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 additional pages, content, and development among the ten schools, devise system for regular review and updating. Provide ongoing training and support to building staff and webmasters.

**Coherence Platforms**
Create overarching structure 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 communications through email, text, and phone. Differentiate notification categories based on critical importance and subject matter, 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 actions/products. 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 ‘introductory 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 programs throughout.

**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, protocols 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 dialogues and provide feedback/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. Delinicate 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's Morris County Relations Committee, realtors, and others. Explore additional opportunities for community partnerships within the wider Morris area.

**Morris Educational Foundation**
Continue to partner with Morris Educational Foundation to promote all manner of MSD accomplishments and programs/offers. 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 Morris town residents and interested 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/photographs on all communications to include as letterhead, emails, presentations, websites, print materials, etc.

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

**Promotional Materials**
Design MSD 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 accurate and transparent longitudinal and comparative data regarding student achievement and progress toward the ends of continuous improvement and refinement of programs/courses. 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

**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 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 and update 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 all district communications.

**Communications PD & Resources**
Participate in NSPRA, NJSPRA conferences and workshops to promote continuous improvement and reflection in our practices.

**Building-Level Focus**
Provide consistent feedback for high school students to promote MHS and the district overall, such as social media ambassadors, internships for credit, highlight sports, the MHS academic clubs/programs, etc. Leverage MHS Broadcasting Club as appropriate.

**College Counseling**
Make available video primers for key college admissions processes and general information for 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 processes, especially for FMS and MHS, traveling through the process of transitioning 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.