Data from 9 universities and 6,438 students shows **student retention is higher with parent engagement**
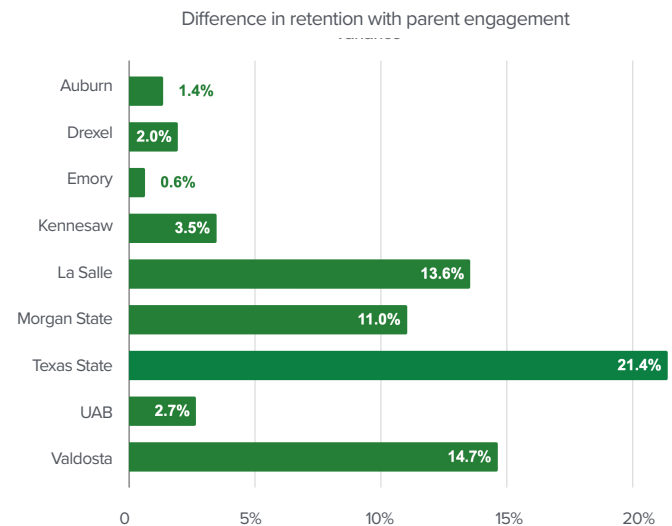
Executive Summary:

This brief report features findings from an exploratory study of parent engagement and student retention based on 6,438 students enrolled at nine universities in the Fall of 2020. At most schools, the more frequently a parent received academic and financial updates on their student, the more likely the student remained enrolled and made progress toward completing their degree.

+8% On average, **student retention was 8% higher** for a student when their parent or guardian received regular updates on student progress, compared to students with a parent who did not receive similar updates.

Student retention is higher when parents receive updates on student progress

The data showed that students with parent engagement were between +0.6% and +21.4% more likely to be retained after their first year. The average increase across all institutions was 7.9%. The results were observed across both private and public institutions, as well as schools ranging in size from 3,293 FTE to 37,390 FTE.

For the purpose of this study, "parent engagement" refers to parents or guardians receiving emails on student progress. Emails were sent to parents and guardians when academic or financial data on the students' records changed, such as new holds being placed on student accounts. The alerts contained access to FERPA protected data and provided guidance on how parents could best support their students.

Difference in retention with parent engagement

Auburn	1.4%
Drexel	2.0%
Emory	0.6%
Kennesaw	3.5%
La Salle	13.6%
Morgan State	11.0%
Texas State	21.4%
UAB	2.7%
Valdosta	14.7%

	AUBURN UNIVERSITY	Drexel UNIVERSITY	EMORY	KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY	LASALLE UNIVERSITY	MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY	TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY	THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM	VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
Total # of parents in CampusESP receiving updates on student progress	12,878	3,656	875	3,184	557	906	7,101	2,274	1,238
Institutional retention rate for all 1st year students	92.8%	89.7%	94.9%	74.1%	66.0%	72.5%	77.0%	83.9%	56.0%
Retention rate for 1st year students with parent engagement	94.2%	91.7%	95.5%	77.6%	79.6%	83.5%	98.4%	86.6%	70.7%
Difference in retention with parent engagement	+ 1.4%	+ 2.0%	+.6%	+ 3.5%	+ 13.6%	+ 11.04%	+ 21.4%	+ 2.7%	+ 14.7%

The impact of parent engagement on retention is highest for students of color

Data indicated that the impact of parent engagement was greatest for Black or African American and Hispanic students. At Drexel University, Black students showed a 7.4% increase in retention when their parents received updates on their progress, compared to a 1.1% increase for White students and their families. Similar trends were seen at Texas State University. Hispanic students showed a 26.0% increase in student retention, compared to 20.1% for White students, when their parents were sent regular academic and financial updates.

In previous studies, data has shown that Black families and Hispanic families have higher levels of parent engagement with their students, which may account for the larger increase in student retention that was observed.

Drexel UNIVERSITY

	Institutional retention rate for all 1st year students	Retention rate for 1st year students with parent engagement	Difference in retention with parent engagement
White	90.0%	91.1%	+1.1%
Asian	93.9%	96.4%	+2.5%
Hispanic	84.7%	90.9%	+6.2%
Black or African-American	86.5%	93.9%	+7.4%

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

	Institutional retention rate for all 1st year students	Retention rate for 1st year students with parent engagement	Difference in retention with parent engagement
White	78.1%	98.2%	+20.1%
Asian	77.7%	100.0%	+22.3%
Hispanic	72.2%	98.2%	+26.0%
Black or African-American	71.0%	99.2%	+28.2%

Methodology:

Data related to race/ethnicity, institutional retention rates, and parent engagement provided by: **Auburn University, Drexel University, Emory University, Kennesaw State University, La Salle University, Morgan State University, Texas State University, University of Alabama at Birmingham, and Valdosta State University**. Student retention was calculated for all full-time 1st year undergraduate students entering in the Fall 2020 term that returned for the following Fall 2021 term.

Parent engagement consisted of updates sent to parents and guardians on student progress. In order for parents to receive updates, parents were required to create an account in a school-branded CampusESP Parent Portal, initiate an electronic FERPA waiver request for their student's data, and have their student approve the request. Once the FERPA waiver was approved, parents received email updates when their students' academic and financial data changed. Parents were informed of unmet financial aid requirements, new holds, final grade assignments, student status changes (changing from full-time to part-time) and new account charges.

PARENT requests access to student data > **STUDENT** approves access to data > **PARENT** receives updates on student progress

Student retention rates were calculated for students with parents receiving progress updates and compared to each institution's overall student retention rate to determine the average increase in retention. The analysis was repeated using race/ethnicity data for students provided by participating universities.

CampusESP is a strategic parent and family engagement platform enabling institutions to keep the most important influencers of their students informed — their parents. From impacting enrollment, to student success, to annual giving, keeping parents effectively engaged has proven to be critical for institutions looking to better support their institutional goals. In fact, **73% of parents say that CampusESP helps them better advise and support their students.**

For more information on parent engagement & electronic FERPA waivers, **please visit campusesp.com**.