

Can You Hear Me Now?

The Building Blocks of Effective, Inclusive Communication

David Morrill, Communications & Technology Director, AWSP

Learning Goal

The goal today is for you to think deeper and differently about your communication. What problems can we help you solve through different communication ideas, strategies, or platforms?

I hope to provide some strategies, tools, and techniques to help streamline your professional (and personal) communication.

What are all of the “regular” communications you provide staff, students, parents, and community?

Who is David?





Communication is...

Communication is...
a choice

Guidelines and Expectations

Expectations

Getting everyone on the same page

- Conflict breeds where expectations are unknown or unmet
- Do you have written expectations for how quickly staff return emails to each other? To parents? How quickly you respond to staff? How often do we expect our staff to check emails?
- Do you have written expectations for frequency of communication to and among your different audiences?
- Do you have a glossary for your district/school? Are you all speaking the same language, from central office and school to students and parents?
- Are you using an equity lens for communication?
- Do you have to send a response?
- What about weekends?

Building Blocks



Why

We take for granted that people
know what we're thinking.



You can not not communicate. Not discussing the elephant in the room is communicating. Few things are as important to study, practice, and perfect as clear communication.

Basecamp



**Don't make
me think.**

Steve Krug





**Clear is kind.
Unclear is unkind.**

Brené Brown

**Poor
communication
creates more work.**

Basecamp

Who

Audience

Bite. Snack. Meal.

When

Great news delivered on the heels of bad news makes both bits worse. The bad news feels like it's being buried, the good news feels like it's being injected to change the mood. Be honest with each by giving them adequate space.

Basecamp

"Now" is often the wrong time to say what just popped into your head. It's better to let it filter it through the sieve of time. What's left is the part worth saying.

Basecamp

The end of the day has a way of convincing you what you've done is good, but the next morning has a way of telling you the truth. If you aren't sure, sleep on it before saying it.

Basecamp

Write at the right time.

Basecamp

**Only send positive emails on a
Friday.**



Consistency is Key

What's your communication schedule

- Regular newsletters
- Activities and events
- Early dismissals
- Staff updates

Where

Consider where you put things. The right communication in the wrong place might as well not exist at all. When someone relies on search to find something it's often because it wasn't where they expected something to be.

Centralized vs Decentralized

Persistent vs Ephemeral

Reels/Stories vs a Post

- How long is this communication relevant for?
- Is this a need to know right now and never again?

Inclusive or not?

Speaking only helps who's in the room, writing helps everyone. This includes people who couldn't make it, or future employees who join years from now.

Basecamp

How

Is your content accessible?

**Once is never enough. Just because you
sent something doesn't mean people
read it.**

Communication is lossy, especially verbal communication. Every hearsay hop adds static and chips at fidelity. Whenever possible, communicate directly with those you're addressing rather than passing the message through intermediaries.

Basecamp

If something's going to be difficult to hear or share, invite questions at the end. Ending without the invitation will lead to public silence but private conjecture. This is where rumors breed.

Bite. Snack. Meal.



**It's Not What You
Say, It's What
People Hear**

Frank Luntz - Words That Work



Checklist

Pause before you post.

Did you include the attachment? Does it make sense?

Would you be embarrassed if this was in the newspaper?

Social Media

Time Blocking

Content Ideas

Can You Pre-Record These for Social Media?

- Student messages on picture day
- Coaches
- Teachers
- Administrators

Social Media Times

According to experts...

Best times to post:

Twitter

- 8:00 AM Monday-Thursday

Instagram

- 11:00 AM-2:00 PM on Tuesdays
- 11:00 AM Mon-Friday

Facebook

- 9:00 AM-1:00 PM Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday

Considerations

- Who is responsible?
- Can you delegate?
- District policy for ownership
- Policy for responding to threats or negative comments
- Pre-schedule posts

Resources

Toolkit

Grammarly and Readable

Basecamp, Slack, Teams, etc

Keyboard Shortcuts & TextExpander

Buffer or Hootsuite



Canva

Smore

Final Thoughts

**Be cautious about spreading yourself too thin.
It's better to be a great communicator in a few
places than a poor communicator on many.**

Resources

Got a resource we should know about? Email david@awsp.org

[**awsp.org/cyhmn**](https://awsp.org/cyhmn)

Need more support?

David Morrill
david@awsp.org