

**4c: Communicating with Families**

**4d: Participating in the Professional Community**

**March 5, 2014**

**South Eastern Special Education**

# How do you currently communicate with families?

Work with a shoulder partner to list all of the ways you communicate with and provide information to families.

# Video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMrysu95gzA>

How could you have eliminated this disruption?

# Communicating

It is the responsibility of teachers to provide opportunities for families to understand both the instructional program and their child's progress. Teachers establish relationships with families by communicating to them about the instructional program, conferring with them about individual students, and inviting them to be part of the educational process itself. The importance of regular communication cannot be overstated. A teacher's effort to communicate with families conveys the teacher's essential caring, valued by families of students of all ages.

# Elements of 4c

- **Information about the instructional program**

*The teacher frequently provides information to families about the instructional program.*

- **Information about individual students**

*The teacher frequently provides information to families about students' individual progress.*

- **Engagement of families in the instructional program**

*The teacher frequently and successfully offers engagement opportunities to families so that they can participate in the learning activities.*

# 4c: Indicators

- Frequent and culturally appropriate information sent home regarding the instructional program and student progress
- Two-way communication between the teacher and families
- Frequent opportunities for families to engage in the learning process

# Understanding the Levels of Performance

## Level 4

The teacher communicates frequently with families in a culturally sensitive manner, with students contributing to the communication. The teacher responds to family concerns with professional and cultural sensitivity. The teacher's efforts to engage families in the instructional program are frequent and successful.

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## Level 3

The teacher provides frequent and appropriate information to families about the instructional program and conveys information about individual student progress in a culturally sensitive manner. The teacher makes some attempts to engage families in the instructional program.

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## Level 2

The teacher makes sporadic attempts to communicate with families about the instructional program and about the progress of individual students but does not attempt to engage families in the instructional program. Moreover, the communication that does take place may not be culturally sensitive to those families.

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## Level 1

The teacher provides little information about the instructional program to families; the teacher's communication about students' progress is minimal. The teacher does not respond, or responds insensitively, to parent concerns.

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# Assign a level

- The teacher sends home a list of possible accommodations and modifications that might be employed during reading instruction. The list is lengthy and generic and does not inform the parents of specific strategies that are relevant for their child.

Level 1   Level 2   Level 3   Level 4

- The teacher maintains a communication notebook and ensures that a balance of information is included in the text. The teacher keeps a copy of all parent communication.

Level 1   Level 2   Level 3   Level 4

- During a face-to-face conference, the teacher asks the parents for suggestions regarding which skills would be important for their child's participation in family events. Together they determine that the teacher will begin to work on some independent self-care skills, including the student's ability to take care of her own toileting needs.

Level 1    Level 2    Level 3    Level 4

- The teacher sends home disciplinary notices and calls home to report misbehavior but does not otherwise communicate with families.

Level 1   Level 2   Level 3   Level 4

# Table Top Activity

- Watch the video...<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INqdjzY0lOU&index=23&list=PLA68D43E9E3FA80A0>
- What is one way that you can increase parent/teacher communication in your classroom?

## 4d: Participating in the Professional Community

# Participating in the professional community

Schools are, first of all, environments to promote the learning of students. But in promoting student learning, teachers must work with their colleagues to share strategies, plan joint efforts, and plan for the success of individual students. Schools are, in other words, professional organizations for teachers, with their full potential realized only when teachers regard themselves as members of a professional community. This community is characterized by mutual respect, as well as by recognition of the responsibility of all teachers to be constantly seeking ways to improve their practice and to contribute to the life of the school. Inevitably, teachers' duties extend beyond the doors of their classrooms and include activities related to the entire school or larger district, or both. These activities include such things as school and district curriculum committees or engagement with the parent-teacher organization. With experience, teachers assume leadership roles in these activities.

# Elements of 4d

- **Relationships with colleagues**

*Teachers maintain professional collegial relationships that encourage sharing, planning, and working together toward improved instructional skill and student success.*

- **Involvement in a culture of professional inquiry**

*Teachers contribute to and participate in a learning community that supports and respects its members' efforts to improve practice.*

- **Service to the school**

*Teachers' efforts move beyond classroom duties by contributing to school initiatives and projects.*

- **Participation in school and district projects**

*Teachers contribute to and support larger school and district projects designed to improve the professional community.*

# 4d: Indicators

- Regular teacher participation with colleagues to share and plan for student success
- Regular teacher participation in professional courses or communities that emphasize improving practice
- Regular teacher participation in school initiatives
- Regular teacher participation in and support of community initiatives

# Understanding the Levels of Performance

## Level 4

The teacher's relationships with colleagues are characterized by mutual support and cooperation, with the teacher taking initiative in assuming leadership among the faculty. The teacher takes a leadership role in promoting a culture of professional inquiry. The teacher volunteers to participate in school events and district projects, making a substantial contribution and assuming a leadership role in at least one aspect of school or district life.

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## Level 3

The teacher's relationships with colleagues are characterized by mutual support and cooperation; the teacher actively participates in a culture of professional inquiry. The teacher volunteers to participate in school event and in school and district projects, making a substantial contribution.

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## Level 2

The teacher maintains cordial relationships with colleagues to fulfill duties that the school or district requires. The teacher participates in the school's culture of professional inquiry when invited to do so. The teacher participates in school events and school and district projects when specifically asked.

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## Level 1

The teacher's relationships with colleagues are negative or self-serving. The teacher avoids participation in a professional culture of inquiry, resisting opportunities to become involved. The teacher avoids becoming involved in school event or school and district projects.

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# Assign a level

- The teacher is outspoken in her dislike for her colleagues. She does not participate in common planning time meetings.

Level 1   Level 2   Level 3   Level 4

- The teacher incorporates components of the social decision-making curriculum into the daily routines in his class for students with behavioral disabilities. After demonstrating the effectiveness of these principles in his classroom, he works with the school principal to infuse the curriculum into a school wide positive behavioral support program.

Level 1   Level 2   Level 3   Level 4

- When the principal asks the teacher to turnkey her training on Wilson Reading System strategies, the teacher says she is too stressed to put together a workshop but will post the handouts on the school's intranet.

Level 1    Level 2    Level 3    Level 4

- The teacher volunteers to host a board committee that is exploring the possibility of expanding community-based instruction. The teacher prepared a brief synopsis of the goals of the program, current options, and hoped-for expansion.

Level 1   Level 2   Level 3   Level 4

Activity

# Balloon Castles

# Table Talk

- In what ways are you providing leadership now?
- What can you do to improve this area in the future?

# Questions

