

# Communication Between Administrator and Teacher

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## Introduction

The administrator's role in school is to develop objectives with his staff, coordinate the work of his/her department(s), evaluate and improve the quality of instruction and keep the curriculum relevant to the students. His/her success and the extent of his influence depends on how well and accurately he/she communicates his/her ideas. To be effective, the administrator should be able to achieve the goals of the department(s) by involving all of his/her teachers, by keeping morale high, by recognizing problems and assisting the teachers in effectively solving them, and by keeping staff up to date by providing criteria for change. The administrator has to be able to communicate with a group and on an individual basis.

Work from Derrick Meador (2016) lists twelve of the most critical aspects necessary to be an effective school leader:

1. **An effective school leader leads by example.** A leader understands that others are continuously watching what they are doing and how they respond to certain situations. They arrive early and stay late. A leader remains calm in times where there may be chaos. A leader volunteers to help and assist in areas where they are needed. They carry themselves inside and outside of the school with professionalism and dignity. They do their best to make informed decisions that will benefit their school. They are able to admit when a mistake is made.
2. **An effective school leader has a shared vision.** A leader has a continuous vision for improvement that guides how they operate. They are never satisfied and always believe they can do more. They are passionate about what they do. They are able to get those around them to buy into their vision and to become as enthusiastic about it as they are. A leader is not afraid to expand or to scale back their vision when appropriate. They actively seek input from those around them. A leader has both a short term vision to meet immediate needs, and a long-term vision to meet future needs.
3. **An effective school leader is well respected.** A leader understands that respect is something that is earned naturally over time. They do not force others around them to respect them. Instead, they earn others respect by giving respect. Leaders give others around them the opportunities to be their best. Highly respected leaders may not always be agreed with, but people almost always listen to them.
4. **An effective school leader is a problem solver.** School administrators face unique situations every day. This ensures that the job is never boring. A leader is an efficient problem solver. They are able to find the effective solutions that benefit all parties involved. They are not afraid to think outside the box. They understand that each situation is unique and that there is not a cookie cutter approach for how to do things. A leader finds a way to make things happen when no one believes that it can be done.
5. **An effective school leader is selfless.** A leader puts others first. They make humble decisions that may not necessarily benefit themselves, but instead is the best decision for the majority. These decisions may instead make their job increasingly difficult. A leader sacrifices personal time to help where and when they are needed. They are not worried about how they look as long as it is benefiting their school or school community.

6. **An effective school leader is an exceptional listener.** A leader has an open door policy. They do not dismiss anyone that feels that they need to talk to them. They listen to others fervently and wholeheartedly. They make them feel that they are important. They work with all parties to create a solution and keep them informed throughout the process. A leader understands that others around them have potentially brilliant ideas. They continuously solicit input and feedback from them. When someone else has a valuable idea, a leader gives them credit.
7. **An effective school leader adapts.** A leader understands that situations change and are not afraid to change with them. They quickly assess any situation and adapt appropriately. They are not afraid to change their approach when something is not working. They will make subtle adjustments or scrap a plan entirely and start from scratch. A leader uses the resources they have available and makes them work in any situation.
8. **An effective school leader understands individual strengths and weaknesses.** A leader understands that it is the individual parts in a machine that keeps the entire machine running. They know which of those parts are fine-tuned, which are in need of a little repair, and which could potentially need to be replaced. A leader knows each teacher's individual strengths and weaknesses. They show them how to use their strengths to make an impact on and create personal development plans to improve their weaknesses. A leader also evaluates the entire faculty as a whole and provides professional development and training in areas where improvement is needed.
9. **An effective school leader makes those around them better.** A leader works hard to make every teacher better. They encourage them to grow continuously and improve. They challenge their teachers, create goals, and provide ongoing support for them. They schedule meaningful professional development and training for their staff. A leader creates an atmosphere where distractions are minimized. They encourage their teachers to be positive, fun, and spontaneous.
10. **An effective school leader admits when they make a mistake.** A leader strives for perfection with the understanding that they are not perfect. They know that they are going to make mistakes. When they do make a mistake, they own up to that mistake. A leader works hard to rectify any issues that arise as a result of a mistake. The most important thing that a leader learns from their mistake is that it should not be repeated.
11. **An effective school leader holds others accountable.** A leader does not allow others to get away with mediocrity. They hold them accountable for their actions and reprimand them when necessary. Everyone including students has a specific job to do at school. A leader will ensure that everyone understands what is expected of them while they are at school. They create specific policies that address each situation and enforce them when they are broken.
12. **An effective school leader makes difficult decisions.** Leaders are always under the microscope. They are praised for their school's successes and scrutinized for their failures. A leader will make difficult decisions that can lead to scrutiny. They understand that not every decision is the same and even cases with similarities may need to be handled differently. They evaluate each student discipline case individually and listen to all sides. A leader works hard to help a teacher improve, but when the teacher refuses to cooperate, they terminate them. They make hundreds of decisions each day. A leader evaluates each one thoroughly and makes the decision they believe will be the most beneficial for the entire school.  
(Meador, 2016, p.1)

