



Comprehensive Communications Plan

2021-2023



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MISSION

The Mehlville School District mission is to build a high-performing school system rooted in the community's desire to build a culture of improvement for staff and students.

VISION

The Mehlville School District, a district striving for excellence, focused on each student's challenge to engage in their future.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Personalized Student Preparation:

- Mehlville School District will identify pathways, or career clusters, that identify various career paths and highlight the types of classes and skills needed in order to have success within a particular career.
- Educators and learners in Mehlville School District will co-create profiles, which contain rich, current information regarding each learner, including demographic data, Academy status, learning-related skill sets and potential learning drivers.

Safety

- Mehlville School District will ensure its facilities are safe and secure.
- Mehlville School District will improve staff and student sense of belonging and mental well-being.

Access and Opportunity

Mehlville School District will ensure all students have access and opportunities to programs and services regardless of parental involvement, race, sexual orientation or identity, socioeconomic status, or disability.

Employee Support

Mehlville School District will support its workforce in achieving individual and organizational goals.

Effective and Efficient

Mehlville School District will make the biggest impact possible for its students while being a responsible steward of its resources.

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

Mehlville School District believes that all of our graduates should be creative and critical thinkers, self-aware, persistent, communicators, and ethical and global. We call this our Portrait of a Graduate, and it guides our work with students from preschool through their senior year.



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Comprehensive Communications Plan Background

Mehlville School District is committed to transparency – open honest and ongoing communication with our stakeholders. We understand that maintaining two-way conversations with stakeholders is essential for building trust and productive relationships. These relationships are the foundation of a strong school system.

This communications plan was designed to establish a comprehensive and integrated process for effective communication with all stakeholders. It aligns with the district’s mission, vision, strategic plan and board policies.

This plan is a working document that is regularly reviewed and updated by the Director of Communications under the advisement of the Communications Advisory Committee. In all communications, the Board of Education and Mehlville administrators strive to share 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 the community we serve.

Communications Department Mission

The mission of the department of communications is to support Mehlville School District’s mission, vision and strategic goals by promoting transparent and strategic communication; by building trust and productive relationships with employees, parents, the community and other stakeholders; and by celebrating the district’s progress.

Beliefs

We believe we have the responsibility to communicate effectively with our stakeholders. We believe effective communication:

- Is a two-way process involving both internal and external stakeholders.
- 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 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 and communications methods in support of the district's goals.
4. Enable the district to present itself accurately and consistently to audiences.

Guiding Documents

The following documents guide the strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Communications Plan.

- Mehlville School District Strategic Plan (Adopted September 2021)
- Mehlville School District Portrait of a Graduate
- Primary Board Policies JO, KB, KBD, KC, KH, KI, KIAA and KKB

Key Audiences and Desired Outcomes

Mehlville School District is committed to ongoing communication within our schools and with the community.

Internal Audiences

- Board of Education
- Administration/District Leadership
- Certified staff (teachers, counselors, librarians)
- Support/classified staff
- Special School District staff
- School Resource Officers

Parents and Students

- Students
- Parents/Guardians
- Parent Organizations
- Student Organizations

External Audiences

- Residents without children attending Mehlville School District
 - Senior Citizens
 - Private and parochial school parents (about 24 percent of families with school-aged children)
 - New residents
- Business leaders
- Community leaders
- Real estate agents
- Faith communities
- Retired Mehlville School District educators
- Chambers of Commerce
- Media
- Alumni and Alumni Association
- Foundation
- Government officials
- Law enforcement agencies
- Civic groups
- Prospective residents
- St. Louis County school districts and neighboring school districts

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

Internal Audiences – Behaviors and Attitudes

- Take pride and ownership in Mehlville School District. Act as a valued member of the Mehlville School District team.
- Keep informed on key issues and be empowered to share accurate information and dispel rumors.
- Work as a high-performing organization with a growth mindset. That means valuing and acting on constructive feedback from stakeholders.
- Exhibit and celebrate Portrait of a Graduate traits, including being:
 - Creative and critical thinkers
 - Self-Aware
 - Persistent
 - Communicators
 - Ethical and Global

External Audiences – Behaviors and Attitudes

- Exhibit pride and trust in Mehlville School District and member schools.
- Be involved and engaged in public schools.
- Choose to enroll children in Mehlville School District because of its academic rigor, dedication to student engagement, continuous improvement and innovation.
- Provide general support to Mehlville School District.

