

# COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



**2023-24**

**RGSDMO.ORG**

## **Comprehensive Communications Plan Background**

Riverview Gardens School District is committed to open, honest and ongoing communication with our stakeholders. We understand that maintaining a two-way conversation with stakeholders is essential for building relationships. These relationships are the foundation for a strong school system.

This communications plan was designed to establish a comprehensive and integrated communications process for effective communication with all stakeholders. It aligns with the district's goals and is incorporated in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). Annual objectives are tied directly to the objectives set by the district for achieving its goals.

This plan is a working document that is reviewed on an annual basis by the Communications Department. In all communications, the Special Administrative Board and RGSD administration strive to disseminate accurate and timely information about district policies, programs, procedures, achievements, decisions, and critical issues. We strive to eliminate rumors and misinformation, observe confidentiality and other restrictions imposed by law and Board policy, and promote a climate of trust between the school district and its patrons.

## **Communications Department Mission**

The mission of the Communications Department is to support Riverview Gardens' continuous journey toward excellence by promoting transparent and strategic communication, fostering parent and community connections, and extending our reach to hear the voices of all stakeholders in order to have a positive impact on all RGSD scholars.

## **Beliefs**

We adopt the beliefs that are included in the district Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. We also believe we have a responsibility to communicate effectively with our constituents; that meaningful public engagement supports our goals, and that effective communication:

- Is a two-way process involving both internal and external publics.
- Is the responsibility of every employee in the district.
- Supports teaching and learning.
- Helps increase student achievement.

## **Intent**

The Comprehensive Communications Plan is intended to the following:

1. Implement a communications program that directly helps the district achieve its strategic goals.
2. Foster strong relationships with district stakeholders
3. Provide focus and direction for messages/methods in support of the district's goals.
4. Enable the district to present itself accurately to audiences.

## Reaching Key Audiences & Desired Outcomes

Riverview Gardens School District is committed to ongoing communication within our schools and with the community. The goals presented in this communications plan are based on meeting the communication goals of these main audiences:

### Internal

- Administration
- Special Administrative Board
- Certified staff (teachers, counselors, librarians)
- Support staff
- Special School District staff
- Classified staff
- School Resource Officers

### Parents and Students

- Students
- Parents Guardians
- Parent Organizations
- Student Organizations

### External

- Taxpayers
- Senior citizens
- Business leaders
- Faith community
- Retired educators
- Chamber of Commerce
- Media
- Alumni
- Riverview Gardens Education Foundation
- Government officials
- Law enforcement agencies
- Civic groups
- Community leaders
- New residents
- Private and parochial school parents
- Prospective residents
- Neighboring school districts

### Desired Behaviors and Attitudes

Through the implementation of this plan, the following desired behaviors and attitudes are the focus:

#### Internal Audiences

- Take pride and ownership in the direction of the district. And keep informed on key issues.
- Show mutual respect, trust, and understanding, and value all roles within the organization.
- Work as a high-performing organization whose employees respect and value customer feedback.
- Exhibit district values of excellence, innovation, integrity, learning, and relationships.

#### External Audiences

- Exhibit community pride and trust in schools and the school district.
- Be involved and engaged in public schools.
- Choose to enroll in Riverview Gardens School District because of its quality and innovative educational opportunities for students.
- Support the Riverview Gardens School District.

## Communication Channels

The district can more effectively provide consistent and unified messages by identifying and managing all communication avenues. A multifaceted approach to overall communications helps ensure a greater impact of messages. The following list details the internal and external communication channels Riverview Gardens School District utilizes:

### Electronic

- Website: [rgsd.k12.mo.us](http://rgsd.k12.mo.us)
  - District homepage
  - School homepages
  - Department homepages
- Social Media
  - Facebook— @RGSDSchools
  - Instagram—@RGSDSchools
  - Twitter—@RGSDSchools
  - YouTube - @RGSDSchools
  - TikTok - @RGSDSchools
  - Threads - @RGSDSchools
  - School and teacher social media pages
  - NextDoor – Riverview Gardens School District
- *The Inside View* — e-newsletter (monthly)
- *Board Briefs/5 Things You Should Know* — (weekly)
- *Ramily Matters* - podcast (bimonthly)
- Google Calendars – district, schools
- Peachjar eflyer distribution
- Canva
- Tyler SISK12

