Teacher communicating with colleagues and administrators

Tips, Guidelines & Forms

Effective teacher to teacher communication is vitally important to your success as a teacher. Too often, beginning teachers isolate themselves from their colleagues and administrators. A key to continued success in teaching is communicating with other faculty and staff.

BY: Dr. Nesreen Al Homaid
Curriculum and Instruction Dept.
PNU
Teacher communicating with colleagues and administrators

Too often, beginning teachers isolate themselves from their colleagues and administrators. A key to continued success in teaching is communicating with other faculty and staff. The administration and staff can provide you with feedback and ideas to aid you in continued success.

Use the checklist below to help with this.

- Whenever you send a newsletter to parents, send one to your principal, also.
- Share your class calendar and newsletters by posting them on a bulletin board in the teachers' workroom. It really helps to know what other teachers in the building are doing.
- Schedule appointments to meet with your principal, if he/she does not meet with you regularly. Write up a mini-agenda for your meetings so that they can be productive.
- Let your principal know what you are teaching and about student success. When the administration knows what you are doing, they are in a better position to provide help and supplies.
- Keep a portfolio of your work. Include best lesson plans, samples of student assignments, pictures of bulletin boards, and agendas from conferences you attend. Share this portfolio with your administrators to help them understand your hard work.
- Find out early in the school year when you will be evaluated and how. If the principal uses a checklist evaluation, you should be able to see the criteria on the checklist before the evaluation. After an evaluation your administrator should schedule a conference to share the results with you.
- Congratulate the principal and colleagues when they are successful. Educators must support each other in word and deed because that's what real professionals do.

Adapted from "Bright Ideas: A Pocket Mentor for Beginning Teachers" by Mary C. Clement and published by the National Education Association.
Teacher to Teacher Communication

Tips for Effective Teacher to Teacher Communication

Effective teacher to teacher communication is vitally important to your success as a teacher. Education is a very difficult concept for those outside the field to understand. Having peers that you can collaborate with and lean on during tough times is essential. If you find yourself in isolation and/or always having conflict with your peers then there is a good chance that you may need to make some changes yourself.

Seven things to avoid when trying to build positive relationships with faculty and staff members at school:

1. Do not talk about or discuss your co-workers with your students.
2. Do not talk about or discuss your co-workers with a parent.
3. Do not talk about or discuss your co-worker with other co-workers.
4. Do not isolate yourself on a regular basis.
5. Avoid being confrontational or combative.
6. Avoid starting, spreading, or discussing gossip and hearsay about parents, students, and/or co-workers.
7. Avoid being critical of your co-workers.

Eleven things to keep in mind when trying to build positive relationships with faculty and staff members at school:

1. **Be an encourager and show kindness and humility** -- Never let an opportunity to show kindness or encouragement to others pass you by. Praise good work, regardless of who did it. Sometimes you can turn even the most hardened of your fellow workers into real softies once they realize that you are not afraid to compliment them or give encouraging words, despite how they may perceive you ordinarily. At the same time, when giving criticism, do it helpfully and gently, never spitefully. Show concern for another's feelings and well being. You will benefit greatly from even the smallest kindness shown.

2. **Be happy** – Every day you go to work, you need to make a choice to be happy. Making a choice to be happy on a day to day basis will make people around you more comfortable on a day to day basis. Don’t dwell on negatives and stay positive.

3. **Refuse to engage in gossip or hearsay** -- Don’t allow gossip to rule your life. In the workplace, morale is vitally important. Gossip will tear apart a staff faster than anything else. Do not engage in it and nip it in the bud when it is presented to you.
4. **Let the water roll off your back** – Don’t let negative things said about you get under your skin. Know who you are and believe in yourself. Most people that talk negative about other people do so out of ignorance. Let your own actions determine how others see you, and they will not believe the negative things said.

5. **Collaborate with your peers** – Collaboration is vitally important among teachers. Don’t be afraid to offer constructive criticism and advice with a take it or leave it approach. Also of equal importance, don’t be afraid to ask questions or to ask for help in your classroom. Too many teachers think this is a weakness, when it is really a strength. Finally, great teachers share ideas with others. This profession is truly about what is best for the students. If you have a great idea that you know works well with students, then share it with those around you.

6. **Watch what you say to people** -- How you say something counts for just as much as what you say. Tone does matter. When confronted with a difficult situation, always say less than you think. Holding your tongue in a difficult situation will make it easier on yourself in the long run because it will create confidence among others in your ability to handle a similar situation.

7. **If you make a promise, you better be prepared to keep it** -- If you intend to make promises, you had better be prepared to keep them, no matter what the cost. You will lose respect of your peers quicker than it took you to gain it by breaking promises. When you tell someone that you intend to do something, it is your responsibility to see to it that you follow through.

8. **Learn about others’ outside interests** -- Find a common interest that you have with others (e.g. grandchildren, sports, movies, etc.) and spark a conversation. Having caring attitude will build trust and confidence in others. When others are joyful, rejoice with them; when troubled or in mourning, be sympathetic. Make sure everyone around you knows you value them and know that they are important.

9. **Be open-minded** – Don’t let yourself get into arguments. Discuss things with people rather than argue. Being combative or disagreeable is likely to put others off. If you don’t agree with something, think your response through and don’t be argumentative or judgmental in what you say.
10. **Understand that some people’s feelings are hurt easier than others** -- Humor can bring people together, but it can also tear people apart. Before you tease or joke with a person make sure you know how they are going to take it. Everyone is different in this aspect. Take into account another person’s feelings before you poke fun.

11. **Don’t worry about accolades** -- Do your best. It’s the best you can do. Let others see your work ethic, and you will be able to take pride and pleasure in a job well done.