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****For Immediate Release****

Open, Productive, and Appropriate Communication is Vital to Creating a Culture of Success

George Bernard Shaw once said that, “the single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” So true! We’ve probably all been there a time or two. Communication is so important to creating a culture of success at Lakewood Public Schools. We value honest, open, and civil communication working towards clarify processes and improving the vehicles of communication within the district.

As a parent with a concern, where do I start with communication?

If your concern is in regards to the classroom, bus or extra-curricular activity, start with the teacher, coach, driver, or mentor. Doing so in a timely manner is helpful. The sooner a concern is brought forward, the faster it can be dealt with. Most concerns are easily solved with some combined effort from school and home. While approaching a teacher, coach, or mentor can be intimidating, remember this: teachers, coaches, and mentors are inherent problem-solvers. They are fixers. They *want* to help find resolution with your child’s best interests at heart.

If resolution cannot be found, the next step is having some dialogue with the building administrator or director. Our principals and directors are here to assist parents and staff by supporting them to be the most engaged and productive team-members they can be. Often, a principal or director will intervene to help mediate the challenge and encourage a resolution.

The final stop in seeking resolution would be at the Superintendent’s office. While my door is always open, I encourage parents who have concerns to start first with those who are closest to the challenge. This will expedite a resolution.

What is the process for communication between the Board and staff, parents and community members?

The Board of Education is easily accessible to the public-both parents with children in the district, as well as those citizens who do not have children in the district. Members of the community can attend a Board of Education meeting and make a public comment regarding concerns, ideas, or expressing gratitude. Remember though, the Board Meeting is a business meeting of the Board of Education held in public; it is not a public meeting with the Board of Education. The Board is there to listen to citizens and direct the Superintendent as needed. Board meetings are not forums to exchange dialogue. You can find more information on public comments on our website under the Board of Education tab. The Board of Education always welcomes public input.

When it comes to district employees communicating with the Board of Education, Board Policy helps govern this process by creating a safe, clear mechanism to avoid circumventing the Superintendent’s authority and/or Board’s authority. While the Board of Education welcomes feedback from the employees in the District, the channel of communication regarding concerns from employees to the Board flows through the Superintendent’s office. Likewise, communication from the Board to staff follows the same path through the Superintendent’s office. This process helps set boundaries for how problems are resolved within the school. The Board of Education welcomes input from employees and realizes that this input is vital to moving the district forward. You can read more about Board policy at www.neoal.com/lakewood-mi/.

How do I stay actively engaged as a parent or community member?

One of the best ways to stay connected is to ask questions. Perhaps it is a note, email, or phone call to a teacher or secretary if help is needed. Our staff is very sensitive to inquiries and usually responds within 24 hours. Attending meetings, athletic events, or Board meetings is another great way to stay engaged. Setting up a time to meet with me to dialogue your hopes and dreams for this district is always a welcomed event on my calendar!

Frequenting our website (www.lakewoodps.org) or social media accounts is another great way to stay connected. We recently launched *The Lakewood View*, a district-wide quarterly newsletter that every residence in the district receives.

What does the future hold for communication platforms at Lakewood Public Schools?

In addition to our newly redesigned website, in January we are launching a mobile app that will be fully integrated to this site. It will be even easier to access current information, news stories, social media feeds, building information, calendars, and much more.

We realize that not all families have consistent access to the internet. While much of the district information these days is digital, we want to continue to offer other options that will assist families in acquiring information quickly. Over the coming months, we are developing a few ideas that will offer families a broader option in how they receive information from the school district.

We believe that open, productive, and civil communication is a foundational element to creating and maintaining a culture of success for our staff, students, and community. If you have suggestions on how we can communicate more efficiently and effectively, please feel free to reach out to me at 616.374.8043.

For Safety and Excellence,



Randall J. Fleenor
Superintendent