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As a high school senior, I am very familiar with the weekly call starting with, "This is a message from Estancia High School..." These last four years, I have not only found the system extremely useful, but I have also found an unexpected connection through it. I do believe that this communication is beneficial for students and I don't think that it is at all overbearing. And to be quite honest, this scholarship prompt has gotten me thinking about the actual effect that the voice recording system has had on my school life and my parents' involvement.

During junior year, I was at school some days from 7am until 9pm. With so many activities on my mind and so much homework to do, there was no possible way I could remember to alert my parents about an event that was happening soon. And at the same time, I could not imagine that my parents would have any interest in it, what with my mother having very weak English, and my dad having to work almost every day from morning to night. To my surprise, however, my parents would occasionally pop the question, "Hey, how come you didn't tell us about this showcase coming up?" or they would say "We'll see you at Open House on Thursday." It lifted the responsibility off my shoulders of having to let my parents know about everything, and it also helped me realize that they were able to actually attend some of these events. Without the recording system, I would probably never learn that my parents were invested in what was happening in my high school. And although these recordings sometimes did not exactly convince them to go, they at least brought the topic to my parents' attention.

Since I also received these recording on my own phone, they were a big help when it came to reminding me of some things that were completely off my radar. For example, I would not have gotten my Grad Night ticket in time if it wasn't for the recording that was sent out the night before the last day to pay for Grad Night.



Even though this isn't exactly a problem for me, I can imagine that the school attendance notification system is useful for parents who might not always be aware of their child's whereabouts. These recordings could potentially bring to the parents' attention any inappropriate activities the student may be doing, and could allow the parent or guardian to start a discussion with their student. Although the student might not be happy about it, the system would bring a layer of transparency that is needed when a student's safety is compromised. Because, as we all know, keeping students in school keeps them off the streets.

This constant communication is very important, because school is a place where students spend the majority of their time, and if they are anything like me, they are incredibly involved in school. Parents deserve to be a part of the conversation, and these recordings have been an extremely efficient way to communicate with them. In terms of how this is affecting the younger generation, I think that it is introducing many people (not only students and parents, but also teachers) to the effectiveness of technology. Companies such as DialMyCalls allow for more instructional time to be used for actual teaching rather than reminding students about events. It adds a slightly more human note than email reminders, because the school is able to record somebody's voice instead of just words in a text box. I think it is a perfect blend of the efficiency of technology and the need for a human element within this efficiency.

Lastly, as a side note, I have found an unexpected connection through my recognition of the voice in the mass notification recordings. I work as a receptionist for a local tennis club, and one day I got called to come in to help call members and invite them to our annual wine dinner. The lady I was working with had the most familiar voice, but for the life of me I could not remember where I had heard it before. Then, she said she worked for the local school district and she was in charge of recording the messages that came to our phones twice a week or so. It was actually really cool to put a face to the usually disembodied voice, and we spent the rest of our time wondering why our tennis club did not have the same mass notification system. Alas, the rest of the time was spent calling members and reciting the same paragraph over and over again.