Building a Foundation for a Connected School Year
Communication strategies to engage families at back-to-school time
Agenda

• Why the focus on back-to-school communication
• Why should you as a communication director care about school supply lists
• The TeacherLists way
• Let’s hear from your peers - Tracy Jentz, Grand Forks, ND
• Q&A
• Next steps for district success
The changing landscape of education in America

- Expanded school choice
- Millennial parent expectations
- Competition for parent’s time

- Need for districts/schools to promote themselves
- Back-to-school time = most critical time of the year
- All eyes on you
Communication is key at back-to-school time

Large number of constituents to reach

Back-to-school time = your product launch!
- Sets the tone for the entire school year

It's like a first date
- You want parents to be impressed by your school system and want to be a part of it
- Parent involvement =
  - Improved grades and test scores
  - Better attitude about school
  - Improved student participation

2018 National Center for Education Statistics
Helpful information to communicate at back to school

Who you are and how to contact you

Methods you’ll use for official communication

Be clear on the basics
- Timing
- Bus routes
- School supplies
- Extracurriculars

Go the extra mile
- Share expert advice
- Shout-out to the PTO or PTA groups in your district
Develop a framework for sharing communication

For districts: Communicating this much information can be complicated

For parents: Receiving this much information is overwhelming

Decide who is communicating what and when
  • School? District? Both?
  • Uniform process & technology apps

Be organized around where, what, and when communication is occurring
  • Stay current—know what’s being said
  • Outdated info can lose a parent for good
Using School Supplies as Your Hook To Engage Parents
The traditional back-to-school supply lists model
How is your district doing it?

From old school...

- Shared in a **Word doc or PDF**
- **Not responsive** (hard to read on a phone!)
- **Not always ADA-compliant**
- **Sometimes printed** at local retail stores
A district’s organizational nightmare?

1 district
75 schools
with 6 lists per school on average
= 450 supply lists to manage and post

Compiling school supply lists can take hours
Posting onto website = huge time commitment

A time-consuming process preventing staff from engaging with families on other important activities
Solve the supply list drama...for your district ...and for parents

Centralized spot to upload and share lists

Auto-converted to digital lists—shared with a click
  • No more downloads, no more making copies!

Responsive—super easy to read on a phone!

ADA-compliant

Automatically shared with national retailers

Connected to eCommerce—one click to prefilled shopping carts

Uniform & consistent process across all schools
  • Elementary, middle, high schools

Free service
Best practices for communicating school supplies

A layered approach works best with a uniform platform

- Post on website(s) at end of school and communicate this website address to parents
- Link district and school websites
- Midsummer email to parents
- PTO groups announce via social channels to reinforce
- Series of email blasts in the weeks before school starts
- Social media reminders days before start of school
Keep it simple

Be clear, be concise, and be uncomplicated

- Parents are busy
- Make information easy to find, read, and find again

Back-to-school webpage is the hook you need
Help your parents

- One-click shopping convenience with top retailers
- Exact items your teachers want are in stock
- Always available on smartphones
- Parent’s choice:
  - Delivery to home
  - Curbside pickup
  - In-store shopping
- Prepared children for the first day of school
- Absolutely free for parents to use—no hidden costs
The TeacherLists™ Way
Office DEPOT.
OfficeMax

VS

THE SUMMER SLEEP SCHEDULE

https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dT7z/office-depot-officemax-1-supplies-the-summer-sleep-schedule
How it works
Specialized pages for your district/school

Districtwide

School-specific
How it works
Convenient features for parents

Text/email alerts of lists

Checklists for in-store shopping

eCommerce-connected to retailers
Exclusive provider of list data to national retailers
How are other districts doing this?
Metro Nashville Public School District

Links on the back-to-school section of the site take parents directly to the district landing page.
Santa Fe Public School District

Link on the district homepage brings parents to the TeacherLists district page

“Thank you for your support and assistance. This is a great tool that has helped thousands of our families get easy access to supply lists.”

—Doug Moser, Digital Communications Specialist, Santa Fe Public School District
Santa Fe Public School District

Links on individual school pages bring parents directly to the TeacherLists school page
Give back! Give a pack!
Supporting donations and causes
Common questions

**How come my list isn’t on Target (or Walmart, Staples, Office Depot/Office Max, etc...)?**

TeacherLists is the exclusive provider of school supply lists to the nation’s top retailers

- For your parents to be able to find your school’s lists on the major retail sites, the lists need to be on TeacherLists.

**Is TeacherLists really free for schools and families to use? What's the catch?**

YES!! TeacherLists is really free for schools and families to use.

TeacherLists is supported by the retailers and CPG companies that we partner with, allowing us to provide our platform and service free to schools and parents.

**How can I be sure that the supply lists posted on our site and with retail partners are authentic?**

- Become an admin for your district!
- Post the supply lists for your school directly on TeacherLists.
Let’s talk with an expert

GRAND FORKS Public Schools
A great place to grow and learn!

Tracy Jentz
Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator
Grand Forks Public Schools

Ben Franklin Elementary School
Developing life long learners and responsible citizens.

School Supply Lists

Kindergarten Supply List
Grade(s): Kindergarten • Kindergarten Teachers • 2019-2020

First Grade Supply List
Grade(s): 1st • First Grade Teachers • 2019-2020

Second Grade Supply List
Grade(s): 2nd • Second Grade Teachers • 2019-2020

Third Grade Supply List
Grade(s): 3rd • Third Grade Teachers • 2019-2020

Fourth Grade Supply List
Grade(s): 4th • Fourth Grade Teachers • 2019-2020

Fifth Grade Supply List
Grade(s): 5th • Fifth Grade Teachers • 2019-2020

Student Handbook

https://www.gfschools.org/Page/7956
What districts and schools say about TeacherLists

“Easy way to build relationships and communicate needs with parents.”
—Teacher, Dickson, TN

“TeacherLists is sooo easy to use! Convenient for parents and students to access and purchase needed supplies BEFORE school starts.”
—Sandra R., West Alexander Middle School

“I have used TeacherLists over the last two years and have noticed that it makes communicating with parents much easier, especially during the summer.”
—Elementary School Principal, KY

“This is wonderful! I (put) the link on our website and FB page. Our parents are loving this!”
—Carrie J., School Secretary, Western Union Elementary School
Parents really ❤️❤️ it!

“Great idea to make back to school shopping effortless for parents.”
—Karen C., Monroe Township

“User friendly and convenient for the parent on the go!”
—Faneecia L., Science Academies of New York

I just used this yesterday. It was AMAZING!
—Kristen K.
Next steps

**STEP 1**
Gather your district’s 2019-2020 school supply lists

**STEP 2**
Upload your 2019-2020 supply lists to TeacherLists

**STEP 3**
Update your website(s) so parents know where they can easily find their child’s supply list

**STEP 4**
Look for our email letting you know your lists are posted on TeacherLists, Target, Walmart, Office Depot, Staples, and more!

**STEP 5**
Get the word out that your supply lists are ready!
Contact us with any questions

Charlene LaFerriere
School Partner Manager

Come visit us at Table 18 in the NSPRA Marketplace

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TeacherLists.com