

We Heard You: ISD in Action

Community & Engagement

Strong schools are built on strong relationships among staff, students, families, and the community. You told us you want clear, consistent communication and more opportunities to be involved — and we are taking action. This is a work in progress, but here are the improvements we've made, changes we have planned, and goals for future growth.

Clear Communication

- **ISD Insider – Monthly District Newsletter**
 - Improved to provide more in-depth content, beyond event recaps, photos, and save-the-date reminders.
 - Includes updates on district priorities, data highlights, progress toward goals, and spotlights on academics.
 - Aims to keep families informed, engaged, and connected to the decisions and initiatives shaping ISD's future.
- **New District Website: Redesigned for easier navigation and access to important resources**
 - Transitioned from an internally managed site to a platform designed specifically for school districts - a major project that began in the 2023–24 school year.
 - Launched June 2nd, with the Communications Team continuing to build content and refine the site structure to meet the needs of all stakeholders.
 - The final product will be a central communication hub that is ADA-compliant, available in multiple languages, and paired with a new ISD app that mirrors the website.
 - **Tip:** Use the search bar in the header of every page for the fastest way to find what you need.
- **ParentSquare Focus: Streamlined district and school communication, available in multiple languages**
 - We are in year two of our implementation of ParentSquare, and new this year, we have directed all staff to use PSQ as the tool to communicate with families. (We still have other platforms, like Seesaw for curriculum-based communication like sharing digital classwork, but all school-to-home communication is now done through PSQ.)
 - We recently built out the PSQ landing page on our district website, and we also auto-enrolled all verified contacts to receive emails and text messages instantly, which a user can always change in their individual settings.
- **Board Meetings: Video recordings posted the evening of each meeting for public access**
 - Our new Board of Education webpage now houses presentations, video recordings, agendas, and minutes all in one place.
 - We are also uploading the recordings the night of the meeting, as well as sending out district-wide communication as soon as the upload has been completed on the ISD YouTube channel.
- **Student-Parent Handbooks: Updated and accessible at all three levels - elementary, middle, and high school**
 - Any time updates are made, due to state law changes or for any other reason, the Board-approved version is uploaded to our website in English and Spanish
 - Parents/guardians are given the opportunity to review these handbooks at the beginning of each school year during online enrollment, when their acknowledgement is required to complete online registration.
 - Leadership has a process for revisions. If you have suggested edits or ideas, please share them with your building principal.

Family Input & Engagement

- **Culture & Climate Survey Analysis**
 - The ISD sent these out last school year, in partnership with DESE. The survey collects feedback from students, staff, and parents on several topic areas including safety, belonging, relationships, and school environment.
 - Formalized under **MSIP-6**, ISD leadership is analyzing results to improve processes and better meet the needs of families and staff, including building lessons specifically on topics in which stakeholders responded that the ISD needs to improve.

- **Parent Previews**

- Our Instructional coaches create **grade-level and content-area overviews** so families know what students are learning.
- These curriculum sheets include course descriptions and overviews for the classes offered in each ISD Academies Pathway.
- Our District Communications team is working to ensure the content is clear, uniform, and easily accessible on the website.

Building Stronger Partnerships

- **Interim Superintendent Roundtables** - Dr. Grant is hosting roundtable discussions with community groups to understand priorities, concerns, and feedback from different stakeholder groups.
 - **PTA President's Council & PTA Tea** - informal opportunities for PTA Unit Presidents to meet directly with district leadership.
 - **Hispanic Family Event** - dedicated evening for Spanish-speaking families to connect with staff and resources.
 - **Title I Family Events** - activities such as literacy/math nights, open houses, and parent workshops designed to involve caregivers in education. Some of our buildings have already hosted their Fall events. Keep an eye out for school communication if your student's building hasn't hosted theirs yet. Schools share information on curriculum, assessments, and tips for learning at home.
- **Pre-K Family Action Council**
 - Formerly the Policy Council, this group includes Head Start parents and community members who help guide early education programs.
 - Goal: engage **25–30 families per session** through personal invitations and phone calls.
 - The first meeting is scheduled for later this month at Sunshine Center. Reach out to ISD Early Education for more information.
- **ISD Academies Capstone Tours**
 - Launched last school year, Capstone Tours have been a huge success and will continue this year.
 - These tours are offered during parent-teacher conferences and give families the opportunity to explore the spaces where students learn, work on projects, and showcase their skills.

Coming Soon

- **CSIP Progress Updates**
 - District progress toward our shared goals will be shared with families through a **video update** and **one-page summary** which will be coming out in the near future.

Again, each of these areas is a work in progress, and we will continue to work on improvements. The Independence School District is committed to clear communication, meaningful family engagement, and building strong partnerships that support every student. We will keep listening, adjusting, and sharing updates so our families know the steps we're taking and the progress we're making together.