BrightArrow PowerSchool Documentation

Introduction
This document contains information for using BrightArrow within PowerSchool. There are several functions and capabilities to using BrightArrow's system, and your options are limitless with this integration. Over time we will update this document with different pieces of information to help you use BrightArrow to the fullest.

BrightArrow Integration with PowerSchool 12
PowerSchool 12 introduced the new Contacts piece. Some of you may know it as the long awaited "Unlimited Contacts" module. If you've been with BrightArrow since PowerSchool 11 or earlier, you may wonder what your options are with the new module. Here we will try briefly describing what you need to know so you can make your plans confident in knowing how this will affect your communications.

BrightArrow Integration With PowerSchool Information

Is BrightArrow ready to use the new contacts module?
Yes. There is an update to your plugin that will need to happen. We couldn't include this before you installed 12 because the tables didn't exist yet and would cause an error. But once you are on 12 we can update your plugins and you can start using contacts as your source for phone/email information.

Are the new contacts easier to manage?
Yes and no. Yes, in that unlike the legacy fields where everyone has different field names to look for, with contacts everyone is using the same set of fields. However, getting that data out is more complicated. That's OK because we handle that for you. Just let us know what you want, and we'll make sure we get it for you.

What information can I get from Contacts?
We are prepared to get whatever information you want out of contacts. A lot of time has been spent to make sure as many options as we could think of were available from the beginning and we are actively adding more as new requests come in. Whether you are looking for just contacts that live with the student or a combination of contacts that live with the student or receive mail for the student we can manage it.

Do I need to use contacts if I'm on 12?
No. Most PowerSchool 12 customers are still using their old fields for now. We can pull from either. The migration of the data from old fields to contacts is a complicated task and very time consuming so we are able to work with your old fields if you aren't ready for contacts, or we can move to the new contacts fields if you are ready.

What advantages are there to moving to contacts?
Contacts standardizes all the phone/email fields, so it becomes very easy to get everything you want. Plus, with all the extra options we can set up different situations such as some contacts for informational messages and others for emergency messages. Adding 3 contacts that are called for 1 student while another student only has 1 is basically automatic. You tell us your business rules and we match them.

Can I test the changes while using the old fields?
Yes. We can leave your existing extracts in place and simply add new exports and imports for the new module. Let us know you want to do this, and we'll set up new lists for you to use so that they don't interfere with your normal lists. When you are ready to make contacts your permanent source of information, let us know and we'll make the new file import into existing lists, so your users don't need to learn a new location for their messaging needs.

Why stay with the legacy phone/email fields?
The migration of the data from your old fields to the new contacts piece has been less than ideal. Most districts choose to spend a large amount of time fixing the errors created during the automatic migration before having BrightArrow use the new tool. Many districts have maintained custom phone/email contacts, although these are not automatically migrated to the new contacts module. Therefore, many schools hold off until they can migrate that data. Sticking with these fields is absolutely fine, and you should not feel pressure to move to contacts just for us.

I want to move to the new contacts module, what do you need from us?
Contacting us to let us know you are interested in moving will trigger an update to your plugins. The main piece of data we need from you are your business rules for which contacts to pull. Many schools think they want all contacts and then decide that's too much. Let us know which ones you want, and we'll take it from there. Just a few examples of what you might want are:
•All contacts of a certain relationship (mothers, fathers, etc.)
•All contacts that live with the student
•All contacts that live with the student or have custody of the student
•All contacts that live with the student for informational messages, but all marked as emergency for emergency calls.

You decide the rules, we make it happen.

What if I don't like it, can I go back?
Yes. Just let us know and we'll move you back to your old imports and walk you through re-enabling your old exports.