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Background

The purpose of the Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools Communications Plan is to present a clear and concise framework for communicating with our school communities.

All communication strategies are directed at two types of school division audiences: INTERNAL stakeholders - students, teachers, staff, administration and EXTERNAL - parents, community members, elected officials, civic group’s media, businesses and other members of the WRPS community.

Strengthening internal communications is one key objective of this divisional communication plan. In order to facilitate stronger internal communications, it is vital that staff support the overall Division Communication Plan: specifically WRPS trustees, teachers and central office staff are highly influential sources of information for the public. WRPS staff relates the messages of the school division back to their families and friends who in turn form opinions of our schools and division.

Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools communication strategies also target our external stakeholders by increasing parental involvement in education, increasing community engagement, and gathering input from external stakeholders on educational topics, and providing accessible information to the public.

Establishing effective and positive relationships will result in significant growth with internal and external stakeholders will facilitate open and transparent two-way communication. Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools communications activities support the following division’s principles:

1. Our people will be committed to a learning community that values people, diversity, excellence and professional growth.
2. Our organization will be people centered by being principled, collaborative, accountable and effective.
3. Our community will share in the ownership and responsibility for the well-being and education of their children and youth.

These principles provide the foundation for supporting all of our communication strategies. Through the development and implementation of this comprehensive communication plan, Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools will strive to effectively communicate in a timely manner with all stakeholders, increase the involvement of parents, students and staff in decision making and foster an exchange of information to increase collaboration between Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools and the communities it serves.
Planning and Preparation
In preparation of the 2015-2018 Communication Plan, the following sources of information were used and reviewed:
2014-2015 Board Meeting Highlights
Board initiatives
Alberta Education Accountability Pillar Results
Past Communication Plan
Consultations with the Superintendent
Annual Education Results Report (AERR) Three Year Education Plan
Review of existing print and web based materials and tools

Technology Evolution
Communication practices and procedures in the division have evolved in the area of technology. This evolution has occurred due to the division’s desire to embrace technology and engage its stakeholders through various platforms. The use of technology, social media and website utilization to communicate has proved to significantly increase and be relied upon as an effective tool in school and divisional based communication.

Why we Communicate?
To get or give information
To get action
To ensure understanding
To prevent misunderstandings
To present a point of view
AUDIENCES

EXTERNAL AUDIENCES

Parents / Guardians
Elected Officials
School Councils
Alberta Education
Provincial/ Municipal Governments & Advisory Committees
Business Community
Media
Community Groups/ Partners
New Residents to the Division
Prospective WRPS Residents
Professional Organizations (ASBA, PSBAA)
Educational Organizations
School Divisions
Senior Citizens
Potential Employees

INTERNAL AUDIENCES

WRPS Students
WRPS Staff
Trustees
HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE?

EXTERNAL

Media Coverage
Board Meetings & Board Meeting Highlights
News/ Media Releases
Back to School Publication
Public Consultations
On line engagement
Websites/ E-Teacher/ Career Opportunities
Website Stories
Donor Recognition
Social Media: Facebook, Twitter
Plans & Reports (Budget, Three Year Plan, AERR, Capital Plan)
Invitations to Events
Partnerships with community organizations
School Newsletters
Parent / Teacher Interviews
Celebration Excellence & Events
School Council Meetings & COSC
Maskwacis Education Council
Division Wide Notification
On Websites
Partnerships with Community Organizations

INTERNAL

Staff Connect
Websites
Google for Education
Long Service Awards
Division Office
School Visits
Staff Meetings
School Calendar
Maplewood/Docushare/ SRB
Staff Surveys
Emails & Letters & Text Messages
Website Stories
Back to School Publication
Planning and Reporting Documents
Staff Recognition
Board Highlights
News/Media Releases
Goal 1

**Enhance communication with schools throughout WRPS.**

**Objective 1**
Work with schools, central administration, trustees to provide Communication based support to Schools, Staff and Board of Trustees.

