

Tip Sheet for Using Blackboard Connect

Did you know that you can send an email message to parents as well as a voice message?

This will reinforce important messages and ensure that parents receive critical communications in case of garbled phone lines or if someone besides a parent listens to the phone message (e.g. students).

When creating a message, don't forget to click on "E-mail" as shown below.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Connect interface for creating an outreach message. The top navigation bar includes 'Send a Message', 'Home', 'Contacts', 'Messages', 'Log', and 'Reporting'. The main content area is titled 'CREATE OUTREACH MESSAGE' and contains a 'Message Setup' form. The form includes a 'Title' field with 'Test', a 'Language' dropdown set to 'English', and a 'Select Delivery Type(s):' section. In this section, 'Phone' is checked, 'In My Voice' is selected, 'Text-To-Speech' and 'Blend-It' are unselected, 'TTY' is unselected, 'E-Mail' is checked, and 'SMS' is unselected. A red arrow points to the 'E-Mail' option. At the bottom of the form are 'Cancel' and 'Next' buttons.

You will be prompted to type in the email message that you would like to send. Don't forget to check your spelling and grammar.

Bilingual Messages

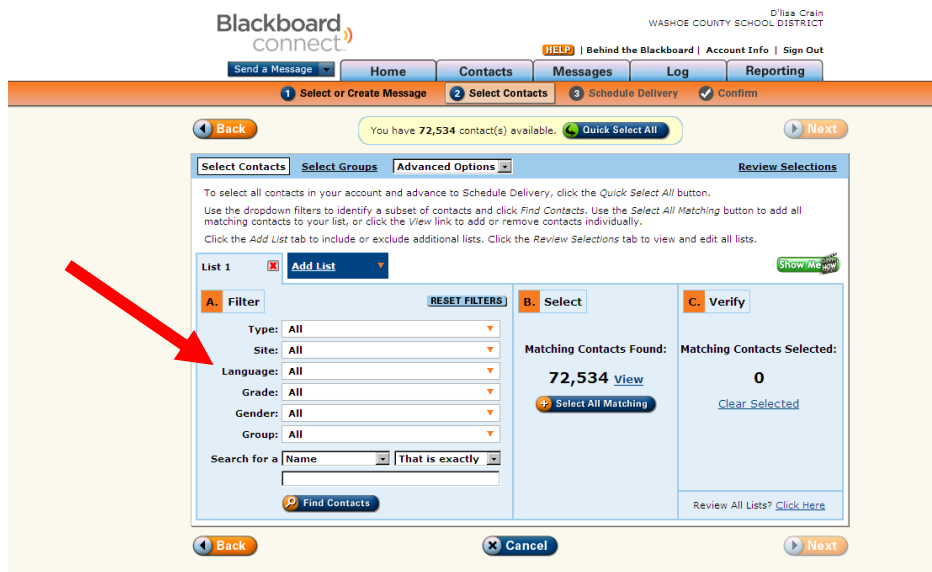
You can also create **separate messages** in English and Spanish and filter by household language. This is the **best way to communicate effectively** with all families at your school. **Sending one message in English and Spanish is not advised.** If you do not have a bilingual staff person at your school or a parent volunteer that can help you to translate and recite the message, please call one of the following departments. We will be happy to help you and it only takes a few minutes!

Department of Family-School Partnerships – 325-2000

Diversity Department – 789-3438

Office of School Performance – 325-2093

Translation Office - 325-2077



Other Helpful Tips:

- Try to keep your messages to 30 seconds or less.
- Always identify who you are and the name of the school.
- End the call by thanking parents or staff for their time.
- Repeat important details such as the phone numbers or the date and time of an event twice. (e.g. "The Open House is on Friday, September 17th at 6 p.m., once again that's Friday, September 17th at 6 p.m.")
- Remember to slow down if it is a detail that you want someone to write down such as a phone number.
- Reserve Connect Ed for important school messages and be wary of "spamming" parents with messages.