Through the Eyes of Parents and Families
Sharpening Your Focus on District and School Communications

Today’s Presenters

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Learning Targets

» Review preferred ways of communicating with parents and families
» Examine what clearly resonates
» Understand how to best capture attention and interest of families in your district or school

Agenda

» Tried-and-true communications strategies
  • 20 minutes
» Learning targets and role-played scenarios
  • 10 minutes per target x 3 = 30 minutes
» Sharing your aha moments and success stories
  • 10 minutes
TRIED-AND-TRUE
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

Getting Started on the Right Foot
The Golden Circle

**What**
Information focused on policy: testing, standards, Third Grade Reading Guarantee, etc.

**How**
Information focused on logistics: teacher credentials, schedules, testing procedures, etc.

**Why**
Information focused on students. They are the REASON policies exist.

The Golden Circle

The Golden Circle

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Communicating With Families

HITTING OUR LEARNING TARGETS
Learning Target 1

» Review preferred ways of communicating with parents and families
» Examine what clearly resonates
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The Right Channels
Parent Quotes

“I don’t go out of my way to get information. If it’s something really important, it will be pushed to me.”

“A lot of grandparents are raising children, so online information can’t be the only way to communicate.”

“Keep the consistency to all audiences with the same message. It doesn’t matter what district you’re in; the message needs to be clear and come to everyone.”

“I get really confused with all the programs and then all of a sudden, it’s all different…There’s so much to keep up with…I just want my child to get where they need to be when they need to get there.”
Learning Target 2

- Review preferred ways of communicating with parents and families
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What Parents and Families Want

- Grade-specific resources to encourage learning at home, including during breaks and the summer
- Testing and standards updates and strategies for taking the tests and practice problems
- Guidance for how to make sense of changes in education and navigate the options
- Low-cost, free, and fun things happening in Ohio outside of school that expose kids to learning
- Information about how we are doing in Ohio compared to other states and nations
Parent Quotes

- “Give me suggested websites for practice.”
- “Let me know the strategies the teacher uses to teach the skill, so that I can help reinforce at home.”
- “As a parent, didn’t know much about the tests. Want someone to say, ‘Let me make this make sense to you, to your school.’ I would’ve signed up to take a practice test.”
- “Share what my child is low on, so…that’s what we can work on at home.”
- “I want to know what they do well on so I can build on the strengths.”
- “My job as a parent is to support during the summer, but I would love more resources about what to do during the summer break.”
Learning Target 3

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Knowing What You Don’t Know

- **Surveys**
  To capture quantitative and qualitative data (typically defined parameters)

- **Focus Groups**
  To test messages or user experience and collect other qualitative data (often less defined parameters)

- **Secondary Sources**
  When the budget will not bear conducting surveys or focus groups, and if there are already-collected data to leverage
Before the Group

Send participants:

1. A preliminary message letting them know what to expect one week before the group
2. A reminder message one day before

Group Protocol

1. Welcome participants as they enter the room and provide refreshments and a nametag.
2. Begin promptly at the scheduled time.
3. Briefly describe the purpose of the group and how the information will be used.
4. Initiate round-robin introductions.
5. Clarify the purpose for taking notes, reminding that no names will ever be attached to specific comments.
6. Pose pre-defined questions. Probe for more information as needed, and ensure that each participant has a chance to respond.
7. Finish promptly at the designated end time and thank participants for sharing their thoughts and feedback. Remind them how the information will be used.
After the Group

Send participants:

A handwritten thank you note with genuine appreciation for their insights, and a brief reminder of how the information they shared will be used.

Biggest Takeaway

“Can we have more of these sessions?”
ROLE PLAY

DISCUSSION
Top Communications Takeaways

**Do**

1. Focus on the child(ren)
2. Use family-friendly language
3. Establish a cooperative partnership
4. Be positive and reassuring
5. Give tips for helping at home
6. Communicate regularly

**Don’t**

1. Focus on the policy
2. Use education jargon
3. Put the family on the defensive
4. Describe the child as a “problem”
5. Leave the family with questions about what to do next
6. Communicate only one time, or through one channel

Contact or Connect with us

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