



Strategic Communications Plan 2019-2024



Communications Department

West Plains School District

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Communications Department

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Introduction	2
Communications Department Goals	2
Communication Measurement	3
Internal/External Audiences	3
Desired Behaviors/Attitudes	3
Communications Mission/Vision	4
Processes for Disseminating Information	4
Communication Channels	5
Marketing and Communications Goals for 2019-2024	7

Introduction

The West Plains School District Communications Department supports the district's mission "Excellence in Education, Service, Life" by facilitating communication with internal and external audiences and building and maintaining relationships to continue the district's high level of community support and involvement. The program is key to the district's accountability to students and the community by demonstrating to stakeholders that the district is fulfilling its mission and meeting goals set forth by the board of education. The department serves 5 schools, approximately 420 staff members, 20 administrators, 2,700 students in preschool through 12th grade (and their families), the board of education and more than 18,000 households throughout the district. District engagement efforts continue to grow as the district is involved the community with strategic planning and critical issues such as tax levy and bond issue decisions and the addition of social media and online communications.

This plan outlines each of our communication and branding strategies, with specific goals to make West Plains School District "the destination district" for families and potential employees moving to the area. Through the use of storytelling (branding), the West Plains School District name is the district where people want to work and families want to educate their children in quality, and caring schools. We know that stories are what people remember and the research agrees:

"Recent studies reveal that the average adult, age 18 and older, spends four hours a day watching television, with those over 65 watching nearly seven hours a day and binge-watching has become an acceptable hobby. Humor, action, drama; the desire to be entertained is as prevalent today as ever. With that in mind, businesses and leaders would be wise to approach their messages with the entertainment-element in mind, creating messages that entertain AND educate or instruct."* - Kindra Hall, President and Chief Storyteller Officer at Steller Collective

Over the next five years, the district marketing and communications plan will make the district's goals come to life through the art of storytelling. Specifically, we will share stories that highlight the following goals.

District Strategic Communication Plan Goals:

1. Implement processes for engaging families in school partnerships.
2. Promote and facilitate partnerships with businesses in the community.
3. Provide a welcoming and responsive environment to all members of the school community.
4. Develop a community-based task force for ongoing and consistent communication.

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

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

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.

External audiences feel involved and engaged in their schools.

Exhibit community pride and trust in schools and the district.

Support the West Plains School District through active participation.

Support the West Plains School District through monetary measures.

Communications Department Mission/Vision

Enhance student success through internal and external relationships and strategic communications to build understanding, partnerships, and trust.

We are communicators, strategists, catalysts, and educators. We forge a culture of engagement across our community to build bridges and address issues collaboratively.

Processes for Disseminating Information

The following processes have been created with district employees and is also posted on the district website. The Director of Communications will review submissions received via email from faculty/employees.

To submit information about a unique activity or event happening in your classroom or building, please follow the directions below:

1 Email iana.snodgras@zizzers.org

- **Include:**
 - The building you work in.
 - Date of the event/activity.
 - A short description of the event/activity and explain why it helps achieve district/building goals, promotes student success, and what experience it provides for our students.

2. **Attach photos or associated files** (PDF files of fliers) if available. Feel free to use your phone or tablet to take photos of your event. Unless it is a large, building-wide event it will be difficult for the Director of Communications to attend as there are many activities taking place throughout the school year.

Communications Department
February 2020

Once this information is received, the Director of Communications will work with building leaders to determine the best method for distribution **if it meets district and building improvement plan goals**. Not all submissions will be publicized. It is the responsibility of the Director of Communications to choose the photos and stories that will work best to keep a district balance and to tell our story. If further information is needed, you will be contacted directly. Keep in mind that every effort will be made to communicate about your submission. Thank you for your partnership in helping us spread the word about the great things happening within the West Plains School District

Submission Examples:

- Student accolades—recognition for winning a school-related contest, attendance celebrations, state/national achievements, etc.
- Staff accolades—recognition for regional/state/national achievements, being chosen to present at conferences, etc.
- Project based learning that deeply engages students and involves guest speakers or community involvement.
- Highly engaging classroom activity that showcases a direct correlation to your building's goals.
- Building level activity— assemblies/awards, homecoming activities, attendance celebrations, field day, etc.
- Holiday/milestone celebrations—Veteran's Day, Earth Day, 100th Day of School, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.

