Interview with

Ms. P

Wednesday,

Folder 5, File 1

**This is the interview with Ms. P. And, um, the first few questions I’m going to ask you are going to be background questions. OK? Ah, for instance, can you tell me how many years you’ve been in Education and how many years you’ve taught here?**

OK. So, I’ve been in Education, um, ah, two years…three years in first…five, six…seven. Just with my credential in the classroom, it’s been seven years. Um, I have my Masters in Education. I’ve been teaching here for two years. This is actually my second year. And then before that, I was an Elementary teacher. So, I did first grade for three years and then I did a four-five combo. And then I came here. I’m an instructional support teacher. So, yes.

**Wonderful. The next question is… like I said, these first few are jumping around a little bit. I apologize. Next one: and this is general on purpose. It’s a general question. Um, can you des-…will you please describe the parents of your students?**

Like personality? Or involvement?

**Anything you want.**

Anything I want…um, you know, the parents of the students here are actually really, it doesn’t seem like they get involved in the beginning, but once we take the time to reach out to them, then they’re very involved. And they’re very supportive with the interactions between myself, parent, and, and student. We do have a really high success rate, as far as parents coming to Student Intervention Team meetings, which are SIT’s and those are usually for the struggling students, either academically, or behaviorally, or even socially. So, we really focused on that a lot last year and we did see, you know, some growth and some improvement. So, we would have the parents be involved with student contracts. We put them on a contract for about six weeks and, you know, the parents are really willing to reward the student if they met their goals and the same thing, give them a consequence if they didn’t meet their goals. Ah, parents are really good about calling me back, returning phone calls here, um, notes, they’ll respond to me. Not so much e-mail. It’s more through phone. Um, and we, as far as what I’ve experienced, we have a lot of support from the parents.

**M-hm. Great. And your, ah, intervention process, does that…it sounds like that works pretty well?**

Yes.

**Or is it backlogged or…?**

It works, it actually works really well, so, um, they’re identified students through the, the teachers identify the students as either some kind of risk. So, it could be, you know, Language Arts or Math, like I said, behaviorally or socially, so we will schedule a meeting, so we have it all documented. It stays with the student. It’s, it goes into their cum. Um, the parents come and meet with us, so we kind of discuss our strategies that we’d like to implement for the student and then, we get the parents’ input. Um, we follow up with them, like, six weeks later for a second, um, meeting and by that time, we’re hoping we’ll see some kind of improvement with the student. Or we could take other courses, if need be, if, you know, they need to get testing, or if they need to be referred to CERT or maybe if we need to get them more, to switch their classes for Intervention. So, we really have, um, our team, who tries to offer suggestions for the parents, but we also want to get the parent input as well. And we keep them involved, in the loop, and put them on contracts, and stuff like that. So.

**Uh-huh. Ah, um, who’s on your Intervention team?**

On our Intervention team, it’s myself. I’m the Instructional Support teacher. We have the Community Liaison, um, CCSP…I’m, I’m forgetting her name. She used to be the counselor, but she is…

**Oh, ah, now, she’s called…**

Benevitez? Support provider?

**Yeah, um, yes. Mr. Sw- Swanson mentioned her.**

Ah-huh. She’s Comprehensive…I don’t know! I usually know, because people ask me all the time and I work with her. I forget. It will come back to me! And then we have our Outreach Liaison. And then, there’s an administrator, some kind of administrator. And then, the teachers are involved. And then, the parents.

**So, it’s not necessarily for, just for Special Ed, to lead to Special Ed.**

No. No. It can potentially lead to Special Ed, but we try to just see what’s the problem, um, before that. And a lot of times, they don’t, we don’t even need to refer them to Special Ed. We might just, um, suggest some after school tutoring, maybe some lunch tutoring, maybe different modifications in the classroom, to try to see what the problem is. So, a lot of times, what we’ll do is, we’ll modify their instructions and we’ll have the teacher, um, modify their instruction in the classroom to see how, if the student’s improving with that. Then, what’s working, what triggers behavior, just, I mean, just different things like that. Every, every situation’s different.

**Do you do, do you do everything for…this may seem a little off subject, but I’m just curious. Does it go for… do you use the same strategy for six weeks before you reassess? Is that how it’s…?**

Yes. Yes. So, we implement the plan, the actions that we’ll be taking, and who’s involved, and then everything like that and then we put the plan into implementation for six weeks. Then, we do a follow-up meeting to see how it’s going. And the parents are involved a lot, because a lot of times, what will happen is, the students have a lot of missing assignments, so they don’t get their agenda signed, or they’ll go home and they’ll tell their Mom or Dad or their caretaker, “I don’t, I don’t have any homework”. So, a lot of times, we, we just do a simple thing as showing them, “This is their agenda. This is what it looks like. If they tell you they don’t have any homework, they’re probably not telling you the truth, so your job as a parent will be to check the agenda daily. And we’ll actually write it on the document, for the parents to check the agenda daily. And then, they’ll, you know, they’ll sign it. And that, actually, a simple thing like that has really, has really worked. ‘Cuz many of the parents will say, “My, you know, I didn’t know they had homework. They don’t have homework, I don’t see…” But they do have homework just about every day.

**Great. And you know, one question I forgot to ask. Um, can you describe for me…so it really seems like I’m jumping around! Your teaching schedule. Like, what is your teaching load, or what are your t-, your responsibilities?**

My teaching schedule, um, um, my title is Instructional Support Teacher. I actually am launching this new curriculum called English 3D. It’s by Dr. Kate Kinsella. This is the first year, so it’s a pilot year for the curriculum that, um, the district, Fontana, hasn’t implemented it before, so we just got the curriculum in late August, September, so my focus is long-term English Learners, like Level 3s that are kind of stuck for English Learners and while they’re either in a rut, or whatever the case may be, um, to get out. Or we do have, I have two sets of ELD students, 7th and 8th grade, and then I have another set, 7th and 8th grade, of EO students, English Only students, and they were just placed because maybe their CST scores in Language Arts weren’t proficient or they might be right on the border…

**Were proficient? Or not proficient?**

Were not. Were not. They might be, like, close to being proficient, but not really, so it focuses a lot on listening and speaking. Ah, high academic language, vocabulary, and we’re doing writing now. So, that’s what I teach for four periods. And then, my fifth period, I work with the teachers. So, whatever they need, I’m the support for sixth grade Language Arts. So, I meet with them twice a week. We do PLCs, Professional Learning Communities, and then, the other three days, I work with, um, a teacher, just on some, like, classroom strategies, or management, whatever, kind of whatever they need.

**Coaching?**

Kind of. Yes. And sometimes, I do demonstration lessons in the classroom, if they, that’s what they need. So, it kind of just depends their need. I meet with them and we discuss how I can help and stuff like that and then we go over them. So, sometimes, I even just do intervention in their class. So, there’s like, today I was with, um, an SEI classroom. And I just kind of sat with some students and helped them work. Or, I can do pull-out, also. Sometimes I pull some kids out in here and I’ll just work with them in a group. So, it kind of just depends on their need. I was working with a student on her reading. So, she was reading like, a third grade level. So.

