



RICHLAND ONE

ENGAGE • EDUCATE • EMPOWER

**Office of Communications
Standard Operating Procedures Manual
2023-2024 School Year**

#TeamOne #OneTeam

*We are Richland One, a leader in transforming lives through education,
empowering all students to achieve their potential and dreams.*



Office of Communications Standard Operating Procedures Manual

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DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Office of Communications is responsible for internal and external district communications, including (but not limited to) emergency/crisis/inclement weather communications; media and community relations; marketing/advertising/branding; district publications; student and staff recognitions; district events; R1TV; the district’s website; and social media. Communications staff members provide communications support, counsel and assistance to all district schools and departments.



Communications Team members: (front row) **Chrystal Burgess**, broadcast communications specialist; **Karen York**, executive director of communications; and **Ilyssa Weiner**, public information manager; (second row) **Rich Owensby**, broadcast communications specialist; **Gwendolyn Haynes-Etheredge**, executive assistant; **Amber Mackey**, marketing coordinator; and **Nicholas Richter**, web administrator.

<p>Karen York, Executive Director karen.york@richlandone.org (803) 231-7504 – office; internal ext. 97504 (803) 600-6072 – cell</p>	<p>Gwen Etheredge, Executive Assistant gwendolyn.haynes-eth@richlandone.org (803) 231-7504 – office; internal ext. 97504</p>
<p>Ilyssa Weiner, Public Information Manager ilyssa.weiner@richlandone.org (803) 231-7510 – office; internal ext. 97510 (803) 908-7107 – cell</p>	<p>Chrystal Burgess, Broadcast Communications Specialist chrystal.burgess@richlandone.org (803) 231-6701 – office; internal ext. 96701 (803) 626-5712</p>
<p>Amber Mackey, Marketing Coordinator amber.mackey@richlandone.org (803) 231-7511 – office; internal ext. 97511 (803) 319-9670 – cell</p>	<p>Rich Owensby, Broadcast Communications Specialist richard.owensby@richlandone.org (803) 231-6702 – office; internal ext. 96702 (803) 629-3293</p>
<p>Nicholas Richter, Web Administrator nicholas.richter@richlandone.org (803) 231-7509 – office; internal ext. 97509 (839) 228-3282 – cell</p>	<p>OFFICE LOCATIONS Communications Main Office: 1616 Richland Street (Stevenson Administration Building); R1TV Studio: 1225 Oak Street (Waverley Administration Building)</p>

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE CONTACTS

Academic All-Stars Program/Banquet	Karen York	(803) 231-7504
Back-to-School Convocation	Karen York	(803) 231-7504
Bereavement Notices	Gwen Etheredge	(803) 231-7504
District Logo Guidelines/Brand Toolbox	Amber Mackey	(803) 231-7511
District-wide Emails	Karen York	(803) 231-7504
Employee Service Pins	Gwen Etheredge	(803) 231-7504
Flyer Distribution Approvals <i>Send flyer distribution requests to flyers@richlandone.org.</i>	Karen York	(803) 231-7504
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests	Karen York	(803) 231-7504
Golden Activities Passes for Senior Citizens <i>Issued Tuesdays and Thursdays at SAB (10AM-Noon & 2PM-4PM)</i>	Gwen Etheredge	(803) 231-7504
Incident Reports NOTE: Call Ms. York at (803) 600-6072 if you have an emergency.	Karen York Gwen Etheredge Ilyssa Weiner	(803) 231-7504
InfoPhone (803-231-7512)	Gwen Etheredge	(803) 231-7504
Intranet	Nicholas Richter	(803) 231-7509
Legislative Platform	Karen York	(803) 231-7504
Marketing/Advertising/Branding	Amber Mackey	(803) 231-7511
News Releases/Media Relations	Ilyssa Weiner	(803) 231-7510
Principal for a Day Initiative	Amber Mackey	(803) 231-7511
Richland One Hall of Fame	Karen York	(803) 231-7504
Richland One Mobile App	Nicholas Richter	(803) 231-7509
R1TV (Richland One TV)/Video Production Requests	Chrystal Burgess Rich Owensby	(803) 231-6701 (803) 231-6702
School and Department News Submissions <i>Send news items to: www.richlandone.org/newsform</i>	Ilyssa Weiner	(803) 231-7510
School Communicators	Ilyssa Weiner	(803) 231-7510
School Board Spotlight	Karen York	(803) 231-7504
SchoolMessenger District-Wide Announcements NOTE: Submit a One-to-One ticket to IT if you need technical assistance with SchoolMessenger.	Karen York Ilyssa Weiner	(803) 231-7504 (803) 231-7510
Social Media (District Pages)	Karen York (Facebook) Ilyssa Weiner (Twitter now X) Chrystal Burgess and Rich Owensby (Instagram)	(803) 231-7504 (803) 231-7510 (803) 231-6701/6702
Spotlight ONE Publications	Karen York	(803) 231-7504
Staff Directory and Emergency Contacts Directory	Gwen Etheredge	(803) 231-7504
Superintendent's State of the District Address	Ilyssa Weiner	(803) 231-7510
United Way Campaign	Karen York Gwen Etheredge	(803) 231-7504
Website	Nicholas Richter	(803) 231-7509