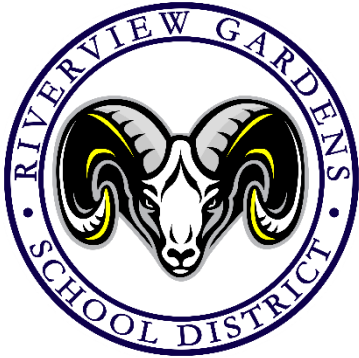
### Media

- Print newspapers
- Broadcast stations
- St. Louis magazines
- Local news websites

### Interpersonal

- Board of Education meetings (bimonthly)
- District Leadership Team meetings (weekly)
- Community City Council/Aldermen meetings (as scheduled by local elected officials)

# Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Evaluation



***Communications Goal 1: Develop and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with all stakeholders to strengthen support for Riverview Gardens School District.***

**Strategy:**

We will continue engaging with our many supportive partners and additionally form partnerships with our local communities. The Communications Department will reach out to our various local communities and form partnerships with them. We will share information in any newsletters or internet pages they might have, including NextDoor. Also, we will keep up with their current city meetings so that we might help or be helped by any activities or programs their city might be thinking about or have in process.

Actions To Be Taken	Audience	Person Responsible	Timeline	CSIP
Utilize NextDoor account to post and respond to community inquiries	Parents Community	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:S3
Put together updated list of community meetings for District leaders to attend	Community	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:
Host Town Halls inviting the community to share feedback about the District	Community	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:
Add community events and resources to electronic board outside administrative building	Parents	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:
Two-way communications with local mayors to update on important information for the community	Parents	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:
Utilize internal/external internal newsletter(s) to function as primary source of information for staff and community	Staff	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:
Publish Board Briefs/5 Things You Should Know following Special Administrative Board meetings to alert staff and community regarding highlights of each meeting	Staff Community	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:

**Objectives:**

- Increase reach by the following (see chart).
- Increase the favorable responses regarding District and building communications by +5% over by the end of 2023-2024.
- Increase parent and community knowledge of Riverview Gardens School District’s mission, vision, core values, goals, objectives, and programs as measured by qualitative and quantitative data by the end of 2023-2024.

Medium	7/1/2023	Goal for July 2024
Facebook	3,020 likes	3,473 likes (+15%)
Twitter	1,007 followers	1,158 followers (+15%)
Instagram	1,798 followers	2,248 followers (+25%)
YouTube	291 subscribers	335 subscribers (+15%)
LinkedIn	170 followers	213 followers (+50%)
TikTok	44 followers	100 followers (+127%)

**Strategy:**

We will increase parent and community engagement.

Actions To Be Taken	Audience	Person Responsible	Timeline	CSIP
Hold Back to School Bash	Scholars Parents Community	Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services, Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:S3
Create incentives and rewards for staff, scholars and parents to attend community meetings	Parents Community	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:S3
Revive PTOs, PTA, PACs	Parents Community	Family Engagement Specialist Building Leaders	Ongoing	CC:S3:1, CC:S3:5
Provide intentional support and education opportunities for parents	Parents	Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services Family Engagement Specialist	Ongoing	CC:S3:7



## ***Communications Goal 2: Improve Climate and Culture in Riverview Gardens School District.***

**Strategy:**

We will track and improve the climate and culture in Riverview Gardens School District. The Communications Department will routinely conduct surveys of scholars, staff, parents and community members to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice in the District. Survey results will be presented to the Special Administrative Board, District Leadership Team, Communications Committee and will be summarized to staff and the community at large.