Communication Channels

The district has a variety of channels for distributing information to stakeholders. A multi-faceted approach to overall communications helps ensure greater impact of messaging. These are the internal and external communication channels available to Mehlville School District along with the primary demographics for each.

| Communication Channel | Primary Demographics | | |
|--|----------------------|------------------|----------|
| | Internal | Parents/Students | External |
| Board Notes (email subscription) | X | X | X |
| Community Enrichment (email subscription) | X | X | X |
| e-Messenger (monthly email newsletter) | X | X | X |
| Employment Opportunity Alerts (email subscription) | X | | X |
| Facebook (Mehlville School District) | X | X | X |
| Google Calendars | X | X | X |
| Google Classroom | X | X | |
| Google Forms | X | X | X |
| Instagram (@MehlvilleSD) | X | X | X |
| LinkedIn | X | | X |
| Marquees | X | X | X |
| Mobile app | X | X | X |
| Parent Portal/Tyler SIS | | X | |
| ParentSquare Notifications | X | X | |
| PeachJar eflyer distribution | X | X | |
| School newsletters | | X | |
| School/teacher social media pages | | X | |
| Staff Notes email | X | | |
| Survey Monkey | X | X | |
| ThoughtExchange | X | X | X |
| Twitter (@MehlvilleSD) | X | X | X |
| Website feedback forms | | | X |
| Website (mehlilleschooldistrict.com) | X | X | X |
| Websites - Schools | | X | X |
| YouTube | X | X | X |

| Print Communications | Internal | Parents/Students | External |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Mehlville Messenger | X | X | X |
| Direct Mail Materials | | X | X |
| At a Glance Factsheet | | | X |
| Media | Internal | Parents/Students | External |
| The Call Newspaper | | X | X |
| St. Louis Post-Dispatch | | X | X |
| Broadcast stations (KTVI, KMOV, KSDK, KWMU, KMOX, etc.) | | X | X |
| St. Louis magazines | | | X |
| Other news and community websites | | | X |
| Community organization newsletters | | | X |
| Interpersonal Communications | Internal | Parents/Students | External |
| Board of Education Meetings | X | X | X |
| Board Listening Sessions | X | X | X |
| Leadership team meetings | X | | |
| All Hands meetings | X | | |
| Back to School Rally | X | | |
| Instructional leadership meetings | X | | |
| Faculty meetings | X | | |
| 60+ events | | | X |
| Staff recognition night | X | | |
| President's Council meetings | | X | |
| Chamber of Commerce and community organization meetings | | | X |

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

District Alignment: Portrait of a Graduate: Communicator; Policy: KB; Strategic Plan: Effective and Efficient, Personalized Student Preparation, Access and Opportunity

Objectives:

- Increase parent and community knowledge of Mehlville School District’s mission, vision, strategic plan goals and strategies, financial status, programs and resource needs.
- Increase opportunities for systematic two-way communication with parents and community members.

