Unite, Inspire, Lead
Our Students, Our Union, Our Future
Together Everyone Achieves More: Creating Successful Teacher/Paraeducator Partnerships
Jean Fay and Jan Demers
NEA Strategic Goal and Organizational Priority

• NEA Strategic Goal
• Strategic Goal 1: Empowered Educators for Successful Students
• NEA Organizational Priority: Early Career Educators
NEA Competency: Leading Our Professions

Level 1: Foundational
Level 2: Mobilizing & Power Building
Level 3: Agenda Driving

NEA Competency Themes
1. Builds capacity for continual improvement and learning
2. Analyzes and applies research, policies and trends to determine potential impact on our professions and student learning
Who We Are

Jean Fay  
Special Education Paraeducator

Jan Demers  
Retired Elementary Teacher
Who You Are

By the way, who are you?
History of Paraeducators
How Much Do You Know About Paraeducators?
Together Everyone Achieves More

Teamwork divides the task and multiplies the success.
What Makes A Good Team?

• An effective team leader
• Effective supporting team members
• Good communication
• A common goal
What makes a good leader?

leadership

[ˈliːdərship]

1. **ability to lead**: the ability to guide, direct, or influence people

WisdomTimes.com
Supportive Team Members
Communication is the key to success
We speak at a rate of about 150 words per minute, but we can hear at a rate of about 1,000 words per minute.
That gives you a lot of extra time...

- Bad listening habits:
  - Interrupting
  - Jumping to conclusions
  - Answering with advice when it’s not requested
- Thinking more about your reply while the other person is speaking
When listening to another person, I...

• Get distracted
• Listen Only to facts
• Interrupt
• Prejudge
• Tune Out
• Ignore nonverbal cues
The train story
So what does this all mean?
Students feed off of the classroom environment we create for them
Joyful classrooms enhance the learning environment
Joy is contagious!
Always remember the common goal
Communication Shutdowns

• That’s not my responsibility
• We don’t have time
• We’ve never done that before
• That’s not the way we do things around here
• It won’t work
• Let’s form a committee
A difference of opinion doesn’t mean that someone is right and someone is wrong
Promoting the Team

- Commit yourself to being a part of the team
- Emphasize cooperation, not competition
- Approach time from a team standpoint, remembering that different people perceive time differently
- Take the time to communicate effectively—this involves being a good listener as well as a good communicator
Building the team

• Look for ways to make ideas work, not for reasons they won’t work
• If in doubt, check it out. Don’t make negative assumptions about each other
• If you need help, ASK!
• Do everything with enthusiasm
• Enjoy what you do!
So what’s the secret to success?

• Mutual respect
• Teamwork
• Common goals
• Communication
• Feedback
Any Questions? No?? Super!!
Additional resources: 50 Communication Activities, Icebreakers, and Exercises, by Peter R. Garber Amherst, Ma. HRD Press 2008
Session Outcomes (Second to last slide)

• The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:

  1. To create successful educational teams between teachers and paraeducators
  2. To foster a culture of collaboration in the classroom
  3. To model positive working relationships in the classroom to enhance the learning environment for all students
Together Everyone Achieves More: Creating Successful Teacher/Paraeducator Partnerships

• Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session!

• Please visit the Leadership Development Resources website at www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment