OFFICE OF
COMMUNICATION SERVICES
OPERATING PROCEDURES

CREATED & EFFECTIVE AUGUST 2021

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Communications Services Department is the hub of all internal and external communications in Carrollton-Farmers Branch Schools. The Communications Services Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were created to assist staff in effectively promoting and publicizing district achievements, activities and events.

II. WHAT WE DO

The mission of Communications Services is to build strong and credible communication links with employees, students, families and the community.

Communications Services contributes to increased student achievement through managing a wide range of communication strategies to effectively promote parental and community engagement within Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD. The office is responsible for ensuring that our brand is an accurate reflection of the district's vision statement:

Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD will be an exceptional learning community where all graduates impact and excel in a complex, interconnected, and ever-changing world.

The department is responsible for internal and external communication, partnership program, district information, media relations, resource development, special events, district website, video services, mobile app, digital media volunteers and education foundation liaison.

Communications Services manages:
- Crisis Communication
- Digital Communication
- Internal Communication
- Marketing & Special Events
- News & Information
- Media Relations
- Partnerships & Volunteers

III. MEDIA RELATIONS

Policy & Procedures

Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD supports the rights of citizens to have access to information that affects school programs and services for students. The District strives to maintain a positive relationship with all news media outlets and other communications representatives. Our goal is to ensure the dissemination of

timely, accurate and newsworthy information to the community through the news media. All district staff and administrators shall endeavor to create a positive, courteous relationship with members of the news media and maintain open communications on matters of a routine nature while also keeping the welfare of students as the guiding principle in all contacts with the news media.

Communications Services coordinates news coverage of the school district and is responsible for overseeing official communications between the school system and news media. All news conferences and public events of a districtwide nature, in which news coverage is requested, must be coordinated by or through Communications Services.

Media Access to District Schools & Facilities
CFBISD welcomes members of the media into our schools and strives to provide the most accurate and timely information available. Communications Services should be the first point of contact for all media inquiries for our district. News media must have prior consent from the Communications Services Department before coming onto a campus or district facility.

Interviewing & Photographing Students
CFBISD operates in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This law allows students and parents to opt out of the release of certain information about students, including photographs. Each school is responsible for maintaining a database to determine who cannot be photographed and interviewed according to FERPA guidelines via the District's Opt Out form. Parent permission must be confirmed prior to taking photos, video and quotes from CFBISD students.

Press Releases, Media Alerts & News Conferences
Communications Services is responsible for coordinating all news coverage of the school district. The department oversees official communications between the school system and news media by initiating story ideas, including press releases and media advisories, as well as facilitating requests for news coverage from media representatives and district personnel. Additionally, the department also provides assistance to school administrators regarding effective relations with the news media. The Superintendent (or a designee) and the Chief of Communications are the primary spokespersons for the district regarding all matters of districtwide interest. All news conferences and public events of a districtwide nature in which news coverage is requested must be coordinated by or through the Chief of Communications. District personnel should submit story ideas via e-mail to parnelld@cfbisd.edu or through the Request for Publicity form located on the district website at cfbisd.edu.

IV.   SOCIAL MEDIA

District Protocol

For the purpose of these guidelines, "social media" refers to any Internet-based software or service that allows users to interact with others via the posting of messages, files or other content. Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The following guidelines have been established to provide campus principals and department heads direction on the appropriate use of Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram for campuses and departments.

Professional Use of Social Media

When using social media as a part of your official duties as a CFBISD employee, the guidelines below should be followed:

- All campus/department Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts will be created by Communications Services to ensure that all page settings comply with district standards and that required information is posted.
- The campus principal/department head will be the administrator of their campus/department accounts as well as members of the Communications Services Department. Facebook school accounts (business profile accounts) will be linked to the principal or department head's personal Facebook account. Twitter and Instagram accounts will be created with the principal or department head's <u>work email address</u> as the username and a designated password shared with the Director of Communications. **This password cannot be changed without notifying the Director of Communications.**
- The principal/department head's secretary must be an additional administrator on all campus/department social media accounts.
- Campus principals can designate assistant principals/librarians/teachers to help manage the campus page. Email the Director of Communications to add administrators to a Facebook page. Twitter and Instagram logins may be shared by administrators and designees.
- The campus principal/department head (or designee) is ultimately responsible for posting and monitoring all content on the campus/department social media accounts. Communications Services will periodically monitor pages but will only post to them when necessary.
- The campus social media pages/feeds must be identified in the page description area as an organization within CFBISD.
- All district style guidelines for names, colors and logo usage must be followed.
- CFBISD staff members will use social media as an informational tool to keep parents, students and the community informed of activities and accolades.
- CFBISD staff members will engage parents and students (when

appropriate) on approved social media accounts only related to educational topics.