**M-hm. Now, tell me again the name of the new curriculum you’re...**

Curriculum? It’s English 3D.

**OK. Now, is it, is it chosen because it’s particularly good with English Language Learners? Or is it a replacement core?**

No, it’s not a replacement core. It’s pilot that might potentially be a replacement core, because they really like what’s have been happening in the classroom, with the…as far as the results and stuff, but it’s Discussing, um…Discuss, Describe, and Debate.

**It’s more verbal, it has more of a verbal component than most? [Bell rings]**

Oh, yes. Definitely. They, um, actually need to speak a lot. They need to Stand and Deliver. They need to Stand and Deliver their, their sentences. So, we do issues, so we also have an Issue book. So, the next issue we’re doing is Graffiti, Vandalism, or Art? Or Both? So, the students…we just did Cyber-bullying, which was really successful with the student, because, you know, cyber-bullying and bullying is a big issue nowadays. So, I actually, I showed them the movie, “Cyber-Bullying”. In the beginning, they said a school should not get involved in cyber-bullying. Then, after reading the articles and research and all this stuff, they, a lot of them changed their mind that school should get involved in Cyber-Bullying. So, we have some vocabulary words to know, to help them build their word knowledge and they do a lot of partner work, a lot of group work. It’s very interactive. Um, and then they have to, you know, like, for example, the way Tonya illustrate, illustrated her Science project. That would be an example of an artistic. So, whatever it may be, they have to Stand and Deliver. But, we actually do Stand and Deliver throughout. That’s something that administrative, that administrative…

**Throughout the whole school?**

Throughout the whole school, we do Stand and Deliver. Unless your focus is Academic Language. So, kind of, it kinds of goes, I think, it does, and kids are really, really…

**It looks really relevant and…so that kids who weren’t engaged, it may be designed to get, get them engaged? Motivated?**

It’s really engaging. It’s really engaging. They are always constantly working with a partner, or with a group, and they’re doing partner Pair-Share. Like the four components of the Four L’s are: Look at your partner, lean toward your partner, lower your voice, and listen attentively. So, the whole year, we’ve been trying to get them to speak. And use academic language. Actually, I even have a paper where, um, they can get extra bonus points if they sign, if they sign, if they get signatures from their teachers, and I’m going to do parent next. I kind of wanted to introduce it to having them do the other class with their teachers, so they get the teacher’s signature. If they use a high academic language word in the word bank, they write the word, they get a signature, and then they get three extra bonus points. So, they’re doing it! I don’t want them just to use academic language in the class, in this class! I kind of want them, I would like them to do academic language even at home, as well. So, and wherever they go.

**Wonderful. Now, getting back to, back to parents. Now, this really is very, very helpful for me. Um, some more specific questions about parents. What percent do you think have phone access?**

For my students?

**Yeah.**

Um, I want to say, like, 90% and the 90%, I don’t really have a problem finding, finding the parents. Some of them don’t have a home phone, but they definitely have a cell phone.

**And what do you do if they don’t? Do you have any…**

If they don’t, I will write them a letter, a note home to the students and then the students will bring it back to me. And usually, since they’re middle school students, they’re usually pretty good at telling me, “I don’t have a phone right now, but I’m gonna get a phone.” Or “I don’t have a home phone. My Mom’s working on paying this” ‘cuz, you know, sometimes they do say, “The cell phone bill’s out, but my Mom’s going to pay it”. So, I’ll just send a note home. I mean, if need be, we also do a lot of home visits here, like a middle school, um, that’s not my job, because I’m in the classroom, but the Outreach Liaison does that, and the Community Liaison.

**Th, those people, one of those, would go, go…**

Do the home visits if we’re not able to get in contact.

**[My cell phone rings. I ignore it].**  **I’m so sorry. Just ignore it.**

That’s OK! That’s OK! If we’re not able to get into contact with the parents, so initially, it’s a phone call, if we can’t get in contact with them and, um…I used to be a, a finance, a financial consultant, so I’m really good at, like, finding [school bell rings]…I used to do collecting, so I’m good at…to find people…to find people. So, you know, we have the Zangle system. If I can’t find them, I’ll call the Grandma, then I’ll call the Aunt, or I’ll call the…. I’ll try to get a working number for them. So, that’s what I do. And then, like I said, if I can’t, we’ll write a note home. If there’s no response through letter, then I, it’ll go to the next step, which would be to the office and we’re trying to get parent contact.

**And the office is pretty good about doing what they can…**

Yes. Definitely. So, if need be, they will go to the house and see what’s going on, or “Hey, can I get a parent, can I get, you know, a, a working phone number?” Um, so, the parents are really interested. I mean, they seem responsive. I don’t think there’s a problem getting a hold of…

**Wonderful. How about computer access?**

Now, that percentage is growing. However, it’s not in the 90% average, definitely. Because I used to be a part of the ELAC meetings, which... Are you familiar with ELAC? [M-hm]. OK. So, a lot of the parents expressed their concern, ‘cuz we do, um, Parent Connect. Are you familiar with Parent Connect?

**M-hm.**

A lot of them expressed their concern that they want to be able just to access Parent Connect online and see how their child is doing. But, they don’t have computer access. So, the administration and our ELAC team is really big on having them go to the computer. Like, we’ve even taken a couple of times where we would take a turn to the library and get them, the parents on the computer in the library and get, show them how to use their password, show them how to get on Parent Connect, and do all that stuff. And we do have, actually, some trainings for that. I don’t know much about it, because it’s not my area of expertise, but the Community Liaison does provide a lot of parent trainings for, um, you know, Internet access and communicating, and stuff like that, so…

**And so, what you were talking about before, where they would take the parents to the computer lab, or whatever, um, that was in association or, scheduled around the ELAC meetings?**

Yes. Yes. Which are once a month in the morning. So, the parents will come…I don’t attend the ELAC meetings now, because I have this curriculum, but last year, I was complete Instructional Support, so that’s, I did the whole entire day. Like trainings, or coaching, or demonstration lessons, and I was on the ELAC team. So, we, we did do that with the parents. And then, even Mr. Swanson, he’s, like, so down-to-earth. He’ll say, “Come to my office. If we can’t find a computer, come to my office.” And the parents are like, “OK, I’ll come to, I’ll come to your office”. So, we try to…and then, I’m also on School Site Council, so with the parents at School Site Council, we really try to show them the site plan, the website, and stuff like that, because, you know, technology is such a growing phenomena. I want them to be aware of that.

**So, you’re very aware that not every parent can get on Parent Connect.**

Yes. Exactly. And they can’t.

**And so, um, I, you sent home, I think, progress reports every two weeks?**

Every two weeks.

**So, they do have that.**

Yes, they do have the progress reports that we send home every two weeks. And, we have Teleparent, also, in there. So, I use Teleparent and…I don’t know how receptive they are to Teleparent. Like, personally, because they’ve never responded to Teleparent. Like, as far as me sending out a Teleparent and then them calling me back. It’s more…

**In other words, you might send a message, “Please call me”? Is that…**

I haven’t been able to, but I’ll just send, “Look for the Progress Report” or “Your son/ daughter has a test coming up”. Something like that. And they might just hear it and not return my call, but at least they’re aware, I’m sure they’re aware of that. The message.

