Communicating to Engage Stakeholders in School Improvement
Session Goal

- Introduce a strategic planning process to create a communications plan focused on:
  - improving student achievement through improving internal and external school communications
Activity ONE

- Stand by a picture that for you represents a metaphor of YOUR PERSONAL communication practices and style
- Introduce yourself and discuss the following questions:
  - Which attributes of your animal prompted you to select it?
  - How do these attributes apply to YOUR PERSONAL COMMUNICATION STYLE?
Activity One

- Stand by a picture that for you represents a metaphor of current communication practices and style in your school as perceived by parents.

- Introduce yourself and discuss the following questions:
  - Which attributes of your animal prompted you to select it?
  - How do these attributes apply to your school?
Communication Focus

- Personal Communication Style
  - Ronald Regan “The Great Communicator”
    - Visible - great speeches
    - Style - ability to connect with his audience
    - Message -
      He claimed that whatever greatness existed in his speeches didn't come from his words or his style, but from the content. He said “he wanted to communicate great ideas, and those ideas came from the heart of the nation and the principles upon which it was founded”
      - farewell address from the Oval Office
The art of communication is the language of leadership.

James Humes
Our Stakeholders Expectations have Changed

- Customer Service
  - Effective customer interaction
- Customer Satisfaction
  - Nordstrom and Ritz Carlton
- Customer Delight
  - Concierge Service
  - Zappos.com.; Lexus Dealerships; Big Box greeters
- Full Customer Experience
  - Disney – “making your dreams come true”
I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure that what you heard is what I meant!
Communication Model

- One Way Communication

Sender ▸ Receiver
The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

George Bernard Shaw
Communication Model

Sender
Encoder

Receiver
Decoder

Zone of Distortion
Attitudes, Knowledge, Beliefs, Channel, Culture...??

Feedback
Effective Communications Hurdles

- It’s Complicated
  - Personal communication skills
  - Organizational size
  - Clarity or Complexity of Message
  - Choice of Medium
  - Background Noise
  - ??????
What Makes Communication Difficult?

- Words mean different things to different people.
- People often code their messages.
- Presenting problem may not be major concern.
- Filters distort and emotions blind.
- Listeners are easily distracted.
Essential Question 1

What is the impact of communication on student achievement?
Factors With an Impact

▪ How can we characterize communication in high-performing schools?

▪ Look at Handouts # 2 and 3 (References)
  ○ Research results
    ▪ Parents
    ▪ School Leaders – Summary on handout 4
Leadership Issue

- The **key personal quality** of effective leadership is *integrity*. (words align with actions)

- The **key skill** of effective leaders is the *ability to motivate cooperation* from others.

- The **key to motivating cooperation** of others is *high-quality communication* in everyday interactions and small steps.

“Kids Are the Chief Reason Why Communication Matters.”

- Students learn better when adults communicate well.
- Good communication increases parent involvement in the school.
- Good communication between parents, teachers, schools and community creates a climate of trust and respect.
- Good communication builds a team that surrounds and supports students so they can succeed.

Guidelines

- **Who** are we communicating with?
- **How** are we communicating (Channel)
- **Which** group do they represent – internal or external stakeholders?
- **What** message or information are we trying to send?
WHOA???
Stakeholders

- Internal
  - Building/Department
- External
  - Neighborhood
  - County
  - State
- District
HOW?
On your Communication Grid, start to complete the HOW column:

- How do I typically communicate with each group?
- Refer to handouts 6,7 (TIPS and IDEAS)

- Confer with table group
- New Ideas? - Star them **
Selecting Methods & Media

- Possibility that message is controversial
  - Carefully crafted written message
- Accessibility
  - To medium – internet, written, radio, etc.
- Level of importance to audience
  - High requires public forum
- Topicality
  - Enduring should have high visibility
- Resources
  - Can they maintained. i.e. web-site staying current
- Cost:
  - Can they be justified
Things to Remember or Think About

- Add notes to your learning journal page
- Add sticky note to your Action Plan pages
Find the surveys in your handouts:

- Organizational Survey
  - Personal Survey

Complete Organizational Survey (district, department)

(time permitting complete Personal Survey)
Take a Break
Essential Question 2

What are the key messages that need to be communicated to various members of the school community?
A **brand** is a product of an **organization's** strategy, mission, image, and activities. Brands distinguish organizations from their competitors, orient the **organization** in the minds of customers and employees, and create a perception of what an **organization** stands for.
“Good things happen when we dog, obsess, and communicate constantly about just a few essential things. Sustaining the vision is not a product of eloquence or slick materials. Like any organization, schools communicate what is valued by what they focus on…in most organizations, what gets monitored gets done.”

