
+ COMMUNICATING ◦ WITH CONVICTION

Foothills School Division Team:
Al Davidson, Assistant Superintendent
Chris Fuzessy, Superintendent

This series of tasks requires critical thinking.



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WELCOME

Considering communications poll

[Link to Results](#)

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Communications and Professional Practice Standards

Managing and coordinating communications effectively are a **key competency of leadership**. This is emphasized throughout Alberta's professional practice standards.

Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard

Alberta Education



MINISTERIAL ORDER #003/2020 (AMENDED 2023)

Alberta

Leadership Quality Standard

Alberta Education



MINISTERIAL ORDER #002/2020 (AMENDED 2023)

Alberta

Teaching Quality Standard

Alberta Education



MINISTERIAL ORDER #001/2020 (AMENDED 2023)

Alberta



Read Reflect Report

(10 minutes)

Quote:

‘If each of us can give full attention to what is actually “blocking” communication while also attending properly to the content of what is communicated, then we may be able to create something new between us.’

- David Bohm – On Dialogue

Guiding Question:

How might we each commit to communicating with conviction in our school and system level roles?



Challenges
to
Opportunities

Fact

Action

Promise

Feeling





Consider

**Leadership
Challenges...**

**New System of
Reporting**



The background features a repeating pattern of lightbulbs in a light green color against a darker green background. The lightbulbs are arranged in a horizontal line, with some appearing slightly more prominent than others. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

OBSTACLES TO OPPORTUNITIES

What have been some of the challenges in communicating with conviction as in this scenario or others you have experienced?

OBSTACLES TO OPPORTUNITIES



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*How can we
reframe these
from obstacles to
opportunities?*



[Link to Results](#)



Opportunities

**Communications
Strategy**

**New System of
Reporting**





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**HEALTH BREAK
(15 MINUTES)**



Challenges to communicating with conviction:

Nearly every action of a school and system leader is relational and requires effective communication.

Barriers and obstacles include:

Structural barriers – time, hierarchy, lack of funding, technology.

Psychological barriers - distrust, low self-efficacy, fear of conflict, blaming attitudes.



Lived best practices for leaders for communication in your new role/assignment

- **Communicate** and live your educational/leadership **philosophy** – It ensures consistency, assists in sound decision making and models the way for everyone. (*Do this everywhere... newsletter, staff meeting, web page, etc..*)
- **Ensure** all communication is **student centered** - This is our shared purpose. Don't let this get lost!
- **Establish high expectations** for students and staff - How do they know?
- **Communicate respectfully** - assume positive intent, invite perspectives, avoid assumption bias.



Lived best practices for leaders for communication in your new role/assignment

- **Close the loop** - Don't avoid the problem, it gets bigger and more difficult to resolve.
- **Be consistent # 1** – Every stakeholder must hear the same message from the leader. Expect confidences to be broken.
- **Be consistent #2** – Ensure you and your admin partner are on the same page always! Divisions erode trust.
- **Be consistent #3** – Ensure you are consistent with your emotions. Self-control is essential and managing your emotions is a key determinant of trust.
- **Apologize when necessary** – This is part of communicating with conviction. I/we got it wrong.

What to avoid in communications...



Overreliance on jargon – Our profession has specific sector related terms and language. Kids, parents, and community members don't understand this context. Keep it simple and clear.



Euphemisms to soften the message – Educators are inclined to be supportive and don't want to offend. Use plain talk when addressing challenging issues. It is ok to be honest (respectfully).



Speaking when the situation calls for listening - Many times people just want you to hear them. Acknowledge them, affirm their concerns, defer judgement or preparing your rebuttal.



Email Tennis - If you are dealing with complex details or dealing with a sensitive topic, then a phone call or face-to-face is the best choice.

Communication is essential for relational trust..

Attending Behaviour - the verbal and nonverbal responses to speakers that demonstrate attention and listening (*eye contact, vocal qualities, verbal tracking, body language*).

Active Listening - Encouraging, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing.

Questioning - The appropriate use of open-ended questions is also an important aspect of effective communication.



Consider

**Leadership
Challenges...**

**Teacher
Communication(s)**



The Dilemma...



"Students and parents are complaining, they don't know where they are at in the course..."

School leaders thoughts and observations:

Their evidence of assessment is a disaster! They have very few assessments recorded and those that are included reflect very limited learning outcomes!



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How will you communicate concerns?

Strategy 1 - Response:

How are students doing in your class this semester? I was in the other day and things seemed calm and students were respectful. Are their assessments indicating they are understanding the content?

Strategy 2 – Response:

I have serious concerns about your assessment of student learning. By the end of this month I want you to ensure you have assessments in the grade book that reflect the essential outcomes that your grade level team has agreed to. They need to be comprehensive like Mrs. Donowrong's are. See her for support.

The complexity of people issues



Managing people



Managing resources for
people



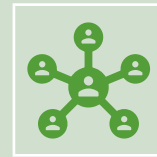
Managing personal
problems

For school and system leaders *people problems*, as categorized here, are often shown to be longstanding, difficult to resolve, and negative to such an extent that they spill over into other areas of the school community.

The Communication Dilemma...



