

A photograph of two young children, a girl with curly hair and a boy with long hair, lying on a carpeted floor and looking intently at a tablet computer. The scene is bathed in a warm, orange light. In the background, other children are visible, slightly out of focus.

**WHY BLACKBOARD?**

# K-12 Communications Leaders Share Real Results

**Blackboard®**

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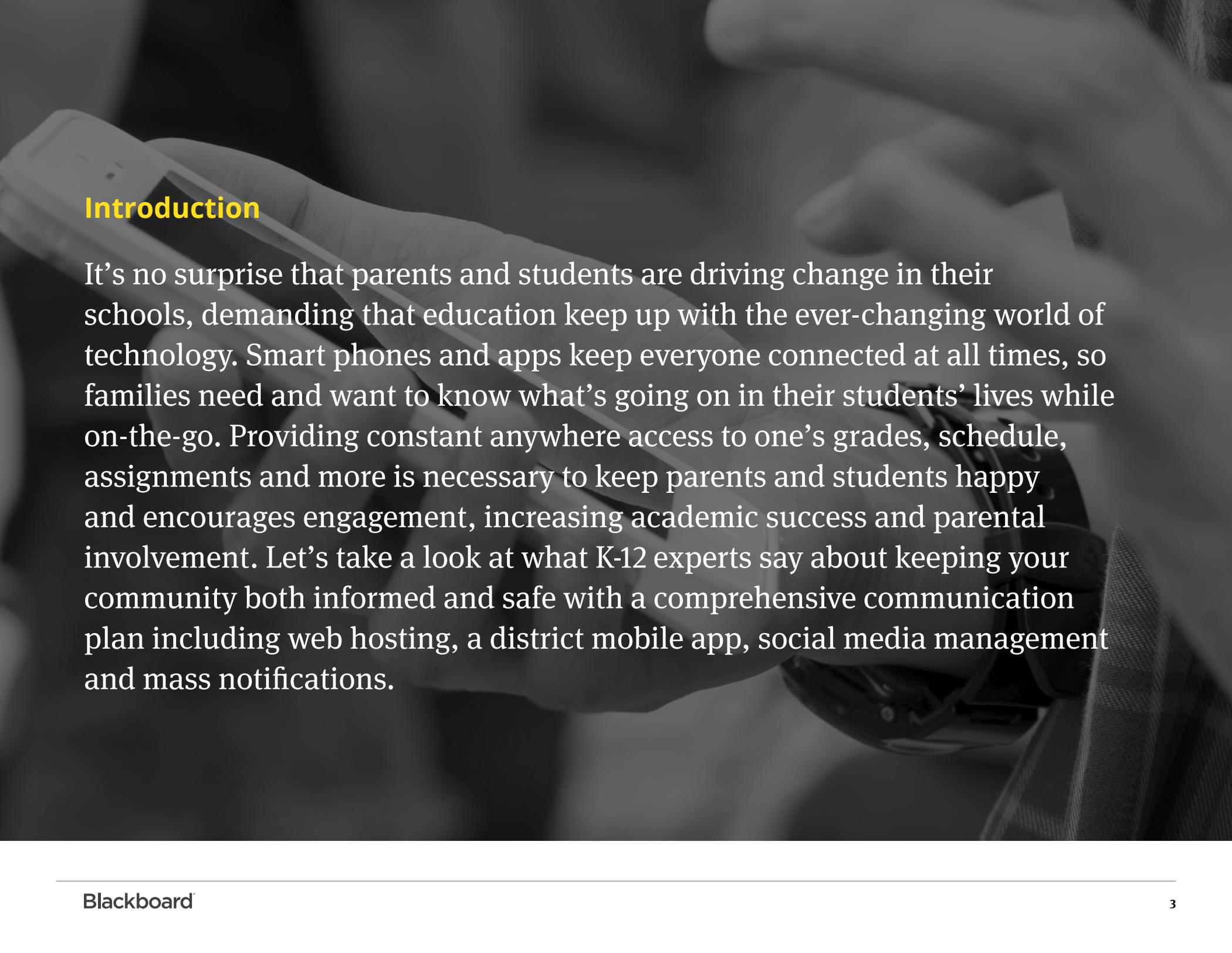
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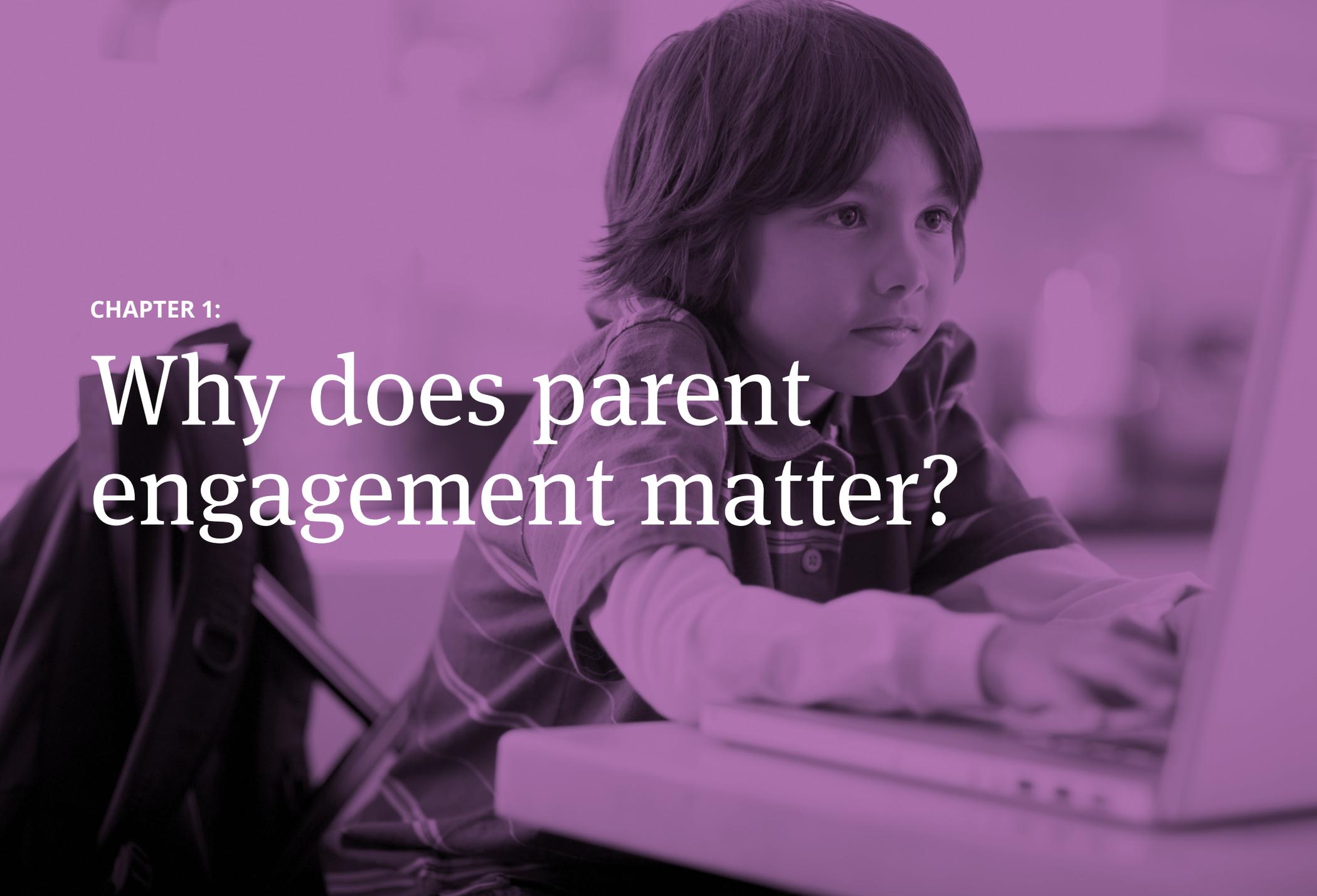
## **32 PARENT ENGAGEMENT SOLUTION RESOURCES**