**So, what you’re saying is, you’re not really sure how effective Teleparent is, one way or the other?**

Right. Exactly. I know, for me, it is, because my son’s school has Teleparent. My son’s elementary school does Teleparent all the time for everything and I don’t call them back, but I’m, “OK, great! I got the message” and I’m…that’s perfect for me. It’s perfect for me to get the message, so I use Teleparent.

**What about your parents’, um, line of work? Are they a lot of unemployed or is there one particular occupation? Two jobs? One job? At home Moms?**

A lot of them do two jobs. Now, there’s a lot of working Moms that do two jobs, from what I hear from the students. So, one could work at Costco in the day, maybe like a McDonalds in the nighttime and then the Dads, a lot of them are in construction. Um, I’ve heard a few mechanics in, in my classrooms, but really, there’s not stay…I haven’t heard of stay home Moms. They’re, they’re working. They talk about their Moms being working Moms. And a lot. They work a lot, like, a lot of hours. They’re really trying to, you know…struggle.

**They have to find time to be responsive.**

M-hm.

**OK. Um, the last general questions about communication. Describe the types of interactions you’ve had with parents over this year so far.**

OK, so we do our initial parent conference and we meet with the parents and everyone’s, all the parents, I, I haven’t had any parent issue or problem, as far as student, like, behavior. So, let’s say, for example, they’re getting a bad grade. The student, the parents are very on, very much on board. Very supportive. Like, “OK, well, thank you for sharing. Please call me.” They’re very open to call, letter, whatever I need. Actually, there’s times in the middle of the class, I’ll stop and I’ll have, I’ll call their parent right there and then and I’ll have the parent talk to the kid, like, right there and then. And so, the parent’s, I’m, like, I’ll kind of give them a brief run-down and I’ll say, “Here you go. Your son, your daughter’s right here” and they’re very, they’re very responsive. So, um…

**Do you speak Spanish, by the way?**

I’m not fluent, but I can survive. So, yeah, so yes, I can, I let them know I’m not fluent, but I kind of get my point across. And the parents don’t write back to me, but they do return my phone calls. So, if I’m not able to get a hold of the parent through the phone call, they most definitely, almost always return my phone call.

**Wonderful. So, you’re aware that not everybody can e-mail you.**

Yes.

**Um, and phone, most of them can phone.**

Yes.

**Um, would you say that, maybe some of them, writing doesn’t work, maybe some of them don’t have an adv-, you know, an advanced education to un-, to be able to correspond by writing?**

Yes. Definitely. Definitely. Because some of my students have said, “My Mom didn’t write back, because she writes in Spanish and she wasn’t sure if you were able to read Spanish.” And I’ll say, “OK, that’s OK. What did your Mom say?” and then they’ll tell me what their Mom said. So, that’s happened quite a few times.

**OK. You know, I, I’m a little not organized today, because I forgot one question, which, do you think, I think, I think you’ve kind of answered it…Do you think your parents value education?**

Yes. I’ve actually seen more so, working in the middle school than in elementary. I’m not saying they didn’t value education in elementary, but it just seems that, maybe because their kids are getting older, they’re putting more of “I got to get them ready for high school. I really got to get them involved, they want them to be responsible, I, I think they’re really, at least, or I kind of see, like a trend, you know. Parents being more involved with their… or wanting to be involved with their education.

**Really? Do you, Do you feel they’re…do you guess that maybe they’re more involved now than they were in elementary school?**

I think…I would think. Just from my experience.

**Which is, you know, not typical.**

Right. Well, you would think, because, my experience, being a first grade teacher, I feel I didn’t have as much parent involvement than I do now in the middle school.

**Ah-huh. Research-wise, um,…**

It’s the opposite?

**It’s the opposite. M-hm. Tends to go down as they, as they get older.**

That’s interesting. That’s interesting. Wow. I’m only one person…

**Your school or, or you…I’ll talk to more people…OK, um…**

But maybe, too, because we have the counselors. Maybe because we had counselors who are really involved with the parents.

**And the Liaison…**

Exactly. So maybe that’s the difference, because in elementary, we don’t have the counselors or we have one counselor that’s only there twice a week. In middle school, we had a counselor for each grade level. So that could be a reason why, although, this year, they, we don’t have counselors.

**Right. I thought of the name. It was ‘guidance tech’? Is that what you were looking…the name you were looking for?**

Comprehensive…

**Oh, you’re thinking of somebody else.**

Ms. Benevita, she’s a Comprehensive Support Provider. CCSP.

**Oh, oh, oh, that’s right. I forgot about that. I have that written down.**

CCSP. Yes. That’s her.

**So, ah, you’ve done…phone seems to work the best.**

Yes.

**Ah, and you do progress…another way of communicating…progress reports.**

Yes.

**Twice, every two weeks. Ah, any other kinds of communications? And the SIT meetings.**

The SIT meetings, so, I mean, phone, Teleparent, well, that’s phone. Phone, Teleparent, progress reports every two weeks. Not necessarily even progress reports. I’ll, if they do, if I assess them, I have their parents sign. So, if they get a test, I have them take it home and then the parent needs to sign it so they saw the test and then the students return it back. So, that’s kind of just random, whenever we have an assessment.

**And kids are pretty good about returning them with the parent signature?**

Yes, because I count it as an assignment.

**So they get points for getting the parent signature.**

M-hm. Yes.

**Ah. OK. And there’s not a certain day you do this?**

No. It’s just whenever we have an assessment.

**And the progress reports go home with the student.**

Yes.

**And you ask for parent signature and they usually come back because they get points for that.**

Yes. Yes. Exactly. If I just didn’t do points, students would not, students would not bring it back. They wouldn’t. Um, let me see…another way…or just, sometimes, I just send home, you know, I just randomly send pos-, even if it’s positive. Like, if a student’s doing better, I notice they’re improving, I’ll send a random note home to the parent.

**A particular parent, you mean?**

Yes. But, I make sure the student…I, I really follow through with the parent getting back to me. So, if they know, if a student doesn’t return the signature, then I will make the phone call.

**So, even on the positive ones, you need signatures.**

Yes.

**M-hm. Great. OK. Ah, can you give me a specific example…oh, no. Here’s another question. How often do you, would you say, you interact with parents in regard to students? And I know that’s going to vary from student to student.**

Right. Um, every week. Definitely. At least once a week. Because I make sure I contact some parents, not all the students, but I pick, like, a group, like a focus group. So, like five from each period would be one week where I want to communicate with the parents. And then, I’ll go down to the next five the next week, where I want to communicate with the parents. And then I go down the next…

**So you make sure you catch everybody that way?**

Exactly. And then, once I’m done with my group, I’ll just go back to them. And then there’s always a time where, in the middle of a class, if I need to call a parent, I call the parent. So, that’s kind of just random. I don’t have too many behavior problems since I’ve been calling the parents, like, right in the middle of the classroom, but sometimes I still do need to call the parents. So, I, I don’t know exactly how many, but I do do like a round robin thing with that. At least once a week. And, if anything, I send something home. So, like, I kind of do double time. Yeah, so, five, the five students focus, they’ll get a note home, but then, at the end of the week, I’ll send something home to all my students.

