School District No. 83
(North Okanagan-Shuswap)

Communications Plan

Purpose:

To improve School District communication, both *internally* through departments and sites, and *externally* between staff and non-employee stakeholders, in support of the **District Strategic Plan**.

Rationale:

Feedback from stakeholder engagement processes indicated communication was a potential area of growth for the District. The benefits of effective communication are clearly present in the Strategic Plan Outcomes under Organizational Efficiency. These are:

- The organization is trustworthy, consistent, ethical, and transparent;
- Resources (e.g., time, money, and people) are allocated responsibly;
- Relationships within and among district departments are healthy and personnel work well together toward common goals;
- The public is informed, connected, and/or can easily access appropriate information;
- Financial reporting is consistent and accessible;
- All employees and trustees are connected to the organization's core purpose and goals; and,
- All employees and trustees are committed to individual and organizational capacity building and to continuous development.

School District No. 83 is committed to continuous improvement in order to uphold our values and achieve our strategic goals. Communication plays an integral role in achieving success in these areas. We will build trust, respect, and mutual understanding through open, proactive communications that convey the achievements and challenges of the school district.

Goal #1: Consistent and Authentic Engagement with all Stakeholders

Building understanding and trust requires effective information gathering. We will use consistent and authentic engagement processes to collect stakeholder's feedback regarding the work of the District, such as Strategic Plan progress, budget decisions, calendar processes, student success, staff performance, and more. Strategies:

- Public sessions exploring New Curriculum with parents and community supported by the District but focused at the schools;
- Elementary reporting processes emphasizing three-way conferences between parents, teachers, and students;
- Exploration of possible barriers to parent and student engagement at the middle and secondary school levels;
- Staff learning sessions to build confidence with technology-based communication tools and privacy legislation;
- Continuation of the Partner Group Table to give trustees and senior

staff access to input from stakeholder representatives; and,

- Continued use of information gathering surveys, enhanced by the use of customer style satisfaction surveys.

Goal #2: Clear, Focused, Timely, and Purposeful Messaging from the School District

Understanding requires accurate information. We will use a streamlined approach to communication and provide clear, focused, and purposeful messaging to our District stakeholders. Strategies:

- Standard website platforms, updated regularly by staff, and using a standard format to ease user navigation and have a more consistent and professional appearance;
- E-news software with highlights that can be shared and consumed efficiently, with the option for the recipient to see additional content when desired;
- Monthly features on learning events in District schools, with a focus on New Curriculum adoption;
- School staff access to communication tools, skills, and strategies in order to maximize sharing of important information directly from schools;
- Regular District updates on Strategic Plan progress;
- Board meeting summaries that go out the day after the meeting to parents and media;
- Policy and regulations that explicitly define our practices regarding the retention and distribution of information;
- Clarification of the manner in which the School District communicates with stakeholders, both internally and externally, for general business and for urgent business. (Appendix A outlines these methods.)

Measurement and Reporting:

Progress on the District Communication Plan will be assessed through the annual Strategic Plan and Communication Survey to be administered each April. The results of the most recent survey can be seen at: https://sd83.bc.ca/strategic-plan-progress/

LEARNING ZONE

Appendix A: SD83 Communication Strategies and Methods *

DISTRICT LEVEL STRATEGIES	SCHOOL LEVEL STRATEGIES

External Communication (General Business)

DISTRICT LEVEL STRATEGIES	SCHOOL LEVEL STRATEGIES
Websites: Engaging modern platform tile-based format with links to news, documents, and general information, updated regularly by Senior Leadership.	**Websites:** Attractive standardized platform and format for ease of navigation and support, updated regularly by site staff.
Email: Professional, concise, and FOIP compliant, with critical information highlighted.	
Phone calls: As necessary for specific issues.	**Phone calls:** Calls for specific student matters are standard practice.
Meetings: Public meetings, with both small and large groups on areas of interest to parents and community. Private meetings for specific student matters.	
Newsline: Monthly updates from the School District, which include a Synopsis of the Board meetings, in an easy-to-access printable electronic format.	**Newsletters:** Updates from the School as needed in easy-to-access format.
Community Newsletter: Timely information prior to school start-up published annually in August.	
Social Media: Used to augment and support other information sources.	

External Communication (Urgent Information)

DISTRICT LEVEL STRATEGIES	SCHOOL LEVEL STRATEGIES
Email: Professional, concise, and FOIP compliant, with critical information highlighted.	
Phone calls: Use of phone trees to distribute sensitive or timely information.	**Phone calls:** School Messenger for bulk callings. Personal calls for specific matters. Use of phone trees to distribute sensitive or timely information.
Website: District website updated with information intended for broad audience.	**Website:** School website updated with information intended for broad audience.
Social Media: Used to augment and supports other information sources.	
Radio and other media: Alerted for serious matters by Senior Leadership.	

Internal Communication (General Business)

DISTRICT LEVEL STRATEGIES	SCHOOL LEVEL STRATEGIES
Email: Professional, concise, and FOIP compliant, with critical information highlighted.	
Phone: Between sites, with texting for brief/non-emergent information sharing.	**Phone:** Between rooms, with texting for brief/non-emergent information sharing.
Meetings: Monthly within schools and departments, or additionally as needed.	
Websites: Reference for Important Dates, District forms, Polices and Regulations, and Contact Information.	
On the Fly: Monthly updates for employees in an easy to access format.	
Circulars: Timely information regarding personnel matters.	

Internal Communication (Urgent Information)

DISTRICT LEVEL STRATEGIES	SCHOOL LEVEL STRATEGIES
Phone: Calls and texts between levels, phones trees for departmental sharing.	
PA Systems: For School/District Building Sites.	
Meetings: Emergency gatherings within work sites to share information directly.	
Websites: Updated with relevant information as needed.	
Email or Circular: Follow-up/updates as required.	
Dispatch Radio at Operations: Alerts as required.	

* spread where items apply to both District and School levels