- Employees will respond in a timely manner to appropriate comments or questions. As needed, staff may contact the Director of Communications for assistance and help with responses.
- CFBISD staff members will be consistent in posting information to approved social media accounts including being timely, accurate, and using proper spelling and grammar.
- Suitable topics for posting include, but are not limited to, athletic events, school events, news about what is happening in schools such as awards won and learning achieved, school-related photographs, child nutrition menus, and school delays/closures.
- All social media posts are public and should not include personal or sensitive information.
- CFBISD staff members must follow all laws, rules, regulations and policies related to protecting student information. All posting of student photos must comply with FERPA, IDEA, HIPAA and student privacy laws. This includes any posts depicting personally identifiable student information, including but not limited to student photographs, names, information, schoolwork, etc. If a parent has restricted access to their student's Directory Information, no such information may be posted to social media. This information can be found in TEAMS.
- All postings must comply with copyright, trademark and fair use laws. Do not copy photos/images/graphics from Google photos. Google photos are not protected by copyright.
- See the district's Social Media and Electronic Media Guidelines for more information and guidelines.

Required Facebook Page Settings
- Campus Facebook page profile pictures should be the campus logo.
- Campus Facebook page header picture should be a photo of the campus, a candid photo showing campus culture, or the mission statement.

Facebook About Section
- Category: Education
- Name: Campus Full Name (_____ Elementary School, Middle School, High School)
- Subcategories: (Elementary, Middle, or High) School, Public School
- Username: www.facebook.com/ _____ (campus page name)
- Address: Campus address including city, state, zip code
- State Date: Select "Opened" and include the year campus opened
- Hours: Include regular school hours for campus
- Short Description: MUST STATE THE FOLLOWING: This is the official Facebook page for _____ School, located in the Carrollton-Farmers Branch

Independent School District in north Texas.
- Long Description: Include the following information for the campus:
  - School colors
  - School mascot
  - Grades served
  - Twitter page link
- Phone: Include campus phone number.
- Website: Include campus website.

Facebook Page Settings
- Visitor Posts: Disable posts by other people on the page.
- Messages: People cannot contact my page privately.
- Tagging Ability: Only people who help manage my page can tag photos posted on it.
- Other Tagging this Page: People and other pages can tag my page.

Required Twitter Page Settings
- Campus Twitter pages must be named with the campus name or abbreviation.
- Characters are limited on Twitter; however, the following information must be included on the campus profile page:
  - This is the official Twitter page of _____ School and is maintained by school officials | 972-___-____.
  - Include campus location (city and state).
  - A link to the campus website should also be included.

Required Instagram Page Settings
- Campus Instagram pages must be named with the campus name or abbreviation.
- The following information must be included on the campus profile page in the bio:
  - Official Instagram page of _____ School and is maintained by school officials | 817-___-____.
  - Include campus location (city and state).
  - A link to the campus website should also be included.

Required YouTube Page Settings
- Campus YouTube pages must be named with the campus name or abbreviation.
- The following information must be included on the campus YouTube page in the About section:
  - Official YouTube page of _____ School and is maintained by school officials | 817-___-____.
  - Include campus location (city and state).

> o   A link to the campus website should also be included.

Creating Teacher and Student Organization Social Media Accounts
- Teachers and/or organization sponsors will need to contact the campus principal for permission to setup a social media page. Once permission has been granted, it is suggested that someone from campus administration also serve as a page administrator. The page should follow the district's required page settings.
- All student organization pages need to be maintained by a district employee and must follow the district's social media guidelines and required settings.
- The Communications Services Department will not set up the teacher and organization pages. The Communications Services Department will not actively monitor the pages unless an issue arises.
- During a crisis/emergency situation, teachers and organizations should not post anything to their professional or personal page without prior consent from the campus administrator or Communications Services Office, unless such post would be to protect student/staff safety and security.