**Every week?**

Every week.

**Oh, so that what? Tells what you’re doing in class?**

Yes. Something maybe like, “Ah, we had an assessment. We’re really focusing on vocabulary. Please make sure your son/daughter reads 15 to 20 minutes a night. This week we focused on writing. Please make sure your son/daughter reads…ah, works on their gram- you know, whatever the focus is, I want, I send something home.

**And that has to be signed as well? Or not?**

No. That doesn’t have to be signed.

**And it goes home a certain day every week so they know it’s coming?**

Yes. Yes.

**Wonderful. OK. Um. OK. And, can you give me a specific example of a time in the past week or as recent as possible when you communicated with a parent in regard to a student?**

Behavior? Or anything?

**Anything.**

You know, I did, actually, last week. I talked to a Dad, because one of my students was having trouble sitting down in class. Not necessarily being disruptive with the words, but, um, it’s an RSP student and he was just kind of bouncing around all over the place. So, what I usually do is, I give them a warning. Then, after the warning, I tell them I’m going to have to log it in their behavior log, so then after the behavior log, they get a phone call home. So, I talked to the Dad and I did explain to the Dad… I was very positive. I said, “You know, your son is, um, having trouble focusing and he seems like he’s…he’s kind of roaming around, and having trouble sitting in his seat, so can you just please talk to him? I really need him to stay focused in class.” So, the Dad talked to him.

**Ah-huh. And tell me about the behavior log.**

Um, it’s just, we keep it on Zangle.

**Oh, OK.**

So, well, we actually do two sets of behavior logs. So, one we turn in to the Co-, ah, Outreach Liaison every two weeks. So, we log phone call, Teleparent, we log every communication that we do with the parents. All the teachers are required to turn it in to the Com-, ah, the Outreach Liaison every two weeks. And, then, aside from that, we do logging for behavior. It’s called the Visitor Maintenance Log, which actually goes on Zangle, so anyone can view that. So, if a parent comes…

**So, administration can…**

Administration and Community Liaison, um, the Comprehensive Support Provider, she can view it also. And that kind of just gives us more, if a parent comes in, they can show, “Well, this day, this student was being disruptive” or “This day, the student was having trouble”. You know, they can kind of see, so it’s logged in two ways. That’s what we do.

**OK, they’re both on Zangle? Or only one of them?**

No. One’s on Zangle. The other one is just on Microsoft Word. So, we just e-mail it as an, as an attachment.

**Ah-huh. And what does the Community Liaison…**

Want a copy of it? Do you want me to print you one?

**I would love, love that. Sorry, I’m sorry. And what does the Community Liaison do with what you give them, the document?**

I’m not sure. I don’t know exactly what she does…Maybe, or maybe just to hold the teachers accountable for interaction with the parents. That could be it. [pause while she makes a copy].

**So, the communication you had with the father about the student who was not staying seated, what was the result of that? Have you seen one yet?**

Y-, actually, the student has been behav- The students get really, really nervous when I call the parent. So, they respond well to me calling the parents, because I’ll hear the parent… there’s even been times where the student is in tears, because, I’m sure they got a consequence after being on the phone with the parent. So, I do, I do see behavior, um, improvements when I make the call. Or, even when I, even when I don’t get a response. One of the student will say, “Oh, Ms. Hernandez, I can’t watch TV for four days”. I say, “Well, you know, for every behavior, there’s a consequence!” So…

**While you’re doing that, I’ll kind of segue into the next group of questions and the next group of questions is about your beliefs about the relationship between parents and teachers in middle school. Is it OK? Can you do two things at once or shall I wait?**

No, I can do it. [getting a form]

**OK. Do you feel that your, your relationships with your students’ parents influence their success in school?**

Yes.

**OK. And it what ways?**

I think, um, well, I think in a lot of different ways. I think that if we have communication with our parents, our parents are involved and are motivated, um. Well, first of all, I think if we educate parents about what we’re doing or what we’re trying to do with the students in the classroom, I think it motivates them, because they have some kind of knowledge and we’re all on the same page and we kind of all have the same goals for their child to be successful. So, I think if we, if parents really feel that we are sincere about their children being successful, I think they’re more likely to even want to get involved, or even want to help the student, because they kind of, and I’ve seen it, I’ve seen parents get excited about, you know, what the, what the students are doing in the classroom.

**So, they think that, they may feel that their involvement is worthwhile.**

Yes.

**They, they can see that it can actually make a difference.**

Yes. Exactly.

**One of the things I think you were, may have been eluding to is that, by educating the parents and interacting with the parents, you’re building shared, you have a shared agenda?**

Yes. Exactly. Yes. Definitely.

**Ah-huh. And, there was another one that…another one…ah…there was something else you said, too, but it will, it will come back to me. Um, can you give me a specific example, you gave me one example, when you talked about the student who was not staying seated. Can you give me another example of when communicating with a parent made a difference to a student’s success in school?**

Well, just like, for example, the SIT meetings, the Student Intervention Teams. I think it works, also for the student, because then the student is motivated. So, we put them on a contract. We, it’s written down, so it’s a written document. So, student signs it, teacher signs it, parent signs it. So, we all have something, like a goal, for six weeks, that we want to do. So, the parent will say, “OK, if you meet your goals, bring up your grades to a ‘C’ in the next six weeks, then I’m taking you to Disneyland”. And, you know, some of the parents don’t have money, so because there’s been times when they’re like, “Oh, I don’t really have anything, how can I reward them?” So, we’ll say, “Take them to the park! The park’s free! Just spend some time.” And the kids get really excited. They’d be like, yeah, if we can just have, like, a Mom-Daughter day, that would be fun. And we kind of try to, you know, try to make it seem that it’s OK to not, you know, give them money, or that way, just do some kind of family time or so something kind of fun. Maybe your Mom can make you your favorite meal. You know, stuff like that in the kitchen, Like, “OK. I’m going to do it, I’m going to do it!” and the parents are like, “OK, yeah, if you do it, I promise you, I’ll do it” and it gets the kids, you know, the child happy and excited, and they’re smiling, and that’s, I’ve really seen that, it work.

**Sounds like it, ah, it builds, helps to build the parent-child relationship.**

Yes. Yes. And that’s what we want to do, too. Especially in those meetings. Because, sometimes, the child doesn’t have, well, I, I don’t know really too much, how I can… well, I don’t know, every situation is different, but some, sometimes a child doesn’t always necessarily have that enthusiasm about, you know, like, the school and wanting to do good, because they’re a little bit older now and some of them are, like, “Oh, I don’t really care” and a lot of them might have family issues at home, and stuff like that. But, if they see that the parent is interested and excited and wants them to do well, it really brightens their day. It really brings a big smile to their face. And, some-,and you know, it might not be at any fault for the parent, it might just be something the parent might not even thought about, you know, let me re-encourage my, my child to do well. It’s important for me to make sure they know I want them to be successful. So, when we’re in that meeting, it, it makes a whole big, it makes a big difference.

**M-hm. Before, when you were talking about why that is important, the relationship between the parent and the teacher’s important, um, I also thought you may have said something about, ah, you said something about when the parent realizes that you believe… you didn’t use these words, but you…**

That we care about the student? And we genuinely care about their success.

