



Lodi Unified School District Strategic Communication and Marketing Plan

2021-2024

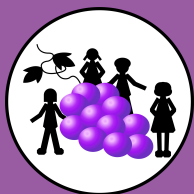


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District Mission, Vision, and Goals

Mission

Lodi Unified School District will provide the best education for all students to be successful in life.

Vision

Lodi Unified School District, in partnership with our community, provides a world class student-centered safe learning environment that cultivates character, fosters academic excellence, embraces diversity, and empowers all students to achieve their full potential.

Goals

- Prepare students with the integrity and skills required to adapt and succeed as responsible citizens in an ever-changing world.
- Be the employer of choice for highly qualified and creative people who reflect, value, and celebrate the rich diversity of the District.
- Provide curriculum and instruction that educates, challenges, and inspires all students.
- Create and support a school environment in which all students, staff, and parents feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Ensure all students read at grade level by the end of third grade and maintain strong literacy skills throughout their educational career.
- Support a broad course of study that offers students the opportunity to develop and enhance interests, talents, and skills in core academic, career preparation, and elective fields.



INTRODUCTION

The Lodi Unified School District (Lodi USD) is committed to providing accurate, timely, and relevant information to our staff, parents/guardians, students, and community. The District wants to ensure that all stakeholders are informed about the major announcements, initiatives, policy changes, student and staff achievements, and activities of Lodi USD.

The purpose of the Lodi USD strategic communication and marketing plan (communication plan) is to present a clear and concise framework for engaging and communicating with both external and internal audiences in our school communities.

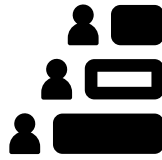
Lodi USD worked with stakeholders to develop a communication plan to determine the direction of the District's communication and marketing efforts over the next three years. The communication plan is aligned with the District's overarching mission, vision, and goals. The communication plan outlines the District's communication and marketing goals and actions to achieve those goals. The plan will be reviewed annually to determine if changes are necessary.

Communication Staff Members:

- Dr. Cathy Nichols-Washer, Superintendent
- Chelsea Vongehr, Public Information Officer/Grant Writer



Timeline



November - December 2019

A Communications ThoughtExchange was conducted among external and internal stakeholders to identify major themes for the communication plan.



January 2020

A communication plan was drafted based on the major themes of the Communications ThoughtExchange.



February - April 2020

The communication plan was presented to administrators and the Superintendent's Cabinet for review and modification.



September 2020

The communication plan was presented to the Board of Education as a report item.



July 2021

The communication plan was presented to the Board of Education as an action item.



Communication Audit

Lodi USD conducted a communication audit via ThoughtExchange. ThoughtExchange uses a unique process for collecting input in a way that is convenient for stakeholders and then analyzes the data to determine common themes and priorities for those stakeholders.

ThoughtExchange has three simple steps:

- 1. SHARE:** Participants are invited to participate in the process. If they accept the invitation, they will be given background information and then asked to answer open-ended questions regarding the main topic. They may share as many thoughts as they would like in response to each question. Participants remain anonymous but thoughts will be shared publicly.
- 2. STAR:** Participants are invited to review their thoughts and those of others before being asked to "star" ideas that resonate with them the most.
- 3. DISCOVER:** The results of the "star" ranking process are analyzed to identify common themes and ideas. A report presents the thoughts and star rankings in an anonymous manner.

In November and December 2019, Lodi USD conducted a ThoughtExchange to get feedback from staff, parents/guardians, students, and the community regarding the District's communication. The following pages outline the results of the ThoughtExchange.



ThoughtExchange Results

Question: How do you feel about Lodi Unified School District's communication?