- Having the difficult conversations to support improvement can put leaders in the challenging position of either:



Maintaining a relationship; or,



Addressing directly the issues impacting on the learning environment

Communication Solutions



- Adopt a curiosity stance about practice,
- ensure you don't make assumptions & seek to get valid information about the concerns you have,
- keep focused on shared commitment and support

Open-to-learning conversations – Vivianne Robinson.

Strategic conversations – Robyn Jackson.

Generative Dialogue – David Townsend & Pam Adams.

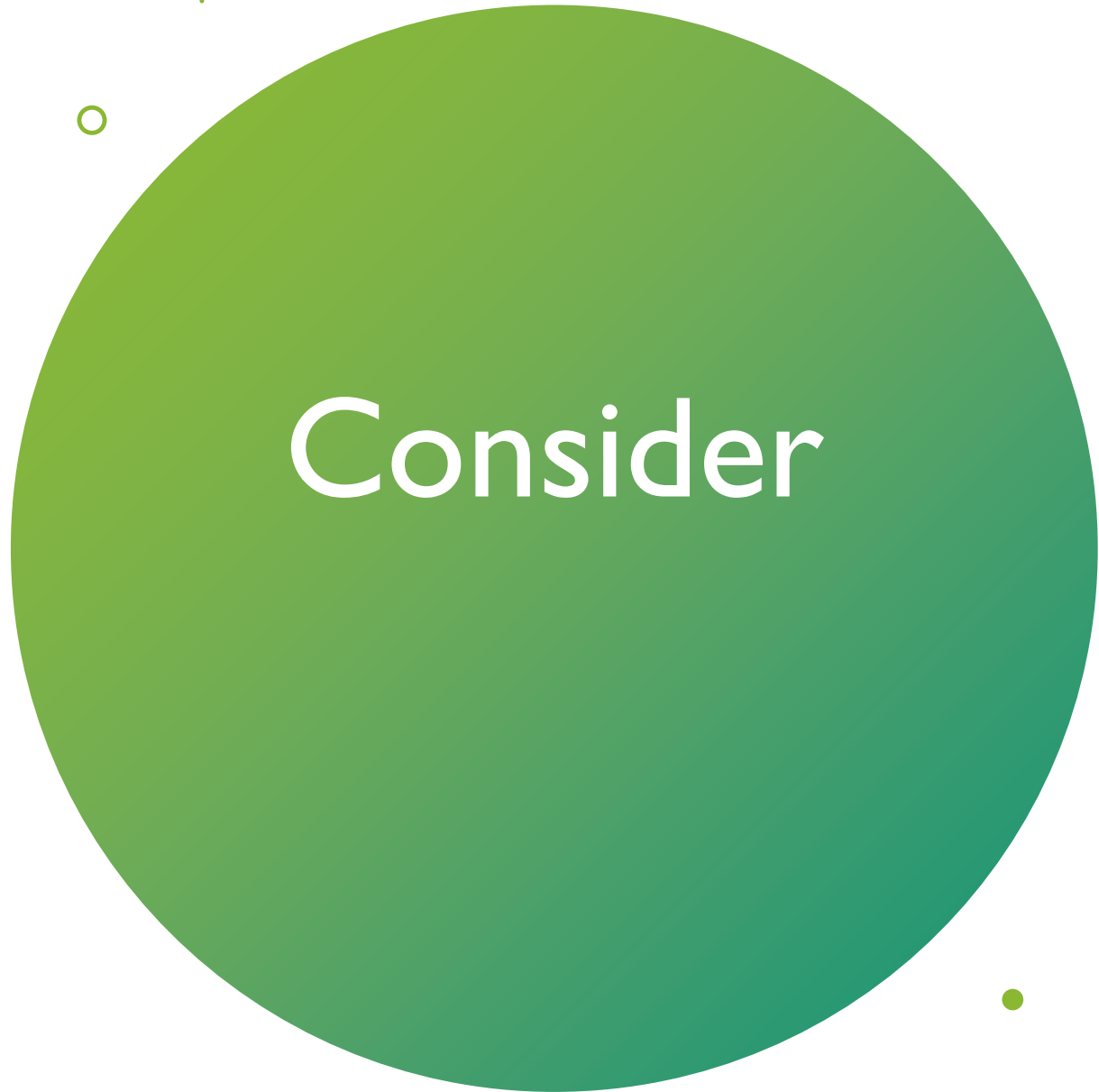


Crisis Communication

'Organizations that sponsor open, collaborative, and most importantly, safe communication cultures are more likely to thrive'.

- Jennifer Moss





Consider

**Leadership
Challenge**

Weapon at school



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One Pair Square

(30 minutes)

***What existing structures
come to mind that can
help build this open and
collaborative culture as a
foundation for
communicating with
conviction?***

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Pairs in Planning

(10 minutes)

What are one or two things I can do differently next year to communicate with conviction?





Real time feedback

(5 minutes)

In 1 word ...



Communications planning

Who?	Why?	How?
Students		
Parents		
Teachers		
Support Staff		
Local First Nations communities & knowledge keepers		
Superintendent & Leadership Team		
School Council		
Board and Ward Trustee		
Local Schools		
Outside Agencies & Partners		
Media		

Retrieved from; <https://www.educationallleaders.govt.nz/Managing-your-school/Guides-for-managing-your-school/Effective-communications>