

*Remind*

# Texting for success

A simple, equitable communication  
channel for increasing family  
engagement and improving  
student outcomes



Nearly everyone in the United States texts, and nearly all texts are read within minutes of being sent.

SMS text messaging remains one of the simplest and most equitable forms of communication available today: While digital access and connectivity has increased significantly in the past decade, 15% of American adults still don't own a smartphone, and 23% don't have broadband internet service at home. However, 97% of Americans do own a cell phone of some kind.

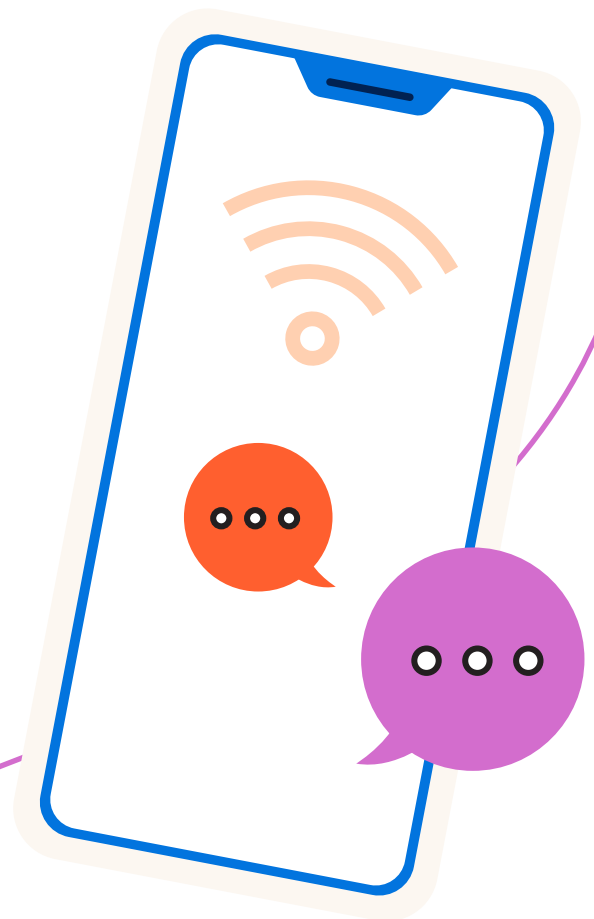
Over the past decade, schools and districts have started to use text messaging as part of their notification systems to connect more quickly and directly with their students and families. However, the benefits of texting aren't limited to efficiency and convenience:

Research shows that texting can also help increase family engagement and positively affect student outcomes.

In recent studies, education researchers have targeted the effect of family and student engagement on outcomes like attendance, academic performance, and college matriculation—and found that text messaging provides a channel for delivering timely, accessible information that drives measurable improvements.

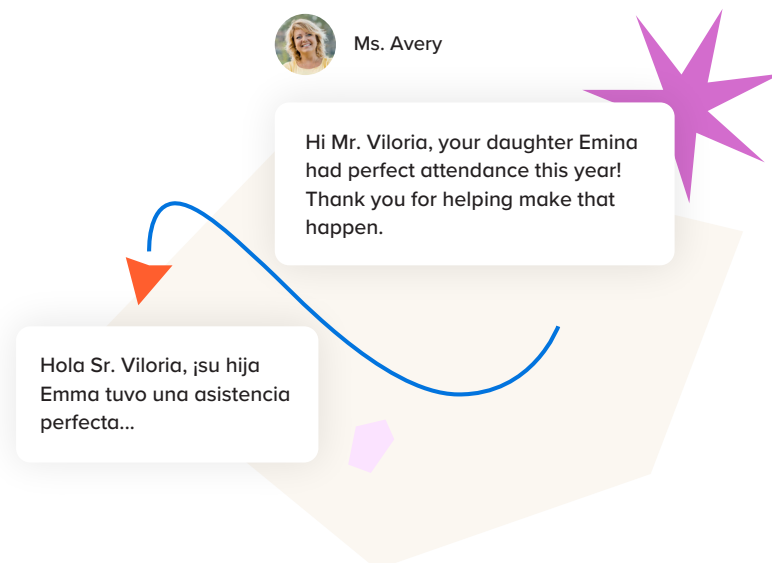
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# Texting and equitable family engagement

Although family engagement is crucial to ensuring positive student outcomes, communication barriers often prevent parents and caregivers from being able to engage meaningfully with their children's learning. As a low-cost, widely available communication channel, text messaging can support families in accessing and engaging with important information.