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A grayscale photograph of a person in a suit holding a smartphone in their right hand and a pair of glasses in their left hand. The person's face is partially visible, looking down at the phone. The background is blurred.

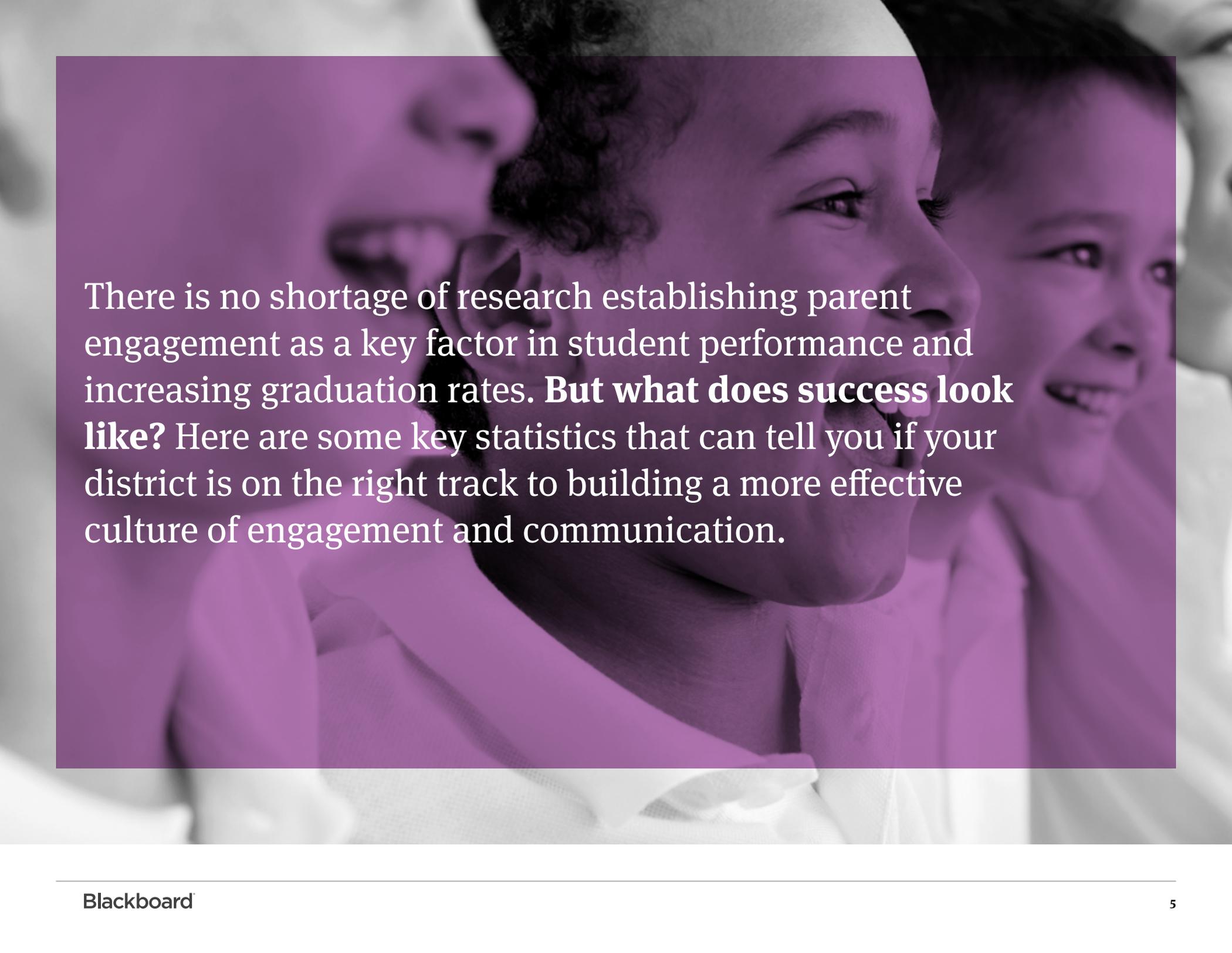
## Introduction

It's no surprise that parents and students are driving change in their schools, demanding that education keep up with the ever-changing world of technology. Smart phones and apps keep everyone connected at all times, so families need and want to know what's going on in their students' lives while on-the-go. Providing constant anywhere access to one's grades, schedule, assignments and more is necessary to keep parents and students happy and encourages engagement, increasing academic success and parental involvement. Let's take a look at what K-12 experts say about keeping your community both informed and safe with a comprehensive communication plan including web hosting, a district mobile app, social media management and mass notifications.



