



KSD Board Communications Plan September 2018 – August 2019

KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION

Successfully preparing all students for their futures.

KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT CORE VALUES

Equity

Student equity means that all students have equal access to quality staff, courses, activities, services, and resources based on their individual needs.

Excellence

Student excellence is a balance of rigorous academic, social, and career-readiness skills.

Community

Community engagement is proactive involvement of stakeholders in school district priorities and partnerships.

KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT STRATEGIC GOALS

Kent School District will:

1. Prepare all students to be college and career ready by raising the academic and social emotional learning bar and closing the PreK-16 gaps to student achievement and college completion.
2. Engage parents, students, staff, and community in two-way communications focused on equity and excellence.
3. Create effective organizational systems that reinforce equity and excellence.
4. Recruit, hire, develop, and retain a diverse and premier workforce.

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Overview

The purpose of the Kent School District's (KSD) Board Communications Plan is to present a clear and concise framework for communicating with our school community. The plan addresses all district audiences including students, staff, families, volunteers, prospective employees, business community members and professional associations, elected officials, civic groups, faith-based groups and all members of the KSD community.

Effective communication is essential to create trust and support among the community, school board, superintendent, and staff. Our KSD Board must be consistent and transparent in reaching out to the community. Effective communication is crucial at every level of the organization, especially within and from the board. Clear, concise, consistent and respectful communication promotes better understanding, reduces unnecessary conflict, and helps build healthy relationships.

BSGT Communication Goals

The Board-Superintendent Governance Team (BSGT) will review and revise as needed communication strategies in the board's communication plan to:

- Develop and implement an effective process to respond to questions, concerns, comments, or feedback from citizens.
- Inform the public of the board's roles and responsibilities.
- Communicate proactively to disseminate information that addresses issues throughout the system and community.
- Communicate district performance to the public in clear and understandable ways. *
- Seek community and staff input in its decision-making to gain community and staff support.
- Carefully consider community and staff input in its decision-making.

Progress to this goal will be evidenced through:

- A report on the review of communications.
- A communication plan for the school year.
- Feedback from staff and community members before and after implementation of the revised communication plan.

KSD Audiences

Target Audiences

- Students
- Staff – school-based, administrators and central office, including:
 - AFT (Maintenance/Custodial)
 - Coaches
 - KAEOP (Office Professionals)
 - KAP (Paraeducators)
 - KEA (Teachers)
 - KSFSA (Food Services)
 - KPA (Principals)
 - Teamsters (Bus Drivers)
 - Non-represented
- Parents and Families
 - Parent Organizations
- Volunteers
- Prospective Employees
- Key Communicators
- Business Community and Professional Associations/Organization
- Elected Officials
- Civic Groups
- Neighborhood Associations
- District Residents
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Senior Citizens Groups
- Faith-based Groups
- Community Groups
- Colleges and Universities
- Private Schools, School Districts, ESD
- Electronic Media
 - Websites, E-mail, Social Media, Facebook, Media, BoardDocs, E-Newsletters, Mobile App,
- Print Media
 - Newsletters, Newspapers, Flyers, Connected, Flyers, etc.

Strategies

1. Keep Communications Simple

- Use clear, concise and non-educational style language for all communication.
- Vary the types and level of communication to target diverse audiences.

2. Provide Timely Information

- Share district provided information sheets and FAQs on key KSD topics of interest such as the district's budget, Reduction In Force (RIF) guidelines, school consolidations, etc.
- Refer to and share key information available online for quick reference.
- Respond to questions and engage in two-way conversations in a timely manner, such as responding to emergent issues within 48 hours, scheduling in-person meetings, etc.

3. Communicate Early and Often

- Provide information when appropriate to send to constituents, partners, reply to inquiries.
- Read weekly email updates from Superintendent.
- Make telephone calls if in doubt.

4. Communicate Face-to-Face

- The more difficult the situation, the more important it is to communicate face-to-face.
- Encourage staff and community members to relay messages through personal interaction when appropriate.
- Attend scheduled regular face-to-face meetings with superintendent.

5. Keep Communications Brief and to the Point

- In order to keep a person's attention, be brief and to the point.
- Use bullet points when appropriate.
- Highlight message in the title.
- Start and end with the why.

6. Develop Relationships with our Community

- Maintain a high level of visibility for the district through participation in various professional, school and community activities across the district.
- Actively seek input from all community members and act to make changes, without abdicating authority of the board.

7. Prepare our Messages

- Partner with KSD Communications team to share district information through consistent messaging.
- Co-develop responses that represent our district message and are always in alignment with our strategic goals.
- Don't use education lingo or technical jargon when preparing messages.

