

## **The new student information system: what's in it now, and what's coming**

This year the Schools have implemented a new Student Information System called eSchoolPlus. Hopefully, by now, school families have been able to register and login and have become familiar with the system. With our first report cards and progress reports distributed, this is the time to make sure you know what eSchoolPlus is about, and what to expect in the months and years to come.

eSchoolPlus was selected to replace a patchwork of systems used in prior years, Engrade and iPass. The new system is more secure, built on current standards (HTML5), is cloud-based and is fully compliant with our student privacy agreement. It is also robust and less prone to outages than the prior systems. These changes are important, but are largely hidden from everyday use of the program.

From a “what’s in there” perspective, eSchoolPlus’ current features largely replicate what parents and students previously had available with iPass and Engrade, enabling parents to access information on student assignments, grades and attendance (with the benefit of now having to enter only one system to access this information rather than two). More features will be rolled out in the months to come, including a mobile app to access eSchoolPlus’ information on your cell phone, a portal to enable parents to update email addresses and telephone numbers, and integration with various payment systems (e.g., you will be able to pay for bus fees, music programs, field trips and PSATs all within eSchool). You will also see a new tab added that will give you information about Transportation for your student(s). As we begin to approach spring and start thinking about next year, course selection will be available in eSchoolPlus as well.

The major impetus for upgrading to eSchoolPlus, however, was not for parents, but for teachers. By providing teachers with a better student information system, they are better able to serve our students. The system offers teachers a plethora of features ranging from communication to grading, thus providing one consistent interface for teacher and student use. eSchoolPlus also enables teachers to communicate more efficiently with families, automating some notification tasks and providing student information more readily that enables them to interact more effectively with their students (e.g., When does a particular high school student have free blocks? Who in a class has allergies?).

For administrators, the new system will tie directly into state reporting, seamlessly integrate with other interfaces such as information on special education (eSPED), medical issues (SNAP) and transportation (Transfinder) along with our new, robust communication resource, School Messenger. This integration with eSchool improves efficiency and reduces the opportunity for data errors. And with this full range of information about a student, or a classroom of students, is far more accessible, improving a teacher’s ability to work with their students. In addition, we are moving the entire school system to paperless for all report cards and progress reports, from Kindergarten through Grade 12.

If you have questions, concerns or suggestions, you are welcome to contact  
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