CHAPTER 1:

# Why does parent engagement matter?



There is no shortage of research establishing parent engagement as a key factor in student performance and increasing graduation rates. **But what does success look like?** Here are some key statistics that can tell you if your district is on the right track to building a more effective culture of engagement and communication.

## What does student success look like?

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“

When we talk about being linked to learning, we're talking about engaging with families in a way that will support the learning process for each student.

**Karen L. Mapp, Ed.D.,**  
*Harvard Graduate School of Education*

“

Well-implemented, goal-oriented programs and practices of family and community involvement can help increase student learning and development.

**Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D.,**  
*Johns Hopkins University*

Learn more about what experts have to say about parent/community engagement:



[Building Capacity for Family Engagement >](#)

[Link It To Learning: Concrete tips for making family engagement happen >](#)

[FINE Article - Interview with Dr. Karen Mapp: Why and how do you link family engagement practices to learning? >](#)

[Six Types of Involvement: Keys to Successful Partnerships >](#)

## Increase student attendance

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The more parents are informed, the more engaged they become. Our goal is to help you keep your parents informed through regular attendance notifications about their children.

### Customer success:



70% reduction in unexcused absence at Federal Way Public Schools



20% increase in attendance at Marion County Public Schools



## Decrease parent phone calls to district/school offices

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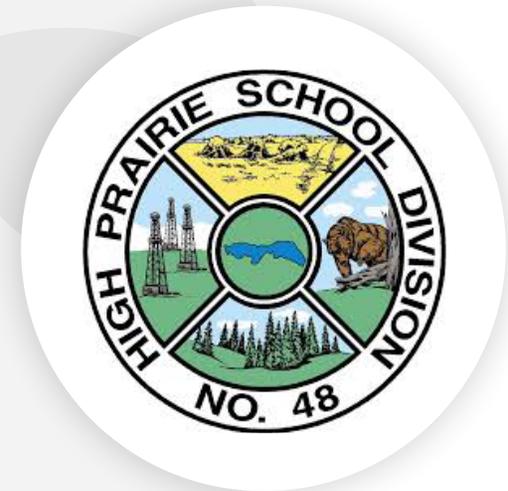
Parents want up-to-date information that is mobile device friendly. Our goal is to help you get the right information out to parents in an easy and timely manner.

### Customer success:

“Prior to using Blackboard, all of our schools were using different tools for their websites. We had parents calling saying ‘I don’t know where the supply list is,’ etc. This was a big wake-up call. One of the most important things we needed was a common look and feel to our websites so that parents could look at any one of our school websites and easily find what they needed.”

- › “We also have parents that call the school on a regular basis and say, ‘I want updates. Please send me an update every Friday.’ The mobile app is a way that we can send those updates without parents asking. We’re being proactive and that is how we want to keep our parents involved.”

**Treva Emter**, Supervisor of Instruction in Charge of Technology, High Prairie School Division #48



## Pass bond measures through community engagement

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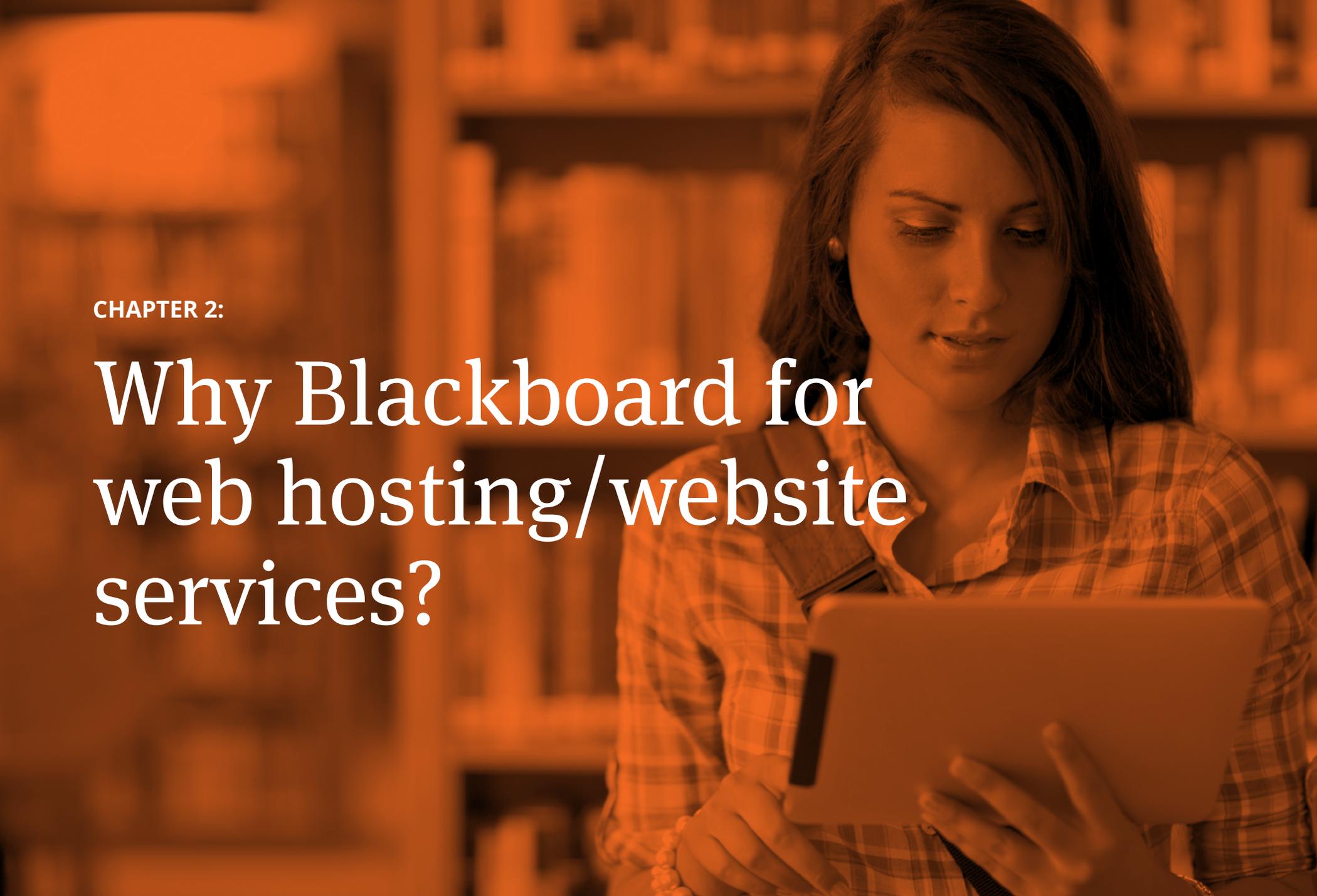
Strong schools are the foundation for strong communities. Our goal is to help you strengthen your relationship with your local community so that when your schools need support, you can accomplish your initiatives. When you can help your community make informed decisions at the ballot box, you are directly impacting the future of not just your schools and your students, but the community at large.

