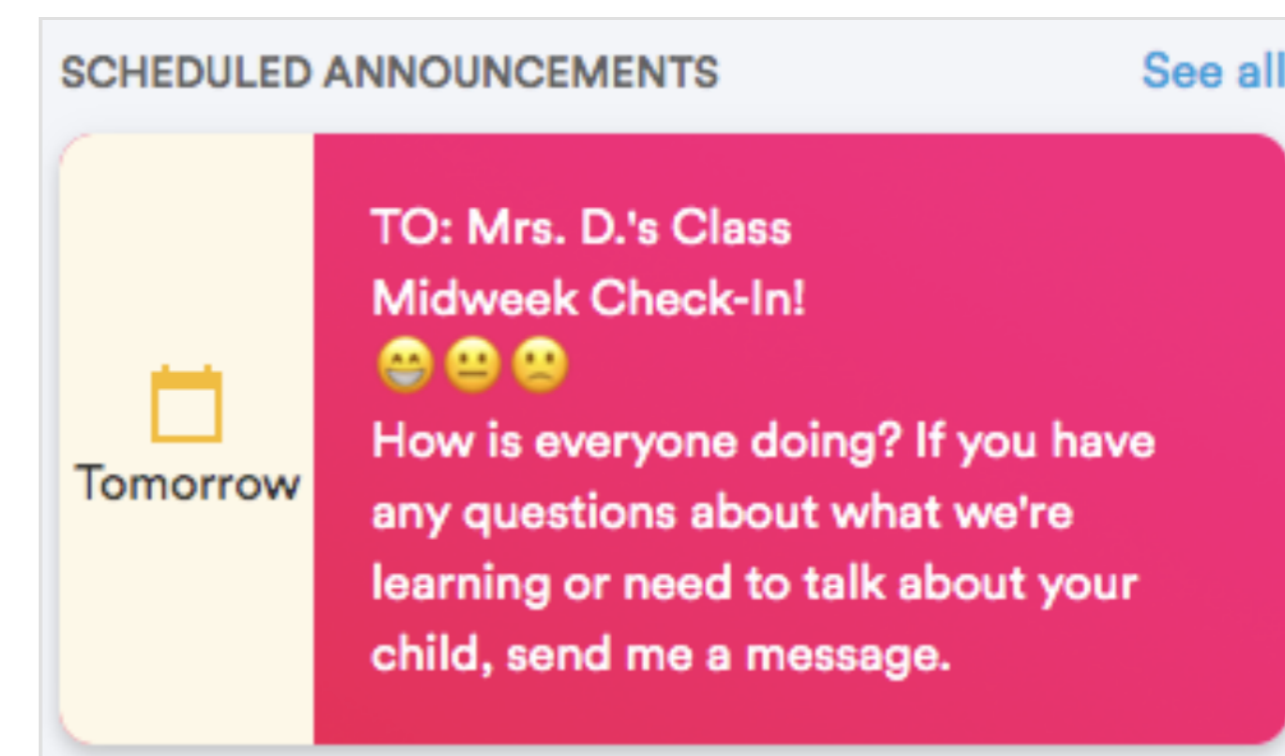
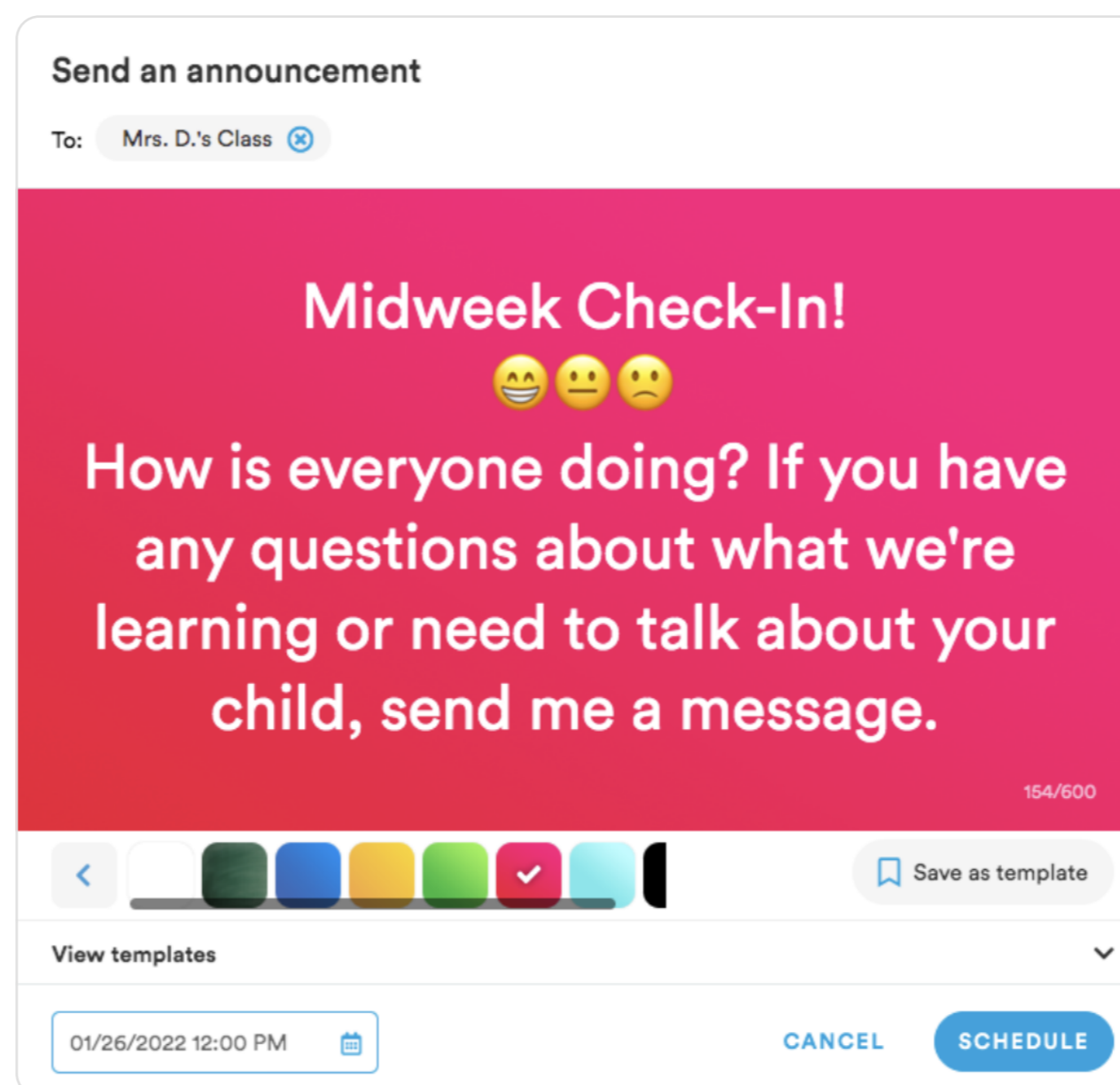


