

Communicate in a way that is convenient for parents

Creating an effective weekly newsletter

“If you are not convinced that a weekly, easy to scan, condensation of news is more convenient for readers then we can have Barry skip sending out Frank every Monday and go back to forwarding all information bits and emails to you as they arrive.”

Carol Tilstra Nash

(She's just kidding. We would never do that to you—but we hope you get the point.)

Create a newsletter that is indispensable, school-wide, scannable, weekly, and available on paper, email and your website.

Primo parent communication is not rocket science but it is designed around what is convenient for your parents--and efficient for your teachers.

Make it indispensable

A newsletter becomes indispensable when every piece of information a parent needs about the school is available in one place—upcoming events, announcements, field trips, spelling words, homework, hot lunch menus, great learning adventures that happened in third grade last week, etc. If teachers continue sending out information through their own channels (emails to their class parents, their own website, notes home, etc.) your newsletter will never become indispensable. For more details, read [*Make your weekly newsletter essential: What goes in?*](#)

Make it school-wide

To be convenient for parents, your school needs one place where a parent with three kids can find all the information they need in one place. Yes, this will be long—which is why the next item is important...

Make it scannable

To be scannable a newsletter needs to:

- **A consistent, clear design** (Examples: school-wide information is always at the top, the upcoming events calendar and hot lunch menus are always in the same place, classroom specific information follows in order)

- **Descriptive headlines for each item** (Example: a parent ought to be able to skim through the headlines and see which paragraphs they can skip and which they need to read.)

For a sample template, see [Weekly Words](#).

Make it weekly

Tell your parents now (and several more times this year and at your "back to school" event next fall) that you are committing, as a school, to tell them everything they need to know once a week in a newsletter to be published every [pick a day of the week: preferably Monday or Friday]. They need to know when it will be published so they know to look for it. Then you can point out: we are committing to publishing this on our end, and as partners in your child's education we expect you to commit to reading those parts of it that apply to your family. (And yes, I'm sure you'll find a much kinder way to say that.)

Make it available on paper, email and your website

The point is you need all three.

- **Paper:** for the second-grade mom who doesn't want to risk spilled juice on her iPad while her daughter practices her memory verse. (And as a physical reminder to all parents that an invaluable information source shows up every Monday.)
- **Email:** for the junior high mom who wants her son working on spelling words from his phone during the drive to a basketball game—and doesn't want any excuses about a lost piece of paper.
- **Your website:** for the frantic mom of four kids who can't find a piece of paper seven seconds after you gave it to you.

Delegating:

You will need to delegate to each teacher the task of preparing their classroom information weekly. If you choose to use a shared document, such as the *Weekly Words* template in Google Docs or one of your own creation, they can type their information into that document directly--and they can all do it simultaneously. And you can delegate proofreading, copying and publishing to email and the web to a staff member or volunteer.

Binder tab: September

School size: All

Marketing process step:

- 1) Who are we?
- 2) What do families want?
- 3) What needs to change?
- 4) How do we tell our community?
- 5) How do we track results?