### Customer success:

“We completed a no tax levy increase bond issue in April 2014. **We were able to basically take all the information about the bond issue and communicate it out to our community through the different Blackboard platforms to make sure that they were informed.** We would rather have people vote no because they have the accurate information than disagree with it and vote no on misinformation. So our goal is to always get it out there so they at least know what they’re voting for and can make informed decisions.”

Zac Rantz, Chief Communication Officer, Nixa Public Schools



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a plaid shirt, is looking down at a tablet computer she is holding. The background is a blurred bookshelf, suggesting a library or study environment. The entire image has a warm, orange-toned filter.

CHAPTER 2:

# Why Blackboard for web hosting/website services?

**Your district and school websites are not simply brochures.** A quality website is a central hub that is critical to connecting your entire community. Our goal is to help you have an engaging, interactive, and easy-to-use website that effectively articulates your mission, values, and goals, and sets a foundation for a culture of communication.



Award winning web hosting >>

## Increase web traffic: computers, tablets, mobile devices

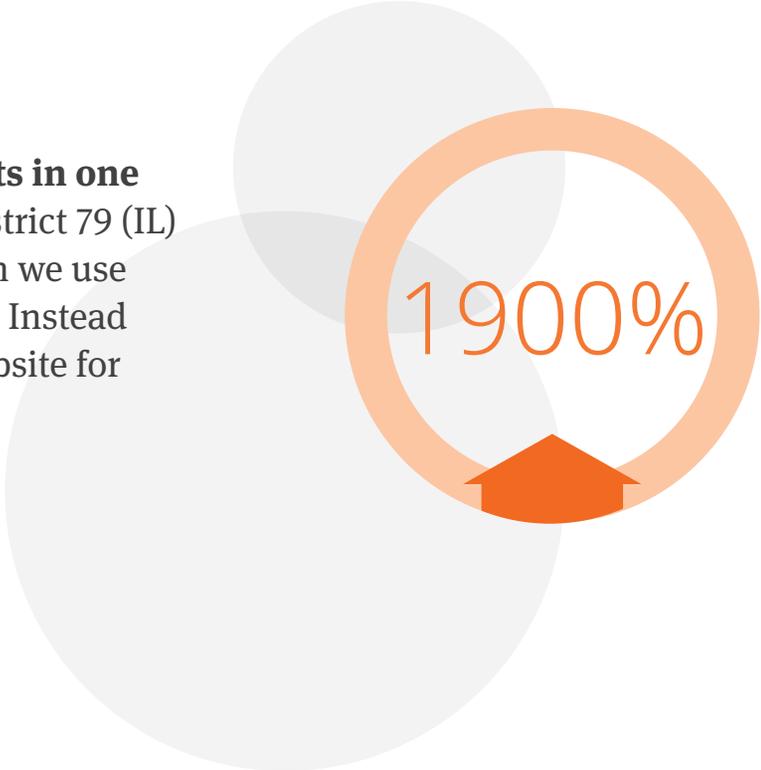
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Your district wants a more visible brand within your community. Our goal is to create a consistent and unified web presence to help you establish your brand, increase traffic, and reduce the number of phone calls to support staff trying to locate information.

### Customer success:

**Imagine experiencing a 1,900% increase in home page hits in one year.** That's exactly what happened when Fremont School District 79 (IL) launched its new custom website. "Our website is the platform we use to deliver reliable and credible information to our community. Instead of venting their frustration or dissension, people go to our website for correct and up-to-date information. It diffuses gossip."

**Margaret Van Duch**, Communications Coordinator, Fremont School District 79



1900%

## Save money on printing and mailing

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Districts and schools are challenged to significantly reduce costs and go green. Our goal is to help you reduce and/or eliminate the number of printed and mailed materials by moving communications online.

### Customer success:

#### School-home communications:

In Arizona, a school district with over 10,000 students transitioned from a paper-based communication system to an electronic one. They are relying on their Blackboard Schoolwires websites to **save nearly \$100,000 in annual communications costs** by using teacher web pages, calendaring, online newsletters, online forms and surveys, e-alerts, and website home page announcements and headlines.

#### Handbooks for students & parents:

A Blackboard Schoolwires customer in Washington state **saved over \$30,000 annually** by making the student handbooks accessible on the website rather than printing paper copies.



## Save money on printing and mailing

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### Customer success:

#### Newsletters:

A school district in New York **estimated \$27,000 in savings** from moving away from the traditional printed school newsletter to an electronic version distributed through their Blackboard Schoolwires community management system.



