



We help students thrive and dreams come alive

Comprehensive Community Relations and Communications (CRC) Plan

2009-2011

Bloomington Public Schools Comprehensive CRC Plan 2008-2011

Executive Summary

Bloomington Public Schools serves more than 11,300 students in Early Childhood through Grade 12, 4,635 adult learners, 1,700 staff members and a diverse community of 84,000 residents.

The Community Relations Office seeks to support the District's mission by improving communication and building relationships within the community. The objective of all communication strategies is to advance the Bloomington Public Schools' Strategic Plan.

Situation

In February 2008, at the request of Bloomington Public Schools, the National School Public Relations Association conducted an audit of the District's communications and community relations activities. The audit has allowed a restructuring of the District's Community Relations Office with a new focus and goals.

The challenges of maintaining public confidence, addressing a growing demographic change, reaching broad-consensus on a philosophy of education for low and high achievers, and communicating effectively with all segments of the community affect not only the school district, but also the community.

Focus

The Community Relations Office will focus its resources on interpersonal communication supported by issues-focused communication plans. The interpersonal communication will build trust within the district and create new lines of communication throughout the district. Our communication plans will assist us all in communicating with one clear voice. It is our goal that this focus, in concert with a commitment to be part of an efficient, high-performing, customer-oriented organization focused on student achievement, will support a culture in Community Relations of proactive quality service.

This comprehensive plan will be used as a basis for the Community Relations Office's accountability, as well as providing a framework for resource and budgetary

considerations in the future. This plan is a working document that allows Bloomington Community Relations to make necessary changes based on the circumstances and vision of what the district needs in the future.

Comprehensive CRC Plan

Community Relations Mission

To build public understanding and support for Bloomington
Public Schools.

Bloomington Public Schools Mission

The Bloomington Public School District is an educational
leader developing
in ALL our learners the ability to thrive in a rapidly
changing world.

Comprehensive CRC Plan

Beliefs

We adopt the Core Values and the Strategic Directions (Success Measures) in the district Strategic Plan. We also believe (1) we have the responsibility to communicate effectively with our constituents; (2) that meaningful public engagement supports our goals, and (3) that effective communication:

- Is a two-way process involving both internal/external publics.
- Helps increase student achievement.
- Is the responsibility of every employee in this district.

Goals

This Comprehensive Communications Plan aligns with the district's Strategic Plan and Strategic Directions (Success Measures). Goals for the Comprehensive Communication Plan are developed annually based on the Strategic Plan and evaluation of the previous year. We understand that meaningful public engagement encourages community involvement in education that benefits children and increases student achievement.

Desired behaviors and attitudes:

Internal Audiences

- Take pride and ownership in the direction of the district and keep informed on key issues.
- Show mutual respect, trust and understanding, and value all roles within the organization.
- Work as a high performing organization whose employees respect and value customer feedback.

- Exhibit district core values (what drives our words and behavior) of respect, responsibility, integrity, citizenship, honesty and teamwork.

External Audiences

- Exhibit community pride and trust in our schools and the school district.
- Feel involved and engaged in Bloomington Public Schools.

- Choose to enroll in Bloomington Public Schools because of its diversity and quality of opportunities for students.
- Support Bloomington Public Schools.

R A C E Flow Chart

Research: Goal setting is based on research and direct involvement with stakeholders to determine the key messages.

Analyze: Communication efforts are planned on a systematic basis to support the achievement of the organization's goals and strategic directions.

Communication: The appropriate channel to reach the determined audience is employed.

Evaluation: Determine that the communication practices were successful and the audience has a high level of satisfaction with the results.

Research	Analyze	Communicate	Evaluate
Develop key messages	Determine who needs to know	Find the best channel for the audience	Rate the effectiveness

