



# Hutto ISD Communication Plan

## Updated September 2024

### **District Mission**

Hippo Nation inspires all students to achieve excellence in academics, character, and community.

### **District Vision**

Inspiring Excellence

### **The Hutto ISD Communications & Community Relations Department**

The Hutto ISD Communications and Community Relations Department (CCR) is committed to facilitating reliable and timely communication within the District and the community.

- A. It is our goal to promote community awareness of the District, address issues and encourage participation and increase community involvement. Our office recognizes its responsibility to ensure open communication and understanding of Hutto ISD, its endeavors and its accomplishments.
- B. The CCR Department is also committed to helping grow and propel the Hutto Education Foundation.
- C. The primary functions of the department are:
  - General District Communication and Updates
  - Community Relations / Business & Community Outreach
  - Media Relations
  - Marketing / Branding
  - Crisis Communication
  - Student and Staff Recognition
  - Election Oversight
  - Bond Oversight Communication
  - Public Information Requests



## Communications Department Staff

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>Noelle Newton</b>	Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations
<b>Juanita Lucio</b>	District Receptionist and Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations
<b>Eliska Padilla</b>	Communications Manager
<b>Leonard Abramovich</b>	Web and Creative Services Manager
<b>Claudia Cardwell</b>	Director of Hutto Education Foundation
<b>Kurt Mogonye</b>	Multimedia and Bond Communications Specialist

## Communications (Priorities and Audience)

### A. Communication Priorities

1. Supporting campus and District administration with communication/messaging
2. Assisting departments with communication/messaging:
  - Parent and Family Engagement
  - School Nutrition
  - School Support / Registration / Instructional Programming
  - Athletics
  - HEF (Hutto Education Foundation)
  - Transportation
  - Business Office
  - Human Resources
3. Managing the website and training staff on website use
4. Serving as the District's spokesperson
5. Managing District mass communication software (ParentSquare) and training staff on use it
6. Responding to public information requests and subpoenas



7. Creating videography and photography
8. Planning and promoting District-sponsored events

**B. Other Communication and Community Relations Functions**

1. Performing election oversight
2. Overseeing marketing and logo use
3. Preparing Board Briefs
4. Supporting the Board of Trustees with messaging

**C. Audiences**

1. Internal

These individuals have a vested interest and sense of “ownership” in Hutto ISD. They operate off the District’s mission and vision statements and core beliefs. Solid and consistent internal communications improves employee relations and trust between Hutto ISD administration and staff.

a. **Staff**

We prioritize communicating with staff before we communicate with parents and community members and do so whenever possible.

The Superintendent sends a weekly “mid-week message” to staff that includes highlights, important dates and encouragement. Staff are invited to send in “kudos” bragging on other staff members for recognition in the mid-week messages.

b. **School Board**

The Board receives important communications directly from the Superintendent when it is determined they need to know first.

The Board receives a weekly Friday Report from the Superintendent and the Executive Leadership Team that includes highlights, situational information, and updates on major projects and initiatives.

2. External

This audience generally has a sense of community pride for Hippo Nation and recognizes the value a strong public education system brings to the community. Many of these are taxpayers who have an interest in understanding the expenditures of tax dollars as it relates to schools.

- a. Parents
- b. Students
- c. Community (non-parent), including senior citizens
- d. Businesses



- e. PTAs
- f. Media
- g. Government (city, county, state)
- h. Religious leaders
- i. Neighboring school districts
- j. HOAs
- k. Prospective residents

## News and Communication

Communication channels can be unlimited, especially considering individual conversations that take place on a daily basis. The following are the main channels the Communications & Community Relations Department has identified as priority in sharing information, recognizing there may be occasion to use a channel not listed here.

