



Sun Prairie Area
School District

Futures depend on us...every child, every day.

COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT REPORT

2022-2025

PREPARED BY THE SPASD COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



WWW.SUNPRAIRIESCHOOLS.ORG

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INTRODUCTION

The district is coming to the end of a three-year communications plan. As we prepare to develop a new plan, we self-reviewed our current communication tools and efforts to help us better understand what is being used and the communication preferences of our various audiences. We created a communications committee of staff, students, parents/caregivers, and community members. The audit process will help us make data-driven communication decisions in the creation of a new plan.

DATA COLLECTION

Through this process, we conducted an inventory of current communication practices.

This included:

- Reviewed the analytics for the website
- Conducted a communications survey for parents/caregivers, staff, high school students, and community members.
- Conducted student focus groups.

All of this data can be found in this report.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Upon the audit's conclusion and the Communication Committee's work, we will have created and moved forward with a 3-year communications plan (2025–2026, 2026–2027, 2027–2028). The plan will be presented to the Board of Education in July.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Our Communications team is committed to ensuring that our students, families, and the community are connected to the District's work. We are responsible for the District's marketing, community engagement, and public relations efforts. We manage the website, publish newsletters, work with the media, provide crisis communications, and organize community relations events.



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COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY

We reviewed the Sun Prairie Area School District's current communication practices.

BLACKBOARD MASS NOTIFICATIONS

The District uses Blackboard as the primary tool for communicating with families. It has texting, email, and phone capabilities. Messages are received in Spanish for families whose home language preference is Spanish.

Year	Total Messages Sent Across All District Schools	Daily Average (based on 180-day school year)
2022-2023	3,799	21
2023-2024	3,928	22
2024-2025 (July-February)	2,690	24 (based on 110 completed school days)

SMARTPHONE APP

The District offers a smartphone app through Blackboard that helps families connect with resources and important information like nutrition menus and bell schedules. The app is available on both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

Year	Total Downloads	Total Updates	Most Viewed Pages
2022-2023	371	594	1. Menus 2. Infinite Campus 3. Top Stories 4. Calendar 5. Notifications
2023-2024	122	2,509 (significant redesign this year)	1. Menus 2. Infinite Campus 3. Top Stories 4. Calendar 5. Directory
2024-2025 (July-February)	127	319	<i>Data no longer provided by vendor.</i>

INFINITE CAMPUS

The District uses Infinite Campus to provide updates on grades, assignments, attendance, and more. Teachers use this tool to message families directly.

PEACHJAR DIGITAL FLYERS

Using an electronic flyer system, we connect our families to community events and activities. A weekly email containing new flyers relevant to their school/age level is sent to families every Wednesday. The flyers are also archived on each school webpage for families to view.

Data Set	District Flyers	Open Rate	Paper Savings	Trees Saved
SPASD Average per school	120 District total: 1,813	52.6%	222,388 District total: 3,335,822	27 District total: 400
State Average per school	46	57.6%	121,349	15
Based on data from the 2024–2025 school year.				

DISTRICT NEWSLETTERS (ELECTRONIC AND MAILED)

The District offers several newsletters a year to keep families and the community connected to the great things happening in our District. Past newsletters are archived under the “Community” tab and “District Newsletters.” Some examples include:

- *The Sun Prairie Experience*
- Back to School Newsletter
- In Focus
- Every Family, Every Day

Year	Views	Number of Newsletters	Average Views per Newsletter
2023–2024	100,123	61	1,641
2024–2025 (July–February)	88,069	41	2,148
Data for District-wide electronic newsletters			

SCHOOL NEWSLETTERS

Each school principal creates and delivers a weekly or monthly newsletter.

Year	Views	Number of Newsletters	Average Views per Newsletter
2022-2023	378,312	327	1,157
2023-2024	532,493	406	1,312
2024-2025 (July-February)	285,976	368	777

STAFF NEWSLETTERS

The Communications Team releases a weekly template to which directors and managers add content. The staff newsletter is sent every Sunday at 4 pm. On average, there is a 100% open rate.

