



What time is it? It's

# The Parlant Times

*"Our mission is to improve learning by providing products and services that facilitate communication between parents, teachers, students, administrators, and the community." (Learn the Mission Statement!)*

#1 in ParentLink news! (Because of our "things will work..... mostly" guarantee)

April 2010

Volume 2, Issue 4

## The Adulation of April

If April showers bring May flowers what do April snow storms bring?

Admittedly, April abounds in an allegory of aesthmatic allergens. Alternatively, available amidst the aerosol attackers is an ablative, absolute of arduos allegorical endeavors, to advance the arts of ParentLink.

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## The Department Water Cooler

### Team Karla's Team

As part of the battle plan we have labeled "The Operation," Chris visited with five school districts in the D.C. Area: Baltimore City Schools, Arlington County Schools, Fauquier Co., Prince William, and Stafford Co. Schools. Of these, two school districts want to proceed with decisions in the next 2-3 months and another two will be looking in the next 3-6 months. Chris will be meeting with Georgia schools in April.

### Trainings

- Hillsborough 50 people trained
- Sunnyside 38 people trained
- Duval County 2 online trainings of 12 people

The team made 218 district contacts and 306 school contacts.

### Team Adam's Team

This team doesn't have anything to report regarding "The Other Operation" (based loosely on "The Operation"), or so it would mysteriously seem. Witnesses have observed the team working individually and sometimes as a group. Time will only tell in revealing their devious plots for success and K-12 domination.

### Team John's Team

John's team was also so busy they were unavailable to comment on the seriousness and secretness of the aptly-named "The Other-Other Operation." We await the reports with baited breath. Don't get creeped out if someone smells like worms. Just smack them upside the head for being too literal.

### Team Miriam's Team a.k.a. "Team Awesome"

The team is doing awesome and has no real update concerning "Operation Awesome." They are contacting clients and discussing value solutions to ensure their renewal in June/July (when the vast majority of our clients renew).



### **Operation Tea Kettle**

Operation Tea Kettle was also unavailable for comments. This is presumably due to their intense training for the queer British environment of waking up early in the morning to un-stickify sticky wickets and Bob's your uncle, freshen ya drink govarna's, and of course learning to set the perfect place setting at the dinner table for when you are hosting Her Lady Grace, the Duchess of Bellary. This is of course going on amidst the "Recognizing Which Jane Austen Novel You Have Stepped Into" survival class. Their hands are clearly full.

### **Marketing**

Because Ryan got caught up in making the newsletter pretty last month, he forgot to include what Marketing had been up to. So, for the last two months the "marketeers" have been working hard to turn out a number of items, among which have been several success stories (kudos to those who submitted them) and case studies (currently being finalized). David is doing more top-secret manager stuff that we call "Operation Impending Doom 3." Mikaela is doing good work at the Bid Desk in keeping up with the workload and telling districts what specs they should have asked in the first place. Stats (a.k.a. "Dane") is crunching numbers and drooling over equations. Cheryl has been trying to figure out how many times she can change dinner plans for 100+ guests before people decide they won't come. Todd is counting the days until Adobe CS5 is released and he continues to work graphical miracles. Bryan is the "Maestro Man" as he orchestrates big things coming out in the future. Ryan is doing complex writing stuff... like... trying to figure out how to make "panegyric" and "antediluvian" fit in the same sentence.

### **Testing and MIS**

MIS is furiously working on new building projects like the 8th floor conference room's AV and networking, as well as gearing up for 5th floor build out. Testing has modified their calendar to offset our testing iteration from development by one week. This will provide better and more comprehensive testing. Carson has joined MIS on an internship and is a rock star when it comes to planning and installing... stuff.

### **Support**

The Support Desk is doing well at the moment with the possible exception of Josh, who is currently recovering from having his wisdom teeth removed, so he's probably felt better. On the plus side, he can whistle through the hole in his jaw that connects his nose and mouth. In the month of March, the Support Desk:

- Opened 329 tickets.
- Took 555 calls.
- Closed 709 tickets.
- Spencer issued a newsletter that was widely hailed as the "funniest yet," contributing to fears that we will eventually lose Spencer to Saturday Night Live (which wouldn't be a bad thing since SNL could use some help).
- Call pickup times have now been under one minute for three consecutive months, and hit the lowest it has been in seven months, with just .63 minutes for our average pickup time in March, less than half the amount of time a customer would have waited in March 2009.
- Spencer won the Support Competition for March, and he's very excited to win the prize of a paid day off. The rest of Support, however, isn't quite as excited since Spencer covers the 4a.m. shift, and that's one day someone else will have to get up at 3a.m.



