

Mercer Island School District

# Superintendent Communications Plan

2023 / 2024



## Communications Engagement Team

Superintendent  
Dr. Fred Rundle

Communications Coordinator  
Ian Henry

Instructional Technology Director  
Andreeves Ronser

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent  
Michelle Mueller

Facilities Scheduling Coordinator  
Rachel Hood

# Mercer Island School District

## Purpose

The purpose of the 2023-2024 Mercer Island School District Superintendent's Communications Plan is to present actions we are taking to communicate with our schools and broader community. The plan addresses two main types of audiences: internal (students, staff, administration and Board of Education), and external (parents, guardians, businesses, civic groups, religious groups, and other members of the MISD community.)

This plan is essential for our community to ensure we have one clear, credible, and consistent voice as the source of information for the public. Our goal is to effectively communicate with our families and community while continually building confidence in the district with messages rooted in MISD's values, vision, and mission.

This communication plan is a working document designed to:

1. Foster strong relationships with district partners, contributors, and staff;
2. Provide focus and direction for messages/methods in support of the district's priorities, fundamentals, and goals;
3. Enable the district to present itself accurately and credibly to audiences; and
4. Make communication about MISD more predictable and reliable.





**MERCER ISLAND**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**STUDENTS  
ARE THE  
PRIORITY**

**VALUES**

WE BELIEVE IN:

- Supporting the whole child.
- Creating inclusive and equitable learning settings.
- Ensuring our school communities are safe and supportive.
- Providing rigorous and challenging learning.

**MISSION**

The District will foster learning by engaging students in thinking critically, solving problems creatively, and working collaboratively.

**VISION**

Inspiring our students to be lifelong learners as they create their futures.

## **MISD Fundamentals**

1. Create a personalized learning environment where differentiated instruction, student-centered education and varied learning opportunities are responsive to students' strengths, needs, interests and passions.
2. Maintain the highest learning standards in the areas of fine arts; health and physical education; English language arts; mathematics; financial education; science; environment and sustainability; social studies; world languages; computer science and educational technology.
3. Develop self-awareness, empathy, emotional/social intelligence, responsible decision-making and citizenship.
4. Engage students in analytical and critical thinking in order to identify and address global concerns.
5. Foster and embrace diversity, inclusiveness, and equity with a focus on respect and acceptance of every student.

# Mercer Island School District

## MISD Audiences

Internal Audiences	
Mercer Island Education Association	Administrators
Principals and Associate Principals	MISD Board of Education
Support Staff Employees	Direct Contract Partners
External Audiences	
Students	Religious leaders
Parents	Chamber of Commerce
Community members with/without students	New residents of the District
Business leaders	Neighboring School Districts
Media	The City of Mercer Island
Parent Teacher Association	Legislators

## 2023-2024 Communication Goals

The Superintendent and MISD Communications Team developed the following communication goals for the District's Internal and External Audiences:

1. Develop and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with internal and external school community members to strengthen support for the Mercer Island School District.
2. Use a variety of media to maximize awareness and support of the district's goals, objectives, and services.
3. Support strong, positive connections between individual schools and their communities.
4. Achieve coordinated communications, both internally and externally, using web and mobile systems to improve two-way communication.
5. Create key messages and talking points about MISD to establish a clear voice throughout all communication platforms.

## Goals - Strategies and Actions

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- **Goal 1 - Develop and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with internal and external school community members to strengthen support for the Mercer Island School District.**

### Strategies and Actions for Goal 1 Implementation and Success

- **Community Engagement** - Mercer Island community groups have been conducting regular meetings for the last year now that we have moved past Covid 19. District staff will join these groups and regularly attend meetings to continue positive and collaborative relationships.
  - Superintendent Rundle will be a regular attendee of Rotary meetings.
  - Communications Coordinator Ian Henry will be a regular attendee of Chamber of Commerce meetings. Henry's new relationship with the Chamber has borne fruit as the Chamber held an After Hours event for their members at MIHS in November of 2022. We have reached out to the Chamber to schedule an After Hours event during the 2023-24 school year to connect with members of the Chamber.
  - Executive Director of Legal, Compliance, and HR Erin Battersby, will be focusing on partnerships with MI Boys and Girls Club and the Jewish Community Center.
  - The Executive Director of Finance and Operations Matt Sullivan will select key groups he will forge relations with during the coming year, focusing first on Eastside Fire and Rescue as a new Mercer Island partner.
  - Our communications coordinator will explore a potential partnership with the City of Mercer Island to post MISD news and updates to their *Let's Talk* Platform. *Let's Talk* is an online engagement platform that offers a variety of interactive tools for Mercer Island residents to contribute ideas and ask questions about featured projects. The goal of this partnership would be to use online feedback in conjunction with board meetings, surveys, and current communications platforms to reach a more representative cross-section of our community.
- **MISD Change Initiatives**
  - Utilize formal and informal feedback tools to gather student, staff, and community input early in the process.
  - Involve internal and external perspectives about proposed changes.
  - Proactively inform the Board about changes in accordance with Operational Expectations.
    - OE-9- Communication and Support to the Board
    - OE-10 Instructional Program
  - Develop timelines and project outlines to plan, implement, study, and adjust as part of the change process.

