College Bound Portal

Frequently Asked Questions
for Portal Users
2025-26

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COLLEGE BOUND PORTAL

1. What is the Toolbox?

The Toolbox is housed within the WSAC secure portal. The Toolbox displays live data and shows which students are enrolled in College Bound. You can also update student contact information in the Toolbox.
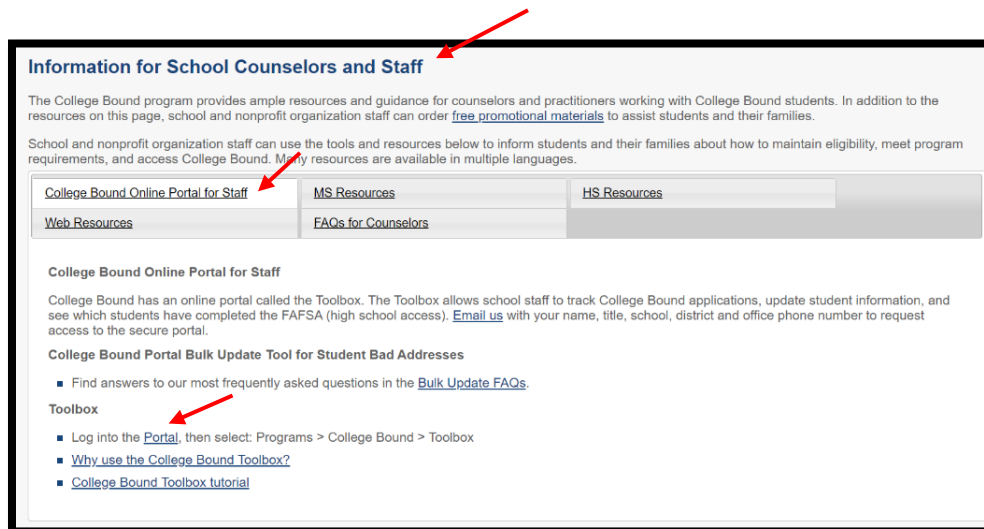
2. How can I access the College Bound Portal?

- You will need a Portal account.
  - ○ Any school or district staff can request access by emailing College Bound at collegebound@wsac.wa.gov with their name, title, school, district, and office phone number.
  - ○ Non-profit organization staff can also request access; however, the process varies. Please email the College Bound program staff for more information.

  Scroll down to the section *Information for School Counselors and Staff* on the College Bound webpage to access our secure online Portal.
  - ○ Access and additional Portal resources are found under the *College Bound Online Portal for Staff* tab.

  Tip: We recommend bookmarking the College Bound webpage and the Portal login page, portal.wsac.wa.gov/.