1,562

People Participated



922

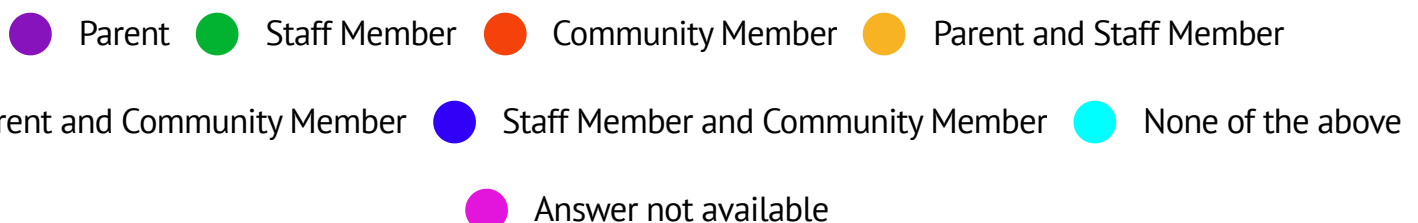
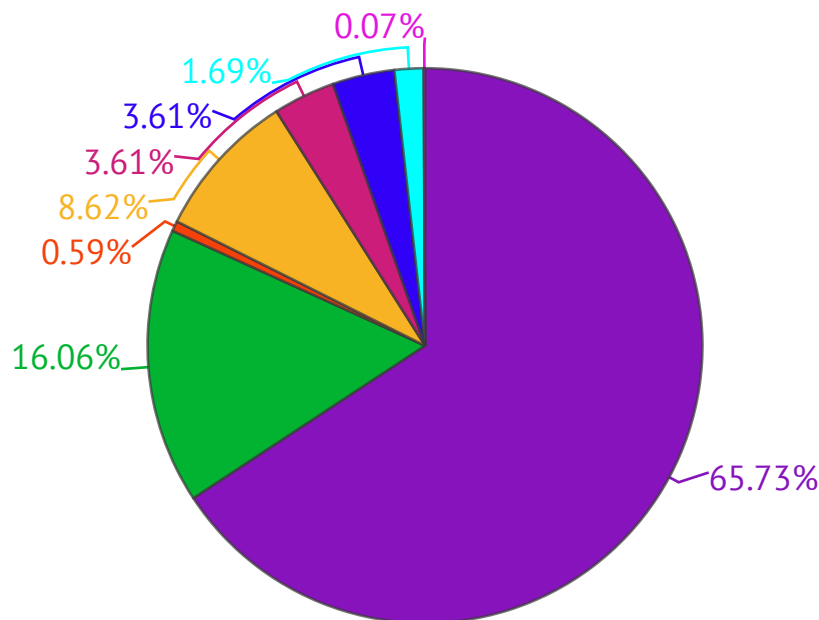
Thoughts Contributed



21,745

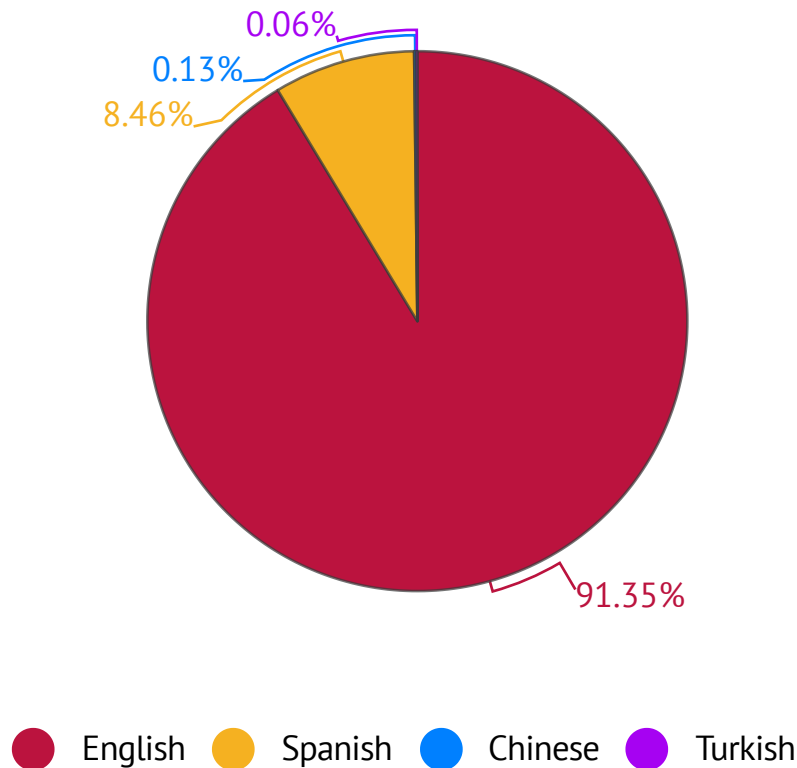
Ratings Assigned

Demographics: How are you affiliated with Lodi USD?