### A. Communication Channels (Electronic)

1. District/Campus Websites
2. Email/ParentSquare
3. Social Media (District and campuses)
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Instagram
  - YouTube
4. Phone
5. Text
6. E-Flyers (PeachJar)
7. [Hippo Monthly e-newsletter](#)
8. News Media
9. School marquee signs



<b>Channel</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
District website Hipponation.org including Incident Updates page for emergency situations	All	Continual updates
School websites	Parents & Staff of individual campus; prospective families	As needed
ParentSquare - Direct email, voicemail, text, app push notifications	Parents, Students 6-12 grade & Staff	As needed; text and voicemail should be for emergencies or highly important notices/reminders
District Facebook	All	Multiple times per week
Campus and Department Facebook	Anyone who has an interest	As needed
District Twitter	All	Multiple times per week
District Instagram	All	Multiple times per week
District YouTube	All	When videos are shared
PeachJar eflyers	Parents	Weekly
Campus Marquee Signs	Anyone who drives by, but mostly for parent reminders	As needed

**B. Communication Channels (Print)**

1. Newspaper - Community Impact, Taylor Press (both also have online presence)
2. Flyers
3. District [Hippo Nation Magazine](#), mailed to homes annually in the spring

**C. District Promotional Calendar**

Guidelines for placing events on the District calendar for public view include:

1. Regular events
  - a. Registration
  - b. Start of School
    - School Supply Information
    - Back-to-School Rally



- Meet the Teacher Nights
  - Meet The Hippos
  - c. [District Recognition Calendar](#)
  - d. Testing dates
2. Social media post calendar
- a. Parallel to the regular calendar but with scheduled deliveries
  - b. Quarterly review of social media analytics

## Communication (Timeline) Protocols

Timeline protocols can vary depending on the situation. Generally, in “high alert” events, the Superintendent will notify the School Board first.

### 1. Standard Information

In standard informational situations, the Board may be notified before an email goes out to staff. Most communications will include:

- a. Notification to the Board by the Superintendent or a member of the executive leadership team
- b. Email to Staff
- c. Email to Parents & Students (as necessary in 6-12 grades)
- d. Post message to website
- e. Post to social media platforms
- f. Release message to media upon request or as needed

### 2. Order of Release of Information\*

- a. Release to School Board
- b. Release to Staff
- c. Release to Parents
- d. Release to Community
- e. Release to Local Government
- f. Release to Local Media

**\*NOTE:** This order is a guide. There will be times and situations when the order may not follow exactly as above.

### 3. Interface with Campuses

- a. Communication “Request for Publicity” Form



Available in Skyward for parents during the registration process. Allows parents to opt out of photos or videos for external release.

- b. Review of campus websites and social media
- c. Include story-telling relevant to the campus community

#### **4. Campus Key Communicator Protocols and Guidelines**

- a. Identify Key Communicators annually
- b. Offer training throughout the year, meeting monthly
- c. Determine story-telling relevant to the campus

### **Media Contact Information**

#### **A. Media Inquiry Guidelines**

Hutto ISD is a closed District. All media inquiries must go through the Communications Department. Call as early in the school day as possible with an inquiry. Much coordination is required to accommodate media where we have students. Our campus hours are (as of the 2024-25 school year):

Elementary (Pre-K - 5) - 7:30 a.m. to 2:55 p.m.

Middle (6-8) - 8:15 a.m. to 3:40 p.m.

High School (9-12) - 9 a.m. to 4:25 p.m.

The Communications Department will not always be in a position to honor tight deadlines requested by the media or to arrange interviews.

Media is not allowed on Hutto ISD campuses or buildings without an authorization from or the presence of the Communications Executive Director or a representative of the department. Spontaneous interviews with students, staff, or parents are not allowed on campus property. Interviews can be obtained from any public place.

We are required by law to ensure any child interviewed or photographed has a current media authorization. This is for their safety.

These guidelines extend to school buses or other forms of District transportation. Even though a Hutto ISD bus or vehicle may not be located on a campus, the media is not allowed to board a bus to talk with students, staff, or parents.

In the event that the Communications Executive Director is out of the office, all media



inquiries should be directed to the [Communications Manager](#), then other [communications staff](#).