3. How do I change my Portal password?

Click the grey text *Forgot your password?* link above the blue Login button on the Portal login page.
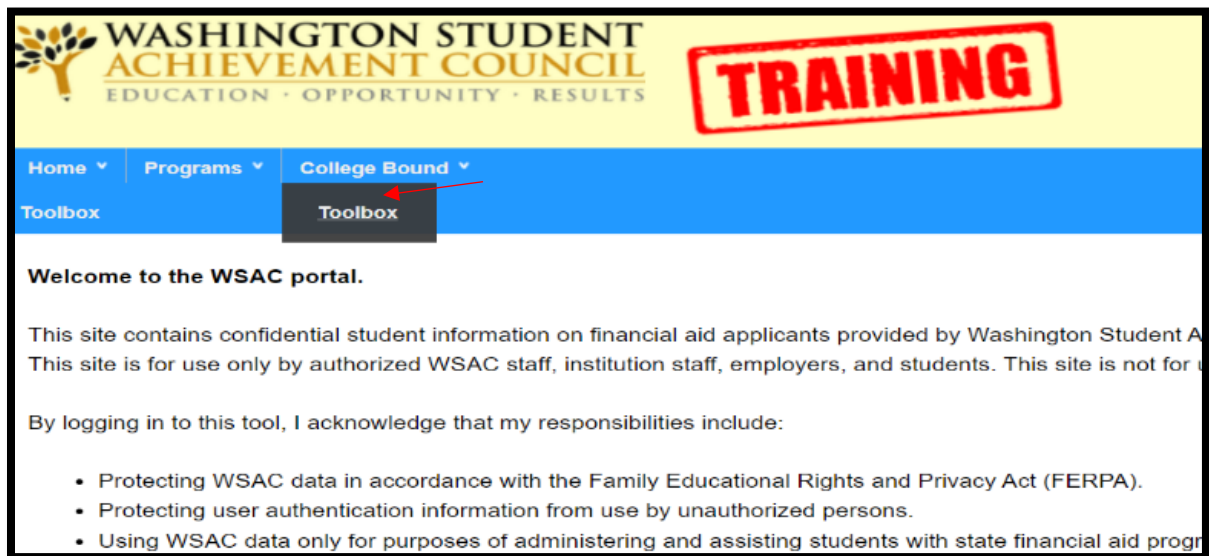
STUDENT LIST
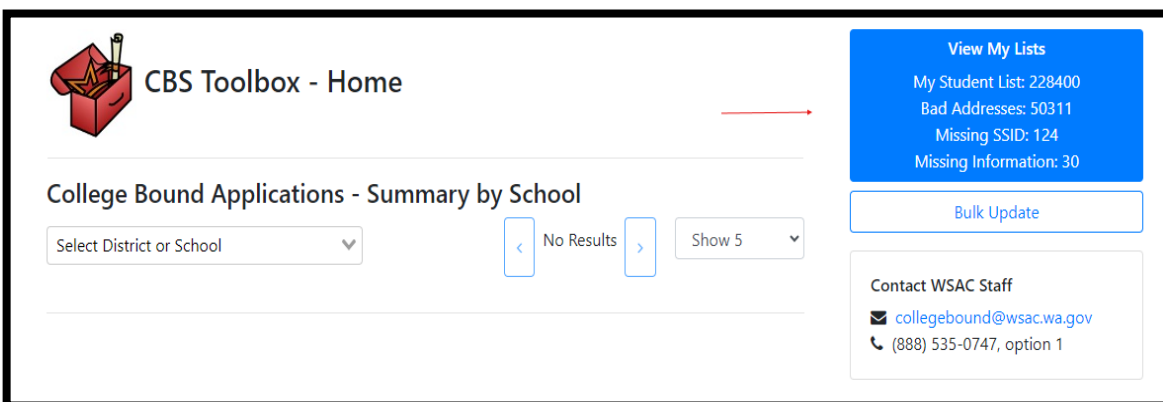
4. How do I access my student list?

- Log in to the College Bound Portal and select College Bound under Programs.

- Under More, click on Toolbox.
- Click View My Lists on the right side of the screen.

Access the Toolbox in the College Bound portal.

You've reached the Toolbox's homepage. Click on *View My Lists* on the upper right.


5. Why can't I find an eligible student on my Student List?

- If a student is enrolled in two schools (dual-credit, alternative schools, or online programs), they may have the other school listed as the primary school.
- If a student has recently enrolled in your school, we might not have their updated enrollment information from OSPI yet. In the Portal, a student can only have one school listed.
  - New school year enrollment information is not received until November. New data is then received monthly throughout the school year.
- It is possible the student did not complete the correct paperwork to be auto-enrolled.

Portal users can use the *Student Lookup* feature in the College Bound Toolbox to confirm the College Bound enrollment of a student who isn't on their Student List.

- You can access this feature from the Toolbox homepage.
  - Place your cursor on the drop-down arrow of the *Pages* tab and click *Student Lookup*. You can search for the student(s) by entering their first/last name or birth date.