Retaining Social Media Records
Posts and content cannot be deleted if there is a pending public information request, subpoena or litigation related to the post or content. Questions about records retention should be addressed to Dawn Parnell at parnelld@cfbisd.edu.

V.   DISTRICT COMMUNICATIONS

CFBISD authorizes its schools to distribute or display communications of school-related or outside organizations that promote youth programs, activities, opportunities or events that aim to improve the health, education or welfare of students. Promotional materials may take the form of notices, announcements, brochures and flyers. It is not the practice of Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD to advertise any for-profit business or activity to staff, students or families.

School-related organizations may include parent groups, booster clubs, school employee organizations and other organizations and clubs affiliated with the district and its schools.

Outside organizations are defined as any non-profit or tax-exempt organization other than school-related organizations.

Campus Flyers for School-Related Organizations and Events
Flyers promoting campus events, initiatives and activities may be posted and distributed digitally. CFB uses ParentSquare and Peachjar platforms to share information. Each campus should establish written criteria and processes to

confirm approval prior to digital distribution through ParentSquare. Flyers being sent to parents through Peachjar will go through the approval of Communications Services. Materials must meet the following requirements:

- Not for profit organizations;
- Support district goals and initiatives;
- Enhance educational outcomes for district students;
- Benefit CFBISD students, parents and/or staff;
- Encourage character building activities and/or interests.

Districtwide Flyer Requests for Districtwide Initiatives, Organizations and Events

Any CFBISD material for districtwide distribution digitally through ParentSquare or Peachjar, should first be approved by the Communications Services Department to ensure all materials are compliant with CFBISD policies. Requests should be sent via email to westbrookc@cfbisd.edu at least one week in advance of the event or initiative being advertised. Flyers submitted on short notice will delay approval and may not be posted. All requests should include the following:

- The campus names to receive the flyers;
- Date, time, location of event or initiative;
- Contact information of person making the request;
- Materials must meet the following requirements:
  - Not for profit organizations;
  - Support district goals and initiatives;
  - Enhance educational outcomes for district students;
  - Benefit CFBISD students, parents and/or staff;
  - Encourage character building activities and/or interests.

Flyers from Outside Organizations and Businesses

Distributing paper flyers from outside organizations at campuses is discouraged. Instead businesses and external organizations may use Peachjar to digitally distribute flyers to parents. Community organizations will upload their flyer and select the specific campus(es) for distribution through Peachjar. After CFBISD approval, the flyer will then email directly to parents at the selected campus(es) and post to the campus(es) website(s). Peachjar charges a fee for businesses and organizations utilizing this service.

Businesses and organizations offering a service/event that is free of charge may qualify for FREE distribution. If there is a cost associated with the enrichment opportunity, the organization will pay a fee. All digital flyers should go through the Peachjar process at https://www.cfbisd.edu/community/flyer-distributionpeachjar.

All non-school materials must display the following disclaimer: "This non-school activity/publication is not sponsored or endorsed by the Carrollton-Farmers

Branch Independent School District."

Questions about Peachjar can be directed to penap@cfbisd.edu.

School Communications
Letters to Parents
Whenever incidents occur in the school building that require parent communication (i.e. accreditation status, health concern or widespread illness, safety/security issue), the principal should contact their Chief of School Leadership to report the situation and receive guidance on drafting a letter.

The Communications Services department is available to assist in drafting parent communications whenever necessary. The principal and or Chief of School Leadership should contact the Communications Services Department to request assistance with the notification and begin the process. Once a draft message is drafted, it will be shared with the campus, department and or leadership to finalize and approve the final draft before sharing. This ensures that Communications Services is informed prior to any potential media calls.

Principals will work with their supervisor (as needed) to determine whether a letter is necessary for the entire school or solely the impacted students/classroom, or if a ParentSquare message is more suitable for the situation.

