

Using Text Message Initiatives for Parent Engagement

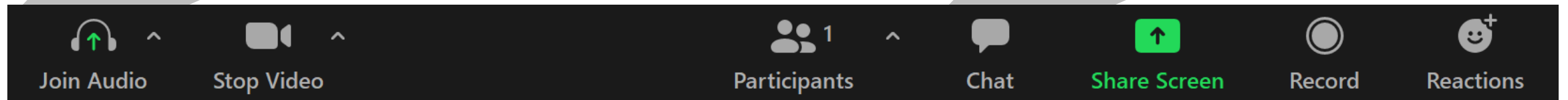
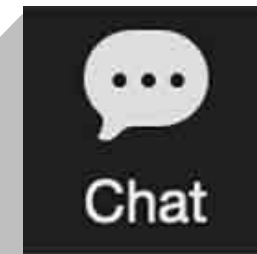
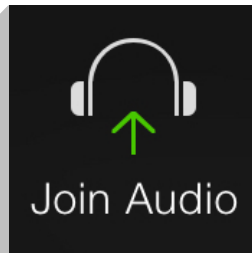


Welcome, Event Orientation, and Speaker Introductions

Lacy Wood, Dissemination Director, REL Southwest



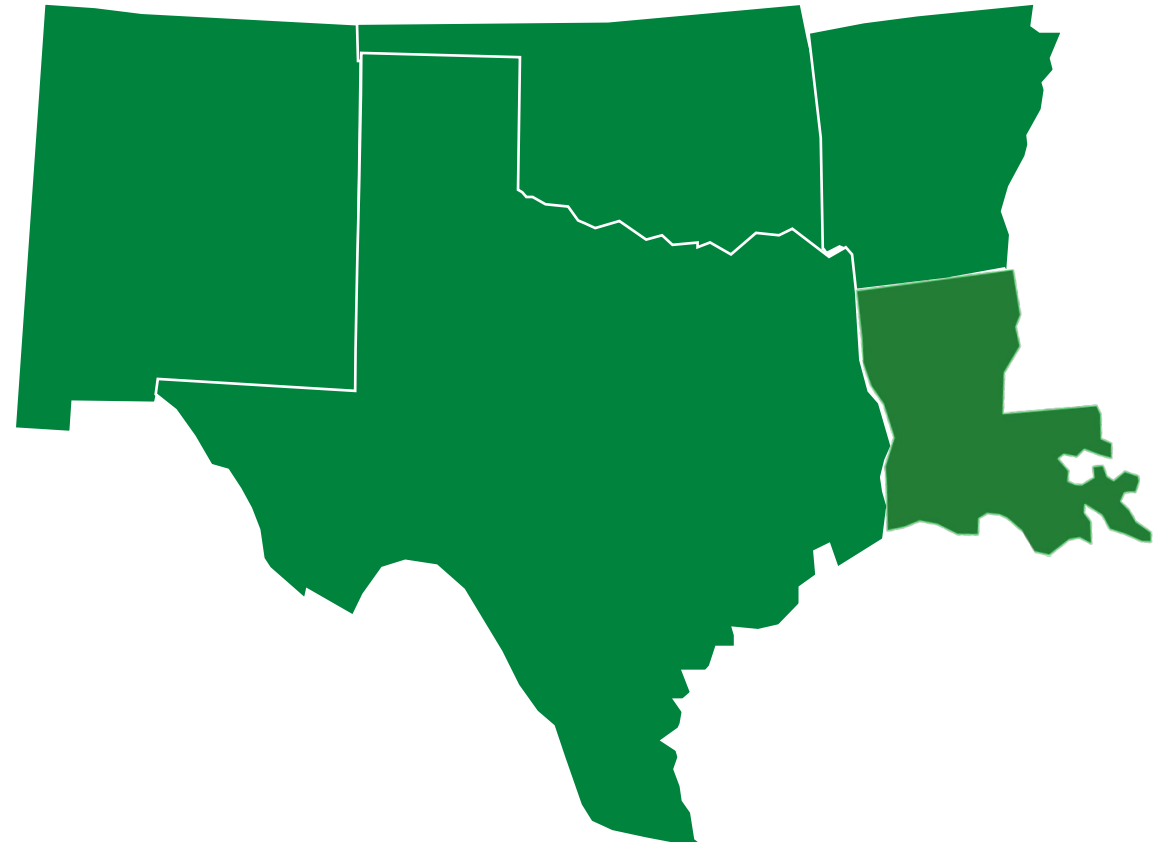
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- You have the option to dial into the phone line or listen through computer audio.
- Click on the Chat box to ask questions for the presenters or let us know about any technical issues.