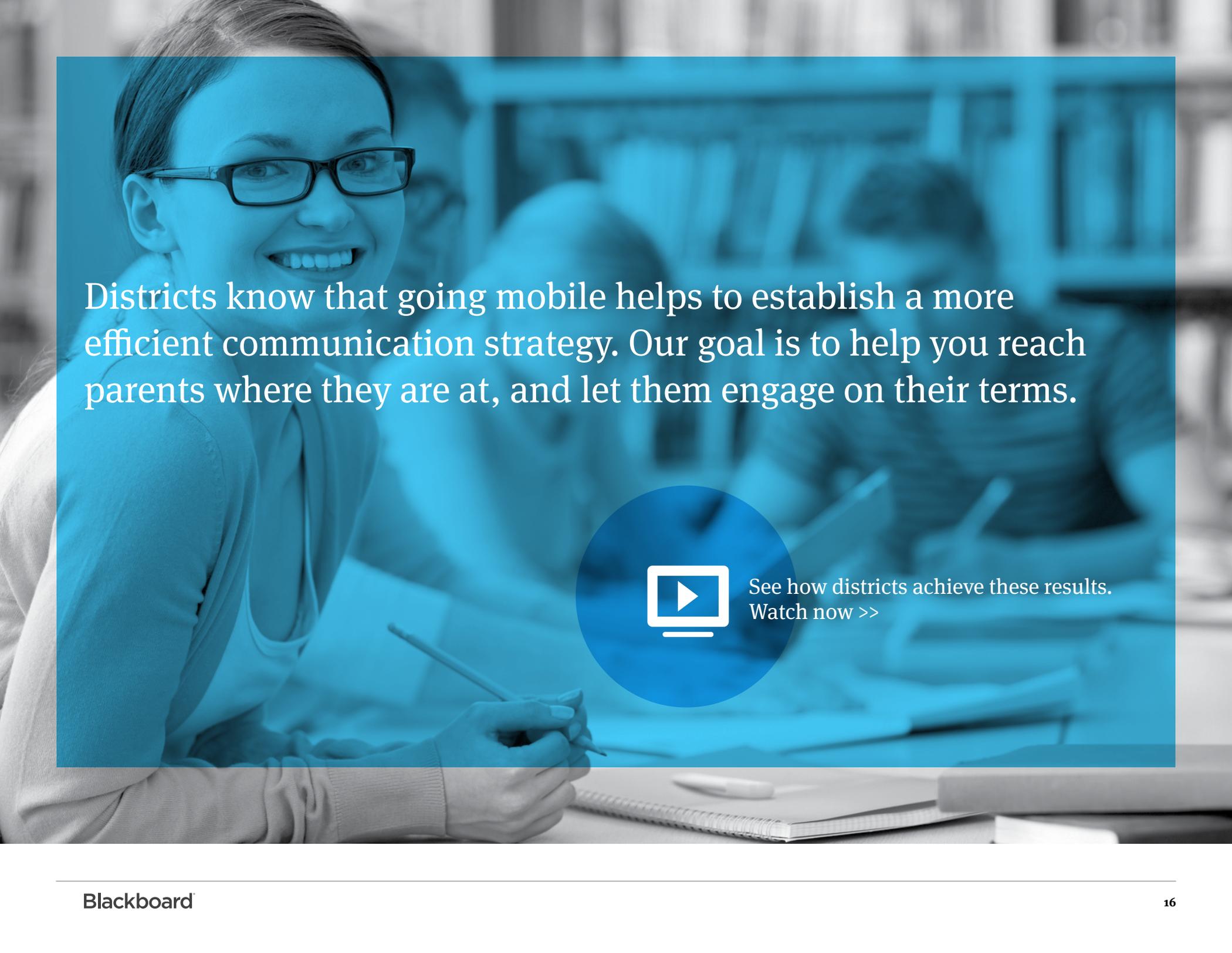
#### Back-to-school packets:

In New York, a Blackboard Schoolwires customer with over 7,800 students saves thousands of dollars each year by replacing printed copies of back-to-school packets, filled with dozens of pages of notices, flyers and forms, with a special section on the district website. This back-to-school section provides parents and students with all of the important notices and forms they need. Utilizing the website as a communication channel **saved the district \$9,000 in stamps plus \$12,000 in salaries** for clerks who used to spend up to two weeks assembling the packets.



CHAPTER 3:

# Why Blackboard for a district mobile app?



Districts know that going mobile helps to establish a more efficient communication strategy. Our goal is to help you reach parents where they are at, and let them engage on their terms.



See how districts achieve these results.  
Watch now >>

## Increase Downloads: 30, 60, 90 days and continued installations

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To create a more connected K-12 community, you first need to drive usage. Our goal is to help you take your community mobile with our expert implementation, customer success teams, and ready-made adoption resources.

### Customer success:

“Coppell ISD launched the initial rollout of the mobile app campaign – **informed, intouch, inspired** – with promotional activities including PSAs at home football games, a print campaign, local media coverage, social media, an announcement at the Rangers baseball game, and promotional items for job fair recruitment, to name a few. In year two, Coppell High School went 1:1 and we included the mobile app among the automatic downloads, which will continue as we extend 1:1 to the lower grades. Next year, we will continue to promote the app by adding the campaign slogan to all

district letterhead and companion pieces, in e-mail signatures, and on the tailgate of all maintenance vehicles throughout CISD. **The result of this launch plan has been almost 12,000 downloads to date, and an app that we know is used by our community.”**

**Tamerah Ringo**, Director of Communications and Public Relations,  
Coppell ISD

## Achieve high app rating

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Once you deploy your app, populate it with frequent, great content to keep your community coming back. The best indicator of a good app is ratings.

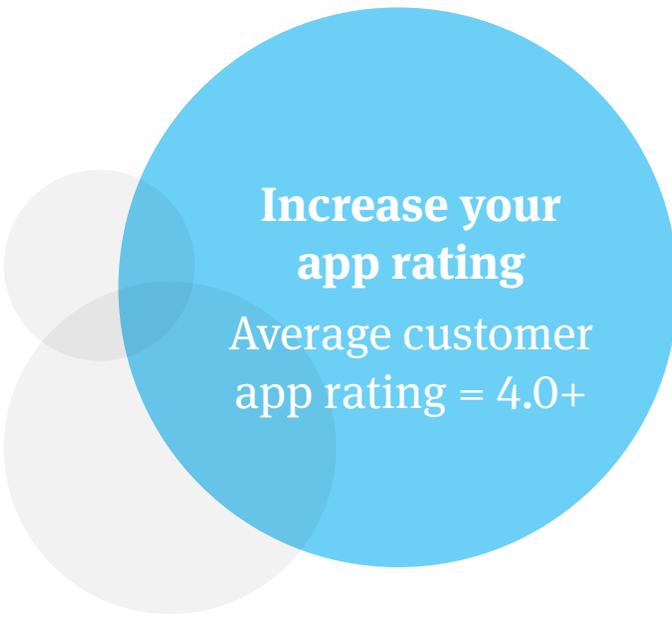
### Customer success:

**4.2/5 average app store rating**



“The app gives us the flexibility to post the content parents care about when they care about it. Our app users enjoy fresh, timely content throughout the year like back-to-school checklists, school supply lists, winter weather alerts, bus stops and summer school.”

