

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.

PROFICIENT RATING LEVEL

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: THE TEACHER:

- Provides clear and accurate feedback to parents and significant adults regarding student needs and progress.

Feedback to parents needs to be timely, clear, accurate, and actionable. When providing feedback to parents, the teacher needs to provide specific examples of how the student has grown as well as areas for improvement and ways families can support a student's growth.

When the teacher only provides feedback that is negative, parents can feel overwhelmed or defensive. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to recognize a student's progress and share this with families. This can lead families to being more open to receive feedback about areas that need to improve. No matter how problematic a child's behavior might be, noting improvement in some area, even though small, establishes a tone that can contribute to further progress.



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Sharing student needs and progress can be a collaborative decision between the teacher and student. While the teacher should select some student work to share, students should be allowed to select others. Student selections should be accompanied by a written explanation of why they chose a particular item to share. This explanation may reveal how the work reflects the student's view of himself/herself as a learner and why the piece of work is important and representative of their progress. Sharing the student's reflections with families can bring them into the feedback spiral of reflection and learning. It can also support the development of a relationship that is built on respect for the student and their family.

One of the most common avenues for providing feedback to parents and significant adults is the parent-teacher conference.

Everyone likes to be an insider—someone “in the know.” Play on this human trait during your annual parent-teacher conferences. Because every parent has an inherent interest in attending their child's conference, this is a unique opportunity to invite input from parents and help them feel comfortable working with you. This comfort can prove to be a base from which parent engagement can flourish. (Ridnour, 2011)

Refer to these external resources for additional information:

- Article: “Parent–Teacher Conference Tip Sheets for Principals, Teachers, and Parents” from Harvard Family Research Project
<http://www.hfrp.org/var/hfrp/storage/fckeditor/File/Parent-Teacher-ConferenceTipSheet-100610.pdf>
Article provides tips for how to ensure parent-teacher conferences are effective for teachers and families.
- Excerpt from *Everyday Engagement* by Katy Ridnour
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/109009/chapters/Making-Inroads-with-Resisters.aspx>
Excerpt provides ideas for how and why teachers should involve students in parent-teacher conferences.

Refer to this internal resource for additional information:

- [Examples and Non-examples of Quality Feedback to Families](#)
Document provides explanations for why feedback examples are of high quality for families.

- Coordinates flow of information between families and colleagues who provide student services.

For the majority of families, the classroom teacher represents the student's school. Therefore, it is important that the teacher works with colleagues within the school and/or district who are involved in supporting a student's education to ensure families receive timely communication concerning the student's progress. By coordinating this information, the teacher can help to ensure families do not receive conflicting information that can be confusing or lead to lack of trust in the school team.

This may include:

- Social workers
- Guidance counselors
- Special education teachers
- Gifted and talented teachers
- Interventionists
- Specialists, such as music, art, band, chorus, and physical education teachers
- School psychologists
- Second language teachers



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The teacher may also act as an advocate for the student by informing families of services available to students and their families. This may include providing contact information, supporting families in completing necessary forms, providing translations when needed, and scheduling and attending meetings with student service personnel. By coordinating the flow of information between families and colleagues who provide student services, the teacher can help ensure a student's emotional, social, and intellectual needs are being addressed, as well as the needs of the families that can impact a student's education.



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