

Improving Communication & Family Engagement

Engaging families is key to driving student success. According to the National Education Association, “children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more” when their families are involved with the educational process.

DeansList can:

- Automatically alert families of student successes
- Keep families in the loop about events through the family portal
- Send home the school’s customized weekly report
- Give teachers easy access to family contact information

Better Communication Builds Engagement

Routine, positive updates are the key to building collaborative relationships with families. They both encourage parents to take an active role in their child's education and arm them with the info they need to have constructive conversations. Strong communication takes time but fortunately, with modern technology, it's never been easier to bridge barriers and reach more family members.

- Leverage **multiple modalities** (text messages, emails, phone calls) and **translate messages** into each family's home language increases accessibility and reach.
- Communication around positive growth, specific reminders, and upcoming events is particularly effective in boosting student achievement.
- Keep your messages **short and simple**. A recent study showed that weekly messages that averaged 8.7 words were tied to a 6.5% increase in the likelihood of passing a class, and a 6.1% decrease in the likelihood of dropping the class.

Improving Family Engagement with DeansList

1. Highlight the positives with automatic alerts to families

When schools do communicate with families, it is often to discuss negative behaviors, as those can seem the most urgent to school staff. However, negative communication is not shown to be as effective as positive communication in engaging families, and can demotivate families and students.

With DeansList's messaging center, you can create automatic alerts (translated into each family's home language) that highlight achievements. Send a text every week to families of students with perfect homework or perfect attendance, or an auto-dial each day to student who have earned only positive behaviors.

2. Keep families in the loop through the Family Portal

Studies that look at high-achieving students of all backgrounds found that their parents encourage them, talk with them about school, and keep them focused on learning and homework. The more parents know about what's happening at school, the easier it is for them to be involved.

DeansList's Family Portal provides an automatic answer to the question "What happened at school today?" Families can help students reflect on their academic progress, make up missed homework assignments, and ensure regular attendance. The portal is also a great place for schoolwide and class announcements. Families can set their own site language, so nothing gets lost in translation.

3. Set expectations for communication and use DeansList to hold staff accountable

When it comes to family communication, there is no substitute for personalized telephone contact between teachers and families. But teachers are busy, and it can be hard to find time for a phone call home in a busy day of teaching, planning lessons, and grading.

The DeansList app makes it easy for teachers to access student contact information and log phone calls. Administrators have access to call logs, allowing them to hold educators accountable for schoolwide communication initiatives.