

DISTRICT COMMUNICATION PLAN



*EXCELSIOR SPRINGS
SCHOOL DISTRICT*

2023-2027



Introduction

The Excelsior Springs School District is committed to open, honest and ongoing communication with our stakeholders. We understand that maintaining a two-way conversation with stakeholders is essential for building relationships. These relationships are the foundation for a strong school system.

This communications plan was designed to establish a comprehensive and integrated communications process for effective communication with all stakeholders. It aligns with the district's goals and is incorporated in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).

The plan is a working document that is reviewed on an annual basis by the Board of Education. It is used as a basis for the district's accountability, as well as for providing a framework for future source and budgetary consideration.

The Comprehensive Communications Plan is intended to do the following:

- Implement a communications program that directly helps the district achieve its strategic goals.
- Foster strong relationships with district stakeholders.
- Provide focus and direction for messages/methods in support of the district's goals.
- Enable the district to present itself accurately to audiences.
- Provide an intentional approach to "Telling our Story".
- Serve as a coordinated response guide for crisis/emergency situations.



Excelsior Springs School District will utilize the communications plan to support the Motto, Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs of the district:

Motto

Inspire, Empower, Challenge

Mission

Working together to discover potential, explore passions, and develop leadership for all learners.

Vision

To challenge and inspire students through their learning experiences to empower future success.

Core Beliefs

Student-Focused

Integrity

Growth Mindset

Collaboration

Community Partnership

Innovation

Transformation

Guiding Philosophy

Continuous Improvement



Communication Goals

Goal #1: Develop and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with all stakeholders to strengthen support for the Excelsior Springs School District.

Goal #2: Utilize a variety of media to maximize awareness and support of the district's goals, objectives and programs.

Goal #3: Establish an effective employee communication plan to improve internal communication and employee engagement.

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

The following resources will be used to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of this communications plan:

- Staff survey
- Community survey
- Website hits and traffic reports
- Media coverage
- Community feedback
- Social media data



Audiences and Outcomes

Internal Audiences

- Students
- Certificated Staff
- Support Staff Employees
- Principals
- Administrators
- Board of Education

External Audiences

- Students
- Parents
- Taxpayers of the district
- Educational Foundation
- Senior citizens
- Business leaders
- Media
- Parent-Teacher Organizations
- Civic leaders/organizations
- Legislators
- Religious leaders
- Social workers/fire/police/first responders
- New residents of the district
- Neighboring school districts
- Residents without children in district schools
- Prospective residents of the district

Desired Behaviors and Attitudes

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

Internal Audiences

- Take pride and ownership in the district.
- Keep informed of key issues.
- Work as a high-performing organization whose employees respect customer feedback.
- Exhibit district values of 'Inspire, Empower, Challenge'.

External Audiences

- Feel involved and engaged in their public schools.
- Exhibit community pride and trust in schools and the district.
- Support the Excelsior Springs School District through active participation.
- Support the Excelsior Springs School District through monetary measures.



Communication Channels

The district can more effectively provide consistent and unified messages by identifying and managing all communication avenues. A multifaceted approach to overall communications helps ensure greater impact of messages. The following list details the internal and external communication channels Excelsior Springs School District utilizes:

Communication Channels

Communication Vehicles: Electronic

- District Web page
- Education Communication Platforms (Seesaw, Echo, etc)
- Excelsior Springs Email
- Excelsior Citizen
- PowerSchool
- School Messenger
- School Newsletters
- School Web pages
- Social Media: School App, Facebook & Twitter
- Video media

Communication Vehicles: Print

- Brochures
- Kansas City Star
- Excelsior Springs Standard
- Kansas City Star
- School Newsletters
- Town and Country Shopper
- Targeted mailing lists

Communication Vehicles: Personal

- Administrator meetings
- Chamber of Commerce
- City Administration
- Community Center, Parks and Recreation
- Education Foundation
- Elks Lodge
- Interpersonal
- Key Opinion Leader luncheons
- Rotary Club
- Superintendent Advisory Council meetings
- School Forums



Communication Plan Goals

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

Strategy 1A: Continue to engage all stakeholders in two-way communication.

Action items:

- Strengthen communications efforts by refining and maximizing the use of current and new platforms to elevate the District's image, brand, and reputation with positive stories and programs.
- Provide resources for staff members and parent leaders and encourage their use in order to build connections and partnerships in the community.
- The school district regularly communicates and engages stakeholders in its established core values.

Strategy 1B: Build and maintain partnerships with business and community leaders.

Action items:

- Support district representation for community-led meetings/events: Chamber of Commerce, Community Center, business partnerships, realtor organizations and senior citizen groups.
- Increase reach of Pounce and ePounce to community: Chambers, City Administrators, Rotary, Religious Leaders, Homeowner Associations, Realtors, etc.

