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## School-Family Communication Bags

Barrett Academy

Akron, Ohio

Staff and parents at Barrett Academy will try using "communication bags" during the '98-'99 academic year. These bags include materials that are color-coded according to grade. For example, first grade might be assigned the color yellow, and second grade might be assigned green. Inside the bag of the first grader would be a yellow refrigerator clip and a yellow pad of paper. The purpose of the clip is for the child and parent to post teacher communication about the child. In addition, all homework assignments would be printed on yellow paper for first graders and green paper for second graders. To encourage parent-teacher communication, the color pad of paper is included so that parents may write notes to their children's teachers.

The idea of the communication bags resulted from a planning session of staff and parents. The goal is to provide a colorful visual cue to catch parents' attention regarding homework and teacher notes. It was also hoped that children may develop a special identity with a grade level.

Grant money became available after the start of the '97-'98 school year, and the Action Team unanimously decided to postpone implementing the activity until the beginning of the next school year. The grant money covered the large expenditure for the actual bags, and school supply money paid for the color paper. Staff donated time for ordering, arranging materials, and in servicing teachers about the purpose. Parents responsible for the "communication bag" activity will make the presentation of the bags to children in their classes and explain the purpose to parents at an open house prior to giving them to students.

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