Communication is a priority of Hutto ISD. The Communications Department will work with the media to ensure a positive, fair, and successful partnership.

**Communications Department:**

**512-759-7179**

[pio@huttoisd.net](mailto:pio@huttoisd.net)

**A. Mainstream broadcast**

1. FOX 7 Austin
2. KVUE
3. KXAN
4. CBS Austin
5. Spectrum
6. KLBJ Radio
7. KUT News Radio

**B. Print media**

1. Community Impact
2. Taylor Press
3. Austin American-Statesman

## Website Organization

**A. District control**

The Communications Department has edit and management rights over all web pages at both the District, campus and department levels.

**B. Department control**

Department directors are given edit privileges for their specific department pages and are expected to keep them updated with relevant information.

**C. Campus control**

Each campus appoints a website editor who is responsible for updating that campus's web page on a regular basis.

**D. Teacher control**

Each teacher is required to maintain a web page that should contain a minimum of





a picture, email, class schedule, and conference hours. Teachers have the ability to also post syllabi, class expectations, etc.

**E. Extracurricular control**

These pages require approval of the Communications & Community Relations Department and are maintained by staff members.

## Emergency Situation Communications

### A. Inclement Weather

1. Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Director of Transportation monitor weather and road conditions, if necessary, and alert the Executive Leadership Team.
  - a. Participate in weather calls (NWS [National Weather Service], WilCo OEM [Office of Emergency Management], other Districts)
  - b. Monitor surrounding districts' conditions
  - c. Monitor communications directors GroupMe app communication
  - d. Consider the following for a delayed start, closure, or shift to remote learning:
    - i. Duration and impact of the weather event
    - ii. Recommendations from the National Weather Service and Office of Emergency Management
    - iii. Road conditions, which affect student and staff travel, we live in an area with numerous overpasses and bridges
    - iv. Travel time for staff given the fact that only  $\frac{1}{3}$  of Hutto ISD staff live in the immediate area, most travel from outside the District
    - v. Ability to weatherproof for ice on sidewalks, ramps, and entrances to school buildings
  - e. As weather conditions worsen we may post "We are monitoring..." message on Facebook.
  - f. If a late start, early release, delay or cancellation is called, messages are sent in the following order:
    - i. Superintendent notifies Board Members
    - ii. Email/Voicemail/Text to Parents, Staff and Students (6-12 grades) - sent simultaneously
    - iii. Utilizing ParentSquare "Smart Alert" voice option to ensure messaging hits all District contacts by phone.
    - iv. District website alert
    - v. Social Media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)



- vi. Tag news outlets online and email (Community Impact, Taylor Press, KVUE, FOX 7, KXAN, KEYE, 590 KLBJ, Statesman)

**B. Campus Situation\*** During times when there is an incident at a Hutto ISD school (i.e. evacuation, weapon, dangerous animal, fire, explosion, bus accident, gas leak, bomb threat, etc.), the District will utilize the mass communication platform, ParentSquare, to send instant notifications via text message, email, app push notifications within the ParentSquare app. The District may need to communicate in an urgent and timely manner for emergency situations, such as unanticipated early dismissals, delayed openings due to inclement weather, a campus or District incident, or security threat. In which case, recorded voice messages, social media messages, and an incident update webpage may also be utilized.

1. [Emergency Communication Procedures](#) provides detailed messages and actions to be taken per type of incident.
2. [Emergency Management Standard Response Protocols](#)
3. Communication Protocol Release: School Board > Cabinet > Staff > Parents > Community > Media > Local Government



### Communication Summary Matrix

Type	Instant Notification (Email/Text/App)	Recorded Call (Smart Alert)	Social Media	Home Page Alert/Incident Updates Website
<b>Weather Cancellation or delay</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Bus Incident with or without injury</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Hold</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Secure</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Lockdown</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Evacuation no reunification</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Evacuation with Reunification</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Shelter</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*All communications are situational and can be elevated to include a need for social media, recorded voicemail and activation of the Incident Updates web page.				