- If there are more than ten possible results, our system won't show any. Make sure to enter enough information to narrow down your search.
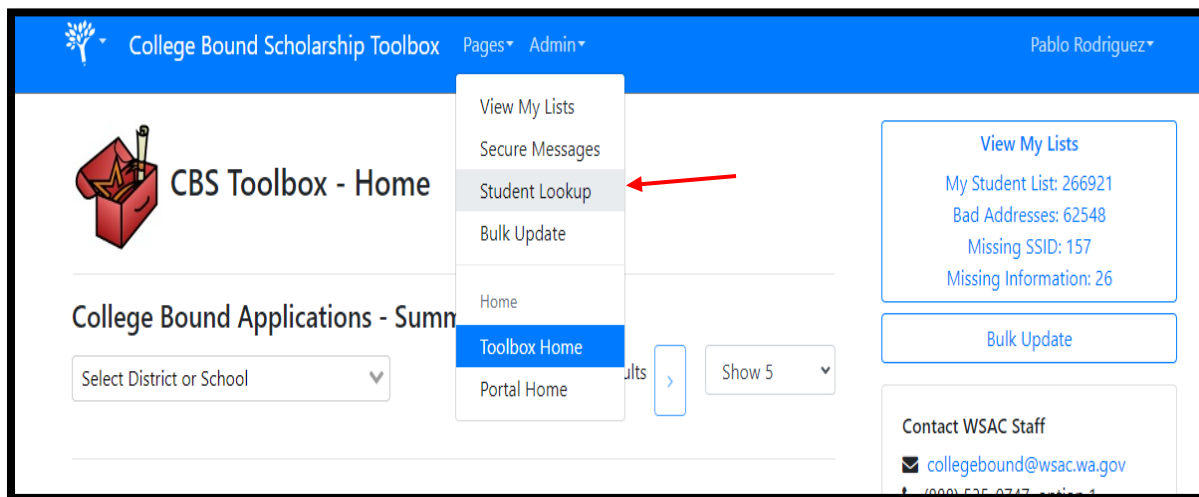
Note: It's best to omit their current school from the search parameters because enrollment information may not be updated in our system yet.

6. Can you remove a student no longer enrolled at my school?

No. We receive student enrollment information from OSPI. The student(s) will move to the correct school list once their new school reports their enrollment to OSPI and we receive the updated data. These changes may take time to update, but being on the incorrect list will not affect a student's ability to access their funds.

Tip: Connect with your CEDARS, registrar, or school data personnel to ensure the needed exit information is entered into the system. This will also help remove students from your list. If you're unsure who the CEDARS administrator is for your school/district, here is the OSPI CEDARS District Administrator list.

7. Why don't students who are still in high school after their expected graduation date appear on my Student List?

The Toolbox does not include students with previous expected graduation years, nor will they be searchable in the *Student Lookup* feature. They will be added once OSPI sends WSAC the data with the updated graduation year. Connect with your CEDARS administrator to update the students expected graduation year. Students are not penalized for graduating after their expected graduation year and may receive funding if all eligibility requirements are met.

We recommend students sign up for OtterBot while waiting for the updates in the portal. This free texting service designed for high school students is a great source of information about financial aid, college planning, reminders, and overall program updates. Students can subscribe by filling out this contact form.

8. How can I remove duplicate applications?

Email the College Bound program with the student's full name and birthdate at collegebound@wsac.wa.gov. If your email includes additional student Personal Identifiable Information (PII), we ask that you contact us using the Secure Message feature in the Toolbox. **(More information can be found on Question 22)**

BAD ADDRESS LIST GUIDANCE

9. How can I see which students have a Bad Address?

After going to the Toolbox, filter the applicable data set to access the list of students on your Bad Address list.

10. Why are there students on my Bad Address List? (What does this mean?)

Students may be on this list if no address is listed for that College Bound record or if the post office returned correspondence from a College Bound mailing to us as *undeliverable*.

The auto-enrollment data sent to OSPI from CEDARS does NOT include student contact information; thus, the data we receive for auto-enrolled College Bound students from OSPI also does NOT include contact information. We ask portal users to update this information periodically to be sure students receive correspondence from WSAC.

