TalkingPoints Frequently Asked Questions

Adoption of District-Wide System

- **What is TalkingPoints?**
  - TalkingPoints is a two-way multilingual family engagement platform that allows school administrators, instructional staff and other key staff to send messages to parents/guardians who receive them in their home languages as text messages or through the parent mobile application. Parents/guardians can reply to the message they receive in their home languages, because TalkingPoints will translate it into English for staff. TalkingPoints supports over 145 languages, including the primary languages in OCPS. Please view the [introductory video](#), [infographic,](#) and [one-pager](#) for more information.
- **Why did the district adopt Talking Points?**
  - To provide consistency and opportunities for engagement for all families, the district has adopted a new platform, for all non-charter schools, called "TalkingPoints" after piloting it last year. Family engagement is more than twice as predictive of students' success as socioeconomic status. Current research and best practices for family engagement indicate the need for districts to establish effective two-way communication with parents/guardians of students using a variety of media, including SMS text messaging. To be considered two-way, communication must have an opportunity to be continuous. The spring 2023 OCPS Communications Survey indicates that parents/guardians who responded prefer receiving classroom communication via text message over phone, email, or planner.
  - Current adopted district communication platforms either do not allow for two-way communication (i.e. School Messenger, Skyward Family Access) and/or do not support SMS text messaging (i.e. Canvas Parent InBox), and/or do not support multilingual translation (i.e. Canvas Parent InBox).
- **Are there any new state statutes on technology that align to this decision?**
  - Yes, there are two new laws that went into effect that make it critical that the district uses products from vendors we have a signed data sharing agreement with.
  - [Senate Bill 662](#) went into effect on July 1, 2023.SB 662: Student Online Personal Information Protection.
  - Senate Bill 262: Florida's Digital Bill of Rights went into effect on July 1, 2023. Senate Bill 262, entitled the Technology Transparency Bill.
- **Do I have to use TalkingPoints or send parents text messages if I don't want to?**
  - OCPS instructional staff can continue to converse and collaborate with our families using phone calls, emails, MS Teams meetings, Canvas InBox messages if they do not want to send two-way text-based messages of any kind.
  - However, if an instructional staff member wants to send a text message to families then they should use TalkingPoints moving forward rather than another platform.
  - Please note, all OCPS families have access to respond to a TalkingPoints message sent by a school staff member. OCPS families also have the opportunity to initiate a message to a staff member who did not message them first (similarly to email) in the optional TalkingPoints for Families mobile app. As of 8/9, 28,400 OCPS families have downloaded the iOS app and 8,408 families have downloaded the Android app.
  - If a staff member is not regularly using TalkingPoints, they will be alerted to a new message in the TalkingPoints daily summary that is delivered to their OCPS email

address. This is similar to the Canvas notifications email, staff are already familiar with. The daily summary includes a link to the message in the TalkingPoints platform for the staff member to review. If the staff member does not want to respond to the message in TalkingPoints, they can use the phone number provided next to the message or email to respond to the parent, being mindful of the need for translation, if the parent's home language is not their own.