Methods

We will identify the communication tools that are most widely accepted and preferred by the community. Our current communications methods include, but are not limited to:

1. Email Communication

KSD uses email communications to connect with both internal and external audiences. Board members, of course, must also consider their actions via email and the open public meetings act. Board members should keep in mind that an email exchange among a quorum of the members of a governing body is not open to the public; however, an email exchange in which “action” takes place would violate the [OPMA](#).

Emails will also be used for the following:

- Superintendent will send out a weekly district update and board members are committed to reading all information in the weekly update.
- Superintendent will use email to communicate during “crisis” situations.
- Superintendent and executive assistant distribute general school board information via email.
- Superintendent and board are committed to not including confidential information in email or sharing or posting board emails to anyone beyond the board of directors and superintendent.
- A monthly board e-newsletter will be sent; content will be provided in large part by the board members and sent and posted by the KSD communications team.

2. Phone Conversations

- Superintendent calls board members to check in and see if there are questions.
- Board members call superintendent to check in.
- Superintendent establishes preferred contact times with individual board members.
- Superintendent establishes a call log to confirm when conversations take place.

3. Website

Our district’s website should be utilized as the key marketing tool for prospective families and employees. The KSD Board page should be kept up-to-date and include pertinent information, including changes in contact information, board community meetings, etc.

Response to Community Questions

School board members are interested in hearing feedback, concerns, opinions and information. Board members can be contacted individually. Their contact information is available at "Meet the School Board" under the School Board tab on the website. Posted on this page are answers to specific questions asked at board meetings that do not involve employee complaints, specific student records, or require the board to bypass the KSD Public Records request process.

The Board will work with KSD staff to seek an affordable and sustainable solution to provide an anonymous, online, public facing forum for discussions so that the board can monitor district wide concerns without violating open public meeting act laws and still proactively address concerns at board meetings or with the Superintendent. This will ensure that all KSD stakeholders can share their thoughts about important issues impacting KSD students and staff, and the KSD Board can consider different points of view. This is one

implication on the Board's budget for 2018-19 will require further discussion at the November 2018 Board Communications work session.

4. Face-to-face conversations

- Face-to-face conversations are used for important or difficult conversations.
- Superintendent records in writing the outcomes of face-to-face conversations; produces a summary of issues addressed; and distributes the summary to all board members via email within one week of meeting.
- Superintendent and board establish a regular timeline for each board member to meet with the superintendent to discuss important issues, including but not limited to:
 - As a district, are we aligning our operations with our vision, mission and goals?
 - Are we effectively measuring our performance against our vision, mission and goals?
 - What are the things you are excited about in our district?
 - Face-to-face conversations, including exempt and executive works sessions, are used to communicate confidential information.
- KSD board members will continue to host quarterly Board Community Conversations to hear directly from KSD staff, community members and partners about their specific concerns, compliments and questions about our district.
 - These events will be planned and coordinated by the Board, with support from the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent.
 - Meetings will not be staffed by KSD staff.
 - Format will remain open, non-structured.
 - Board will ensure locations cover all areas across the district.
 - Board will take notes to be able to respond to questions that may arise.
 - Board will debrief and discuss as a group, at the subsequent, regular board meeting, what they heard at the quarterly community conversations meeting.
 - Concerns and potential next steps will be highlighted on the Board web page.

2018-19 Board Community Conversation Schedule:

- October 11, 2018 6-8pm
- October 11, 2018 6-8pm
- October 13, 2018 10am-12pm
- January 24, 2019 6-8pm
- January 24, 2019 6-8pm
- January 26, 2019 10am-12pm
- February 28, 2019 6-8pm
- February 28, 2019 6-8pm
- March 2, 2019 10am-12pm
- May 9, 2019 6-8pm
- May 9, 2019 6-8pm
- May 11, 2019 10am-12pm

5. Social Media

The overall goal of our district social media presence is to provide information without being prompted, ensure transparency, and be vulnerable and available to collecting honest feedback. By doing so, we will

continue to build trust.

Participation in social media involves creating and sharing content our followers are either looking for information about or want to engage with. It is also about actively pushing out information we have determined is critical to share with our stakeholders.

KSD Communications Team will share all scheduled board meetings on KSD social media platforms once the board calendar is finalized.

School board members should follow the public official's golden rule: Don't blog, tweet, or post anything you wouldn't want splashed across the front page of the daily newspaper.