Automated Messaging through ParentSquare
The ParentSquare platform for districtwide use will be limited to Communications Services only and to the extent necessary to inform and engage stakeholders. Districtwide messages will be sent in a discretionary manner to avoid excessive use and promote a streamlined communication channel to all designated stakeholders.

A message about an emergency or sensitive event should be approved by the Chief of Communications or designee prior to release.

VI. Crisis Communications

During an emergency or critical incident, accurate and timely communications are essential. During an emergency, the Communications Services Department will prepare a message and send it to the Superintendent for approval.

Examples of emergencies that warrant messaging include, but are not limited to:

- A campus "lockdown" is initiated and released.*
- A campus "secure" is initiated and released.*
- An arrest is made at a campus.
- Major event involving Law Enforcement presence on/near a campus.
- An event that directly relates to a student, employee, or property where media coverage is anticipated or a Chief of Communications comment may be requested.
- Potential threat to a campus (such as terroristic threat) identified either in person, over the phone, internal monitoring systems, or over social media.
- Critical or severe medical injury.
- Emergency inclement weather such as a tornado, fire, etc.

  *Campus Principals will work with the Chief of School Leadership in partnership with the Communications Department as needed per each situation.

Messaging Protocols

The following internal notification procedures will be followed:

1. Chief of Communications or designee will write a message for the campus, department or district.
2. Communications will get clearance on the message with the Superintendent and or Associate Superintendent(s).
3. Communications will work directly with the campus leadership or department to determine who posts the message and on what platform.
4. If warranted, the Communications team will post on district social media and website.
5. Campus leadership will forward any separate messaging and or follow-up messages to the Communications department.

Communication Channels

The Communications team will evaluate the emergency or critical incident and determine the correct channel to use in disseminating information. If the crisis is school or student related, parents will receive emergency notification using ParentSquare. Additionally, Communications Services will monitor media and online coverage and respond with approved messages.

Once the message is posted on ParentSquare, the additional following communication channels may be used to share information and updates:

- District and or Campus website
- Social media
- News media outlets
- District Telephone

Phone Calls from Parents (or the public)

During a critical incident, parents and others from the community will call the school in an attempt to gather information about the incident. Every attempt will be made to be open and honest about the crisis without disclosing confidential information or giving out inaccurate information. Staff members should only provide information about a student to a person they can positively identify as a parent, guardian, or emergency contact for the child. Information may only be provided when it is known to be reliable. It is more appropriate to say, "I don't know" than to repeat something that may be incorrect.

Media Inquiries

The Chief of Communications is the point of contact for all media inquiries. The Superintendent and his designee(s), may respond to media requests for general information. Unless the media requests to speak to a specific Board member, members of the media seeking official comments from the Board will be directed to the President, or in his or her absence, the Vice-President. Calls or messages from the media seeking information will be returned promptly, preferably within one hour.

Social Media

CFBISD may use social media to supplement the dissemination of information during an emergency. Social media will be used after direct parent notification has been made.

How will CFBISD use Social Media for crisis communications?

- Provide notifications for school dismissals and closures
- Post status information during an emergency
- Receive status information during an emergency
- Disseminate safety information, news alerts, health alerts
- Communications during full-scale exercise
- Post reunification protocols

