

# How the Education Communication System Works for Parents and Families

Office of Kindergarten to Third Grade Education  
Division of Early Childhood Services  
New Jersey Department of Education

In addition to teachers, many other people are involved in your child's education. The more you know about what they do, the more you can help your child succeed.

If you are not sure where to find answers to your questions, get help problem-solving, or learn more about how to support your child outside of the classroom, begin with the people who are closest to your child.



Have a question?



## Teachers

- Teachers have the best insight into your child's daily learning, development, and school environment. Sometimes that includes in-class learning, out-of-class activities, behavior, experiences with peers, the school environment, or other experiences.
- Teachers are also knowledgeable about the school rules and policies that impact students in your child's grade level and throughout the entire school.
- They can answer questions about research-based student learning standards and assessments across the state and nation. They build on their expertise, regularly participate in professional development, and continually learn the newest methods for high-quality teaching and learning.
- Contacting your child's teacher to ask about ways you can support your child's learning outside of the classroom is an excellent way to immediately get answers about what and how your child is learning so that you can help your child succeed in school.
- Talk to teachers about your child. The more they know, the more they can help.



## Principal

- Principals provide leadership and direction for the entire school community.
- Their focus is to develop and supervise effective educational programs within the school and to promote the continual improvement of teaching and learning.
- They facilitate the school district's policies, administration, and operation of the school.
- Principals are responsible for supervising and supporting teachers, staff, and students.
- They set the tone for a positive school climate and culture that enriches student learning for all children.
- Talk to the principal about issues that the teacher can not resolve.



## Para-Professionals & Education Support Staff

- Trained staff members work with educators to support teaching, student learning, and specialized student needs.
- They also help teachers develop and maintain the learning environment.
- They support and reinforce the teacher's instruction and promote active student engagement in learning experiences.
- They provide general health and safety practices within and outside of the school classroom.
- Other helpful school staff include school counselors, nurses, Occupational/Physical/Speech Therapists, administrative support staff, food service workers, bus drivers, crossing guards, custodians, security guards, and others.



## Superintendent and Central Office Staff

- The Superintendent is the Chief School Administrator of the school district.
- They hire, supervise, and manage central office staff, Assistant Superintendents, Business Administrators, Principals, curriculum directors, school nurses, student support services, special education staff, specialized instructional program staff, etc.
- They make day-to-day decisions about educational programs, policy, spending, staff, and facilities.
- Superintendents are responsible for community relations and serve as a connection from the district to the community.
- Superintendents are responsible for implementing all decisions made by the Board of Education.



## Members of the Local Board of Education

- As a group, local Board of Education members are referred to as the school board. They are unpaid local community members who are elected or appointed. Any member of the community can become a school board member in their local school district.
- Members of the school board represent the community's priorities and set district policies, goals, and objectives.
- They hold the superintendent responsible for implementing the policies, day-to-day operations, and achieving goals.
- The school board plays a key communication role between the community and the school district. They are responsible for representing and communicating community interests (those of local residents, taxpayers, and parents) to school district administrators. They are also responsible to communicate the needs of the students and school district to community members (residents, taxpayers, and parents). The school board is the link between district governance and operations.



## Parent Organization

- The main role of a local parent organization at a school district or individual school is to build strong learning partnerships among parents, families, educators, and communities in support of students' successful learning and development.
- The organization provides a vehicle for parents, families, and community members to hold leadership roles that reach beyond the immediate impact of their individual child to impact the education, health, safety, and welfare of all children in the district.
- Members of the organization and educators can collaborate at a school-wide level to facilitate parents' capacity to expand student learning, development, and achievement beyond the classroom. They can also work together to support staff's professional development that strengthens parent and family engagement and creates a more equitable education for all children in the community.

Questions and concerns should be communicated through the connections above. However, if all contacts have been exhausted, the NJDOE maintains an office in each of the state's 21 counties. The following link will help you contact your NJDOE County Office <https://www.nj.gov/education/about/counties/>.