



Collaborative Teams *in the Classroom*



Collaborative Teams in the Classroom

Communication and collaboration are at the core of Elk Island Public Schools’ mission, vision, and core values in *Policy 1*, and success as a school system. Similarly, collaborative teams are essential for students to experience success in the classroom.

Collaborative teams require that all participants share a clear set of beliefs and a desire to work together toward a common goal. Leadership, flexibility, trust, open-mindedness, shared decision making, and creative problem solving are also fundamental to the success of collaborative teams.

This document outlines the expectations, roles, and responsibilities of the key players involved in classroom collaborative teams. Stemming from support and a shared understanding of each other’s roles, it is our goal to support teachers and educational assistants as they work together to provide meaningful classroom experiences for students.

The principles outlined in this document are designed to empower classroom colleagues to achieve their ultimate

purpose in a culture that encourages open information sharing and working together effectively to serve the needs of students.

Purpose

This document provides a framework to clarify the roles, responsibilities, and shared duties of teachers and educational assistants, and suggests a process to facilitate communication among educational teams.

Background

The Employee Relations Group (ERG) identified a need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of teachers and educational assistants. They proposed a joint committee to examine the issues and to develop a working document that

would assist teachers and educational assistants in the classroom. A nine-member committee was formed consisting of members from the ATA Local #28, the ERG, principals, and EIPS’ Central Services. The committee’s goal was to create a document and a process that would facilitate communication to promote and enhance the excellent services that our classroom teams currently provide to all EIPS’ students.

Overview

When employees work together in teams our students receive the highest quality of services possible. Communication among team members is essential in providing excellent services to our students. Classroom teams are the most common teams, providing front-line service within the school jurisdiction, and these teams are imperative to the success of our students.

It is the responsibility of the principal and teacher(s) to outline the duties of the educational assistant(s). As some of the duties between the teacher and educational assistant overlap, this document is to be used to discuss and clarify

Notes

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the operational expectations of classroom team members. Principals are to facilitate the process and outline their expectations for ensuring that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood.

The chart in the planning guide is designed to outline the responsibilities of teachers, educational assistants, and duties that are shared. The duties and responsibilities are organized in the areas of Classroom Environment, Individual Program Plan (IPP), Learning Activities Resource Development (LARD), and Communication.

The first column delineates the teacher's roles and responsibilities. The middle column outlines the shared roles and responsibilities. In the third column, the roles and responsibilities of educational assistants are outlined. The "notes" column is intended for use when teachers and educational assistants meet to review this document.

Teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) must keep in mind the following:

- Creating and maintaining a supportive classroom environment for students

and staff is a shared responsibility for all staff who work in the classroom. While the teacher is ultimately responsible for the environment within his/her classroom, it is expected that the educational assistant(s) will support the teacher's initiatives. Teachers and educational assistants are expected to interact with each other and students in a respectful, professional manner. Professionals should address concerns as they arise, offer and receive constructive criticism, and be open to suggestions.

- Confidentiality of student and staff information must always be maintained. The teacher and educational assistant should have access to information that will affect student learning. On occasion, teachers may receive sensitive information regarding students that cannot be shared with others, or if it is shared, minimum details should be provided. It is imperative that educational assistants who receive personal information from students share this information with the teacher(s) involved with the student. All school staff must be very careful