INCIDENT REPORTS

Principals, administrative building administrators and department heads (or their designees) should report to the Office of Communications any incidents including, but not limited to:

- Student or staff injuries that occur on campus or on field trips, at sporting events, at off-site school- or district-sponsored events, etc.
- Student or staff arrests made at school/work
- Accidents involving school buses or other district vehicles
- Fires and fire alarm activations/building evacuations
- Building lockdowns
- Loss of electrical power, water, heating/air conditioning and/or telephone service
- Any major school/work disruptions

Please report incidents to Karen York, Gwen Etheredge or Ilyssa Weiner at (803) 231-7504 or via email. For incidents that occur before or after normal work hours, contact Karen York at (803) 600-6072 or karen.york@richlandone.org.

When you report an incident, please provide as many details about the incident as possible, such as:

- When, where and how the incident occurred
- Who was involved (students? staff? parents?)
- Whether there were any injuries and, if so, the nature of the injuries
- Whether law enforcement, EMS and/or the fire department were called and, if so, what actions were taken by the responding agencies
- Whether a student's parent/guardian has been notified (if applicable)
- Whether a staff member's spouse/other family member has been notified (if applicable)
- Whether the building was evacuated (if applicable)
- Any other pertinent information about the nature of the incident

IMPORTANT: Your first priority is to get the situation under control (call EMS, fire department, law enforcement, District Security, etc.). Incident reports should be made to the Communications Office as soon as possible thereafter. School incidents also should be reported to the appropriate Executive Director of Schools. **If you have any doubt as to whether to report an incident, call the Communications Office.**

Communications compiles incident reports received from schools and departments and sends the reports via email to the Board of School Commissioners, the Superintendent and Cabinet members, as well as certain department heads (including Security and Emergency Services, Building Services and Facility Services) to make them aware that incidents have occurred and to ensure that schools/departments get the assistance they need in handling those incidents when they arise.

Please see Appendix A for more information about incident reporting, including examples of complete vs. incomplete incident reports.

NEWS MEDIA PROTOCOL

Under our established news media protocol, ALL media inquiries should be routed to the Office of Communications. Reporters, assignment editors and other members of the media (TV stations, newspapers, online news services, radio stations, etc.) are directed to contact Communications first if they want district- or school-related information, or if they want to interview district staff and/or students, get video footage or take pictures.

Ilyssa Weiner (public information manager) and **Karen York** (executive director of communications) are the two Communications staff members designated to handle media requests. Ms. York serves as the official spokesperson for the district.

When the Communications Office receives media requests, Ms. Weiner or Ms. York will decide the best way to facilitate the requests. Ms. Weiner or Ms. York will contact the principal or department head to coordinate or set up the interviews, photo shoots, etc. Parents who do not want their child(ren) interviewed, photographed or recorded notify schools as such in writing at the beginning of the school year.

