

Communication PRinciples for Principals

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REACH OUT TO THE COMMANDER



IDEA

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DEALING WITH KEY COMMUNICATOR GROUPS – COMMANDERS

Beyond the hallways and grounds at your school, the one person who probably has the most impact on your school is the installation commander. He or she is probably responsible for maintaining the grounds at your school, providing day-to-day support services, and establishing the community climate where your school is located. The commander is not an outsider – he or she is your strongest advocate and depending on the situation, sometimes may be an adversary. The commander may or may not have a child attending your school; if they do, they take on a dual role as community leader and parent.

REACH OUT TO THE COMMANDER

In addition to keeping your commander informed as part of your Key Communicator Group, try the following suggestions to get him or her involved in and informed about your school.

- Invite the commander to teach a class in an area they are interested in or have experience in.
- Invite the commander to a school staff meeting, luncheon or PTA/PTO meeting.
- Offer student artwork to the commander to display in the headquarters complex.
- Invite commanders to attend band concerts, plays, or athletic competitions. You may want to consider having a student participating in one of these activities to invite the commander.
- Keep the commander informed regularly of your school's achievements.
- Put your commander on the mailing list for school publications, including student newspapers and yearbooks.
- Remember to thank the commander for his/her support, perhaps with an assembly or special event like a 5K walk/run.

Try to include the commander's staff in the above ideas when you have the opportunity.



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BE RESPONSIVE

Your actions are also part of the communications process with the commander. In addition to developing and fostering a dialogue with your commander and involving him or her in your activities and programs, you must make sure you are involved in the community beyond the school grounds.

- Attend the commander's meetings. Many commanders conduct monthly or quarterly Quality of Life or community leader meetings. Make sure you attend!
- Solicit input regularly to the installation or community newspaper. Make sure news about your school is regularly featured in the installation or community newspaper.
- Volunteer your time in the community. Become a part of community programs and celebrations and volunteer your time and talent.
- Be accessible. Make sure the commander and his or her staff has your contact numbers and e-mail address and provide updates as necessary.
- Attend ceremonies and special events. When possible, try to attend military ceremonies such as change-of-commands, etc.

Content adapted from Principals in the Public, published by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA).

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TIPS