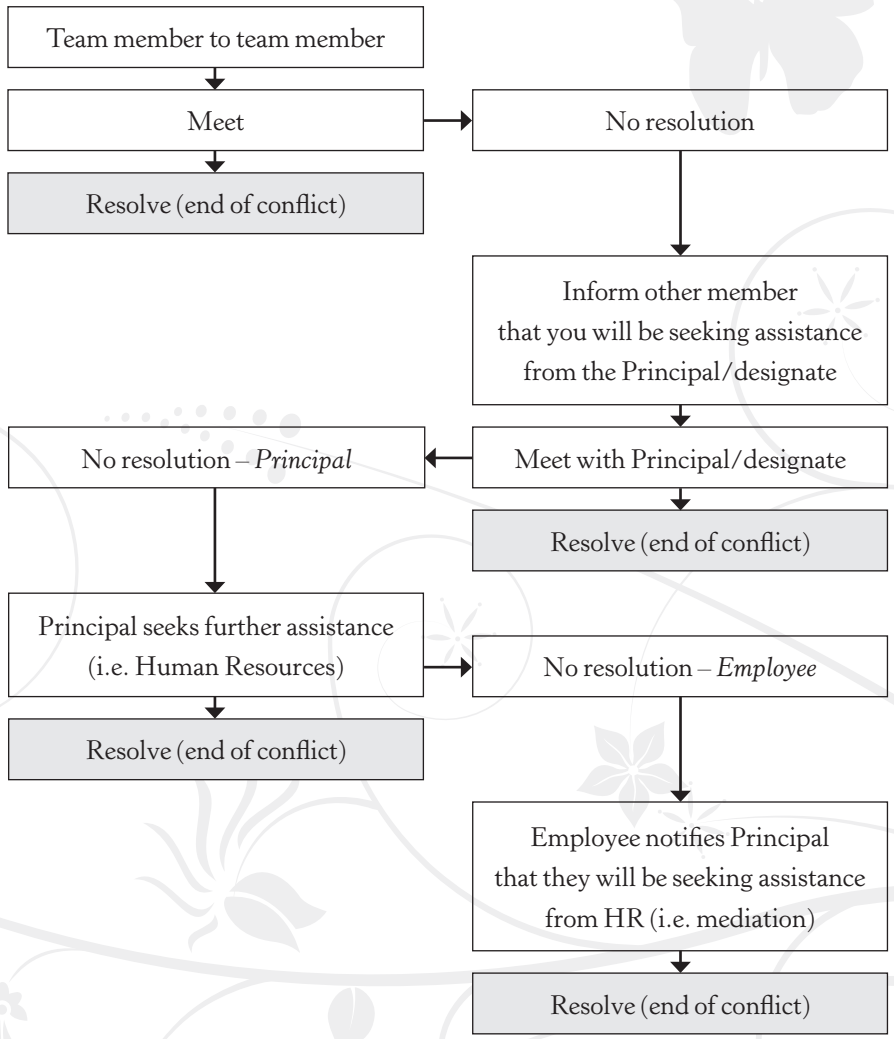
to respect confidentiality regarding private information. General knowledge of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)* is essential for all district staff.

- Communication is the core of every relationship. We communicate openly, honestly and respectfully. Should issues arise between team members, teachers and educational assistants should outline the process by which they will attempt to resolve their differences. If they are unable to resolve the issue, the next step is to approach their principal or designate for resolution assistance. Team members who wish to seek assistance from the principal/designate will inform the team member(s) involved that they believe this next step is required. All employees will ensure they adhere to the relevant standards outlined for their profession. For teachers, the *ATA Code of Professional Conduct*, for educational assistants, *Section 27, Handbook of Procedures and Benefits for Classified Personnel*, and for all employees, *Policy 19, Respectful Working and Learning Environments*. (see flow chart on page 3).

Reference Documents/Conflict Resolution

Reference Documents
Policy 1
Policy 19
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)
Handbook of Procedures and Benefits for Classified Personnel
ATA Code of Conduct

Conflict Resolution
 Should a conflict arise *how* will it be addressed? *Who* do we go to if conflicts cannot be resolved?



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Collaborative Teams Checklist

Notes

Principal

- Review the document *Collaborative Teams in the Classroom*, including the planning guide.
- Meet with teachers and educational assistants (EAs) to outline expectations.
- Clarify who is the supervisor of the educational assistant(s). Principals/Assistant Principals are the “administrative” supervisor and teachers are the “functional” supervisor.

Functional Supervision includes:

- Assigning, reviewing, and ensuring completion of work;
- Understanding the responsibilities and duties outlined in the job description of the EA;
- Providing input into performance evaluation; and
- Providing information and support as required for EAs to carry out their duties in the classroom.

Administrative Supervision includes:

- Assigning, reviewing, and ensuring completion of work;
- Evaluating performance and signing written appraisals;
- Recommending staff selection;
- Recommending discipline for staff;
- Approving leaves;
- Person to be notified of any absence of EA; and
- Approving extra and overtime for employees.

- Discuss the flow chart contained in the *Collaborative Teams in the Classroom* document (page 3) and outline how effective communication will be ensured between the teacher and EA.
- Provide information in reference to the *Handbook of Procedures and Benefits for Classified Personnel*. Address pertinent areas; job description, hours of work, expectations regarding attendance at staff meetings, committee meetings, parent-teacher conferences, days of work, coffee breaks, extra time and overtime, etc.
- Provide information in reference to relevant district and school policies, for example the discipline policy of the school.
- Ensure teacher(s) and EA(s) have information related to their job description. For generic copies of job descriptions go to StaffConnect, under *Human Resources > Staffing > Classified Job Descriptions*.

Teacher

- Meet with EA(s) to review the *Collaborative Teams in the Classroom* document and complete the planning guide.

Educational Assistant

- Meet with the teacher(s) to review the *Collaborative Teams in the Classroom* document and complete the planning guide.