Once the updated information is entered, students will be removed from your Bad Address List. These students will likely have a current address on their school data system, so we're asking school staff to enter this information since they can access it.

11. What if my students show the correct mailing address on the Bad Address List?

We recommend the following steps to confirm a student's current information:

- Make sure the address in the portal is the mailing address. The mailing address might be a P.O. Box number.
- Clear all address fields and click *Save*. Then, re-enter the information and click *Save* for the second time.
    - Addresses with apartment and suite numbers should be separated into their respective fields.
    - This triggers our system to recognize the full address, which should remove the student(s) from your list.

- Verify the current information with the student, their family, and/or your school's student records.
  - If the current address is correct, follow the steps in number 2.
  - Insert a period after every abbreviated word in the address. For example, if *Street* is shortened to *St*, change it to *St.* and then click *Save*.

If students still appear on your list after completing all the steps, contact College Bound using the Secure Messages system in the portal. We recommend using this feature when sending students' personally identifiable information (PII), as regular email is not secure. For info on how to navigate the *Secure Messages* feature, **please review Question 23.**

THE BULK UPDATE TOOL

12. How do I remove students from my Bad Address List?

By correcting or adding students' mailing addresses. This can be done in the College Bound Toolbox. Updates can be made using the Bulk Update Tool in the Toolbox or individually in each student's College Bound application. Using the Bulk Update Tool: (You can also access instructions in the portal. See Question 13 for more information.)