The administrator has to show that he/she has respect for the teacher by listening to the teacher's comments and having trust in what the teacher is doing. In doing this, the administrator is helping the teacher to believe in themselves and to foster self-direction. All of this will help the instructor to view the administrator as a person who will help them with their weaknesses and be supportive of their strengths. Assisting teachers to be more effective in their classroom methods will form a solid foundation for a good support system.

## **Communication**

The administrator has to be able to communicate effectively with a group and on a person-to-person basis. He/she can communicate with a group using the following techniques:

1. Electronic communications
2. Staff meetings
3. Workshops

Electronic communications are prepared by the administrator and distributed to the teachers. To be effective, these communications should be responses to questions and proposals. They should be relevant to proposals and decisions that have resulted from discussions with the people under his/her direct supervision.

The most common attempt the administrator makes to communicate with his/her teachers is through staff meetings. These meetings have to have definite purpose(s). It is an easy way to distribute materials and announcements from the administrator to his/her staff. The administrator should use the meetings to:

1. Encourage participation from his staff.
2. Answer any questions that arise.
3. Make sure that all the teachers understand what is going on.
4. Keep the meeting moving toward the purpose he/she has set forth.
5. Summarize all the criteria discussed.

Workshops should be conducted by the administrator and his/her staff, so that the teachers can work on problems, either individually or in groups. Group discussions that address common concerns and problems in the department should be the goal of these workshops.

## **Person-to-Person**

Person-to-person communication is used on a day-to-day basis. The everyday problems faced by the teacher on such items as instruction, equipment, safety, and discipline should be discussed on a daily basis. The daily interaction by the administrator and teacher will lead to a better relationship between the two. The teachers became aware that the administrator is interested in his/her daily routine and becomes a source for direction and help. There is little question that the best way for the administrator to keep in touch with the problems of a classroom activity is to spend time visiting classrooms.

Person-to-person communication is probably the most important level of communication. This is the level at which the administrator is going to evaluate the teacher. A good relationship between the administrator and teacher will help to establish a comfortable atmosphere where department goals are addressed collaboratively.

According to Abraham (2016), the following 5 guidelines need to be followed for a more effective communication between staff and administrator.

### **5 Guidelines for More Effective Communication**

Communication is effective when the perceived message matches the intended message. This is more likely to happen, if you:

1. Understand your intentions or goal. Since the communication process begins with an intended message, be clear on your intentions or what you hope to convey before you begin.
2. Say what you mean. If you convey a mixed message, you are likely to confuse the other person. If you are struggling to find appropriate words, acknowledge that.
3. Use I Statements. I statements describe your ideas &/or feelings, and enables you to take responsibility for your thoughts and emotions. They are much more effective than your statements, which carry a judgmental tone, and often put a person on the defensive immediately.
4. Listen for content, feelings, and intent. Each is an important component of whatever message is being communicated, and must each be considered in interpreting information.
5. Check for understanding. Communication often breaks down because people make assumptions, or because there is an assumption of understanding. Clarify, ask questions, summarize and paraphrase to be ensure that both parties have the same understanding.

(Abraham, 2016, p. 1)

The best way for an administrator to become acquainted with the teaching and learning situations occurring in classrooms is through personal observations. Administrators must develop a good rapport with the teachers. The teachers and administrators should be willing to accept each other's strengths and contributions. This will help to foster relationships of mutual trust between administrators and educators.

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