Teacher

Establish and maintain communication protocols between teachers, staff, students, parents and consultants that promote and support a positive classroom environment

Share current student-related information on an as-needed basis
 Discuss upcoming professional development opportunities
 Request that appropriate training be provided to EAs

Shared

Respect the communication process by communicating openly and professionally
 Collaborate
 Seek early resolutions to problems through information communication and regularly scheduled meetings
 Share workplace concerns and documents if necessary

Maintain confidentiality

Educational Assistant

Support communication protocols between teachers, staff, students, parents, and consultants that promote a positive classroom environment

Share current student-related information on an as need basis
 Follow all established reporting procedures
 Communicate training needs to teacher and administrator

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Communication – Responsibilities

Notes

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Teacher

The teacher has primary responsibility regarding parental contact

- Establish communication protocols with EA and with parent(s) in accordance with school policies
- Provide evaluative information to parent(s) regarding academics, behaviours, or other IPP goals

- Know relevant school, district, and provincial policies

Shared

- Discuss relevant information while respecting confidentiality
- Discuss communication protocols to address the following communication areas. The purpose of this discussion is to clearly establish and clarify roles:
 - Casual conversations (how is s/he doing?)
 - Logs, journals, agendas, phone calls
 - Behaviour
 - Personal care and needs
 - Medication
 - Socialization
 - Academics/homework
 - Bus concerns

- Follow guidelines established by the school/district to protect the safety and wellbeing of students and staff

Educational Assistant

- Follow established communication protocols as directed by the teacher(s)
- Maintain and respect confidentiality
- Be familiar with and understand relevant school, district, and provincial policies and procedures relevant to his/her duties
- Adhere to school, district, and provincial policies and guidelines

Classroom Environment – Responsibilities

Notes

Teacher

- Provide or advocate for a workspace and materials necessary for the EA to perform his/her duties

- Provide the EA with information regarding classroom management structure, discipline plan, and expectations for students and staff
- Model techniques for EAs to use in providing instructional and behavioural assistance

Shared

- Discuss potential organization of physical space in the classroom to determine appropriate workspace

- Discuss and clarify classroom management structure, discipline plan, and expectations for students
- Discuss specific philosophy, techniques, strategies, and appropriate language

Educational Assistant

- Provide feedback to the teacher on effectiveness of the work space

- Provide input into how best to assist with behavioural program implementation
- Implement and support classroom routines, discipline plan and expectations for students
- Provide suggestions or information regarding interventions/strategies that may be appropriate to student behavioural needs
- Document, monitor, and report to teacher/team on implementation of the behaviour program

Teacher

Establish the priority of duties for classroom staff

Ensure classroom procedures align with school and district policies

Shared

Review duties and schedule to ensure effective implementation

Meet to consult with team

Discuss classroom procedures

Educational Assistant

Follow plan prepared by the teacher

Keep teacher informed about how the schedule is working

Implement classroom procedures

Notes

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Learning Activities Resource Development – Responsibilities

Notes	Teacher	Shared	Educational Assistant
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan learning activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss goals and objectives <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss and clarify how the EA can best assist the teacher with setting expectations for learning, behaviour of students, and implementation of instructional programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Gather, document, and share relevant information gathered through working with student(s) for the planning process <input type="checkbox"/> Provide input regarding instructional activities
	<input type="checkbox"/> Determine priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Provide or advocate for appropriate resources <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor appropriate use of resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate in setting priorities for learning resource development <input type="checkbox"/> Develop learning resources <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor resources to determine effectiveness for program delivery	<input type="checkbox"/> Assist with the development of instructional resources as directed by the teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Suggest instructional/learning resources to classroom teacher(s)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assess for instruction and program modification	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure documentation is kept current <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss information regarding assessment and evaluation of individual students	<input type="checkbox"/> Carry out and adjust learning activities under the teacher's direction

Responsibilities – Learning Activities Resource Development

Teacher	Shared	Educational Assistant	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Instruct, supervise, and facilitate student learning <input type="checkbox"/> Teach, review, and reinforce learning activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate student learning <input type="checkbox"/> Review learning resources and activities together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Implement student programs under the supervision of a teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate student learning individually or in small groups <input type="checkbox"/> Review and reinforce learning, following lesson plans and using appropriate learning strategies and activities as outlined by the teacher 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 736px; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px dotted black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> </div>

Responsibilities – Individual Program Plans

Teacher	Shared	Educational Assistant	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Establish goals and objectives	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss goals and objectives <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss and clarify how the EA can best assist the teacher with setting expectations for learning, behaviour of students, and implementation of instructional programs <input type="checkbox"/> Plan activities to meet goals <input type="checkbox"/> Work together to adapt/modify curriculum and share resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Share relevant information gathered through working with students with the school student support team <input type="checkbox"/> Provide input regarding instructional activities	Notes section with horizontal lines for writing.
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop individualized, appropriate, behavioural program	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss specific philosophy, techniques, strategies, and appropriate language	<input type="checkbox"/> Document, monitor, and report to the school student support team on implementation of the behaviour program	



Notes

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