

2025-26 Strategic Communications Plan

Introduction

The Hillsboro School District Communications department is committed to encouraging and enhancing open, honest and respectful communication with all constituent groups. We strive to provide accurate, relevant and timely information through a variety of channels to build trust, strengthen relationships, and positively impact student achievement.

This plan is intended to provide both a framework within which Communications staff coordinate and prioritize their activities, and also a reference for constituents as to the department's areas of focus.

Team

The Communications department comprises four paid staff members:

Beth Graser, Communications Officer

graserbe@hsd.k12.or.us

503-844-1772

Key responsibilities: District spokesperson, media inquiries, public records requests, press releases, articles, parent/community/staff message creation and dissemination, key initiative distillation, legislative affairs/advocacy, Public Information Officer (PIO) duties, incident response, bond development coordination, Strategic Plan administration, school-based grants, Superintendent appearances.

Jahmai Cherry, Multimedia Specialist

cherryj@hsd.k12.or.us

503-844-1762

Key responsibilities: Graphic design, brand management, marketing/advertising, collateral material creation (brochures, flyers, posters, etc.), videos, event coverage, articles, management of district messaging platform: ParentSquare, key message dissemination.

Justin Arey, Web Specialist/Designer

areyj@hsd.k12.or.us

503-844-1756

Key responsibilities: District website design/content, school website design and support, social media posting, survey creation/usability studies, flyer requests, photos, videos, event coverage at schools.

Katie Russell-Willis, Communications Specialist

russellk@hsd.k12.or.us, transfers@hsd.k12.or.us

503-844-1771

Key responsibilities: Student transfer processing, department support, event planning/coordination, back-to-school information compilation, district-level volunteer and donation management, business and community outreach/partnerships, Assistance League clothing program & Elks Holiday Basket program coordination.

Goals and Objectives

We aim to support the District's Strategic Plan and overall Strategic Objective of ensuring that all students graduate prepared for career, college, and life by focusing our efforts in the following areas:

1. Engage in strategic communications, marketing and branding;
2. Build relationships/community; and
3. Increase awareness, encourage involvement, and foster ownership of our schools and district.

Target Audiences

Also known as “patrons,” “constituent groups” or simply “constituents,” target audiences are the various people we want to be sure and consider as we’re developing communications. Individuals may fit into one or more classifications, and their affiliations may change over time.

- Students
- Staff
- Families
- Community
- Speakers of languages other than English
- Businesses
- Higher education
- Faith
- Alumni
- Elected officials
- Civic organizations
- Realtors
- City/County government
- Non-profit organizations
- Media

Key Messages

Although there are a wide range of things we want people to know about our schools and district, there are a handful of key messages that we feel encompass our core strengths and upon which we will focus.

1. We believe every student deserves to be supported by caring adults who know, value, and empower them to achieve their dreams.
2. We believe cultural, ethnic, racial, linguistic, and other diversities are assets that bring strength and richness to our schools.
3. We celebrate our students and provide them with opportunities that prepare them for the future.
4. We welcome and foster family, community, and organizational partnerships.

Strategies and Tactics

Strategies represent the things we intend to do to reach our stated goals and objectives. Tactics are the actions we take to implement each strategy.

Strategy I: *Deliver consistent, relevant and timely communications to our constituent groups using a variety of media and methods.*

Tactics:

- Prepare and disseminate weekly Hot News, bi-annual newsletter: *A Look Inside Hillsboro Schools*, press releases, and other information as needed.
 - Podcast recording allows another avenue for receiving Hot News, a way to do special features, etc.
- Expand the number of people receiving and spreading positive and accurate information about the school district.
 - Provide training and support to schools, departments, and individual staff members to approach communication methods and messages with consistency.
 - Strengthen and utilize partnerships and cross-marketing opportunities with City of Hillsboro, Library, HSF, Hillsboro 2035, Hillsboro Downtown Business Partnership, Chamber, and other groups to help tell District stories and share information on events
- Refine and strengthen protocols for emergency communications.
 - Create new and update existing messaging templates.
 - Continually update the Safety webpage to ensure information is easily accessible and understandable.
- Continually improve the District and school websites.
 - Provide ongoing training and support to users.
 - Complete systematic audits of pages to clean-up broken links, add missing information, respond to feedback, and enhance navigability.
 - Ensure content is fresh and timely - capitalize on theme months and activities taking place in the broader community
- Utilize social media and mobile applications as alternatives to District and school sites for sharing information.
 - Rollout ParentSquare as our new communication tool for mass email, phone calls, newsletters, and text messages/push notifications.
- Produce videos to help tell stories in an engaging way.

- Create videos that tell consistent, compelling stories about students, staff, curricular/extracurricular opportunities that will capture people’s attention.
- Aim for “short shot” videos for maximum impact and view completion.
- Work with print and broadcast media (TV, radio) to help tell our stories.