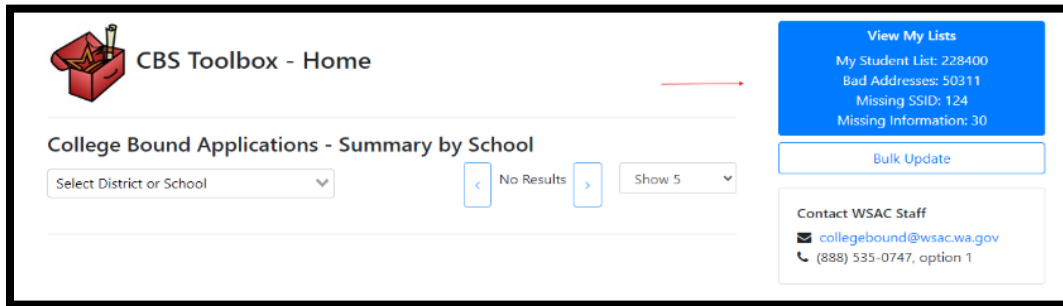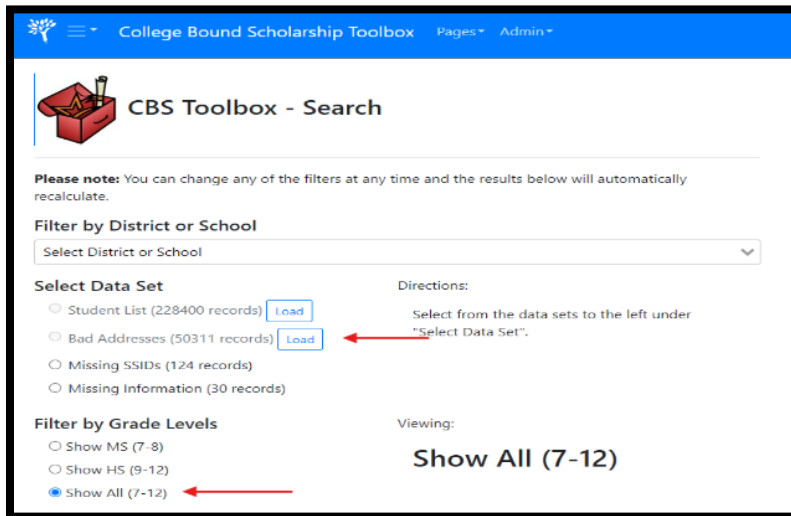**Step 1:** Land on the Toolbox's homepage and click on *Bulk Update*.
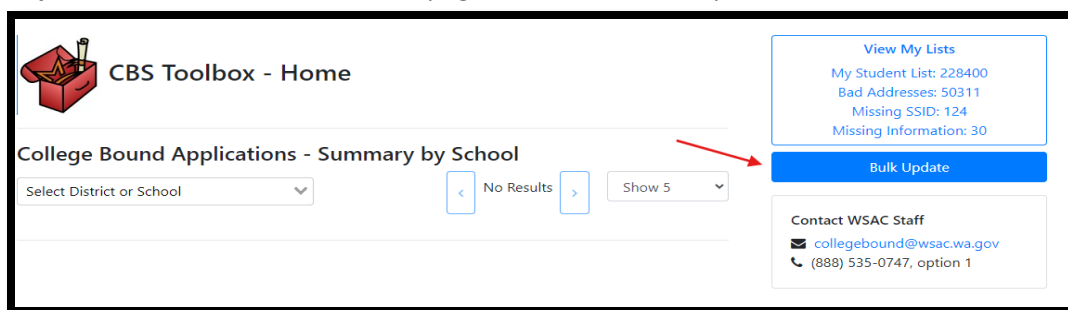
Optional: You can download our fillable spreadsheet by clicking on the hyperlinked word *here*. This fillable spreadsheet is one of two files (more on this later) where information can be entered and uploaded.
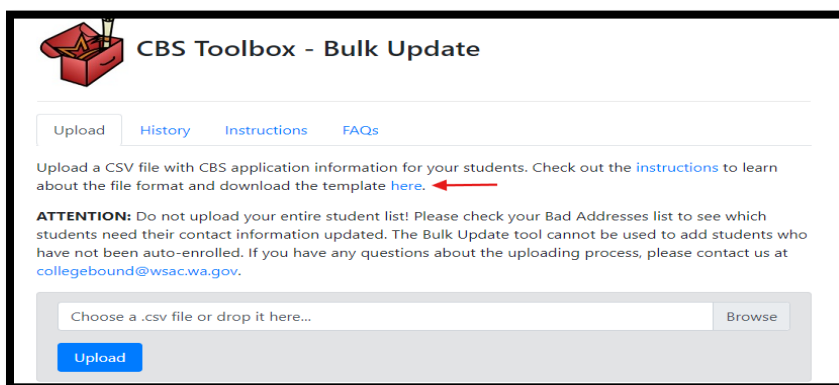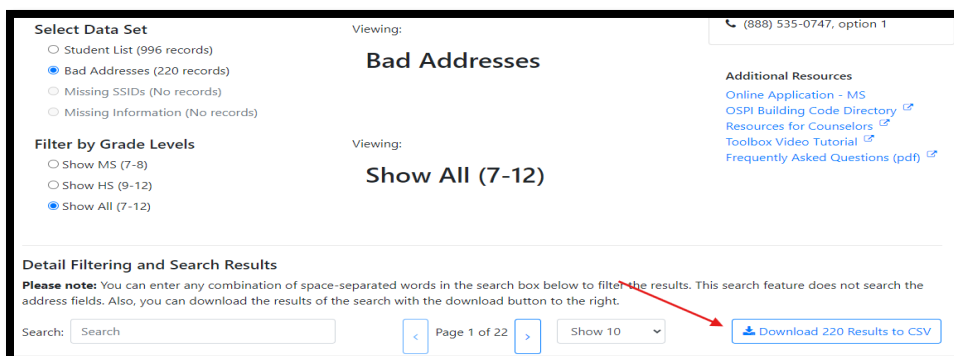

Save this download on your computer in a location that is convenient for you.

