**Artifact #6**

Communication With Children

and Families

Summer 2008

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Lesson 2

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6-15-08

One thing that inhibits relationships with students at our school is the lack of continuity when it comes to rules and enforcing them. Our school has really tried to lay out clear rules and consequences so students know what to expect. Most staff are on board with this. Some staff however choose not to follow the rules/regulations that we have laid out. This causes some students to be confused and resentful.

Activities that inhibit relationships with parents would be any event held during the daytime because of working parents. We have our beginning of the year parent orientation during the day. Last year we did have a huge turnout but I know that if my daughter’s school had this activity, I might not be able to make it. Something that is hard for staff to affect is the way parents feel about school. If they had a bad experience in their schooling, they might be less likely to come to any events.

Something that might inhibit relationships with colleagues would be lack of understanding about what different grade levels face. Teaching 5th grade, I might not know exactly what goes on in the lower grades, and vise versa. I think that sometimes staff form resentments if they think a certain grade is getting better treatment in scheduling etc. It seems like it would be easy to just talk it out, but it isn’t always that easy.

A positive strategy that our school does for students is to focus on a certain character trait each month, and then give out awards for students who have shown a strength, or growth in that area. I feel that students have a sense of pride when they receive these awards.

A positive strategy that our school does for parents is that most staff have very open lines of communication with parents. Communication could be through weekly newsletters, phone calls, notes in the student’s agenda, email, and even online blogs. I give my home phone number to parents and students so they can call anytime with questions. This has not been abused ever-probably because of caller ID ☺.

A positive strategy that our school does for teachers is having a School Effectiveness Team (SET Team). This team has representatives from each grade level as well as PTO officers and specialists. This team meets monthly to plan school/staff activities. The representatives also bring concerns from staff members to the meeting so they can be discussed. It isn’t always a perfect system, but it is beneficial to have.