**And something else. That you were, did you say something about them believing that they could succeed? Or…maybe you didn’t you say that.**

Yes. Yes. Believing that they could succeed. Because, sometimes I kind of think that just our demographic area and just where we’re living at, you know, there’s a lot of low income families. Sometimes I think the parents don’t really buy into the idea that the students are going to be going to college, but we really push for college, even here at the middle school. At this early level. So, I have, like Biola University up there [indicates toward wall]. I have a few things that say “Biola University” and every week is College Day. Every Thursday’s College Day. So, the teachers are encouraged to wear college, college t-shirts, um, and participate in College Day. And so, we even get, like, I do a reward system with points and tickets. Ah, if they wear college on Thursday, I give them extra points and extra tickets. So, it gets the parents kind of asking, “Why do you want to wear college? Or, why are you wearing College?” Or, you know, gets them kind of talking. Even when we have our meetings and I have, like, “Biola University”, or “USC”, you know, they’re like “Oh, why…” this, this and that and we say, “Oh, because, we’re excited. You know, we’re really promoting college” “We want your child to be successful” “They really have a chance to be successful”. And we just talk about it a lot on campus, so I think the parents believe, “OK, my child has, has a chance to be successful”. And especially with this curriculum, because we really, um, Dr. Kate Kensalla, in our trainings, have made it where we, where the instruct-, the instructors are pushing for it to be their career. So, like, the students are talking a lot to their parents about… Like, if they stand and deliver, or, if they’re just standing and playing with their thumbs, I would say something like, “Oh, would you do that in, in the workforce? You know, would you do that in college?” or, “Would you do that…” and they say, “No, Ms. Hernandez, I wouldn’t. You know, I would get fired”. Or “No, I would get a bad grade”. So, they’re telling their parents the importance of going to college and having a career. So, we’re pushing that, at least in my class. I’m sure all of the other teachers are doing it as well, but that’s something we’re pushing.

**Very…very interesting. Um, ah, do you, now, as I said, I chose this school because, ah, of the combination of the demographics and the fact that your, um, students are achieving so well. What…do you feel, um, that the relationship between the parents and the teachers contributed at all, has contributed at all to that success of the school?**

Oh, yes. Oh, yes, Definitely.

**And do you want to say in what way? Or, pretty much what you’ve already said?**

Pretty much what I’ve already said. I just think that, if the parents, if we are openly communicating on a regular basis with the parents and we are all on the same page, and we take each individual student, their different learning styles, whatever the case may be, and have a plan for them, I really think the p-, the parents are on board and then, at home, they’re pushing learning and, you know, they really want to make the child feel like they’re being successful, so they’re getting it at school and they’re getting it at home and then I, I really feel that that’s why our scores have gone up from before.

**OK. The whole reason? Or a large part of the reason.**

A large part of the reason. We have great teachers, too.

**Um, I know. I can tell. [We both laugh]. What philosophy, if any, about the place of parents…oh. First of all, do you feel that the…I, um…oh, I’m getting ahead of myself. What philosophy do you think the administration has about the relationship between parents and teachers?**

Huge. They are really big on, ah, parent involvement and they really want the teachers to have a, a working relationship with the parents.

**OK. And how do they convey that?**

Um, I just think they convey it by, well, the parent contact log, for one, because I’m sure they’re keep… they’re tracking…it’s something it’s not a choice, whether or not we can turn it in. We have to turn in the Parent Contact Log. I don’t know how they monitor it, but I’m sure they’re, they know. And then, um, also, too, during some of our PLC’s, we’ve sometimes have administration talk about, come in and, you know, discuss some of the ways we’re, we’re getting involved with our parents during our PLCs, during our Professional Learning Communities. Um, other times, just during in, you know, in staff meetings, during staff meetings, they’ll just kind of mention, you know, having communication with the parents, the importance of communication with the parents. We’ve even had, like, a video, before, about how parents make a difference in the child’s life. Um, and then, ah…

**So, have you almost had professional development on anything to do with the parents? It sounds like that video could almost…**

It could probably be parent development. I don’t, I know there’s…see, I don’t know, I know there’s a lot of parental involvement, but the Community Liaison would be really good for you to talk to, because she’s really into parent involvement. She sees all the parents come in all the time. She actually builds trainings for the parents and they, we do offer, um, trainings for the parents to come after school for classes, and stuff like that. I just don’t know exactly what it is or what it entails.

**Ah, yeah, Mr. Swanson told me a little bit.**

Oh, OK. Exactly. Um,…I lost my train of thought. Sorry. We were talking about…

**And even things like how to run, how to run a, just while we’re on this topic, and you touched on it, even how to run a Parent Teacher Conference. Anything like that, where you’ve actually had, um, instru-, guidance from the, not just expectations from the administration, but maybe even a little bit of guidance.**

Well, I think guidance, too, I think we, when we’re doing, having the Parent Conference, we need to, we get sheets of, like, what’s expected of us. So, you know, what we need to do. Like, maybe, what’s our agenda going to be for that. So, we need to turn it in. We also need to turn in, um, our Introduction letters to the parents, the syllabus we’re sending out to our parents. We have to turn that in to administration. Um, let me see, what else? There’s always, you know, the sign-in sheet. And, of course, we’re expected to be here and, you know, be, be ready for the parents. That just comes across as, “Parents are important. You need to be prepared for Parent Conference” um, and…

**OK. Almost a climate. ..**

Yes. Yes. Exactly.

**There’s a climate established here that says ‘Parents are important’.**

Yes. Definitely. And then even with the School Site Council.

**Yeah, and you know, not every school has one of those, so I’m curious to know how, a little bit about how, um…**

How it’s run. A parent runs it.

**The parents run it?**

A parent runs it now. Uh-huh. One of…I have his daughter. So, he’s the President.

**Do you happen to know what responsibilities they have?**

I don’t. I don’t know. But, we have a president. We have a secretary.

**Ah-ha. So, it’s not a PTO. It’s definitely a Site Council.**

Yes. Exactly. A School Site Council. Yes.

**OK. I’ll ask Mr. Swanson.**

Yeah. And he’s always in the meetings also, so…

**Ah, OK, ah, now, we’ll move on to another group of questions and these are about how you would, ah, envision, um, what would you consider to be an ideal relationship between a parent and a teacher? What would that consist of? Or what would it look like?**

Um, I just think open communication, I think, um, phone calls, notes, not just negative, but also for positive. Um, I think, as a teacher, we need to really inform our parents about what’s happening in the classroom. Ah, if we have any concerns about student behavior, we definitely need to inform our… and vice versa. You know, we’re hoping that the parents…we’d like to build a trusting relationship with the parent, so, in turn, they can help us understand if anything’s going on at home…

**So, you see a relationship as being two-directional.**

Yes. Yes.

**OK. Reciprocal.**

M-hm.