Please be advised that the media must have permission to be on campus. Members of the media cannot just walk into a school or administrative building and start interviewing, photographing or recording students and/or staff. Members of the media are permitted to shoot video footage (called B-roll) from across the street (on the sidewalk, for example) because that is public property; however, they are asked to inform Communications first, so our office can notify the schools/administrative sites.

If you or any of your staff members receive requests from any members of the media or if they show up at your site and you have not been contacted by Communications first, please refer them to Ilyssa Weiner at (803) 231-7510 or (803) 908-7107, or Karen York at (803) 600-6072.

Schools and departments that would like to have media coverage of a special event or initiative should forward the information (a description of the event, purpose, date, time, location, etc.) to Ilyssa Weiner at least three days in advance. We will share the information with the media and let you know whether they plan to cover the event. **Schools and departments should not contact the media directly. Schools and departments also should not schedule and announce news/press conferences on their own or in collaboration with an external organization without contacting the Office of Communications first.**

Additionally, school and department staff should notify Communications if they receive a request from the media or a community organization to participate in panel discussions, interviews or videos in which they would represent the district in their capacity as a Richland One employee.

INCLEMENT WEATHER COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES

There may be times during the school year when inclement weather will prompt a late start, early dismissal or cancellation of school. Richland One has procedures in place to make decisions about whether school and work schedules will be modified and to notify students, parents, district employees and community members as quickly as possible.

- **Parents will receive an automated phone message from the district (Office of Communications) through the SchoolMessenger notification system.** A text message also will be sent to parents who have opted in to receive text alerts via SchoolMessenger. Notifications also will be sent via the district's mobile app (available in the Apple App Store and Google Play). Parents who download the free app can choose to receive notifications from the district and/or from specific schools.

IMPORTANT! In the event of an inclement weather event or another emergency affecting the entire district, schools should not send their own SchoolMessenger messages to parents because doing so could delay the delivery of the messages sent via the system by Communications. We also want to ensure that all of our parents receive the same message.

Announcements of school closings, delays or early dismissals due to inclement weather also will be sent to local news media and posted on the district's website (www.richlandone.org) and R1TV (Spectrum cable channel 1303), the district's Facebook page (facebook.com/richlandone), X/Twitter (twitter.com/richlandone) and the Richland One InfoPhone (803-231-7512). An alert notification will be sent through the district's mobile app. A district-wide email will be sent to all Richland One employees.

- **Under a two-hour delay, buses will pick up students two hours later than normal and school will start two hours later than normal;** any exceptions and any other pertinent information will be announced, including whether breakfast and lunch will be served to students. Any changes to normal employee work schedules will be announced via district-wide emails, on the district's website, R1TV, social media, etc.
- **Other school emergencies, such as power, water and heating/air-conditioning outages, also may result in delayed school starts, early dismissals or cancellations.** Similar notification procedures are followed at the district or school level, including notifying parents whether after-school programs, child care programs and athletics activities will proceed as scheduled.
- In the event that make-up days are required for students and/or staff, announcements will be sent by Communications accordingly.

SCHOOL AND DEPARTMENT NEWS SUBMISSIONS

To spread the word about all the great things happening throughout the district, the Communications Team relies upon our schools and departments to keep us informed about special programs, events and initiatives, honors and awards, etc.

At the beginning of each school year, principals are asked to appoint someone to serve as the Communicator for their respective schools. The person you select as your Communicator should be someone who is a good "cheerleader" for your school or department and be willing to collect, compile and share news from your site with the Communications Team throughout the school year.

Schools and departments that have news to share can use our new news submission form at www.richlandone.org/newsform. The form allows you to submit news items and attachments, such as pictures.

Schools and departments that would like to have media coverage of a special event or initiative should contact Communications instead of contacting the media directly **(SEE NEWS MEDIA PROTOCOL ON PAGE 6)**. Please contact Ilyssa Weiner at least three days in advance.

For more information about news submissions, contact Ms. Weiner at (803) 231-7510 or ilyssa.weiner@richlandone.org.

SCHOOL AND DEPARTMENT WEBSITES

The Office of Communications is responsible for the overall operation and maintenance of the district's website (www.RichlandOne.org).