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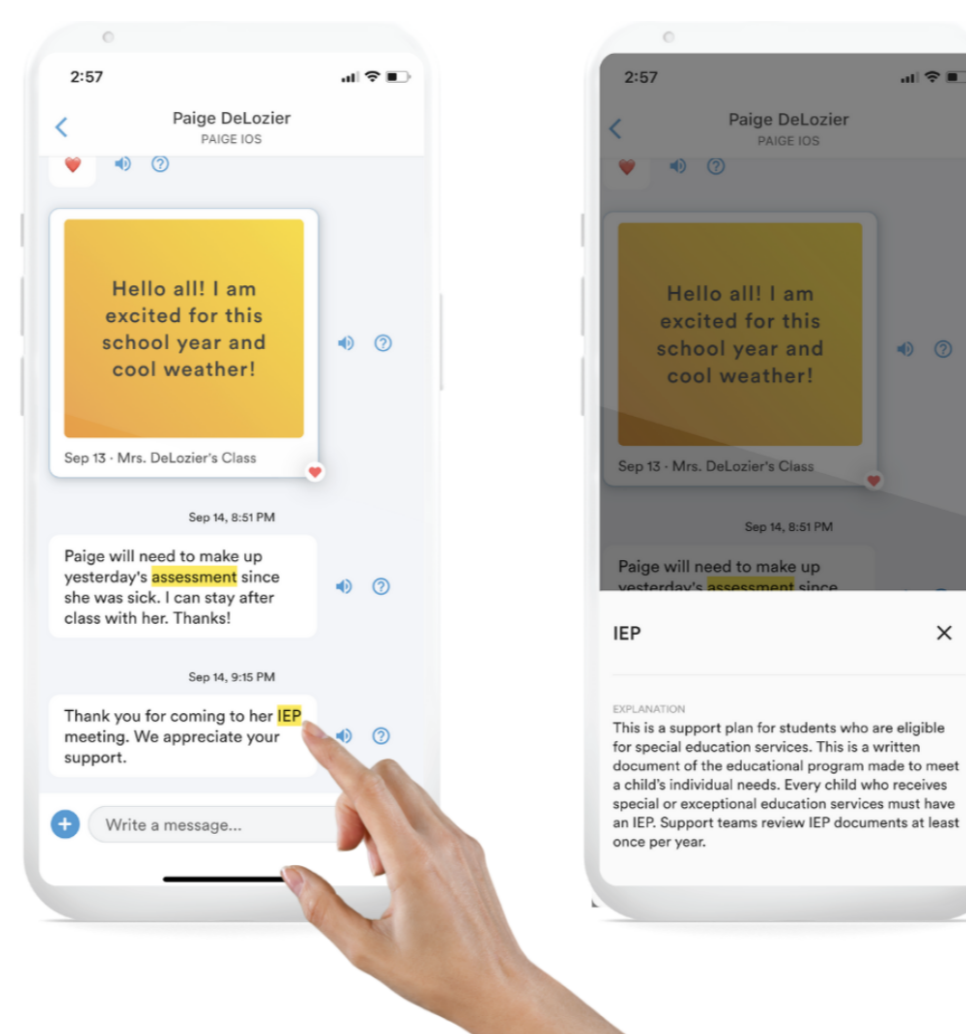


