

Family Quick-Start Guide to Canvas

FIRST! PowerSchool is still active. You can continue to view your student’s schedule, attendance, lunch account balance, academic progress, and course grades using PowerSchool just as before. Student work in Canvas will be reported in PowerSchool during a nightly sync operation. If you are confident that your student can do their work independently in Canvas, you may choose not to gain access to that program at all. It is your choice based on your comfort level.

That said, below are the “quick-start” instructions for gaining “Observer” access to Canvas. In Canvas, parents and guardians are called “Observers”. This is different from the Student role in the system.

How to Get Observer Access

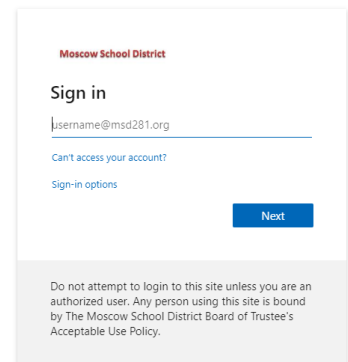
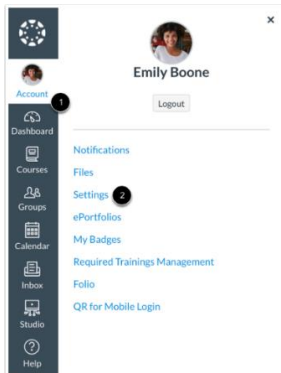
Instructions for Your Student:

Using a web browser, log in to Canvas at <https://msd281.instructure.com>. Use your Network username, (full email address) and password.

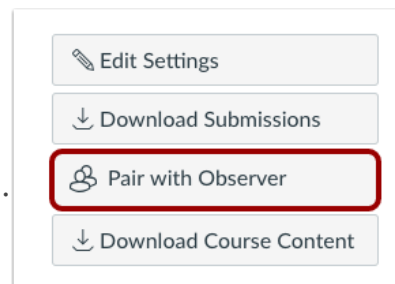
- Student Username will look like this: abc123@msd281.org
- Student Password will look like this: [msdXyz456](#)

1. Click “Account”.

2. Click “Settings”

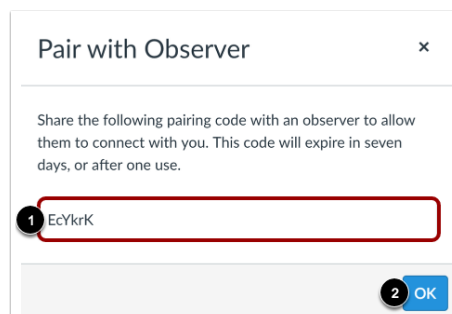


3. Next, click the **Pair with Observer** button.



Note: If the Pair with Observer button doesn't display in your User Settings, please contact your school for assistance with pairing with an observer.

4. Copy or write down the six-digit alphanumeric pairing code that appears [1].



5. Give this code to the Observer (parent/guardian) who will link to your account. The pairing code will expire after seven days or its first use. Pairing codes are case sensitive.

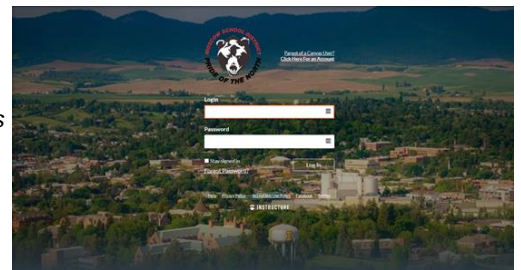
6. To close the window, click the **OK** button [2].

