

Practical Communication Strategies to Create Stronger Family Relationships

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Madison County approves raises for teachers, staff but board says it'll create budget strain



TEACHING PROFESSION, OPINION

Stress, Hypervigilance, and Decision Fatigue: Teaching During Omicron

We can't just "self care" our way through this, writes a teacher.

Parent shares bullying story to school board

Blake Vickers bvickers@richmondregister.com Jul 18, 2022

Schools concerned about finding, creating the next generation of teachers

A look at how Kentucky schools are handling COVID and the upcoming year

U.S. Schools Close in Doves as Omicron Staff Shortages

- Students returning to class after break are rocked by Covid
- rates are higher than 20% in parts of the nation
- Positi

Madison County releases Return to School Plan

Ricki Pryor rpryor@richmondregister.com Aug 2, 2021

Parents' group planning walk-out over mask mandate in Beaver Creek Schools

by Bryn Caswell | Tuesday, September 7th 2021



NEWS

Tennessee school officials: No, we did not give litter boxes to students identifying as furries

NBC NEWS

Parents protest school mask mandate shouting 'will not comply' at board members

SHARE THIS

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STATES INTERACTIVE

Map: Where Critical Race Theory is Under Attack

Updated: January 26, 2022 5 min read

PUBLIC HEALTH
Latest COVID Surge Pushes Parents to Next-Level Stress

The new normal this winter is longer drives for kids' tests, multiday waits for results, drug-store restock alerts and social media tips

f t e

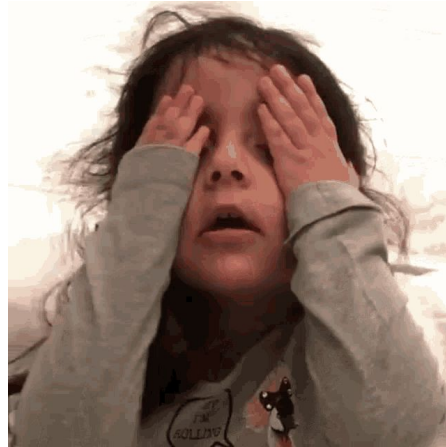


How are you feeling?!?

a.



b.



c.



Today's Goals

- Identify barriers to communication.
- Practice simplifying communications.
- Sort through information to include/information to leave out.
- Talk through some tips for improving your tone.
- Consider some ideas on how you can check home/school communications and work with your staff.



Today's Goals

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**“I was floating in a tunnel toward a very bright light
and then a voice told me I had to go back and
finish listening to the presentation.”**



There once was a little girl...

...who dreamed of being a television news reporter. With her **family** supporting her, she worked really hard, studied writing and journalism and....



she got to live out her dream!



One day, she interviewed a young man and...



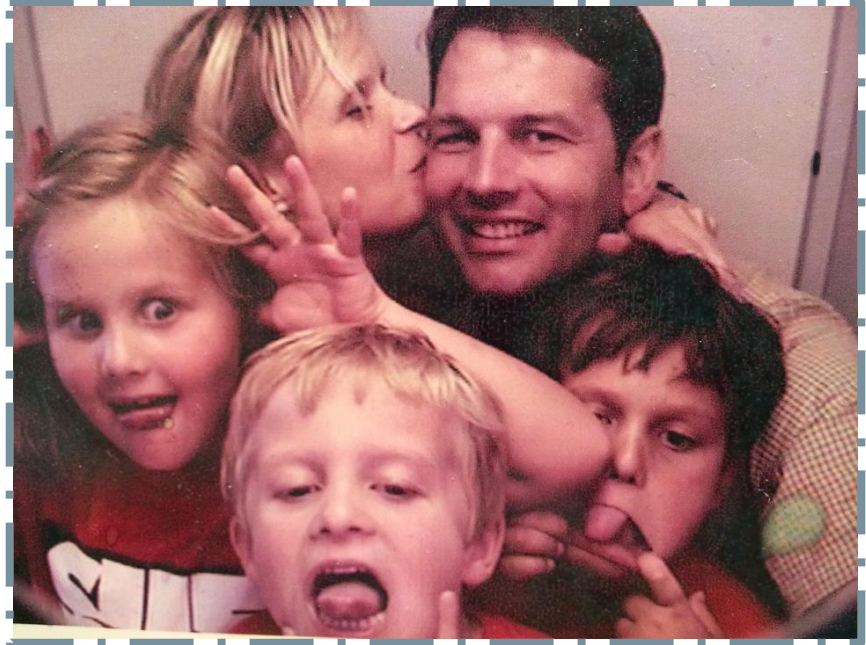
He was “the one.”

And she quickly found herself...



...with three children under the age of two.

Nevertheless...

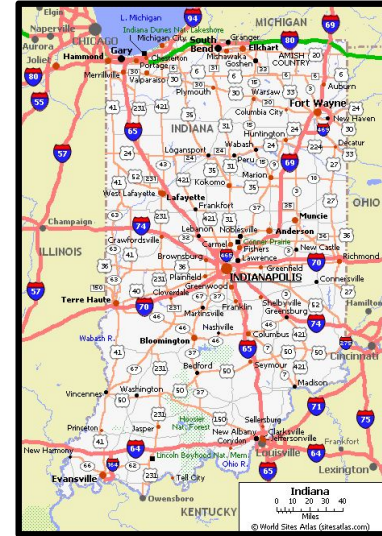


she decided to go back to work.

Helping other young girls and boys live out their dreams.



Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation
Bringing Learning to Life



One day....when she got home from work..

