

PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
2024-2025 DEPARTMENT PLAN

Department Name: Communications

Department Contact: Hilda Ramirez Horvath

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Department Purpose

What does the department do?

The Communications Department builds relationships with students, employees, families/caregivers, and the community as a credible and consistent source of information for the Pasadena Unified School District. Responsibilities include: media relations, external communications, internal communication support, marketing, management and oversight of district and school websites, district social media, crisis communications, Public Records Act requests. The department includes KLRN. However, KLRN provides its own separate plan.

The Communications Department tells the stories of the District and supports its primary mission to prepare students to be successful in a changing world.

Department Services

What is a general list of services that your department provides?

Media relations; external communications; internal communications support; marketing; management and oversight of district and school websites; district social media; crisis communications; Public Records Act requests; District TV channel (KLRN) livestreaming of Board of Education meetings/other events; mass notifications; Town Halls and major district events.

Total Department Budget

What is your department's total budget?

\$1,284,324.00

Note:

The Communications budget includes personnel in Communications and KLRN. KLRN is a unit of the Communications department and operates a separate budget for supplies, hourly/overtime, and media management systems.

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Prior Year Reflection

This section of the department plan reviews the intent of prior department plans and the successes/challenges encountered while implementing the planned actions. This portion of the plan summarizes key learnings that inform the planning for the current year.

Prior Year Intended Outcomes

What did your department plan set out to achieve during the prior year?

Improve Crisis Communication
Increase In-person Outreach
Increase Marketing
Increase opportunities for engagement via earned media/content
Public Records Requests
Reciprocal Communication
Support understandable communication
Launch 24 new websites (district and schools)

Prior Year Achievement

Did the department achieve what it had outlined? How do you know?

For Crisis Communication, we achieved our goal of expanding the crisis communication flowchart, built a new crisis communication toolkit and trained district staff, trained the Communications dept. staff.

We know this was achieved by: a new crisis communication flowchart/toolkit shared with district and school administrators; Communications staff attended FEMA public information officer training (3) and district emergency operation training (4).

For Increased Personal Outreach, we know this was achieved by: number of festivals where we hosted booths (8) and estimated number of people reached (3025)

For Increased Marketing, we know this was achieved because we created a new visual branding guide that was shared with district administrators, hired 1 communications specialist for marketing/crisis, marketed and purchased media (print and digital) year-round for TK-12 enrollment.

For Increased opportunities for engagement via earned media/content, we know we achieved this with publication of the weekly PUSD Update in Eng/Span sent to 236,818 unique contact with 1.4 million pieces of information; district social media posts reached 224,380 users; 74,000 YouTube views. There were at least

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313 earned media mentions (TV/Radio/Online) that reached an audience of 159.5 million. Sentiment was 64% positive; 23.5% neutral; 12.3% negative.

For Public Records Act requests, actions taken to decrease amount of time spent to fulfill requests did not consistently result in faster fulfillment.

For Reciprocal Communication, we know this was achieved by hosting of two town halls, 3 community meetings on special education, three school community meetings, the annual State of Schools event, and the annual Welcome Back all-staff event. We attended/hosted booths at 8 community events festivals, reaching approximately 3025 individuals; reports provided by PACTL to amplify PUSD information to traditionally hard-to-reach parents/guardians

To support understandable communication: we created writing for the web and editorial content guides for website editors and held two training sessions and 1:1 sessions to train them on the style guides. We trained office managers on the style guides. We developed presentation templates for use by department leaders.

For our goal "Update Websites," we know we achieved this by building and launching 24 new websites for all PUSD schools and the District. In 2023-24, district websites had 475,688 new and returning users.

Prior Year Successes, Challenges, and Learnings

What successes, challenges, and learnings should be highlighted from the prior year?

Crisis Communication:

Expanded crisis communication flowchart
New crisis communication toolkit for district and school administrators
Increased Communications Department training
Increased staff capacity for crisis communication

Increased Personal Outreach:

Hosted and staffed booths at 8 community festivals/events from October - June and reached estimated 3025 individuals

Increased Marketing:

Created a new visual branding guide for the district
Hired 1 communications specialist for marketing/crisis,
Purchased print and digital media year-round to support TK-12 enrollment.

