



[News Search](#) [Web Search](#) [Classified Search](#) [Advertising](#) [Home Delivery](#) [Reader Services](#) [Traffic](#) [Stocks](#) [Weather](#)
[Home](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Business](#) [Opinion](#) [Entertainment](#) [Features](#) [Columnists](#) [Community](#)
[Subscribe](#) [Previous Issues](#) [Letters](#) [Obituaries](#) [Place An Ad](#) [Send Feedback](#)

[Print Page](#)

Friday, February 23, 2007

Last modified Thursday, February 22, 2007 10:39 PM PST

New software helps Oceanside teachers reach more parents

By: KEITH RUSHING - Staff Writer

OCEANSIDE ---- An increasing number of Oceanside Unified District school teachers have found a way to call hundreds of parents every night without having to even pick up a phone.

Teachers at three Oceanside middle schools and one high school are using a new software program called Teleparent that enables them to message parents within minutes, from any computer that has Internet access.

When teachers log in on Teleparent, they're able to select the classes or parents they want to reach and choose from a group of messages that are then sent through an automated phone system.

Teachers can tell parents, for instance, that their child received an A or has a test coming up the next day. Teachers can also notify parents when a student was disruptive or sent to detention.

School principals say Teleparent is so fast and easy that teachers are able to reach far more parents than they could previously. And parents are pleased that they're getting more information about how their children are doing in school.

Last year, Jefferson Middle School began trying out the software, said Principal Duane Coleman. Other administrators immediately became interested and more schools began using it this year, Lincoln Middle School Principal Bob Mueller said.

"Duane (Coleman) discovered it (and) it caught fire with secondary schools," Mueller said.

Campuses now using Teleparent include El Camino High School, Jefferson, King and Lincoln middle schools. Oceanside High School administrators are considering using the software, too, employees said.

"I love it. Our teachers are loving it," said Mueller. "The system is making about 300 calls a night. We've gotten really positive feedback from parents."

Mueller said about 80 percent of the school's teachers are using the software. Teleparent hasn't replaced the personal phone calls teachers make to discuss concerns in depth, but it helps with more routine calls ---- often with positive messages ---- that teachers don't always have time to make.

El Camino Principal Dan Daris said communicating efficiently in less time is the main benefit of using the program.

"A teacher at a high school can have up to 200 students a day," he said. "If a teacher has 200 students, (now) they can send a message to all students who got As."

Daris said that when teachers call parents even to convey brief information, those calls can easily take 30 minutes.

He said teachers often only have time to make the most essential calls from home.

Principals say the calls through Teleparent often prompt parents to call teachers to find out more about their child's work at school.

"Once they get the call, it gives them a trigger to make sure they give us a call," Coleman said.

Teleparent also helps the school document efforts to communicate with parents. The messaging system will tell teachers if the call was picked up or not and whether anyone hung up the phone before the message was complete.

"Sometimes the complaint (from a parent) is no one ever called me," Mueller said. "(Now) there's a record of the calls."

And if a student intercepts a message, erasing it from the answering machine before a parent hears it, "a parent can go back and say: What's been going on here," he added.

Deann Bloomer, an eighth-grade science teacher at Lincoln Middle said she sends out about one message each week because she doesn't want to overwhelm parents. On Wednesday, Bloomer messaged the parents of her 197 students to inform them that a test was coming Thursday. She said it took about three minutes to get the message out.

"It's extremely useful," Bloomer said. "I was never able to call 197 parents and tell them there's a test coming up."

Bloomer said parents seem to feel more connected to what's going on in school through Teleparent.

"If there's ever a problem, they can call back and get information about what happened in a room," she said. "It's very quick for them to know what's going on."

Contact Staff Writer Keith Rushing at (760) 901-4151 or krushing@nctimes.com.