

Teacher Quality Standard II

Teachers establish a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students.

The most important action an effective teacher takes at the beginning of the year is creating a climate for learning.

—Mary Beth Blegan, former U.S. Department of Education teacher-in-residence

A positive classroom environment enhances the academic achievement of all students, promotes appropriate classroom behavior, and is welcoming to families and adults. A respect for diversity and the uniqueness of each individual is valued. A sense of community is created in which members encourage and promote the learning of each other through collaboration, communication, and mutual respect as they work to achieve individual and common goals.

Element E

Teachers provide proactive, clear and constructive feedback to families about student progress and work collaboratively with the families and significant adults in the lives of their students.

Parents are the essential link to improving American education, and schools have to do a better job of reaching out to them. Sending home a report card is not enough. Parents want to help their children succeed in school, and often need guidance on how to be most effective.

—Richard Riley Secretary, U.S. Office of Education 1999

Professional practices referenced under each element of the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers are cumulative. Therefore, for teachers to be proficient in providing constructive feedback to families on student progress and working collaboratively with families, they must first establish a classroom environment that is inviting to families. They must also use a variety of methods to initiate communication that result in respectful relationships with students, their families and significant adults.

ACCOMPLISHED AND EXEMPLARY RATING LEVELS

The impact of a proficient implementation of the professional practices referenced in Element E will be students who communicate freely and openly with teachers and families and significant adults who partner with the teacher in supporting student strengths and addressing next steps for learning.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: FAMILIES AND SIGNIFICANT ADULTS:

- Discuss student performance with the teacher.
- Participate in school-based activities.
- Partner with the teacher to support student strengths and address next steps for learning.

Classroom Examples

Elementary reading, writing, and communicating: Students are working on the Colorado Academic Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes, Grade Level Expectation 1—Fluent reading depends on specific skills and approaches to understanding strategies when reading literary text. *(Implements lesson plans based on: Colorado Academic Standards)*



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As a way to promote student reading comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary, the 2nd-grade teacher invites students' family members and significant adults to read with students during the independent reading block each Friday. She sends home invitations to each family explaining the opportunity to help support students' reading skills. As family members enter the classroom, they are welcomed by the teacher and introduced to their "reading partner." A selection of books and questions they can ask the student after reading is provided. *(Establishes a classroom environment that is inviting to families and significant adults. Maintains respectful relationships with students, their families, and/or significant adults.)* For family members who are unable to visit the classroom during the day, the teacher provides resources for them to create recordings. Family members who are bilingual are encouraged to create recordings for second-language speakers. After each reading experience with an adult, the student writes a thank-you note and shares how the experience helped her as a reader. *(Maintains respectful relationships with students, their families, and/or significant adults.)*

Elementary reading, writing, and communicating: Students are working on the Colorado Academic Standard 1: Oral Expression and Listening, Grade Level Expectation 1—Effective communication requires speakers to express an opinion, provide information, describe a process, and persuade an audience. *(Implements lesson plans based on: Colorado Academic Standards)*

At the beginning of the school year, the 5th-grade grade-level team, or department, sends a newsletter to each family outlining the units of study for the school year. Family members are encouraged to identify topics for which they have interests, artifacts, or experiences that could enhance student learning. Throughout the school year, family members and significant adults are welcomed into the classroom to share their experiences or create videos that can be shared with students. The students maintain a visitor log for their classroom that includes each visitor's name and area of interest. There is also space for each visitor to write a note to the students about their visit. *(Establishes a classroom environment that is inviting to families and significant adults. Maintains respectful relationships with students, their families, and/or significant adults.)*

Planning/Coaching Questions

- How will I create a classroom environment that is inviting to students' families and significant adults?
- How will I ensure the relationships I have with students, families, and significant adults are respectful?
- What methods will I use to communicate with families and significant adults?
- How will I ensure the feedback provided to families and significant adults is clear and accurate?
- How will I coordinate the flow of information between my students' families and significant adults and other colleagues who provide student services?
- How will I ensure families and significant adults are aware of services available to students and their families?



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