

How to Share a Concern with School Staff

Remember we are a team. No one is in education for the paycheck or the glory. No parent wants there to be an issue that needs to be addressed. We are all working together to help your child be successful - you from home, us from school. We don't always get it right, though, and it's important that we can work together when there are frustrations, misunderstandings, and areas needing growth.

Seek first to understand, then to be understood. This is one of my favorite of the 7 Habits, because it is so very helpful in daily life. If I go into situations trying to understand the other person's perspective and being truly open to their ideas and viewpoint, we are more likely to get to a true solution that benefits both of us.

Start at the lowest level possible. Whether your concern is with your child's teacher, Ms. Pickar, a specialist or a support staff member, try to address the concern directly with the person(s) involved. Think about your own work - would you want a customer going to your boss before letting you know or would you want a chance to try to make it right? Sometimes people worry about a staff member "taking it out" on their child. This is something that just doesn't happen on any regular basis!

Be brave to share who you are. Because every child and every situation is unique, we can't respond thoughtfully to anonymous messages. It's not our culture -- we want to be accessible and open and responsive. Anonymous feedback is only considered when provided through the annual Family Survey process.

Loop Ms. Pickar in if you are not satisfied with the response you get. You can feel free to CC me on a message to teachers, ask me to attend a meeting with you, or be in touch with me in one of the ways below if you are not sure what you need.

To get help if you are not satisfied or are not sure how to best get the help you need. Please contact me at pickarh@edmonds.wednet.edu My direct number 425-431-7387 (please leave your name, number and who your child is) or **Call:** 425-431- 7383 to reach the office, Mrs. Bennett, bennettl@edmonds.wednet.edu

Form your own opinion. Every child is different. Every year is different. A neighbor or friend may have had a poor experience with a staff member; another person may think they are a rockstar. Let your experience speak for itself, positively or negatively.

Speak positively around your child. It's confusing for children to have their parents question the authority of their teacher or another adult at school. We try our best to have your back; please have ours as well.

Remember the basics. There are some go-to interpersonal skills that can so easily fly out the window when we are feeling strong emotions about our children.

- Don't let it fester. Address it sooner rather than later.
- Use I statements.
- Avoid generalizations like *always* and *never*.
- We are always more bold in writing than we are in person. Think twice before pressing send.

When in doubt, just reach out!