Step 2: Click on *View My Lists* and filter the data set to show all your students on your Bad Address List.
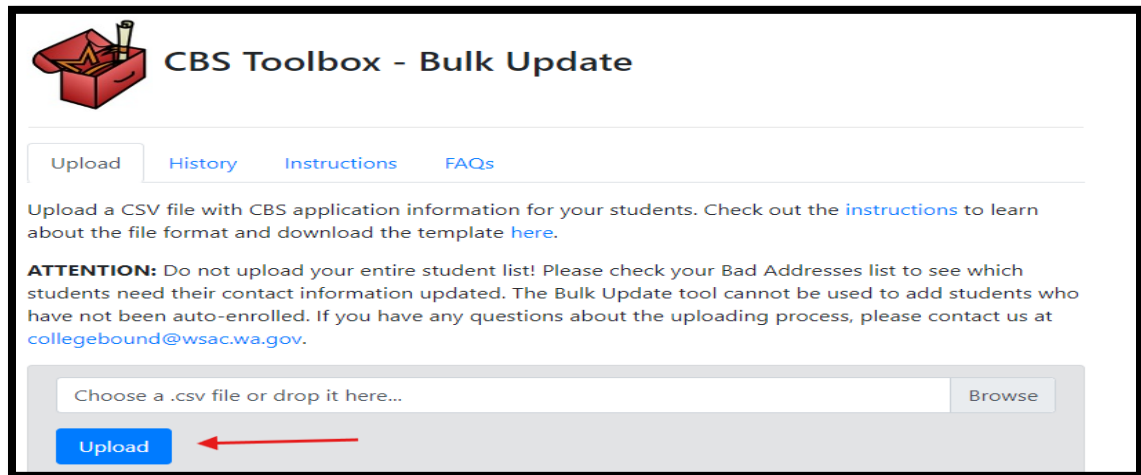

Step 3: Click *Download Results to CSV* to access your list of students
Note: This is the second sheet you've downloaded, but it is the only one with data. Once information is entered with the correct formatting instructions **(more information on Question 13, either list can be uploaded.**

Step 4: Enter the information on either spreadsheet and upload your file. You will upload the file in the Toolbox's homepage by clicking *Upload*.

Note: When working in the spreadsheet, do not shift any cells and follow the format instructions.

Updating individually in each student's CB application:
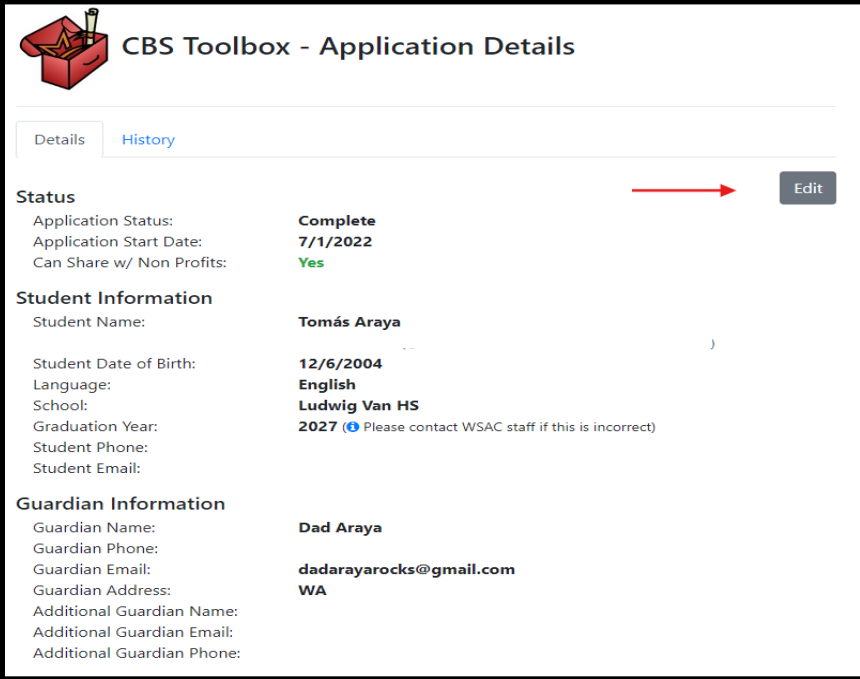Click *View* under *View Details*. **The image below is displaying demo student data.**