<b>Actions To Be Taken</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>CSIP</b>
Conduct bi-annual survey on climate and culture	Scholars Parents  Staff Community	Executive Director of Communications	Fall 2023 Spring 2024	CC:S1:1-3 SW:2:1
Partner with and attend events hosted by churches, community organizations, community partners, area businesses, etc.	Community	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:S1
Enhanced onboarding process	Staff	Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources	Ongoing	SW:3
SMILE training and other customer service-related professional development for the entire District	Staff	MIS Coordinator	Ongoing	SW:3
Highlight important achievements and accolades through 'Riverview Excellence' recognition program at Special Administrative Board meetings. Invite and present awardees with a token of acknowledgment	Staff Scholars	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	SW:S3:3



**Communications Goal 3: Improve the image of Riverview Gardens School District through parent, community and media relations.**

**Strategy:**

We will be intentional about improving the image and reputation of the District through positive media coverage, stakeholder interactions and messaging.

Strategy	Audience	Person Responsible	Timeline	CSIP
Send press releases to news organizations and community partners highlighting important achievements, accolades and excellence	Community Media	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:S2
Create videos with important announcements, updates and information for scholars, parents, staff and community	Staff	Superintendent of Schools Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:S2
Conduct neighborhood walks and community outreach efforts to meet families in their space	Parents Community	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:S3





**Communications Goal 4:** *Work with secondary students to create a Communications goal that is developed and designed specifically to serve and advocate for student-interests.*

**Strategy:**

We will improve the student voice, involvement and engagement with the Riverview Gardens School District.

Strategy	Audience	Person Responsible	Timeline	CSIP
Work with Student Advisory Committee and Student Representatives to the SAB to identify a Communications goal developed by and for scholars.	Community Media	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC
Identify at least two students to serve on the district's Communications Committee and/or sub-committees.	Staff	Superintendent of Schools Executive Director of Communications Building Leaders	Ongoing	CC:S4:5
Work with secondary administrators and teachers to bring student involvement into District communications via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student articles in newsletters,</li> <li>• Student videos,</li> <li>• Student podcasts,</li> <li>• Student-driven social media posts,</li> <li>• Other student-drive communications initiatives.</li> </ul>	Parents Community	Executive Director of Communications	Ongoing	CC:S4:5

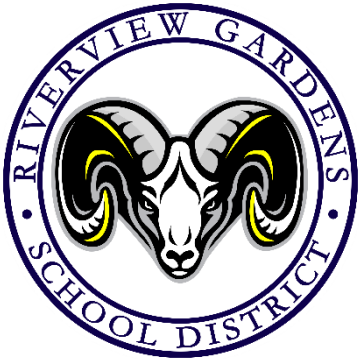
# DEPARTMENTAL GOALS UPDATED FOR 2023-2024



**Communications Departmental Goal #1:**

*Develop an intranet system to serve as a communications hub for RGSD faculty and staff by November 2023.*

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**Communications Departmental Goal #2:**

*Hold weekly Communications department meetings to better plan, strategize and collaborate on Communications initiatives.*

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**Communications Departmental Goal #3:**

*Attend local community meetings and events at least twice per month.*

## Working With the Media

Riverview Gardens School District works with the media on a regular basis, including local newspapers, St. Louis regional broadcast stations and newspapers, and on occasion, national news media. Our goal is to be helpful and provide information in a timely, transparent manner.

### When the Media Calls

To protect our students' privacy and ensure that reporters receive all the information they need, staff are instructed to direct all media inquiries to the Executive Director of Communications. The reference card below provides guidelines and helpful information for RGSD staff.

Personnel authorized to speak to the media include: Executive Director of Communications, Superintendent, Board of Education President, Athletic Director, other staff as assigned on a story-by-story basis.



### Missouri Sunshine Law

The Coordinator of Board Governance/Custodian of Records handles all Missouri Sunshine Law (<https://ago.mo.gov/missouri-law/sunshine-law>) requests and we strive as a district to adhere closely to the requirements set forth by the law.

