

Communications Committee Meeting

Friday, March 16, 2018 9:00 AM

Central Office Conference Room, 24 School Road, Weston, CT 06883-1623

I. Review Action Items for Plan Development

II. Review and Confirm Goals for Communications Plan

III. Social Media Presence

A. Current Presence

B. Future Plans

IV. Communications Survey

A. Review Overview and Links

V. Next Steps

A. Report to Board of Education on Progress

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SETTING GOALS:

The communications goals depend on strategic initiatives.

Goals should align closely with overall objectives

Know your school's strengths and weaknesses. Confirm them through stakeholder surveys. Consider your current communications with staff, parents, and students.

- What are the barriers to improving dialogue with your parents?
- Have there been misunderstandings because event information isn't transmitted as smoothly as it could be between staff and parents?
- How can you better engage staff, parents, and students at your school?
- What makes parents decide to enroll their children in your school?
- Are there any disconnects you need to eliminate?
- Are you reaching prospective students effectively?

Overall objectives might include:

- Increase opportunities to share good news about staff, students and school issues with the entire school community; or,
- Increase amount of content being pushed to parents with regular information on important district-level, school-level, and classroom-level information; or,
- Better gauge and be more responsive to the communications needs of school community stakeholders.

Some examples of specific, achievable goals you might set:

- Redesign school website
- Establish communications advisory committee
- Create social media following
- Adding or enhancing communications channels
- Create a superintendent's blog

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- Establish a school Youtube channel
- Expand social media
- Establish a social media internship
- Recount popular retired teachers and staff
- Develop school mobile app
- Enhance uniformity of classroom (teacher) websites
- Integrate social media onto website
- Use technology to survey stakeholder groups
- Increase messaging around key programs
- Show the fun side of your school
- Highlight featured teachers and non-teaching staff members
- Better utilize intranet for in-service and professional development
- Develop social media ambassadors
- Create a school style guide for staff emails
- Launch a school Instagram/Twitter/Snapchat account
- Form a communications advisory committee
- Highlight successful alumni

Communications Plan Checklist

Phase 1: Research & discovery

1. Confirm mission and goals

- See worksheet

2. Identify target audiences

- staff
- parents
- students
- town boards
- community
- alum
- media

3. Survey key audiences.

See accompanying documents

4. Research other programs

- Suggest Communications Audit for: Westport, Greenwich, Wilton

Phase 2: Analysis and recommendations

5. Select channels

Choose the right medium.
Where is your target audience?
How can we reach them?

Channels:

- District and school websites
- Mobile app
- notifications and alerts
- Email
- Social media
- Blog
- Video

Website Tips:

- easy to navigate
- look great
- frequently accessed pages quick to access for each of your key user groups.
- Notification systems, mobile apps, emails, social media, blogs and videos are the other channels critical to reaching stakeholders. Unifying all these channels is essential for the best reach.

Phase 3: Communicate

6. Develop Messaging

- After identifying the targets and the channels, it's time to craft the content. It should be more than news.
- Considerations include:
 - What do you want your audience to know?
 - How can you best use these channels to engage them, get them to keep coming back to your channels?
 - Who's going to do all the legwork to find and create all the content?
- Influencers: these are the eyes and ears of the vast 'field' of building-level communications opportunities.
 - principals, admins, teachers or any staff member who can serve as a champion for school communications and support that sector
 - student reps
 - PTO presidents
 - parents
 - Alum
 - Community Liaison
- Use technology to solicit ideas:
 - dedicated email address (goodnews@westonps.org)
 - submission forms on your website
 - and your school's social media channels
 - information gatherings and touch bases
- The four key content hubs to cover:
 - Crisis communications
 - Internal communications
 - Media and community relations
 - Parent engagement

Each communications channels can be utilized throughout all the content that's created around these hubs.

7. Social media

- Develop systems and automations to simplify process
- Develop guidelines for implementation and use
- Share your new found accessibility

8. Legal Issues

- Develop guidelines that align with policies that adhere to legal diligence followed by all aspects of the district
- Make sure that regulations (media policies etc) are clear and updated
- Work with counsel to ensure compliance. (data privacy and app control issues)
- Get buy in and appropriate approvals for the plan

9. Promote the plan

- Get stakeholders excited about plan, start with internal audience.
- Get influencers/audience: Students, teachers and other staff to support
- Explore all your digital and non-digital channels, parent groups

Phase 4: Evaluate

10. Measure. Adjust. Repeat

- Develop Benchmarks to evaluate milestones and achievements
- Keep the plan nimble and able to adjust to changing channels, needs, and staffing
- Provide avenue for measurable feedback on the plan

WPS SURVEY OVERVIEW:

Reminders in developing the survey:

1. Tell Stake Holders the Benefits of participation.

- Emphasize importance of the survey and of participating. I.e. Not only to better communicate with parents, but ultimately to improve educational experience for the family.
- The email should be from an actual person, not the school. (Superintendent or principal.)

2. Be Brief.

- Clarity and simplicity are key.
- Provide survey respondents with the survey length and the number of questions.
- Keep it easy. Use multiple choice, 1-5 rating scales, and short-answer format questions so respondents can complete the survey easily. This brevity makes it easier quantify results and produce practical, actionable summaries.

3. Content

- Provide opportunities for survey to get completed. (via email)
- Encourage email opens, by choosing words carefully to enhance the participation rate.
- keep the email message short don't dilute message. The goal is to drive reader to the survey.
- Simply embed the link to the survey in the email and make it easy for the reader to find the link.

4. Thank participants.

- Survey Monkey automatically replies.
- Reply comes from an individual.

5. Share the Survey.

- Share results so participants feel included.
- Beyond sharing results, provide information on next steps.
- In addition to sharing on original channel, share results on multiple platforms, where and when appropriate.
- This is a powerful communications loop that is as much about listening as it is about disseminating information.
- Also consider surveys to extend beyond parent base. The entire school community – school board, voters, prospective students, etc. – can be tapped for information that

may be used to better understand them and better communicate with them.

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