**Annie J. Dickerson**, Communications & Community Relations Coordinator, Parkway Schools

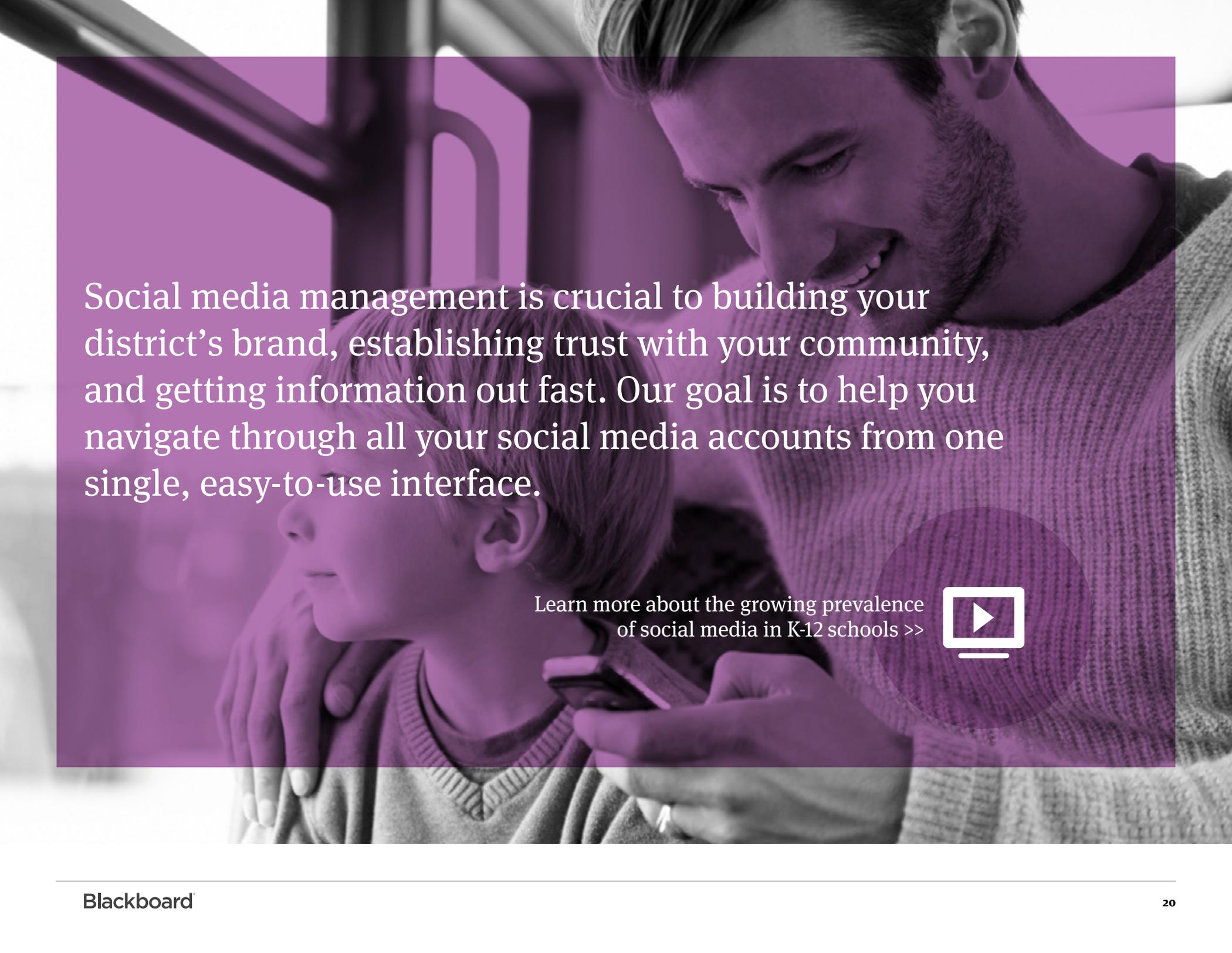


**Increase your  
app rating**  
Average customer  
app rating = 4.0+



CHAPTER 4:

# Why Blackboard for social media management?



Social media management is crucial to building your district's brand, establishing trust with your community, and getting information out fast. Our goal is to help you navigate through all your social media accounts from one single, easy-to-use interface.

Learn more about the growing prevalence of social media in K-12 schools >>



## Increase posts sent out by schools

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Join the conversations happening about your school on social media. When you take every opportunity to engage parents and the community through social posts and interactions, they will be more supportive of your schools. Our goal is to help you intelligently manage your district's story by showing you how to easily find, join, and respond to conversations and questions about your school faster than ever before.

### Customer success:

“Since we’ve implemented Blackboard Sociability, schools have been much more engaged in social media. In the past it was threatening. It’s a lot less intimidating now. Principals use social media without realizing they’re using it.”

**Annette Eyman**, Communications Director, Papillion La-Vista Public Schools



## Increase followers

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By regularly sharing your district’s story through frequent posts, tweets, and pictures, you can increase the number of community members and parents following your school and district social channels. Our goal is to improve your ability to connect with parents by providing them with the information they need.