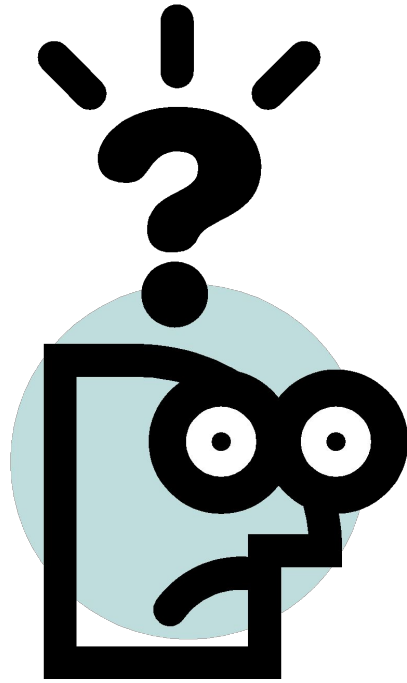


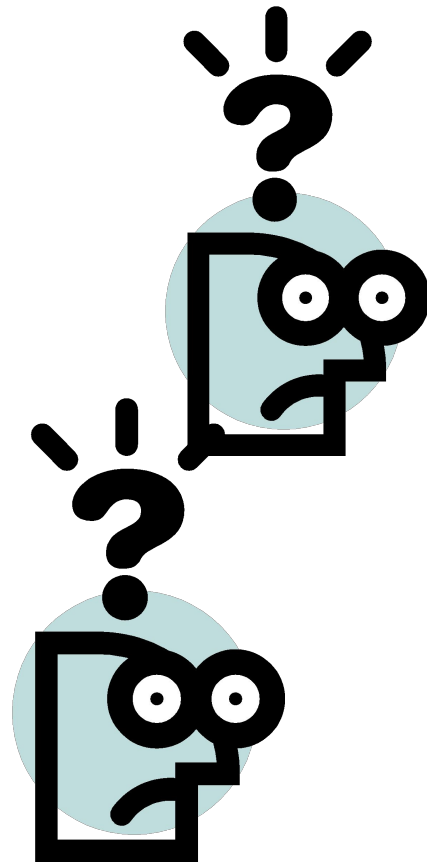
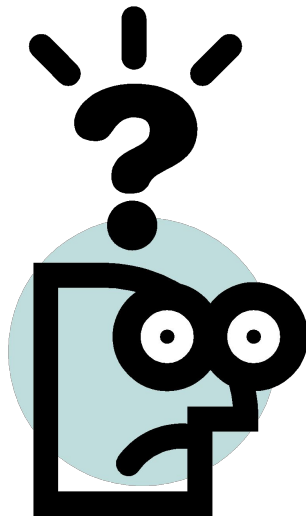
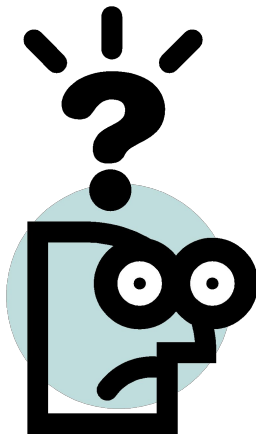
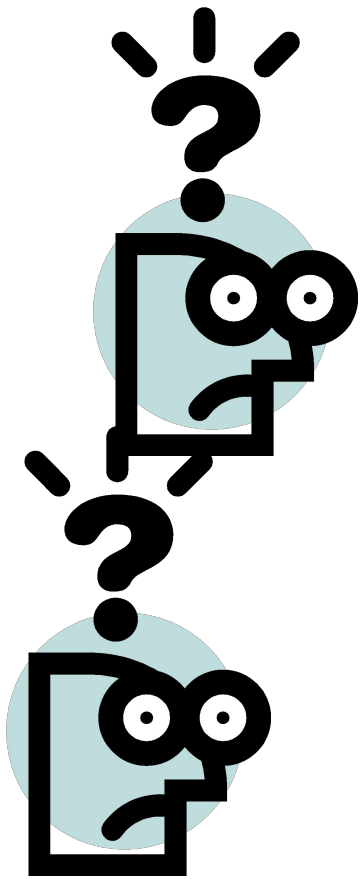
she opened this letter...

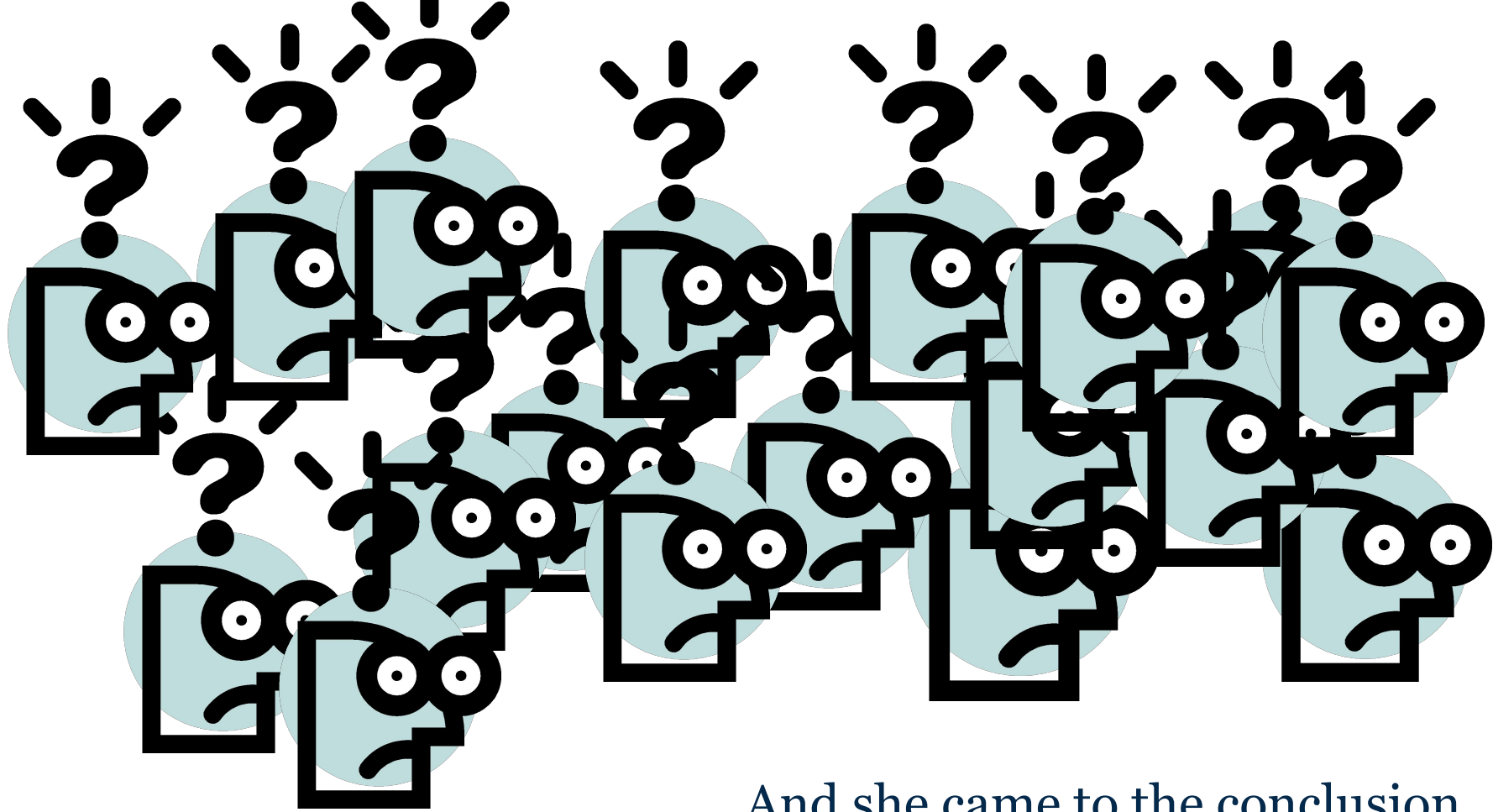
“In March, our school administered the Indiana Reading and Evaluation Determination (IREAD-3). Based on the Indiana Academic Standards, IREAD-3 is a summative assessment that was developed in accordance with Public Law 109, which requires the evaluation of foundational reading skills for students in grade three to ensure that all students can read proficiently before moving onto grade four. The results of your child’s test is included.”