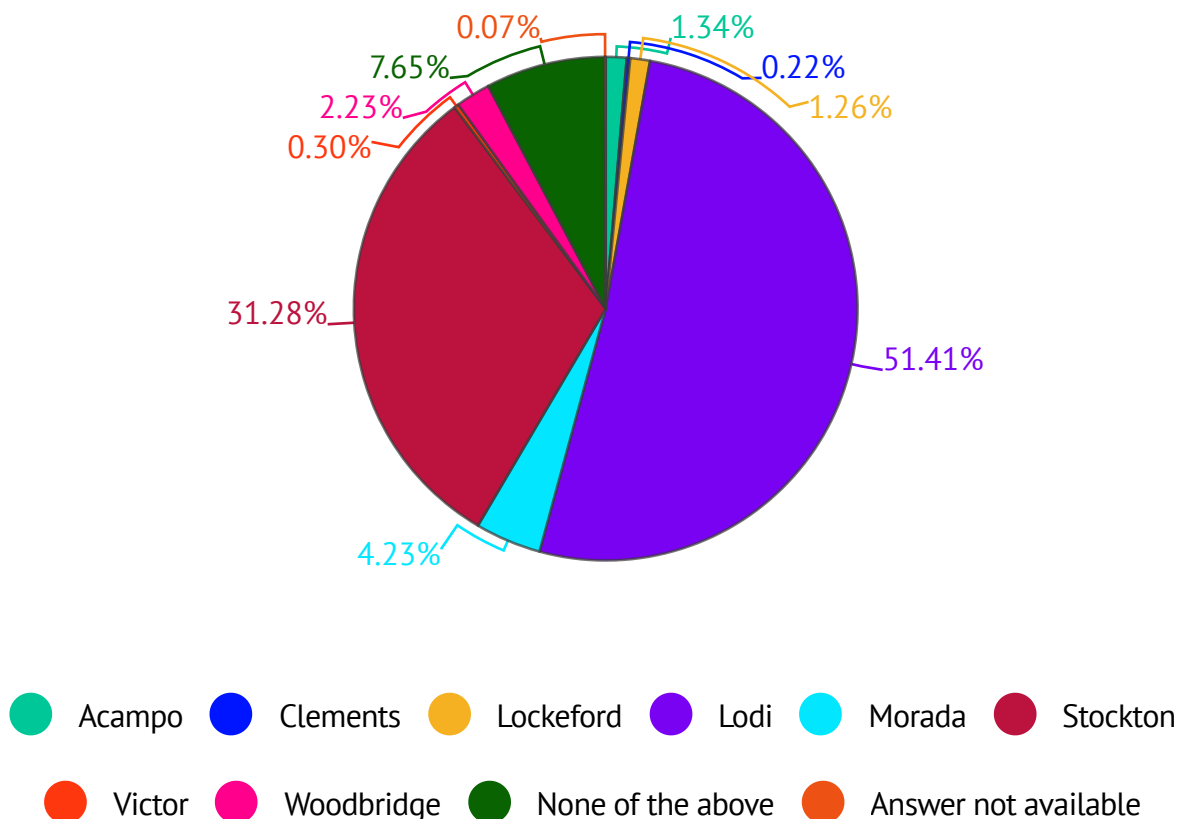


ThoughtExchange Results

Demographics: Participation languages



Demographics: Please select the community where you reside.



ThoughtExchange Results

Top Themes

- Safety
- Communication getting better
- Modes/frequency of communication
- Communication is good
- External communication
- District communication
- School site communication
- Internal communication
- Communication needs improvement
- Other

Top Thoughts in Themes

- **Safety**

"I want quick knowledge of danger."

- **Communication getting better**

"I'm happy, I'm happy because I'm going to be more informed about what's going on at school."

- **Modes/frequency of communication**

"I'm a very busy parent and checking my phone and emails is the best way to keep me updated on everything."

- **Communication is good**

"It's great. I believe it is imperative for all families to be informed of current events."



ThoughtExchange Results

Top Thoughts in Themes

- **External communication**

"Community input forums are poorly advertised + done in such a tone that says 'we are just checking a box + don't want your input.'"

- **District communication**

"School district communication is good."

- **School site communication**

"Improve [sic] communication between parents and teachers/counselors when children are struggling to complete school assignments and grades are poor."

- **Internal communication**

"It's wonderful to see the collaboration between staff members."

- **Communication needs improvement**

"Timely communication is important so parents can make decisions."

- **Other**

"I think it would be better if there was a class for parents to learn how to use Aeries [sic] program."



Strategic Goals



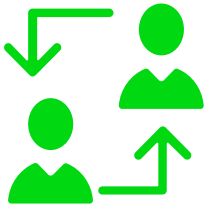
Goal 1

Develop a comprehensive crisis communication plan and supplemental safety communications.