| Strategy | Audience | Person Responsible | Timeline |
|--|---|--|----------|
| Communicate key messages using a variety of media, including but not limited to district and school websites, social media, e-mail, e-newsletters, news releases, print media and direct mail (Messenger). | Parents Staff Students Community | Communications department Supported by district leadership and all district staff | Ongoing |
| Target key messaging around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student engagement, particularly around personalized learning • Access to academic opportunities, and celebrations of student achievement • Staff expertise related to instruction and support of students • Stewardship of district facilities and resources, particularly spending related to Prop S, Prop A and ESSER. • Safety improvements and opportunities, including public health messages related to COVID-19 | Parents Staff Students Community | Communications department Supported by district leadership and all district staff | Ongoing |

| | | | |
|---|------------------|---|---------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portrait of a Graduate | | | |
| <p>Ensure district representatives are present at key community stakeholder group events, included but not limited to Kiwanis, Southwest Chamber of Commerce, and other civic and community organizations. Evaluate organizations open to involvement and partnerships.</p> | Community | Superintendent's Cabinet members | Ongoing |
| <p>Gather community feedback via community phone survey every two years. Share survey results with community.</p> | Community | Communications Department | November 2022 |
| <p>Gather feedback via annual parent survey using Thought Exchange, Survey Monkey or Panorama; and via one-on-one conversations at school events.</p> | Parents | Communications Department, principals, district leadership | Ongoing |
| <p>Provide specific opportunities for district residents without children in our schools to engage with Mehlville School District via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded 60+ events Community performances Community Enrichment Use of facilities where feasible. Business partnerships Alumni events and recognition Portrait of a Graduate Speakers Series | Community | <p>Communications Department</p> <p>Community Enrichment Coordinator</p> <p>Director of College and Career Readiness</p> <p>Director of Fine Arts</p> | Ongoing |
| <p>Consider establishing a new Mehlville School District foundation</p> | Community Alumni | Communications Department | |

Measuring Progress

| Performance Indicator | Baseline | Goal |
|--|---|--|
| Frequent Voter Survey Question: Keeping the public informed about important school district issues and policies | <i>2020 Responses</i> Very Satisfied = 47% Somewhat Satisfied = 44% Somewhat Dissatisfied = 6% Very Dissatisfied = 3% | <i>Maintenance Goal</i> Very Satisfied/Somewhat Satisfied > 90% Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied < 10% |
| Participation in parent surveys | <i>2020 Responses</i> Parent response rate to communications survey: 17% | Average response rate to district and school surveys (response/number of families): 20% |
| Attendance at 60+ events | January-December 2019 Unique RSVPs: 332 Total RSVPs: 720 | January-December 2022 Unique RSVPs: 400 Total RSVPs: 800 |
| District-initiated news coverage and positive news coverage | FY21 initiated coverage: 131 stories / 47% of coverage FY21 positive stories: 216 / 77% of coverage | FY23 initiated coverage: 100 stories / > 35% of coverage FY23 positive stories: > 200 stories |

Communications Goal 2: Refine and review use of digital communications tools to ensure they are used to maximum effectiveness, are streamlined and accessible for target audiences

District Alignment: Strategic Plan: Access and Opportunity; Portrait of a Graduate: Ethical and Global, Communicator

Objectives:

- Increase and maintain reach through digital media channels.
- Increase opportunities for two-way communication.
- Increase parent engagement and involvement.
- Increase parent and community knowledge of Mehlville School District’s mission, goals, objectives and program.
- Increase accessibility of communications.

| Strategy | Audience | Person Responsible | Timeline |
|--|---|--|---|
| Expand use of ParentSquare to include classroom- and activity-based communication. | Parents Students | Communications Department Principals | 2021-2022: School and district communications 2022-2023: Classroom and athletics/activities communications |
| Regularly review ParentSquare metrics to ensure parents can be contacted via the platform. Fix outdated contacts. | Parents | Communications Department Principals and school secretaries | Quarterly reviews |
| Continue to follow best practices that have resulted in expanded reach and engagement in social media. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use invite feature on Facebook posts with a large number of likes to encourage more page likes. • Use Instagram Stories. | Parents Prospective Parents Community | Communications Department | Ongoing |

| | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Facebook events for Board of Education meetings. • Promote subscriptions to e-Messenger, Board Notes, Community Enrichment and Employment Alerts. • Use alt-text or descriptions for all photos shared on social media to allow for screen-reader use and translations. | | | |
| Follow a regular schedule to review district and school websites to ensure they contain accurate information that is easy to find and that is accessible. | Parents Students Staff Community | Communications Department | Focus for 2022: High School and Early Childhood websites Focus for 2023: District website |
| Communicate how we use different communications tools to deliver messages. | Parents Students Staff Community Media | Communications Department | Annually |

