

Promoting a Positive School Team

Teachers and Support Personnel

Teachers and support personnel working together are integral to the success of every school staff. Establishing a professional relationship based on mutual respect and communication is essential.

The teacher, as instructional leader, is responsible for program planning, student assessment, and liaison with parents. Support personnel are there to support and assist the teacher with these responsibilities.

Here are some important considerations for developing a positive team:

- It is essential that the role of the teacher and the role of the support personnel be established and clarified at the beginning of each school year. This could be done between the two of you and/or in consultation with other staff or the school administration depending on the circumstances of the particular assignment.
- Role descriptions, responsibilities, and duties must be clearly defined and should be communicated to the whole school team at the beginning of each school year to assist in preventing:
 - overlap;
 - communication problems; or
 - confusion or conflict regarding role description.

- Expectations and protocols should also be clearly established. These should include:
 - Communication.
 - with each other
 - with parents and students
 - with administration
 - Strategies for classroom management.
 - The appropriate way to express concerns.
 - Confidentiality.
 - Ethics and professionalism.
 - Use of non-violent crisis intervention and/or restraint procedures.
 - Administration of medication and emergency procedures.

It is the policy of ETFO:

- That paid support personnel be responsible to the principal of the school.
- That the evaluation of support personnel be the responsibility of the principal and vice-principal.
- That teachers and support personnel be provided additional preparation time within the students' instructional day to plan and communicate.
- That district school boards provide appropriate training for teachers and support personnel to enhance the effectiveness of teachers and support personnel working together.
- That district school boards provide appropriate training for support personnel that is relative to the condition of his/her students(s).

The role of support personnel is defined by the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF). The OTF policy states:

A. General

1. That the term "educational support personnel" refers to those persons other than teachers as defined in the *Teaching Profession Act* who are directly employed by school boards and who function in a supportive role to principals and teachers in the school.
2. That teaching functions which involve decisions regarding:
 - i) identification of student needs;
 - ii) planning, development, and implementation of educational programs; and
 - iii) evaluation and reporting of student progress

be the exclusive responsibility of teaching staff.

B. Educational Support Personnel

1. That the function of educational support personnel be to assist the teacher.
2. That educational support personnel assume no responsibility for any evaluation involving the school personnel, pupils, or program.
3. That educational support personnel be responsible to the principal of the school.
4. That educational support personnel not be included in the calculation of student-teacher ratio.
5. That the deployment of educational support personnel within the school be the responsibility of the principal in consultation with staff.
6. That educational support personnel be directly employed by school boards.

From *We the Teachers of Ontario* - Ontario Teachers' Federation

Critical to a positive professional relationship is the need for flexibility, openness, sensitivity to the feelings of others, and a commitment to working as a team in order to build the best possible learning environment for students. Have a great year and remember that...

If you are experiencing difficulties and need to talk to someone in confidence, call staff in Professional Relations Services at 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836.

ST:RW