

The Questions Keeping Superintendents Awake at Night

And How Communication Helps Solve Them

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What is Keeping you Awake?

Think of one issue in your district.

Who needs to hear from you?

What do they need to understand?

What would a useful next step look like?

Why are families leaving?

01 Enrollment

Ask departing families what influenced their decision.

Make enrollment steps easy to find and complete.

Show what students experience in your schools.

This week: Ask five families what made enrollment easy or difficult.

Why would someone choose to work in your district?

02 Staffing

Show the everyday experience of working in your district.
Explain mentoring and support with specific examples.
Keep applicants informed throughout hiring.

This week: Ask a recent hire what helped them say yes.

Why do parent concerns become public fights?

03 Parent complaints

Give families a clear person to contact first.

Acknowledge the concern and explain the next step.

Close the loop when you promise a response.

This week: Review the path from a complaint to a response.

What do we do when a rumor spreads?

04 Facebook rumors

Verify what you know before responding.

Correct meaningful misinformation in one official location.

Give staff the same facts and a link they can share.

This week: Decide who monitors, verifies, and approves responses.

How do we explain why families should choose us?

05 School choice

Answer the questions families actually ask.

Show specific opportunities and student experiences.

Invite families to visit and talk with your staff.

This week: Review your website as a family comparing schools.

How do we lead when the issue turns political?

06 Political pressure

Explain the decision, its purpose, and student impact.

Keep messages consistent with the district's role.

Offer a clear process for questions and participation.

This week: Prepare answers to the hardest five questions.

Will our community support a difficult decision?

07 Budgets and change

Explain the problem before presenting the solution.

Describe the options and the tradeoffs in plain language.

Show where community input can affect the decision.

This week: Turn one budget explanation into a family-friendly FAQ.

Are we ready to communicate in a crisis?

08 Crisis response

Name the spokesperson and a backup.

Prepare messages and a reliable update location.

Practice how staff and families will receive information.

This week: Rehearse the first message in a short tabletop exercise.

Why did our staff hear it from someone else?

09 Internal communication

Brief staff before public announcements when possible.

Give principals answers to likely questions.

Provide a place for employees to ask for clarification.

This week: Add a staff briefing to your next major announcement.

How do we build trust before we need it?

10 Community trust

Listen beyond the families who already participate.

Report what you heard and what you will do.

Show progress and explain when plans change.

This week: Invite one less-connected group into a conversation.

Communication Matters

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One action for the next 30 days

Choose the question that matters most right now.

Name the audience and the person responsible.

Set one action and a date.

Decide what will show you whether it helped.

Questions?



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