And she thought...







And she came to the conclusion
that...

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Building Relationships

Before we can begin to have respectful, meaningful conversations with families...they have to understand what we're talking about! And, we have to be able to approach them in a respectful, partnership way.

Before we can begin to build lasting relationships with families we have to be able to communicate effectively.

And just like that, the little girl found a new passion...



Skills of a Broadcast Journalist

Ability to take large amounts of information, and complicated ideas and subjects, and present them in ways that are clear, concise, and informative.

Ability to communicate in ways that resonate with the audience, in ways that make the audience care, and in ways that build trust.





And that brings
us to today...



What is Family Engagement?

- When families play significant roles in **supporting their children's learning**, in **guiding their children** through a complex school system, and in **strongly advocating for their children** and for effective schools.

-Harvard Family Research Project

- Family engagement involves **building strong, trusting partnerships** between home and school.

-Dr. Karen Mapp, Harvard School of Education



What is NOT Family Engagement?

- It's not the number of people at a Family Fun Night.
- It's not necessarily membership in a Parent Teacher Organization or Association.
- It's not really baking cookies for Teacher Appreciation Week.

It's about Relationships!



What is Communication?

- The imparting or **interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information** by speech, writing, or signs.

-Dictionary.com

- **Two way process of reaching mutual understanding**, in which participants not only exchange (encode-decode) information, news, ideas, and feelings but also **create and share meaning**.

-BusinessDictionary.com



What is NOT Communication?

- It's not sending home a newsletter and checking that off your to do list.
- It's not giving families a list of school supplies or the school uniform policy.
- It's not sending home a parent form and asking parents to sign it and send it back.

It's about Relationships!



Let's Hear from Parents...

- To parents, family engagement means:
 - They are active participants in the education of their kids.
 - **Communication is flowing between home and school.**

-CT Distance Learning Survey, 9/20/20



Why Does Communication Matter?

Families have information
and knowledge we need!



"You're listening to what you hear. I like that in a teacher."



Why Does Communication Matter?

- Families are the experts in their children.
- Families are the experts in their family cultures.
- Families can change our assumptions and help us become better educators.
- Families can be our most powerful partners.



Why Does Communication Matter?

We have information and knowledge families need!

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"Thank your mother for me, but I have my own lesson plans."



Why Does Communication Matter?

- We can explain the increasingly complex, ever-changing world of education.
- We can make schools less scary and overwhelming for parents.
- We can help parents feel they have someone they can turn to for help raising their children.



Why Does Communication Matter?

It can help us create a kinder, more respectful world.



Remember...

Parents may not tell you if they don't understand!

Parents may not tell you if they overwhelmed or unwelcomed.

They will simply disengage or worse.



Newsletter Article

- Put on your “parent hat.”
- Read the following school newsletter article. Keep in mind the purpose of the communication.
- Think about the words your parents might not understand, think about the tone of the article, and the information in the piece.
- Think about how your parents might feel reading this message.
- Ask yourself, “Is this effective communication?”



IMPORTANT EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 5: Orientation begins!
SEPTEMBER 6: Special P.E.
SEPTEMBER 12: School library reading
SEPTEMBER 22: Art Show
SEPTEMBER 26: Photo day
SEPTEMBER 27: Science fair contest

PROMOTE YOUR CLUB!

This semester, our student club and student body president are trying to increase the number of clubs and activities held around the school.
Contact Mia Tyler at miat@msd.k12.or.us if you would like to submit a proposal or if you have any further questions.
Watch out for more information in next week's newsletter!

THIS WEEK

ORIENTATION STARTS THIS WEEK!
Free lunches will be held in the school quad. Please make sure you get your food tickets at the door.
Please arrive to class on time as activities start at 9 am sharp!
If you have any questions, you can visit the school office or contact your homeroom teachers.



Newsletter Article

Our ELA students are taking their second Reading Inventory (RI) assessment for this school year. According to the National Center of Intensive Interventions, the RI is “a research-based, computer-adaptive reading assessment for students in grades K-12 that measures reading comprehension on the Lexile Framework for Reading.” The student is asked to read a passage taken from an authentic text and then choose the option that best fills the blank in the last statement. To complete the statement, the student must respond on a literal level (recall a fact) or inferential level (determine the main idea of the passage, draw an inference from the material presented, or make a connection between sentences in the passage).



Newsletter Article

Your student has been busy this past month seeing how much they've improved with their reading! They have been taking a test called the Reading Inventory. RI is designed to see how well students understand or comprehend what they read. With RI, your student reads something on a computer and then answers questions. Depending on the answers, we can see just where all our students are compared to where they need to be for the year.

There are four scoring levels in RI; below basic, basic, proficient and advanced. These are called Lexile Levels. When we know your student's Lexile Level, we can tailor our teaching to make sure they are on target to grow and become a strong reader.



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Remember...