**Goal 1 - continued next page**





# Mercer Island School District

## **Goal 1 - *continued***

- **Superintendent Advisories** - The Superintendent will continue to maintain several advisory groups that meet regularly over the course of the school year. The advisory groups are a great benefit to Superintendent Rundle and the district as it gives both the opportunity to hear from and engage with our community and present the district accurately and credibly to community members. These groups include:
  - Superintendent Equity Advisory Council (SEAC)
  - Superintendent Community Advisory
  - Superintendent Student Advisory (SSA)
  - Superintendent Teaching and Learning Advisory (STLA).
  - We are looking forward to the PTA Council meetings in the 2023-24 school year. The Mercer Island Preschool Association (MIPA) is now a part of the Council. These meetings are a valuable resource to connect with and inform our community.
  - Mercer Island Realtors Advisory - We started these meetings in the 2022-23 school year and will have at least three of them in the 2023-24 school year. At these meetings the Superintendent hears from realtors on what their clients are asking about the District as they consider purchasing homes on the island. We have found these meetings to be helpful in communicating with potential families. We have also created a [realtor webpage](#) that realtors can send to potential families.
- **Celebrations and Recognitions** - As we look at the calendar for 2023-24 School Board meetings, we have numerous recognitions scheduled for the September and October meetings. We will endeavor to recognize as many members of our school communities for successes and accomplishments at Board meetings in 2023-24.
- **Superintendent Listening Sessions** - In 2022-23 Superintendent Services scheduled and facilitated meetings for the Superintendent with district staff, community agencies, families, and individuals. This listening tour gave Superintendent Rundle the opportunity to meet with community groups and hear their concerns while also establishing and strengthening relationships. Superintendent Rundle will continue with the listening tour in the 2023-24 school year.

## **Goal 1 - *continued next page***

# Mercer Island School District

## Goal 1 - *continued*

- **Community Presence** - There are four community events we will continue to attend each spring and summer. These fun community events are a great way to interact with our community and tell our story.
  - MIPA Preschool Fair
  - MIPA Circus in April
  - Jewish Community Center Touch-A-Truck event in May
  - Mercer Island Summer Celebration in July
- **New Cultural Calendar and newly designed Academic Calendar** - We have redesigned our [Academic Calendar for 2023-24](#) and have introduced a [Cultural Calendar for 2023-24](#). These two calendars now have a more professional look and design while also providing families the information they need. We are in the process of designing these two calendars for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years.

## ● Goal 2 - Use a variety of media to maximize awareness and support of the district's goals, objectives, and services.

### Strategies and Actions for Goal 2 Implementation and Success

- **Niche** - We signed a three-year partnership agreement with Niche, the top search engine for schools, in May of 2023. We ran a targeted enrollment promotion from June 12 to July 12 of 2023. We will be updating our Niche profiles with content regularly. We have two more targeted enrollment campaigns we will be looking to utilize.
- **Superintendent on LinkedIn** - Superintendent Rundle is going to increase his presence on LinkedIn starting with the 2023-24 school year. The Superintendent will be sharing MISD posts on the platform to celebrate the District. We will also utilize the Superintendent's presence on LinkedIn to brand our district and leadership as leaders in the education realm.
- **New Kindergarten Enrollment Yard Signs** - We will be purchasing new Kindergarten Enrollment yard signs to place in the community prior to enrollment opening for Kindergarten in 2024.
- **Social Media** - We believe we are doing a very good job posting stories on our social media platforms that celebrate our community. These posts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn have informed and engaged our community about the many great things happening in the district. Just recently we created a Threads account and have started posting stories to this Meta platform. We will continue to look to include more video in our social media posts to diversify ways people consume stories. We will continue to analyze the analytics for our platforms to track our growth and engagement and determine future content.