All Sunshine Requests should be submitted to Sha Fields at [shafields@rgsd.k12.mo.us](mailto:shafields@rgsd.k12.mo.us) or by calling (314) 869-2505 Ext. 20123.

### Student Media Permission

Staff are familiar with their students' media permission status, which is listed in Tyler SIS. All parents/guardians must opt-out of photograph and/or biographical information permissions on an annual basis.

## School Communication Using Social Media

Riverview Gardens School District staff members are encouraged to communicate with students and families for educational purposes using a variety of effective methods, including electronic communication. Riverview Gardens School District policy states that, as with other forms of communication, staff members must maintain professional boundaries with students while using electronic communication. This applies in all cases, regardless of whether the communication methods are provided by the district or the staff member uses his or her own personal electronic communication devices, accounts, webpages, or other forms of electronic communication.

### **Riverview Gardens School District Social Media Guidelines**

All Riverview Gardens School District social media pages include the following guidelines for our fans and visitors:

*Riverview Gardens School District welcomes the opportunity to engage with parents and our community through the use of social media. This page is designed to celebrate the achievements of our students, teachers, staff, and community.*

*We encourage dialogue that is open, honest, and professional while being respectful of diverse viewpoints.*

*Riverview Gardens School District's Facebook page and comments are reviewed daily by the Communications Department. We may remove comments that are inappropriate including:*

- *Spam;*
- *Selling a product or service;*
- *Inaccurate information;*
- *Off-topic or unrelated to the Riverview Gardens School District;*
- *Personal attacks; and*
- *Language (comments including profane or provocative language; hateful, racially or ethnically offensive or derogatory content; threats; obscene or sexually explicit language will be removed)*

*We reserve the right to block users from RGSD's social media pages for inappropriate use and report these violations to Facebook.*

## Information Sharing and Authorization

Those employees wishing to create and maintain a Facebook or other social media profile as part of their job should complete the information sharing form below. (This includes pages for classes, teams, organizations, or groups of parents and/or students. It does NOT include personal profile pages.)

Employees setting up and/or maintaining a Facebook page or group also agree to add a supervisor and/or Ishmael Sistrunk, executive director of Communications, as an administrator for the page. In case of an emergency that prevents you from being able to access your page, this will ensure timely and accurate information is shared with your followers. Adding a page administrator is simple; click here for instructions: <https://www.facebook.com/help/187316341316631>

Completing this form will connect you with social media champions in your building and will allow the district to maintain a central directory of social media profiles in our schools to help parents and patrons.

### \* Required

- Your Name (First & Last): \*
- Your Email Address: \*
- I plan to represent the following class/team/club/project/etc. on social media: \*
- Your Building \*
- The social media tool I intend to use is: \*
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Instagram
  - YouTube
  - Other:
- The URL for my page (or my Twitter/Instagram handle and/or hashtag) where some can find it is: \*
- Here is a description of the type of information or content I plan to share on my site: \*
- I plan to use the following privacy structure for my page: \*
  - Open public access to view and post
  - Open public access to view, with no ability to post
  - Viewing access limited only to invited members (private or secret Facebook group)
  - Other:
- I affirm that I have read and understand the social media guidelines for employees \*
- I acknowledge that I will be solely responsible for managing the information and posts on my page. I also affirm that I intend to give one of my supervisors, and/or Ishmael Sistrunk, administrator-level access to my page, group or account, to assist in case of emergency \*

## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

At Riverview Gardens School District, we recognize that many of our staff, students, parents, and community members are active social media users. As a school district, we are also incorporating social media as a strategic tool for communication, teaching, and learning.

The purpose of these guidelines is to help you to participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects your reputation - and the reputation of the Riverview Gardens School District - and that respects the relationship between teachers and students.

For the purposes of this document, social media includes, but is not necessarily limited to, social networking and media-sharing sites such as Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, TikTok, SnapChat, NextDoor, LinkedIn, Flickr, Tumblr, Threads and YouTube. It also includes blogs, comments on websites, discussion forums, and any other activity online involving connecting or communicating with other users.