## Video Program and Production

### A. District Informational Videos

The District produces informational videos for reinforcement of important information, such as Back to School Rally, “How to” instructions on apps such as Skyward, construction updates, etc.

- B. The number one goal of the CCR department is to tell the story of the District. This includes creating compelling video content of successes, District events, and supporting District departments to share important messaging. All video content is shared on the District [YouTube channel](#), social media and on the District website.

## Elections

- A. Communication of Board of Trustees’ candidate application packets
- B. Receiving candidates’ applications
- C. Working with Williamson County Elections for approvals
- D. Promoting new Board members upon being elected
- E. Bond Elections

We work with architects' Bond counsel to assist in the design and promotion of Bond Election information. We also work with the Superintendent and other executive leadership to help promote Bond information workshops and to ensure staff understand the “dos and don’ts” expectations of them during a campaign phase.

- F. Bond Oversight & Construction Reports

We work with the Operations and Business Departments to keep the community informed of the progress of Bond sales and construction projects.

## Marketing and Branding

### A. Developing logos and logo use guidelines

In the spring of 2022, the Communications Department updated the District logos, fonts and colors. Hutto ISD's Brand Standards and Guidelines are published [online](#) to preserve and protect the image of Hippo Nation. Contact the CCR Department for design requests and approval. In the summer of 2022, campus logos were created for all campuses. Logos of student clubs and organizations, departments, etc. have been updated to the correct ‘Rocking H’ version and have been ensured to follow the branding guidelines. District and campus logos have been uploaded to the District Canva account whereas all District employees have access to using and applying them to their documents and designs. The Communications Department has worked collaboratively with Hutto ISD Athletics and



vendors. This was to ensure a consensus branding approach that was approved by the Communications Department in regards to the branding guidelines. This created a consistent and clear communication to Athletics' vendors when producing materials such as banners, uniforms, equipment that carried Hutto ISD branding.

**B. Managing trademarks and copyrights of Hutto ISD logo and wordmarks**

Hutto ISD is the owner of its logos, images, and phrases. We will continue to manage the copyright and trademark protection as the logos and wordmarks connected with Hutto ISD emerge. The Communications Department works to flag down any false use of our logo, likeness, etc. by directing those to our licensing agreements and standards to comply and follow our agreements. An additional logo sheet was created to assist in tracking Hutto ISD's inventory of logos to give to vendors.

**C. Developing and managing licensing agreements**

Companies that use Hutto ISD trademarked logos must sign a licensing agreement with the District if they intend to use the logo for profit (Hutto ISD organizations are excluded from this requirement as well non-profit organizations). In an effort to protect its legal rights in these trademarks, yet allow outside vendors and groups an opportunity to utilize them as well, the District has implemented a [licensing program](#). This program benefits non-District affiliated groups, vendors, and manufacturers by allowing them to carry and sell Hutto ISD merchandise as an officially designated licensed dealer. The program also positions the District to oversee and assure the integrity of our brand through proper usage, while providing a financial benefit to the District through royalty fees. To become an officially designated licensed dealer, a form must be completed that asks for Company Name, Requestor Name, Intended Use, and address of the requestor.

**D. Supporting Hippo Spirit Store at Hutto Memorial Stadium**

Hutto Memorial Stadium features a retail store for Hippo apparel and other promotional merchandise. The Communications Department will be involved in the design and selection of products and will promote the store regularly.

**E. Organizing and promoting school major events**

As the mouthpiece of the District, the CCR Department will promote major school events, taking leadership in organizing some events as well.



## Public Information Requests

Hutto Independent School District, as a local governmental entity, is subject to the requirements of the [Texas Public Information Act](#).

All requests must be submitted in writing and should contain: name, address, phone number and email, if available, and description of the information and/or document being requested. To help expedite requests, please be specific in what you are requesting.