## Goal 2 - *continued next page*



# Mercer Island School District

## Goal 2 - *continued*

- **Flash Alert and School Delay Notifications** - We will continue to use the Flash Alert notification platform, our website, and our email and text delivery platform to notify our community of school delays or cancellations due to weather. The Flash Alert platform notifies all local television and radio stations of school delays or cancellations. We have a page on our website dedicated to informing families about weather delays that will be linked to on our social media posts. We know inclement weather impacts our families and staff schedules. Annually in late fall we will remind families about confirming their email addresses and phone numbers in Qmlativ so we have their most up-to-date contact information for email and text notifications about weather delays or cancellations.
- **Video** - We have been successful in our use of video to tell stories about our district and inform the community. This will continue in 2023-24 and will include student productions from our Video Production class at MIHS. In 2022-23 students produced a piece on "Literacy" as a capstone project. This video was made possible through a partnership with MIHS video production teacher Michael Ketchum. We will continue to work with Michael and his students to identify stories about the district students can produce.
  - Our communications budget has been increased for the 2023-24 school year and we will look to create video stories produced by Tim Hamp from TVH Keys Productions.
  - We will look to create new episodes of our Discover the District video series and our PTA Q&A video series that were started in the 2021-22 school year. These will both highlight stories about our district and inform staff, students and families about what is happening in the education realm.
- **Local TV Show Broadcasts** - Studio 13 Live on Fox 13 will be broadcasting live from MIHS on a to be determined day in November to celebrate the Marching Band traveling to New York for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Ian Henry and Nick Wold have worked with the show to identify numerous segments on high school classes and programs that will be highlighted. This hour-long show will highlight MIHS and celebrate our students. It will end up online and we will be able to share segments of the show on district platforms.
  - We will be working with MIHS groups to encourage them to post photos and videos to their social platforms with the hashtag #Studio13LiveAtMIHS during the live broadcast.
- **Celebrating Staff** - We will have a social media campaign during the 2023-24 school year to celebrate our teachers. At the Instructional Tech Day at MIHS on August 28 we will take group photos of teacher groups (first grade, second grade, etc) sharing a wholesome joke which will be posted on our social platforms. With this campaign we want our community to get to know our teachers, have a smile with the recognition that education is fun, and celebrate our staff.



# Mercer Island School District

## ● **Goal 3 - Support strong, positive connections between individual schools and their communities.**

### **Strategies and Actions for Goal 3 Implementation and Success**

- **Websites** - We launched new websites in March of 2023. Our website coordinators have learned our new content management system (CMS) during the school year. Our communications coordinator will work with the website coordinators to continue to learn and use the platform to create strong and positive connections between the schools and the students and families they serve.
- **Two Way Communications** - It is very important for us to hear from our community on what is going well and what can be improved. We are looking at alternate two way communication platforms that can connect us with our community.
- **Capital and Facilities Updates** - This summer we posted on social media about MIHS students picking up new laptops at the administration building. The new laptops were made possible through the capital and technology levy. We will continue to post on our platforms stories on our communities support through the capital and technology levy. We will also continue to post stories about updates to our facilities.

## ● **Goal 4 – Achieve coordinated communications, both internally and externally, using Web and mobile systems to improve two-way communication.**

### **Strategies and Actions for Goal 4 Implementation and Success**

- **Improving Practice**
  - Our communications coordinator will look to connect with all MIHS athletic teams and fine arts booster groups in the fall. The purpose is to connect with these groups to develop content that can be posted on district social platforms about the teams and groups.
  - Our communications coordinator will liaison with school staff to set up training sessions on School Messenger. This training would be part of a process to slowly give our schools and staff the ability to use communication tools with the proper oversight.
- **Leadership Support** - Our communications coordinator will be meeting with MIHS and IMS administrators twice a month during the school year. The purpose of these meetings is twofold. One is for Ian to learn what is going on at both MIHS and IMS that we can celebrate on our platforms. The second is to support the schools in their communications to their community.
- **Consolidating Calendars** - Our communications coordinator has worked closely with MISD Facilities Coordinator Rachel Hood on developing the events calendar for our schools and district in the 2023-24 school year. These events will be highlighted on our websites and

**Goal 4 - continued next page**



# Mercer Island School District

## **Goal 4 - *continued***

on our social media platforms. He has also connected with MIHS Athletic Director Lindsey Blaine to continue the process of posting an athletics calendar on the district and MIHS websites. We will continue to focus on linking to fine arts performances and other events on district platforms.

**School Coordination** - We will continue to work with each school's website coordinators to enable our schools to maximize the capabilities of our new websites.

## **Goal 5 - Create key messages and talking points about MISD to establish a clear voice throughout all communication platforms.**

### **Strategies and Actions for Goal 5 Implementation and Success**

- **Culminating Reports** - Our annual report, which has won a design award from the WSPRA the last two years, will continue to be produced. The last two years the report was six pages and we went with a tri-fold design. For our next annual report we are looking at increasing the number of pages and including more information on our School Board Directors.
- **Single Voice** - We have created a presentation deck for Superintendent Rundle to use at community meetings and listening tours with the purpose of talking about MISD in a clear voice. This presentation will help drive the conversations Superintendent Rundle has with community members.
- **School Profiles** - We created elementary and middle school profile documents in the 2022-23 school year to complement our MIHS profile document. These documents were, and will continue to be used, to highlight our schools at community events and on our websites. These profile documents will be updated annually and shared with our community.
- **Marketing** -
  - We are researching the possibility of a yard sign campaign to celebrate our high school graduates who go on to colleges, universities and other post-secondary education institutions.
  - We are looking at ways our student media platforms can produce positive stories about our community while also generating revenue.
  - We have an ad in the Chamber of Commerce Business Directory which was published last fall. This Business Directory is published every two years and can be found at Chamber businesses and other locations on the island.