Increased opportunities for engagement via earned media/content:

Weekly PUSD Update in Eng/Span sent to 236,818 unique contact with 1.4 million pieces of information;
District social media posts reached 224,380 users;
Videos: 74,000 YouTube views
At least 313 earned media mentions (TV/Radio/Online) that reached an audience

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Current Year Priorities

This section of the department plan provides a summary of the identified needs that are prioritized for informing the department plan's actions for the current year.

Data and Information Used for Plan Development

What data did you consider when developing this plan?

- Data gathered during the development of the Strategic Plan, including reports from the Enrollment Committee.
- Data gathered from Superintendent's 100-Day plan.
- Public support surveys
- Data presentations from job-alike webinars and organizations

Stakeholder Engagement/Input

What stakeholder engagement or information was used to inform this plan?

Meetings with school site leaders; department leaders; enrollment committee; student Think Tank; parent leaders; labor partners; community-based organizations; monitoring of Board requests

Key Data Findings/Information for This Plan

Based on data analysis and stakeholder information, what key data findings are considered in the development of this plan?

Stakeholders value consistent weekly communication; consistency and content of social media posts; updated and consistent websites; seeing PUSD booths at community events; increased visibility of Superintendent at school sites

Key findings:

Individuals not directly connected with PUSD are not aware of full breadth of programs available in PUSD.

Students use social media as their primary source of information about the district, and use the website primarily to access Canvas accounts and high school student store/tickets.

All audiences need information presented in clear and understandable language. All audiences need information presented in clear and understandable language.

Audiences (students, families, staff, community) get information about the district via three main sources: 1) family/friends/district employees, 2) district channels, 3) local media.

Internal communication is key.

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Current Plan Priorities

Based on the key data findings, what needs emerged from your Department's root cause analysis, and which of these needs are given priority for this planning cycle?

- Maintaining the quality of communication from the district;
- Maintain frequency of communication from the district;
- Maintain consistency of communication from the district;
- Maintain opportunities for engagement via earned media/content;
- Maintain district participation in community festivals/events;
- Coordinate presentation of the breadth of PUSD programming;
- Develop system/support for Public Records Act requests

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Current Year Planned Actions and Metrics

This section of the department plan provides a summary of the planned actions that address the identified priorities based on data analysis and stakeholder input. Metrics associated with monitoring and/or evaluating the effectiveness of the planned actions are summarized in this section.

What action could you take to address the identified needs of your department?

What would you be able to monitor throughout the year (quarterly or more than twice per year) to know that your actions are creating a change?

Theory Of Action

| If we... | Then... | Which will... |
|--|---|---|
| Produce weekly district communication | students/families/employess will have a predictable schedule for receiving information about the district | maintain frequency of communication |
| Produce posts >=3 times on District social media | students/families/employess will have a predictable schedule for receiving information about the district | maintain frequency of communication |
| District social media updates >=3 times week | students/families/employees will have a consistent source of information directly from the district | maintain consistency of communication |
| Quarterly district communication on bond programs | students/families/employees/community will have a consistent source of information directly from the district | maintain consistency of communication |
| Weekly earned media stories to local press | students/families/employees/communities will have a consistent source of information directly from the district | maintain consistency of communication |
| Semi-annual staff training on district style guides and website editing, production of templates; onboarding new staff | students/families/employees/community will have access to consistent, understandable, high quality information directly from the district | Maintain quality of communication |
| Professional development for Communications staff on public relations practices, emerging issues | students/families/employees/community will have access to consistent, understandable, and timely information directly from the district | Maintain quality of communication |
| Coordinate with PUSD departments/schools/educational partners to develop collateral material, campaigns and events | students/families/employees/communities will have a consistent source of information on the breadth of district programs | coordinate presentation of breadth of District programs |
| Increase internal capacity to process PRAs and add software solutions | students/families/employees/community will have a consistent source of information directly from the district | develop system/support for PRAs |

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| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Maintain opportunities for engagement via earned media/content | students/families/employees/community will have consistent access to information about the district | coordinate presentation of breadth of District programs |
|--|---|---|

PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Communications

2024-2025

Public Information Officer - Hilda Ramirez Horvath

Communications

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Comm. Specialist, Marketing | Lisa Nguyen |
| Web Design Specialist | Sunghoon Eom |
| Administrative Assistant | Melissa Hernandez |

KLRN

Director - Beth Leyden

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| TV Producer/Director | David Doperoy |
| TV Producer/Director | Oscar (Manuel) Laguna |
| TV Producer/Director (.5 FTE) | Nancy Ontiveros |