<p>Direct involvement with stakeholders to determine needs for information and knowledge.</p> <p>Research audience perceptions, desires, interests and opinions.</p> <p>Use qualitative and quantitative research to establish information needs.</p> <p>Key messages developed with useful and useable information.</p>	<p>Students Parents Teachers Principals Support Staff Employees Administration Board of Education Taxpayers Senior Citizens Business Leaders Media PTSO Civic Leaders Legislators Religious Leaders Neighborhood Groups School/Community Partners New Residents Prospective Families Metro Twin Cities</p>	<p>Print <i>School Pages</i> Press Releases</p> <p>Electronic Supt's Report District Web site School Web sites Key Email Lists</p> <p>Media <i>Sun Current</i> <i>Star Tribune</i> Broadcast BEC-TV Radio Advertising</p> <p>Personal Small group Large group Public Engagement Voice messages Billboards</p>	<p>Engage in formal and informal evaluation of practices.</p> <p>Determine the audience level of satisfaction with practice.</p> <p>Upon evaluation, create, modify or discontinue practice or project.</p>
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Code of Ethics

Bloomington Public Schools is a member of the National School Public Relations Association (and its state affiliate MinnSPRA) and is guided by the hallmark of professionalism established by the organization's Code of Ethics:

- 1) Be guided by the pursuit of the public interest through truth, accuracy, good taste and fairness; follow good judgment in releasing information; not intentionally disseminate misinformation or confidential data; avoid

confidential data; avoid actions that lessen personal, professional or organizational reputation.

- 2) Give primary loyalty to the employing organization, insisting on the right to give advisory counsel in accordance with sound public relations ideas and practices; cooperate with other groups while avoiding conflicts with primary responsibilities; object to untenable policies or activities.
- 3) Be aware of personal influence, avoiding promises or granting of unprofessional advantages to others; refrain from accepting special consideration for influences on organizational decisions; avoid unauthorized use of organizational facilities, resources or professional services for personal gain or for promotion of the candidacy of aspirants to elected offices; forego derogatory acts or utterances against other professionals.
- 4) Recognize that effectiveness is dependent upon integrity and regard for ideals of the profession; not misrepresenting professional qualifications; give credit for ideas and words borrowed from others; cooperate with professional colleagues to uphold and enforce this Code.

Evaluation

The comprehensive plan will be used as a basis for the Community Relations Department's accountability as well as providing a framework for resource and budgetary considerations in the future. This plan is a working document that allows Bloomington Public Schools' Community Relations Department to make necessary changes based on the circumstances and vision of what the district needs in the future.

Products and Services

The following areas of focus can be considered "Products" and "Services" provided by the Community Relations Department. They are the basis of the work of Community Relations to achieve the *Desired Behaviors and Attitudes* of our internal and external publics.

Community Relations

Community relations encourages public support and understanding of Bloomington Public Schools.

Objectives

- Increase opportunities for public input and response (two-way communication)
- Increase opportunities to share district information with community
- Increase opportunities for community members to interact with Board of Education
- Expand use of technology and other forms of media

Strategies

- Establish external Key Communicators Network
- Community forums and dialogue sessions
- Promote School Board meetings through increased information sources
- Provide District representation for community programs, organizations
- Electronic discussion groups, list serves, broadcast e-mail, and web site (school and district level)
- Promote district knowledge and participating in Education Foundation of Bloomington
- Maintain effective communications through traditional (print) and non-traditional approaches
- Develop alumni program of Jefferson, Kennedy and (formerly) Lincoln graduates to further the initiatives of Bloomington Public Schools, including advocacy of the district's mission, goals and programs, and for alumni to support student achievement.

Crisis Communications

Crisis communications mitigates negative impacts in the community and encourages fair, objective media coverage.

Objectives

- Counsel school principals and staff in managing crisis communications.
- Counsel school board members on appropriate role in a crisis or emergency.
- Provide timely, accurate information to internal and external audiences.
- Work closely with the media to provide accurate, timely information.
- Serve as Emergency Management Coordinator and Crisis Response Team Leader.
- Chair the district's Safety & Security Committee

Strategies

- Revise Crisis Management Policy
- Revise Crisis Management Plan, utilizing the Incident Command System (ICS)
- Crisis management and communications training
- Onsite and central support in emergencies
- Immediate and ongoing counsel to principals, key staff and district leadership in crisis issues and events that have the potential to become a crisis
- Crisis communication plans specific to each major incident to include goals and key messages

- Written materials, including talking points, fact sheets and letters for schools to use in emergencies
- District spokesperson with the media

Media Relations

Media relations increases the number of positive stories in the media, showcases student achievement, and helps the district communicate with target audiences about increasing student learning, providing educational choice and managing finances in a responsible manner.