These guidelines complement, but do not replace, any existing policies regarding the use of technology, computers, email, and the Internet that are in place at Riverview Gardens School District. Employees should specifically review:

[Riverview Gardens School District Board of Education Policy GBH](#), which defines expectations of Staff/Student Relations.

[Riverview Gardens School District Board of Education Policy EHB](#), which defines Acceptable Use of Technology.

### YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY:

We encourage responsible participation in social networking sites, subject to existing policies concerning the use of social media during work hours and other applicable policies, including, but not limited to, those concerning non-discrimination, anti-harassment, anti-bullying, and copyright/fair use. We ask that you carefully consider the very public forum you are participating in and act in a way that appropriately represents both your professional reputation and the Riverview Gardens School District.

You are responsible for what you post; communications that would be deemed inappropriate or actionable if they occurred inside or outside of the classroom do not become acceptable merely because they are made online. Always bear in mind that once posted, you cannot take it back. Some specific guidelines we ask you to consider:

#### **Use Common Sense.**

Use common sense when posting online. While these guidelines are in no way intended to limit or infringe upon your rights to comment upon the workplace, it remains good practice never to post anything that would embarrass you or Riverview Gardens School District or would call your professional reputation into question.

#### **Be Transparent.**

How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity or misrepresenting your identity. Be honest about who you are, where you work, and what you do.

#### **Be Respectful.**

While the Riverview Gardens School District respects the rights of its employees to exercise their rights, employees should not make any derogatory statements about colleagues or students or other comments that would reflect poorly on your professional reputation or the reputation of Riverview Gardens School District. You are ultimately responsible for your comments, and Riverview Gardens School District recommends that you thoughtfully

### **Be Aware of Liability.**

You are personally responsible for the content you publish online or send in a private message. "Content" includes personal comments, links, photographs, audio or video, and content created by other users that you choose to share, send, or re-post. As an employee of the district, content you post should not include provocative photographs, sexually explicit messages, content showing or promoting the excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol or use of drugs, or any activity students are legally prohibited from doing. Remember, even with privacy settings in place, your content could be seen by students or parents or find its way into the public realm.

### **Know that "Delete" Doesn't Mean Gone Forever.**

Be mindful that any content you publish will be public for a long time. Not only can your content show up in Google and other search engines, but the FTC allows private corporations to store publicly accessible Facebook posts for a period of some seven years to be used in employee background checks made by current or potential employers. Moreover, even posts and messages that are "private" or designed to disappear after a short time may be subject to discovery in legal actions.

### **Once Posted, You Can't Take It Back.**

You should be mindful that once something is posted, you cannot take it back. In most instances, deleting content will not make it disappear. Deleted content can still show up in online searches. Or, with the click of a button, other users can take a screenshot, re-post, or share your content with others. Even if you share your content with a very limited number of people, nothing prohibits your contacts from sharing the information you post.

### **Be Mindful When Posting Photos.**

Special care should be taken when posting personal photographs. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality and professional reputation. All photographs should be posted with the assumption that they could end up in the public realm.

### **Always a School Employee.**

The lines between public and private, personal and professional, are blurred in the digital world. Even when you have a disclaimer or use a different username, you will always be considered to be a district employee. Whether it is clearly communicated or not, you will be identified as working for and sometimes representing the school in what you do and say online. Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration you apply offline.

### **Build Community.**

Represent the District and the students and parents you serve in the best light. Respect the privacy and the feelings of others. Under no circumstance should offensive comments be made about students or colleagues (including administrators) nor Riverview Gardens School District in general. Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community. You are responsible for what you post, be certain it is accurate and supports your organization. Before you post or share content, ask yourself if you would want to see that content in the newspaper or on the evening news. Would you feel comfortable if your content was read by colleagues, your students, parents, or the Board of Education? If the answer is "no," then the content is best not shared.