Click *Edit* inside the students' applications to start making changes. Save your changes to finalize them. **The image below is displaying demo data.**

13. Where can I view the template instructions?

Click on *Bulk Update* from the Toolbox's homepage. You will see four tabs: *Upload*, *History*, *Instructions*, and *FAQs*. The template instructions are on the third tab. Full formatting instructions with examples and a Yes or No field indicate whether that information is required. **Note: Columns listing *No* under *Required* cannot be deleted. The information isn't required, but the columns are.**

14. Can I leave everything blank and only upload students' addresses?

If Columns A, B, C, E, F, G, J, and L have information entered for their columns, everything else can be blank. This is highlighted in the *Instructions* tab, where you will see either *Yes* or *No* under *Required*.
Note: The cells for columns with *No* under Required can be left empty, but those columns cannot be deleted. The information isn't required, but the columns are.

15. Why are address fields not required when I have a list of Bad Addresses?

The Bulk Update Tool isn't specific to mailing addresses and can be used to update any form of student information in bulk.
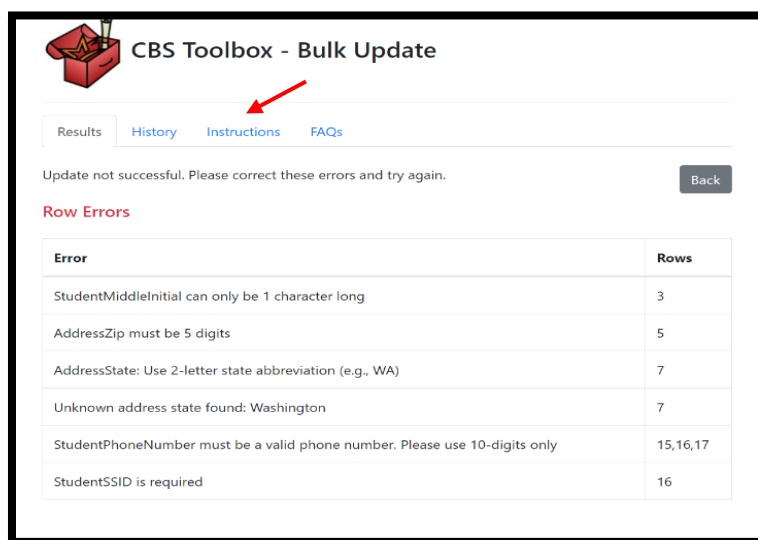For example, if you want to sign students up for [OtterBot](#), and they have an up-to-date mailing address, you can save time by just adding the student's cell phone number.
Some students don't have an address, and others have indicated they do not want to share that information. The tool can assist when providing other forms of communication for those students.

16. What do the errors mean?

This means the data entered in your CSV file was entered in the incorrect format, there are additional columns in your file, or columns were removed. You will need to make the corrections and re-upload your template. The Toolbox will not update students whose information was formatted incorrectly.
The error message will show you the errors. The Rows indicate the row number in the uploaded file with the specific error. The *Instructions* tab can be accessed through this page.

17. SSIDs are not shown in the CB Toolbox so why do we need these for the bulk update?

It is true that SSIDs are not shown in the CB Toolbox and yet are required as an essential piece for a student to be included in the bulk update. This is because SSIDs are the most accurate unique identifier available to WSAC from OSPI, but they are also listed as a confidential data element. We have worked with schools and districts to develop a variety of ways to link students to the SSID so they can do bulk updates.

Here are the two most common:
1) Student name and date of birth can be pulled from the student list and combined to create a unique identifier. From there, a district or school can cross-check their Student Information System (SIS) to get the SSID and then use that for the bulk update tool. (See question 20 for more info about your school's SIS).
2) All students from a school can be added into the bulk update tool and only the ones with matching CB applications will be imported into the system. No others will be uploaded or have their data transmitted into the CB Toolbox. This data will remain encrypted and will not result in a bulk update file fail.