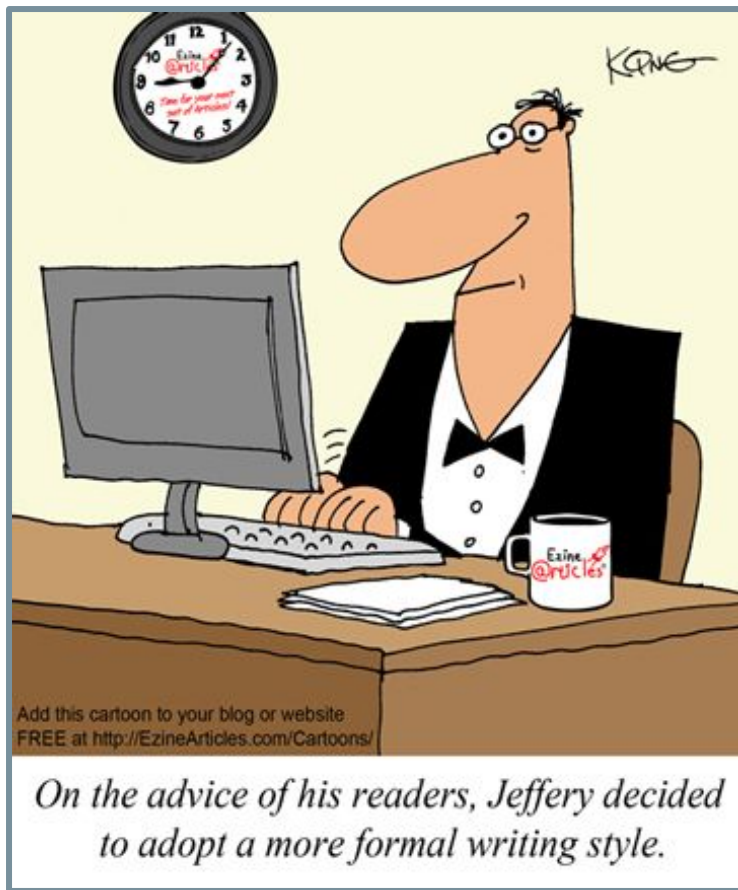
Giving parents clear, concise information can empower and equip them to have deeper conversations.



Why We Are Not Always Good at Communicating...

“A Pictorial History!”







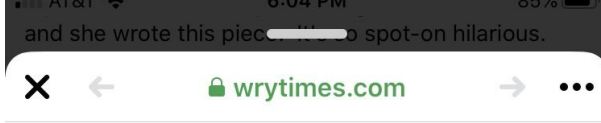
“Were there any new buzzwords created while I was out to lunch?”





"I miss the 3 R's."





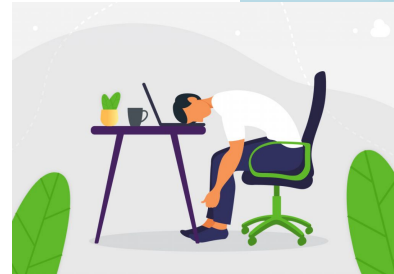
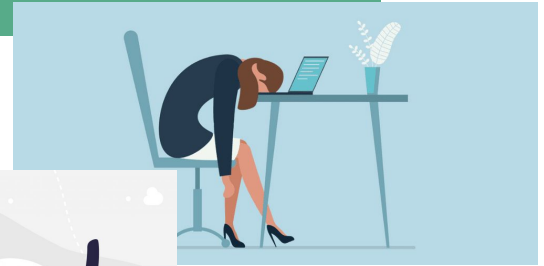
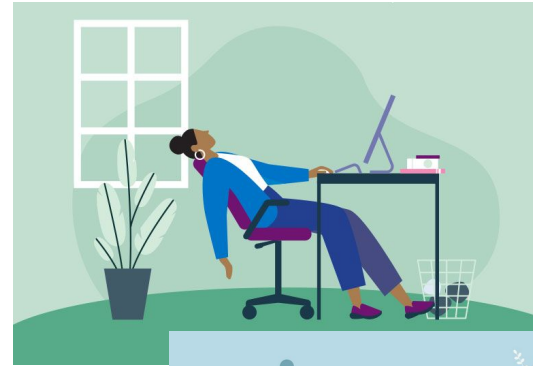
Woman Drowns in School-Related Emails

August 7, 2020 — *by* ELISA

ZURITSKY



 Send









"Let's work on your communication style."





**“My last comment appeared to invite feedback.
Do not be fooled.”**



Tips for Effective Communication.



Tips for Effective Communication

- Adaptable for any audience.



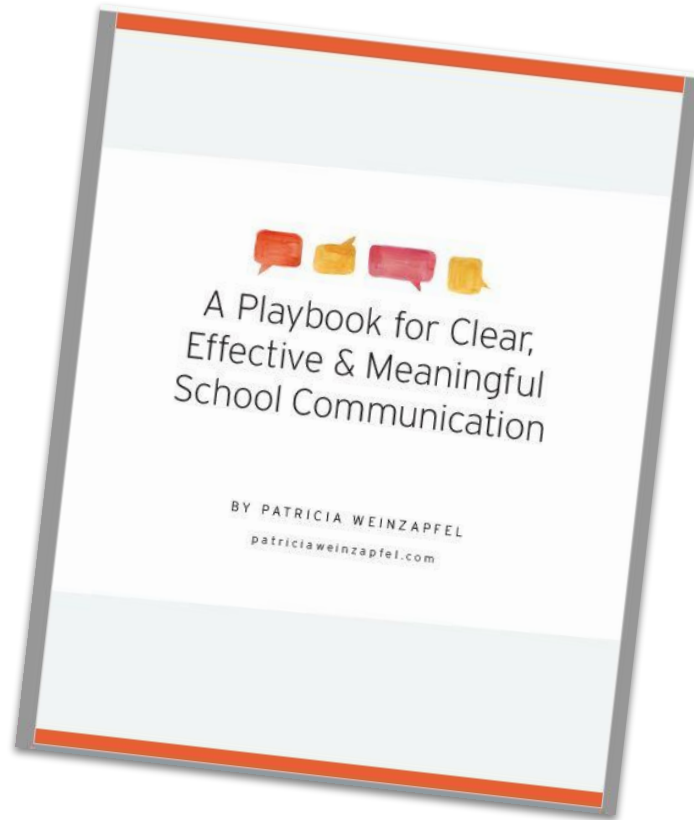
- Adaptable for any communication highway.



- Adaptable for any subject.



Free Communications Playbook



Styles of Communication



Communication Styles

- Formal Style.
 - *Think “dissertation” or “federal grant report.”*
- Technical Style.
 - *Think “coffee maker instructions.”*
- Conversational Style/Broadcast Journalism Style.
 - *Think “the way I talk.”*
 - *Clear, concise, understandable, simple.*
 - *Touches you emotionally.*



Formal/Conversational Style

“Please contact the school to request assistance.”



Formal Style/Conversational Style

“Please contact the school to request assistance.”

“Please reach out if you need help.”



Formal/Conversational Style

“I’m writing to draw your attention to the fact that your child has missed five days of school.”