### **Do Not Share Confidential Information.**

Online postings and even private message conversations are not private. Do not share confidential information whether it is internal school discussions or specific information about students or other staff. Do not write about colleagues or students without their (or their parents') permission. Photos and videos of students should be posted only with parental consent, which is obtained each school year as part of enrollment and the Family

Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). It is an opt-out procedure that is coordinated at the district level and shared with employees each year to ensure proper information is withheld from social media release.

### **Protect Your Privacy.**

You are responsible for understanding and controlling privacy settings on each social network you use. Always assume default settings will make your profile and any content you share publicly accessible. You should also understand that even with maximum privacy settings in place, or in social media apps designed to make content disappear, content can still find its way into the public domain.

## **EMPLOYEE-STUDENT RELATIONS:**

Riverview Gardens School District recognizes the role that communication and collaboration between employees and students play in the educational process and experience. The District further acknowledges that the advancement of electronic communication and social media technologies creates more significant opportunities for interactions between employees and students, and provides these additional guidelines for the protection of employees and students alike.

- Employees are never under any obligation to accept friend or follower requests from any student or to use personal social media accounts to engage with students or participate in district projects. In addition, you should bear in mind that depending on your account's privacy settings, everything you post may be publicly accessible to your students, whether you are connected to them or not.
- Employees must exercise great care in connecting with students on any social media channels. Do not send permission-based friend or follower requests to students, for example, Facebook friend requests. Use discretion and carefully consider the guidelines provided by the district before accepting any permission-based friend or follower requests received from students. Riverview Gardens School District recommends that if an employee decides to accept friend or follower requests received from students, they should accept all such requests, and not selectively limit their interactions to what could be perceived as a few preferred individuals.
- Private messages, as well as direct messages, with one or more participants are commonplace in social media. However, employees should avoid using social media messaging tools to communicate with students and/or parents and should instead use official tools (such as district email or the mass notifications or app) for such purposes. If a conversation with a student or family member does occur in a private message system, the employee is encouraged to document that conversation, such as with a screen capture image, to create a more permanent record of the exchange.
- Any employee-student communications or relationships via social media, including in private messages, should be of an appropriate professional nature, have content that is appropriate for both the communications medium and the audience addressed, and must not violate any provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). With each communication, ask yourself if it's something you would feel comfortable being printed in the newspaper, read by parents, colleagues, or the Board of Education. Always assume any communication can easily end up in the public realm.
- Employees who are connected to or communicate with students via social media must understand they may be granting those students access to all content in their personal social media profiles and should consider the guidelines the district has provided to ensure students are protected from exposure to inappropriate content or content that might compromise the employee's professional reputation.



- Employees are also responsible for ensuring any relationship and all dialogue with the student is kept professional in its nature, and for immediately reporting to the district any inappropriate communication received from a student. This is as much for your protection as the student's. Any content or communication generated either by you or by a student which would be inappropriate in the classroom should also be considered inappropriate when shared via social media or in private message.
- The district recognizes there may be certain limited exceptions to these guidelines, such as a student being a family member or relative, or in those instances when an employee's interaction with a student is a result of certain non-district activities, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, religious organizations, or other similar relationships.

## **Emergency Communication**

The Communications Department works closely with the District Leadership Team and the Safety & Security department in crisis situations to ensure that we are communicating with all appropriate audiences in a timely and accurate manner. When a crisis occurs, we use one or more of the following channels to communicate:

### **External**

1. District, school website alert
2. Principal email/text to parents
3. District, building level Facebook
4. District, building level Twitter
5. District, building level SchoolMessenger text alert
6. Phone message to families

### **Internal**

1. Notify District Leadership Team, Special Administrative Board
2. Send email to staff in the affected building(s) and/or all district

### **Media**

1. Talking points
2. Media release/statement
3. On-camera interview

## **Administrator Crisis Checklist and Media Guidelines**

In addition, administrators are instructed to follow the Building-Level Crisis Management Plan & Checklist, Stakeholder Checklist, and Communicating with the Media in a Crisis Situation (see appendix), as outlined in the district's Crisis Guide.