

Engaging Students and Families in a Virtual Space: Wisdom from Experience

The following slides share lessons learned from virtually engaging with students and families in the spring and the beginning of the school year. The “sticky notes” were created by high school counselors and access advisers who participated in the Professional Development Institute on 8.28.20.

DO THIS: Engagement strategies & tools that worked this spring

Just click on a square and begin typing!

One-on-One meetings to give students some sense of normalcy

Sending information to both students and parents so parents can reinforce info being shared

Info Calendar with direct links to virtual meeting space

How to videos to be proactive

Sending specific information so students are not bombarded with unnecessary information

Virtual hours for students and parents

Mentors for students dealing with virtual

Some type of crisis plan, expect students and parents to ask questions about how to handle a crisis (food, tech, etc.)

**Give-a-ways/
Incentives**

Google Doc and share it with them

Actually picking up the phone and calling parents

Using multiple modes of contact to reach students (email, phone, text, etc.) instead of relying on one method

Use QR Codes

Reminders and recap emails

Senior Entrance Survey

Active Social Media (IG)

To build relationships, doing College Spotlights, IG Polls,

Making use of trivia, polling, games, and other virtual engagement strategies

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SMS messages to students- Grace, very interactive with emojis, drawback: only MCAC and not super user friendly

Google Voice- used for phone calls or direct communication with students and parents.

Other SMS- Remind to share and push out info to students and parents.

Twitter- very one sided but up to minute sharing with large audience.

Record things in Zoom and edit in iMovie or WeVideo and share via web and social media or Remind

Use QR codes for signing up for meetings or linking to a video Codes can be included in many forms

STLCC offers live chat with students through Library Help?

Counselors also enjoy STLCC live chat option on the website to get answers all the time

Zoom and Google classrooms

Poll Everywhere-word clouds were especially engaging/exciting

Social Media - Instagram and Twitter posts to keep high schoolers engaged with my reminders

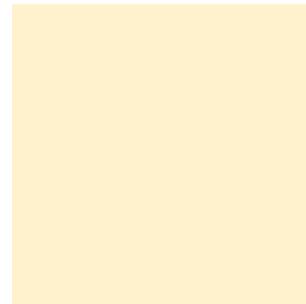
Taking advantage of the virtual context to connect students with companies, speakers, and professionals who might not be able to meet them in person

Remind to follow-up with students and parents for reminders/nudges

Class Dojo (perhaps more elementary platform); helpful from a parent/guardian perspective to know what is happening

Parent/guardian orientation to tools/tech of the school/district/org

Quick and easy mass text messages - respond with 1 (for this answer) or 2 (for this answer)



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Microsoft Teams
For meetings

Google sheets forms

Try not to use
anything new with
students

Meeting the
students where they
are - using the tools
they are most
familiar with at their
district -Britni STLCC

Short and to the
point presentations

-Britni STLCC

Practice but be
prepared for
anything

-Britni STLCC

Student portals

Emily Lombardo
Using google sheets
for second semester
seniors still deciding
on their
post-secondary
pathway --->

The google sheet
has a tab to help
with making your
decision, a financial
aid comparison, and
enrollment checklist
(I can share this
template if needed)

Calendly!!!! Yesss!!!
(Tameka & Emily)

A huge scheduling
lifesaver.

Emily- Using a bitmoji
classroom to engage
current seniors and link
to commonly used
websites for this year.
(i.e. common app,
powerschool, et.c)

Emily- Encouraging
students to take
advantage of drop in
advising zooms and
chat bots/chat
features on school
websites

Tameka-Using
Calendly to schedule
virtual group and
1:1 meetings. Using
Canvas to provide
college planning as a
class.

Role playing , 3 way
call in when using
phone calls to
schools (i.e financial
aid, admissions, etc)

DO THIS: Engagement strategies & tools that worked this spring

Just click on a square and begin typing!