**Strategies**
1. Assist in drafting media releases, letters, notices if required
2. Coordinate media interviews with appropriate spokesperson
3. Promote events (via Social Media and Website)
4. Develop key messages
5. Assist with Focus group / public consultation coordination
6. Assist with survey development and implementation
7. Enhance print and web communication
8. Assist in planning divisional events (Board Recognition, School Openings)
9. Assist with information decimation through the appropriate mode, media, website, social media
10. Monitor school websites to ensure consistency and accuracy

**Objective 2**
Provide a School Based Strategic Communication Focus to schools undergoing the school review process.

**Strategies**
1. Support schools that are participating in the School Review process by enhancing school communication practices through data driven and strategic communication planning.

2. Develop school specific strategic communication schedule/plan for each school participating in the school review process.

3. Meet with School Review administrators and staff responsible for communication that include: reviewing and analysing Accountability Pillar Results Report, online input and all other relevant data, address areas of concern, develop key messages, communication strategies and schedules, set measurable targets and review current communication practices and processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015-2018</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Review 15-16</td>
<td>School Review Team; Communications Coordinator, School Communicators</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffiths-Scott Middle School</td>
<td>CB McMurdo School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Review 16-17</td>
<td>School Review Team; Communications Coordinator, School Communicators</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>École Queen Elisabeth Alder Flats Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 2

Support and enhance School Council Communication

Objective 1
Communicate regularly and consistently with School Council Groups

Strategies

1. Create and maintain a divisional email group and list to ensure all school councils are kept informed and are receiving pertinent information.
2. Foster consistent and relevant communication with parent groups through the Council of School Councils
3. Forward divisional and school based communication to School Council groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015-2018</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create contact and email distribution list for COSC and School Councils.</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator</td>
<td>September 30, 2016</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate COSC meeting information including agendas &amp; minutes</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator</td>
<td>4 X per year October, January, March and May</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist Schools in Web page development representing School Council information</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator / School Communicator / Parent Council Reps</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 3

Improve communications with Internal and External Stakeholders

Objective
Release divisional communication in a timely and transparent manner to all external stakeholders to ensure school communities are informed (external stakeholders listed on page 5 of this document). The Communication Coordinator will work with the media to facilitate interviews, provide information, connect with schools and keep the media informed of divisional matters.

Strategies
1. Maintain positive working relationships with external stakeholders.
2. Work with advertising organizations to ensure WRPS is represented in local newspapers
3. Work with various organizations when required to distribute information and/or provide or receive assistance (including but not limited to: Alberta School Boards Association, Public School Board Association of Alberta, Council of School Councils, other school divisions, Alberta Government, Local Town and Village offices and MLA’s and ATA Local).
4. Develop Key Messages for issues / event in order to provide consistent messaging
5. Develop external Communication publications
6. Ensure website includes current information including Media Releases, Board Meeting Highlights etc.
7. Use Social Media to communicate with external stakeholders (Goal 4 Objective 2)
8. Continue to promote website features, Staff Connect, E-Teachers etc., PD Calendar, Google Surveys etc.
9. Promote Board, Trusteeship and elections
10. Story of the week posts to the website; encourage principals to submit a good news story about a student, staff member or community event. Each school to provide stories based on yearly schedule.
11. Kindergarten Registration Packages (Advertising)
12. Strategic advertising
13. Recognize Donors in August Publication and on the website
14. Implement the use of ConnectEd email notification for parents
15. PD Calendar in Staff Connect
## Improve communications with Internal and External Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015-2018</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circulate Board Highlights in a timely manner to media and external stakeholders</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator</td>
<td>After every Board Meeting</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure Board Meeting, and stakeholder information is posted on the Division Website and when required School Websites.</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator</td>
<td>Daily, weekly, monthly as information becomes available</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Key Messages</td>
<td>Communication Coordinator/ Trustees / CAT members</td>
<td>As needed</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate the Development of Back to School Newspaper</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator &amp; Writer- Laurette Woodward</td>
<td>Mid-August – Back to School Edition</td>
<td>$10,000.00 Total Per Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story of the Week</td>
<td>Principals, Communication Cor.</td>
<td>Weekly as per schedule starting in October of each year</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Registration</td>
<td>Communication Cor.</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>$600.00 Advertising/ year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor Recognition</td>
<td>August Publication &amp; Update to Website</td>
<td>August Each year</td>
<td>Included in Publication costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update Calendars Website, PD Calendar</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator/ PD Organizers</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ConnectEd Implementation Email to Parents</td>
<td>Technology Department/ School Communicators/ Communication Coordinator</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 4