**OK. So parents, ah…open communication, ah, two-directional, trusting, ah, part of the responsibility would be in-, informing, in, in both directions…**

And even meeting. Even meeting, I think, you know. It’s important to really meet with the parent and have that face-to-face talk about…You know, we, I want teachers…teachers should really make it clear to the parents how much we care about the students. I think that’s very important for teachers to convey to the parents. Because, sometimes, parents are a little defensive about teachers only calling when it’s bad. You know, for behavior, so, it should go both ways.

**Ah-hah. Um, would this ideal relationship, not in actuality, but in, ideally, would that relationship look the same for all parents, or would it look different it were a parent of a high-achieving student, a low-achieving student, a misbehaving student…?**

I think it should be the same. Me, personally. I think it, I mean, depending on how receptive the parent is, of course. Because, I know some parents aren’t as receptive as others. Or some feel like the teachers should be educating, you know, kind of educating them or taking that role. Like, so, some parents are defensive, in a sense, because you know, they don’t really know us, as a teacher, but I think as time goes on, we’re able to build that relationship.

**OK. Um, OK. You…what do you expect of yourself in your relationship with a parent?**

What do I expect…Well, I think it’s my responsibility to have an open relationship with the parents. I think that…

**Open by ‘transparent’? Or…**

Yeah. Anything, really. Flexible. Transparent. You know, if a parent can’t meet me until 5:30, I think I need to wait for that parent to come until 5:30, because it’s very important to have a relationship with the parent. Um, I expect myself to be honest and open with the parent. I expect myself to teach the student, you know, that the parent knows that I’m here to teach the student, that my primary goal is success for the student.

**That you’re effective, maybe? That you’re actually doing it?**

Yes, that I’m effective. That I’m trustworthy. Um…I don’t know.

**You know, jumping way back, I really am jumping around now…What grade do you teach?**

Seventh and eighth.

**OK. I, I think Mr. Swanson told me and I forgot. OK. And, what would you expect of the parents?**

Communication. I really expect the parents to communicate with me. So, if I’m calling them, I expect a phone call back.

**OK, responsive, then?**

Responsive. Yes.

**Anything else?**

Um, not, not really. I just want them to be responsive, really. That’s all, that’s all I can ask for!

**And sign things, maybe? That would be responsive.**

Right. Exactly. Yes.

**OK. What does the school’s administration…some of this, you’ve already answered. What does the school’s administration expect of you in your relationship with a parent? You’ve already said they expect you to communicate and to provide documentation.**

Yes. I think they expect me to have, I think they expect us, as teachers, to have, like, an open door policy for the parents. So, I think they, they, um, want us to be available to the parents. They expect us to be available to the parents. They expect us to be flexible and they expect us to communicate. Have an on-going communication with the parents. That’s what they expect.

**OK. The open door policy, do the parents need to give…I think that might be in one of the documents. Do the parents need to give warning?**

I don’t know. I don’t need…If a parent wants to come see me, come on in! And I know every teacher’s different, but I just think that, even with administration, they will drop whatever they’re doing to talk to a concerned parent. And I’ve seen it.

**So they model.**

I’ve seen it all the time. Because, being Instructional Support, I’m not in the class all day, so you know there’s a lot of times when I’m working with the liaisons or with, um, the assistant principal and the principal. So, they definitely want parents to be involved.

**Uh-huh. OK. Um, how do, how, if at all…do you, um, do you think the relationship between parents and teachers should look different in the middle school than in the elementary school years?**

No. I don’t. I think it should be the same, even in high school. It probably isn’t as much in high school, but I really think it should be. I think parents play a big role in, in their child’s life. Probably more than, than they can imagine. So, with stability from their parents, I think that really contributes to, you know, a child’s success.

**OK. Next set of questions. We’ve talked about your concept of what the ideal relationship looks like? Now, let’s talk about what actually is, OK? And my first question is, how do your relationships with parents compare to the ideal?**

I don’t have a problem with my set of students and parents. I’m sure this is probably not the case with other teachers, because I’ve heard other teachers say that the parents are not responsive. Um, and they don’t really communicate with them. And, I’ve heard flip, I’ve heard, you know, teachers say that their parents text them all the time. You know, that they’ll be texting on their cell phone and…

**The opposite problem.**

Right! Exac-, right. So, I mean, it could go either way, but really, the way this, this year, it’s ideal. My relationship with our parents...

**Has it always been that way? Or is this a particularly good year?**

Not in elementary, it hasn’t. In elementary, I really had to push for more parent involvement. Like I felt like I had to go out of my way a little bit more, but this year, the parents are really…

**Do you, would you have a guess as to why you’re having a good year, a particularly good year? Would it have maybe to do with the really successful curriculum the kids... The kids are more interested…**

I think it’s the curriculum. I really think it’s the curriculum. I love this curriculum and they are very interested in, like, the topics that we discuss, so…it might be.

**Very interesting. That’s an interesting thought. Um, OK. What, ah, and the fact that things are going… you’re having a really good year, any particular thing you want to say about how it, how it got to be strong? You’ve mentioned the possibility of it being the curriculum. Anything else?**

The possibility of it being the curriculum, but I also think, just, um, the importance of, of Parent Involvement, from my perspective, so…Me, parent involvement is extremely important. I’m going to push for parent involvement. I’m going to try to get the parent involved in any way I can. So, I think the parents have been responsive to my effort to reach them.

**So, you’ve reached out to them.**

Yes.

**OK. And you think that’s important to success?**

Yes. Yes. Definitely.

**And what kinds of parents do you have a hard time with?**

Um, I just think…Like, this year, I don’t have a hard time with any of the parent. I think the only time would be when the parent feels like the child is being attacked. Or like when they feel that the teacher really doesn’t have the best interest of their child in mind, where they feel that the child is not doing well and they only hear negative, negative, negative about the child, instead of positive. That’s what I’ve seen, like, in my, in my Student Intervention Team meetings. I’ve seen that. I’ve also seen, like, in IEP meetings, I’ve seen parents, not necessarily attack me, but they’ve attacked the other teachers, saying, “Well, how come you never call me when it’s positive?” or “How come you never write positive notes? How come it’s only when my son/daughter is, um, getting into trouble or, even, how come I’ve never got a phone call? You know, even that, some parents have said, “Well, you haven’t called me, so why now? Are you telling me all these negative things about my son or daughter and you haven’t bothered to pick up the phone?”

**So, your parents expect of the teachers to be kept informed.**

Yes. Yes.

**Uh-huh. Yeah. Um, and, OK. What kinds of parents do you have an easy, the easiest time with, developing relationships with them?**

I think the parents that, um, are really concerned with, with their, their child’s success, it’s easier. Because, right away, they, we go into the relationship with, “OK, my child has a goal, this is the plan, this is what I expect from you asa parent”, vice versa, the parent tells me, this is what they expect from me as a teacher, and then, it goes, it goes really smooth from there. Yeah.

**Uh-huh. So, it, so, you have shared agendas from the beginning?**

Yes. Yes.

**Collaborative?**

Collaborative. Yes. Definitely.

**Uh-huh. Not to put words in your mouth.**

No.