Principals and department heads should identify a staff member to serve as the website administrator for their school or department. The school/department website administrator is responsible for posting content and updating/maintaining content. The principal/department head should provide oversight to ensure that all posted content is appropriate, accurate, grammatically correct and up to date.

The Communications Office provides training and technical support for school and department website administrators. **NOTE: The district's web administrator is not responsible for making routine updates to school or department pages; that is the responsibility of school and department website administrators.**

For website training, support or technical assistance, contact Web Administrator Nicholas Richter at (803) 231-7509 or nicholas.richter@richlandone.org.

R1TV/VIDEO PRODUCTION REQUESTS

Video production requests and other requests for the R1TV staff should be directed to Chrystal Burgess (chrystal.burgess@richlandone.org; 803-231-6701) or Rich Owensby (richard.owensby@richlandone.org; 803-231-6702). Please be advised that the R1TV staff may not be able to accommodate all requests from schools and departments. The R1TV staff members will advise you as to whether your request can be accommodated. For event coverage requests, please contact the R1TV staff at least three days to one week in advance.

MARKETING/ADVERTISING/BRANDING

The Office of Communications is responsible for coordination and implementation of all branding, advertising and marketing activities for Richland One. As district employees, we know that Richland One is a great district, but we want to ensure that prospective students and families, prospective employees, Realtors, the business community, elected officials and others know it, too. The goal of a brand is to create a memorable identity that distinguishes an organization and communicates its value to the public.

The district's logo is the visual representation of the Richland One brand. **Our Brand Toolbox outlines guidelines for proper use of the district logo and the official district color palette.** Schools and departments also can download the official versions of the district logo (full color, black and white, vertical, horizontal, inverse, etc.). The Brand Toolbox can be accessed from the Communications department web page; after clicking the link, you must enter your normal login and password.

NOTE: The district logo should not be modified in any way without approval from the Office of Communications. Also, the district logo should not be used by individuals/businesses/organizations outside Richland One without approval from the Office of Communications.

In an effort to create consistency, the Office of Communications handles all advertising for schools and district programs. This includes, but is not limited to, advertising in newspapers, magazines and other print publications; mass mailers; online advertising; billboards and other outdoor advertising; and radio and TV commercials. Communications handles all aspects of advertising, from pre-production and design to scheduling and payment, including communicating with vendors, submitting contractual agreements for review and approval, developing advertising content/messaging and scheduling. Funding for all advertising district-wide will be included in the advertising line item in the Communications department budget.

If you have any questions, contact Marketing Coordinator Amber Mackey at amber.mackey@richlandone.org or (803) 231-7511.

BEREAVEMENT NOTICE EMAILS

If a current district employee dies or if there is a death in an employee's immediate family (parent, spouse, child or sibling), the principal, department head or their designee is asked to report this information to Gwen Etheredge at (803) 231-7504 or gwendolyn.haynes-eth@richlandone.org.

IMPORTANT! Please note that some employees do not want their bereavement information disseminated, so be sure to consult with the employee or family member first to get their approval.

- **Death of an employee's immediate family member (parent, spouse, child or sibling)** – Please provide the name, title/position and work site of the employee, along with the name of the employee's immediate family member who passed, the date of the family member's death and the date/time/location of the funeral services. With the employee's permission, also include a mailing address to which condolences may be sent to the employee and their family.
- **Death of a current district employee** – Please provide the employee's name, title/position and work site, along with the date, time and location of the funeral services. With the permission of the family of the employee, also include a mailing address to which condolences may be sent to the family.

Bereavement notices are sent via email by Communications to the Board of School Commissioners, the Superintendent's Cabinet, principals, department heads, school administrative assistants and department administrative assistants. Bereavement notices also are posted on the Richland One Intranet.

In the event of a death of a current district employee, the superintendent will send out a district-wide email. In addition, the Board of School Commissioners will present a special memorial resolution to the family of the deceased employee at a school board meeting.

MEMORIAL RESOLUTIONS

The Board of School Commissioners presents signed, framed memorial resolutions to the families of persons who pass away while they are employed by the district. The memorial resolutions are normally presented to the employee's family at a board meeting.

