

# COMMUNICATION PLAN

## Perry County School District Communication Plan

The purpose of the Perry County School District Communications Plan is to present a clear and concise framework for communicating with our school community. This plan will provide public understanding and awareness of the learning opportunities provided for students and learners of all ages in the Perry County School District. The plan primarily addresses two types of school district audiences: *internal* (students, teachers, staff, administration, and Board of Education) and *external* (parents, businesses, civic groups, religious groups, and other members of the Perry County community).

**\*\* This plan has been adapted from the Orange County Unified School District in California.**

# Target Audiences

## Internal

1. Students
2. Staff
  - A. District Level
    - i. Classified
    - ii. Certified
    - iii. Leadership
  - B. Site Level
    - i. Classified
    - ii. Certified
    - iii. Leadership
3. Board of Education

## External

1. Parents
2. Parent Organizations
3. Key Communicators
4. Business Community
5. Elected City Officials
6. Elected State and Federal Legislators
7. Civic Groups
8. Senior Citizens Groups
9. Religious Groups
10. Community Groups
11. Education —school districts, local colleges, and libraries
13. Electronic Media—Web site, email, pod cast, listserv, etc.
14. Print Media—newsletters, newspapers, flyers, etc.
15. Non-Profit Organizations
16. Perry Co. Citizens

# Objective

Our objective is to improve internal and external communication systems with the specific goal of creating open, two-way communication between the Board of Education, administration, staff, students, parents and the Perry County community.

## **1. Clarify district flow of information**

Distribute organizational charts to all staff showing decision-making process, reporting, and accountability structure.

Charts will include individual areas of staff responsibility for communication. See the Quick Reference System Checklist.

## **2. Provide ongoing training and support for administrators in effective communication with staff and the public**

Provide continuing training sessions as part of principal's meetings on how to train teachers and staff to communicate their school's message.

Supply administrators with public relations fact sheets and other easy-to-use communications tools as needed when issues arise and must be pre-approved by Superintendent.

Provide communications training sessions to site-level staff.

Schools will manage upcoming events through the online school calendar posted on school website. Schools will be held accountable for maintaining upcoming events.

## **3. Provide regular information on district-wide issues**

Distribute information from meetings on need-to-know basis.

Distribute *external* publications and news releases to all employees via email, website, newsletters, postings, and through school messenger.

Issue short, bulleted FYI sheets to staff and parents on issues of immediate concern.

Formalize a policy for district communication with teachers and site staff.

#### **4. Create a system to encourage flow of information from parents/ community to the district**

Encourage parents and community members to sign up for district-wide and school-wide Internet listservs (automatic mailing lists from the internet, Open Houses, orientations, academic/athletic events, and email logs at each school campus).

Conduct electronic surveys (email) at district and site levels to provide feedback on flow of information through either school messenger or school/district websites.

Offer informal meeting opportunities to receive input.

Establish informational email account to receive feedback from community.

Expand use of the Parent Portal to facilitate communication between parents and schools by placing an icon on district website and advertise through school messenger and newspaper. Publicize via the website and school messenger to parents about the new app for the smart phones that allows them to view student information from a hand held device.

#### **5. Publish and distribute informational pieces**

District/School Informational Pamphlets.

Newsletters – to be emailed via the listserv.

Press releases as needed.

#### **6. Communicate with civic, community and religious groups**

Include groups in mailings and provide opportunities for them to sign up for our community listserv.

Attend community meetings as needed to provide information.

Provide district communications materials to key leaders. A representative will attend Chamber of Commerce meetings and present happenings in the Perry County School District.

Develop partnerships with groups.

## **7. Be visible in the community**

Attend community organization meetings.

Encourage participation in local service clubs.

Encourage school staff to talk positively about Perry County schools to friends, neighbors and community acquaintances.

Seek business partnerships through contacts in local groups.

## **8. Promote the successes of Perry County personnel**

Produce a monthly newsletter or presentation focusing on a student, staff member, program, school, department, etc. This is to be shown on District website, radio, newspaper, and/or at Board meetings.

Highlight staff with articles in district communications pieces, outside media, and through recognition at events.

# Strategies

## **1. Keep Communications Simple**

- ◇ Use clear, concise and non-educational style for all general publications.
- ◇ Vary the types and level of communication to target diverse audiences.
- ◇ Translate communication pieces when appropriate for various language groups.

## **2. Create Information Sheets**

- ◇ Create information sheets on four or five topics such as district and state budgets, school safety, accountability, etc.; update them bi-annually or as needed.
- ◇ Have sheets available on-line for quick reference.
- ◇ Use template for uniformity so that new topics can be addressed rapidly.

