



Kenilworth School District No. 38 2018-2019 Communications Plan

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Purpose

Effective communication drives collaboration and operational effectiveness by ensuring all stakeholders are appropriately informed and engaged with the organization. The Kenilworth School District No. 38 Communications Plan is a tool intended to help guide Kenilworth School District No. 38 leadership in fostering effective communication at all levels of the District. The Plan and the associated communication frameworks are intended to work toward fulfilling the intent of the District's strategic plan: fostering a learning community that collaborates to cultivate student development and the well-being of all District stakeholders.

About the Communications Plan

The Communications Plan is an annual document that identifies the communications priorities for the upcoming school year and beyond. The Plan is developed in May in alignment with the District's strategic goals, which are developed in spring and refined over the summer. Developing the Communications Plan toward the end of the school year allows for greater input and collaboration from stakeholders closely related to the Plan. It also enables a better understanding of the dynamics in play that will impact the success of the Plan's strategies and initiatives.

The Communications Plan is developed by the Communication Coordinator at the direction of the Superintendent/CSBO in collaboration with the Administrative Cabinet. All school leaders are responsible for working together to execute the initiatives contained within the Plan.

The Communications Plan outlines the communications strategies that will be used to accomplish the communication objectives and initiatives set forth by the Superintendent/CSBO in a given year. The Plan also serves as an annual review of communication-related campaigns, their effectiveness and how they can be improved going forward. Developing a detailed, yet flexible communications plan allows for the forethought and preparation necessary to ensure the Plan is successful.

The Kenilworth Board of Education, in its governing role, is responsible for monitoring progress toward the ends identified in the vision through the strategic plan. As such, the Board has an obligation to understand all components of The Communications Plan and monitor progress toward communication objectives and initiatives. The Communications Plan should be reviewed in detail by the Board's Communication Subcommittee prior to its presentation to the full board, ideally in tandem with the presentation of the first draft of the strategic plan objectives and indicators. The Plan should be presented in August and formally adopted by the Kenilworth Board of Education in September.

Communications Plan Timeline

- A. Administrative Meeting to Discuss Communication Objectives for Upcoming Year (End of April)
- B. Draft Communications Plan (May-June)
- C. Presentation of Communications Plan to Communications Subcommittee at First Yearly Meeting (July)

- D. First Draft of Communications Plan and Public Presentation (August)
- E. Revise and Amend Communications Plan (August/September)
- F. Formal Adoption of Communications Plan (September)

Communication Framework

Much like any other facet of the organization, communications should work toward achieving the District's *desired end state* – its vision. Interpersonal communications, be they written, verbal or visual, should in some way facilitate the District's vision of balancing academic excellence with personal well-being.

Communications can achieve this purpose by *informing*, *showcasing* and *promoting* information related to the District so faculty, families and community members can meaningfully participate in the educational process.

The Communications Plan was developed based on three guiding frameworks. All communications – written, verbal and visual – should work toward achieving at least one of the following ideas:

1. ***Inform*** stakeholders of District activities in order to generate enthusiasm in *The Joseph Sears School and school leadership*

District communications must generate interest and enthusiasm in the school district and school leadership. This is important to do since stakeholder interest and enthusiasm is essential to driving active participation, collaboration and continued investment in the District. Similarly, school leadership must work toward this end by informing faculty, families and community members on current affairs through proactive communication that displays leadership and field expertise. The District must work toward this end in order to build a collaborative learning community that works toward the Vision in service of Sears students.

2. ***Showcase*** the factors that make the District unique

Inspired stakeholders invested in the school community will drive continuous improvement throughout the organization which ultimately impacts the quality of education the District is able to provide for its students. Therefore, it is important to continuously retain and attract faculty, families and community members to the District. Attracting and retaining people to Sears can most directly be done by showcasing the unique elements, differentiators and advantages the District has over other school districts, both locally and nationally.

3. ***Promote*** ideas and concepts related to the strategic plan

District communications must work toward increasing knowledge and understanding of the fundamental concepts contained within the District's strategic plan. This is done in attempt to have stakeholders support the concepts contained within the strategic plan. Frequently reinforcing these concepts will influence perception and will allow communications to become an agent of organizational change.

SY18-19 Communications Initiatives

The Communications Initiatives represent a list of major communications, events and campaigns set forth by school leadership designed to increase community engagement.