Goal 2

Improve and strengthen external communication with students, families, and the community at-large.



Goal 3

Improve communication from the District to all staff.



Goal 4

Revise policies and procedures regarding public relations and media relations.



Estimated Additional Costs

Budget Item	Cost
Webmaster	\$90,000 (ongoing)
Rebranding	\$30,000 (for the next three years)
ESTIMATED TOTAL	\$120,000



Goal 1: Crisis Communication

Goal: Develop a comprehensive crisis communication plan and supplemental safety communications.

Implementation Strategies

- 1.1 Develop a crisis communication plan that aligns with the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) plan.
- 1.2 Develop, maintain, and strengthen relationships with local agencies and emergency response personnel.
- 1.3 Provide ongoing training for students and staff on the Sandy Hook Promise (SHP) Say Something Anonymous Reporting System (SS-ARS).
- 1.4 Develop public service announcements (PSAs) regarding various safety issues in consultation with local law enforcement.
- 1.5 Develop internal videos for students and staff on how to respond to different crisis scenarios.
- 1.6 Develop training and supplemental materials that explain lockdown procedures for substitute and new employees.
- 1.7 Inform and reinforce need for current contact information and how to update emergency notification settings.



1.1 Develop a crisis communication plan that aligns with the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) plan

The District maintains a REMS Plan that helps the District mitigate, prepare, respond, and recover from unforeseen school crises. The REMS Plan is a comprehensive safety management guide that the District uses in response to a number of potential safety issues. The REMS Plan is updated in consultation with safety and security experts, including local law enforcement agencies.

Communication is a critical component of any crisis scenario. A crisis communication plan provides the appropriate procedures for the coordination of internal and external communications in the event of an emergency or controversial issue that requires a public response.

The District will work with safety and security experts to develop a crisis communication plan that aligns with REMS and serves to facilitate the management of communications before, during, and after a crisis.

The crisis communication plan will: ensure that the District is prepared with communication strategies for various crisis scenarios; ensure that the District's procedures and resources are in place to provide timely, accurate, and clear internal and external messages; and prepare the District and school staff to effectively and quickly manage communication during a crisis.

The crisis communication plan will identify roles, responsibilities, methods of communication, and communication processes. The plan will also include draft key messages and talking points to be used in crisis situations.



1.2 Develop, maintain, and strengthen relationships with local agencies and emergency response personnel

Relationships are critical in a crisis situation. The District needs to be able to contact the appropriate agency in charge and coordinate with them on the dissemination of accurate and timely incident-related information.

The District will develop, maintain, and strengthen relationships with all agencies that may need to be contacted in the event of a crisis. This includes, but is not limited to:

- City and county governments
- Emergency medical services
- Fire departments
- Institutions of higher education
- Local hospital systems
- Local educational agencies
- Local law enforcement agencies
- Offices of emergency services
- Public health services
- Transportation agencies

In the event of an extended incident and/or a cross-jurisdictional incident, the District will participate and take part in all relevant Joint Information Center (JIC) planning with the aforementioned agencies.



1.3 Provide ongoing training for students and staff on the Sandy Hook Promise (SHP) Say Something Anonymous Reporting System (SS-ARS)

SS-ARS educates students in sixth grade and above, educators, and administrators on how to recognize the signs and signals of individuals who may be at-risk for hurting themselves or others. The system, sponsored by SHP, a national nonprofit focused on preventing violence before it happens, encourages individuals to report their concerns through an anonymous reporting system. The reporting system allows administrators and local law enforcement to create effective interventions and help prevent violence, suicide, bullying, self-harm, and other forms of harmful behavior.

During the 2019-20 school year, the District implemented SS-ARS. Students and school personnel were trained on how to recognize the warning signs of potential violence and how to submit tips anonymously via the SS-ARS website, hotline, and mobile app. School and District administrators and local law enforcement officials were trained on how to manage and act upon anonymous tips in coordination with SHP crisis counselors.

Each school year, the District will train students and staff on SS-ARS. It is the District's goal to build and maintain a culture of "see something, say something."



1.4 Develop public service announcements (PSAs) regarding various safety issues in consultation with local law enforcement

The District recognizes the need to provide students and their families with information about current and emerging safety issues. The District will work with local law enforcement and school administrators to determine the safety issues students are facing and develop PSAs to inform the community.