Formal Style/Conversational Style

“I’m writing to draw your attention to the fact that your child has missed five days of school.”

“Just a note to let you know your child has missed five days of school.”



Formal/Conversational Style

“Martricia School understands there are instances when a student may need assistance with meal funds, therefore the following guidelines will apply...”



Formal Style/Conversational Style

“Martricia School understands there are instances when a student may need assistance with meal funds, therefore the following guidelines will apply.”

“If you need help with meals, please let us know. Here are the guidelines for meal charges.”



Conversational Style Tip...

Read your work outloud!

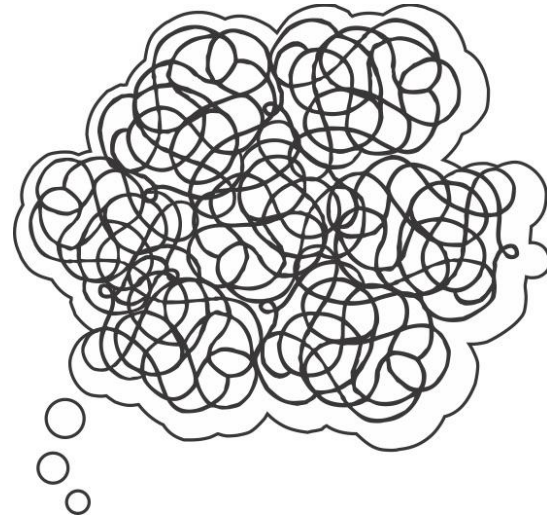


Remember...

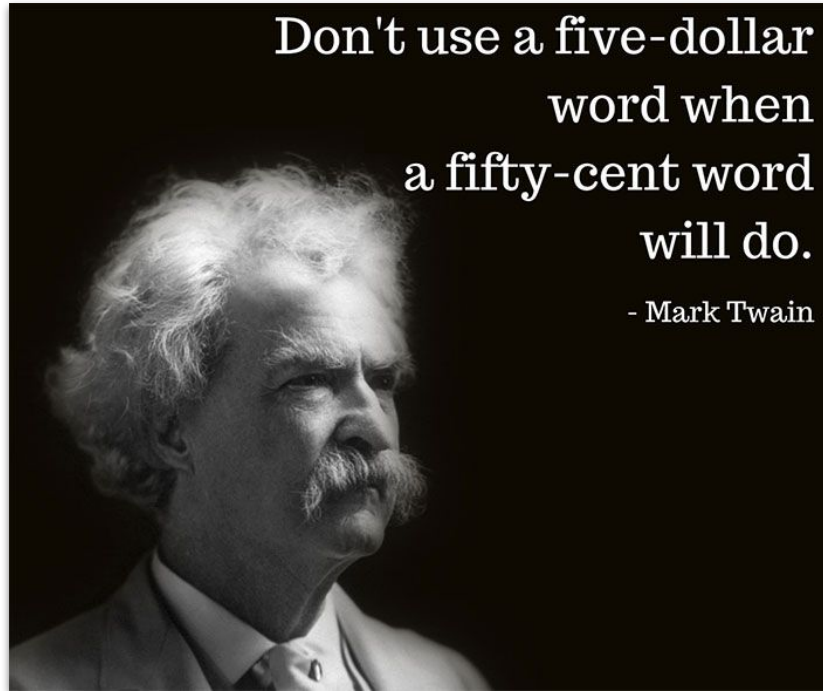
The communication platforms and messaging technologies are only as effective as the words and letters we are sending over those platforms and technologies.



The Words We Use



My Number One Tip....



Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) is a school-wide **decision-making framework** that guides selection, **integration**, and **implementation** of the best **evidence-based behavioral practices** for improving important academic and **behavioral outcomes** for all students. It is a **multi-tiered system of support (MTSS)** developed to promote positive, safe, and supportive school **climates** for all students by clearly identifying positive behavioral **expectations** and **explicitly** teaching the desired behaviors to students.



Five Dollar Word

Fifty Cent Word

Assessment	Test
Data	Information
Interventions	Additional programs and supports to help your student succeed.
Differentiated Instruction	Lessons designed just for your child. Learning tailored to your child.
Guardian	Caregiver



Inclement???



Activity Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

<p>Curriculum</p> <p><i>“Please let me know if you would like to look over this year’s math curriculum.”</i></p>	<p>Excluded</p> <p><i>“Your child will be excluded from school.”</i></p>
<p>Proficient</p> <p><i>“Your child is not yet proficient in sight words.”</i></p>	<p>De escalation Skills</p> <p><i>“The program will also help to develop your child’s de escalation skills.”</i></p>
<p>Baseline</p> <p><i>“You child’s baseline scores were on target”</i></p>	<p>Postsecondary</p> <p><i>“This week, we are discussing postsecondary possibilities with your student.”</i></p>



Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

Curriculum

*“Please let me know if you would like to look over this year’s math **curriculum.**”*



Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

5 Dollar Word	50 Cent Word(s)
<p>Curriculum</p> <p><i>“Please let me know if you would like to look over this year’s math curriculum.”</i></p>	<p>Teaching materials, Learning materials, Teaching tools.</p>



Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

Excluded

“If you don’t turn in the forms, your child will be excluded from the program.”



Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

5 Dollar Word	50 Cent Word(s)
Excluded <i>"Your child will be excluded from school."</i>	Your child will have to stay home.



Activity- Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

Proficient

“Your child is not yet proficient in sight words.”



Activity- Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

5 Dollar Word	50 Cent Word(s)
<p data-bbox="301 607 542 653">Proficient</p> <p data-bbox="204 703 639 768"><i>“Your child is not yet proficient in sight words.”</i></p>	<p data-bbox="741 604 1727 718">“Not yet able to recognize” “working on sight words” “working to read words just by sight”</p>



Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

De escalation Skills

“The program will also help to develop your child’s de escalation skills.”



Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

5 Dollar Word	50 Cent Word(s)
<p data-bbox="256 609 583 721">De escalation Skills</p> <p data-bbox="195 776 649 838"><i>“The program will also help to develop your child’s de escalation skills.”</i></p>	<p data-bbox="678 669 1789 781">“The program will also help your child learn how to keep calm in stressful times.”</p>



Activity- Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

Baseline

“Your child’s baseline scores were on target.”



Activity- Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

5 Dollar Word	50 Cent Word(s)
Baseline <i>“You child’s baseline scores were on target”</i>	“Your child’s scores were right on target.”



Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

Postsecondary

“This week, we are discussing postsecondary possibilities with your student.”



Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

5 Dollar Word	50 Cent Word(s)
Postsecondary <i>“This week, we are discussing postsecondary possibilities with your student.”</i>	“After high school possibilities.” “college, career, and job opportunities.”

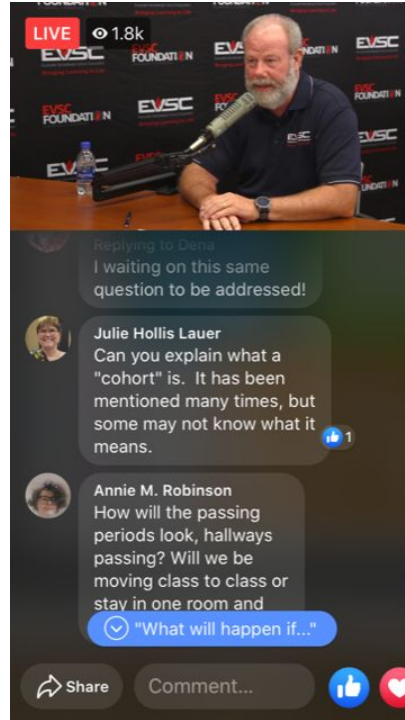


Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

The simpler the words, the more easily they are translated and understood in other languages.



5 Dollar Word!



The Number Two Tip...

Avoid Acronyms!



Avoid Acronyms

“As a requirement of our **CAP, EERC** and **PBIS** Indiana staff will be visiting our district to attend a **DLT** meeting in the coming months. The purpose of the meeting is to support our district’s efforts to address **disproportionality** and will last approximately two hours. The agenda for the **DLT** meeting will at a minimum include a review of our **CAP, root cause analysis** and any relevant data as well as the needed resources and supports from the **EERC** and **PBIS** Indiana.”****

*****actual email received by Patricia*



Is this helpful?

COMMON SPECIAL EDUCATION ACRONYMS

ACR	Annual Case Review	SI	Speech Impairment
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	SLD	Specific Learning Disability
AT	Assistive Technology	SLP	Speech Language Pathologist
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan	TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
BDDS	Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services	TOR	Teacher of Record
BLV	Blind or Low Vision	TOS	Teacher of Service
CC	Case Conference	OI	Orthopedic Impairment
CCC	Case Conference Committee	PBIS	Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports
DD	Developmental Delay	PLEP	Present Levels of Educational Performance (also often referred to as Present Levels)
DHH	Deaf or Hard of Hearing	PT	Physical Therapy; Physical Therapist
ED	Emotional Disability	VR	Vocational Rehabilitation (also often referred to as Voc Rehab)



Behavior Intervention Plan

“A BIP, or behavior intervention plan is the plan we will work on together to make sure your child has the support they need to be successful. For example, when your student has completed all of their assignments in class, they can have free gym time.”



The Number Three Tip...

Use “You”, “Your child,” “Your school,” “Your student,” and
“We”



Activity- The Power of You

- If you are comfortable, please close your eyes. If you are not, just concentrate as I read four different statements to you.
- Think about how you are feelings as I read the statements.



Remember...

When we simplify our communication, we're not "dumbing it down." The information is as complex as ever, we're simply conveying it in a way that is understandable.



What to Communicate.



CartoonStock.com



Communicating for the “Ear”

The “Ear”
represents your
attention span.



Communicating for the “Ear”

- The “Ear” can only digest about one fact per sentence.
- The “Ear” quits listening when it takes too much effort.
- The “Ear’s” attention span is getting shorter and shorter.



Communicating for the “Ear”

The “Ear”
reads on the
phone.



Communicating for the “Ear”

- Send your flier, email, or text message to yourself.
- Open it on your phone.
- Give it a glance.
- Think...would you read it?



Communicating for the “Ear”

Don't bury the lede!



What is a Lede?



A *lede* is the most important information in a story.

When that information is squished between other bits of distracting information, you have *buried the lede*.



Bus Transportation Call

- Put on your “parent hat.”
- Be prepared to pretend you are answering a phone call.
- Listen as I read an automated message from the school.
- Put your phone down when you feel your parents might hang-up on the message.



Bus Transportation Call

Hello. This is a parent information call from Martricia School. Due to the risk of Covid-19, Martricia is taking measures to make school buses as safe as possible this school year. This includes requiring all students to wear masks and limiting the number of students to a maximum of two per seat. This will lead to a reduced capacity and will limit our ability to provide transportation as we have done in the past. Because of this, **we are requiring families to enroll in bus transportation in order for your child to ride the school bus. Families that do not enroll are not guaranteed school bus service this year.**



Bus Transportation

Hi. Does your child need bus transportation to Martrica school this year? If so, we want to let you know of an important change. This year, we are responding to the pandemic by limiting the number of students on our buses, so you'll have to sign your child up for bus transportation. Yesterday, we emailed and texted a link to you. When you click on the link, you'll see a form where you can type in your child's name and address....



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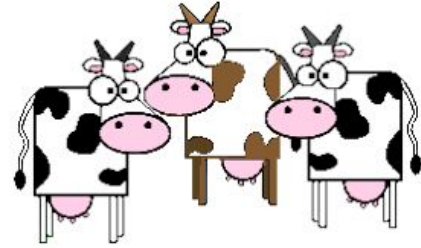
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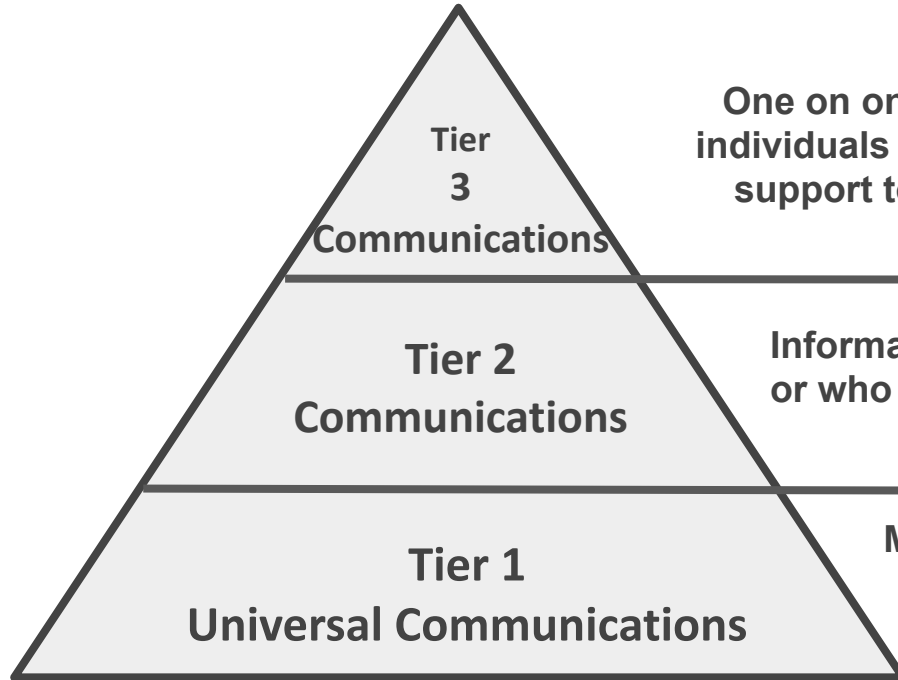
Cull the Herd