- **I use Class Dojo, is this still allowed?**
  - Class Dojo was NEVER an approved software in OCPS and is not supported by the district. However, school leaders and individual teachers have used a variety of free or freemium model platforms, like Class Dojo, to fill the gap of a district-adopted two-way communication system in past school years. This led to inconsistency among schools and confusion for families. There are also significant risks to using free or freemium platforms that have not been approved through the OCPS software request process, which requires a data sharing agreement be in place. Risks to using free or freemium software include, but are not limited to, the district's inability to archive/view past messages and respond to public records requests, the vendor's ability to share/sell student information without consent, and the use of targeted ads. Schools should avoid using free/freemium platforms, like Class Dojo, moving forward because they will no longer be accessible on the OCPS network AFTER this school year.
- **I use Remind, is this still allowed?**
  - Remind was NEVER an approved platform in OCPS and is not supported by the district.. However, school leaders and individual teachers have used a variety of free or freemium model platforms, like Remind, to fill the gap of a district-adopted two-way communication system in past school years. This led to inconsistency among schools and confusion for families. There are also significant risks to using free or freemium platforms that have not been approved through the OCPS software request process, which requires a data sharing agreement be in place. Risks to using free or freemium software include, but are not limited to, the district's inability to archive/view past messages and respond to public records requests, the vendor's ability to share/sell student information without consent, and the use of targeted ads. Schools should avoid using free/freemium platforms, like Remind, moving forward because they will no longer be accessible on the OCPS network AFTER this school year.
- **How long will free and freemium platforms, like Class Dojo and Remind, continue to be available?**
  - Platforms like Class Dojo and Remind will be able to be reached on the OCPS network/wifi until the end of the 2023-24 school year. moving forward because they will no longer be accessible on the OCPS network AFTER this school year.
  - How long will free and freemium platforms, like Class Dojo and Remind, continue to be available?
- **Is Class Dojo blocked right now?**
  - No, Class Dojo is still accessible on the OCPS network at this time.

- **Is this replacing Connect Orange?**
  - NO! OCPS School administrators will continue to use School Messenger to send one-way ANNOUNCEMENTS through Connect Orange voicemails, emails, & SMS text message

Access

- **Do all schools have access to TalkingPoints?**
  - The purchase is for all non-charter schools, staff, parents, and families to have access to TalkingPoints this year.
- **Who can send a message in TalkingPoints?**
  - School administrators can send messages to families of students in the whole school, in a grade level, in a specific class, in a custom group they have created and individual students.
  - Classroom teachers who have students tied to them in Skyward can send messages to families of students in their class, custom groups they have created and individual students.
  - Instructional staff without students tied to them in Skyward will have access to send messages to families of students in a grade level, custom groups they have created and individual students.
- **Do classified staff have access to TalkingPoints?**
  - Some classified staff members have access to send messages in TalkingPoints such as Parent and Secondary Engagement Liaisons, some clinic staff, ESE paraprofessionals, registrars, and OCPS employed extended day coordinators.
- **Who can remove or change a staff member's access to messaging?**
  - School administrators can change a staff member's role which will change which families a staff message can message.
- **Where do families log in?**
  - The great thing about TalkingPoints, is that families don't need to take any extra steps to receive messages from you! As soon as you start sending communication, families will automatically receive messages from you on their phones as basic SMS text messages.
  - If they choose to use the optional mobile application, they will just use their phone number
  - If they use the web platform, they can login in at https://TalkingPts.org

Contacts

- **A parent's contact information is incorrect. What should I do?**
  - Please have the family send the correct contact information to their teacher. The teacher will need to provide the updated information to the school administrator or registrar to update in Skyward.. The contact information will be updated in TalkingPoints when the nightly ClassLink sync goes through.
- **A parent is missing one of their children in the TalkingPoints for Families app. How do I add them?**
  - Please make sure that the person is listed as a contact for the student, with the correct mobile phone number in ClassLink. If it is not correct, please have your school admin make the adjustments in Skyward and wait for the nightly sync to refresh the data present in TalkingPoints.

Students and Rosters

- **Do I need to add the students in my school or class?**
  - No, students who are enrolled or withdraw are automatically updated and sync nightly based on Skyward.
- **Will new students be added by the district automatically?**
  - No, students who are enrolled or withdraw are automatically updated and sync nightly based on Skyward.
- **I am an instructional staff member who does have a course schedule. I cannot see any students. What should I do?**
  - The district is in the process of adding the Non-Rostered Staff role to instructional staff members without students tied to them over the next week. If you have an urgent need to send a message, your school administrator can edit your profile and add the Non-Rostered Staff role.
- **My classes are incorrect, or missing. What should I do?**
  - Please make sure that you are rostered to the correct classes in ClassLink. If they are incorrect or missing, please reach out to your school admin to make the adjustments in your Skyward and wait for the nightly sync to refresh the data present in TalkingPoints.

Announcements

- **What is an announcement?**
  - A message that is sent to families of a whole class or group of students.
- **Can families reply to an announcement?**
  - Yes, when families receive a message they can respond.