**Now, suppose I were a parent of one of your students. And the student comes, came home and told me something that wasn’t true, ah, that supposedly happened in, in your classroom. How do you suppose that typical, like, ah, like, you gave them, like you gave my child a detention and my child didn’t do anything wrong. How would you, your, the typical parent respond, do you think, to that?**

Well, I’m hoping that they would call me. Better, even, yet, than call me. I would like to have them come in so we can actually have a small meeting with the parent, myself, and the child, so we can see, actually, what happened. But, I, my response, initially, would be to…

**But, what would, what would the parent’s response be?**

If they get angry? No, I think a lot of the parents know that their, their students… I think the parent will ask the teachers before they get upset. That’s been my experience.

**Oh, OK. How, how…because the trust was developed? Or why do you think that is?**

I think because the trust was developed. I definitely think so. Because, there’s been times where I thought a parent was going to be super upset with me and then I would go in the office and they’d be, like, “Mrs. Hernandez, I’m so sorry that my son/daughter said this lie about you” and stuff, and I think it’s because I’ve built a relationship with the parents.

**How did you build that relationship?**

I, you know, I just think that through, like, letters, you know, friendly smile, through communication, you know, just kind of, you know, my demeanor with the parents, you know. “I’m very happy to meet you. I’m excited about this year. Your son/daughter learning. I really want them to be successful”. I think they just, they really buy into that. And, I’m not quiet, so... When I meet them, I have all these things to share and. So, I think, I think that’s how.

**Ah-huh. Um, OK. And what if that parent went to the administration. Ah, the child said something that was un-, untrue. Um, what if the, what if the parent went to administration instead of coming to you.**

That would be fine.

**How do you think, how do you think the, what would the administration’s typical, um, procedure be?**

Well, they would talk to the parent and then they would call me in to get my side of the story. That’s usually what happens. And then I would explain my side of the story. Then, hopefully, we can all sit down and come with, come up with some kind of resolution. That’s usually how it would work.

**Do you usually feel supported by administration in those situations?**

Yes. Definitely.

**OK. And what do you like most about developing relationships with parents?**

I just, I, I don’t, I just think they’re fun. Like parents are so…they’re just super fun, ‘cuz I’m a parent myself, you know, and I think teachers work extremely hard, you know, at what they do, so, if a student is in, like…My son’s teacher, you know, like, I love my son’s teacher, teachers every year, because I know how hard they work. And I know that they really are trying to make my son/daughter successful. So, I want the parent to feel the same exact way. So, I don’t necessarily expect anything from the parents. I just think that the most I enjoy about the parent, like, is the conversation or the laughs or…

**The relationship?**

The relationships with, with myself and even with the students, you know. We’re out in front of the school and a parent, “Oh, Hi! How’s it going?” They’ll start talking to me, like, “Oh, do you know what we did last weekend?” and just…

**So, your relationship with the parent influences your relationship with the student?**

I think. I think it does.

**Want to clar-…anything more you want to say to clarify that, or…?**

I just think that the student, if the student knows I have a really good relationship with the parent, I really think that they believe I care for them. So we both care for them. Like, “My Mom wants me to do well. Mrs. Hernandez wants me to do well” So, I think it kind of gives them a little push to do well.

**If the parent trusts you, the student’s more likely to trust you?**

I think so. I think so.

**OK. Um, now. Next questions: Moving ahead. By the way, this is really very helpful.**

Oh, good! Good! I’m glad!

**The next questions are about language barriers. OK? Ah, do you find language to be an issue between yourself and the parent?**

No.

**OK. Because you can speak some Spanish?**

Yes. And I understand whatever the parent says.

**What about the stu-…you do have some students who don’t, who, it’s another language other than Spanish?**

No.

**OK. Your, your parent who…oh, I was going to ask you that. What percentage, roughly, just a guess, I know, percentage of parent does not speak English fluently?**

Probably like 88%.

**Don’t speak English fluently?**

Don’t speak English. 85. Maybe 85. A lot of them don’t speak English fluently.

**But they’re all Spanish speakers, not another language?**

No. All Spanish speakers. With my group of students.

**OK. And how adequate and available do you, would you say translation services are in this school?**

Oh, we have a lot. We have the, um, bilingual aides that are open to translate for Parent Conference. Then, we also have the Community Liaison. She’s super awesome. So, she translates for, like, IEPs, the SITs, everything. And then we have our Outreach Liaison. He also is fluent in Spanish and then we have the Comprehensive Support Provider, the CCSP. She speaks fluent Spanish as well.

**And you don’t send a lot home written, so written translation’s not as much of an issue, would you say?**

It’s not as much of an issue, but she’ll even translate stuff, so I’ve seen her where she’s had to translate letters, in English and Spanish. Um…

**Like your, ah, weekly notes that you sent home. Are those in just English, or…?**

Those are just in English, but I tell the students, OK, if your parents, I want you to read this to your parents. If your parents, I don’t want your parents signing something that they don’t understand. So, just make sure that they understand what they’re reading before they sign it. I’ve never had anyone tell me, “Oh, Ms. Hernandez, I wasn’t able to read…” And that’s a good opportunity for the student to practice their reading, anyways. I’m always looking for ways for students to practice their reading, so I intentionally kind of do it where they need to explain to, um, the parents.

**Progress reports, are those just in English as well?**

Those are just in English. Yes.

**OK. Um, is there anything about the translation services that has made it difficult for you to use them, or?**

No.

**OK. OK, moving on to the next series of questions: Um, school practice and policy that has to do with, that may affect the relationship between parents and teachers. Um, what beliefs, if any, about the ideal relationship between parents and teachers is reflected in school policy and practice? Is there a…You’ve talked, we’ve talked about what you believe, we’ve talked about what you think the administration believes, d-, would you say the policies and the practices reflect the same beliefs that the administration has?**

Yes. Yes. I think so.

**OK. And, are there particular school policies and practices that you find support your efforts to build relationships with parents?**

Yes. I just think, like, the whole parent contact log that we need to implement works. I think having parent conference is, well, they should be mandatory. I think that kind of forces some of us to build a relationship with, with the parents. Um, and then, the parent trainings. Teachers are, are, we can get involved with parent trainings if we’d like to. We’re welcome to go to some of the parent meetings, if we need to. It’s, it’s really pushed here for us to be involved with parents.

**OK. Um, so what do-, are there policies and practices that you think impede your efforts to build rel-…?**

No.

**OK. Ah, also, can you, talking about practice and policy, can you walk me through a typical parent-teacher conference? And Mr. Swanson told me about how he requires you to really try to get the parent there.**

M-hm. Yes.

**So, once you’ve set that up, can you tell me how the parent-teacher conferences work?**

Yes. So, we’ll set up a date or a time and usually, I give them the schedule of what I would like. If the parent can’t, then, you know, they write me back a note. “I can’t on this date, but I could on this date”. So, sometimes we have, where, long, like, you know, like a day, where the school’s open late, like, specifically for that long day, so where we’re aware that, OK, on Wednesday, the school’s going to be open until seven, so that’s my day to get all my late parents to come in for parent conference. So, once we set up the, the dates and the times, some are a few minutes late. You know, they aren’t always on time, but we just try to, you know, they come in, we greet them, we go over what we need to go over. Um, grades, expectations. I even ask the parents what do they expect from me, are there any questions? [school announcement over loudspeaker] Do they have anything they want to ask me?