## Helping parents and caregivers engage with content

Some parents and caregivers may not be confident in their ability to support their children's education. However, **receiving text messages from teachers** can help increase their capacity to support students at home.

To increase engagement among underserved families, [one school in Louisiana provided teachers with tools for texting families with weekly at-home activities](#). The participants reported that these text updates helped reinforce classroom learning, with many parents engaging in conversations with their children about their activity prompts.

## Helping multilingual families support learning at home

**Text messaging can also help linguistically diverse families** support their children with classroom learning. In particular, texting has been shown to help non-English-speaking adults who have difficulty discussing math concepts at home.

[In one Iowa State University study](#), culturally diverse parents who had experience supporting their children in reading—but not math—were sent “mathematically-focused” messages in their home languages that explained basic concepts and introduced activities they could do at home with their children. After receiving these texts, parents reported that they were able to understand and complete the math activities with their children. Some even found ways to modify and build on these exercises for additional enrichment.

# Texting and student outcomes



Studies have also shown that texting-based interventions, while relatively simple and low-cost, can have an outsized impact on student outcomes in all grade levels—and, in particular, for children in under-resourced communities.



Mr. Coleman

We're looking forward to seeing you at school today. Remember to check in with us at the office!

## Student learning

In preschool, sending home text messages can help children **improve language skills and vocabulary.**

[Temple University researchers](#) used Remind to study the impact of texting at an urban preschool. Teachers sent weekly texts to families in an intervention group that included vocabulary words and at-home activities, then measured students' language skills and word knowledge when the program concluded.

The families receiving texts reported greater contact with teachers, with children learning significantly more target words than those in the control group. The researchers concluded that the texting program promoted more vocabulary usage outside of the classroom, reinforcing learning.

## Course failures, attendance, and retention

While targeted interventions can be tailored for specific academic targets, texting programs can also **affect a number of outcomes related to student achievement.**

[In one study, researchers studying the impact of high-frequency information](#) sent weekly text messages to the parents and caregivers of middle and high school students. These automated alerts included information about their children's academic progress, including absences, grades, and missed assignments.

Results showed that course failures decreased by 27%, attendance increased by 12%, and student retention increased as well. Significantly, these improvements were also more noticeable for students whose GPAs were below the school median—making texting a promising option for low-cost, high-impact interventions.

# Using Remind for family engagement and student outcomes

On the Remind platform, all communication is available via SMS text messaging: Families don't need to download an app to use Remind, and they can respond to senders directly in their text message threads. With Remind Hub, school and district communities also have access to automatic two-way translation via text, so families both receive and reply to text messages in their home languages.

In addition, communication features like message scheduling, targeted messaging, and engagement statistics allow administrators and teachers alike to use Remind for texting-based intervention programs, engagement-building initiatives, and more.

## Improving engagement with families from diverse backgrounds

With 77,000 students from diverse backgrounds, Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) needed a way to communicate effectively with multilingual families as well as families without regular access to email. While the district used a variety of communication tools—including robocalls, printed newsletters, and website updates—to cover as much ground as possible, administrators found that families would tune out messages that didn't seem directed to them.

To individualize communication with students and families, MPS rolled out Remind district-wide so teachers and staff had access to two-way texting in more than 100 languages. Because the district also gained the ability to quantify engagement with metrics like the number of messages sent and the percentage of parents reached, they could begin planning ways to correlate family climate with activity on Remind.



**“Our challenge was figuring out a way for families to connect with the person they view as the most important person in our district: their child’s teacher.”**

— Danielle Costello, Family and Community Engagement Specialist

## Increasing attendance with motivational text messages

Poinciana High School in Florida was using a combination of emails, phone calls, and a content management system to communicate with students, but found that these channels weren't effective at reaching them: Students rarely checked their email or picked up calls from numbers they didn't recognize, individual phone calls were time-consuming to make, and the district-level CMS was difficult to use for personalized, one-on-one communication.

