

BEYOND EMAIL COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE

Have You Lost Control of Your Message?

Why the education community's overreliance on email is a major problem.

Email. It wasn't that long ago that we embraced this new communication technology with open arms. Yet here we are, only a few decades later, more likely to cringe than to celebrate at the thought of our inbox.

There are very few school districts that don't rely on email for the bulk of their internal communications. But is that really a problem? The answer might surprise you.

The productivity black hole. Depending on your source, the average employee spends **28%** of his or her time reading, answering, and organizing email. In an environment like the district office, where many people are juggling a variety of tasks, that loss in productivity can mean the difference between working ahead and just scraping by.

When faced with tasks that require focus, frequent interruptions can have a measurable negative affect on the quality of work (upwards of 20% according to one [study](#)). Whether the result is a payroll specialist taking hours longer to cut checks or a teacher making mistakes while entering grades, it's not good for your school or district.

The cost of status quo. Improved communication isn't just some pie in the sky goal. There is a significant financial incentive involved here, with estimated returns as high as **\$26,000** per employee. Spam and malware (or the training needed to avoid them) can divert critical technology resources away from more important tasks while reflecting poorly on your district and exposing you to risk.

Educational funding is not exactly falling from the sky these days. When school and district leaders meet to discuss budgeting, communication rarely makes it on the

agenda. But as the gap between email and new technology widens, you won't be able to avoid that conversation for much longer.

The culture hit. Communication sets the tone for your entire [culture](#). If you're serious about building the latter, you have to start with the former. The medium you use is just one small part of that conversation, but it is a barrier that needs to be addressed.

If innovation, collaboration, and sustainability are foundational to your mission, it's going to be hard to ignore the changing communication [preferences](#) of both your workforce and your students. Among 25- to 35-year olds, email use is down 18%. As of 2015, teenagers were already using 60% less email than those who came before.

The Skyward Starting Point

Of all the technology your team uses throughout the course of a day, many will spend the majority of their time in and around your student information system or ERP platform, depending on their role. With Skyward, you have an opportunity to reach more of your audience and keep your message intact. Move beyond the traditional cycle of email notifications and inbox management.

How is this any different from the experience you're already accustomed to? Let's take a look.

REACH PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Yes, accessibility is a [big deal](#). But it's every bit as important to notify your parents and students when there's a reason for them to log in to the portal you've provided for them. With automated alerts and push notifications, we have taken the

concept of communication and transformed it into a real-time expectation.

Your students won't have to stress over the outcome of a test while frantically pressing the refresh button all weekend – they'll receive a notification on their phone the

“Skyward is the backbone of our communication efforts.”

Tim Schigur, Superintendent, School District of Milton, WI

minute their grade is posted. If they forgot to turn in that assignment, their parents will know about it the moment it's marked as missing. That's what it means to look beyond email.

REACH YOUR STAFF

Like it or not, email is making your employees [miserable](#). By putting major

announcements, training tips, and notifications directly in front of them when they need it, you can take a huge chunk out of those overflowing inboxes. With Skyward, your workflows will be the engine that drives your communication.

Employees will be alerted when they have a pending task, such as a behavior referral or a time off request. Online surveys and organizational announcements will be moved to your employee portal, reducing the amount of back and forth that typically accompanies a message and guaranteeing visibility for anybody who needs to log in to the system throughout the course of a day. We've even built context-sensitive messages directly into the system to alert people when there is a new or better way to perform an action in Skyward. All of these little efforts add up to more transparency, fewer disruptions, and a higher performing culture.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Is Email Dying?](#) – Advancing K12 EdTech Blog Post
[The School District Marketing Plan](#) – White Paper