



Standard 2: Communicating Effectively



Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way meaningful communication about student learning.

Ideas for Implementation

1. Use all types of communication channels to connect with or inform parents. Scaffold communication approaches for various groups of targeted parents based on preferences and what works. Go beyond traditional means of communication by not just doing it one way, but every way! Place notes on the school marquee, create public service announcements, send emails or text messages, use the call system, hang posters, send personalized notes or invitations, and place phone calls. Make communications accessible by taping meetings and allowing parents to access a condensed version on the website or check out a DVD.
2. Ensure parents are considered partners by including a two – way communication mechanism on all home and school contacts. Incorporate a question and answer section in the school and classroom newsletter, or ask for parent feedback by using social media to display a question of the week and encourage parent responses through facebook, twitter, or the school website.
3. Provide and publicize the hours for when the principal, teachers, and staff are available for parent visits or phone calls. Develop procedures for school and parent contacts to ensure that both parties know the manner in which to initiate, respond, and follow up. It would be a good practice for teachers to log their communications with parents and set goals of reaching out to a certain amount of families each month.
4. Take time to engage in positive communications with families. For many parents, the only time they hear from the school is when something is wrong. Reach out at the beginning of the year to establish positive contact with every family at the school. Send positive notes, emails, or place phone calls home. Establish an easy system for teachers to regularly report student achievements.
5. Take time to be responsive to parent feedback. The two-way communication process is only meaningful to parents if they know their opinions or contributions matter. Make it a point to highlight solutions or improvements made based on parent feedback.

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6. Ensure communications are understandable to all parents. Develop flyers, letters, emails, newsletters, and websites using family – friendly language. If legal language is required, attach a cheat sheet or flyer that breaks the message down into easy to understand information. When possible, provide communications in other languages representative of your school community.
7. Develop a communication plan that keeps parents informed of their child’s academic progress and development beyond parent – teacher conferences and report cards. Send home notices about what students are learning each week or month. Make grades and teacher feedback easily available.
8. Show respect through your communications with parents. First impressions are everything so be mindful that your conversation with a parent will set the tone for the entire school year. Be respectful and think about the little things. For example, if you call yourself Mrs. Smith, then address your student’s parent in the same manner and not just by their first name. Remember to speak in family – friendly terms.

Reference:

National Parent Teacher Association (PTA). (2009). *PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: An Implementation Guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.pta.org/2757.asp>

Your Ideas for Implementation