How does REL Southwest do this work?

REL Southwest works with state education agencies, districts, and other stakeholders to develop and apply research evidence to **meaningfully improve student outcomes**.

REL Southwest supports **six** collaborative research partnerships to address the regional needs, priorities, and interests of five states: **Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas**.



Webinar agenda and outcomes

Agenda

- Welcome
- Nudge Communications to Parents Through Emails and Text and Statewide Outreach in Arkansas
- Texting Parents to Improve Attendance in Elementary School: Results From an IES Study
- Question-and-Answer Session
- Texting to Trust: Collaborative Communication Between Middle School Staff and Families
- Parent Engagement in Portland Public Schools
- Question-and-Answer Session

Outcomes

- Learn about recent and upcoming research on text messaging for parent outreach
- Hear about effective communication strategies

Meet the presenters

- **Candace Hester**, PhD, Partnership Research Lead, Southwest College and Career Readiness Research Partnership, REL Southwest
- **Anja Kurki**, PhD, Managing Researcher, American Institutes for Research
- **Hadley Bachman**, Program Manager of Community Development, Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center, The Ohio State University
- **Dunya Minoo**, Senior Manager, Attendance and Engagement, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Department, Office of Student Support Services, Portland Public Schools
- **Kelli Mitchell**, NCC, Professional School Counselor, Portland Public Schools

Parent outreach via text messaging

Parent engagement in a child's education has many benefits, including improved student academic, behavioral, and social outcomes.

Texting is among the best strategies for communicating with parents:

- **Good reach.** Cell phone ownership is high, texts can reach parents quickly, and most received texts are read within minutes.
- **Flexible.** Easy to change over time based on parent or staff feedback.
- **Inexpensive.** Per-person text costs are low.
- **Works well with other strategies.** Texting can complement other parent engagement strategies that are more targeted and costly.

Sources: Sanders et al., 1999; Pew Research Center, 2019

Research on messaging

- Informational messaging to parents (delivered via email, text, or phone) has been found to affect outcomes, including
 - parent knowledge and monitoring and subsequent student academic outcomes in high school (Bergman, 2014);
 - homework completion rates, on-task behavior, and class participation in a summer program (Kraft & Dougherty, 2013); and
 - the likelihood of earning credits in a credit recovery program (Kraft & Rogers, 2015).
- Integrating graphics or pictures into messages and personalizing an intervention by sending the messages through a trusted source can broaden participant engagement, particularly for diverse and multilingual audiences.

Sources: Abroms et al., 2015; Arcia et al., 2016; Balu et al., 2016; Castleman & Page, 2014; Doss et al., 2019; Grüne-Yanoff & Hertwig, 2016; Head et al., 2013; Heppen et al., 2020; Reinikka & Svensson, 2005; Sunstein et al., 2019; Thaler & Sunstein, 2009; Veinot et al., 2018

Nudge Communications to Parents Through Emails and Texts and Statewide Outreach in Arkansas

Candace Hester, REL Southwest

The Impact of Nudge Communication Mode, Presentation, and Sender on Parental Visits to a State Literacy Program Website in Arkansas

The project supports Arkansas stakeholders' literacy initiative called the Reading Initiative for Student Excellence (R.I.S.E.) and tests **whether and what type of informational nudge** would increase parent uptake of educational materials for their elementary-grade students.

