Coffee County Schools Communication Plan

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Superintendent, Lead Communicator:
As Coffee County School System's lead communicator, our superintendent works to create a culture of effective communication that supports our district's vision of creating a stronger community through an equitable and excellent education for every student.

Our Superintendent finds time to prepare and send messages on a regular basis to staff members, parents and other stakeholders in the community. The topics vary from back-to-school logistics and district plans and programs, to school system challenges, construction updates, and the latest local issues. The primary purpose is to inform, motivate, and reinforce key messages.

As the lead communicator, CCSS Superintendent understands the importance of communication and how to create a communication infrastructure documented in this communication plan.

The purpose of the Coffee County School System's Communication Plan is to present clear and concise framework for communicating with our district community. This plan primarily addresses internal and external school district audiences.

Staff support for, and involvement in, this plan is vital – particularly, teachers and office staff. The CCSS staff is the face of the District and carries the message of the District to their families and friends who, in turn, form opinions about our schools. Our top priority must be to communicate a clear, concise and unified message at all times.

The CCSS Communication Plan is intended to do 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.

Stakeholders

Internal:
- Students
- Teachers
- Staff
- Administration
- Board of Education

External:
- Parents
- Businesses
- Civic Groups
- Religious Groups
- Other members of the community

The district can effectively provide consistent and unified messages by identifying and managing available communication tools. A multifaceted approach to overall communications helps ensure greater impact of messages. The following list details the internal and external communication channels utilized by the Coffee County School System.

Electronic

District Web page
School Web pages
Targeted Email lists
Kinvolve
Remind 101
Infinite Campus
Peachjar
District and School Websites

Print

Brochures
Newsletters
Press Releases
Targeted mailing lists

External Media

Print newspapers
Broadcast stations (both radio & TV)
Public Service Announcements
Social Media: Facebook

Interpersonal

District Leadership Meetings
PTO Meetings
Principal meetings
Assistant Principals' Meeting
Superintendent's Teacher Advisory
School Governance Team Meetings
Parent Advisory Council Meetings
Board of Education Meetings and Work Sessions

The CCSS communications program includes elements common in most school public relations programs. The following activities are performed continuously, every day:

Promotions

Students and staff work hard each and every day, and deserve recognition for their efforts. District personnel publicize this hard work by:

- informing and encouraging the media to focus on these achievements by attending events, taking photos and writing good news articles;
- having key personnel develop and publish content recognizing those achievements in district newsletters and on the district web site; and
- designing certificates of recognition.

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Media Relations

Professional interaction is crucial to developing a positive and open relationship with local newspaper, TV, radio, and electronic media reporters. The District's Director of Personnel and Human Resources serves as the primary contact for reporters and assignment editors. The Personnel Director provides background information, answers questions and arranges interviews for local media. A strong relationship with the media is important in promoting the district, including student and staff accomplishments.

Website Maintenance

Parents, community members, and staff members increasingly rely on the internet for up-to-date information about school events. The District's Technology Director maintains the CCSS's external web site by updating the front page several times a week with fresh news, populating the calendar, and working with other departments on new features. District personnel (department heads) maintain the internal Intranet by publishing relevant and updated information to engage all employees in an effort to improve internal communication and staff involvement.

Social Media

District stakeholders, along with the general public, are increasingly turning to the internet to receive vital information about the community they live in, and many expect to find the most up-to-the-minute information at their fingertips on social media. All school district employees are encouraged to tag Coffee County School System on social media pages in an effort to promote positive news within our schools. This must be a team effort. These posts are used to drive parents, community members and stakeholders back to the district's external web site for a clear and unified message.

Community Relations

The quality of a community can be defined by the strength of its public schools. Our most important "stakeholders" are our students. However, Coffee County businesses and organizations also have a vested interest in our schools' success. In an effort to enhance the quality of education, and to prepare all students for success, the Coffee County School System encourages businesses and organizations to participate as partners. By partnering with local business leaders and small business owners, our students receive the interaction and knowledge needed to become fruitful members of the community post-graduation.

Crisis Communications

In times of crisis, open communication with parents, community members, and the media is vital to prevent panic and the spread of misinformation. The District works closely with local law enforcement officials to obtain and disseminate accurate and timely information in times of crisis.

District personnel handle media and parent phone calls, write letters to parents and automated messages about any incidents, and send out news releases to media organizations with timely information. District personnel also maintain an active presence on social media sites to inform parents and the community-at-large of any incident they should be aware of.

Crisis communications are coordinated by the Public Relations Department and detailed in the CCSS Emergency Preparedness Plan.

Threat Communications

A **threat** is an expression of an intent to cause harm to self or others. The threat may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means.

When a report of a threat is received the person receiving the threat will
- Notify School Administration who will
- Notify System Chief of Police who will
- Notify Superintendent who will
- Notify Superintendent's Cabinet
    - Assistant Superintendent of Facilities & operations
    - Assistant Superintendent of Standards, Instruction , & Assessment
    - HR Director
    - Technology Director

If it is not feasible for all team members to be involved with the screening of initial reports referred to the team, the Superintendent or designee may designate a subset of team members to investigate cases and determine action by the full team. If the team implements an investigative process, at least two members of the team will review initial reports and determine if the full team should further assess and manage the situation. All administrators shall be trained in threat assessment.

The goal of the threat assessment process is to take appropriate preventive or corrective measures to maintain a safe and secure school environment.

Timely reporting of expression to harm is crucial to an effective school-based threat assessment program.

Anyone, including students, families, and community members may report communication or behavior that appears to be threatening or potentially threatening to [designate school and or district administrators].

All school district employees, volunteers, and contractors should report immediately to [designate school administrator(s)] any expression of intent to harm another person, concerning communications, or concerning behaviors that suggest an individual may intend to commit an act of violence. Anyone who believes that a person or situation poses an imminent threat of serious violence that requires containment should notify school security and/or law enforcement.