

# The Importance of Communication

***“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion it has taken place.”***

George Bernard Shaw



# Why Communicate?

## Students Are the Chief Reason Why Communication Matters

- Students learn better when adults communicate well.
- The need for good communication in our schools is great because the needs of our students are great.
- Good communication increases parent involvement in schools (Henderson, 2002).
- Good communication between the school and parents and between the school district and the community creates a climate of trust and respect.

**COMMUNICATION IS A KEY COMPONENT OF STRONG LEADERSHIP**

# Communication Has Changed

- In the past, sending out school newsletters or press releases have been sufficient to keep parents informed and overall pleased with their school or district
- We believe we are communicating, but many of our communication tools are no longer sufficient. We need to do more.
- In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, parents receive more information from *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and other social media sites than they do from school or district communications



# Making Communication a Priority

- With all the new initiatives, communication does not have the priority status it needs
- Paying attention to building relationships with our stakeholders will ensure support and trust that we are making good decisions in the best interest of the students and the community
- Relationships built through strong communication provide long-term sustained support for our schools and districts



# Principles of Effective Communication

Planned

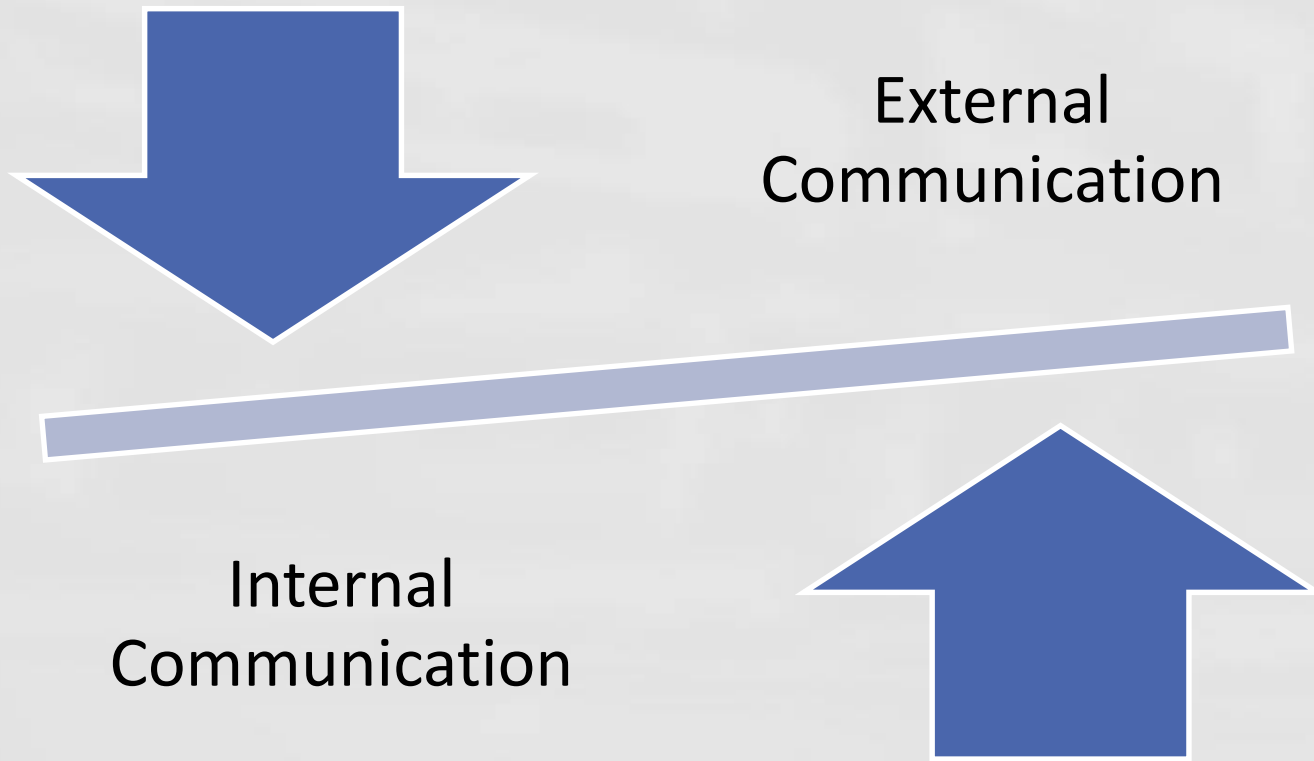
Concise

Clear

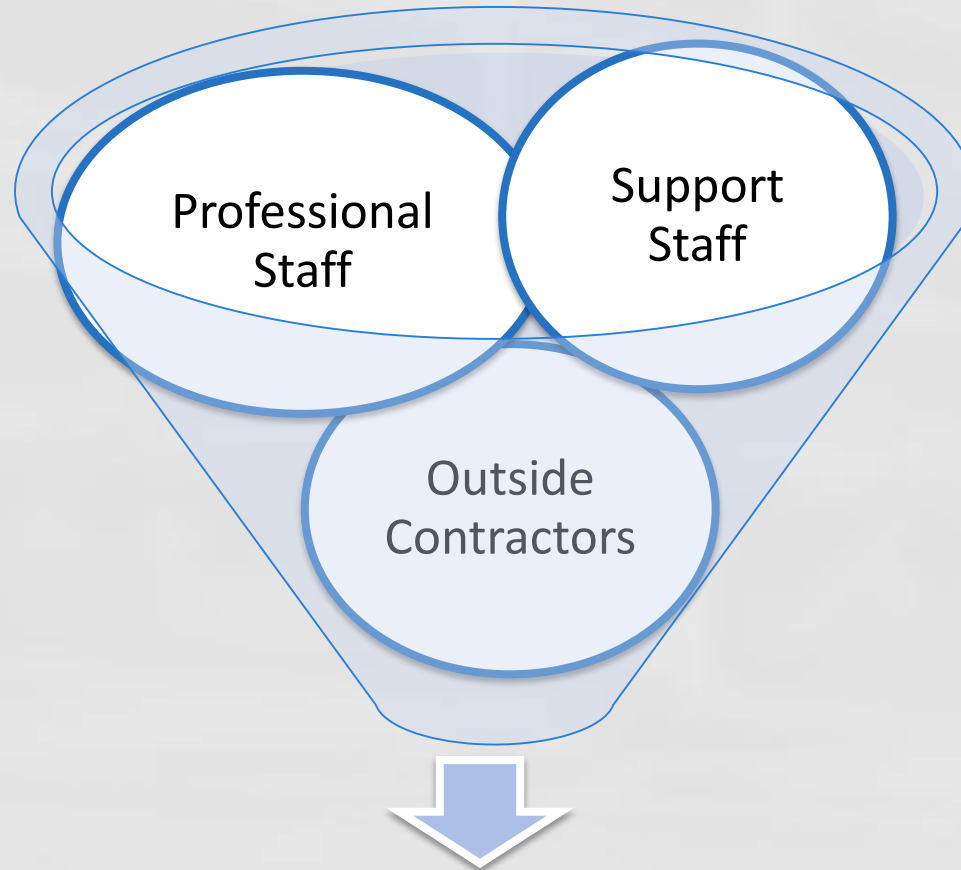
Relevant

Constant

# Recognizing All Stakeholders: External vs. Internal Communication



# Importance of Internal Communication



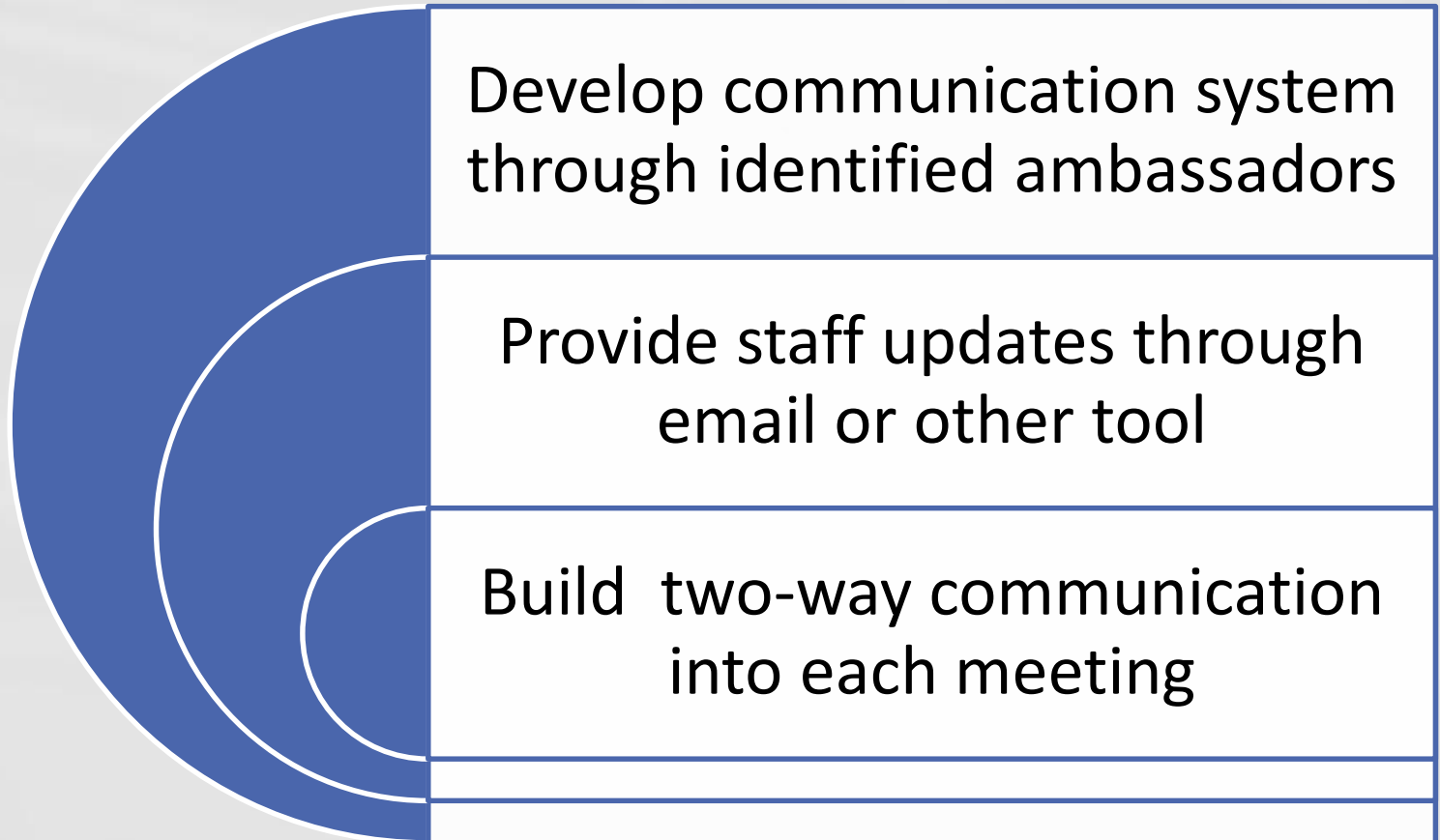
Keep Staff Informed - Increases  
trust and morale