Objectives

- Increase the number of positive stories provided to the media.
- Expand professional relationships with members of the local and metro media.
- Increase use of social media networks to augment media efforts.
- Serve as Bloomington Public Schools' primary liaison with the news media, including spokesperson at the direction of the Superintendent.

Strategies

- Press releases, briefings, photo-ops, and conferences.
- New sources of information to augment or replace traditional media news releases.
- Relationship building and one-on-one story development.
- Create a media link on District Web site.
- Distribute Fact Sheets of District initiatives
- Letters to the editor and guest editorials/opinion pieces (quarterly and issues-based)
- Produce news and information programming to coordinate key messages throughout existing district channels.

Strategic Counseling

Strategic counseling supports our schools and departments in developing and maintaining strong relationships with students, staff, parents and the community. Providing high-level, strategic counsel to the School Board, Superintendent, Administrative Cabinet and Management Team will improve performance in the areas of communication and community relations (e.g. family and public engagement, welcoming environment, etc).

Objectives

- Increase positive public perception of Bloomington Public Schools.
- Guide relationship building to increase public support and understanding.
- Improve organizational performance in communication and community relations.
- Integrate the actions and attitudes of Bloomington Public Schools with those of its publics and the actions and attitudes of its publics with those of the organization.

Strategies

- Frame district issues for increased understanding
- Serve on district and school committees to guide communication and public engagement efforts
- Represent the district on local, state and national organizations (e.g. MinnSPRA, NSPRA, etc.)
- Environmental scanning (public perception)
- Issues framing
- Key messages and scripts

- Employee training/workshops

Research and Development

Research and Development allows the district to: a) identify views and values of stakeholders within the community, and b) design effective community relations programs and activities.

Objectives

- Increase the use of data to refine and/or create school and district programs.
- Expand development of new strategies to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the district.
- Engage in both formal and informal evaluation of communication practices and the levels of satisfaction with its performance.
- Build evaluation methods in each element of the community relations process in order to create, modify or discontinue practices or projects.

Strategies

- Focus groups - to gain in-depth understanding of survey results.
- Paper/pencil surveys, and automated voice response system - to gather data related to specific issues or situations
- Information clearinghouse - to gather data in a variety of informal settings: public engagement sessions, presentations and correspondence
- Employee/staff survey
- Parent and Student surveys
- Internet research
- Organizational development

Marketing

Marketing creates pride in the school district and builds an understanding that public education is a benefit to the community.

Objectives

- Increase the distribution of positive information about the school district.
- Expand relationships with members of the community and other partners.

Strategies

- Special events that involve the community; school and district-based
- Counseling prospective parents and families; creating newcomer and preschool packets as supplements
- Marketing materials for distribution at Bloomington public offices/areas
- Displays/exhibits at community events
- Cable TV/Video
- Key Messages and scripts
- Employee Training/Workshops
- Key Communicator Networks
- Publications
- Recognition programs

Communications Training

Communications training enables employees to understand their role of serving as ambassadors to the community.

Objectives

- Increase opportunities for employees to receive communication training.
- Increasing the number of employees who are trained in communications.
- Provide opportunities for school board members to receive communications training.

Strategies

- Public engagement
- Image builders and breakers
- Effective communication strategies
- Communication planning
- PR for principals
- Media relations
- Crisis communications
- School Board School

Public (Family) and Employee Engagement

Public and employee engagement empowers employees and families to take ownership in their schools and the district, and fosters collaborative relationships.

Objectives

- Increase opportunities for staff and community members to become involved in meaningful public engagement with schools, the District and school board.
- Increase students, parents and employees' awareness of their role as customers and ambassadors of Bloomington Public Schools.

Strategies

- Community forums and dialogue sessions
- School Board listening sessions
- Legislative forums
- Presentations/Special Event appearances
- Recognition programs
- Civic/service organization memberships and attendance
- Strategic partnerships
- Cable TV and cable-casting of School Board meetings
- Publications

Student/Staff Relations

Student/staff relations increases ownership in the district, builds trust, creates goodwill ambassadors, and fosters a positive environment for teaching and learning.