All requests must be sent as follows:

- By mail: Hutto Independent School District Public Information Request, Attention: Communications Department, 200 College St. Hutto, Texas 78634
- By email: [pio@huttoisd.net](mailto:pio@huttoisd.net). Subject heading should read "Public Information Request" or "Open Records Request." **All requests by email should be directed to this email address only.** Requests sent to any other email address will not be considered a valid request and will not trigger the timeframe required by the TPIA.
- In person: 200 College St., Hutto, TX 78634

Hutto ISD works to meet information requests in compliance with state and federal laws. To the extent possible, requests are handled in the order they are received. By law, Hutto ISD has 10 business days to determine whether or not to seek an Attorney General's ruling regarding information that may be exempted from public disclosure.

## Social Media Use

### A. Expectations / Guidelines

Hutto ISD's Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram accounts are provided for the District community by the Hutto ISD Communications and Community Relations Department. We will update these pages as often as possible to share as much as we can about Hutto ISD and the achievements of the students and staff as well as other relevant District community information.

All posting of comments on any Social Media page are at the discretion of the page administrators. The intent of this policy is not to keep any negative or critical information from being posted, but to protect the privacy and rights of Hutto ISD staff and students. Naming specific employees or students in a negative way will not be allowed (and is just generally rude). The page administrators will review all postings to make sure they do not run afoul of the rules nor of the District's Acceptable Use



Guidelines regarding the Internet and the Hutto ISD Electronic Communications System.

We welcome your thoughts and comments and look forward to what you have to say. However, we will not leave postings that:

- Break the law or encourage others to do so. This includes respecting copyright and fair use laws. If you are talking about somebody else's work, reference this or the person, and where possible include a link.
- Contain abusive or inappropriate language or statements. This includes remarks that are racist, homophobic, and sexist as well as those that contain obscenities or are sexually explicit.
- Easily identify students and/or staff in defamatory, abusive, or generally negative terms.
- Do not show proper consideration for others' privacy or are considered likely to offend or provoke others – i.e. don't pick fights or goad others into inflammatory debates. Nobody likes a bully.
- Are spam or unsolicited advertisements– i.e. repeatedly posting the same comment or comments that are simply advertising/promoting a service or product.

The page administrators reserve the right to not post or remove any comments at any time, for any reason. If you have a comment or would like to report an inappropriate comment for us to review, send an email to [pio@huttoisd.net](mailto:pio@huttoisd.net).

The District's social media sites are where the District will post official information. On occasion, information may be shared by individuals within the communications team on non-District sites, but this should not be an expectation due to the large number of community sites and the inability to continually monitor those.

Hutto ISD Staff should be familiar with District policy as it relates to social media use, including expectations on personal accounts.

Official Hutto ISD Platforms include:

1. Facebook
2. Twitter (X)
3. Instagram
4. LinkedIn



Please note, users can receive email and phone text messages of our updates as they are posted through the settings of your personal Facebook or Twitter account.

### **B. Social Media Analytics**

We will run analytics regularly on our main social media accounts to see which posts have the highest engagement, increases in followers, etc.

## **Community Relations**

A. Visit new businesses and deliver District swag bags

B. Civic engagement. The District has representation in the following organizations:

1. Hutto Chamber of Commerce
2. Hutto Rotary Club
3. Hutto Lions Club
4. Hutto YMCA
5. Economic Development Council
6. Hutto Power Breakfast
7. Hutto Women's Alliance

C. City of Hutto

We partner with the City to share important information and to work cooperatively in publicizing events and activities

## **Key Marketing and Communications Network**

- School Board
- Staff
- Parents
- Community
- Media
- Local Government

## **Digital Millennium Copyright Act**

Hutto ISD is registered as a service provider under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA).

### **The District is registered as:**

Hutto Independent School District (Hutto ISD)  
200 College Street





HUTTO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Communications &  
Community Relations

Hutto, TX 78634  
512-759-3771

**Its designated agent is:**

Noelle Newton

[noelle.newton@huttoisd.net](mailto:noelle.newton@huttoisd.net)