PSA themes could include, but would not be limited to:

- Cybersecurity issues, such as privacy, malware, and online predators
- Cyberbullying and bullying
- Social media threats
- School violence
- Sexting
- Drugs, alcohol, and vaping
- Driving safety tips



1.5 Develop internal videos for students and staff on how to respond to different crisis scenarios

The District trains students and staff each year on how to respond to emergency situations. Each training aligns with the District's REMS Plans and helps schools plan and prepare to mitigate various crisis scenarios.

The District will develop training videos regarding scenarios such as:

- Active threats
- Soft lockdown
- Hard lockdown
- Shelter in place
- Evacuation

The videos will be available to staff and students throughout the school year outside of the scheduled trainings.



1.6 Develop training and supplemental materials that explain lockdown procedures for substitute and new employees

The District will develop training materials for substitute and new employees.



1.7 Inform and reinforce need for current contact information and how to update emergency notification settings

The District uses various communication tools to reach employees and parents/guardians, including but not limited to:

- Phone call
- Text message
- Mobile app push notification
- Email
- Peachjar
- Social media pages

It is vital that the District has current contact information in order to reach employees and parents/guardians during a crisis situation. The District will continue to explore new ways to reach employees and parents/guardians and encourage them to update their contact information in the Employee Self Serve and the Aeries Parent Portal.



Goal 2:

External Communication

Goal: Improve and strengthen external communication with students, families, and the community at-large.

Implementation Strategies

- 2.1 Redesign website to be more user friendly and easier to navigate for all stakeholders.
- 2.2 Hire webmaster to maintain and support maintenance of the District's and school sites' websites.
- 2.3 Establish a clear brand identity for the District to build its image.
- 2.4 Refresh brand identities of school sites to build their images.
- 2.5 Create key messages and talking points about the District to establish consistency throughout all communication channels.
- 2.6 Supply District administrators and staff with fact sheets and other easy-to-use communication tools when issues arise.
- 2.7 Produce digital and video media to increase awareness and support of District initiatives and programs, to highlight staff and student achievements, and to inform the public regarding important changes.
- 2.8 Grow and expand reach of social media channels to inform the public with timely and relevant information about the District.
- 2.9 Organize community engagement opportunities to inform the public about District initiatives and programs.
- 2.10 Build and maintain positive media relations.
- 2.11 Build and maintain partnerships with business and community leaders.



2.1 Redesign website to be more user friendly and easier to navigate for all stakeholders

The District's website serves as a primary communication tool for staff, parents/guardians, students, and the community at-large. Visitors need a positive user experience and the ability to quickly locate information that is important to them. The District will redesign the website to:

- Improve functionality and usability across all platforms (browser and mobile devices)
- Increase search engine optimization (SEO) and site performance
- Ensure accessibility
- Establish guidelines on content maintenance

The redesign of the District's website will be implemented across all school websites.



2.2 Hire webmaster to maintain and support maintenance of the District's and school sites' websites

Our website is a central communication tool. Our website is often the first place our community checks for important information. It is essential that our website is kept up-to-date and regularly checked for safety updates and patches.

The District will hire a webmaster, as funds allow, to manage the design of the website. The webmaster will handle the overall programming, testing, implementation, and maintenance of all webpages in the District. The webmaster, in coordination with the Technology Department, will be responsible for the planning, maintenance, and accessibility of all websites in a way that ensures consistency across the District.



2.3 Establish a clear brand identity for the District to build its image

A distinguishable brand identity thoughtfully tells our story and is identifiable by our community.

The District will work with stakeholders to rebrand the District so that it represents our values, our diverse community, our mission, and our vision. A clear identity will build organizational pride and a unified culture around the brand.

The District's re-brand will include, but not be limited to:

- Logo and logo variations
- Key brand colors and color palette
- Typeface
- Consistent style for images and content
- Style guide



2.4 Refresh brand identities of school sites to build their images

The District will work with the school sites and their communities to refresh their brand identities.

The refresh for each school will include, but not be limited to:

- Refreshed logo and logo variations
- Key brand colors and color palette



2.5 Create key messages and talking points about the District to establish consistency throughout all communication channels

It is important that the District is visible and accurate information is available to our community. The District will develop clear key messages and talking points to be used in written documents, social media channels, and the website.

This will provide consistent and accurate information regarding the District's demographics, mission, vision, leadership composition, goals, program offerings, and other areas, as needed.



2.6 Supply District administrators and staff with fact sheets and other easy-to-use communication tools when issues arise

When issues arise, the District will develop statements, talking points, infographics, and other tools to be used to communicate with staff, students, and parents/guardians.