Objectives

- Expand distribution of information to students and employees.
- Expand opportunities for students and staff to have input in decisions that affect them.
- Recognition of students/employees internally and externally for their accomplishments.
- Assess employee morale and trust in the district.
- Increase employees' awareness of their role as ambassadors for the district.

Strategies

- Develop an internal eNewsletter for all employees to receive timely information
- Develop a management eNewsletter to better inform and educate leadership
- Staff/student forums and dialogue sessions with School Board and/or Superintendent
- Assist schools and departments with internal communications plans and actions
- Staff orientation and professional development
- Establish internal networks for communication
- Evaluate current employee recognition programs for effectiveness

Video Production and Cable Television

Video production and cable television provides Bloomington with the opportunity to reach out to school district stakeholders with positive programs in order to increase trust and awareness of the district and student achievement.

Objectives

- Expand communication to community residents who currently do not have children in the Bloomington Public Schools.
- Increase production of videos and/or cable television programming highlighting positive school district, students and staff achievements.

Strategies

- Produce public awareness videos and coordinate use for specific targets, including schools, media and Internet use.
- Explore use of cable television programming to "tell the Bloomington Public Schools' story."
- Create videos of Bloomington special events to promote internal communications.

Web Communications

Web communications provides the opportunity to reach a broad public with an immediate message that can be targeted directly to their interest. Two components link the district's Web communication from external audiences to internal publics:

District Web site: www.bloomingtonschools.info
School Web sites accessed through school and District site

Objectives

- Reach all audiences through the immediate connections offered by electronic communication.
- Broaden awareness of district information that will build community involvement, including access by non-English speaking families.
- Place growing emphasis on electronic, two-way communication through the expansion of sites.
- Apply consistent standards for District and school sites.
- Adhere to standards of quality for content, design and management.

Strategies

- Improve current District and School Web sites to better engage audiences.
- Develop employee intranet to improve internal communication.
- Investigate opportunities for expanding and/or improving electronic communication, such as blogs or other social media opportunities.

- Review processes for school Webmasters and principals to adhere to quality standards.

Community Relations and Communications Goals

2008-2011

Goal #1

Establish an effective community relations program to build collaborative relationships and strengthen support for and confidence in Bloomington Public Schools.

Strategy #1:

Create an external Key Communicators Network to engage public opinion leaders in understanding District's vision, communicating key messages, and providing feedback on critical issues impacting Bloomington Public Schools.

Strategy #2:

Determine public attitudes toward the district and increase awareness and support for Bloomington Public Schools, through the use of formal and informal research (e.g. surveys, focus groups, etc.)

Strategy #3

Develop opportunities for non-English speaking parents to get involved in the District.

Goal #2

Establish an effective employee communications program that improves knowledge about, and support for, Bloomington Public Schools.

Strategy #1:

Develop key communication tools for employees, including an internal eNewsletter for all employees and an online communication for the management/leadership team.

Strategy #2:

Identify employees who don't have access to online communication and implement a distribution program for those employees.

Strategy #3:

Initiate work with the Technology Department to begin development of an employee Web portal (intranet).

Goal #3

Improve the public's access to online district information and provide online tools that empower the public to interact with Bloomington Public Schools.

Strategy #1:

Improve District's Web site tailored to public stakeholders - parents, students, potential employees, businesses and the general public - that best facilitates the flow of information and provides an efficient and clear delivery of district services.

Strategy #2:

Create a Web governance structure and organizational policies that define responsibilities, relationships, and rules involved in managing the district's Web site.

Strategy #3:

Gather data and analyze the needs of our stakeholders/Web users in order to develop an appropriate Web structure and content. Consider an online survey from the district's existing home page to identify who are the district's Web users and for what information they are searching.

Strategy #4:

Determine an appropriate software platform or system for delivering Web content to users.

Goal #4

Establish a long-term, ongoing plan for community engagement for the Board of Education.

Strategy #1:

Research and develop a strategy for effective community engagement for the Board of Education in order to advance district initiatives.

Goal #5

Establish a strong, positive connection between individual schools and their communities.

Strategy #1:

Develop tools and resources to help principals become more effective in their roles as communicators for the District.

Strategy #2:

Develop targeted communications for prospective families and parents of Bloomington pre-school/early childhood families

Strategy #3:

Develop targeted communications for non-English speaking families and parents.