



## **Test of *Connect-ED* System Planned January 12**

A test of the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation's new parent/guardian notification system, *Connect-ED*, is planned for Monday, Jan. 12.

This is the next step in determining the efficacy of the program and the information the corporation has received from families and input into the database. Individuals who were designated as the "primary" contact should expect to be notified through their selected means of notification between 4:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Monday. If a parent does not receive the test message, they should call 435-0990 and leave a message with the student's name, identification number, school name, and the nature of the problem.

Letters asking for updated contact information and preferred methods of notification were sent to parents and guardians in mid-December, and information obtained was input into the EVSC database over the holidays. If a parent did not receive an update form in December, they should obtain one from their child's school office and update the information as soon as possible.

Anyone with questions can contact the Office of Information Technology at 435-8694.

## ***Connect-ED* Letters Mailed to Parents**

Letters asking for updated contact information were mailed to parents and guardians of Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation students on Friday, December 12, regarding the corporation's new automated parent notification system, *Connect-ED*. This system, which will be activated in January, provides the school corporation with the ability to reach parents and guardians quickly and in the manner they wish to be contacted such as home or work phone, cell phone; email or text message.

Superintendent Bertram has said that communication plays an important role with families in helping to minimize the spread of misinformation and to let them be an active part of their child's school life.

The *Connect-ED* service will enable the EVSC to schedule, send and track personalized voice messages at up to six phone numbers and two email addresses per family. In all, the multi-modal service helps officials to reach out to parents and staff via:

- Voice messages to home phones, work phones, cell phones and emails
- Text messages to cell phones, PDA's and other text-based devices
- Written messages to email accounts
- Messages to TTY/TDD receiving devices for the hearing impaired.

Parent letters requesting information updates and primary sources and mediums of contact need to be returned to either their child's school or to the EVSC Administration Building by Wednesday, December 17. Information will be updated at the Administration Building initially, then maintained by school personnel.

A test of the *Connect-ED* system is planned in January, before it is fully operational.

## ***Connect-ED* Facts**

### How does the **Connect-ED**<sup>®</sup> notification service work?

The **Connect-ED** service combines the power of the Internet with the pervasiveness of the telephone to give users an affordable and easy-to-use tool to reach out to their communities. Users record a voice message in their own voice using just a telephone or typing a message to be sent to text receiving devices. In all, the multi-modal service helps officials reach out to students, parents and staff via:

- Voice messages to home phones, work phones, cell phones, and even emails
- Text messages to cell phones, PDAs and other text-based devices
- Written messages to e-mail accounts
- Messages to TTY/TDD receiving devices for the hearing impaired

#### Simple three-step process to send a call:



### Who do I call if I do not receive the notification?

Please contact your school secretary or principal or call 435-8694 if you have related questions.

### How many calls have been sent through the **Connect-ED** service?

NTI is currently sending 20-25 million time-sensitive calls per month solely on behalf of government entities and schools via its Connect family of services which include:

- **Connect-ED** for K-12 schools and school districts
- **Connect-ED** for Higher ED
- **Connect-CTY**<sup>®</sup> for municipalities
- **Connect-GOV**<sup>®</sup> for state and federal agencies

### How many schools are using the service?

All EVSC school will be using the service after January 2009.

Throughout the nation, One in every six K-12 students are enrolled in schools using the **Connect-ED** service to send messages to students, parents and staff.

### What is multi-modal communication?

With the **Connect-ED** service, school officials can reach their community members in their own voice (at landlines, cell phones, and via e-mail) and via text messages (on cell phones, PDAs/other text-receiving devices, e-mail accounts, and TTY/TDD receiving devices for the hearing impaired).

During a time-sensitive situation, multi-modal communication is critical. It is the most comprehensive way to reach people in the environment they may be in at the moment an issue arises. Communication is sent simultaneously to all available contact points for each person.

### How much does the **Connect-ED** system cost?

The service is based on an affordable flat per-student rate.

### How has the **Connect-ED** system been used?

The **Connect-ED** system has been used to communicate vital information when a critical situation has taken place. Additionally, some sites use the service for more routine communication such as holiday schedules, test day reminders, and to alert parents of important upcoming events or deadlines.

### What if an emergency occurs and the school can't access the Internet to send a message?

Each user is given a personal, wallet-sized Emergency Messaging card. In case of an evacuation or power loss, school administrators can use the information on this card to send a time-sensitive notification to all their contacts or to a pre-determined emergency response team using just a telephone. NTI maintains Client Care representatives to assist users 24/7/365 should alternative means be necessary such as encountered throughout both Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Wilma as well as regularly encountered when a snow day message needs to be sent.

**Does the *Connect-ED* service require any additional equipment?**

No. The only thing needed is an Internet connection and a telephone. The EVSC did not have to buy or maintain any special equipment, have special phone lines installed, or install any software applications or plug-ins.

**How does the *Connect-ED* system get access to student and staff contact information?**

NTI provides an encrypted, online process to securely import a school's existing data into that school's account in a secure and reliable manner. The school maintains all data. The EVSC has full ownership over that data. NTI also provides a system that allows schools to schedule automatic updates as frequently as they like, and/or they can add, remove, and delete individual contacts at their convenience.

Additionally, students, parents and staff are encouraged to ensure that their contact information is up-to-date so that the school can contact them should an issue occur. Parents should call their child's school if their family contact information has changed.

**Does NTI share the school's information with anyone?**

No. NTI does not sell, lease, share, or rent personally identifiable information (names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) to any companies or persons outside of NTI or NTI service providers.

**How long has NTI provided this service?**

NTI's first client sent its inaugural *Connect-ED* for K-12 communication in early 2001 under the PACE brand. Since then, NTI has delivered hundreds of millions of messages on behalf of schools and public officials.

**What is NTI?**

The NTI Group, Inc. (NTI) is a privately held company located in Sherman Oaks, CA that provides comprehensive communication services designed specifically for local, regional, State, and Federal government entities that enable rapid dissemination of critical information via voice and text devices.

NTI owns and distributes the *Connect-ED*<sup>®</sup>, *Connect-CTY*<sup>®</sup>, *Connect-GOV*<sup>®</sup>, and *Connect-MIL*<sup>®</sup> family of notification services for use by schools, municipalities, government agencies, and military institutions. NTI designs systems specifically for each served vertical to ensure quick adoption by end-users. NTI services are developed with the assistance of end-users within each vertical and are regularly upgraded based upon requests made by a panel of industry-specific users and non-users ensuring that we are providing the best services possible.

**Questions?**

Call 812-435-8694 or email [stacy.mauser@evsc.k12.in.us](mailto:stacy.mauser@evsc.k12.in.us)