## Monitoring

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The following resources will assist the Superintendent to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of this Communication plan:

- Educational Effectiveness Survey
- District Advisory Groups
- Website Analytics
- Social Media Engagement
- Media Coverage
- Community Feedback
- Niche Analytics
- Incoming and Outgoing Family Surveys
- PTA Council
- Enrollment Data

## Conclusion

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Superintendent Rundle is firmly committed to proactive, consistent, and clear communication. While telling an accurate story about MISD and updating the community about critical messages is essential, so too is listening to the students, staff, parents, and others across Mercer Island. Communication will be two-way and focused on strengthening partnerships, building trust, diversifying platforms, coordinating messages, aligning district and school strategies, and establishing a clear voice. Mercer Island School District is committed to improvement and engagement.

This plan is a living document, and as such will be updated and refined.

## **Additional Information**

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### **Superintendent Rundle's Entry Plan**

Superintendent Rundle developed a multi-phase entry plan to engage the community in the first six months. [A link to this plan can be accessed here.](#)

### **Superintendent Succession (OE-12)**

In the event the Superintendent, Fred Rundle, should unexpectedly become unable to perform his duties, the following line of succession has been created to maintain the affairs of the District.

- Executive Director of Legal, Compliance, and HR and Executive Director of Finance and Operations will become co-Superintendents. The Director of Special Services, Directors of Learning Services and Director of Maintenance and Operations will join the Inner Cabinet.
- The Director of Special Services (Sue Ann Bube), Director of Learning Services (Jamie Prescott), and Director of Maintenance and Operations (Tony Kuhn) will be next in line if required.

### **Communication and Support to the Board (OE-9)**

Superintendent Rundle is held accountable to the Board to provide on-going communication outlined in Operational Expectation 9. This formal expectation is an important aspect of the governance model and process but will not serve to replace the need for community communication and engagement.

## **Addendum 1 Long Range Facility Plan**

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Beginning in April 2023, a diverse group of 30+ community members started coming together to begin the process of updating the District's Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP). Their work will include a review of the prior LRFP, current demographic information, facility conditions, vision and mission, and the District's financial status. Some participants are returning members who served on the committee in 2019-20 and others are new.

Over the course of a series of meetings in the spring, they developed recommendations for any future improvements to our schools. These recommendations were shared with the larger Mercer Island community in the fall of 2023.

**Addendum - *continued next page***



# Mercer Island School District

## Addendum - *continued*

Mahlum Architects brought the committee through the 2019-20 process and they continued their work on the 2023 updates. David Mount and LeRoy Landers, both principals with Mahlum are leading the work.

As documents became available and are shared with the committee, they will be posted on the [2023 LRFP website](#). Video of each meeting was also posted shortly after the meetings.

Below is a timeline of LRFP milestones and events in the 2023-24 school year.

- Phase 1 Report to the School Board took place August 24
- The First Long Range Facility Plan Meeting of 2023-24 took place September 11, 2023
- MISD will host Community Engagement Sessions with both MISD staff and school community members during the first three weeks of October. These events were publicized to the community on all our platforms.
  - We will host two MISD Staff Engagement sessions on Wednesday, October 4 at 7:30am-8:30am in the MIHS Performing Arts Center and 2:45pm-3:45pm in the Northwood Commons.
  - We will host three Community Engagement Sessions for the Mercer Island community.
    - **Community Engagement Session 1** – Tuesday, October 10 at the IMS Commons from 6-8pm. This is an in-person meeting only.
    - **Community Engagement Session 2** – Wednesday, October 11 – A hybrid meeting at the Mercer Island Community Center at 10am. This session is an in-person meeting and there will also be an online stream of the meeting. The link to the online stream will be released close to the date of this meeting.
    - **Community Engagement Session 3** – Wednesday, October 11 at the MIHS Library from 6-8pm. This is an in-person meeting only.
- The Board will hold a Study Session on Tuesday, October 24 on the LRFP
- At the Board Meeting on Thursday, October 26 the Board removed consolidation of an elementary school as a variable from the LRFP
- At the Board Meeting on Thursday, November 9 the Board will formalize no consolidation of an elementary school.
- Phase 2 of the LRFP will start on Monday, November 13 when the Long Range Facility Plan Committee reconvenes for a single meeting
- Development of the LRFP will be presented to the Board in January of 2024.