Google Forms for collecting contact info

Use social media to communicate with students, post links through a Linktree

“Personalized” texts and emojis (using first names in greetings, asking for fun/emoji responses)

Use Remind

Be available often

Microsoft teams

Creating a website

How-to videos

Recorded presentations

Have fun, be personal, be goofy with images, GIFs in your presentations (I used Baby Yoda pics for students to say how they are feeling today)

Google classrooms - all postgraduate related items get announced through there (cuts down on emails)

Supply box drop-off

Recorded introduction videos that have a presentation and your face

Diversifying ways of reaching out - email, Zoom, social media, text, phone call, etc

Use the language that students use to get them to connect with you

Online questionnaires for students - asking about college plans

Calendly

Increased social media presence (ex. Social media takeovers) - meeting students where they are

DO THIS: Engagement strategies & tools that worked this spring

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Google voice number - phone calls from computer, can text from the number as well

Send a text reminder to a student before a scheduled call

Shared google doc with links to forms, reference requests, information sheet, etc. - in the school drive so all students have it

Figure out family dynamics - parents can very easily pop in to meetings - help students draw boundaries

Follow up/reminder texts/calls/emails after scheduling a meeting

Having more than one college admission counselor for sessions (1 to present, multiple to answer Q's)

Bitmoji classroom - send it to students, links for resources, important dates, senior checklist

Youbookme.com to make appointments

Canvas - all seniors and juniors have links to resources

Utilizing multiple platforms to push information out (I used email, Classroom, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter)

Created weekly newsletters with self care tools, information regarding COVID, school updates and Mindfulness Podcast

Expanding the hours I am available to take meetings with students and families

Evening hours for students - what is going to work best for them

The link tree - website with links all in one place

Give students deadlines - i need you to call me by this date

Using Google Classroom to organize application deadlines and keep students on track

Weekly or daily check in via email or Hangouts with students at risk of not graduating to help motivate or keep them focused.

Calling the student/parent for the meeting even if the meeting was scheduled for a zoom x2

DON'T DO THIS: Engagement strategies & tools that were not successful this spring

Just click on a square and begin typing!

Students could not access internet due to not having wifi

x2

Needing students to schedule the meeting (/waiting for students to make the first move)

Setting up a meeting with the counselor through Google Form...no one requested. Which is not our normal.

Only having one main method of communication for meetings

Only offering students to meet with us via google hangout...this created non-confidential situations in their home environment

Trying to have meetings during normal school hours

Don't avoid face to face - do it safely

Students still do not use email - may use personal email instead of school - don't rely only on email

Don't do "all call" emails - try to personalize and individualize them

Don't make the deadline the actual deadline - tell students the deadline is earlier

Too much Zoom all day for students - burn out

Having correct contact information for students

Give out your personal cell phone number

Expect that students are comfortable with phone calls

Mass robotic-sounding texts

Expect that students will check their email frequently

Check with your org/school about 1-1 counseling, recording, etc

Make social media accounts for your school without getting prior permission

DON'T DO THIS: Engagement strategies & tools that were not successful this spring

Just click on a square and begin typing!

Too much virtual (burnout)

Unclear communication

Sharing outdated or limited resources

Non effective communication especially internally

Ignore barriers students and parents are facing

Emily- don't try to do too many systems, stick to one consistent method of communication

Virtual tools - student comfort with tools, lots of new tech stuff being thrown at them

Canvas- meetings scheudld through Canvas is recorded and saved

Calendly FERPA waiver for student usage:
<https://calendly.com/pages/ferpa>
Caused me to not use it

Keeping appointments from students and parents

Do not make things too complicated or too long

Don't assume others want or can be on video

-Britni STLCC

-Britni STLCC

How students communicate (e.g-text vs. phone calls vs zoom)

Outdated contact information

Lack of understanding of how to use the technology they have

Introduce students with technology they are not using

DON'T DO THIS: Engagement strategies & tools that were not successful this spring

Just click on a square and begin typing!

Email-only modes of contact (some email addresses for parents/students did not work)

Open office hours on Zoom (low attendance). Scheduling specific times to meet with individual students worked better.

Long sessions on Zoom (3+ hours of structured programming). Zoom fatigue is real!