### **Duty Officers (Thailand Office)**

The Duty Officer department has hired a new employee named "Lit." We asked Lit to introduce himself to everyone by means of a video. Please click on the link below to get to know our newest employee.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkpdmVlHvgI>

### **Implementation (2nd Level)**

Work... work... work. Midland and North East ISD are currently being implemented. With Carson being gone, the work load has increased a tad. Just a tad though. Brian is in the process of buying a house and will be living with Jacob (in Development) for a few weeks until he can move in. You are a good friend Jacob!

Bill Clyde has been developing some great changes to PLDB and has done a great job working through problems at North East. Thanks Bill!

### **Development**

Development didn't respond with anything going on, so we shall assume they are playing WoW or TF2. How come we weren't invited?!

We have recently done an upgrade on the system see the end of the newsletter for 7.2.3 release notes.

### **Customer Learning**

Trainings have taken place for the following districts in the month of March

- North East
- Duval
- Milton
- Sunnyside
- Emery County
- New Haven

72 customers from various districts participated in the March Support Webinar. This is the most we have ever trained!

Jordan and Matthew Gunby have been working hard on the eTraining lessons. You can see the progress of their work by clicking on **DOCUMENTATION** ---> **CUSTOMER DOCUMENTATION** ---> **TRAINING MATERIALS**. Check it out. If you have any thoughts or feedback, please communicate with Jordan or Michael.

### **The Employee, formally known as Pui T**

In accordance with keeping up with the events of life Pui's new last name has been updated in PLDB to Pui Rundall. We hope you have found married life fulfilling and that he will pick his socks up off the floor for longer than the traditional six month grace period.

### **Thailand New Year**

Our friends across the way recently celebrated the Thai New Year or Songkran Festival. We are glad they are back as we missed them very much as they do a great job for all of us as Duty



Officers but we hope they had a great time. As opposed to sounding smart and culturally informed by ripping off the Wikipedia page we have just decided to give you a link to it, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songkran> we hope you guys had a lot of fun what appears to be the world's largest water fight.

### Employee Spotlight

This month's spotlight shines down on Cheryl of Marketing-land.



**What is your name?**

*Cheryl Lisa Mortensen.*

**What is your quest?**

*Um.... to have BMWs as prizes at company Christmas parties.*

**What is your favorite color?**

*Pink; I'm wearing it today actually.*

**How long have you been with ParentLink?**

*Almost 2 years.*

**Where were you before ParentLink?**

*I was interning at the Make-A-Wish Foundation.*

**What is your favorite thing about ParentLink?**

*Easter egg hunts and Glenn's funny emails.*

**What is your favorite food?**

*I'd always choose candy over food... so any candy with chocolate.*

**What is your favorite activity?**

*Doing absolutely nothing with my hubby!*

**Star Trek or Star Wars?**

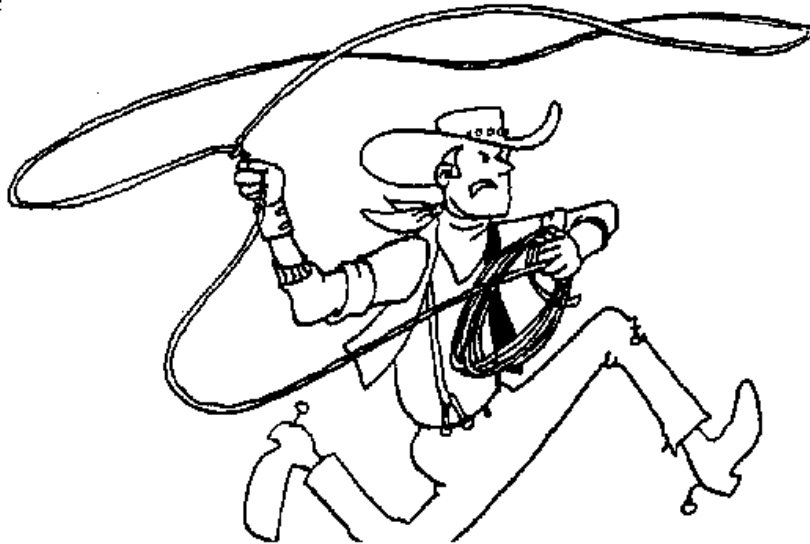
*\* Gulp\*... Dancing with the Stars???*

**If you were stranded on an island what 3 things would you want with you?**

*My husband, chocolate, and fresh water to rinse off sand and yucky salt water (oh and for drinking as well).]*



### *Spencer's New Monthly Mascot Proposal*



Let ✱ PARENTLINK Rustle you up some Parent Involvement

## 7.2.3 Release Notes

### New Features

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Added a description of assignment category weights for courses to the students' Class Assignments page.