No.	Communication Initiative/Tool	Purpose			Summary Evaluation
		Inform	Showcase	Promote	
1.	Principal Faculty Communication (Periodic)	★			The Principal will soon launch a weekly communication to faculty that provides information, updates and reminders for the upcoming week.
2.	Sears to Home (Bi-monthly)	★	★	★	The Principal's Message in Sears to Home is a communication tool that affords the Principal the opportunity to inform parents, discuss District strategic initiatives and highlight the factors that make the school unique.
3.	Board Briefs (Monthly)	★			Board Briefs provide meeting summaries of all regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings. Subcommittee meetings and Committee of the Whole meetings are not included in the Board Briefs as formal board action is taken during these meetings.
4.	Superintendent's Welcome (Annual)	★		★	The Superintendent's Welcome is an email that contains a welcome message from the Superintendent as well as an introduction of all new faculty/staff.
5.	Superintendent's New Year's Greeting (Annual)	★		★	The Superintendent's New Year's Greeting is an email sent the week after winter break. The email looks ahead to key initiatives for the new calendar year.
6.	Annual Report (Annual)	★	★	★	The annual report is published at the beginning of the calendar year. The report serves all three communication purposes as it is designed to showcase the District to all stakeholders
7.	State of the District Presentation (Annual)	★		★	The State of the District Presentation highlights District initiatives while providing for open discussion on the short- and long-term future of the District.
8.	Community Service Recognition Awards (Annual)	★			The Community Service Recognition Awards celebrate the accomplishments of those who have made a significant contribution to the families and residents of the District 38 community.
9.	District Postcard Mailings (Periodic)	★			District postcards are mailed in advance of events and traditions open to the Kenilworth community.
10.	Second Cup of	★		★	The Second Cup of Coffee Series will include

	Coffee (Periodic)				opportunities to dialogue and learn about the concepts contained within the strategic plan.
11.	Classroom Communication Tools (PowerSchool, SeeSaw, Canvas)	★	★	★	Elementary classroom teachers have been trained on SeeSaw -- a social platform that allows families greater access to curriculum and classroom projects/activities. Canvas and PowerSchool will continue to be utilized to keep parents informed and engaged with their children's educational experience.
12.	Direct Parent Communication (Report cards, Parent/Teacher Conferences)	★			Direct school/parent communication, be it through report cards or through faculty/staff during parent/teacher conferences, is an important piece of our communications strategy. Faculty play an important role as ambassadors for the school in carrying out the District vision.

SY18-19 New Communications Initiatives

No.	Communication Initiative/Tool	Purpose			Summary Evaluation
		Inform	Showcase	Promote	
13.	*NEW* Superintendent's Closing Message (Annual)	★		★	During SY18-19, a Superintendent's Closing Message will be added to existing communication initiatives to wrap up the year, generate excitement for the future and further emphasize the District's strategic plan offerings.
14.	*NEW* Class Notes Newsletter (Tentative) (Monthly)	★	★		The Administrative Team is currently considering a monthly Class Notes newsletter to share with families more of what is taking place instructionally inside the classroom.
15.	*NEW* Panther Pics (Weekly)	★			Panther Pics are a photo showcase of the learning taking place within classrooms. These are circulated internally only among faculty/staff.
16.	*NEW* Administrator Emails (Periodic)			★	Every other month or thereabouts, a member of the administration will send an email out to faculty and parents to discuss elements of the strategic plan in the context of the daily workings of the school. These emails will contain information on district philosophy, values and how we are working toward achieving these goals at Sears.
17.	*NEW* Strategic Plan Communication (One-time)	★	★	★	The strategic plan communication will tell the story of The Joseph Sears School: its purpose, mission, vision, values and goals.
18.	*NEW* Internal Faculty/Staff Portal	★			The District will look to create an online portal where faculty/staff will have access to professional development resources, District information, forms, and related documents. This portal will be

	(Ongoing)				rolled out during the spring.
19.	*NEW* Direct Administrator Presentations (Ongoing)	★	★	★	Administrators have added small group presentations to the lists of ways to engage parents and community organizations. This initiative will continue to grow and expand moving forward.