Use message scheduling tools for weekly check-ins with families to see how students are doing



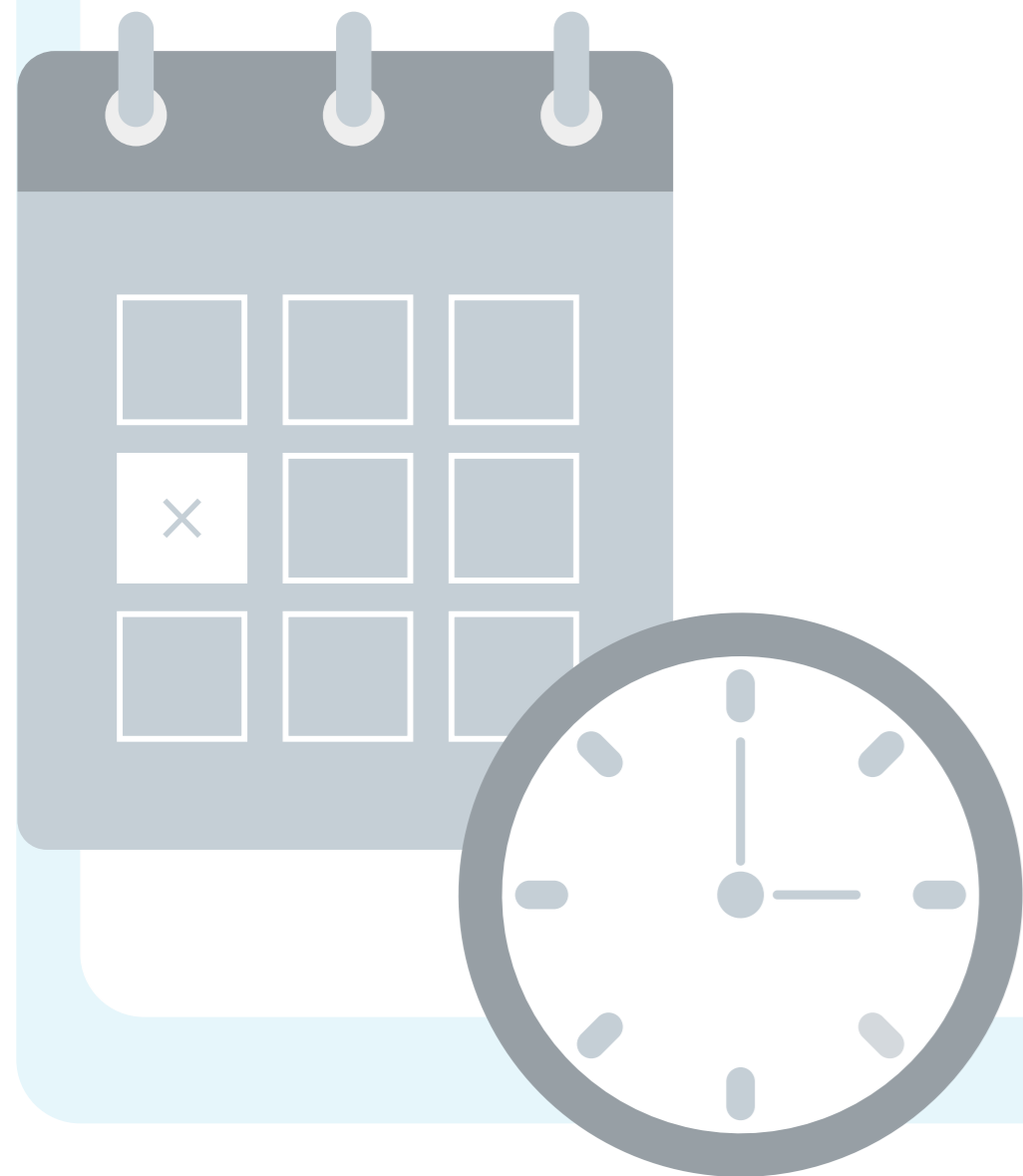
Built-in equity features in the TalkingPoints for Families free app improve access and understanding and help remove common barriers to effective family engagement

In-app Parent Ed101 helps demystify education terms:



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Readability flags & tips helps support varied family literacy levels:

Send an announcement

To: Select a class

Another short poem, The Phoenix
legendary phoenix and his faithful
love and commitment in a world w



View templates

Readability Tips

Your message was flagged because it requires a reading level higher than 6th grade. In order to have optimized translations and help with understandability, we recommend simplifying your message.

Check out the article below for best practices

WRITING FOR TRANSLATION

Don't flag my messages again

DONE

See more ways that equity features can expand access to communication for families [here](#).

