MASON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Communication Plan

2014 - 2015

Mason County Schools
Communication Plan

Mission Statement
*A safe and welcoming community where all
students are challenged and inspired to reach
their potential and pursue their dreams.*

The purpose of the Mason County School District Communication Plan is to provide a clear and concise internal and external framework for communicating with our school community. This plan primarily addresses two types of school district audiences: *internal* (students, teachers, staff, administration, and Board of Education members) and *external* (parents, businesses, civic groups, religious groups, and all other members of the Mason County community).

Note: Crisis communication for emergencies such as tornados and earthquakes will be handled according to the current District Emergency Management Plan.

This Communication Plan is designed to assist school personnel in communicating effectively and consistently with all stakeholders and, in the process, positively impacting the community's perception of and support for Mason County Schools.

Target Audiences

I.   Internal

      A.   Students

      B.   Staff

          1.   District Level

               a.   Certified

               b.   Classified

               c.   Administration

          2.   School Level

               a.   Certified

               b.   Classified

               c.   Substitute Teachers

               d.   Administration

               e.   Volunteers (ex. Foster Granny Program)

      C.   Board of Education

II.   External

      A.   Parents

      B.   School-Based Parent Organizations (PTSO)

      C.   Business Community

      D.   Elected Officials

      E.   Civic Groups

      F.   Senior Citizen Groups

      G.   Religious Groups

      H.   Community Groups

      I.   Education: Other School Districts and Local Colleges

      J.   Mason County Citizens

Goal:

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Objectives:

1. To provide a clear flow of district information.
   - Distribute organizational charts to all staff showing the decision-making process, reporting, and accountability structure.
   - Charts will include individual areas of staff responsibility for communication.
   - Communication messages should be short, concise, immediate, and provided by a variety of modes.

2. To provide ongoing training and support for administrators in effective communication with staff and the public.
   - Provide continuing training sessions as part of principal meetings on how to train teachers and staff to communicate a positive message about their school.
   - Provide school level leadership with public relations fact sheets and other user-friendly communications tools to use as needed when issues arise and must be pre-approved by the superintendent.
   - Schools will manage upcoming events through an online school calendar posted on their websites. Schools will be responsible for maintaining updated information about upcoming events.

3. To create a system to encourage flow of information from parents/community to the district.
   - Request that parents provide email addresses and cell phone numbers with student information.
   - Provide information regarding all electronic media outlets that are available for parents to access.
   - Offer informal meeting opportunities to receive feedback.
   - Meet with stakeholders through the student, classified, and certified advisory groups.

4. To provide regular information on district-wide issues.
   - Maintain an "open door" policy (administration).
   - Distribute information from meetings on a "need to know" basis.
   - Conduct surveys via email at district and school levels to gather feedback on the flow of information.
   - Meet with stakeholders through the student, classified, and certified advisory groups.

5. To publish and distribute informational items.
   - District Strategic Planning Guide
   - District/school informational brochures (specific areas such as FRYSC, school nutrition, and attendance)
   - Newsletters
   - Student planners
   - Information posted on the district and school websites
   - Mason County Schools video on the district website, updated each school year

6. To communicate with civic, community, and religious groups.
   - Include groups in mailings and provide opportunities for access to relevant electronic information.
   - Attend community meetings as needed to provide information.
   - Make the District Strategic Plan available to community stakeholders.
   - Develop and maintain community partnerships.

7. To promote the successes of Mason County Schools students and staff.
   - Highlight student success through district and school level awards programs.
   - Develop awards and publicity for staff recognition.

Strategies

1. Maintain an "open door" policy (administration).
   - Use clear and concise language for all general communications.
   - Provide translation when needed for different language groups.

2. Create specific information sheets.
   - Create information sheets as needed for topics such as budget, school safety, accountability, etc.
   - Post specific information sheets on the district and school websites.

3. Communicate face to face.
   - The more difficult the situation, the more important it is to communicate face to face.
   - Request that staff relay messages and information through personal interaction when needed.
   - When possible, use a natural recorded voice on School Messenger.

4. Keep communication brief and to the point.
   - Be brief and to the point.
   - Use bullets in text when appropriate.
   - Proofread all written communication.

5. Train staff.
   - Train staff to understand that what they say regarding Mason County Schools has an impact on how the district is perceived.

Communication Modes

1. In Person
   a. Parent/Teacher conferences
   b. Advisory councils

2. Written
   a. Student planners and handbooks
   b. Classroom newsletters (Straub)
   c. Paper notes and reminders (one-half sheet notes sent home)
   d. Signs/marquees
   e. Brochures: district, school, and departments

3. Electronic/Website
   a. All Board meeting minutes, posted in a timely manner on the district website
   b. Department and school information on district and school websites
   c. Edmodo
   d. Facebook (Administrators should also use other message forms in order to relay important messages to those who do not use Facebook.)
   e. Twitter at district level and all schools
   f. Infinite Campus: parent and student portals
   g. Text reminders
   h. Email
      a. student and parent as needed
      b. staff updates, weekly/daily/as needed
      c. between administration/staff/colleagues
   i. Community calendar
   j. Parent University

4. School Messenger
   a. School level: Use to relay vital information that needs to be known immediately.
   b. District level: Use to relay immediate, vital information to all parents.

5. Radio

   a. Public Service announcements (student and FRYSC)
   b. Weekly radio program "News and Views" (promotes the schools and provides information to the public)

6. Awards
   a. Superintendent monthly student awards at each school
   b. Staff "Class Act Awards" at the end of each school year

7. Additional possible communication modes to implement
   a. Apps: picture videos
   b. APP: calendar/planner for students