To reach and support a pilot group of chronically absent students, many of whom had to wake up and make it to school without family support, the school's Student Services department used Remind to send wake-up text messages every day. To increase engagement and build rapport, these texts included motivational quotes and invitations to check in—and resulted in a 60% improvement in attendance.

**“The students we work with enjoy receiving these messages. They could just unenroll, but they don’t.”**

— Michael Meechin, Principal



## Involving families in classroom learning

As a autistic support teacher at Solis-Cohen Elementary School, which serves one of the most diverse populations in the School District of Philadelphia, Denise Baumbach needed a form of communication that was as individualized as her teaching. Along with sending home group announcements about events like picture day or field trips, she used Remind to text individual parents with updates from their child's day. “In a school with a large English learner population like ours, it's the easiest way to say, ‘Hey, this happened,’ since Remind translates messages for you,” she says.

Denise also found that sending parents texts helped invite a response, from replies to her messages to greater parent involvement at home and at school.

To encourage conversation about classroom learning, especially for students with limited or no language, she sent home messages with prompts such as “Today, we learned about rabbits. Ask your child about rabbits!” to help families create consistency and support learning at home.

**“I’ve found it’s a lot easier to get somebody on their phone in a text than to call or to write a note; maybe they’re busy, or maybe they’re working late. But everybody’s glued to their phone, one hundred percent of the day.”**

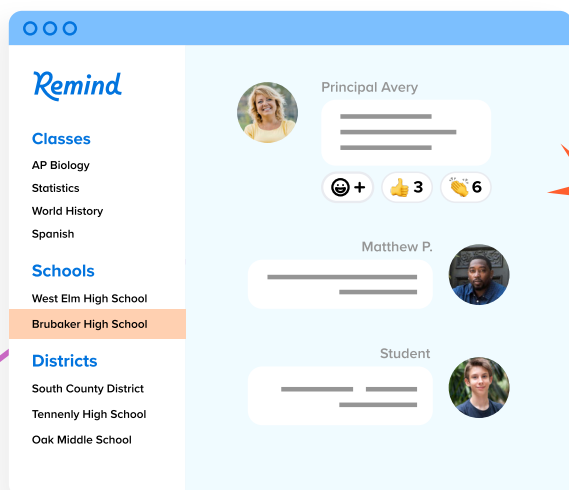
— Denise Baumbach, special education teacher

# Texting with Remind

Years of research support what educators already know: Students benefit when teachers and families connect easily and often. Yet despite the many developments in education technology, including the increased adoption of internet and digital technology, SMS text messaging continues to be the simplest, most effective way to communicate equitably with students and families.

With Remind, text notifications are part of a 360-degree communication platform that allows schools and districts to leverage the impact of texting for classroom, school, and district engagement—from everyday updates and individual outreach to emergency alerts and targeted interventions.

Find out more about Remind Hub for schools and districts at [www.remind.com/hub](http://www.remind.com/hub).



## References and further reading

[Internet/Broadband Fact Sheet](#)  
(Kuhfeld, Soland, Lewis, Morton, 2022)

[Family Literacy Engagement Strategic Plan for Schools and School Systems](#)  
(Louisiana Department of Education, 2021)

[Mobile Fact Sheet](#)  
(Pew Research Center, 2021)

[Leveraging Parents through Low-Cost Technology: The Impact of High-Frequency Information on Student Achievement](#)  
(Bergman and Chan, 2019)

[Teaching and Learning Through Text Messages](#)  
(Lynch, 2020)

[Text to talk: Effects of a home-school vocabulary texting intervention on prekindergarten vocabulary](#)  
(Snell, Wasik, Hindman, 2021)

[Text Messaging and Implications for its use in Education](#)  
(Tomita, 2009)

[Texting in the Classroom: Not Just a Distraction](#)  
(Watters, 2011)

[Using Mathematically-Focused Text Messages to Improve Connections between Linguistically-Diverse Parents and Their Child's Classroom Learning](#)  
(Applegate and Jackson, 2018)

[Using Texting to Promote Learning and Literacy](#)  
(Center for Technology Implementation, 2014)