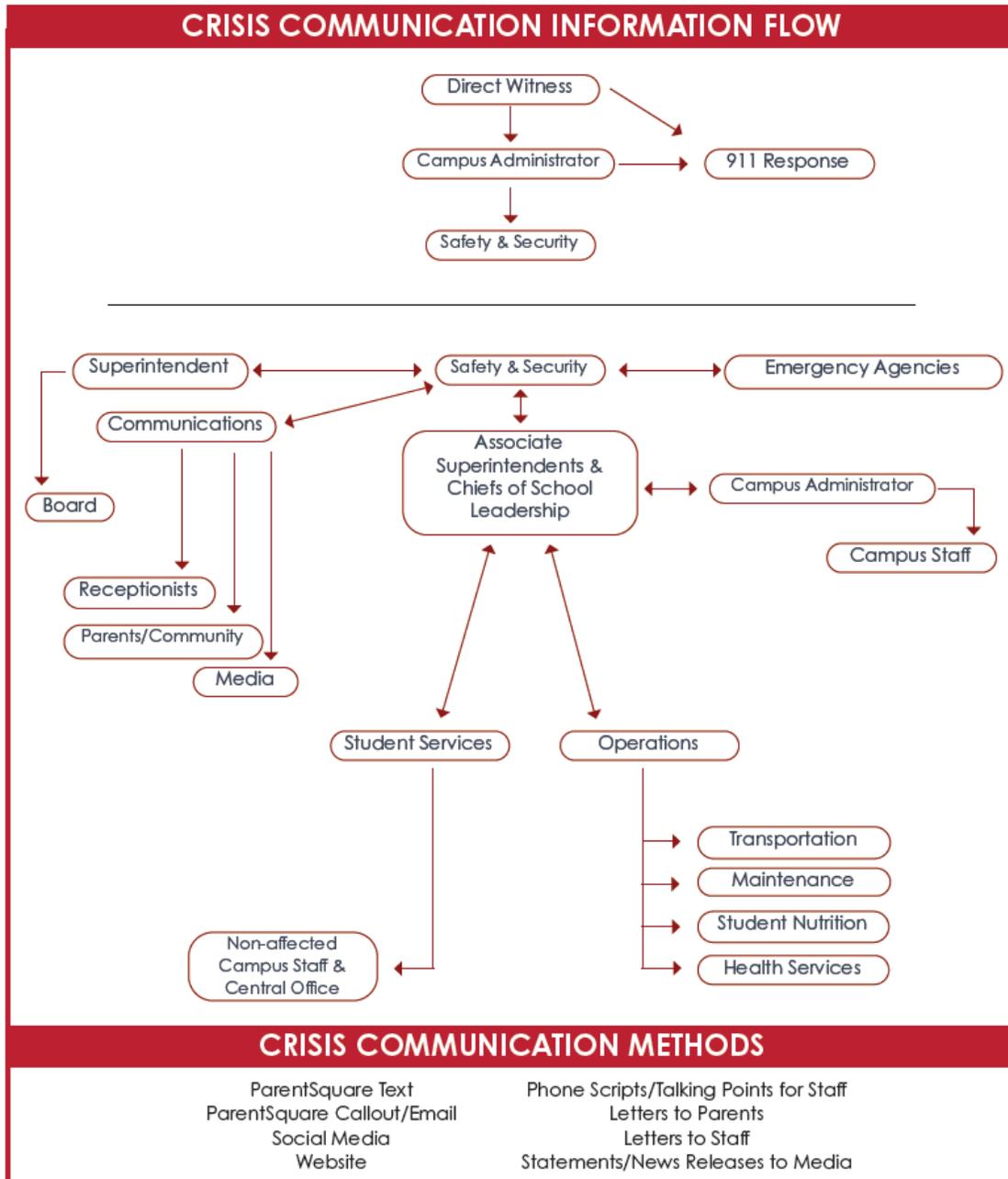When using social media during an emergency, the following protocols will be followed:

1. The Director of Communications or designee will use Facebook and Twitter for posting.

2. An appropriate hashtag will be used per the emergency. Example, #CFBISDsafe.

3. The Director of Communications or designee will work with the Security and Safety department to monitor social media channels, and parent/community listserv messages.

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PROCESS
(centralized, internal & external)

CRISIS COMMUNICATION INFORMATION FLOW

Direct Witness → 911 Response

Direct Witness → Campus Administrator → 911 Response

Campus Administrator → Safety & Security

Superintendent ↔ Safety & Security ↔ Emergency Agencies

Superintendent → Communications

Communications → Safety & Security

Superintendent → Board

Safety & Security ↔ Associate Superintendents & Chiefs of School Leadership ↔ Campus Administrator

Campus Administrator → Campus Staff

Communications → Receptionists

Communications → Parents/Community

Communications → Media

Associate Superintendents & Chiefs of School Leadership → Student Services

Associate Superintendents & Chiefs of School Leadership → Operations

Operations → Transportation

Operations → Maintenance

Operations → Student Nutrition

Operations → Health Services

Student Services → Non-affected Campus Staff & Central Office

CRISIS COMMUNICATION METHODS

ParentSquare Text	Phone Scripts/Talking Points for Staff
ParentSquare Callout/Email	Letters to Parents
Social Media	Letters to Staff
Website	Statements/News Releases to Media

VII. VOLUNTEER PROCEDURES

All volunteer activities take place on the school grounds during school hours under general supervision of school staff. Exceptions can include chaperoned field trips and away-from-school volunteer activities such as projects done at home, booster club activities and district-level activities.

