



## COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

### Purpose

The purpose of the DCS Communications Guide is to present a clear and concise framework for communicating information of interest to our school community. It is important to have, as a top priority, the goal of clearly communicating a unified message at all times.

(Please note that Crisis Communications are detailed in the DCS Crisis Management Guide.)

District-level staff designated by the Superintendent will assist the Superintendent's Office and help manage district publications, marketing, community relations, and offer assistance on all comprehensive communication services and strategies for the district under the direct supervision of the Superintendent.

School-designated staff will assist the Principal's Office and help manage school publications, marketing, community relations, and offer assistance on all comprehensive communication services and strategies for the school under the direct supervision of the principal.

The driving questions for every program or activity will be:

1. Does this align with our District's vision, mission and goals?
2. How does this benefit Duplin County Schools' students and employees?
3. How do we effectively communicate it to stakeholders?

### Methods

- Printed Materials (e.g., news articles, etc.)
- Broadcast Media (e.g., television, radio, etc.)
- Website (i.e., school, department, and district Level)
- Mass Notifications Messages
- District Publications (e.g., Report to the Community, Bright Spots, etc.)

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## District and School Guidelines

*\*\* Students must have on file a completed Duplin County Schools Media Use and Release Permission Form <https://www.duplinschools.net/Page/197>. The completed form indicates parental preferences regarding school system/news media use of students in photographs, videos, illustrations and/or any work of the student.*

*If there is no completed form indicating the parent has given permission for the student's photo, etc. to be used, or if the parent returned the form and marked "No," then the student's photo, etc. cannot be used.*

*STEAMA Digital Learning and Media Coordinators manage these lists at each school.  
(Policy Code 3225/4312/7320 Technology Responsible Use)*

**School Contact:** Each principal shall designate a staff member to coordinate communications and serve as the school's communications contact.

**Print materials should:**

- Include a contact name and number
- Be carefully proofread
- Be shared with the appropriate news media
  - **Duplin Journal- Ena Sellers - [ena@northstatejournal.com](mailto:ena@northstatejournal.com)**
  - **Duplin Times- Nicole Heller - [nheller@apgenc.com](mailto:nheller@apgenc.com)**
  - **Sherry Matthews-The Mt. Olive Tribune - [smatthews@clintonnc.com](mailto:smatthews@clintonnc.com)**
  - **Trevor Dunnell- The Jacksonville Daily News-[tdunnell@gannett.com](mailto:tdunnell@gannett.com)**

**\*\*When emailing stories to the press, please copy the Superintendent's Office  
[Cwimmer@duplinschools.net](mailto:Cwimmer@duplinschools.net)**

**Media Coverage for School Events-**With principal's approval, share school-level events with appropriate media contacts and notify the Superintendent's office with the date and time that the media will be covering the event.

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## **Working with Broadcast/Newspaper Reporters:**

- If a reporter calls or comes to a school without an invitation, please refer the reporter to the Superintendent's office.
- The principal must give permission to invite the news media on campus to cover an event and should ensure the Superintendent's office is notified in a timely manner.
- The Superintendent's office will assist with coordination of media visits to help ensure parent release form requests are honored, minimize instructional interruptions, etc.

## **Website:**

- STEAMA Digital Learning and Media Coordinators are responsible for school websites. School designated communications contacts will forward stories and photos to be featured on the school website to the STEAMA Digital Learning and Media Coordinators.
- STEAMA Digital Learning and Media Coordinators will collaborate with the principal and designated school communications contact to determine which stories from the school website should be forwarded for placement on the district website. Send stories to Lindsay Skidmore, Director of 6-8 Curriculum/Digital Innovation at [lskidmore@duplinschools.net](mailto:lskidmore@duplinschools.net).
- Schools are encouraged to submit stories showcasing phenomenal teaching and learning activities.
- Teachers are responsible for maintaining website profiles.
- Policy 3227/7322 Web Page Development, provides specific guidelines regarding web pages.

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- All web pages are expected to be maintained and current with information relevant to the intended audience.
  - School-level “News and Announcements” pages are intended for the sharing of school-level accomplishments, news, and information.
  - District-level “News and Announcements” page is intended for the sharing of district-level (or higher, such as regional, state, national) accomplishments/news events or district-initiated events.

## **Mass Notification Messages**

### **Recommendations and Considerations:**

- Update PowerSchool parent contact information at the beginning of the school year and as needed upon changes.
- Send one weekly message containing important information instead of multiple messages with varied information.
  - Be as concise as possible.
  - Direct parents to your website’s “News and Announcements” section for more detailed information.
- Send messages in dual language when at all possible.
- Use the following times when delivering non-emergency messages:
  - Daily Attendance Calls
    - Elementary Schools: 12:00 PM
    - High Schools: 6:00 PM
  - General School Announcements
    - Elementary Schools: 5:30 PM
    - High Schools: 6:30 PM
  - General District Announcements (from Central Office) 5:00 PM

### **Related Policies/Documents:**

- 3225/4312/7320 Technology Responsible Use
- 3227/7322 Web Page Development
- Duplin County Schools Media Use and Release Permission Form