STUDENT AND SCHOOL INFORMATION

18. What should I do if I only have access to students' names and not their contact info?
There are two ways you may be able to access that information.
- Using your school's Student Information System (SIS),
  - The SIS system can collect school-wide data that include their mailing address and guardian information.
- Reaching out to your school's district office

19. Where can I access my school's Student Information System (SIS)?
This varies by school. One way to start would be to reach out to someone with access to it. Typically, this would be someone in your registrar's office or with IT.

20. Where do I find the OSPI building code, and why do we use it?
The OSPI building code list is in the Education Directory on OSPI's website. This link can also be found as an *Additional* Resource in the Toolbox, titled OSPI Building Code Directory. Building codes are used because there may be multiple schools with the same name. For example, *St. Patrick Jr./Sr. High School* and *Saint Patrick Junior Senior High School* can easily be misidentified.

21. Is entering student or parent/guardian information without family consent a violation of FERPA? How do we document permission?
*FERPA permits a school to disclose PII from a student's education records, without consent, when such information has been appropriately designated as **directory information** and the parent has not opted out of the disclosure of such designated information. The FERPA regulations define directory information as information in a student's education record that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Directory information may include information such as the student's name, address, telephone number, email address…* **Source:** US Dept of Education (p.4) A Parent Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

## 22. What are the common uses of the *Secure Messages* feature?
This feature allows Portal users to communicate with WSAC about specific students' College Bound records, Student Lists, or Bad Address Lists. When you need to share personally identifiable student information (PII), this tool will protect student data. You can add attachments to Secure Messages. This is helpful you have questions about errors in your bulk update.

23. How do you send a *Secure Message*?

To send a secure message, you must be in the College Bound Toolbox. From the Toolbox's homepage, click on *Pages*. Then, click on *Secure Messages*.
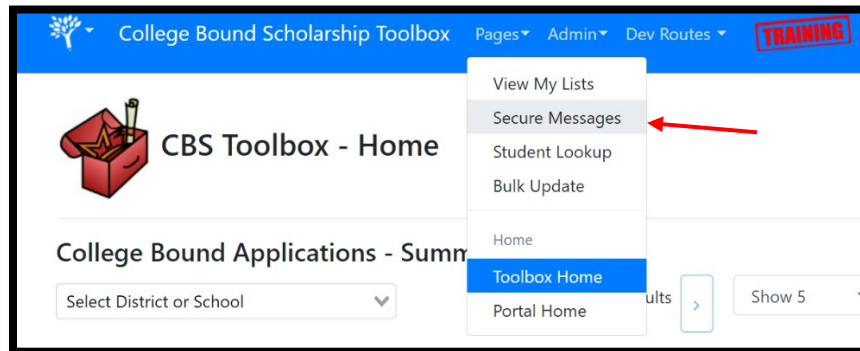
Click on the hyperlink: *Create a new secure message to WSAC*.
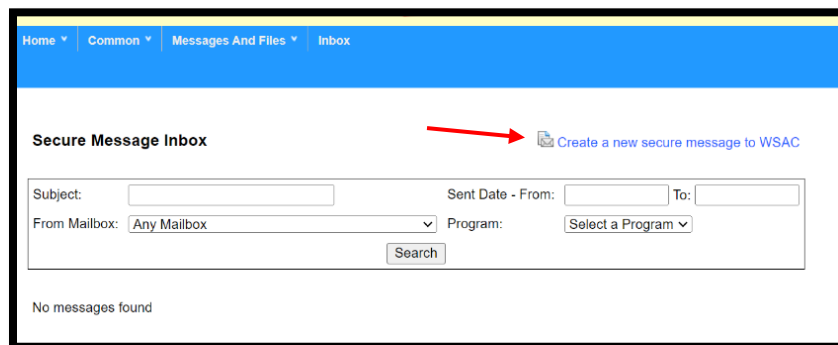
Be sure to set the *To* field to *College Bound Scholars*. To include an attachment, click *Choose File* and *Attach*. Once the message is complete and the file(s) is/are attached, click *Send Message*.