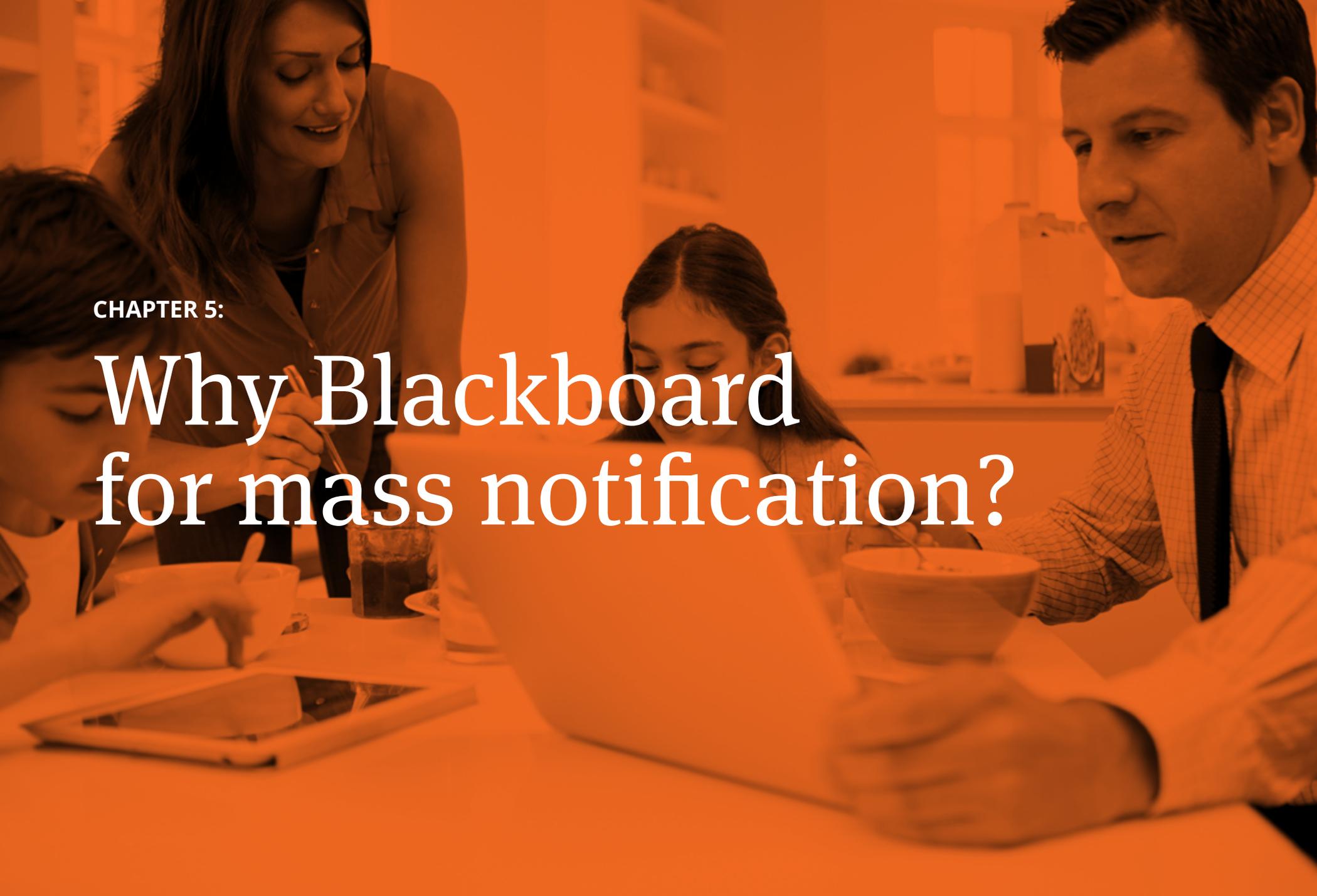
### Customer success:

“Since implementing Blackboard Sociability, our parent and community following have both increased. Parents have noticed the difference in the response rate, it’s much quicker, and our school admins and principals are much more comfortable using social media.”

**Annette Eyman**, Communications Director, Papillion La-Vista Public Schools

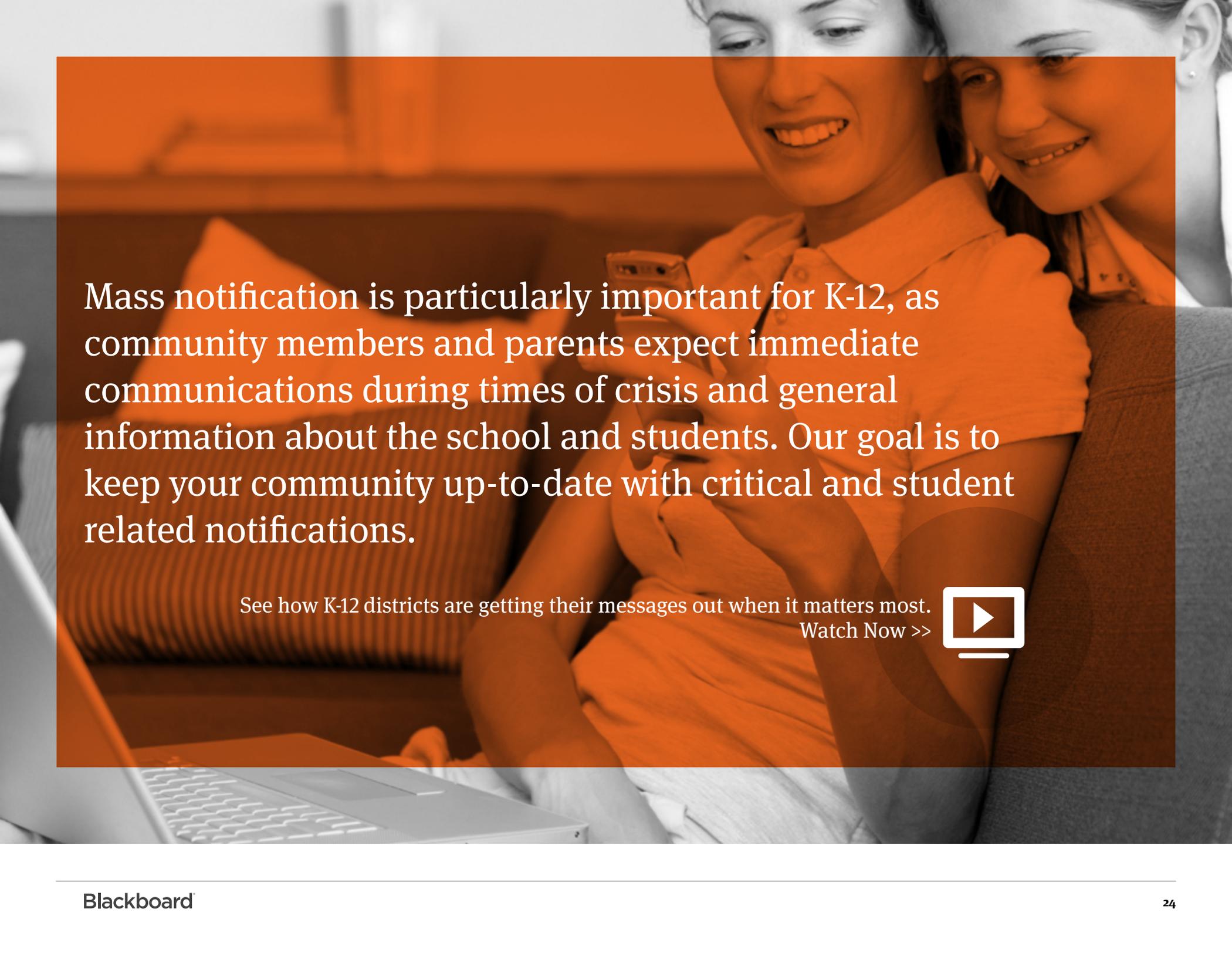


[Learn more about how Papillion La-Vista Public Schools improves parent engagement through Blackboard Sociability >>](#)



CHAPTER 5:

# Why Blackboard for mass notification?



Mass notification is particularly important for K-12, as community members and parents expect immediate communications during times of crisis and general information about the school and students. Our goal is to keep your community up-to-date with critical and student related notifications.