Volunteer Training

Individuals must complete the Volunteer Training each school year. The Volunteer Training video and handbook are available online at www.cfbisd.edu/volunteer. State and local policy also requires individuals who serve as school volunteers to submit to a criminal history check each year, also located at www.cfbisd.edu/volunteer. By completing the volunteer application, individuals permit CFBISD to run this Criminal History Check. All information is confidential. CFBISD reserves the right to refuse volunteer placement to individuals with disqualifying criminal convictions.

Signing In and Out Procedures

All approved volunteers must follow standard school procedures of signing in and out each time they visit a school. Approved volunteers at elementary and middle school campuses must be signed in using the Raptor System in the front office. The Raptor System performs a scan of the volunteer's driver license against the national sex-offender database. This scan adds an additional level of security to the criminal background check performed once per year. Raptor also keeps track of volunteer hours and functions. Records are maintained for the security of our students as well as documentation of community involvement hours which may be used as data for grant proposals and so forth. All volunteers are required to check in at the front office upon arriving and before leaving a campus, as well as wear the Raptor identification badge (provided at check-in) in a visible location and at all times while on campus.

School Partner/Volunteer Coordinators

Each school has a designated partner/volunteer coordinator. In addition, there is a district level coordinator for the overall school volunteer program. If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact your campus partner/volunteer coordinator or Communications Services at 972-968-6187. All questions regarding background checks should be directed to CFBISD Security Department at 972-968-6422.

Reporting

Any volunteer who believes bullying or harassment has occurred should immediately report it to the school principal. Volunteers must also report suspected child abuse to the Texas Abuse Hotline at 1.800.252.5400.

VIII. VIDEO PRODUCTION AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Requests for Video Production and/or Photography - all requests should include the following:

- Requests in writing must be made a minimum of two weeks prior to the desired filming date(s) to the Director of Communications via email to westbrookc@cfbisd.edu.

- Detailed information should be included in the request:
  - Date and time of the event;
  - Approximate number of people that will be in attendance;
  - Location or venue of the event;
  - Size of the room, space or area;
  - Logistics of the venue (availability of screens, power outlets, in-house sound system, lighting, separate room or space for pictures and interviews, etc.).

- Materials to broadcast must also meet the following requirements:
  - Support district goals and initiatives;
  - Enhance educational outcomes for district students;
  - Benefit CFBISD students, parents and/or staff;
  - Encourage character building activities and/or interests.

- Programs, presentations and/or flyers included in the video must not be political in nature, proselytize, or advertise, sell or endorse a product.

- All requests to produce a video by CFBISD has to be approved prior to any production stages begin.

- Approval of services will be based upon resources and availability of personnel.

IX. INCLEMENT WEATHER

District Protocol & Guidelines

During inclement weather, the safety of our students and staff is our top priority. To that end, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD has adopted the following communication procedures for school delayed openings, closings and early releases when adverse weather conditions exist or are predicted.

The decision to close and/or delay the opening of schools is based on many factors and a collaborative discussion with our transportation and facility

services departments as well as our local public safety agencies and school districts.

If weather becomes inclement during the evening/night hours, the transportation department has staff members prepared to check the road conditions as early as 4:00 a.m. They check to see if conditions are safe for buses, giving consideration to rural roads, bridges, etc. The Director of Transportation will then be prepared to share this information with the Superintendent. The Superintendent makes the decision to announce either delayed opening or school closure by approximately 6:00 a.m.

The district uses the following methods of communication to relay urgent information to district families and the broader community:

- Parent Notification System: rapid phone call and text messaging system
- District Website
- District Social Media (Facebook and Twitter)
- Local Radio and TV Stations

The decision to close or delay the opening of school is carefully considered. The district recognizes that its students are better served--both academically and socially--by being in school.

