

Mercer Island School District

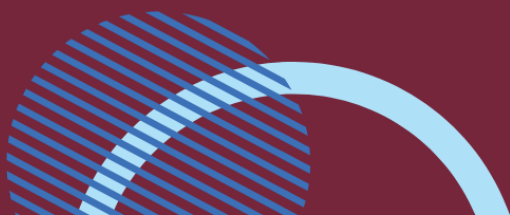
Superintendent Communications Plan

2024 / 2025



Communications
Engagement Team

Superintendent
Dr. Fred Rundle
Communications Coordinator
Ian Henry



Mercer Island School District

Purpose

The purpose of the 2024-2025 Mercer Island School District Superintendent's Communications Plan is to present actions we are taking to communicate with our schools and broader community to:

- Amplify the stories and accomplishments of students, staff, and the district.
- Inform our community near and far about MISD.
- Articulate the priorities of the district.
- Advocate for the interests of MISD in local and state matters.

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.



**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.

OE9 - Communication and Support to the Board

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.

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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

2024-2025 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 through coordinated communications, both internally and externally, using web and media platforms.
4. Create key messages and talking points about MISD to establish a clear voice throughout all communication platforms.
5. Provide platforms and opportunities for student voice that promotes students, staff, and the district.

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Goals - Strategies and Actions

- 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 - District staff will join community group meetings regularly 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 relationship with the Chamber has borne fruit as the Chamber held an After Hours event for their members at MIHS in both 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years. We will be reaching out to the Chamber to schedule an After Hours event during the spring of the 2024-25 school year to connect with members of the Chamber.
 - 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.
 - Ian Henry and Executive Director of Compliance, Legal Affairs, & Human Resources Erin Battersby attend the monthly Mercer Island Youth and Family Services (MIYFS) Healthy Youth Forum meeting.
 - MIPA Nights - We will host two open houses during the 2024-25 school year with the Mercer Island Preschool Association (MIPA) to connect with preschool families to highlight our schools and district as they prepare to transition their students from preschool
 - We will continue to look for opportunities to engage with distinct community groups. An example of this is conversations we have had recently with some families attending the French American School of Puget Sound, located on the island, about the possibility of increased French language instruction in our schools. While the possibility of increased French language instruction is not currently known, that will not stop us from engaging and learning more about what community members are looking for should they choose to enroll in MISD.
- 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-10 Instructional Program
 - Develop timelines and project outlines to plan, implement, study, and adjust as part of the change process.

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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).
 - PTA Council meetings which include the Mercer Island Preschool Association (MIPA) as they joined the Council in 2023-24. These meetings are a valuable resource to connect with and inform our community.
 - Mercer Island Realtors Advisory - We will meet at least three times with this group, which was created in the 2022-23 school year, in the 2024-25 school year. We have found these meetings to be helpful in communicating with potential families and informing realtors about our realtor [webpage](#) that can provide information to potential families.
- Celebrations and Recognitions - As we look at the calendar for 2024-25 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 2024-25.
- 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.

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● 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 will be running a Targeted Enrollment Promotion on the platform in the 2024-25 school year and will continue to regularly update our Niche profiles with content.
- Superintendent on LinkedIn - Superintendent Rundle increased his presence on LinkedIn in the 2023-24 school year. We will continue in 2024-25 to utilize the Superintendent's presence on LinkedIn to brand our district and leadership as leaders in the education realm.
- New Kindergarten Enrollment Yard Signs - Last year we purchased two school years worth of Kindergarten Enrollment yard signs to place in the community prior to enrollment opening for Kindergarten in 2024 and 2025.
- 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, LinkedIn and Threads have informed and engaged our community about the many great things happening in the district. 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.
- Flash Alert and School Delay Notifications - We will continue to use the Flash Alert notification platform, our website, our email and text delivery platform, and our social media platforms to notify our community of school delays or cancellations due to weather. We will continue to remind families about confirming their email addresses and phone numbers in Skyward to make sure 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. We will look to continue this in 2024-25.
- Student Photos Archive For Marketing Purposes - In the 2024-25 school year we will be hiring a professional photographer to take classroom and educational setting photos of district students to use in our marketing materials, on our platforms, and in community presentations. This will be the start of an archive of photos that district staff, school staff, our PTAs, and MISF will have access to use how they see fit for the purposes of marketing our district.
- Stories Highlighting Each School - In the 2024-25 school year we will be contracting with a freelance reporter to produce eight stories, one on each school, including Crest, and one on the district. These will be in-depth stories written by a new voice heralding our district's excellence.

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- Goal 3 - Support strong, positive connections between individual schools and their communities through coordinated communications.

Strategies and Actions for Goal 3 Implementation and Success

- Websites - Our communications coordinator will continue to work with school website coordinators to use the platform to create strong and positive connections between the schools and the students and families they serve.
- Capital and Facilities Updates - This summer as we announced MI Phone-Free Schools we highlighted that the Yondr pouches were funded through the capital and technology levy. We will continue to look for ways to highlight our communities' support through the capital and technology levy.
- Leadership Support - Our communications coordinator will continue to meet with MIHS administrators weekly and IMS administrators twice a month to learn what is going on at both schools that we can celebrate on our platforms. This school year Ian will also start meeting with our elementary administrators on a regular basis for the same purpose as MIHS and IMS.
- School and Athletic Calendars - Our communications coordinator will continue to work closely with MISD Facilities Coordinator Rachel Hood and MIHS Athletic Director Lindsey Blaie on developing event calendars for our schools and district that will be highlighted on our websites and on our social media platforms.

- Goal 4 – Create key messages and talking points about MISD to establish a clear voice throughout all communication platforms.

Strategies and Actions for Goal 4 Implementation and Success

- Annual Report - Our annual report, which has won a design award from the WSPRA two of the last three years, will continue to be produced. Last year the annual report was eight pages, which we are looking at replicating in 2024-25.
- School Profiles - We will continue to create school profile documents in the 2024-25 school year. These documents will continue to be used to highlight our schools at community events and on our websites.
- Chamber of Commerce Business Directory -We will be purchasing a third of a page ad in the Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce Business Directory . The Business Directory is published every two years and can be found at Chamber businesses and other locations on the island.

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Monitoring

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

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.

Addendum 1 Bond - February 2025

We know the Mercer Island School District Board of Directors is considering presenting a bond to our community in February 2025.

This Communications Plan will be updated with communications plans for this bond should the Board of Directors move forward with the bond.

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Addendum 1 Bond - February 2025



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Addendum - continued