# Keep All Staff Updated

- Keep lines of communication open and make it a priority
- Make sure all staff know what is going on
- Don't limit to just professional staff
- Research indicates that support staff are the most important communicators/public relations specialists you have in your school or district
- Demoralizing to hear about what's happening where you work from someone outside the system



# Communication Opportunities



# Who Are External Stakeholders to Your School?

Parents

School Board

Town or City  
Gov't

Local  
Businesses

Community  
Organizations

Senior  
Citizens

Media

State (CSDE)

Students

# Suggestions for Communicating with External Stakeholders

- Communicate in **clear and concise language**.
- **Avoid using education jargon**. Speak in terms that non-educators can understand.
- Feel comfortable **referring stakeholders to district leadership** as needed.



# Suggestions for Communicating With Parents

- Recognize that the **transitions such as new curriculum and changing expectations impacts both school and home.**
- **Respect parents' concerns** for their children's education and communicate that respect through word choice, tone, and body language.
- **Acknowledge that some aspects of the transition may be confusing** and the school wants transparency and open communication.
- **Stay positive.** Parents will be more confident if the school is positive about their students and the programs that support them.



# Considerations When Communicating New Initiatives

## Anticipate

- how people will react, the questions they'll raise, and the issues that may result

## Design

- your communication to answer those concerns immediately

## Key Communicators

- keep key personnel up to date regularly

## Resistors

- expect the change or new initiative to have resistors or detractors, appreciate their point of view

# Considerations When Communicating New Initiatives

## Listen

- to what people have to say and encourage their participation

## Solicit Ideas

- for your communication to answer those concerns immediately

## Be Direct

- in stating the change and explaining the rationale for the change in relation to the overall goals you wish to achieve

## Keep Communicating

- about the change after it has been made. Recognize and celebrate its successful implementation.

# Developing a Communication Plan

## Develop Communication Plan

Determine Team to Help Create Plan

Consider Strategies for Effective Communication

## Establish Frequency of Communication

Teachers

Staff

Parents

Community

## Determine Key Messages for All Stakeholders

What Do Teachers/Staff Need to Know?

What Do Parents Need to Know?

What Does the Community Need to Know?

# Communication Plan Template

Initiative to Communicate	Message	Audience	Identified Concerns	Method	Person/ Position Communicating	Date/ Occasion	Result



# Communication Plan Sample for External Stakeholders

Initiative to Communicate	Key Messages	Audience	Identified Concerns	Method	Person/ Position Communicating	Date/Occasion	Result
Implementing the CT Standards	<p>Ct Core Standards are learning goals</p> <p>Standards focus on practical skills and concept</p> <p>Standards will require a new form of testing</p> <p>Standards are designed to be challenging</p> <p>Our school/district is hard at work</p>	<p>Parents</p> <p>Community Members</p>	<p>Parents are fearful standards are and too difficult</p> <p>Community members may worry about implementation cost</p> <p>Too much testing which brings anxiety</p> <p>Standards don't represent the communities' beliefs</p>	<p>Ambassadors</p> <p>School public channel</p> <p>School Board Meetings</p> <p>Community Meetings such as Rotary</p> <p>PTA</p> <p>Blogs</p> <p>Social Media Sites</p> <p>Web pages</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>District Administrators</p>	<p>Weekly updates on website</p> <p>January Rotary Meeting</p>	