- Who is your audience?
- What is the specific purpose of the communication?
Compose a sentence in your head.
- What are the two or three things you really want them to take away from your conversation or written communication?



Tiering your information



One on one communications tailored to individuals who may need a higher level of support to bring about understanding.

Information for people who want to know more or who have questions or may not understand.

Minimal, basic information presented in a clear, concise way in order to foster broad understanding.



Information We Share

- Read the following description of a program to help students who did not finish high school earn their degrees.
- Think about the audience for the information, think about the purpose and think about what we've covered so far.
- Pick out at least one fact that you feel is not necessary to include in this program description. Be prepared to share.



Information We Share

The Virtual School allows students to earn credits for recovery or advancement through the utilization of online learning. Courses are facilitated by licensed teachers, utilizing content from Apex Learning, Inc., which offers a comprehensive digital curriculum that meets high school graduation requirements in math, science, English, social studies, world languages and selected electives. In addition, students and parents receive automated progress reports each week to communicate the progress of the student toward course completion dates.



Information We Share

With Virtual School, you'll work online to earn high school credits but you won't be in it alone. Teachers will guide you as you work on Math, Science, English, Social Studies and other courses. With Virtual School, you'll find the freedom you need to finish your degree and the support you need to be successful.

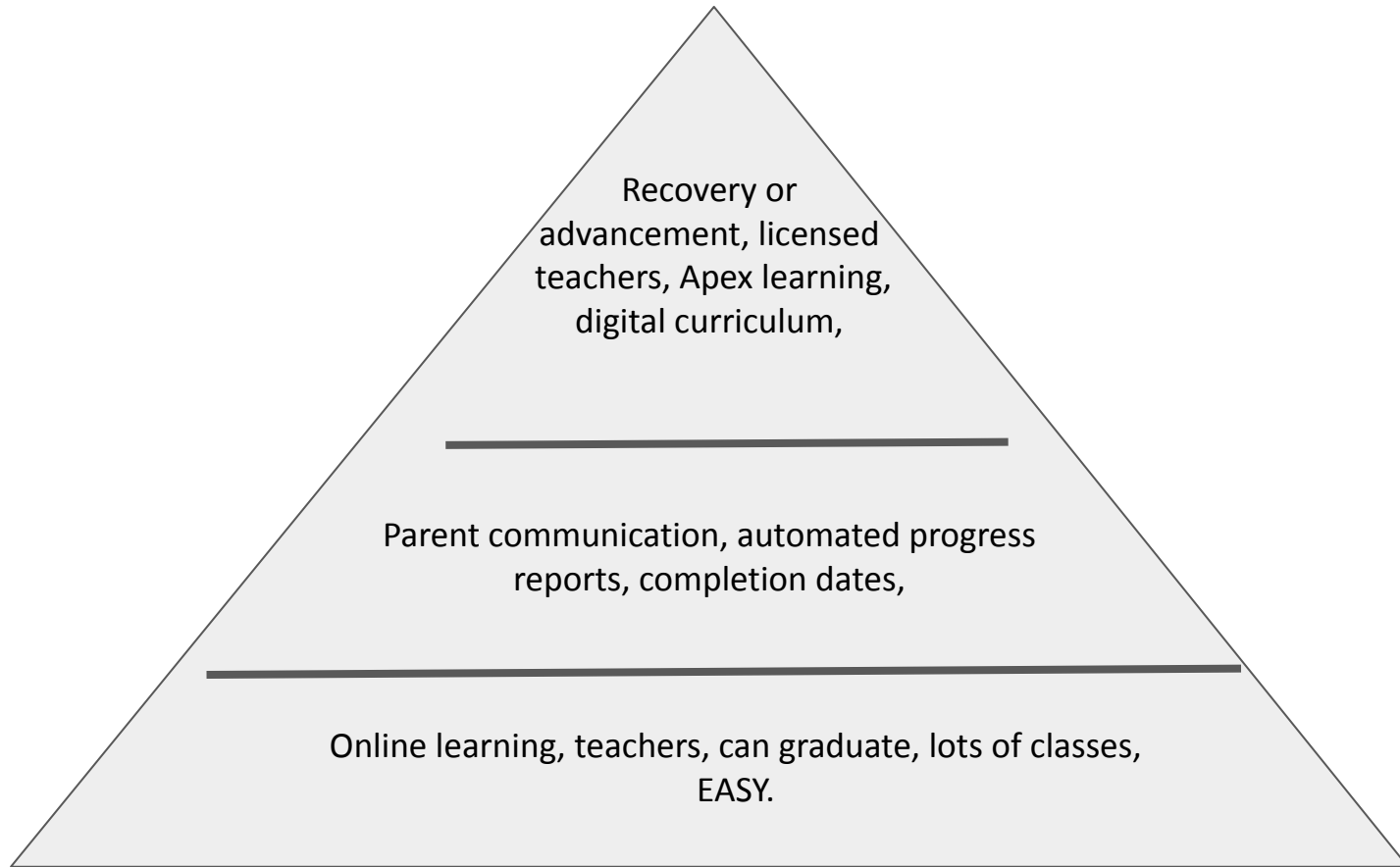


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Your Information-Leave In

- Include Emotion.
- Include “Why”
- Include “How
- Include an “Ask.”
- Include a “Thank You.”

**But use all of our conversational style
tips to keep it short!**



Your Information-Leave Out

- Lots of details
 - If parents want to know more, they'll ask.
- Unnecessary background information
- Information you can give them at a later time or in another communication.



Remember...