Parents are urged to make arrangements in advance for the care of their children when schedule changes arise and unexpected closures occur. Children should know where to go or what to do if a parent will not be home or available to pick up their child.

X.   Graphic Design Protocols

To ensure brand consistency across the district and within schools, the Communications Services Department has created a District Style Guide and style guides for each campus. The style guides provide branding standards for logos, colors, fonts, the district formal name and acronym, email signatures, business cards, name badges, letterheads, and word usage.

District Style Guide
The information contained in the district style guide has been compiled as a resource for all staff members and vendors to ensure that the district's image, communications and brand are presented consistently and correctly. Please contact Communications Services for assistance with any items identified in this guide. The district style guide can be found on the [district website](#).

Campus Style Guides

The information contained in the campus style guides have been compiled as a resource for all staff members and vendors to ensure that the school's image, communications and brand are presented consistently and correctly. Please contact Communications Services for assistance with any items identified in these guides. The campus style guides can be found on campus websites.

Graphic Design Requests Form

The Communications Services Department may assist with graphic design requests for districtwide initiatives and events. The Graphic Design Requests Form must be completed and include requestor contact information, project name, date requested, date needed, design product type, any pertinent project details, target audience, project dimensions and quantity needed, and any logos or graphics pertaining to the project. The form can be found on the [district website](). For questions about graphic design request, contact Amy Johnson at [johnsonamy@cfbisd.edu]().

XI.   Website Protocols

All campus and district websites/webpages must follow brand standards for the campus or district. All campus and district websites must have accessible design and be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Website Maintenance

The district webmaster will:
- Ensure all content on website is accessible to people with disabilities (PDF's, images, webpages with proper structure);
- Train staff and campus webmasters as needed that need access to edit their own pages;
- Work with the student data team and Website vendor to maintain updated and correct staff directories;
- Publish news posts for the Communications Services Department.
- Input district events into the calendar;
- Assure that all pages have updated and current information such as frequently updating staff photos and roles manually for departments and updating policy changes as they occur;
- Prepare and schedule newsletters bi-weekly for staff & subscribers.

Requests for Web Updates
- All district-level web update requests can be emailed to the district webmaster, Ashley Limvorratre, at limvorratrea@cfbisd.edu;
- In a request for an update to an existing page, include the following:
  - URL of the page (if already a webpage);
  - Content needing update (text, pictures, etc.);
- In a request for adding a new page, include the following:
  - Title of the page;
  - Content to be placed on the page;
- All web updates must follow the district mandated style guidelines;
- All content must be accessible therefore content may have to be adjusted as needed;
- There are times when a flyer is unavoidable, but for most cases, all flyers and content must be web-friendly and accessible;
- All campus-level updates should go through the campus webmaster assigned for the year. In the event the campus webmaster is out and there's not a back-up webmaster in place, then the updates can be sent to the district webmaster at limvorratrea@cfbisd.edu.

Campus Webmaster Training
All campus and district webmasters must complete the webmaster training on the following pages.

Duties/Responsibilities
- Input and update all campus events onto the web calendar.
- Publish a campus news post. This should be done at least once every other week. News posts will differ from social media posts.
- Maintain respective campus pages with updated information.
- Post new campus policies and/or changes as they occur.
- Upload good quality photos on the site.
- Follow the district mandated style and editorial guidelines.
- Follow the campus mandated style and editorial guidelines.
- Assist with district initiatives, as needed. Example: "Why to Enroll"

Accessibility

- All electronic and information technology must be accessible to people with disabilities.
- If content is found to not be compliant, it can be deemed as discrimination.
- A screen reader should be able to read every element on the webpage.
- Finalsite has provided a framework that is ADA compliant on your sites. It's up to the campus webmaster to maintain it.
- Headings, alt tags for images, tables all need to be properly formatted.

News Posts

- News posts are to be posted a minimum of every other week
- Principal will establish who is responsible for writing content
- Who?, What?, Where?, Why? (more details than social media)
- Needs a good photo or thumbnail
- Can be an event that's taking place or took place or spotlighting a staff member