3. Do not submit stories to the media directly.

Communication Channels

Category	Channel	Audience	Frequency
Electronic	District website (www.zizzers.org)	Parents, students, staff, new families, alumni, community	Daily to weekly
Electronic	School websites	Parents, students, staff, new families	Daily to weekly
Electronic	ZizzerPride e-newsletter	9,000 subscribers Parents, staff, media, legislators, community who subscribe	Once per week

Communications Department
February 2020

Electronic	Peachjar e-flyer distribution	6,000 subscribers Parents, staff	As needed
Electronic	Blackboard (email, phone, text)	Parents, staff	As needed by district, individual schools
Electronic	Direct email	Parents, students, staff	As needed by district, individual schools
Electronic	District app	6,000 downloads Parents, students, staff, community members	Daily to weekly
Social media	Facebook	8,000 Followers Parents, students, staff, community members, alumni	Daily
Social media	Twitter (@wpzizzers)	Parents, students, staff, community members, alumni, leaders in region, nation	Daily
Social media	Instagram (@westplainsschools)	Parents, students, staff, alumni, community members	Daily
Social media	You Tube	Parents, students, staff, community members	Periodically
Print	"West Plains School District" district newsletter	Taxpayers, district residents, parents, students, staff, retirees	1x per year

Print	R.E.D. Magazine	Taxpayers, district residents, parents, students, staff, retirees	1x per year
External	Local Newspapers, Radio News, TV, and Magazines	Taxpayers, district residents, parents, students, staff, retirees	Daily
External	District Radio Shows	Parents, students, staff, community members	Weekly
Engagement	Liaison with community organizations - West Plains Education Foundation, (Rotary, Lions Club, Foundations, Kiwanis, Optimist etc) Community leaders, administrators	Community Leaders	Weekly to Monthly
Engagement	Coffee with Lori	Community Leaders	Quarterly
Engagement	Realtor's Breakfast	Realtors	Annually

Marketing and Communications Goals for 2019-2024

Strategy 5: We will develop and implement plans to increase effective communication.

Action Plan #1 Implement processes for engaging families in school partnerships.

Action Items -

- The Communications Director will maintain a formal, written communication plan detailing district policies and procedures.
- Implement and/or educate to staff the processes for disseminating information including writing and submitting stories to the Communications Director.
- District administrators and teachers will utilize a variety of technology tools to connect with families and engage them in their students education.
- Determine building level teacher to parent communication tool i.e. (Class DoJo, Seesaw, Blackboard etc)

Communications Department
February 2020

- Improve Student Communication Methods Between Students & Staff via Zizmail and Blackboard.
- Improve Student Information System Parent Accessibility through video overviews, information sessions, and tutorials.
- Improve building level communication to parents through daily or weekly announcements using Blackboard and/or social media.

Action Plan #2 Promote and facilitate partnerships with businesses in the community.

Action Items -

- Implement and/or educate to staff the processes for disseminating information including writing and submitting stories to the Communications Director.
- Promote student achievement and activities to foster a sense of pride in the community for our schools.
- Maintain local media contacts including radio, newspaper, and television.
- Communications Director should continue to actively engage with the community through Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, and other civic organizations.
- Coordinate a strategic plan including developing alumni donor lists and various mailed district publications to engage with businesses, alumni and the community to support student success at all levels.

Action Plan #3 Provide a welcoming and responsive environment to all members of the school community.

Action Items -

- Develop a district wide customer service practice.
- Provide customer service training to all district staff.
- Ensure each building is welcoming and inviting.
- Oversee regular updates to indoor and outdoor digital signage across district.

Action Plan #4 Develop a community-based task force for ongoing and consistent communication.

Action Items -

- Select task force, meeting dates, and times.
- Develop an annual strengths and weaknesses evaluation.
- Communications Director will participate in ongoing professional development to stay current on effective communication methods.