Year	Weekly Average Views
2023-2024	2,089
2024-2025 (July-February)	1,856



SOCIAL MEDIA

The Sun Prairie Area School District has a social media presence across several platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM

Facebook and Instagram are used to highlight the District's success, challenges, and stories about our students, staff, and families.

Year	Average Monthly Page Reach	Average Monthly Page Engagement	Average Monthly Page & Profile Visits	Audience Growth
2022-2023	28,640	6,268	9,040	+579
2023-2024	39,333	5,687	11,920	+627
2024-2025 (July-February)	39,186	4,470	9,633	+202

NEXTDOOR

The District utilizes Nextdoor to share important updates with community members.

Year	Impressions
2023 (March-June)	5,179
2023-2024	23,622
2024-2025 (July-February)	42,168

LINKEDIN

The District utilizes LinkedIn to promote the District to prospective and current employees.

Year	Impressions
March 30, 2024 – March 29, 2025	8,823

YOUTUBE

The District has a YouTube Channel where we share school board screencasts, student and staff videos, and program features.

Year	Views	Published Videos	Audience Growth
2022-2023	9,715	104	+40
2023-2024	73,637 (high viewership of BHM videos)	67	+257
2024-2025 (July-February)	4,874	48	+17

DISTRICT BRAND ANTHEM

The District’s brand anthem video, “Like Nowhere Else,” is used to promote our District to current and prospective students, staff, families, and community members. Created in partnership with a third-party contractor, the video details what makes our District a unique place to learn and work.

Views	Audience Retention Rate
5,750	Over 50%



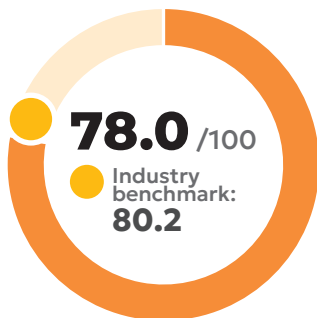
WEBSITE AUDIT

The District website www.sunprarieschools.org is a key tool for communicating, intended to be the first place for students, staff, family members, and community members to go when looking for information about the District.

Year	Total Active Users	Average Active Users per Month	Engagement Rate	Most Viewed Pages
2022–2023	285,800	23,817	60.1%	1. Homepage 2. Calendar & Bell Schedules 3. SP West Homepage 4. SP East Homepage 5. Staff Directory
2023–2024	347,000	28,917	63.5%	1. Homepage 2. Calendar & Bell Schedules 3. Staff Directory 4. SP West Homepage 5. SP East Homepage
2024–2025 (July–February)	218,000	27,250	62.4%	1. Homepage 2. Calendar & Bell Schedules 3. Staff Directory 4. SP East Homepage 5. SP West Homepage

Website benchmarking from Sitelmprove:

Digital Certainty Index



Measures how good our website is and how easy it is to use. The final score is based on how accessible, trustworthy, and ready for search engines the website is.

Quality Assurance



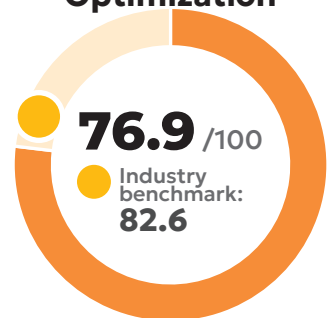
Checks our website for things like broken links, misspelled words, and outdated content to make sure visitors have a smooth and safe experience on every page.

Accessibility



Helps find and fix website problems that can make it hard for some people to use, making sure the website is friendly for everyone and meets the rules for web accessibility.

Search Engine Optimization



Checks how well our website shows up in search engine results and compares our score to similar websites in our industry.

STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

We held a series of student focus groups at Sun Prairie East and West High Schools. We asked the group to share areas of improvement with us. Here is the AI-assisted summary of key themes from notes taken from the focus groups:

1. INFORMATION OVERLOAD & REDUNDANCY

Too many emails and notifications
(Infinite Campus, attendance, random messages)

Repetitive communication
(e.g., multiple calls and emails about attendance)

Confusing or overly long messages

3. CLARITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Difficulty finding key info
(e.g., attendance)

Confusing platforms
(Google Classroom, Infinite Campus)

Lack of context in communications

2. LACK OF TIMELY OR RELEVANT COMMUNICATION

Teachers and families not informed
about important events
(e.g., pipe burst, incidents)

Desire for more targeted and meaningful updates
(e.g., HSV and Asian Club news)

4. AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Messages not tailored appropriately
(e.g., care lessons not relevant for older students)

Frustration with irrelevant or generic email intros

5. CALENDAR & SCHEDULE TRANSPARENCY

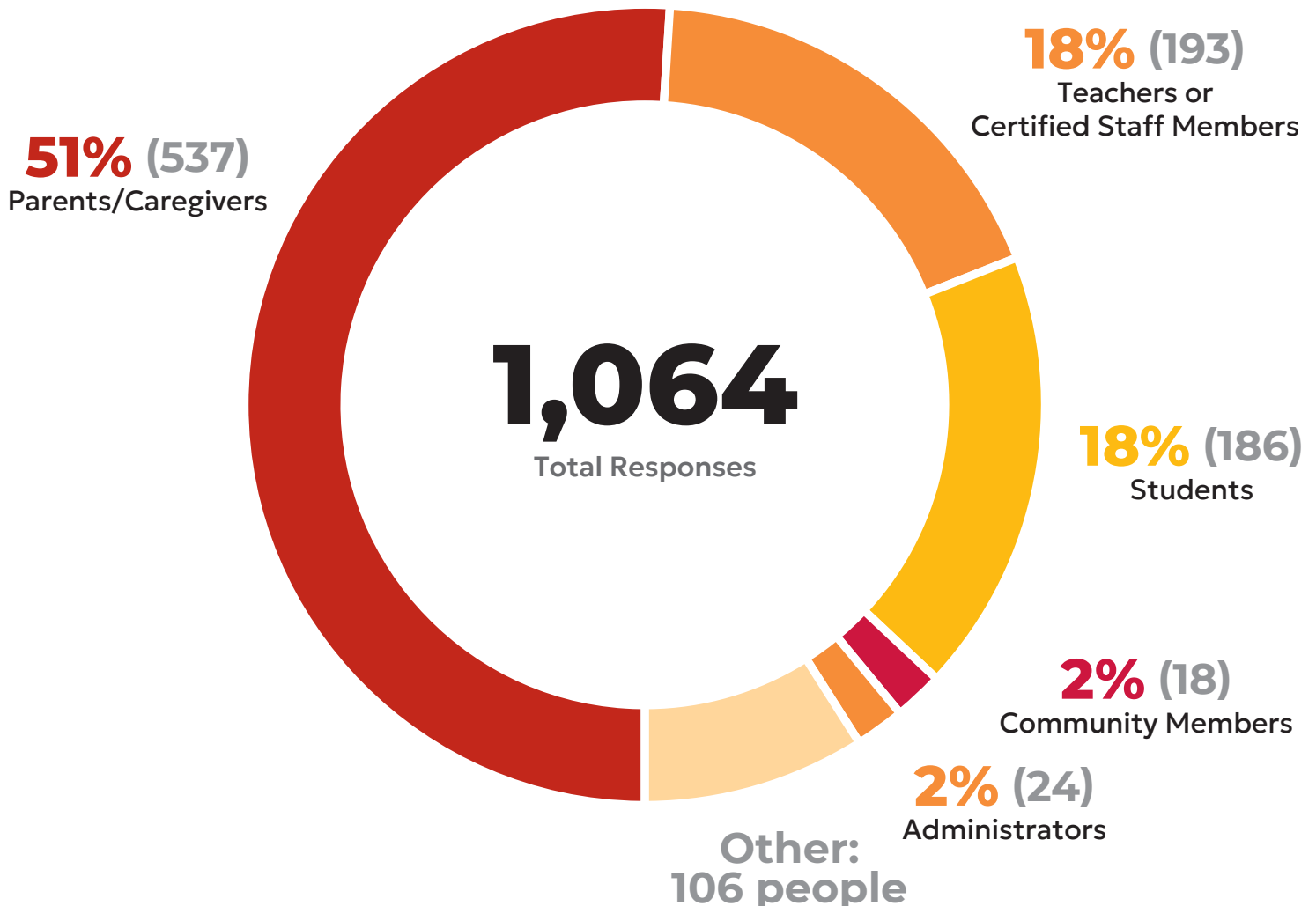
Requests for clearer communication about schedule
changes and days off

COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY REPORT

We conducted a survey to continuously improve the communications experience for our students, staff, parents/caregivers, and community. The survey was sent out using a Google survey and was open from February 1 to 28, 2025. The survey was designed to measure the effectiveness of the District's current communication efforts and show where we can improve.

We will use the survey results to inform the development of our next Communications Plan.

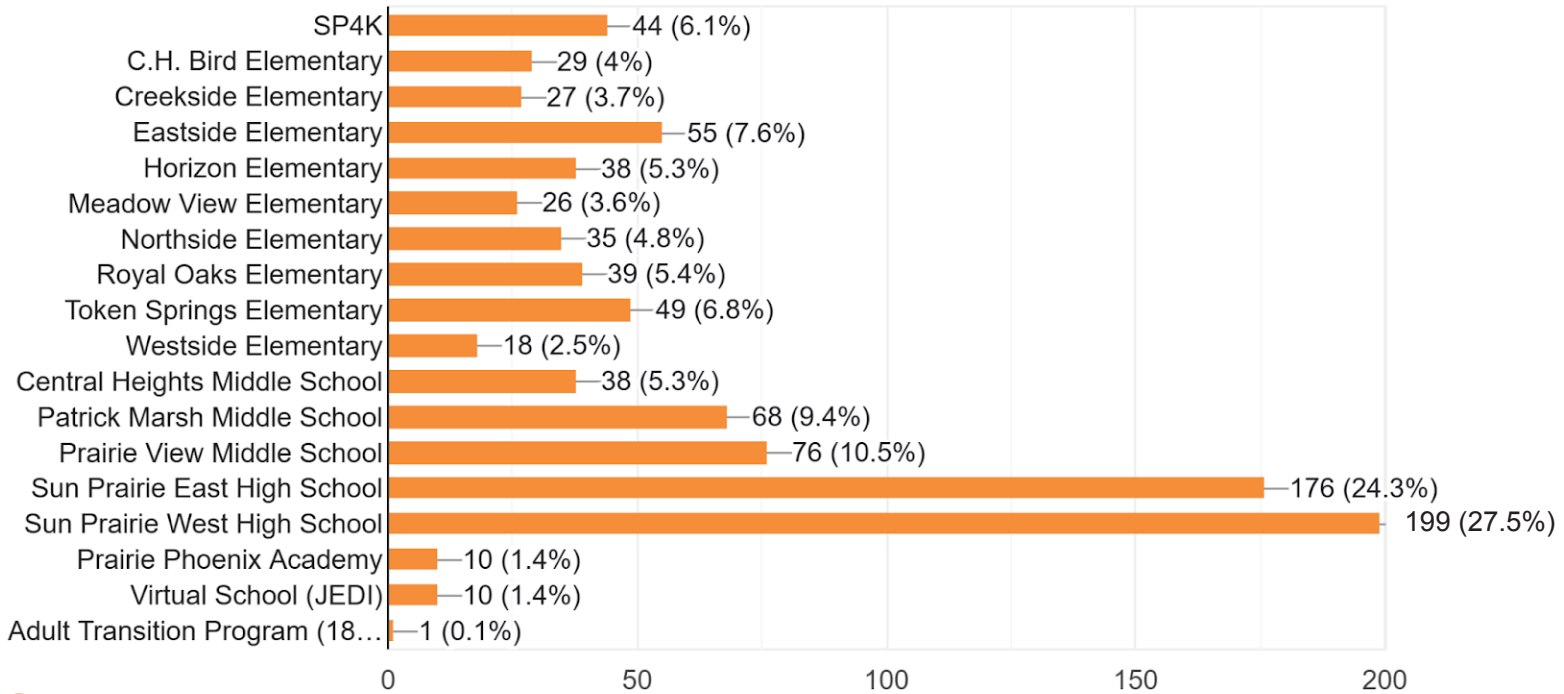
SURVEY SUMMARY



COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT REPORT

Which school(s) do you or your child(ren) currently attend? (Select all that apply.)

