

# Communications and Community Relations Action Plan 2019-2023

## Strategic Use of Digital Platforms

### Stakeholder Feedback

Leverage digital feedback opportunities such as online surveys through Panorama Ed, website and social media analytics, or other communication channels to gain insight into and understanding of school relationships, climate, family engagement, barriers to engagement, communication and related issues. Share feedback results and district follow-up strategies with the public as appropriate.

### Website Redesign

Redesign district and school websites to improve messaging, accessibility of information, user friendliness, uniformity, aesthetic appeal, etc; ensure responsive design for mobile device compatibility. Make website a central hub for information and a public-facing statement of district identity.

### Website Construction & Management

Build out all interior pages, coordinate content development among the ten schools, devise system for regular review and updating. Provide ongoing training and support to building staff & webmasters.

### Coherency of Platforms

Create overarching system to direct and differentiate the dissemination of information based on content and target audience via website, mass notification system, social media, electronic newsletters, and/or other communication platforms.

### Integration of Mass Notification System (SwiftK12)

Create district guidelines and best practices for notifications via email, text, and phone. Differentiate notification categories based on critical importance and subject matter to facilitate accuracy and understanding by recipients. Align notification information with other digital platforms.

### Social Media

Increase family engagement and excitement through greater district visibility on FB and/or other social media platforms. Align messaging with district website and general MSD narrative. Explore adding new district Instagram page and leverage the concept of telling stories through images. Direct traffic back to district/school web pages as part of communications loop.

### Video

Increase use of video, especially short snapshots (eg "FMS in a Minute"). Create and promote "introduction to the district" video and other videos consistent with MSD narrative. Amplify and promote district YouTube channel (MSDK12 ONAIR), including accessible archived videos. Look for opportunities to extend MHS Broadcasting Club experiences beyond the classroom and celebrate the students' accomplishments. Enhance use of NFHS Network and other video platforms to increase access to important events and presentations.

### Communicate Communications

Create district communications webpages as part of district website to foster shared understanding of best practices for two-way communication. May include guidelines for email response protocols, principles of productive dialogue, norms of communication, proper channels of communication, etc.

### Systematize Methods and Guidelines

Develop consistent and uniform practices for digital communications across the range of platforms (eg student photo release permission, submission of news content, submission of calendar content). Create regular schedule of district/school news output (eg newsletters, updates, social media posts, etc.).

## Strategic Use of Partnerships and Networks

### Focus Groups and Feedback Forums

Regularly engage stakeholders in face-to-face dialogue with respect to district/school communication, information, strengths, parent concerns and questions, among other relevant and timely topics.

### Home School Associations

Partner with and assist HSAs in channeling district communications to parent community. Delineate HSA communications from school communications.

### Community Partnerships

Sustain and enhance community partnerships with external stakeholder groups such as Equity and Inclusion Community Alliance, Interfaith Clergy Council, town councils, Morris County Human Relations Committee, realtors, and others. Explore additional opportunities for community partnerships within the wider Morristown area.

### Morris Educational Foundation

Continue to partner with Morris Educational Foundation to promote all manner of MSD accomplishments and programs/offering. Share language and ideas to align messaging. Envision future opportunities for supporting district initiatives and capital improvements.

### MSD Ambassadors

Conceptualize "Key Communicators" Group to establish wide network of advocates for the district and conduits of accurate and timely information.

### "Know Your Board"

Elevate public and stakeholder understanding of the role and responsibilities of the board, membership composition, BOE agenda highlights, new and revised policies, and other aspects of board governance. Place special attention on celebrating student and faculty achievements at BOE meetings.

### State of the District Events

Conceptualize possible presentations and events to forge connections between the district and external stakeholders from a range of constituent groups and keep the public informed of the "latest and greatest" district programs, data, and happenings.

### Community Events

Create a greater Morris School District presence at a variety of community events to reach citizens beyond parents and immediate Morristown residents and community.

### Open Houses

Create common process for establishment and execution of school open houses, especially a more substantive introduction to MSD for potential kindergarten students. Arrange for presentations at area preschools. Explore inviting private school students and parents to attend information sessions such as Discover MHS Night.

## MSD Narrative: Our Identity and Key Messages

### The MSD Advantage

Articulate and promote the advantages of attending the Morris School District.



### Multidimensional Narrative: Past, Present, and Future

Promote and celebrate MSD's unique history and legacy, cutting-edge programs, graduate and alumni successes, MSD vision, priorities, and commitments. Showcase student success stories through a variety of mediums to highlight the various opportunities available for each student.

### Learning Organization

Communicate to the public the range of activities the district and buildings are engaging in toward continuous improvement, such as articulation of building goals, annual focus strategies, and progress/results.

### Standard Branding

Explore standardizing certain images/logos/phrases on all communications such as letterhead, emails, presentations, websites, print materials, etc.

### Signage

Align signage in schools with district priorities, achievements, and celebrations.

### Promotional Materials

Design Morris School District promotional materials for events such as Back to School Night, Convocation, HR recruitment, or other contexts.

### Faculty Professional Development

Communicate district professional training of faculty to enhance public knowledge of and confidence in Morris School District vision and goals.

### Professional Leadership

Publicly communicate administrator and faculty participation in professional practices such as editorials, webinars, journals, research, conferences, professional organizations, etc.

### Student Achievement Data

Continue to provide accessible and transparent longitudinal and comparative data regarding student achievement and progress toward the ends of continuous improvement and refinement of programs/curriculum. Make Student Success Dashboard available to parents in order to provide comprehensive view of individual student progress and strengthen the home-school connection.

### Key Programs

Increase visibility and promotion of key programs such as Music, Theater, Sports, STEM and Humanities Academies, Clubs, etc.

## District-Level and Building-Level Focus

### District-Level Focus

#### Faculty and Staff

Celebrate faculty and staff accomplishments with greater frequency and consistency (eg. BOE recognition of retirees, teacher milestones, news articles, social media posts, etc.)

#### Framing School Comparisons

Provide context and framing of school comparison data to more accurately detail the successes of our diverse schools and students, in relation to county, state, and national benchmarks. Create clear, digestible, and easily understandable information available on the district website.

#### Crisis Communication

Continue to refine our internal protocols, alert communication systems, and other channels of information delivery.

#### Superintendent Outreach

Explore creating Superintendent Blog and/or Podcasts to complement BOE and community presentations and increase personalization of dialogue.

#### Equity

Continue to look at communications strategies and practices with an equity/inclusion lens to ensure full participation of our community in district dialogue.

#### Communications PD & Resources

Participate in NSPRA, NJSPRA conferences and workshops to promote continuous improvement and reflection in our practices.

### Building-Level Focus

#### Student Opportunities

Explore opportunities for high school students to promote MHS and the district overall, such as social media ambassadors, internships for credit, highlight sports, theater, academic clubs/programs, etc. Leverage MHS Broadcasting Club as appropriate.

#### College Counseling

Make available video primers for key college admissions/counseling topics to assist parents and students in understanding and navigating the college admissions process.

#### Transitions

Provide comprehensive, accessible information to orient parents and students and help them feel comfortable and connected in a new environment. Improve transition programs, especially for FMS and MHS, regarding the range of opportunities and pathways available to each student.

#### Home/School Partnership

Continue to explore strategies and develop best practices that assist parents' understanding of what their children are learning and how they are progressing, help parents feel a part of the community, and foster trust in our schools and systems.

#### Parent-Teacher Conferences

Explore how to effectively meet the diverse needs of parents through refining parent-teacher conferences.