Good, effective communication practices are
good and effective with *any* audience!

(The media, your colleagues, your partner, your kids... ;0)



The Tone We Use



Non-Verbal Communication

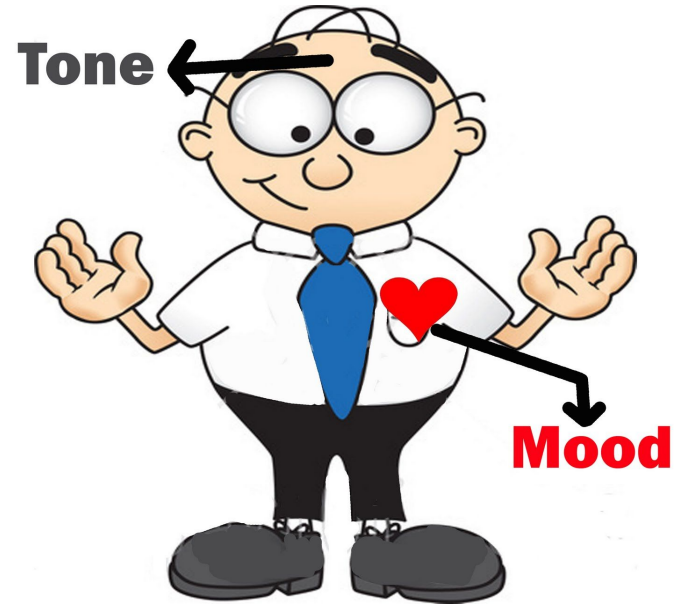
- Non-Verbal makes up between 65-85% of communication.
- Non-Verbal includes:

Eye Contact	Posture
Facial Expressions	Body Language
Gestures	Touch
Proximity	Tone



What is Tone?

Tone is the attitude of a speaker or **writer** toward a subject or an audience. Tone is generally conveyed through the choice of words and phrases. **Tone brings out an emotion of in the receiver of the information.**



Activity-The Tone We Use

- Put on your “parent hat.”
- Read the following information about school bussing sent home to parents on the first day of school. Think to yourself...
 - What is the tone?
 - What is the feeling in the person who wrote it?
 - How could it be perceived by parents?



Facebook Post

Information for Monday, February 28th: Town hall meetings are held prior to regularly scheduled school board meetings at the JCCSD Administration Building from 5:00 p.m. to 5:25 p.m. Elected trustees will be present to have conversations with any interested individual who has completed and submitted a registration form. This has proven to be a successful process for the Board to receive public comment and engage with our stakeholders. Click here to submit a town hall registration form for Monday evening:

<https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSc69cfQOsb.../viewform...>



From Formal to Friendly...



Facebook Post

Do you have questions or comments for the members of the School Board? If so, come to the next School Board Town Hall! School Board Town Halls are held before every school board meeting. The next one is set for this Monday from 5:00 p.m. to 5:25 p.m. at the Administration Building on Walnut Avenue. **Remember, if you want to speak, you'll need to sign up ahead of time. Here's the link:**

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Bussing Information

School districts have broad authority to control student conduct and adopt all rules reasonably necessary to maintain proper discipline among their students. Behaviors not covered will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Manager of Transportation and will fall within the guidelines of each school's student handbook.



From Curmudgeonly to Congenial



Bussing Information

We know you want your child to be safe and we do too! That's why we have rules and regulations that we need students to follow when they are riding our school buses. Please partner with us and help teach these behaviors to your child. We will work with you if any issues happen during your child's time riding the bus.



Bussing Information

School Districts have broad authority to control student conduct and adopt all rules reasonably necessary to maintain proper discipline when transporting students. Behaviors outside of those rules will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and will fall within the guidelines of our program handbook.

We know you want your child to be safe and we do too! That's why we have rules and regulations that we need students to follow when they are riding our school buses. Please partner with us and help teach these behaviors to your child. We will work with you if any issues happen during your child's time riding the bus.



Parent Brochure

The Youth Day Treatment program is a psychiatric partial hospitalization treatment for children between ages five through twelve who are diagnosed as having a serious emotional disorder. The program includes developmental rehabilitation activities, a therapeutic education milieu, psychiatric services and medication management, and individual and group therapy and skills training. Once a child consistently exhibits emotional and behavioral self-regulation an IEP conference /ISP meeting will be scheduled to facilitate transition back to a lesser structured environment.



From Terrifying to Terrific



Parent Brochure

The Youth Day Treatment program is committed to providing what each child needs to be successful. At YDT, staff will work with you and your child to design a plan that includes goals for behavior and for learning. Your child will take part in social skills training, therapy, and other activities designed to help them improve their self-esteem and manage their emotions. If your child receives speech, occupational, or other therapies, they'll continue those at YDT. Your child can stay in the program until you and your treatment team decide they are ready to go back to their home school.



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Tone Starts with You

- How do you feel about the parents you are communicating with? Do you believe they want the best for their children?
- How was your day?
- How do you feel in general? Are you doing your self-care?
- What information do you need to share?
- What's your goal for the communication?



Improving Tone

- Breathe before responding.
- Check your emotions.
- Take off your “educator/school hat.”
- Think about the receiver of the information.
- Bring a fresh start to every interaction.



Improving Tone

- Read your work back to yourself.
 - How does it make you feel?
- Have someone else read it.
- Remember your goal.



Remember...

Our goal is not “to be in charge”, “to win”, or
“to be right.”

It’s to build relationships that will result in
strong partnerships and student success.



Remember...

If you are consistently welcoming with your words, information, tone, you can build the respectful relationships that make challenging conversations easier.



Checking yourself.



Checking Yourself-Written Words

- Read your work out loud (especially phone messages).
 - You will see the acronyms.
 - You will hear the clumsy language.
 - You can work on your tone.
- Do a reading level check of your work.
 - Not just yours, but the materials you hand out and the websites you suggest.
- Engage community partners and parents in this work.



Checking Yourself-Spoken Words

- Check for understanding, invite questions
 - “Are we all good?”
 - “I’m sure I didn’t do a very good job explaining that...what questions do you have?”
- Reflect before and after conversations.
 - Think about the information you provided.
 - Consider your tone.
 - Ask yourself if your communication helped build the relationship.



Never Forget..

- The responsibility for good communication lies with us.
- It's easier for us to push out then for parents and the public to push in.
- Changing our communication practices is the beginning....



The Essence of Communication

listening



School-Home Communication is Everyone's Responsibility!



Free Communications Playbook