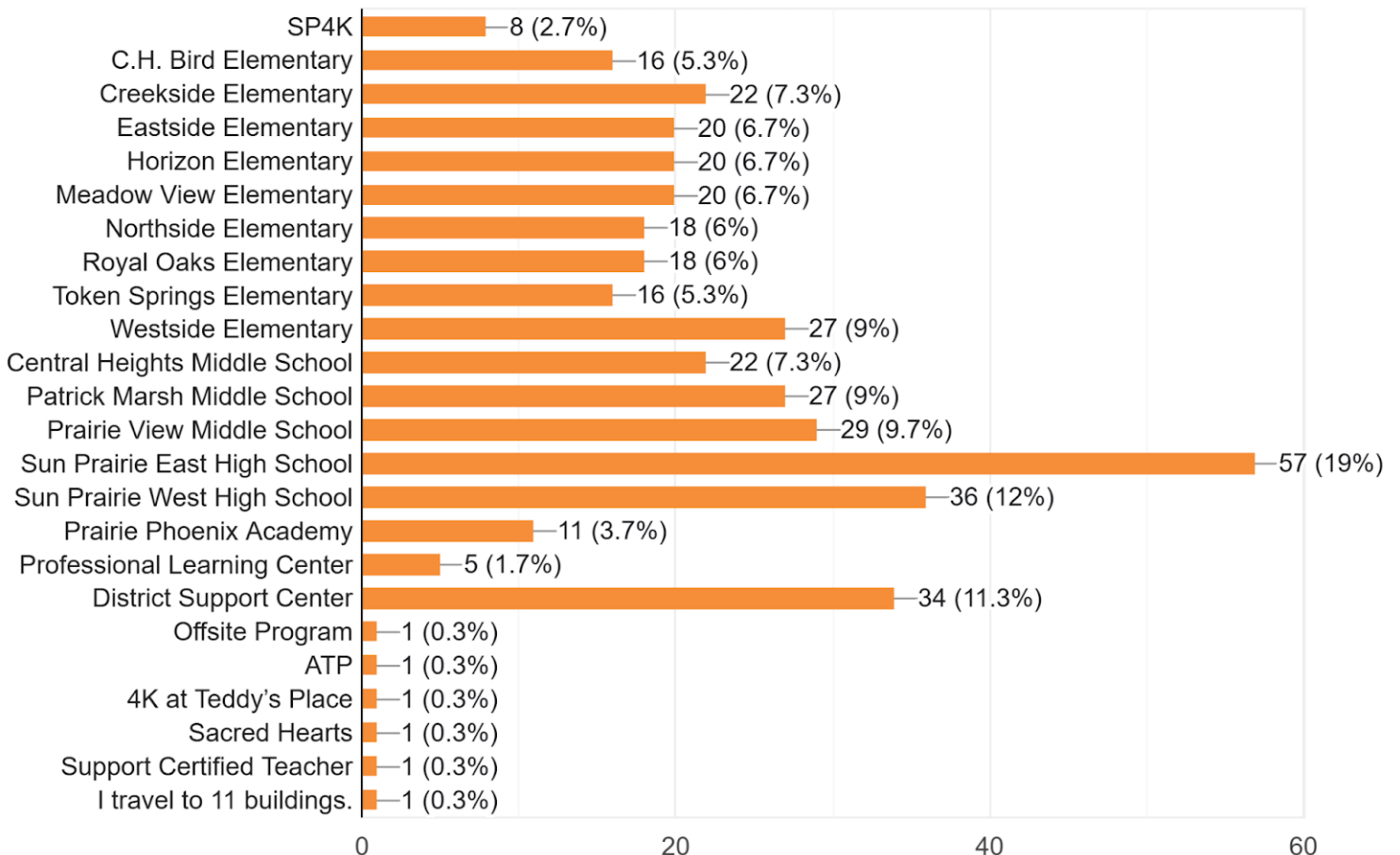
723 responses



STAFF

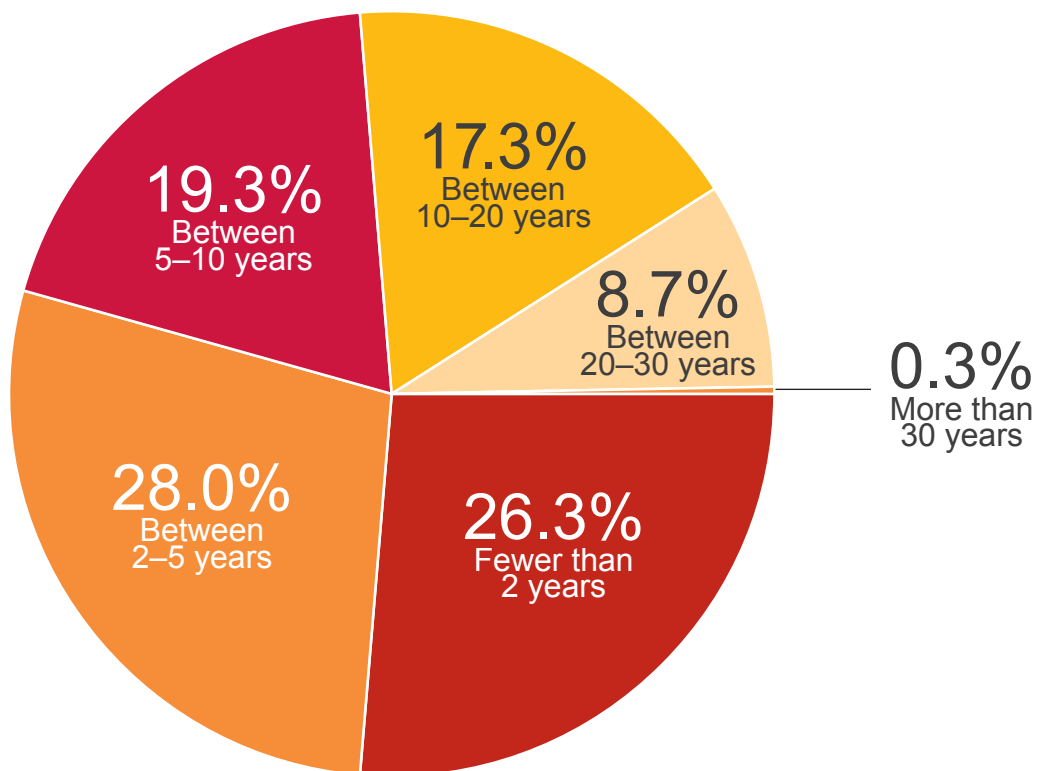
Which school(s) do you work at? (Select all that apply.)

300 responses



How long have you served in your current role?