Strategy II: *Implement year twelve of the “Proud to be HSD” campaign to highlight our various constituents and generate pride in the system.*

Tactics:

- Hold Proud to be HSD Festival in partnership with the Hillsboro Farmers Market in May 2026.
- Continue messaging to explain that everyone in this community is an important part of Hillsboro School District, even if they don’t currently have kids in school. Use personal stories and testimonials in print, video and audio to reinforce the message.
- Work with community partners to cross-message.
 - Place free ads in City of Hillsboro’s *Hillsboro Happenings* and *City Views* newsletters.
 - Seek other partners and venues for cross-messaging.
- Create additional promotional materials to give visibility to the campaign.
- Participate in the 4th of July Parade.

Strategy III: *Facilitate/promote opportunities for constituents to engage in two-way communication with school and district staff.*

Tactics:

- Organize and hold events where people can connect with the Superintendent.
- Use surveys to solicit constituents’ feedback on District strengths, opportunities for improvement, and initiatives.
- Go to businesses, organizations, meeting places, existing forums to talk about the District and answer questions people may have.
 - Option to have virtual and/or hybrid meetings instead.
- Promote school and District meetings, trainings, forums and other events to encourage constituent participation.

Strategy IV: *Promote volunteerism and partnerships.*

Tactics:

- Faith organizations want to partner with our schools - ensure they are matched with opportunities.
- Actively solicit new partnerships with businesses and organizations.
- Encourage schools to submit volunteer opportunities and donation needs and to keep them current on the District website.
- Highlight specific volunteer opportunities/donation requests in Hot News.
- Recognize partners, volunteers and donors on our website, in our publications, in videos, etc.

Strategy V: *Increase engagement of parents and patrons of various racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups.*

Tactics:

- Collaborate with the Office of Equity, Access, and Engagement and the Department of Family and Community Engagement to identify communication channels and events that will reach our patrons who speak languages other than English.
 - Engage with parent affinity groups to help share messages.
 - Hold Superintendent forums aimed at Latinos/Spanish speakers.
- Provide communications materials in multiple languages to facilitate outreach efforts.

Channels and Timing/Frequency

How and when we will communicate with our various constituents is a very important element of this plan. Predictability and consistency of information flow helps build trust while reducing confusion and frustration.

Channels

- District website
- School websites
- Hot News e-newsletter
- Podcast
- District newsletter: *A Look Inside Hillsboro Schools*
- Social media: Facebook, X, Instagram
- Videos
- District app
- Surveys
- Media advisories/press releases
- Fact sheets
- Automated phone messages
- ParentSquare and/or Text messaging
- Letters/flyers
- Posters
- Brochures
- In-person meetings
- Community events
- Public service announcements (PSAs)

Timing/Frequency

Weekly

- Family/community Hot News e-newsletter
- Staff Hot News e-newsletter
- Hot News Podcast
- Monday Notes for administrators

Bi-Annually

- Career & College Pathways Steering Committee
- Superintendent Community Meetings
- Superintendent Forums in Spanish
- Hard-copy newsletter (*A Look Inside Hillsboro Schools*, mailed to all homes in District)

Periodic

- Strategic Plan progress reports
- Meetings, seminars, presentations
- Videos
- Special edition podcasts
- Surveys
- Community events

As needed

- Press releases
- Emergency communications
- Fact sheets
- Presentations

Ongoing

- Website updates
- News articles on website
- Social media posts/tweets

Desired Behaviors and Attitudes

If we implement our plan well, we expect to see the following from our internal and external constituent groups:

Internal Audiences

- Take pride in and demonstrate ownership of the District.
- Stay informed on key issues.
- Help spread positive messages about students, staff, schools and the District.
- Exhibit District values of caring, integrity and collaboration.

External Audiences

- Feel involved and engaged in their schools/District.
- Exhibit community pride and trust in their schools/District.
- Support Hillsboro School District.

Evaluation and Measurement

Determining the effectiveness of our efforts is a key component of the “RACE” model—communications’ version of a continuous improvement process—which stands for Research, Analyze, Communicate, Evaluate.

Though it can be difficult to correlate direct cause and effect as well as objectively measure progress in the area of communications, we will attempt to do so via the following:

- Website and social media metrics
- Staff surveys/feedback
- Parent/community surveys/feedback
- In-person listening sessions, empathy interviews
- Organizational partner (Chamber, City, County, Hillsboro Schools Foundation, etc.) surveys/feedback
- Constituent participation/engagement (qualitative and/or quantitative)

Contact Us

If you have comments, suggestions or questions about this communications plan, please feel free to contact us via phone (503-844-1500) or email (communications@hsd.k12.or.us). We value your input and strive to provide excellent communication and customer service.



Hillsboro School District
Communications Department
3083 NE 49th Place
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124
P. 503-844-1500
F. 503-844-1557
www.hsd.k12.or.us