2.7 Produce digital and video media to increase awareness and support of District initiatives and programs, to highlight staff and student achievements, and to inform the public regarding important changes

It is key that our community is informed about District initiatives, programs, and policy changes. It is important to maintain an open dialogue and communicate frequently with the public about issues that may impact them. It is also important to highlight achievements and positive news so that our community can celebrate the efforts of staff and students.

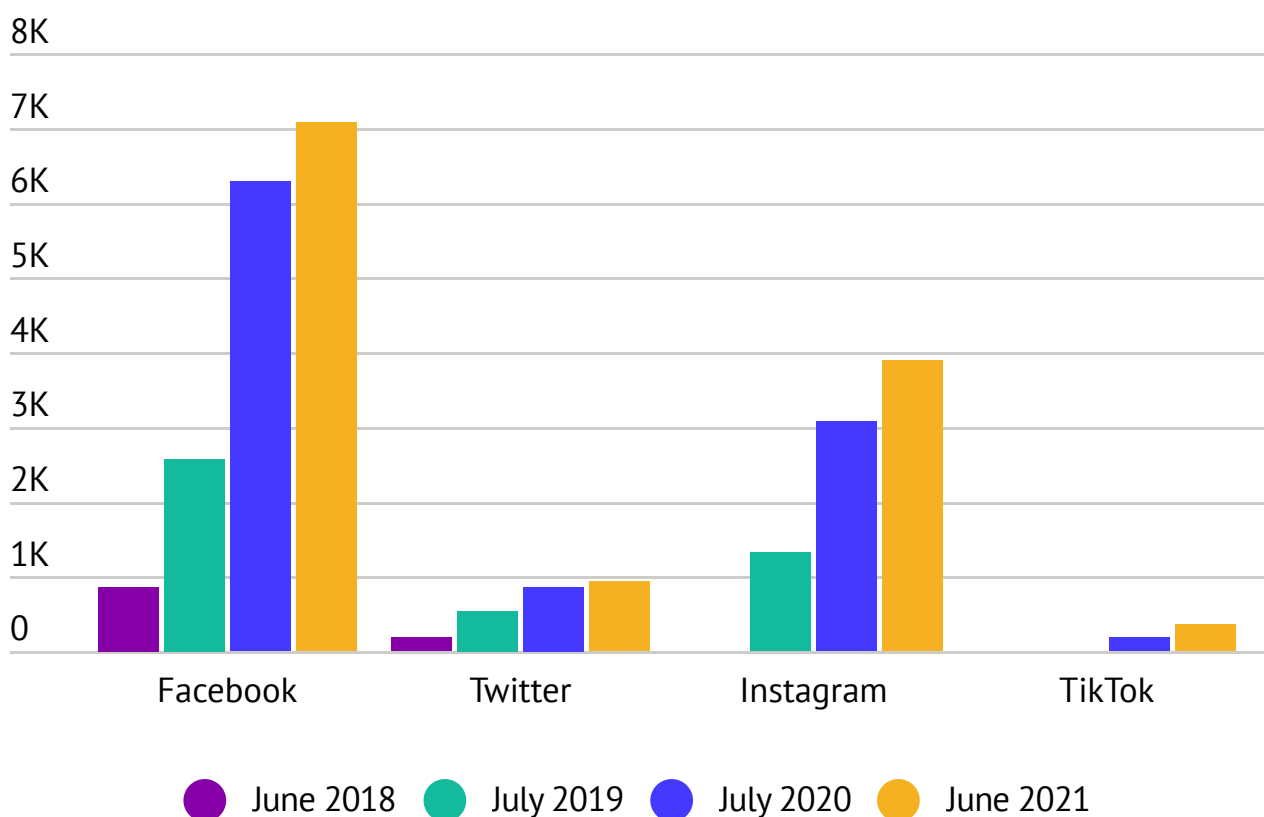
The District will develop digital and video media that inform the public about important changes, events, and accomplishments.



2.8 Grow and expand reach of social media channels to inform the public with timely and relevant information about the District

The District is committed to delivering succinct and timely messages to our audiences through appropriate communication channels. The District currently uses Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to disseminate important information and positive stories to the public. These channels serve as a secondary source for information following mass notifications to our staff and families and updates on our website.

The District will continue to build on ways to reach the community and encourage participation through current social media channels. The District will incorporate new social media channels to reach the public, as needed. For example, the District created a TikTok in January 2020, to reach a broader audience of students and youth in the community.



