

## School Messenger

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*Buckeye Woodland Elementary School  
Cleveland, Ohio*

Every day, administrators at Buckeye Woodland Elementary School manage to call 450 student homes in under three hours. The phone calls inform the parents of absences, tardiness, and school announcements. To have a parent or a staff member spend three hours on the phone calling parents would be an exhausting task. Instead, the school purchased a communications system called “School Messenger.”

School Messenger connects educators with hundreds of families. Administrators type in announcements, and School Messenger converts them into natural-sounding speech. The equipment allows translation into multiple languages, assisting parents who speak languages other than English. Furthermore, School Messenger keeps a log of which numbers were called and how often, whether they spoke with somebody, or if the line was disconnected. The school can use the program to schedule calls well in advance, sometimes days or weeks at a time.

Staff from Buckeye Woodland Elementary spoke with members from other schools that used this program with success. Next, the company producing School Messenger gave Buckeye a 60-day free trial. The school purchased a School Messenger system using funds from a \$4,000 grant award.

Administrators wanted to increase parent involvement in the building and hoped better communication was part of the solution. Since using School Messenger, parent turnout at events has increased. Parents who rarely receive notes or fliers from their students’ backpacks are now able to keep up with the day-to-

day happenings in the school building. According to its mission, School Messenger “fosters consistent two-way communication between schools and home.” And, it helps solve translation issues so that *all* families have the opportunity to become more involved in their children’s academic lives. Next year, Buckeye Woodland Elementary School will seek funding for a separate telephone for the School Messenger to improve communication even more.

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