Measuring Progress

| Performance Indicator | Baseline (Sept. 15, 2021) | Goal (June 1, 2023) |
|---|--|--|
| Facebook followers | 10,578 followers | 11,500 followers |
| Twitter followers | 3,069 followers | 3,100 followers |
| Instagram followers | 2,605 followers | 3,500 followers |
| LinkedIn followers | 800 followers | 850 followers |
| e-Messenger subscribers | 20,938 subscribers | <i>Maintenance Goal:</i> 20,000 subscribers |
| ParentSquare Parent Interaction | 13% of parents appreciate, comment, completed a task in ParentSquare | 40% of parents interact via ParentSquare |
| Website Accessibility Score (SiteImprove) | 73.4% | 80% |

Communications Goal 3: Establish effective employee communication programs to improve internal communication, employee sense of belonging, district climate and consistency of external messaging.

District Alignment: Strategic Plan: Employee Support, Effective and Efficient; Portrait of a Graduate: Communicator

Objectives:

- Provide opportunities for two-way communication and for staff to have input on decisions that affect them.
- Increase employees’ awareness of Mehlville School District’s mission, goals and programs, as well as their role as ambassadors for the district.
- Increase recognition of employees internally and externally for their accomplishments.
- Improve employee morale and trust in the district.

| Strategy | Audience | Person Responsible | Timeline |
|---|-----------------|---|------------------|
| Publish at least a monthly employee newsletter via ParentSquare to improve accessibility and two-way communication. | Staff | Communications Department, Department Directors | Ongoing |
| Collect feedback via an annual staff climate and communication survey and via Panorama. | Staff | Communications Department, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Executive Director – Student Services | Annually |
| Recognize employees for 5, 10 and 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 years of service. | Staff | Communications Department, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents | Each school year |
| Meet with building staff at least once a semester during faculty meetings. Ensure an agenda item includes gathering feedback. | Staff | Superintendent | Ongoing |
| Support Human Resources with employee recruitment to help ensure | Staff | Communications and Human | Ongoing |

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| a qualified and diverse candidate pool | | Resources departments | |
| Highlight staff in newsletters and media relations for their expertise related to instruction and support of students. | Staff Parents Students Community | Communications Department | Ongoing |
| Provide staff with speaking points, frequently asked questions, or other information related to new initiatives, ballot measures and other situations as needed. | Staff Board of Education | Communications Department | Ongoing |
| Plan a Back to School Rally to build staff alignment around district goals, improve communication and foster relationships across campuses. | Staff | Communications Department Curriculum Department Central Office Staff | August |
| Provide leadership staff with professional development on media relations. | Administrators | Communications Department Curriculum Department | Summer 2022 |

Measuring Progress

| Performance Indicator | Baseline | Goal |
|---|---|---|
| Results of staff climate survey | Spring 2021: “I feel like a valued member of our staff team.” Strongly Agree and Agree: 76.7% “I enjoy coming to work.” Strongly Agree and Agree: 81% | Spring 2023: “I feel like a valued member of our staff team.” Strongly Agree and Agree: > 80% “I enjoy coming to work.” Strongly Agree and Agree: > 85% |
| Consider Panorama staff data on adult sense of belonging as a future performance indicator. | | |

Communications Goal 4: Achieve coordinated communication, both internally and externally, regarding safety issues and crisis management.