Here are some other quick tips:

- Board code of ethics and conflict of interest policies apply to social media outlets. Don't use social media to leak closed session materials and/or information that is protected by law.
- Keep the tone conversational and informal but use proper grammar and show the same sensitivity regarding word choice you would in other venues.
- Social media is a commitment. If you don't want to keep sites updated, it's better not to start them in the first place.
- Snarky doesn't play well if you're not a teenager. Keep your communications professional, albeit more informal in tone and manner.
- Connect your site to the official district website, social media outlets, etc.
- Be transparent — let people know who you are and what you stand for. Don't hide behind the anonymity afforded by social media.
- Take the high road. You'll take some unfair hits — that comes with the territory. Don't get into fights with parents, students, teachers, and other bloggers. You will lose.
- Let people know what the rules of the game are for your sites. As the "editor," you have the right to remove profane comments or other material that could be offensive to others. But often you build more credibility by responding professionally and courteously.

6. Board E-Newsletter

The board e-newsletter will serve as a monthly opportunity for the board to proactively engage parents, students, staff, and community in our district priorities. This is also an opportunity to celebrate staff, students, partners and our community.

If board members take photos of their school visits, community event participation, and volunteer work in the community, share those photos on social media.

E-Newsletter Content

- President's Message
 - Up to 500 words
 - Brief message, hot topics, inspiring words of encouragement for parents, staff and community members – may include resources, news and upcoming events.
- Legislative Update

- Up to 500 words
- Brief legislative update, what to watch for, news from legislative representative

- Superintendent’s Message
 - Up to 500 words
 - Brief message related to goals and core values of KSD.

- Board Links:
 - Policies and Procedures
 - Agendas and Meeting Videos
 - Contact us
 - KSD Website
 - KSD Social Media

The KSD Communications team will continue to provide the technical support for the layout, design and execution of sending the board e-newsletter. The BSGT will be responsible for the authoring of all content.

2018-19 Board E-Newsletter Schedule

Content Due	Draft to Board	Revisions to Communications	E-newsletter sent to KSD Community
September 14, 2018	September 17, 2018	September 19, 2018	September 21, 2018
October 12, 2018	October 15, 2018	October 17, 2018	October 19, 2018
November 12, 2018*	November 14, 2018	November 16, 2018	November 19, 2018
December 10, 2018*	December 12, 2018	December 14, 2018	December 17, 2018
January 11, 2019	January 14, 2019	January 16, 2019	January 18, 2019
February 15, 2019	February 18, 2019	February 20, 2019	February 22, 2019
March 15, 2019	March 18, 2019	March 20, 2019	March 22, 2019
April 12, , 2019	April 15, 2019	April 17, 2019	April 19, 2019
May 17, 2019	May 20, 2019	May 22, 2019	May 24, 2019
June 14, 2019	June 17, 2019	June 19, 2019	June 21, 2019
July 12, 2019	July 15, 2019	July 17, 2019	July 19, 2019

7. Video and Live Stream

The school board sets the vision for the school district and the decisions the board make at their monthly meetings make a difference for our district and our schools. Through a series of short, engaging videos on key topics, the KSD communications team can help the board achieve several communication goals and share important information.

Videos Topics for 2018-19:

- KSD School Board: Our Role
- Board Community Conversations: An Invitation, What to Expect

- KSD Board Meetings: Why Attend, What to Expect, How to Engage

Board Meeting Live Streams

School board meetings continue to be shared via our YouTube channel on livestream. Special events, work sessions and other board meetings are not livestreamed, unless the board requests so in advance and there is sufficient staff and budget to support the needs.

At the October 3, 2018 work session, Communications presented data on the number of views of board livestreams for each session and meeting from the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. Communications also worked with IT to present three potential solutions, and the associated costs and next steps, of live streaming all board meetings and work sessions. Based on the discussion and recommendations of the board, Communications will continue to partner with IT and HR to present further options to the board, such as budget implications for live streaming only budget and hot topic work sessions as defined by the board in advance for the 2018-19 year, audio only recordings of all meetings, part-time position, and others. This is one implication on the Board's budget for 2018-19 will require further discussion at the November 2018 Board Communications work session.

Assessment and Accountability

Being that different measurements work best in different situations, and most platforms have built-in analytics, the measure of communication effectiveness is more of an adaptive challenge than a technical one.

Feedback – an electronic survey will be used to ascertain people's opinion and to collect quantitative information at the end of the school year. Feedback received will be used to adjust the board communications plan for the following year. The electronic survey will be distributed through the board e-newsletter and links will be posted on the board webpage.

Data Review – analytics will be used to monitor feedback from our community. The Communications team will provide the board analytics to review on website activity and e-newsletter data monthly knowing that trends will be noticeable, most notably with quarterly data reviews. Course corrections to the communications plan should not be made based on one or two months of data for numerous reasons.

Interpersonal Contact – Informal "word-of-mouth" feedback will be collected to gauge the level of effectiveness of the communications plan.