

Parent Coordinator Resource Guide & Toolkit

PLANNING with your PRINCIPAL

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What you'll learn...

To reach your full potential as an effective parent coach, open communication and intentional planning with your principal is essential. These planning meetings and continued conversations provide a detailed roadmap to ensure that school and student learning priorities match the day-to-day realities of your position.

What you'll need...

1. Copy of the Getting Started Checklist.
2. Copy of the Action Plan tool.

What you'll do...

1. Read the brief introduction on page 2
2. Complete the activities
3. Schedule planning sessions with your principal

Why planning with your principal is essential!

Priorities...we all have them, but are they the same? Are you and your principal on the same page? To be effective, you will need a clear and defined understanding of the priorities for your position. Frequent communication and joint planning with your principal is the key to success as a Parent Coordinator. This tool describes 5 important planning sessions you should have with your principal. In addition to these planning sessions, you should have regular check-ins and meetings with your principal to make sure you are both on the same page.

Planning Session #1

Think about the following—What are the priorities for your position? What are the goals for your position? Do these goals and priorities match the job description? Your first planning session with your principal should be a discussion of these questions. You should leave your first planning session with a shared understanding of and commitment to the priorities for your position and the goals to be accomplished for the year. As you plan with your administrator, think about the following: Are you and your principal...

- *On the same page?*
- *At completely different sections of the book?*
- *Reading two different books?*

By the end this first session, both you and your principal should have the same expectations for your work. Make sure that you plan for regular contact with your principal. Consider using the Weekly Report worksheet to structure these meetings.

Planning Session #2

Once you and your principal have a common understanding of your role at the school, it will be important to clearly communicate this information to school staff and parents. During this planning session, work with your principal to schedule a presentation about your position at an upcoming staff meeting. In addition, find a time early in the year when you and your principal can jointly present the same information to your PA/PTA and other parent organizations. At the end of this planning session, you should have:

- *A date/time for a presentation to school staff,*
- *A date/time for a presentation to the PA/PTA and other parent groups, and*
- *An agreement on what and how you will share the information about your role with staff and parents.*

Planning Session #3

While you at this point already have a plan to share information through presentations to staff and parents, there are other effective ways to let the community know how your school is supporting families and helping engage parents in the learning process. During this 3rd planning session, talk with your principal about creating a communication plan using multiple modes of contact. Some additional methods include: a parent newsletter, weekly updates for staff, social media, a website, tip sheets, parent guides, family nights, etc. Use the Keeping Our School Community Informed Worksheet to guide the development of your communication plan.

Planning Session #4

Even though you are the parent coordinator for your building, if your school's efforts to build strong family engagement are going to be successful, you can't be the only person working in your school to bring parents and families into the student learning and school improvement process. To increase the cooperation and commitment of other school staff with parent engagement efforts, it is important for you to be involved with various teams in your building. Talk with your principal about which school teams, meetings and committees you should be a part of. These can include: staff meetings, safety committee, Inquiry team, School Leadership Team sub-committees and back-to-school planning teams. Together with your principal, list all of the teams in your school and decide which ones you should join.

Planning Session #5

As the Parent Coordinator, you have been hired to be the school "expert" on parent engagement. To be successful in this role, it is important for you to continue learning about what works to effectively engage parents in the learning process. With your principal, create a professional development plan that will enhance your professional skills. Your plan should include both "in-house" and external sources of professional development. Make sure to build adequate time into your schedule for regular learning opportunities.

Scheduling Regular Meetings

The 5 planning sessions described in this tool will help ensure you and your principal are "on the same page." In addition to the 5 planning sessions, you must have regular contact with your principal that will allow you to keep her/him informed of what you are doing, as well to ask for further clarification and support. During the first planning session, set a regular date and time to meet with one another. The meetings don't need to be long (10-15 minutes). They do, however, need to happen consistently. Consider using the Weekly Report worksheet to structure these meetings. The Parent Coordinator position should be an indispensable one within your school. The only way to become indispensable is to continuously highlight and share your accomplishments with your administrator!

Sample Format for Weekly Report

Date: _____

I am **currently** working on the following...

How my work aligns with our **School Improvement** goals...

My outreach to **parents** includes...

My outreach to **educators and school staff** includes...

My outreach to **community** includes...

I **need assistance** with...

I have **questions** regarding...

My **weekly highlight** was...

Worksheet: Keeping our School Community Informed (Page 1)

Use this worksheet (or your monthly MMR (Mayor's Management Report) to describe details for each item. First decide **what** and **with whom** you will share the information. Second decide **how** and **when** you will share the information. Finally, who will be responsible for ensuring that your communication plan is successful?

1. Information about **parent engagement activities and resources** (describe what you will share):

With whom will we share this information?

2. Information about our **student learning data** (describe what you will share):

With whom will we share this information?

3. **Information and outcomes** from previous family engagement efforts:

With whom will we share this information?

4. **Other** items (describe what you will share)

With whom will we share this information?

Worksheet: Keeping our School Community Informed (Page 2)

How and when will we share information?

Use this tool to develop a plan for how you will communicate project information with the different groups that you identified on the first page of this worksheet. Below are some things to consider when developing this plan:

*Will you need to **deliver the information in multiple ways** to reach each of your audiences or will you be able to develop method(s) that can reach multiple audiences at once? Here are some methods of communication used by other schools: general newsletters, website, bulletin boards, outdoor signs, special parent engagement newsletter, school events, parent group meetings, school board meetings, and social media.*

***How often** do you feel that you will need to communicate with the school community? Of course, this may vary depending on the information and the audience.*

***Which member(s)** of your school staff can help ensure that the Communication Plan that the team developed is implemented successfully?*

Finally, note that this communication plan should be updated throughout the school year. This initial work is to ensure that as a team, you and the building administrator begin the process of communicating about your work with our school community that will help develop this important aspect of building partnerships.

Our Communication Plan:

- 1. How we will share the information?*

- 2. How often we will share the information?*

- 3. Who is responsible for sharing the information?*