Assignment category weights show up under the Term Selection box when users navigate to the **CLASSES** tab, then to the **GRADES** link, then to the **VIEW ASSIGNMENTS** page. The weights are associated with an organization, section, and term. If the user selects "Enter date range," then ParentLink will check to see if the date range spans multiple terms. If it does and the weight information for the term is the same, then ParentLink will display the information. If the weight information has changed between those terms, ParentLink will display the message, "Date range spans multiple terms, cannot determine weights." If there are no category weights for the organization/section/term combination, ParentLink will not display anything. ParentLink will add a "%" to the end of the weight information imported.



Class Reports are now available for teachers to view their students by period as well as their overall grades.

If the VIEW\_STUDENT\_GRADES permission for teachers is enabled, when a teacher clicks on the CLASSES tab the first page they see should be the Class Info page. This page will list all sections that the teacher is teaching. Users can click on one of the sections and it will take them to a page with a list of all students in that class along with their overall grades and percentage in that class. This list is sorted by “LastName, FirstName.” Users can also export/print this list; students should export/print in the same sorted order.

In the Recommendations interface for staff and administrators, students are now grouped by the school they will be attending next.

On the pages that allow recommendations for an entire class, students are grouped by the school they will be attending next. The school is defined by the file imported or can be edited through the Pre-registration interface by a school administrator. This option can be found in the Edit Student Recommendations page under the **Registering at** dropdown menu.

## Enhancements

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The Progress Report Message will now include comments, such as discipline and grade warnings.

The Grades Progress Message has been modified to display progress information for several classes rather than a single class. It is very similar to the Grades Summary Message. ParentLink now has a “Comments” field for message and has changed the requirements for the data of the message. The message requires a class grade, comments, or both. A class grade may consist of any combination of an overall grade, a points total, or a percentage.

The message will be created during an import. Select **Progress** from the “Message Type” field in the import. The data for the message must be in the grades data source of the import. It is important to note that **all** grades data in the file will be imported and reproduced in the message. The message will not filter out data based on term information as the Grades Summary Message does. This import and message is designed to work with a SASI-style progress report that is created for all the intended recipients, and only the intended recipients, at once. Because of this, it will only run periodically, and just contains the information necessary to create the current message.

The Course Description field in Pre-registration has been expanded to allow for longer entries.

Enhanced the Assignments page so that the Weight column does not display unless there is weight data for an assignment.



Changed the Course History page so that the data exactly matches imported SASI data, even if there are identical records.

## Fixes

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### Accounts

Fixed a bug that limited staff permissions when merged with another account.  
Fixed a bug that prevented users from being able to see some assignments.

### Cafeteria

Fixed a bug that was causing an “Our apologies” error when editing cafeteria lunch menus.

### General

Created a function that will purge unneeded log files so they will no longer fill up system disk space.  
Fixed a bug in an upgrade that prevented the addition of database fields in Windows.  
Fixed a bug that returned a system error when a customer tried to submit feedback through the **HELP** tab in ParentLink.  
Fixed a bug that caused certain services to shut down without logging traces.  
Fixed a bug that caused Message Utilization to report the wrong day for EST and CST users.  
Fixed a bug that was causing an “Our apologies” error when users were editing cafeteria lunch menus.

### Messages

Improved system communication speed, which had been impeding message recording.  
Fixed a bug that prevented some users from being able to record an inbound message for ParentLink.  
Fixed a bug that caused an “Our apologies” error when trying to expand a group on the Select Recipients page.  
Fixed a bug that affected message delivery queuing performance.  
Fixed a bug that kept messages from playing twice on answering machines.  
Fixed a bug that prevented parent organizations from being able to send messages to addresses in child organizations.  
Changed the sorting on the Select Recipients page so that students selected in class groups are now sorted alphabetically.



Select Recipients under the Send Message interface and Add/Edit Group in the Groups interface should now sort the students and parents in the Classes folder by “LastName, FirstName.”

## Reports

Fixed some statistical inaccuracies in the Message Tracking, Message Details, and Contact Reports.

Fixed a bug that kept the **Delivered** and **Undelivered** messages links on the Message Tracking Report from displaying.

Fixed a bug that kept reports from generating and doing page redirects (e.g., the **change report parameters** hyperlink on the Task Schedules page).

Fixed a bug that would return an “Our apologies” error when users attempted to generate a Change Log Report.

## Pre-registration

Fixed a bug in Pre-registration that didn’t eliminate duplicate courses and did not display all linked classes.

Fixed a bug in Pre-registration that caused recommendations to clear for a student when searching for student names.

## Patches

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Fixed a bug that displayed incorrect attendance code descriptions.

Fixed a bug in query-based groups where groups sometimes incorrectly included temporary accounts.

Fixed a bug that was causing some scheduled tasks to be skipped.

Improved message sending reliability by reducing occurrences of “Your message has already been activated.”

Fixed a bug that prevented some message batches from loading (and essentially delivering).