

# Creating School Community

## The Staff Spotlight



Schools are moving towards creating professional learning communities. The basic idea is that instead of working independently and isolated, administrators and staff can team up to more effectively serve students.

Teachers can share information about advancing their teaching practices, share insights about students, make shared decisions. Creating a professional learning community involves building a mutually supportive network. Basically, building a team.

Kagan knows a thing or two about building supportive teams. To build classroom community, we recommend classbuilding. To build effective learning teams, we do teambuilding. And to build a cohesive staff, we do staffbuilding.

A common objective of Teambuilding, Classbuilding, and Staffbuilding is getting acquainted. You work more effectively with people you know, like, and trust. Here at Kagan, we do quite a bit of staffbuilding. We regularly receive compliments from staff and visitors that our culture is very different from other organizations. Thank you very much!

In this article, I'll share an ongoing getting acquainted activity we do here at Kagan. It's called Staff Spotlight. You can do it with your school staff to build bonds.

Here's how it works:

[Download Spotlight form \(PDF\).](#)



## **Setup:**

Create a Staff Spotlight Form. The form should have questions or prompts to have teachers, staff, and administrators fill in information about themselves. Some of the questions may be about their education, career, personal favorites, family, childhood, and so on. For example, some of the questions may be directed toward common bonds, "Why did you become a teacher?" Or, they can be just fun things to learn about each other: "What is your favorite TV show?" We've provided a Spotlight form you can use as a model for your own form, or if you like the questions, you can use it as is.

## **Step 1. Distribute the Form**

At a staff meeting, pass out the Spotlight form. Have everyone fill in information about themselves. If you are concerned about wasting meeting time with filling out a form, pass out the form at the end of the meeting and give the staff homework with a deadline for turning it in. Keep the deadline short, like within a day or two at the most.

## **Step 2. Create a Teacher Spotlight**

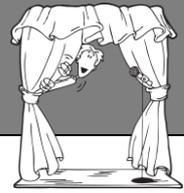
In the classroom, we often have a Student of the Week. This makes students feel special and helps students get to know each other. The Staff Spotlight works pretty much the same way. (Sorry, usually no show and tell involved.) One form is shared with the staff periodically. Here at Kagan, we have a weekly newsletter to keep everyone apprised of what's happening at work. We include the Staff Spotlight page as part of the weekly update. People love to read about their colleagues. It's amazing what you can learn about each other. Some of the questions encourage staff room interactions. "I didn't know you watched Gray's Anatomy..."

You may want to alter how and when you share the Spotlight forms. There are approximately 40 weeks in a school year. If you have 40 teachers, do one a week. If you have 80 teachers, you may want to share two a week. If you have 20 or less teachers, either share one every other week or share one weekly for half the year, then start again with a new form with different questions.

This activity is a great way to create bonds. Without much investment, you have a Staffbuilder that pays off week after week.



# Spotlight On Staff



Name:

## My Career

Role:

About my education:

When I began here:

What I like best about my job:

## My Favourites

TV programme:

Dessert:

Actor or Movie:

Sport (Team):

After Work Activity:

Place:

## My Family

Describe your family:

## My Home

Birth place:

Where I grew up:

Where I live now:

Dream place to live:

## Questions About Me

*Feel free to add 'why'*

If I could be anyone for a day, who would I be?

If I could change one thing about myself, what would it be?

If I could have any other profession, what would it be?

Who would star as you in a movie about your life?