Messaging

- **Can I use TalkingPoints to send messages to high school students?**
  - Not right now, however coming very soon high school staff will be able to message high school students over the age of 13.
  - High school administrators will be provided a process to collect student mobile phone numbers and then they will be uploaded and added as another contact for the student.
- **Can I use TalkingPoints to send messages to middle school students?**
  - TalkingPoints will not typically be used to message students in middle school and/or elementary school because federal and state law require that parents expressly consent in writing for students under age 13.
- **Can I use TalkingPoints to message another staff member?**
  - By default, this is not an available feature. However we have expressed to the vendor school's desire for this feature.
  - There is a "hack" for this however. School administrators can add staff manually as students using phone numbers or email addresses. Please keep in mind that you will need to obtain staff member consent before entering their mobile phone numbers. Then, the school administrator can create a custom group of "Student Staff Members" to send messages.

- **Can I add additional family members that are not listed Family 1, Family 2, or Family 3 in the Skyward Student Profile?**
  - No and there is an important reason why. Legally, the school is required to have documentation and permission to share any information about a student with an adult. For example, let's say that mom says to add grandma and dad who also has educational rights say they do not want to share with grandma, it could create legal risk for the staff member who adds a contact outside of Skyward and starts sharing with grandma.
- **What should I do if I receive an uncivil message?**
  - Please refer to the [Code of Civility.](#)
  - If personal harm is threatened, the employee may contact law enforcement.
  - If a telephone call recorded by an answering machine, email, voicemail message or any type of written communication is demeaning, abusive, threatening or obscene the employee is not obligated to respond.
  - All messages are archived in TalkingPOints. The employee shall contact his or her immediate supervisor, the school resource officer and/or OCPS District Police.
- **How often should classroom teachers send messages to families?**
  - Each classroom is different and we respect the professional judgment of staff.
  - Best practice is to send one announcement per week and two or three personal messages about student progress to families of students.
- **What if families don't have unlimited text messages?**
  - For this exact reason, TalkingPoints has developed an optional, and free, parent mobile application which they can use to receive messages, and bypass the texts.
  - The TalkingPoints for Parents mobile app is also available for download on both the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store.
- **Can I add attachments to messages?**
  - Sure! You can add PDF, pictures, videos, and Google Drive documents. The size limit is 20 MB.
- **What if I need to send a large video?**
  - You can upload the video to YouTube or Canvas Studio and share the link 🙂
- **Can I unsend a message?**
  - No, just like a text message in real life once it is sent, it is sent.
- **Can I edit a saved scheduled message?**
  - No. You would need to cancel and reschedule.
- **If I send a message to more than one family, is it received like a group text message? Will they be able to see each other's replies?**
  - No, the messages will be delivered separately and answers are confidential and not viewable by other families.

Privacy and Security
- **Do I have to use my personal cell phone?**
  - NO! TalkingPoints can be accessed from LaunchPad on a district laptop or desktop.
  - Instructional staff can CHOOSE to use the OPTIONAL TalkingPoints for Teacher mobile app.

- **Do I have to share my personal phone number to text message families with TalkingPoints?**
  - NO! TalkingPoints uses your OCPS email address only.
- **Am I expected to answer TalkingPoints messages from families outside of contracted hours?**
  - NO, you are not expected or required to generate or reply to messages outside of contracted hours.
  - If staff would like to send a message outside of contracted hours they can use the "Schedule" function to draft a message and have it be automatically sent at a later date and/or time by the system.
  - Staff can also set office hours which silence notifications during away hours. By default office hours have been set to 7am-4pm but staff are encouraged to adjust to meet their own personal needs.
  - Staff can choose to set up automatic replies which parents will receive automatically when they send a message outside of the staff members office hours.