Instructions for Observers (parents/guardians):

1. Using your DESKTOP or LAPTOP computer internet browser, go to our District Observers Canvas site:

<https://msd281.instructure.com/login/canvas>

Note: a mobile phone app is available but not currently active for Observers



2. Click on “Parent of a Canvas User? Click Here for an Account” in upper right of screen.

3. Complete the form. Enter the “student paring code” provided to you from your student.

Parent Signup ×

Your Name

Your Email

Password

Re-enter Password

Student Pairing Code [What is a pairing code?](#)

[View Privacy Policy](#)

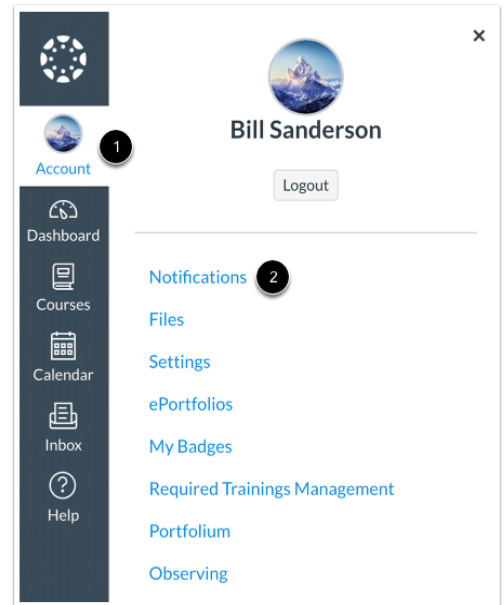
If you are a District employee with a Teacher role in Canvas and you have a student in our schools, please use your personal email address to create an Observer role. If not, conflicts may occur with your Teacher account.

Observer/Parent First Time Set Up

Notifications: It is essential that you personalize your notification settings. We strongly recommend you limit your notifications to a weekly summary email of your student's progress in their classes.

You will create more stress in your life and the life of your student if you are constantly receiving emails/texts about every class, assignment, and grade.

1. Log in to Canvas using your NEW username and password.
2. Click the **Account** link [1], then click the **Notifications** link [2].



3. Set **Notification Preferences**

This is best!

Notification Preferences

Notify me right away Send daily summary Send weekly summary Do not send me anything

Show name of observed students in notifications.

Course Activities	Email Address bill.sanderson.canvas@gmail.com	Email Address canvasobserver.canvas@gmail.com
Due Date	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Grading Policies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Course Content	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Files	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Announcement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Announcement Created By You	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Grading	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

- ❖ You can select to view an observed student's name in a notification. Select the **Show name of observed students in notifications** checkbox [1]. Currently only grade update notifications include observed student names.
- ❖ Each notification is set to a default preference. To change a notification for a contact method, locate the notification and click the icon for your preferred delivery type.
- ❖ To receive a notification right away, click the **check mark** icon [1]. *These notifications may be delayed by up to one hour in case an instructor makes additional changes, which prevents you from being spammed by multiple notifications in a short amount of time.*
- ❖ To receive a daily notification, click the **clock** icon [2].

- ❖ To receive a weekly notification, click the **calendar** icon [3]. The date and time of your weekly notifications are posted at the bottom of the notifications page.
- ❖ If you do not want to receive a notification, click the **remove** icon [4].

Notes:

- Each set notification preference will automatically apply to all of your students' courses/classes. They cannot be set individually.
- Twitter and SMS (Text message) notification preferences do not support daily summary or weekly summary options.
- Unregistered contact methods will appear in notification preferences but will not receive notifications until you confirm the registration.

Other Considerations

Observer/Parent Roles

Observers/Parents can view course data but cannot participate in all Canvas areas. The observer's role is to link authorized family members to their student(s). Observers can be linked to one or more students and view the data in their courses. Observers cannot submit work on behalf of the students they observe, but they can see student grades, assignments and events, and course interactions.

Observers Can:	Observers Cannot:
View the dashboard	Comment on announcements or discussions
View and read announcements	Submit assignments or quizzes
View the calendar	Join groups
View modules and see due dates and point values	Reserve appointment slots in the Scheduler
View grades, view assignment due dates and comments, and print grades	
View and read discussions	
View syllabus	
Use personal inbox	

Need Help?

- For **login or account access problems**, please contact Jennifer Lynn at lynnj@msd281.org
- For questions about **viewing student information**, please contact Alex Greig at greiga@msd281.org

More Resources:

- [Canvas LMS for Parents Video](#)
- [10 Tips for Observers](#)
- [Parent Pointers for Canvas Part 1](#)
- [Parent Pointers for Canvas Part 2](#)
- [Canvas Overview for Observers](#)
- ["How-To Guides"](#)