−Mike Schmoker
Key Messages

▪ All students can succeed.
▪ We can and should have high expectations for all students.
▪ All members of the school community should be able to state (in their own words and in a way that is meaningful to them) the school’s mission, vision, goals, values, and current priorities.
▪ The vision, goals and values should be living, breathing parts of school life.
Vision, Mission and Values

- **Mission**: A statement that explains your purpose (why does your organization exist?)

- **Vision**: A statement of what your organization wants to become (working at its peak performance)

- **Values**: A list of building blocks that are the foundation of your organization – guiding principles
KISS

- *Keep it Simple, Stupid*

KIR

*Keep it REAL*

*Integrity*
As the leader of your school/department/area, list your three key messages, and three priorities for this upcoming school year.
Pitch Deck (Branding)
Elevator Speech
Why would I want to work at your school (department, district, . . .)?
Step 1

Describe who you are.

- Keep it short.
- Hint: What would you want the listener to remember about you or your organization?
Step 2

Describe what you do.

▪ Here is where you state your value, phrased as key results or impact. To organize your thoughts, it may help to think of this as your tag line.

▪ Hint: This should allow your listener to understand how you or your school adds value.
Describe why your organization is unique.

- Now it is time to show the unique benefits that your organization bring to the world of educating young people. Show what you do that is different or better than others.
Describe your goal.

- Describe your immediate goals (remember those three important messages). Goals should be concrete, defined and realistic. Include a time frame.
- Hint: This is the final step, and it should be readily apparent to the listener what you are asking of him or her.
The key to obtaining cooperation from others is:

- using high-quality communication in everyday interactions and small steps
- knowing what your key messages are
- focusing on your key message in everyday interactions/communications

Go back to grid and complete the WHAT (three priorities that should be communicated with everyone – all stakeholders)
Essential Question 2

What are the key messages that need to be communicated to various members of the school community?

- What squares with my thinking?
- What’s still rolling around in my mind?
- What do I need to change?
Next Steps Follow Up Activity

- Create a team
- Provide background information – WHY?
- Survey
- Analyze results
- Create a plan (they have template)
- Carry out plan
BABY STEPS

- Choose one “key message” that you would like to work on for your organization.
- Use the handouts and other sources to extract key principles for imparting your key message.
- Begin to create an action plan for imparting your key message.
- Make sure your action plan meets all the criteria that you developed for organizational communications.
Leaders’ Key Message

- The **key to obtaining cooperation from others** is:
  - *using high-quality communication in everyday interactions and small steps*
  - *knowing what your key messages are*
  - *focusing on your key message in everyday interactions/communications*

LET’S REVIEW
Big Idea # 1

- A good number of studies identify communication as a key leadership responsibility that, when combined with other leadership responsibilities, has a strong impact on student achievement.
- Successful school leaders encourage meaningful messaging around student achievement.
Although school leaders say that they believe communication is two-way, and that communication between the school and the community/parents is just as important as that within the school, they act as if they don’t believe these things.
Big Idea # 3

The first step in effective communication is understanding what it is that you wish to communicate.
Big Idea # 4

- Successful school leaders get all members of the school community focused on high expectations for all students. A high percentage of communications reflect this focus.
Successful school leaders use a variety of venues (meetings, discussions, staff development, social media and school visits) to make their points and to reach out and involve others.
Big Idea # 6

- Successful school leaders have a clear consistent message.
Big Idea # 7

- Successful school leaders let member of the school community know what is going on, sharing both good news and bad news.

- Successful school leaders have Integrity
Big Idea # 8

Everyone in the school community should be able to state (in their own words and in a way that is meaningful to them) the school’s vision, goals and key current priorities. (and values)
Follow-Up Assignments

- Handout and survey
Pursue one great decisive aim with force and determination.
Carl von Clausewitz