Communications Plan

2012-2015

1204 NE 201st Avenue
Fairview OR 97024
503.661.7200
www.reynolds.k12.or.us

1. Academic Achievement
2. Fiscal Solvency
3. Communications

A complete Action Plan for each of the target areas listed above was adopted by the Reynolds School Board in September 2012.

"Public relations is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics."

~Institute of Public Relations
Reynolds School District developed a new mission, vision and value statements.

A work group representing, staff, parents and business leaders drafted the following statements in January 2013.

Draft Statements were presented to the community for feedback at the Reynolds School District Education Summit on February 28, 2013. The Board approved the mission/vision statements at the June 12, 2013 meeting.

**Vision**

Each and Every Child prepared for a world yet to be imagined.

**Mission**

Each graduate embraces lifelong learning and applies skills in technology, global literacy, creativity, and critical-thinking to enhance family, career, and community.
Values

- **Community Involvement**
  Parents, local business, community members, staff, and students stay informed and participate in school and district decisions.

- **Engagement**
  Students receive inspiring lessons that optimize active participation, higher-order thinking, and inquiry skills.

- **Equity**
  Each student receives necessary supports to achieve academic success. Students demonstrate global literacy and cultural-responsiveness.

- **Excellence**
  Teachers and staff employ research-based, effective instructional practices.

- **Expectations**
  Parents and community set high expectations for the school district, schools, and students.

- **Relationships**
  Staff build and maintain effective relationships with students.

- **Relevance**
  Teachers and staff engage students in relevant learning activities that deepen students’ understanding and application of content.

- **Resilience**
  Parents, local business, community organizations, and staff collaborate to provide students multiple opportunities for success within a comprehensive support system.

- **Respect**
  Reynolds School District recognizes and promotes diversity as a community asset. People value and appreciate one another for their unique talents and contributions.

- **Responsibility**
  Parents, local business, community members, staff, and students share responsibility for student learning.

- **Responsiveness**
  Graduates possess academic, practical, and interpersonal skills to successfully meet the needs of employers, post-secondary vocational training, college, and university programs.
Reynolds School District Communications Plan

The Reynolds School District Communications Plan presents a clear, concise work plan for communicating effectively with our school community.

The plan addresses our internal (students, teachers, staff, administration and School Board) and external audiences (parents, businesses, service and nonprofit organizations, church and religious groups, patrons and others in the Reynolds School District community).

Staff engagement and support of the communications plan is critical – particularly teachers and office staff who are the main sources of information to the public. The Reynolds School District staff carries the messages of the school district to their families, friends and neighbors, who in turn form opinions about the schools. It is a top priority to clearly communicate a positive, unified message at all times.

The Reynolds School District Communications office will implement and manage publications, marketing, and community relations efforts and offer leadership on the comprehensive communications strategies and services for the district under the direction of the Superintendent.

Critical questions for our programs, activities and plans will be:

1. How does this benefit the student?
2. How do we let our stakeholders know about our actions and results?

“A goal without a plan is just a wish.”
-Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
Target Audiences

Internal
- Students
- Staff
  - District Office (Administration, Supervisors, Licensed, Classified)
  - Schools, Program and Department Sites (Administration, Supervisors, Licensed, Classified)
  - School Board

External
- Parents
- Parent Support Groups
- Key Communicators
- Patrons
- Business Leaders
- Elected City, County and Metro Regional Officials
- Elected State and Federal Legislators
- Service and Nonprofit Organizations
- Church and Religious Groups
- Neighborhood Associations
- Local Colleges and Universities
- Other Area School Districts
- Private Schools
- Media Contacts (print, broadcast)
- Electronic/Social Media (website, social media)

"Everything you do or say is public relations."
~Anonymous
Communications Goals

The purpose of the district communications plan is to support student achievement through information provided in a timely, professional, positive, responsive and systematic manner.

Provide regular information related to district-wide issues.
- Distribute information from meetings on a need-to-know basis.
- Distribute news releases and external publications to all employees via email or intranet.
- Develop and distribute talking points, key messages and tools to assist administrators and supervisors in communicating with others.
- Distribute information to staff via paycheck stuffers, intranet, email and publications.
- Highlight successes of the Reynolds School District students, programs and staff.

Establish and maintain positive relationships with media outlets.
- Issue regular press releases.
- Submit story ideas and editorial items to local media for potential publication.