Strategy 1C: The district will provide information to the community when the Board of Education places a bond or levy question on the ballot and will communicate year-round about school and district goals, plans, programs, and finances.

Action items:

- Building stakeholders informed consent through community engagement.
- Understanding stakeholders needs, expectations, opinions, attitudes, knowledge levels.
- Developing and following a communication plan, with distinct phases.
- Listening to public sentiment throughout the process, and adapting messages and strategies based on stakeholder input.



Communications Goal #2

Utilize a variety of media to maximize awareness and support of the district's goals, objectives and programs.

Strategy 2A: Use electronic, print and mass media tools to promote awareness and interest in the district.

Web

- Implement and maintain social media tools.
- Manage one centralized public district calendar on the external site.
- Produce district report card online and coordinate electronic, video and print channels.
- Develop a process to collect/communicate the results of survey data.
- Train key personnel for effective use of district websites using content management strategies.
- Maintain and update websites on a regular basis.
- Survey stakeholders to identify preferred means of communication.

Video

- Broadcast video/media through social networking on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and website.
- Produce video/media of Excelsior Springs special events to support internal communications.
- Create video/media (informational and educational in format) for release on the website.
- Utilize instructional video/media to build awareness at the school and district levels.

Print

- Publish details about Excelsior Springs School District to increase parent knowledge of involvement opportunities within the Excelsior Springs School District.
- Publish Excelsior Springs Pounce to reach patrons with messages targeting key goals and district finances.

Media

- Conduct media training with new building principals.
- Maintain updated news releases on the Excelsior Springs website to continuously update the constituents about district initiatives and programs.
- Distribute fact sheets of district goals and objectives to media and update the scorecard report during the school year.



Strategy 2B: Develop a process for tracking, monitoring and responding to feedback.

Action items:

- Research and define a process to effectively manage concerns from stakeholders.
- Monitor department Web pages on the ESSD40 website in cooperation with school site communication liaisons and department supervisors.
- Facilitate District Communications Team and monthly school administrator meetings to establish internal networks for communication; develop an internal employee communications plan.
- Leverage SMORE or other electronic communication tools for consistent district and school newsletters and external communications.

Strategy 2C: Consistently communicate and implement the district brand identity and build on that image and reputation.

Action items:

- Develop and roll out Social Media Best Practices and related training for all employees.
- Develop and roll out Communication Best Practices and related training for all administrators and district leaders
- Generate talking points that clarify what ESSD40 stands for and the values that drive our staff toward the mission of quality education for all students.

Strategy 2D: Maintain a proactive media relations program to enhance the district's image on local, state and national levels.

Action items:

- Produce regular "Tiger Talks" videos highlighting news, events, and student and staff achievements throughout the District. Post on social media and send internally through "All-ESSD" email.
- Adhere to standards of quality for content, design and management for all publications.
- Recognize student, staff and parent achievement at local, state, and national levels/events/meetings.



Communications Goal #3

Establish an effective employee communication plan to improve internal communication and employee engagement.

Strategy 3A: Provide training for school communication teams to facilitate communication among staff and community.

Action items:

- Offer communication training to Excelsior Springs administration, staff and community.
- Conduct in-person professional development for staff on how they can best use the Communications Guide.
- Conduct media and social media training sessions at principal meetings and one-on-one as needed to empower better communicators.

Strategy 3B: Provide opportunities and resources to build connections within the district and community.

Action items:

- Build and maintain the Web pages on the Excelsior Springs website that will facilitate information and discussion forums among staff members.
- Continue to develop and implement new features for teacher websites.
- Create an advisory committee to have regular meetings with the superintendent.

Strategy 3C: Work with the Human Resources Department to coordinate clear, consistent messages to staff members.

Action items:

- Create and implement a staff orientation for the communications plan.
- Develop a staff orientation video that welcomes new employees to Excelsior Springs and includes key messages.
- Leverage SMORE or other electronic communication tools for consistent district and school newsletters and external communications.
- Create bi-monthly ESSD40 internal newsletter to share “What's Happening Around ESSD40” with district staff. Send internally through "All-ESSD" email.
- Relay news and information to all District leadership through Cabinet meetings, ESSD40 internal news emails, Board minutes, Board goals, and more.



Communications Goal #4

Achieve coordinated communications, both internally and externally, regarding safety issues and crisis management.

Strategy 4A: Develop and sustain relationships with local emergency management officials.

Action items:

- Develop an emergency content feature on the district home page that can be updated by key safety and crisis management personnel.
- Partner with local emergency personnel to ensure safety plans and crisis management scenarios are managed effectively.

Strategy 4B: Utilize a variety of communication tactics to share information with staff and parents about safety plans and crisis management.

Action items:

- Work with district nursing staff and local hospitals to coordinate the sharing of information and resources about health issues with parents.
- Work with the administrative services department to provide crisis information to all staff.
- Manage and update crisis information on the district website.





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