Leadership and Communication at the Secondary Level

A Collection of Ideas for What to Say and When to Say It

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Letter to Staff Prior to the Beginning of School

A letter is usually sent to staff in the summer with information on when they are expected to report to school and what is in store the week prior to the students returning to classes. Below is an example of a letter designed to welcome the staff back and provide some advance information on what will occur.

School Motto!

Dear Region High Staff:

Your summer vacation is drawing to a close, and I sincerely hope you have been able to relax and enjoy your time away from school. The counselors, administrators, and office personnel have returned and are preparing for the new school year. There is much to do, and our schedule is quite a bit different than it has been in recent years.

Tuesday, August XX is designated as an Optional Work Day for any Region High teacher wishing to come to the campus to work in preparation for the year. This is something new that the Board of Trustees approved over the summer. Hours will be 8:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m. with an hour and a half for lunch (11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.). If you are involved in Freshman Orientation that evening, please contact Ms. ___ to discuss your schedule for that day. Teachers who choose to work that day will be paid a flat amount of $90. There will be a sign-in sheet at Mrs. ___’s desk for teachers who wish to be paid for that day. There is no provision for selecting another day or working fewer hours.

Wednesday, August XX is our first of four staff development days. You are invited to a breakfast provided by Student Council that will be served 7:30 a.m.–8:15 a.m. You will pick up a name tag when you arrive that will designate the group to which you are assigned for the next few days. This will give us an opportunity to mingle and catch up a bit before the introduction of staff at 8:15 a.m. and an overview of in-service. Our schedule will vary each day in order to accomplish all staff development requirements for the district and Region High, so please read your itinerary carefully each day.

Please note that the District Convocation is Thursday morning, August XX. Region High has secured three buses for those staff members who would prefer to avoid the traffic issues presented last year. Please e-mail Ms. ___ by Tuesday, August XX if you would like to ride the bus. The sign-up will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Ms. ___ has some fun activities and door prizes planned for those who ride. Lunch will be provided by our PTO on the Region High campus following the Convocation, so all staff members will return to Region High immediately following the ceremony.

Friday’s schedule (August XX) has many of us on campus and others at other district locations. The district assignments will be available once you return to our campus on the first day.
Speech for Honor Graduate Recognition Program

Honor graduates frequently are recognized at the time when class rank is finalized. Ceremonies vary, but the important thing is that the students are properly recognized for being a student in the top ranking of their class. The speech below is one made by the principal at a special ceremony at school with a reception following. The parents are sent embossed invitations by mail and the counselor also calls each parent in advance. Participants' names are on a list distributed to teachers in advance; they report to the library, where the principal has a few private moments with them to congratulate them. Then they report to the auditorium, where their parents are waiting. The auditorium lobby has a picture of each graduate from the yearbook blown up to a poster size, and the students' pictures are displayed prominently in the school after the ceremony. The stage is decorated with plants and flowers for the occasion.

Welcome to the class of 20XX's Honor Graduate Recognition Program. This is indeed a special occasion as we recognize the Region High students who have been designated the top 10 percent scholastically of their graduation class. I want to begin by thanking our string quartet with members ___, ___, ___, and ___ from the Region High orchestra for providing us with a wonderful prelude.

While this is a special event for our students and their families, it is also important to the Region High Staff and Region ISD. I have a few introductions to make. Please hold your applause until all staff members have been introduced. Our senior class sponsors, ___ and ___; Associate Principals, ___ and ___; Assistant Principals, ___, ___, and ___; and Counselors, ___, ___, ___, ___, and ___. The two most important people in making certain that all matters related to class rank are accurate are our Registrar, ___ , and her secretary, ___. One of our teachers, Mr.___, will speak to you in a moment. Other faculty members are here as well. We also have guests from Region ISD’s central administration: superintendent Dr. ___, Assistant Superintendent Dr.___; and Executive Director Ms.___. We also have two members of the Board of Trustees here today: Mr.__ and Ms.___. Thank you for coming.

Our special guests today are family members of our students. Please stand. Students, will you please give the family members who have supported you a round of applause?

I’m the sentimental type, and I have a tendency to get a bit misty at events such as this for several reasons. Quite often my position forces me to deal with the negative, but today I get the opportunity to look at some students who have been so positive here at Region High. They are leaders and have worked hard to achieve ranking in the top 10 percent of their class. Some of them will no doubt be disappointed in where they are in that ranking, but they need to remember that 90 percent of their classmates are sitting in class right now wishing they could be in the shoes of those who are sitting in our auditorium today. This group of students sitting here today has done everything we have asked of them . . . and more. Making the top 10 percent is a real accomplishment. These are outstanding students.