SY19-20 Future Communications Initiatives

No.	Communication Initiative/Tool	Purpose			Summary Evaluation
		Inform	Showcase	Promote	
20.	*FUTURE* Launch District Social Media Pages	★	★	★	Launching social media is a key priority. In SY18-19, the Administration and the Technology Department will research and review how to best utilize Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, among other platforms, to enhance District communications and student engagement.
21.	*FUTURE* District Promotional Materials	★	★	★	The District will look to create promotional materials highlighting course offerings, vertical progressions, student services, athletics and FAQ. The compilation of this information will begin in SY18-19 and will continue on through SY19-20.
22.	*FUTURE* The Joseph Sears School Alumni Association	★			Sears alumni have reached out to the District in hopes of forming an association for alumni. The purpose of this organization as well as how the District will leverage this group to reach out to alumni, will be determined in detail during SY 19-20.
23.	*FUTURE* Develop external media presence	★	★	★	Once the “Sears story” has been articulated and the District’s strategic plan is in place, systematic efforts to showcase the District and promote the strategic plan concepts will begin. Efforts include increased local media coverage of school events and student achievements.
24.	*FUTURE* Community Engagement Service Event		★	★	The District will hold a student-organized service event as part of the District’s mission to promote advocacy for others among students. The event will include participation from all grade levels. The event will promote the school district and engage the broader Kenilworth community.
25.	*FUTURE* Kenilworth Village House and Master Facilities Communication	★			The District will look to create a plan around communicating capital improvement projects to all stakeholder as well as informing residents of possible construction considerations.
26.	*FUTURE* Streamline teacher/parent	★	★	★	The Administration will ensure the content and messaging to parents in teacher communications is consistent throughout the district.

Communication Initiatives Analysis

District communications initiatives continue to expand and evolve throughout the 2018-2019 school year. School leaders leverage email, newsletters and events effectively to keep internal stakeholders engaged with The Joseph Sears School. The communication initiatives added this year round out District offerings and close notable gaps in communication as identified by the Administration.

Communication among internal stakeholders (parents, faculty/staff) remains strong. The District provides these groups with information through varied communication channels – many of which parents have come to expect. Several internal communications initiatives such as Sears to Home, district postcards and the State of the District address are entering the third year in which they have been consistently executed over the span of a full year. While each initiative has room to improve, maintaining consistency among communications will remain a District priority moving forward.

The completion and communication of the District’s strategic plan will drive communications initiatives toward the end of the 2018-2019 school year and well into the following year. A clearly-defined strategic direction as told through the “Sears Story” will guide how the District positions itself in external media outlets. Defining the District’s strategic direction and communicating this to all stakeholders will be an important task to complete during the 2018-2019 school year.

Communications Schedule

The communications schedule does not include communications related to the rollout of the strategic plan. A strategic plan rollout timeline will be developed at a later date.

February 2019

- Week 2: Sears to Home (Inform)
- Week 2: Board Briefs
- Week 2: Faculty/Staff Survey Invitation
- Week 2: Faculty/Staff Survey Opens
- Week 4: Sears to Home (Showcase) + Class Notes
- Week 5: Second Cup of Coffee: Anxiety

March 2019

- Week 1: Second Cup of Coffee Follow Up
- Week 2: Faculty/Staff Survey Closes
- Week 3: Sears to Home: (Inform) + Class Notes
- Week 3: Second Cup of Coffee: Gifted/Enrichment
- Week 4: Release Faculty/Staff Survey Data
- Week 4: Board Briefs
- Week 4: Periodic Administrative Communication: Unpacking Vision Statement (Crystal)

April 2019

- Week 1: Sears to Home: (Promote)
- Week 2: Registration Communication
- Week 2: Mail Spring Postcard on District Traditions
- Week 3: Sears to Home (Promote) + Class Notes
- Week 3: Board Briefs
- Week 3: Launch Strategic Plan “Sears Story” Materials
- Week 4: Periodic Administrative Communication: Mission Statement and Educational Offerings (Lisa)

May 2019

- Week 1: Sears to Home: (Inform)
- Week 1: Parent Survey Invitation
- Week 1: Parent Survey Opens
- Week 3: Parent Survey Closes
- Week 3: Sears to Home: (Showcase)
- Week 4: Memorial Day Parade + Community Engagement Initiative
- Week 4: Board Briefs
- Week 4: Periodic Administrative Communication: Student Services and Personalized Learning (Zuica)
- Week 5: Sears to Home: (Promote) + Class Notes

June 2019

- Week 2: Superintendent’s Closing Message
- Week 2: Board Briefs
- Week 3: Release Parent Survey Data