District Alignment: Strategic Plan: Safety, Employee Support, Effective & Efficient; Portrait of a Graduate: Communicator

Objectives:

- Counsel school principals and staff in managing crisis communication.
- Provide timely, accurate information to internal and external audiences.
- Work closely with the media to provide accurate, timely information.
- Serve as part of the district’s Safety Assessment and Planning Committee.

| Strategy | Audience | Person Responsible | Timeline |
|---|--|---|----------|
| Ensure district and building crisis plans include crisis communications component. Work with Safety Committee to review building crisis plans. | Crisis Response Team Safety Committee Administrators | Director of Communications, Executive Director of Planning and Development | Ongoing |
| Maintain and update library of crisis letters and alerts, and checklists, for use in emergencies and for safety alerts | Administrators | Communications Department | Ongoing |
| Provide immediate and ongoing counsel to principals, administrators and other key staff during a crisis. Manage all external communications during a crisis with the goal of initial communication occurring within 15 minutes or any evacuations, lockouts or lockdowns. | Staff Parents Community | Communications Department | Ongoing |
| Continue participating in crisis management/communication training | | Communications Department | Ongoing |
| Debrief with Crisis Response Team following emergencies to develop better responses and communication in the future | | Communications Department | Ongoing |

Measuring Progress

| Performance Indicator | Baseline | Goal |
|---|--|--|
| Results of parent communication survey: How would you rate the district at communicating emergency information? | <i>December 2020</i> Very Good and Good: 92% | <i>Maintenance Goal</i> Very Good and Good: > 90% |
| Frequent Voter Survey Question: Overall satisfaction with Mehlville School District | <i>2020 Responses</i> Very Satisfied = 42% Somewhat Satisfied = 47% Somewhat Dissatisfied = 8% Dissatisfied = %3 | <i>Maintenance Goal</i> Very Satisfied/Somewhat Satisfied > 90% Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied < 10% |

Communications Goal 5: Be known as a destination school district specifically chosen by parents to educate their children.

District Alignment: Strategic Plan: Personalized Student Engagement, Effective & Efficient; Portrait of a Graduate: Communicator

Objectives:

- Attract new students.
- Ensure families with school-age children know the programs and services provided by Mehlville School District.

| Strategy | Audience | Person Responsible | Timeline |
|---|---|--|--|
| Encourage authentic reviews and social proof from families and students through Niche, Great Schools and Google | Prospective Families | Communications Department Director of Career and College Readiness. | Start May 2022 |
| Seek opportunities to provide an overview of our programs and services in early childhood through 12 th grade via special events for young families and at transition ages | Prospective Families | Communications Department Curriculum Department | Start Fall 2022 before kindergarten registration and private high school application deadlines |
| Create district program look book and other collateral to share with current and prospective families to boost interest in student pathways and district programs. Explore venues for distributing district informational materials, including during PAT events, at birthing centers and doctors' offices, school-based tours, Community Learning Walks etc. | Students Parents Prospective Families | Communications Department Curriculum Department | Start Fall 2022 |
| Conduct quarterly Community Learning Walks open to business | Community | Communications Department | Start Fall 2022 |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------------|
| <p>leaders, religious leaders, realtors, legislators, prospective families and other community members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit classrooms at an elementary, middle and high school • Provide an overview of district services and programs | | District Leadership Principals | |
| Develop relationships with real estate agents. Include them in routine communications, including Messenger and e-Messenger, and invitations to Community Learning Walks. | Real Estate Agents Prospective Families | Communications Department | Start Fall 2022 |
| Ensure district brand compliance on future building signage | Community Prospective Families | Communications Department Facilities Department | Ongoing |
| Seek out and apply for relevant local, regional and national awards | | Communications Department | Ongoing |

Measuring Progress

| Performance Indicator | Baseline | Goal |
|--|---|--|
| Add a parent survey question: How likely are you to recommend Mehlville School District to another parent? | Establish baseline with likert scale: Very Likely, Likely, Unlikely, Very Unlikely. | Goal will be determined based on the baseline. |