2.9 Organize community engagement opportunities to inform the public about District initiatives and programs

The District understands the importance of engaging with the public and providing opportunities for face-to-face interaction. The District will organize community forums and other engagement opportunities for the public to interface with District leadership and learn about current projects, programs, and initiatives taking place in the community.

Community engagement opportunities could include, but would not be limited to:

- Ribbon cutting events
- Get to know your Superintendent and/or Board of Education
- Informal community forums
- State of the District

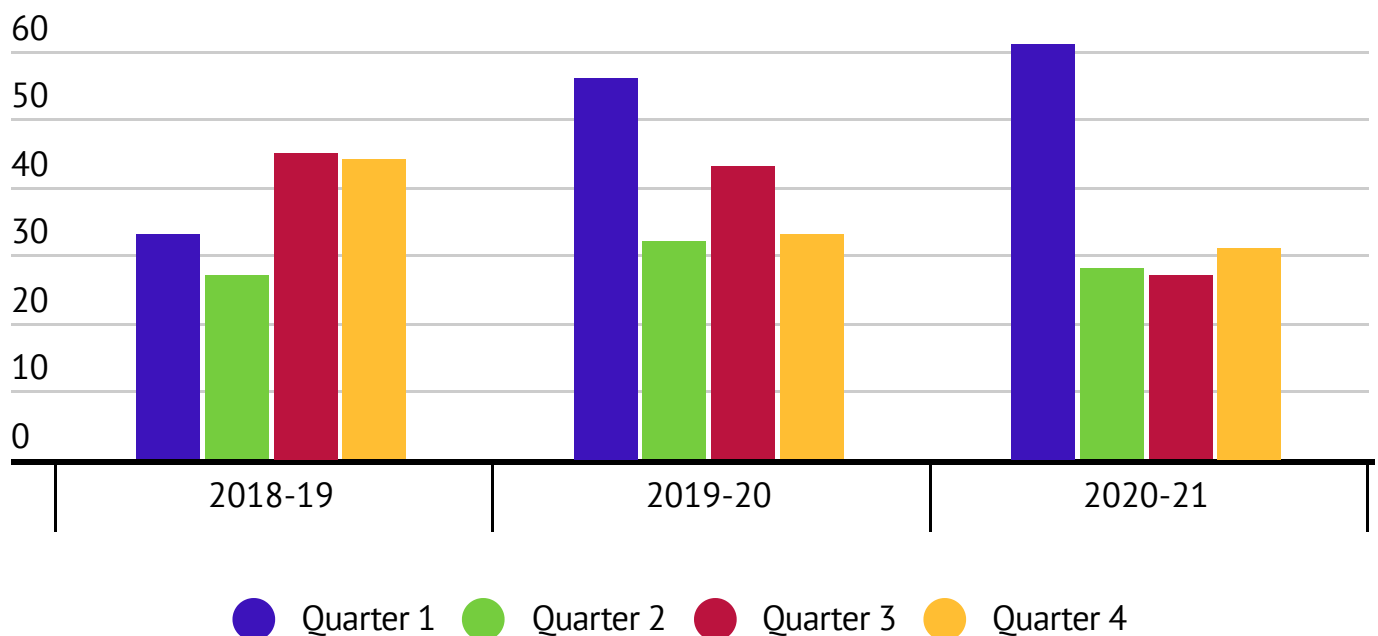


2.10 Build and maintain positive media relations

The District recognizes the important role the media plays in reporting news and relaying information about our educational programs, services, students, and employees.

The District will continue to build and maintain relationships with the media, including pitching positive news stories, being accessible to the media, meeting with reporters and editors, and providing timely information in response to story deadlines.

The chart below illustrates the number of stories the District was featured in by quarter in the 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 school years. The chart excludes stories that were generated outside of the Superintendent's Office.



2.11 Build and maintain partnerships with business and community leaders

Local businesses are the future employers of our graduates. We understand that our local businesses and organizations rely on a strong public education system to prepare a viable workforce pipeline and recruit highly qualified employees.

The District will continue to build and maintain partnerships with organizations and community leaders via the local chambers of commerce, service clubs, nonprofit organizations, and other business groups.



Goal 3:

Internal Communication

Goal: Improve communication from the District to all staff.

Implementation Strategies

3.1 Conduct internal survey/questionnaire/ThoughtExchange to more closely identify major themes and areas of improvement regarding internal communications.

