Strengthening Communication with Diverse Families to Foster Student Learning

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COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES BENEFITS SCHOOLS & FAMILIES

Communication with Families can make or break school-family ties
- School-family ties impact student participation which impacts student attendance, attitude and behavior
- Student participation impacts classroom instruction

Communication with families can empower or handicap families
- Empowered families can make decisions for their children and the school
- Empowered families can further support learning outside of school

REALIZE YOUR COMMUNICATION ROLES

Teachers should be to families as Public Servants should be to Constituents
- Be transparent
- Focus on key issues

Teachers and families should act as partners as Olympic Coaches and Families should act as Partners
- Focus on common goal
- Coach has expertise

Teachers should communicate about learning as doctors should communicate about health
- Make the technical understandable
- Recommendations follow explanations

Teacher-Family Communication should celebrate student learning as a wedding toast should celebrate the happy couple
- Tell a story
- Be polished, yet familiar

*Communication roles are about the relationships!*

INVITE ONGOING COMMUNICATION

- The Framework for Teaching Component 4C – Communicating with Families

*FREQUENTLY

REGULARLY

TIMELY

RARELY

SOMETIMES

DOES NOT

IS NOT TIMELY*
INTEGRATE COMMUNICATION INTO TEACHING & LEARNING

Focus on Learning Processes
  MORE focused on learning processes
  LESS listing of curricular topics

Equity is in the processes
  - Uncovering the skills, strategies, and learning processes that matter can empower culturally and linguistically diverse families and equip them to make decisions for their children in school.

Tell student stories
  - MORE personal tone focused on students
  - LESS general descriptions and commands

Equity is in the tone
  - Families are rightly focused on the learning and development of their own children. Sharing student stories from the classroom may lead to families sharing stories from home.

DESIGN INTENTIONAL COMMUNICATION

Make it RESPONSIVE, ENGAGING, CLEAR, & MEANINGFUL
  - MORE showing through images or student work
  - LESS telling through text

  - MORE intentional simplified language
  - LESS complicated language and jargon

Equity is in the design
BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Practical


Research


Communication


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Teacher's Communication</strong></th>
<th><strong>Appropriate</strong></th>
<th><strong>Unsatisfactory</strong></th>
<th><strong>Basic</strong></th>
<th><strong>Distinguished</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Families' concerns and solutions that address teacher's communication needs are not conveyed in a culturally appropriate manner.</td>
<td>Teacher rarely or does not communicate with families to inform them of class activities, to convey information about an individual student's progress, and to solicit the family's support in relationship to grade level expectations.</td>
<td>Teacher initiates communication regularly with families in a two-way interactive manner via phone, email, newsletters, notes, letters, and/or in person to discuss class activities and individual student's progress, soliciting the family's support in relationship to grade level expectations.</td>
<td>Teacher and students frequently communicate with families to convey information about an individual student's progress and to solicit and utilize the family's support in relationship to grade level expectations.</td>
<td>Teacher provides resources and solutions that address family concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement of Families &amp; Guardians as Partners in the Instructional Program</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher does not engage families in the instructional program.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher engages families in the instructional program only for attendance at activities or events.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher meaningfully engages families as partners in the instructional program through classroom volunteering, working at home with their child, involvement in class projects in and out of school, and parent workshops and training.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher meaningfully and successfully engages families as partners in the instructional program through classroom volunteering, working at home with their child, involvement in class and school projects in and out of school, and parent workshops and training.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response to Families' Concerns</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher does not respond to family's concerns either professionally or in a timely manner.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher sometimes responds to family's concerns in a professional and/or timely manner.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher responds to family's concerns professionally and in a timely manner.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher responds to families' concerns is handled professionally and in a timely manner.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Appropriateness</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher's communication with families is not conveyed in a culturally appropriate manner.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher's communication with families is not always appropriate to the cultural norms of students' families.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher's communication with families is appropriate to the cultural norms and needs of the students' families.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher's communication with families is sensitive to cultural norms and needs, with students contributing to the communication as appropriate.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School-Family Communication Generator

### Step 1. Select a subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Step 2. Select a learning process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>PRACTICE</th>
<th>SKILL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Step 3. Select a role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC SERVANT</th>
<th>COACH</th>
<th>DOCTOR</th>
<th>WEDDING TOAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Step 4. Select a communication purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum &amp; Instruction</th>
<th>Student Progress</th>
<th>Family Learning Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Step 5. Name your story elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Learning Verb</th>
<th>How? When? or Where?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Step 6. Select a family feedback element

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro-Survey</th>
<th>Simple Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## 3-Minute Design

1 Title

1 Text Element*

2 graphic elements**

1 Family Feedback Element

*15 words or less **e.g., photograph, graphic organizer, student work

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JM Vasquez

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# School-Family Communication Generator

**Step 1. Select a subject.**

**Step 2. Select a learning process.**

**Step 3. Select a role.**

**Step 4. Select a communication purpose.**

**Step 5. Name your story elements.**

<table>
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<th>Who</th>
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</tr>
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</table>

**Step 6. Select a family feedback element.**