Communications will contact the principal/department head of the employee regarding scheduling the memorial resolution presentation, so that any school/department colleagues who would like to attend the meeting for the presentation will be aware.

SCHOOL BOARD SPOTLIGHT

At regularly scheduled board meetings, the Board of School Commissioners and the Administration set aside time on the agenda (School Board Spotlight) to recognize students, staff, schools and departments that have won statewide, regional, national or significant district honors and awards. Honorees receive Superintendent's Award certificates that are prepared by the Office of Communications.

For more information about School Board Spotlight, contact Karen York at (803) 231-7504 or karen.york@richlandone.org.

DISTRICT-WIDE EMAILS/REQUESTS

Several times throughout the year, district-wide announcements will be sent via email by the Office of Communications, as well as on behalf of certain departments, including the Superintendent's Office, Human Resource Services, Financial Services, Information Technology (IT) and Procurement Services.

Requests to send district-wide emails should be sent to Karen York, executive director of communications, at karen.york@richlandone.org. **Such requests should be sent by the department/division head (director level or above) to help ensure that the proposed announcement has been reviewed and approved at the department/division level first.**

Requests will be reviewed upon receipt to assess whether the information is appropriate for a district-wide email; if so, the information will be sent out via Announcements. If the information is deemed to be better suited to another communications platform, the person making the request will be informed as such.

REQUESTS TO POST ITEMS ON THE RICHLANDONE.ORG HOME PAGE

Requests to post items on the home page of the district's website should be sent to Karen York, executive director of communications, at karen.york@richlandone.org. **Such requests should be sent by the department/division head (director level or above) to help ensure that the proposed posting has been reviewed and approved at the department/division level first.**

Requests will be reviewed to determine whether the information is appropriate for posting on the home page or if it is better suited to another communications platform.

EMPLOYEE SERVICE PINS

Richland One is proud to have employees who give many years of dedicated service to the district. As small tokens of the district's appreciation for their commitment and loyalty to Richland One, service pins and congratulatory letters from the superintendent are awarded to employees after they have reached 10 years of uninterrupted service to the district and at five-year intervals thereafter.

In addition to service pins and congratulatory letters from the superintendent, employees who have reached 25, 30, 35, 40 or more years of uninterrupted service to Richland One receive Superintendent's Award certificates and they are recognized at a Board of School Commissioners meeting.

Communications receives the names of employees who have reached the service milestones listed above from Human Resource Services. Service pins and letters are issued based on that list. If an employee at your site reached a service milestone and the employee did not receive a service pin and a congratulatory letter from the superintendent, the employee should contact Gwen Etheredge at gwendolyn.haynes-eth@richlandone.org or (803) 231-7504.

FLYER DISTRIBUTION REQUESTS

Many local businesses and organizations request to distribute flyers to our schools, students and/or staff during the school year. This includes merchants offering discounts at their stores, colleges/universities offering degree programs for staff and information from nonprofit organizations about their services, programs and events.

Individuals, businesses or organizations should be directed to email their requests to flyers@richlandone.org; requests are reviewed on Fridays only. If the request is approved, the individual/business/organization is responsible for getting the flyers to the schools. Communications will provide them with a signed memo on Communications letterhead stating that their request to distribute the information has been reviewed and approved.

Flyer distribution approvals do not carry over from year to year. If an individual indicates that their materials have been approved by Communications but that person does not have an approval memo from Communications with a date from the 2023-2024 school year at the top of the memo, please refer that person to our office.

You are asked to place approved flyers in the front office, lobby or some other appropriate common area of the school or administrative building where space is available for interested students, parents or staff to pick up the materials. We do not approve sending these types of non-school-related materials home by students. Considerations will be made for businesses/organizations that are official school or district partners.

If you have questions about the flyer review and approval process, contact Karen York at (803) 231-7504 or karen.york@richlandone.org.

2023-2024 COMMUNICATIONS EVENTS
(events coordinated by the Office of Communications)

- **Back-to-School Convocation**
Wednesday, August 9, 2023
Dreher High School Auditorium, 9 a.m.