3.2 Review, modify, and strengthen internal communication tools.

3.3 Provide consistent and timely internal communications regarding initiatives and policy changes in the District.

3.4 Produce digital and video media to share good news, recognize employees, and provide important District updates.

3.5 Provide additional opportunities for the Board of Education and Superintendent to communicate with staff.



3.1 Conduct internal survey/questionnaire/ThoughtExchange to more closely identify major themes and areas of improvement regarding internal communications

One of the major themes of the 2019-20 Communications ThoughtExchange was internal communication. Staff shared thoughts regarding internal communication and in their estimation, what is and is not working.

The District will conduct a ThoughtExchange specifically related to internal communication to identify how to strengthen and improve communication.



3.2 Review, modify, and strengthen internal communication tools

The District will evaluate current communication channels for effectiveness and usage. The District will review alternative communication methods and tools that can reach more employees and may be easier to use.



3.3 Provide consistent and timely internal communications regarding initiatives and policy changes in the District

The District is committed to keeping staff apprised of important changes. The District will provide real-time updates to staff regarding initiatives and policy changes.



3.4 Produce digital and video media to share good news, recognize employees, and provide important District updates

The District will facilitate communication to staff via digital and video media. Previously, the District sent quarterly and then monthly staff newsletters. The open rate remained at 34 percent.

The District will develop short, succinct digital pieces to send to staff that communicate good news, important updates, and highlights staff for their hard work and efforts. The District will solicit information from staff to develop these pieces.



3.5 Provide additional opportunities for the Board of Education and Superintendent to communicate with staff

It is important that staff are able to interact with District leadership. The District will organize additional opportunities for staff to communicate with the Board and Superintendent.



Goal 4:

Policies and Procedures

Goal: Revise policies and procedures regarding public relations and media relations.

Implementation Strategies

4.1 Revise Board Policy 1100 Community Relations - Communication with the Public.

4.2 Revise Board Policy 1112 Community Relations - Media Relations.

4.3 Draft and Present Board Policy 1113 Community Relations - District and School Websites.

4.4 Draft and Present Board Policy 1114 Community Relations - District-Sponsored Social Media.

4.5 Update social networking guidelines for students.

4.6 Update District social media guidelines for staff.

4.7 Provide training and technical assistance to staff members in public relations, media/news, and social media.



4.1 Revise Board Policy 1100 Community Relations - Communication with the Public

The District will update sections of Board Policy 1100 Community Relations - Communication with the Public, to include but not be limited to:

- Updating current modes of communication, with the acknowledgment that communication channels may continue to be updated with time
- Adding a section related to the District's comprehensive communication plan, which has established priorities for proactive community outreach to build support for District initiatives and programs
- Adding a section related to target audiences for communication



4.2 Revise Board Policy 1112 Community Relations - Media Relations

The District will update sections of Board Policy 1111 Community Relations - Media Relations, to include but not be limited to:

- Adding a section related to interviewing and photographing students
- Updating media contacts/spokespersons and training on effective media relations for designated spokespersons
- Adding a section related to the District's crisis communications plan



4.3 Draft and Present Board Policy 1113 Community Relations - District and School Websites

The District will develop and present a Board Policy to the Board of Education regarding District and school websites. The policy would include, but not be limited to:

- Design standards for the websites that align with the website redesign
- Guidelines for content
- Guidelines for use
- Privacy rights of students, parents/guardians, and staff



4.4 Draft and Present Board Policy 1114 Community Relations - District-Sponsored Social Media

The District will develop and present a Board Policy to the Board of Education regarding District-sponsored social media. The policy would include, but not be limited to:

- Purpose of District-sponsored social media accounts
- Guidelines for content
- Guidelines for use
- Privacy rights of students, parents/guardians, and staff



4.5 Update social networking guidelines for students

The District will update the social networking guidelines for students to include, but not be limited to:

- Current modes of communication
- Best practices for social media use



4.6 Update District social media guidelines for staff

The District will update current social media guidelines for staff to include, but not be limited to:

- Official District social media presence
- Requisite authorization to create official school social media pages
- Standards for official school social media pages
- Maintenance and monitoring responsibilities for official school social media pages
- Guidelines for responsible use of social media



4.7 Provide training and technical assistance to staff members in public relations, media/news, and social media

The District will provide training to new administrators and District officials in public relations, media/news, and social media, including but not limited to:

- Media relations
- Crisis management
- Social media management