**Expec-, expectations, um, you go over expectations of the parents? Or of the students?**

Both. And there’s, like, a contr-, a parent, um, agreement. Did he tell you?

**M-hm. He gave me a copy of that. I haven’t looked at it yet.**

So, we go over that. Um, and then I specifically ask them what do they expect from me, as a teacher, and then I kind of go over what I expect from them as a parent, what I expect from their child. I go over my whole system. So ,like, my point system, my reward system. Um, I’ll go over my discipline system that I have. I tell them a little bit about the curriculum. Um, I go over, like, the standards, if I need to. This one doesn’t really have any state standards, ‘cuz it’s not mandated yet, um, but it’s a big vocabulary, so I focus on, you know, academic language, on vocabulary, so the parent knows what we’ll be doing throughout the year and then, any questions that they, that they may have for me, they can ask. Any questions I may have for them, I can ask. And then, any, like I specifically say, “Is there anything specific you’d like me to know about your child?” And then they, they can tell me, they have an opportunity to tell me. And I actually kind of say, “Oh, I…” In the beginning of the year, I have the students fill out on their card three things that they like, so when the parent comes in, I’ll say, “Oh, I understand that he likes to go, he likes horses!” or something. So, kind of like a little icebreaker for the parents. They’re like, “Oh, you’re interested in my son!”. “Yes, I’m interested in your son! I’ve been teaching him all year long!” So, it kind of gets them to warm up, I think. And then, um, **I give them my phone number and my e-mail. And then, I’ll even, I’ll ask them, “Would you prefer my cell phone number, if you would prefer to text?” and then, if they say, “Give me your cell phone number”, I’ll give them my cell phone number. I don’t have a problem giving them my cell phone number**.

Ah-huh. What, what percentage of parents, do you think, attend, ah, Parent-Teacher Conferences? Your parents.

Well, my parents, I, I haven’t had a problem. Like, they all…so, if they can’t come in, I’ll do a phone conference with them.

**100% percent?**

M-hm.

**OK. Wow. What about Back to School Night? What would be the attendance participation for that?**

That’s not as high as Parent Conference. Maybe 70%?

**Ah-huh. That’s still good.**

Ah-huh.

**Yeah. And do students come to the parent-teacher conferences?**

Yes.

**OK. Required or encouraged?**

They’re encouraged, not required, but encouraged.

**They’re just there to listen and then…**

M-hm.

**OK, ah…and tran, translators, you don’t need a translator, so…**

I never needed one. Right. But, we have a schedule for the translators. There’s a schedule that’s actually posted in the staff lounge for, for…

**So you have a system. OK. Moving on to the next set of questions. I’ll move along. Ah, how do…I think you’ve answered this already, perhaps. How does the school or principal communicate to you what’s expected of you in the Parent-Teacher relationship? I think you’ve…anything else you want to add to that?**

I mean, through e-mail also. There’s a lot of e-mails. Bulletins. Right.

**The, the administration might e-mail and say, “Don’t, don’t forget to tell your parents this” or something?**

Right. Exactly.

**OK. Does the school communicate with the parents about what’s expected of them? And you talked about the parent-school contract. That would be anything else you want to say about that?**

Or the handbook, too. We also have a student handbook.

**Yeah, I had trouble downloading that, but I’ll get myself one. And are parents required to read that?**

Yes.

**Sign it? Anything?**

I don’t think they’re required to sign it. I think it depends on the student, so [bell rings] the core teacher, I believe, gives them the handbook and then might have, like, a welcome letter and have the parent sign “I have read and reviewed the Welcome, the student handbook” and then they’ll sign that back. Because they keep the handbook there at home.

**When you do parent teacher conferences in seventh and eighth grade, you don’t do core, or...?**

I don’t do core, **because I’m an elective.**

**You don’t do core, right, so you just have it by yourself, then. And your students who have this, is this their, it’s an intervention, so they also have a regular Language Arts as well?**

It’s an elective, yeah, so it’s supposed to be an accelerated learning class for them. Um, so they don’t have any other electives. But, this is not a replacement for the core Language Arts, so they have Language Arts. Then they have me. So, mine would replace their ELD class. This curriculum replaces their ELD class. So, they still have the Language Arts, the Social Studies, the Science, the Math, and the PE.

**OK. Yeah. OK, ah, OK, I think you’ve answered that. I am moving along. Um, in the future…ah, is there anything that you, pol-, in terms of policies and practices, are there ones you particularly appreciate, that you’d like to see continued, ones that you don’t think are necessary, not really working, ones that you think should be changed, anything like that?**

I think it’s fine. I really like the way the school’s run.

**You’re pretty pleased about...**

I’m very happy with working here. With the way things go. Yes.

**Ah-huh! That’s wonderful! And any comparisons you want to make to your elementary school you worked at, things that worked better there that they don’t do here, things that…anything that you think…**

I think things work better here. I think there seem to be more, um, administration, administrative support here.

**Ah-huh. Last question: Is there anything I haven’t asked you, something I need to know that would help me better…oh, I do have another question. Might as well do this one anyway. Um, is there anything I haven’t asked, something I need to know that would help me better understand your relationship with parents?**

No, I think you’ve asked me everything. I think you should have a great understanding after today.

**Yeah, and if there’s anything that comes up, ah, just e-mail me that you’d, like, “I forgot to tell her this” or “I wish I hadn’t said that” or, or “I really didn’t say…” or anything like that. But I do have one more specific question. So many of your students are low income. How are school supplies handled? Do they bring their own?**

They bring their own, um, school supplies. But, if they’re not able to bring their own school supplies, that’s the Community Liaison gets the notebooks for them. So, they all have their notebooks. And we’ve even had free backpacks. So, some of the students that don’t. I don’t know how the Community Liaison gets them, or what happens, but I’m sure there’s funding for that. Um, they, we provide the, the backpacks.

**So, you expect all of the students to bring pencils and paper, or whatever, and you expect it because you know that, even if they don’t have the money, they can go to the Community Liaison.**

Exactly. And what I do, to kind of prevent them from losing their stuff, is, I actually keep their pencils in that basket. So, they don’t take them. So, um, I have the highlighters, the markers, the erasers, and the pencils in that basket.

**So, you pick them up and you pass them out every day?**

They just grab it, and then, at the end, on their way, well, when they sit down at the table, they use my pencils. So, it’s my pencil, so, but they’re using it. So, at the end of the period, I have the group table leaders count everything. And then, if they don’t have all their pencils, then they’re not going.

**So, instead of expecting them…they, they supply the pencils by bringing them at the beginning of the year and giving them to you…**

Well, they have their own pencils, but I did have a lot of problems with, “Oh, Ms. Hernandez, I don’t have my pencils” and I had a student say, “Oh, I don’t have any money to buy any pencils”. I’ll just order pencils from the warehouse. So, it’s not even a big deal. And ones who don’t, we have paper here, so we get the paper from the warehouse. So, I don’t do any of my own shopping…

**So, the school provides the paper.**

Yes. Right.

**Ok. Oh, Ok. Good. That’s everything that I can think of. So helpful, so full of information.**

Yeah, a lot of stuff.

**Yeah. Yeah. So, this, this will conclude the interview.**