See how K-12 districts are getting their messages out when it matters most.  
[Watch Now >>](#)



## Increase the number of messages sent out with continued reliability

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It's important for your district to streamline your communications and build a comprehensive communication strategy to ensure the safety of your students. Our goal is to help you send timely messages when it matters most.

### Customer success:

“Parents are pleased with the level of communication they receive from schools, particularly in emergency situations where communication is core to calming fears.”

**Cindy Warner**, Community Education and Public Relations, Shelby County

- › **Improved parent engagement:** Parents now gain access to important student information on a daily or weekly basis.

### Blackboard keeps stakeholders informed during emergencies:

- › **2.7 million messages** sent out during the 2007 San Diego wildfires
- › **80 million messages** sent out during Hurricane Sandy in 2012
- › **Over a billion calls** sent out during the east coast's 2014 polar vortex
- › **1.8 billion notifications** successfully delivered in 2014 with Blackboard Connect



Learn how Shelby County created a comprehensive communication strategy that keeps parents and community members informed during emergencies. >>

## Increase parent opt-in rate

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Parents like the ability to opt-in or opt-out of receiving particular messages via different channels. Our goal is to help you tailor your communication strategy to your particular audience.

### Customer success:

“With some messages, we’ll start out by texting 90 percent of our families. We know who’s received the text, and only those who haven’t receive a subsequent e-mail. By the time we get to a third tier of communication via phone calls, there are literally less than 20 calls that need to be made.

**Mode prioritization helps us to avoid over-communicating, and principals and parents really love that.”**

**Zac Rantz**, Chief Communication Officer, Nixa Public Schools

“I’ve personally found the support and transition to Blackboard Connect easy to adapt to and seamless. However, the best barometer has been the feedback we’ve received from our parents, who have been very satisfied with the changes.”

**Michelle Kavanaugh**, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools,  
Honeoye Falls-Lima Central School District



Learn how Nixa adopted Blackboard Solutions to reach its families and students across multiple channels in a consistent and comprehensive way. >>

## Affordable cost per message per student

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Districts and schools want the ability to send out an unlimited number of messages through multiple communication channels. Our goal is enable you to send out mass notifications in a cost-effective manner. Our unmatched capacity and **99.999% reliability** will allow you to send out as many messages as you want.

## Customer success:

“Last year we sent out messages to 748,582 contacts, and when we did the math we paid approximately \$0.024 per contact. When I shared that with my board I thought they’d be impressed with what we were paying, but they were impressed with how often we were communicating out. For us it’s changing the way we do business. With everyone communicating in so many different ways, you have to be everywhere.”

**Stephanie Smith**, Public Relations Director, Fort Osage R-1 School District



Learn more about Fort Osage’s holistic communications plan. >>



CHAPTER 6:

# Why partner with Blackboard?

Disparate systems can make it difficult to integrate and create a comprehensive parent and community engagement strategy. Going through multiple vendors for all of your communication needs can be both challenging and tedious. Our goal is to consolidate all of your communication demands to save you time, money, and staff resources.

Learn more about our comprehensive communications solution.  
[Watch Now >>](#)



## Why partner with Blackboard?

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### Customer success:

“We were looking to migrate and move to a more complete solution that allowed us to engage our learners and community in a way we had not done before. In an evaluation we discovered the Blackboard suite of products worked together to achieve that and helped us meet that goal.”

**Jamie Price**, District Technology Coordinator, Wauwatosa School District

“Blackboard is a one-stop shop. We’re able to get all the tools that we need in one place and we only have to connect up in that one way.”

**Treva Emter**, Supervisor of Instruction in Charge of Technology,  
High Prairie School Division #48



## Why partner with Blackboard?

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### Customer success:

“Communication is the backbone to success. Administrators and teachers find these solutions to be great tools in their toolbox for education resources. Parents love it—we’d have a riot on our hands if we tried to take any of these tools away. They stay engaged and can choose what mode they want to receive information, especially with the popularity of texting. Students are experiencing real, documented success in our schools and we couldn’t have done it without the Blackboard family.”

**Zac Rantz**, Chief Communication Officer, Nixa Public Schools

“We strongly believe family engagement is crucial to the success of our students. We’ve worked with Blackboard for nearly 10 years and they are industry leaders. We want to meet our families where they are, and we look forward to even more collaboration with Blackboard as we expand our digital communication.”

**Jackie Turner**, Chief of Engagement, St. Paul Public Schools



## Why Blackboard parent engagement?

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### Why?

We believe engaging family and community members leads to creating successful students and stronger communities

### How?

- › Continuously evolving interoperable technology
- › Consulting services
- › Personalized training and support

### What?

- › Multichannel mass notification
- › Content management system
- › Branded mobile apps
- › Social media management
- › Admin notification app
- › Video sharing
- › Safe social engagement
- › Free updates
- › Website hosting
- › 99.9% uptime web hosting and notification guarantee
- › SIS integration
- › 3rd party systems integration
- › Teacher classroom messaging
- › School safety and feedback tip line
- › Creative services
- › Responsive design
- › Site launch consulting
- › Content migration
- › App implementation
- › SIS connector implementation
- › Notification implementation
- › Admin training
- › Staff training
- › Teacher training
- › Advanced user training
- › Premium support

# Parent Engagement Solution Resources

[Learn more about our Parent Engagement Solution.](#)

[Watch this video series to learn more about connecting with your community.](#)

[Contact us today to get started.](#)

**Blackboard<sup>®</sup>**

Follow us on:



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# About Blackboard

Blackboard is a global leader in education technology that transforms the experience of millions of students and teachers every day. Blackboard works with states, K-12 districts, and virtual to expand educational opportunities, create collaborative learning communities, and increase engagement for students, teachers, parents, and administrators. With Blackboard's website, online learning, mobile, and mass communication solutions, educators are closing the gap between the way students live and the way they learn through personalized, connected learning experiences that meet the needs of the K-12 classroom and the 21st century.

Learn more at [www.blackboard.com/k12](http://www.blackboard.com/k12)

# Blackboard<sup>®</sup>

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