Enhance communication through Technology

Objective 1
Ensure the Division Website and School Websites are reviewed and enhancements are provided to keep the websites current.

Strategies
1. Review School Websites to ensure consistency (Goal 1 Objective10.)
2. Provide Support and Training for site website administrators
3. Update Photos on Website and ensure FOIP compliance
4. Staff Contact in Staff Connect is populated and maintained
5. Staff Connect I Phone app is implemented
6. Transportation I Phone & Android Apps are available to the public
7. Liaise with Box Clever on website improvements
8. ConnectEd email implementation for schools

Objective 2

Increase Social Media Presence: To Highlight the Division, School and Education through the use of Social Media by increasing communications with parents and community members who rely on internet for information and social contacts.

Strategies
1. Ensure news is posted to the WRPS Facebook and Twitter Accounts regularly
2. Use social media and email to inform and drive the public to our website for information
3. Promote the schools/division social media presence by including Twitter and Facebook icons on advertising and internal/external communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015-2018</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Website Review</td>
<td>Communication Coordinator</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Training/ Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPS for Busses Running</td>
<td>Communication Coordinator</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Connect Contacts</td>
<td>Box Clever</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Updates</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update Website Photos</td>
<td>Communication Coordinator</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>$600.00 (Photographer &amp; Mileage)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 5

Community/ Student Engagement: Gather Input from Internal and External Stakeholders Educational Topics as determined by the Board of Trustees

Objective 1
Focus on building strong relationships, by providing opportunities for parent, students, staff and community stakeholders to share ideas and concerns openly and honestly. Information gathered can be used by the Board when developing the Strategic Facilities Plan.

Strategies
- Provide opportunity for online or public engagement as per Board direction.
- Provide opportunity for student engagement forum.
- Work with Alberta Culture and Community Spirit to develop discussion topics and review/analyze input.
- Support the board of trustees’ Community Consultation and Engagement process.
- Assist the Board in determining a purpose and/or questions to be answered for engagement.
- Utilize on-line technology for implementation if required.
- Promote the campaign.
- Analyze the data.
- Report findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015-2018</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trustee(s) determine purpose of</td>
<td>Alberta Culture and Community Spirit</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Release time, mileage, meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consultation and what outcome</td>
<td>Facilitator Communications Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
<td>costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they wish to achieve.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board to determine Purpose and</td>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop questions for online</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consult with School Divisions</td>
<td>Communication Coordinator &amp; Trustee</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who have successfully implemented</td>
<td>Representation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on line engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Advertise and Publicize Online Engagement</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>$1000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement On line Engagement tool</td>
<td>Communication Coordinator</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement (forum</td>
<td>Board determines</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undetermined)</td>
<td></td>
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Accountability

How will the success of this plan be measured?

Feedback
- Board / School Administrators/ Central Administration

Accountability Pillar Results
- have results improved in the areas of focus as determined through school communication planning work with administrators?

Surveys or Consultation results
- what is our audience saying?

Media coverage (newspaper & attendance to events)
- are we connecting and getting our messages out timely, consistently and effectively?

Website traffic
- are websites being visited – how often?

Social Media
- does WRPS have an active social media presence? Is communication vetted through social media consistently and regularly?

Tracking schools under review - newsletters and websites for improvement
- Are School Strategic Communications being implemented
- Are key messages visible and strategic

Evaluate Consultation / Public Engagement for effectiveness
- Board Determines

Review Completion of Projects Outlined in this Plan
- review if goals and objectives have been achieved