The following are the three foundational goals of the study:

1. To identify best practices for communicating with diverse parents
2. To strengthen parental engagement in Arkansas schools, especially in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic
3. To help the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) identify effective pathways for improving student literacy



Study sample and approach

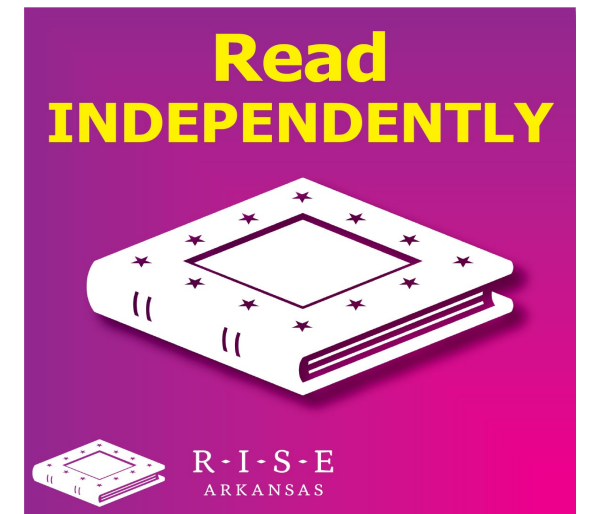
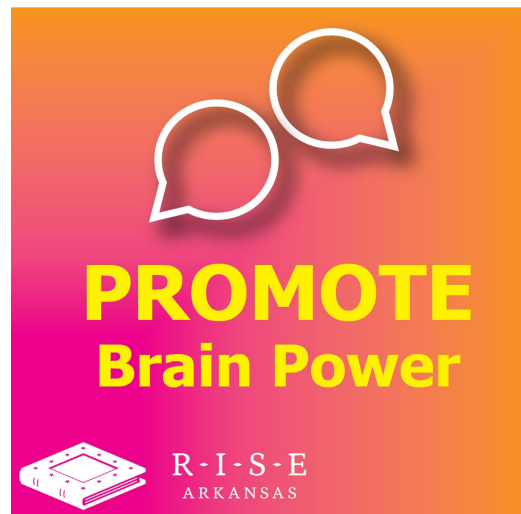
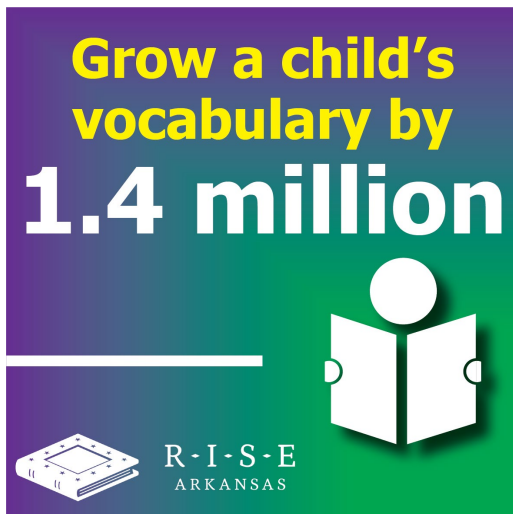
The **sample** includes approximately 483 elementary schools in 253 Arkansas public school districts serving approximately 196,065 K–6 enrolled students.

The study will **examine** the implementation and impacts of a parent nudge communication intervention with three factors:

- **Mode:** email versus email + text
- **Presentation:** words versus words + graphic
- **Sender:** trusted sender versus generic sender

Behind the study approach

- Presentation: Including graphs and pictures can increase the saliency of information.
- Sender: Receiving messages from a known and trusted sender increases the saliency of information.
- Mode: Using text and email can improve the reach of the messages.



Sources: Abroms et al., 2015; Arcia et al., 2016; Head et al., 2013; Moon et al., 2017; Sunstein et al., 2019

Selected research questions

- What percentage of elementary school households were successfully contacted by ADE?
 - Did the percentages of households that approved ADE’s request and that had accurate and functioning contact information vary by school locale or school demographic composition?
- What percentage of elementary school households received the emails or text messages in each round of communication?
 - Did the percentage of households that opened email messages or received text messages vary by school locale or school demographic composition?
- Did the mode, presentation, or sender impact the average percentage of households that visited the R.I.S.E. landing page and the time spent on the page?
 - Did the fully enhanced nudge strategy (adding a text message, a graphic, and a known sender) improve study outcomes compared with the base condition?

Learn more about the study

- For more details about the study, visit <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=6722&display=1>
- The final report will be published by **fall 2022**.
 - Sign up for REL Southwest’s newsletter: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/newsroom/spotlight.aspx>
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