

**EDUC6165: Communicating and Collaborating**  
**“Communication Skills in Action, Part 1”**  
**Program Transcript**

NARRATOR: In this program, you will watch the same role play of a teacher-parent meeting that you watched in Week 1 of the course. This meeting involves an elementary school principal, a second grade teacher, and three parents whose children attend the school. They are meeting to discuss a new proposal for extending the current school day by two hours. As you watch this meeting a second time, consider everything you have learned throughout this course regarding verbal and nonverbal communication skills. What do you notice now that you didn't notice before? What new observations can you make?

DR. ANDERSON: Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for coming today. I'd like to welcome all of you. As you know, our district has proposed lengthening the school day. So the child will be going, not from 8:00 to 2:30, but from 8:00 to 4:30. Now, this is in response to the fact that test scores district wide have been very low. And the district feels that by adding these two extra hours to the end of the day, maybe we can come closer to getting our test scores up to what they should be. However, before the decision is made, they've asked school groups around the district to come together and bring parents and teachers and discuss this, get whatever concerns you have out, get your opinion, so that we can give them back to the district. So before we listen to each other, why don't we take a minute to introduce ourselves? As you know, I'm Dr. Anderson, principal here at Seton Elementary. And this is--

MS. MOORE: Hi, Ms. Moore. I'm the second grade teacher here.

JAMIE: I'm Jamie. I have a son in fourth grade and a daughter in second grade.

RANDY: And I'm Randy. And I have a daughter, Megan, who is in fifth grade. And I have a son Stephen, who is in first grade.

MARIA: I'm Maria. And my daughter is in kindergarten.

MS. MOORE: OK, thank you. And welcome again. Does anyone have they'd like to say? They feel strongly for this or against this?

JAMIE: When would this start? To have a longer school day?

DR. ANDERSON: Well, as I said, we're just starting to consider it. But hopefully next year we would like to-- The beginning of the school year, I think the district is looking at that kind of a change. Is that something that-- I detect a little concern.

JAMIE: I think I'd like to see more research. Why are we doing this? If you're saying some kids' test scores aren't that strong-- My kids have good test scores. So why do my kids have to take a longer day because other kids aren't scoring as well?

DR. ANDERSON: I can see that. I see what you're saying, that your children do have good test scores. But the district is now looking at, how could everyone benefit? What can we do the most for the most kids? And perhaps your children's test scores could even be higher.

RANDY: Well, Jane, a concern that I'm thinking about right now is that the school district has already taken away the art. They've taken away the music. They've taken away all these things. So what I've done to supplement for that to be supportive of the district is I've begun to create things and opportunities for my kids after school, so that they can make up for those deficits.

And if we go longer now with the school day, then I don't know when they're going to get their soccer in. Where they're going to get their pageant rehearsals in. Where they're going to get the tap dancing-- all of the things that I have tried to supplement, because the district took it away. That's where it is now. And so I'm a little bit concerned about the amount of time that it's going to go into the supplements I've created.

DR. ANDERSON: I can see. So you're looking at a life balance kind of issue.

RANDY: Absolutely. And I think Ms. Moore can probably speak to this too. Because she doesn't have enough time to do what she has to do already. And now we're going to add two more hours of planning. Two more hours to grade papers for that. Two hours of work.

JAMIE: Who's paying for this?

RANDY: That's a good question.

MS. MOORE: Well, from a teacher's perspective, we definitely want to make sure that we are trying to help all that we can do to have student achievement. But I definitely think some of the teachers do have concerns just understanding where is this budget going to be coming from? And to make sure that we're being most effective with, is it going to be more quality or quantity time? And are students going to be more time in the seats? Or what does this more time actually mean?

So there's definitely some questions there. But I do think there could be potential as well. We've seen in other nations and around the world that sometimes having

longer class hours can translate into better test scores and better results for students. So I definitely think it is something for us to consider.

MARIA: I think it sounds like a positive thing. I would ask you, are there other districts that have adopted this? And other states perhaps? What is the impact on those students and families?

DR. ANDERSON: That's a very, very good question. I'll have to get back to you with that, but I think that's an excellent question. We can put that into our next newsletter to the parents.

JAMIE: How do you not know that though? How do you not know that now? Why are we having this meeting if you don't even know what the statistics are for having a longer school day?

RANDY: Well, I don't think she has to necessarily know already. I think that there is plenty of evidence out there that suggests that the more you work at something, the better you're going to probably get at it. But my concern is that the achievement is already high enough in this district. I think the people who benefit from all this extra time are the low achievers. And we are in a district of high achievers. And we've always had the best scores. And we've always been the best district in the state. So I don't understand why we have to jump on that bandwagon of those low achieving schools.

MS. MOORE: Well, I definitely think we want to encompass all of our students. We want to make sure that all of our students are achieving. So both our high and our low to bring them all up to a great standard. So we don't want to be exclusive, but want to be more inclusive for sure.

