

Parent-to-Parent Email Lists

Boulder Community School of Integrated Studies
Boulder, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Implementing ways for parents to communicate with one another and easily communicate with the school makes communication practices much easier for school staff. Boulder Community School of Integrated Studies (BCSIS) recognized that while Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) has strong top-down communication mechanisms, such as district emails, principal emails, and teacher emails, there was no system in place to facilitate communications from PTA/PTO to parents and for parents to communicate with each other. BCIS established a Parent-to-Parent Email List, a standardized set of email lists with one per classroom.

BCIS used their Ed Council Web Service so that parents knew that in their classroom, they could email to the alias teachername-parents@freidnsfbcis.org, an easy email address to remember when your child's teacher changes each year. This email list helps parent-teacher representatives communicate with parents in their classrooms, and helps parents to engage with other parents, thus enhancing the feeling of community at the school. News and reminders can be sent out through the Parent-to-Parent Email List, as can information on volunteer opportunities, questions parents want to ask other parents, and photos from field trips, among other things.

The Parent-to-Parent Email List uses a list service through Ariel MIS and is run by a computer-savvy BVSD parent. While setting up a list of parent emails per classroom is initially time-consuming (about 16 hours at the beginning of the school year), it pays off in the long run. BCIS piggybacked on the opt-in student directory list, so all parents opting in to be in a student directory were added to the initial email lists. Those involved in the planning then did outreach in each classroom with handouts and principal-initiated emails to promote more sign-ups.

The Parent Representative at BCIS shared that the Parent-to-Parent Email List tends to be self-policing, with inappropriate emails being rare and, when they do occur, are usually handled by the community of parents. Teachers value the Parent-to-Parent Email List as most of what is sent on the list helps make their jobs easier, such as coordinating classroom volunteering. The Parent-to-Parent Email List is a great way of getting parents connected not just to the school, but to each other.