Engage in listening processes to define, shape and ensure that the district meets the needs of our community.
- Encourage parents and community members to join key communicators program.
- Conduct surveys to obtain feedback.
- Offer informational meetings/forums to receive feedback.
- Encourage use of ParentVue to increase communication between parents and schools.
- Establish feedback mechanisms to improve internal and external websites (Internet/Intranet).
- Conduct parent focus groups to prioritize mobile application needs.
- Create opportunities for student voice and input.
- Form committee to plan programs to remove obstacles for students.

"PR is Performance Recognition."

-Douglas Smith
Create and distribute publications.
- Develop a school information publication.
- Maintain the Realtor/Relocation publication.
- Create regular communications for patrons (postcard, newsletters, letters, electronic news).
- Support the website and intranet through training, support and content creation.
- Create internal publication via email for board action and updates.

Develop and implement annual events that support a positive district reputation and provide visibility by encouragement to participate in:
- Principal for a Day.
- District-wide Service Day.
- REF (Honoring Our Own).
- Welcome Back.
- Retiree Reception.
- Service Learning Day/Events.
- Parades/Community Events.
- Local Service Club and Neighborhood Associations.
- Employee Recognition.

Expand volunteer program.
- Manage volunteer screening process.
- Support record keeping, hours tracking and recognition of volunteer service.
- Ensure that training programs are offered to develop skills of volunteer work force.
- Build capacity for volunteer service and increasing diversity of volunteer work force.
- Develop handbook and training program.

Communicate regularly with partners (business, civic, community, religious groups).
- Develop and formalize partnerships.
- Prepare and distribute materials, information and presentations.
- Attend meetings to provide information and receive feedback.

Create Targeted Communications Plans.
- School Boundary Changes.
- Strategic Plans.
- Crisis/Emergency/Safety Issues.
Best Practices

Communicate Face-to-Face
- The more difficult the situation, the more important it is to communicate in person.

Keep it to the Point
- Prepare information sheets to send to key staff (administrators, office staff) as needed.
- Follow up with email or memos to all staff as needed.
- Make phone calls if in doubt.
- Share at the earliest possible point. Use publications and resources provided.

Prepare Messages
- Share internal before going external.
- Avoid jargon, technical language, acronyms by preparing a short, simple “sound bites” when needed.
- Study the issues facing education and be prepared to respond.
- Respond as a representative of our school and district message.

*Take advantage of every opportunity to practice your communication skills so that when important occasions arise, you will have the gift, the style, the sharpness, the clarity, and the emotions to affect other people.*

-Jim Rohn
Develop Relationships with our Community

- Ask for input.
- Communicate with neighbors, partners and businesses regarding late starts, calendars, events, etc.
- Maintain visibility by participating in professional and community activities.
- Develop a key communicators list and establish regular contact with the members.

Train Staff

- Engage frontline staff early so they have all the information. They are the most-effective link to parents and community.
- Train staff to understand that the perceptions of schools and the district are formed by what staff members say to friends, family and neighbors.
- Build the capacity of staff to access, develop and use the website, media and publications.
- Research a customer service training and audit program.

Consider the Audience

- Think through what they will want/need to know.
- Be prepared for questions.
- Get back to people that wanted/needed additional information.
- Use multiple methods (print, video, face-to-face

"Public relations practice is the discipline which looks after reputation with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behavior."

~Institute of Public Relations
Tools and Resources

A variety of tactics will be needed to have an effective communications program.

Printed Publications
- Newsletters, brochures, posters and patron postcards.
- Press releases, earned media, editorial items.
- Minutes, summaries and records of activities.
- Email, website and social media.

Videos/Photography
- Informational (programs, schools).
- Training (how to).

Oral Storytelling
- Sharing of experiences/achievements/highlights.

"Society cannot share a common communication system so long as it is split into warring factions."

~Bertolt Brecht
Assessment and Research

In order to measure the effectiveness of the communications program we will employ a variety of methods matched to our situation and needs.

- Focus Groups for gathering qualitative information.
- Surveys of key communicators, parents and students.
- Suggestion boxes.
- Community forums for gathering information.
- Website and Social Media statistics, tied to direct mail and other marketing campaigns.
- Research conducted by third-parties (surveys with sample sizes sufficient to predict outcomes).

The Communications Plan will be reviewed regularly, as guided by the Superintendent and at least every three years.

“Measuring PR contributes to planning – hence techniques for assessment need to be in place before the start of a public relations campaign, not after.”

~Debbie Leven