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Collaboration and Communication Plan

Students' success can be greatly enhanced by teachers who make best use of all the resources available, including human resources. The goal of any collaboration and communication plan should be to encourage student success by creating and maintaining lines of communication with, and enlisting the support of, all stakeholders. Below I describe some ways that I will do this. A common goal of my efforts with all of the groups is to develop mutual respect and a willingness to work together on students' behalf. Common, simple shows of respect and concern are not listed below because they can be assumed. These include such things as showing interest in, and concern for, each individual by remembering and recognizing birthdays and important cultural holidays, and inquiring about family and hobbies and other interests, etc.

Parents & Guardians

To communicate with parents and guardians, I will:

- create and maintain a list of contact information for parents and guardians
- send my Google Voice™ phone number home with all the students at the beginning of the year, with a note to the parents that they can call me anytime about anything
- explain my communication and collaboration plan to the students as it pertains to their teachers and their parents / guardians. By explaining my actions and expectations up front, I hope to enlist the students' support and assistance in communicating with other stakeholders, especially parents and guardians.
- encourage students to discuss lessons with their parents by occasionally requiring a parent's signature on homework and end-of-unit review sheets
- send letters home in the parents' native languages approximately once every two months. To the extent it is possible, these letters will be written in class with the students and will outline what the students have been learning and how they are progressing.

- make every effort to meet each students' parents or guardians at least once per school year, either at their home or a public space in their community, to discuss their student's progress. If necessary, I will use interpreters, phrasebooks, computer translation, or other language resource in order to effectively communicate. These visits are in addition to regular school visits such as open houses and parent-teacher conferences.
- attend local events in the students' communities, especially events connected to students' cultures
- attend events that my students are involved with, as their parents can be expected to attend these also, if their schedules allow
- invite two or three parents to visit class and tell the students about their careers or life experiences. The goal is to increase student motivation and parent participation.
- make every effort to make parents feel welcome at the school, being aware of, and taking appropriate measures to address cultural or linguistic factors that may make participation by parents difficult
- use technology to assist and enhance communication, to the extent practical for my students' parents. Email is an obvious first place to start, but faxes, cell phone messaging, Internet instant messaging (IM), and web pages (with school permission if necessary) are other tools that will be used if practical.
- make efforts to learn at least school-specific vocabulary in each students' native language, in order to help communication with parents. Ideally, I would additionally like to learn to speak each students' native language well enough to at least meet and greet parents in their own language. (Because having a basic knowledge of students' languages can also help with classroom discipline and developing rapport with students, language study is extremely important in my opinion.)

Community Resources

I will get to know and be known by members of the students' communities. To communicate and collaborate with community resources, I will:

- attend and, if possible, participate in local community events

- meet with several community leaders at least once per year so that we can get to know each other
- attend school events in which my students are participating, because members of students' communities may attend as well
- invite community leaders to visit the classroom to tell the students about their careers or life experiences
- invite community leaders to assist with field trips and request their permission to take students on field trips to appropriate community locations (religious, cultural, business, or otherwise)
- attempt to place computers in my students' homes, to ensure equal access to technology. To do this, I will work with community organizations and leaders to recycle unused computers and place them with families that need them. If legally necessary to protect the school (or school district), I will work with community leaders to found a non-profit organization to manage the collection, refitting, and distribution of computers.

Content and Resource Teachers

To communicate and collaborate with content and resource teachers, I will:

- eat lunch in the staff room as often as practical, in order to meet and talk with teachers
- ask to eat (or meet at any convenient time) with specific teachers to discuss our students, as often as is necessary, but no less than once per quarter
- ask to present to school staff at meetings. I will try to do this at least once per school year and will address issues of concern to teachers and staff vis-a-vis ESL students and TESOL.
- create a quarterly TESOL newsletter and put it in teachers' mailboxes (after receiving permission if necessary). Content would include updates on students' progress and relevant information from professional TESOL publications, conferences, webinars, etc. Using technologies such as simple databases and the mail-merge functionality of word processing software, I will be able to customize these newsletters for each teacher. Customization makes each letter more directly relevant to each individual

teacher and thus they are more likely to read and act on the content of the letter. When necessary, supplemental newsletters will be distributed.

- email content or URLs of *highly* relevant news or content to individual teachers. To avoid being thought a nuisance, I will not email this sort of information to any individual more than once every two weeks. Further, when possible, I will ask a content area teacher's opinion on the news-worthiness of the content before forwarding to teachers of that content area.

Technology and Library Staff

To communicate and collaborate with technology and library staff, I will:

- (all of the steps listed above for content and resource teachers)
- visit the library often to discuss appropriate materials with the information science experts (i.e. librarians)
- explain and enforce proper library etiquette with my students
- do nothing to cause the staff headaches or unpleasant surprises. This means at the very least, following all guidelines for requesting or using facilities and materials.
- work with library and tech staff to acquire materials and technologies relevant for ESL students
- attend seminars to learn about new technologies and their uses, make such information available to the staff. Get their feedback and advice on new technologies.
- offer my assistance with technologies with which I am familiar

Administrators

To communicate and collaborate with administrators, I will:

- (all of the steps listed above for other school staff and teachers)
- make maximum effective use of technology to maintain communication with administrators, especially asynchronous methods that allow the administrators to reply when they have time to do so. If there are troubles or concerns, communicate those to the administrators immediately.
- offer to assist with school events, even those not related to TESOL

- do nothing that causes the administrators or school system any unfavorable publicity or unnecessary trouble, and as far as possible, make certain my students do not either
- serve in local and regional professional groups and education related bodies, and as far as is ethical, keep the administrators informed regarding those groups' decisions
- bring relevant ESOL issues to their attention, with appropriate background and supporting documents and details
- apply for grants and other funding for TESOL-related materials, training, etc.
- request time or space for developing cultural awareness among staff, teachers, and students. This might include time in staff/teacher meetings or space on a prominent bulletin board, or both. Ideally, I would present at staff/teacher meetings at least twice per year.
- request time for meetings of TESOL and relevant staff at the school and district levels, to share information and coordinate programs

Many of the steps outlined above are generic because without more information about specific situations, more concrete goals cannot be realistically set. For example, at Westerville South, Arabic or Somali would be good languages for me to start learning immediately. At other schools however, Spanish might be the best language for me to learn in order to communicate with students and parents. Until I am in a specific school, I cannot create a more detailed goal. In every case however, the intent of the goal should be clear. For most of the steps, the intent is to be an asset to my students, the school, the community, and the district, in general and specifically in terms of TESOL program development and student achievement.

Success will be measured as appropriate for each goal. For example, failure to meet with at least 90% of my students' parents or guardians at least once a year would require some reflection on why it was not possible and if the goal or its implementation needs to be modified.