JAMIE: I'm not so concerned about the other kids though. I'm concerned about my kid. So--

RANDY: Well, you have to take into account other people's kids too. It can't be all about us. There are other kids who don't have the advantages that we provide our kids. And we have to be cognizant of that. The whole common good thing.

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you. Oh, excuse me, but--

[PHONE RINGING]

MS. MOORE: One second. Hello? [LAUGHING]

DR. ANDERSON: No.

MS. MOORE: Let me call you back later. OK. Thank you.

DR. ANDERSON: Ms. Moore.

MARIA: Can we talk about maybe the scheduling? How it's going to impact parents' and family's schedules? Because I think I can speak for a lot of working parents, who if the school day is longer, we can't pick up our children at 2:30 in the afternoon. And I think that I would rather have my daughter be in the classroom versus paying for extra after school care. So I think it sounds like it would benefit me and other working parents as well.

RANDY: Well, I want to be with my kids. And so that's the difference is that I want to be able to play soccer with my son. And I want to be able to take my daughter to her tap dancing lessons and all that stuff, and be there for her. I don't want her to be in another day care situation.

JAMIE: You just said we're supposed to be concerned about all kids. Now you're talking about your kid.

RANDY: Well, I'm just talking about in reference to the fact that she doesn't have the time spend with hers.

MARIA: I would say that most working adults can't stop in the middle of the day and pick up their kids at 2:30 in the afternoon. So we have to make accommodations. And it would be great. I would love to pick her up at 2:30, take her to a bunch of after school programs, but that's just not a luxury that we have.

DR. ANDERSON: Have any of you talked to other parents in your neighborhoods to find out how they're feeling about it? What about the other teachers?

MS. MOORE: I was just finishing a text. Could you repeat the question?

JAMIE: [SIGHS LOUDLY]

DR. ANDERSON: Yes, Ms. Moore. I really felt that it was part of your responsibility as a member of this committee to talk to some of the other teachers. And what kind of input did they give you?

MS. MOORE: I feel like the teachers are a little bit split in that sense. Some definitely support the idea of longer class hours and really making sure we support the kids. But the question becomes, at what cost? So how is the funding going to be for the teacher pay? What are we actually going to be doing for this longer time? Is it going to be things with physical activity? And what sort of

curriculum? Who's going to be coming up with that curriculum? Is it going to all--  
The burden be back on the teachers?

So I know there's still some questions that need to be answered. And there's hesitation from the teacher's standpoint of are we really supportive or not until we get more details? But the idea is students first. And we want to support our student. So if the district really feels like it comes up with a good proposal on how we can do that, then I think the teachers will be behind it. But until we see that, there seems to be a little bit more resistance behind saying, yes, we're all for it.

RANDY: I think we should add the extra time for the teachers. I think that they should get the extra money. And they should use the extra time to grade papers or do whatever. I just don't think my kids should be there during that time. I think we should save all of that for the planning at the end. Because I'm sure that your experience is going to be that when you have kids that are caged into that classroom for hours and hours on end, you're going to start having kids that are going to want to drop out. They're going to disengage. They're going to become disruptive. And then all the things that you were talking about possibly gaining, you're going to end up losing.

MS. MOORE: Well, it's always the teacher's responsibility. We're always the one that the burden comes back on. And we've got to figure out some different ways in that sense to try to negotiate a little bit better to work together in that sense. Because--

JAMIE: Who's for this? Doesn't sound like the teachers are for it. He's not for it. This guy wants to stay home with his kid or something. I don't want my kids to have to go longer, because they are doing just fine.

MARIA: Well, I think it sounds like a positive thing. They're spending more time learning the substance that they need to learn to be competitive in this world. So it sounds to me that as long as it's implemented in a certain way, it could be a positive thing.

DR. ANDERSON: Research across the board truly does show that children do need more time in the core subject areas. And they need more time in reading. And they need more time in oral language. And they need more time--  
[INTERPOSING] Excuse me, I was talking.

JAMIE: --one more hour in the classroom--

DR. ANDERSON: Excuse me.

JAMIE: --you're going to score 100 points higher in the test scores?

DR. ANDERSON: Excuse me. Our kids don't need to score 100 points, but I really want to finish my sentence. And what I was saying was--

JAMIE: Excuse me, I apologize.

DR. ANDERSON: Apology accepted. If you would look at across the board research of how much time is spent in core subject areas, our children really need more reading. And they need more math. And so we should be able to give them that time. And the teachers should be able to provide that curriculum. And we are remiss. And I understand that we're going to be letting go of our psychologists. And we've got to close our library down early. And we've had some grants I know for the music program. Looks like the music program will have to go. But we'll have two more solid hours for reading and math, reading and math, reading and math.

RANDY: Jane, I think the problem here is that you guys aren't necessarily using the time that you already have as wisely. I run a business here in town. And what we know and what we're looking for in the kids isn't more math and reading. Anybody can do that in any country in the world. They can learn how to read and do math. We've got computers that can do all that for them.

