

In Spring 2023, Hickman Mills C-1 Schools launched "Around the Mill," a transformative magazine that redefined district communication. This initiative evolved from a basic newsletter into a 12-page, high-quality publication designed to amplify student, staff, and community voices, directly addressing critical marketing objectives. Research highlighted that parental referrals, positive school perception, and a welcoming environment are key factors in school selection. "Around the Mill" was strategically planned to address these needs by showcasing the district's achievements and fostering a strong sense of community. Our objectives were clear: create a compelling publication highlighting our schools' positive activities. The Fall Edition exemplified this, featuring the Superintendent alongside Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, celebrating the Real-World Learning Center's grand opening, and showcasing student and staff accomplishments. Visual storytelling was paramount, with high-quality photos capturing the vibrant spirit of our district. "Around the Mill" was strategically distributed to every household and business within district boundaries, extending a mile beyond, reaching approximately 22,646 neighbors in Fall 2024, up from 21,830 in Fall 2023. We targeted families with children, crucial for enrollment, and engaged community members and businesses, fostering partnerships. The Fall 2024 edition increased its print run to supply local businesses and organizations, solidifying these vital connections. Each edition features compelling content: messages from district leadership, student and program spotlights, athletics coverage, community partner features, and alums profiles. This diverse content reinforces our district's mission and strengthens bonds with stakeholders. The magazine's impact is evident. Families embraced the new format, appreciating its engaging content and vibrant visuals. Expanding circulation to businesses and organizations ensured our message reached every corner of the community. "Around the Mill" became a bridge, connecting schools with their supporters. Each story reinforces our narrative, whether a student's success or a community partnership. "Around the Mill" directly contributed to the district's marketing objectives by enhancing positive perception, fostering community engagement, and providing a platform for authentic storytelling. It transformed communication from a one-way broadcast to a dynamic dialogue, reinforcing Hickman Mills C-1 Schools as a vibrant, welcoming, thriving district.