



Parkrose School District

10636 NE Prescott Street
Portland Oregon 97220
t: 503.408.2100
f: 503.408.2140
www.parkrose.k12.or.us

Dr. Karen Fischer Gray,
Superintendent

National School Boards Conference

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Making Connections and Building Relationships:

Communication Skills for Smart School Boards

Ways School Boards Communicate-Relationship Building

- Depends on understanding by Superintendent and Board
- Depends on community's characteristics
- Depends on which functions serve best in your school community

Urge you to move from old perspectives

Direct correlation between student achievement and meaningful, direct and ongoing communication

Board's responsibilities-Implication

-hold responsible for communication, and engaging the community

-hire superintendent with strong communication skills

-hold high expectations of current superintendent for effective communication both internally and externally

- Establish open, honest lines between superintendent and board
- Establish a culture that is committed to effective 2 way communication across the district and community

Communication and Accountability

-Establish clear expectations and policies

-Develop comprehensive communication plan directly tied to the district's strategic goals and objectives

-Establish clear protocols for media relations (especially in a crisis)-tools and skills

The Parkrose School Community provides a premier education that unlocks the potential in each student.

-Designated spokesman

-Training for administration-has training and background in dealing with the media

Areas of communication accountability

-regularly assessing the effectiveness of district and school communication plan: measurable outcomes tied to district's goals and objectives

-recognizing school success-that all stakeholders have opportunities to engage with the district in meaningful ways that allow them to have a voice in the important decisions that affect students

(no lip service, nobody is listening, rubber stamp process)

Building relationships whereby people want to feel connected.

1. Make a commitment to the relationship
2. Determine expectations and create opportunities for shared decision-making
3. Explore community values and beliefs
4. Find common ground for taking action that leads to student achievement

People connect when: (be strategic)

-problem touches them at/on a personal level

-they feel that a possibility for change exists-they have to feel they can make a difference

-they feel there is something they can do personally, however small, to make a difference

People can become engaged

-when they have a connection

-have a chance to interact with others, offer input and participate in problem solving

-can take ownership of ideas

Key components of effective engagement

-active listening

-dialogue and deliberation



-collaboration

-shared responsibilities for outcomes



Where to start with Communication Planning

- Assessment is critical (determine gaps in programs)
- Provide date and information to make solid decisions about communications
- Tie communication goals to district strategic goals
- Lay out common objectives and strategies to achieve them
- Demonstrate communication is a priority
- Build a lesson plan on how to communicate

Identify and seek out opinion leaders (someone to know and trust)

-find the people with influence

-create database of these leaders

-build relationships

-regularly communicate with them (gather data)

Attach communication thinking to every decision

-Begins to make communication a routine part of what you do

-Gets people to think about community reactions while decision is being made

Create Key messages-

- Establish ideas and share them
- Incorporate key thoughts in everything you do



- Frame the discussion for your stakeholders
- Help them understand

Review your Crisis Communication Plan

- Be ready before the crisis occurs
- Update and train your staff regularly
- A plan is no good if no one knows how to use it
- You will be judged on your response to the crisis

1. Speak with a clear voice
2. Repeat what you want people to remember
3. Saying many things means we will usually remember nothing

Communicate from the inside-out both internal and external

-start with internal audience

-own staff can communicate with external audience

-leaving them out our loop will hurt your reputation (especially in orientation when staff first begins)

Cannot do it alone-

Everyone is responsible

Establish expectation

Insist on effective communication from all staff

Staff cannot be effective if they do not communicate well

Bad News-

Share it all at once, don't spread it out

Share steps to help people move past bad news

Sprinkle good news continuously

Ensure someone in charge-you cannot be NOT proactive



Build up a bank of goodwill

Train your people

Teach communication to build relationships

1st impressions

Understand communication is an aspect of their profession

Manage reputation

Stress stories about your district

Feed the Loop with stakeholders

Share information

Include building and district staff-secretaries are Critical

Notes from workshop

Alesia J. Reese

Parkrose Board of Education