- **Richland One Principal for a Day Initiative**
Thursday, November 16, 2023 – All schools, all day
Reception for Principals and Principals for a Day
C.A. Johnson High School Auditorium, 4:30 p.m.

- **Superintendent’s State of the District Address**
Thursday, February 8, 2024
W.J. Keenan High School Auditorium, 6 p.m.

- **Richland One Hall of Fame 20th Anniversary Induction Gala**
Saturday, April 13, 2024
Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center Exhibit Hall
Red carpet reception at 5 p.m.; program at 6 p.m.

- **Richland One Academic All-Stars Recognition Banquet**
Thursday, May 16, 2024
Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center Exhibit Hall, 6:30 p.m.

APPENDIX A

Incident Reporting

When you report an incident to the Office of Communications, it is essential that you (or your designee) provide pertinent details about the incident, such as:

- When, where and how the incident occurred
- Who was involved (students? staff? parents?)
- Whether there were any injuries and, if so, the nature of the injuries
- Whether law enforcement, EMS or the fire department was called and, if so, what actions were taken by the responding agency
- Whether a student's parent/guardian has been notified (if applicable)
- Whether a staff member's spouse/other family member has been notified (if applicable)
- Whether the building was evacuated (if applicable)
- Any other pertinent information

The following examples (fictionalized but similar to incidents that have occurred in the district) are provided to illustrate complete incident reports vs. incomplete incident reports.

Incident Example #1

INCOMPLETE REPORT

Our fire alarm went off, but we are back inside now.

COMPLETE REPORT

Our fire alarm went off around 9:30 this morning. All students and staff evacuated the building. The fire department responded. After about 15 minutes, we were given the all-clear by the fire department to go back inside. Classes have resumed. Someone apparently left popcorn in a microwave in the break room unattended, which set off the fire alarm.

Incident Example #2

INCOMPLETE REPORT

We had to call EMS for one of our custodians.

COMPLETE REPORT

One of our custodians was injured after she slipped on some water in the hallway on the second floor this morning. Our school nurse examined her knee and recommended that we call EMS, which we did. We have notified her husband and he is going to meet the ambulance at Prisma Health Richland hospital.

Incident Example #3

INCOMPLETE REPORT

A student was arrested after a fight in the cafeteria during lunch.

COMPLETE REPORT

We had a large fight in the cafeteria during lunch today which caused a major disruption. Approximately 8-10 students (male and female students, all in 11th grade) were involved. This occurred around 12:15 p.m. Our SRO and two assistant principals who were in the cafeteria broke up the fight. There were no injuries reported. We are still investigating the incident, but we believe it may be related to a dispute between two of the students last week. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the students who were involved in the fight. All of the students' parents were notified.

Assistant Principal Jones noted that one of the students had a marijuana-like smell. The student (16 years old) was searched and found with a small bag of marijuana in his pants pocket. He was arrested by the SRO and charged with having marijuana in his possession; he was released to his mother.

APPENDIX B

Social Media

Richland One schools and departments are permitted and encouraged to establish and maintain a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter (now X) and/or Instagram. **Note: Do not use TikTok on any district devices due to security concerns and vulnerabilities.**

Using social media is an easy way to reach a large number of people quickly, including in the event of an emergency. There can be pitfalls to relying so heavily on social media, but many people (especially teens and younger adults) get most of their news and information from social media.

TIPS FOR PRINCIPALS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS

- It is key that after you establish a social media account for your school or department, you work to maintain your page(s) by **posting regularly** (daily, a few times a week, etc.).
- Keep in mind that visuals (such as pictures, video clips and graphics) help to draw attention to your posts. **Be sure to check parental consent before posting any images and/or names of students on social media.**
- In setting up a social media account for your school or department, **make sure you choose your social media administrator carefully.** Establish your expectations and monitor what's being posted, shared, liked and followed.
- **IMPORTANT!** You (the principal or department head) should have rights as an administrator to your site's social media account(s), in addition to the person you designate to serve as the administrator. This will be particularly beneficial if your designated social media administrator leaves the district, so you can still access and update the page. **If your social media administrator leaves the district or moves to another school or department, make sure you remove that person's rights as an administrator. In certain circumstances, you also may need to change the account password.**