

Be welcoming

Walking into your school as a parent (or visitor) would

***“Making a school 'welcoming' is much more than a list of things we can do. Creating a welcoming atmosphere is more an attitude than anything else—
an attitude that starts right at the top.”***

Deborah Harbin, Principal
Duryea Elementary School

Since this week is already busy with webinars and in-services, today's message is short and can be delegated--in fact it will probably be better accomplished if delegated.

Drive to your school and park where a visitor or parent would

This first step is important since visitors and parents are creating an opinion about your school even before they walk through your front door.

- Is this parking area closest to the school office?
- Is it easy to find?
- What does the view of the school look like from here? Is it, at least, clean and tidy? Is it, at best, attractive and welcoming?
- Is it clear where a visitor should go? (The sign telling them they need to sign in at the front office doesn't cover it. Do you also have arrows and signs pointing to the front office and welcoming them?)

Walk in your main entrance and see it through a visitor's eyes

- If the main entrance doesn't lead directly into the school office, is it clear where to go once you are inside?
- What does the office look like? Is it organized and tidy? Attractive? Would there be a way to hide most of the materials the receptionist uses daily so they are not cluttering the space?
- If you display brochures and materials from other organizations, remember you are not obligated to display everything someone sends to you. You can certainly set standards for both content and visual attractiveness.
- Are they representative of your school?
- Do they reinforce the message of your school's mission? (A plethora of promotions for tutoring may not indicate that your school does a great job of educating during the school day...)

- Are they displayed in an organized way? Or are they a confused jumble of different materials in miscellaneous racks?

And because being welcoming *is* more than a checklist, here are some more ideas that address attitude.

The following article addresses welcoming attitudes at schools:

http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin424.shtml

Delegating:

You need to adopt and set the example on being welcoming. Everything else can be evaluated (and changed) by a volunteer.

Binder tab: August

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?