But I'm talking about more-- I need kids who are creative. I need kids who are entrepreneurial. And you're not talking about that. You're talking about more of the same. And I just don't think we need that. We've got the highest scores in the state. What do we need more time on math and reading for?

DR. ANDERSON: I think that if you look at district wide, we don't have the highest scores in the state. And I think that we still need to do this reading and math. And creativity is not where we're going right now. We're going toward these test scores. We're meeting the needs that the government said we have to meet. We do not want to lose our funding. We do not want to be one of those many schools that gets closed down, because our test scores keep getting lower and lower and lower. So I think you need to do some reading up on this.

JAMIE: What are you asking us parents to do? With the whole student body, the whole community? What are you asking us to now do? Take this information and talk to our own grades? Parents?

DR. ANDERSON: Well, Ms. Moore has been very diligently writing everything down that you've all been saying. And she will keep doing that. And now what I'd like you to do is just present to the community, and please asked other people.

We can reconvene and talk some more about this. I am an unbiased about this. I don't have an opinion. And my job here is not to have an opinion. I'm just to take in what you are thinking, and take it back to the district, and be the best facilitator I can, so that everyone's voice is heard.

MARIA: Well, my concerns were definitely about scheduling. When are the hours going to be added? Are they going to be at the beginning of the school day? Or the end of the school day? [SIDE CONVERSATION] Excuse me, can we get back to topic here, please? [SIDE CONVERSATION]

MS. MOORE: Hey, let's all just focus.

RANDY: We were just talking about the baseball team.

JAMIE: Was he playing on the traveling team or not the traveling team?

RANDY: It's a state team that-- [INTERPOSING]

DR. ANDERSON: --we're going to talk about the meeting. And let's put our cell phones away. Let's concentrate on the meaning. Thank you, Randy. And you were saying, Maria?

MARIA: About scheduling, definitely. I'd like to know when those hours are going to be added. Is that going to be every day?

DR. ANDERSON: Yes, and I hear you about that every day. And it would be. It would be an every day addition of two hours. At least that's what they're looking at right now.

MARIA: All right. So that would be a concern of mine.

MS. MOORE: Well, and have they made a definitive decision on if it has to be in the afternoon? Or could there possibly be an hour before school and then an hour after school for the two hours? I don't know if that would make a difference on any of the parents' opinions as well, if we started school an hour earlier and ended an hour later?

DR. ANDERSON: How do you feel about that?

RANDY: Well, the parents I've talked to aren't interested in longer hours at all. They agree with me that we've got what we need. Why do we have to fix something that really isn't broken? We're at the tops in the state. We're all satisfied that we've gotten our schedules all figured out after you guys took away

all music and PE and everything. And so now we've made arrangements for that, and our kids are happy. And they're not nearly as stressed as some of those kids in those districts that are going longer. So I think I can speak for my community that I'm responsible for representing here that--

JAMIE: Don't we live in the same community?

RANDY: Well, I'm talking about the community where I live. Where we live, we have some camaraderie. And we have teams where our kids are on the same teams. And the times that I've talked with them, we're very happy with the way things are. It's been very great. We've got awesome teachers. We've got a great principal. Jane's the best. And so I don't think that there's anything else really to discuss as far as the perspective that I'm representing here.

DR. ANDERSON: So you're detecting stressed though, did I hear in—

RANDY: Absolutely. People who live in the other districts where they're going longer, their kids are totally stressed out. Parents are happy to have daycare extended, like Maria was talking about, they're perfectly happy. But for those of us who want to be with our kids and are happy with the way things are going, happy with the teachers, happy with you, Jane, we just don't really see the need for this. We think it would engender more stress. And we're happy. We're really happy with what we have in our school.

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you.

MARIA: Another concern of mine would be more homework. Are these extra hours going to add more homework time for parents? So that would be something that I would ask my community.

MS. MOORE: Well, I think it's important for us once again to all realize we are from the same school community. So--

JAMIE: Thank you.

RANDY: But it's not a one size fits all thing. I think we all have different needs. I think we should acknowledge that we all have different needs. And not just assume that because she wants longer daycare, and I want to have my kid in sports and things, that we're the same. Because we're not. And I think you should maybe have a provision where you accommodate the fact that what I need and what she needs are two different things. I appreciate she's working harder and long hours--



MARIA: It's not just about the daycare. I'm just trying to raise that as a point.

RANDY: Yeah, well, it's not an issue for my family. We don't have the daycare issue, and we want to be with our kids. We want to do the things that they can't get in school anymore right after school.

DR. ANDERSON: I feel like I think I've heard each of you. And you have raised very, very important points. I want to thank you all for being so participatory and for giving us all your attention and being so fair with each other. And if you would, if it would be OK with you, poll the people who you work with, obviously the teachers and the other parents in the community. And then we'll maybe meet again in three or four weeks and hear what you're saying. And put together a little report that we can then share with the district.

MARIA: Great.

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you so much.

MARIA: Thank you.

MS. MOORE: Thank you.