## **3. Communicate Early and Often**

- ◇ Prepare information sheets when appropriate to send out to principals, office managers, and other staff as needed.
- ◇ Follow-up with memos or communications to all staff if necessary.
- ◇ Make telephone calls if in doubt.

## **4. Communicate Face-to-Face**

- ◇ The more difficult the situation, the more important it is to communicate face-to-face.
- ◇ Encourage staff to relay messages through personal interaction when appropriate.
- ◇ When possible use natural voice to record messages on School Messenger.

## **5. Keep Communications Brief and to the Point**

- ◇ In order to keep a person's attention, be brief and to the point.
- ◇ Use bullet points when appropriate.
- ◇ Highlight message in the title.
- ◇ Proofread all documents for errors.

## **6. Emphasize Customer Service**

- ◇ Customer (Parents, Students and Community) must leave with an answer to their concern or question.
- ◇ Never be dismissive.
- ◇ Actively listen to understand the message beyond the words.

## **7. Train Staff**

- ◇ Train staff to understand that what they say to friends, neighbors, and people in the community has an impact on how Perry County schools are perceived.
- ◇ Superintendent will relay important information. This information will be given to all schools including, principals, teachers, and classified staff.
- ◇ Engage frontline staff in the conversation, and make sure they have access to information immediately. They are the best link to the parents and community.

## **8. Develop Relationships with our Community**

- ◇ Develop relationships with business partners by keeping them informed
- ◇ Ask for input on areas of concern through surveys, Board email address, school email addresses, and through form surveys on the District website.
- ◇ Develop key communicators groups and deliver message to them as needed. They will take the message to the community more effectively than district personnel. This includes Hazard/Perry County Chamber of Commerce and the Perry County Drug Awareness Council.
- ◇ Maintain a high level of visibility for the District through participation of key staff in various professional and community activities.

## **9. Study the Media**

- ◇ Pay attention to the type of stories aired or published.
- ◇ Note who is generally used as a source of information.
- ◇ Develop relationships with editors and education reporters.

## **10. Prepare our Messages**

- ◇ Study issues facing education and be prepared to respond with information sheets.
- ◇ Develop responses that represent our school or district message.
- ◇ Avoid technical jargon by keeping it simple and using quotable “sound bites,” when appropriate.
- ◇ Prepare stories in formats that match those used by the local media.
- ◇ Don’t use education lingo when preparing messages.



# Methods

We will identify the communication tools that are most widely accepted and preferred by the community through quarterly assessment and adjust accordingly. Our current communications methods are:

## 1. Printed Materials

- ◇ The District Newspaper insert (Tomorrow's Leader)-district newspaper containing articles about each school delivered monthly.
- ◇ *Electronic Newsletters*—sent to employees, parents, business and media contacts
- ◇ Memos from the Superintendent—as needed.

**2. E-mail Communication** – Perry County School District will create a community listserv that will allow individuals to sign up for on the District web site. This gives us the ability to send periodic notices including links to the latest information:

- ◇ Publications
- ◇ Board minutes, agendas and notes
- ◇ Press releases

\* All schools should send out a monthly email communication to encourage parents to become more involved in their school and to keep them informed. Paper communication will be greatly reduced over time.

**3. Publications Posted Online** - We can save money and time by continuing to provide the majority of our printed materials on our district's web site and begin to move away from paper communications. Our on-line archives include:

- ◇ Board agenda/notes/minutes
- ◇ Student and Master Events Calendars
- ◇ Link to School and District Websites
- ◇ School Newsletters
- ◇ ESTUB – Electronic Paystubs for employees

## 4. Radio Announcements –

- ◇ School sponsored clips during broadcast of sporting events
- ◇ Emergency Situations
- ◇ Back to school announcements by superintendent

# Assessment and Accountability

Because different measurements work best in different situations, a tracking system will be developed to measure communication effectiveness.

- ◇ **Benchmarking** - will be used to ascertain what communication strategies are being implemented in other school districts.
- ◇ **Focus groups** – each school’s site base council will collect and evaluate communication methods.
- ◇ **Surveys** - electronic surveys will be used to ascertain people’s opinion and to collect quantitative information.
- ◇ **Email** receipt requests - counters will be used on the website to measure the number of hits for each story.
- ◇ **Interpersonal Contact** - Informal word-of-mouth surveys will be conducted to gauge the level of effectiveness of Communications Plan. The Communications Plan will be reviewed annually or as deemed necessary by the Superintendent, Board of Education and/or Communications Committee.

# **Internal Communication:**

Weekly Instructional “go to” meetings (Monday Huddle) will be held with all District/School Level Administrators to communicate new programs, ideas, concerns, policies, procedures, staff development, and announcements. These will serve as a focus group meeting for all district/school initiatives.

