**COMMUNICATION Activities**

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SCHOOL TO HOME

* Identify and respect family preferences for home-school communication
* Personalize your conversation by addressing the parents by name
* Have “low-tech” and “high-tech” options for parents to receive information
	+ LOW-TECH
		- Weekly folders for notices, memos, progress notes, schoolwork, and other two-way communications
		- School signs
	+ HIGH-TECH
		- Internet video, Audiotapes / Podcasts, Website pages, Teacher Blogs, text messages, Electronic newsletters, Electronic student log
* What are their accessibility needs?
* District Timelines / Calendar of events – HIGHLIGHT parent deadline dates
* Parent-teacher (or parent-teacher-student) conferences with every family at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed; could be academic goal specific
* Provide language translators and interpreters, as needed, for all communications with families
* Annual survey of families’ views on the quality of school programs and student progress.
* Information to help families:
	+ Understand school programs
	+ Classroom rules and expectations
	+ Student progress
	+ State tests
	+ District and Student report cards / assessment reports
	+ Contact teacher(s) and related services staff
	+ Contact district administrators
	+ Contact other building staff
	+ Contact transportation office
	+ Understand school board activities
	+ School policies, programs, reforms, and student transitions
	+ Choosing schools (open enrollment), selecting courses, joining extra-curricular activities
	+ Prepare for conferences / meetings (guiding questions, checklist)
* Conduct home visits
* Establish an open door policy
* School to home notebooks to share information with parents, particularly for students who have special learning needs.
* “Literacy bags” These were developed to help parents understand grade-level expectations and to provide them with materials and specific activities to support literacy development in their child.
* Work with parent volunteers / PTAs to spread information
* Create a neighborhood event for staff to meet families, discuss ideas, and enjoy refreshments
* Provide digital video streaming of classroom instruction
* Start conversations with a positive about the student
* Include reason for requesting a meeting in an understandable and nonthreatening way; give options for meeting day / time.
* Provide minutes of meetings in writing to all team members

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

* Each teacher’s criteria for report card grades
* How to interpret interim progress reports
* Conferences for parents AND student with teams of teachers
* Recruit “class” parents to assist students and student activities
* Phone trees
* Include student work in communication systems
* Opportunity for parent responses on website / teacher page / blogs
* Calendars of important events
* Know which families are and are not receiving universal communications
* Contact AND respond to educators / guidance counselors / administrators
* Electronic homework assignments

HOME TO SCHOOL

* Establish two-way channels of communication for questions, suggestions, and interactions (what is best way to reach you)
* Obtain ideas from families to improve the design and content of communications such as newsletters, report cards, and conference schedules.
* Folders of student work sent home weekly or monthly for parent review and comments
* Communication about school programs and student success
* Ask the teacher about expectations for their classroom

RESOURCES:

*Beyond the Bake Sale*, by A.T. Henderson et al., 2007 by The New Press.

*Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality, Seventh Edition*, by A. Turnbull et al, 2015 by Pearson Education, Inc.

S*chool, Family, and Community Partnerships*, *Third Edition*, by J. L. Epstein et al., 2009 by Corwin Press.

*What Successful Schools Do To Involve Families: 55 Partnership Strategies*, by N.A. Glasgow & P.J. Whitney, 2009 by Corwin Press.

Davern, L. (2004). School-to-home notebooks: What parents have to say. Council for Exceptional Children, 36(5), 22-27.

Grande, M. (2004). Increasing parent participation and knowledge using home literacy bags. Intervention in School and Clinic, 40(2), 120-126.

Williams, V.I., & Cartledge, G. (1997). Passing notes to parents. Teaching Exceptional Children, 30(1), 30-34.