Mobile Applications
- **Are the optional mobile applications the same for teachers and families?**
  - No! There is a TalkingPoints for Families and a TalkingPoints for Teachers app.
- **How do staff login to the optional mobile application TalkingPoints for Teachers?**
  - Click login with Google.
- **Should school admin use the mobile app?**
  - No this is not recommended.
- **Do families have to use the mobile application or can they just get text messages?**
  - No, they do not have to use the mobile application. All families will receive text messages by default.
- **What types of families might benefit most from using the mobile application?**
  - Families who are newcomers to this country.
  - Families who are newcomers to public education.
  - Families who do not have unlimited text messaging services.
- **If families use the optional TalkingPoints Family app will they get notifications?**
  - No.
- **If instructional staff use the optional TalkingPoints app will they get notifications?**
  - Yes, but only during the scheduled office hours.
- **Can families receive SMS text messages from TalkingPoints AND use the optional TalkingPoints for Families mobile application?**
  - No, once families download the optional TalkingPoints for Families mobile application, they will stop receiving SMS text messages and start receiving messages in the mobile application instead.

School Admin Inbox vs Personal "Teacher" InBox for Principals and Assistant Principals
- **What is the difference between the School Admin Inbox and the Personal "Teacher" Inbox?**
  - The School Admin Inbox can be viewed from the school admin account which can be identified from the blue menu bar. These messages can be viewed and

responded to by more than one person. This is used when a school administrator wants to send a message to the whole school or a grade level.

- ○ The Personal Teacher Inbox can be viewed from the school admin's teacher account which can be identified by the white menu. These messages can be viewed only by the school administrator that sent it and are used to message one family.
- **Who can respond to messages in the School Admin InBox?**
  - ○ Any Principal or Assistant Principal

Staff with Personal Children
- **I am an OCPS employee with a student at an OCPS school. Can I use TalkingPoints to speak with their teachers?**
  - ○ Yes, you will receive text messages from the school/teacher at the number who have on record in Skyward.
  - ○ You can also download the optional TalkingPoints for Families app to see your child's teachers and send them messages or reply to their messages?
- **Can I have the TalkingPoints for Teachers and the TalkingPoints for Families mobile applications on my phone at the same time?**
  - ○ Yes, they can be used in tandem just like Canvas Parent, Canvas Student, and Canvas Teacher - nothing will break.

Translation
- **Will it translate messages automatically?**
  - ○ Yes, messages will be translated automatically into the families home language and their replies will be translated back into English or the staff members preferred language.
- **What makes the TalkingPoints translation different?**
  - ○ TalkingPoints is the only platform that has always offered two-way enhanced translation, powered by both human translators and machine-learning algorithms.
  - ○ TalkingPoints works with a network of vetted linguists to translate messages and evaluate system accuracy to ensure our translations are of the highest quality. Overall 99% of the messages sent through TalkingPoints offer human translation support.
  - ○ The embedded proprietary glossary ensures school terms, proper nouns, and words with multiple meanings make sense in an educational context. This helps avoid misunderstandings and confusion when messages are translated.
- **Can I translate video messages?**
  - ○ If the staff member chooses to record a video message, families will be able to view the captions in their home languages.
- **Does it translate the messages to the languages in my community?**
  - ○ Yes, TalkingPoints supports over 150 languages including the top five languages in OCPS.
- **What if a family member prefers to get messages in another language than what is in Skyward?**
  - ○ Any school administrator can locate that particular family member in their Student's Details, and click on the three dots next to the contact, and click on the "Edit Contact," where you'll be able to update their language!
  - ○ If families have downloaded the Parent Mobile Application, they can also change their own language preference in the app!

Training and Help

- **Where do I get training if I missed it during pre-planning?**
  - There are additional trainings and office hours listed here by the vendor: https://intercom.help/talkingpoints/en/articles/5413790-upcoming-trainings-for-talkingpoints-for-schools-and-districts
- **How do I get immediate help?**
  - Staff can click on the get help button in the TalkingPoints platform for immediate live chat support.
  - Staff can also go to the TalkingPoints Help Center at https://intercom.help/talkingpoints/en/
  - Email hello@talkingpts.org
- **Where can I report an issue with a class roster?**
  - Please submit a ticket at https://help.ocps.net .