Encourage the use of e-mail to convey information and to communicate with principals, teachers, and staff on an “as-needed” basis.

Continue publishing and distributing the school newsletter by mail and parent/community email distribution list.

Continue to hold new staff members’ orientation annually.

Provide information and opportunity for training on effective communication.

Develop a board agenda calendar for long-term planning for recurring projects and deadlines that are addressed each year and post them on the district website.

Provide student handbooks to all parents at the beginning of the school year.

Provide employee handbooks to all employees and have them sign them at the beginning of each year.

# **External Communication:**

Use newspaper articles to promote the district’s mission.

Arrange interviews and media coverage to promote the district’s mission.

Honor volunteers and community partnerships at the district level.

Continue the development of the district web site and individual school sites.

Develop and distribute packets of school information upon request to parents and businesses.

Communicate significant dates such as the opening of school, student orientations, National Education Week, National School Nurses’ Week, Red Ribbon Week, through local newspapers, radio, announcements, school snow assignments and website.

Provide the public with the opportunity to provide written or oral concerns or statements to the board through board email addresses and submit news on the district website.

Encourage central office staff and school staff to become involved in civic opportunities.

# Possible Publications Tools:

District newsletter to parents and the community that identifies student achievements, school activities, and program information. This is to be completed at the end of each nine weeks.

All-School calendar of activities and events

Special event/activity brochures

District website (all items listed will be printed and listed on district website)

Electronic and other signage

Building Level newsletters

Principals Newsletters

District run TV Channel through TV Service

School Messenger

Emails to businesses and parents

Student Generated Newsletters

## Perry County School District

### Outgoing Correspondence and Publications

<b>Location</b>	<b>Types of Publications</b>	<b>Sent Out</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
<b>Central Office</b>	Newspaper District Website School Messenger Emails	Monthly Updated Every Monday Sent out as needed Sent out as needed	Susie Sizemore Michael A. Smith & Susie Sizemore Johnny Wooton & Jonathan Jett John Paul Amis & Central Office Staff
<b>Perry County High School</b>	Digital Sign Newsletters Radio Spots School Messenger Emails School Website	Updated every Monday Sent out weekly As Needed As Needed As needed Updated weekly	Tony McGuire Lexie Centers Estill Neace Estill Neace & PCCHS Staff Estill Neace, Lea Sparks & Larry Robinson Lexie Centers & Staff
<b>Buckhorn School</b>	School Messenger	As needed	Lisa Weist

	Emails	As needed	Lisa Weist & Staff
	School Website	Updated Weekly	Paula Boggs & Staff
<b>A.B. Combs Elementary</b>	School Messenger	As needed	Neal Feltner & Steve Dixon
	Emails	As needed	Neal Feltner, Steve Dixon & Staff
	School Website	Updated Weekly	Melissa Moore & Staff
<b>Dennis Wooton Elementary</b>	School Messenger	As needed	Thomas Neace & Clifford McIntyre
	Emails	As needed	Thomas Neace, Clifford McIntyre & Staff
	School Website	Updated Weekly	Melissa Moore & Staff
<b>Big Creek Elementary</b>	School Messenger	As needed	Jeff Castle
	Emails	As needed	Jeff Castle & Staff
	School Website	Updated Weekly	Kelli Fields & Staff
<b>Willard Elementary</b>	School Messenger	As needed	Jody Campbell
	Emails	As needed	Jody Campbell & Staff
	School Website	Updated Weekly	Monica Gibson & Staff
<b>Chavies Elementary</b>	School Messenger	As needed	Eddie Browning
	Emails	As needed	Eddie Browning & Staff
	School Website	Updated Weekly	Jennifer Day & Staff
<b>Robinson Elementary</b>	School Messenger	As needed	Scott Brown

	Emails	As needed	Scott Brown & Staff
	School Website	Updated Weekly	Ashley Vanover, Doug Bryant & Staff
<b>R.W. Combs Elementary</b>	School Messenger	As needed	Josh Baker & Jamie Fugate
	Emails	As needed	Josh Baker, Jamie Fugate & Staff
	School Website	Updated Weekly	Dee Hurley & Staff
<b>Viper Elementary</b>	School Messenger	As needed	Delilah Sue Brashear
	Emails	As needed	Delilah Sue Brashear & Staff
	School Website	Updated Weekly	Jamie Neace & Staff
<b>Leatherwood Elementary</b>	School Messenger	As needed	Kenny Roark
	Emails	As needed	Kenny Roark & Staff
	School Website	Updated Weekly	Kristi Minks & Staff