

Superintendent News

WARRICK COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION
ADMINISTRATION CENTER

This Edition:

Instant Messaging Program

Enhanced Communication

Communication—Essential Element of Education

September 26, 2013

We all understand the importance of communication. Few things can ruin a business, idea, or program faster than poor communication. This is true for schools as well, especially in the age of technology. Clear, timely, and concise communication between teachers, students, parents, administrators, and the community is an essential element of great schools. Before the explosion of technology, educators communicated with parents primarily through the written and spoken word. With the advent of technology, teachers now have many more options, including, e-mails, social media sites, and the internet. Today society expects communication to be instant and on-demand, and that expectation includes communication from teachers and school officials. This new expectation can be both a blessing and a curse. Without question, communication in 2013 is much different than what it was 25 years ago. Today just about everyone has access to a cell phone, e-mail account, or can log on to social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter. Long gone are the days of writing a letter, mailing it to a friend, and then waiting a week or two for a return letter. Today's instant access is great, as it provides immediate communication and feedback. Technology facilitates the sharing of ideas and thoughts with not just one person, but the entire world. This ability to instantly communicate to the masses can also be problematic. People may not take time to think through their message before sending it. The communication may be confusing, misinterpreted, or lacking in detail. Inaccurate information is another concern. People may knowingly, or unknowingly, communicate false information, which can then be passed along to others. Unfortunately, this situation occurs all too frequently on many social media sites today. Some even use social media to launch rumors and gossip to harm or hurt others. So while the power of technology to enhance communication is great, so is the opportunity for some to use that power in a negative and hurtful manner.

WCSC is committed to using the power of technology to share information in a positive way. We will use technology to clearly and concisely communicate with our parents and stakeholders in a timely manner. Several years ago we implemented our Parent Internet Viewer, allowing parents to log on to our website and monitor their child's grades, homework, and academic progress. Other communication tools include teachers contacting parents via e-mail. Many of our schools now post daily announcements on their home web page. This summer WCSC purchased Blackboard Connect. Blackboard Connect is a program that enables school personnel to send out a mass communication to parents, notifying them of an emergency situation. Examples of an emergency may include a lockdown, early dismissal, or any other event that may alter the school day. WCSC will also use the program to notify parents of attendance issues, Saturday School assignments, and missing immunizations. We ask all parents to ensure their contact information is up to date, and to be sure school officials have that accurate contact information. Should you receive a call with an emergency announcement, please listen to the message closely. The message will be crafted to answer the who, what, when, where, and how of the situation. If an emergency message is sent, we ask parents to refrain from calling the school to get additional information or verify the message. School officials will be busy ensuring the safety of our students, and working to resolve the issue at hand.

Brad Schneider, Superintendent, Warrick County School Corporation