300 responses



COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

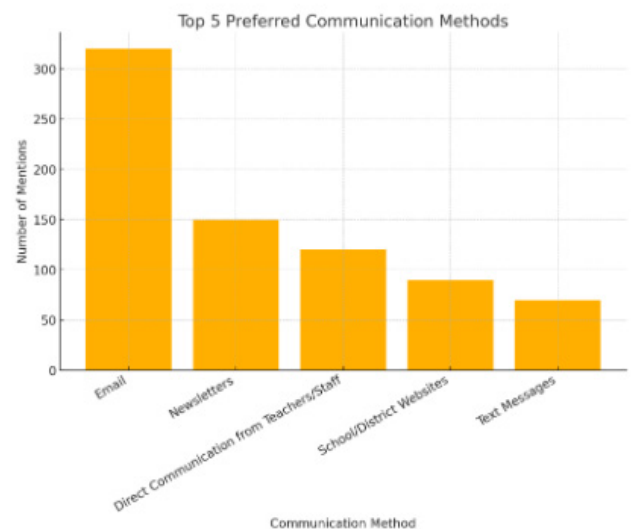
QUESTION (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

Where do you get most of your information about the Sun Prairie Area School District?

Email Messages from the District	940 Responses	88%
Email from Teachers or Staff	692 Responses	65%
Texts from the District	260 Responses	24%
Social Media	261 Responses	25%
District or School Websites	289 Responses	27%
School Newsletters	332 Responses	31%
School/Community Calendar	196 Responses	18%
Sun Prairie Experience Newsletter	128 Responses	12%
Back to School Newsletter	138 Responses	13%
Annual Report	114 Responses	11%

HERE ARE THE TOP 5 THEMES FROM THE DATA (AI-ASSISTED SUMMARIES)

- Email as the Primary Communication Method** — The overwhelming majority of respondents prefer email for communication from the District, teachers, and staff. Many cite reasons such as ease of access, ability to flag or refer back later, frequency of updates, and credibility as a direct source.
- District and School Newsletters** — Many respondents value newsletters, especially weekly emails from the district or school. They appreciate the consolidated, up-to-date information and structured format.
- Direct Communication from Teachers and Staff** — Respondents trust direct messages from teachers and school staff the most, as they provide the most relevant and specific information about their children's education and school events.
- School and District Websites** — Websites are considered reliable sources for up-to-date and comprehensive information, allowing users to access details conveniently.
- Text Messages for Urgent or Quick Updates** — While not as frequently mentioned as email, many respondents appreciate text messages for immediate or time-sensitive notifications (e.g., school closures or urgent updates).

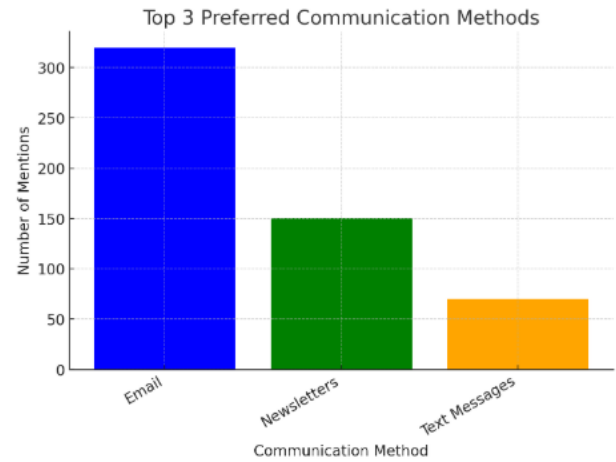


QUESTION (SHORT ANSWER)

Which resources are considered to be the most reliable? Why?

HERE ARE THE TOP 3 THEMES FROM THE RESPONSES (AI-ASSISTED SUMMARIES)

- 1. Email as the Primary Communication Method** — Email is overwhelmingly the most relied-upon communication method. Respondents prefer emails from the District, teachers, and staff because they provide direct, timely, and detailed information. Many appreciate the ability to flag emails, refer back to them later, and trust them as a primary source of
- 2. District and School Newsletters** — Weekly or monthly newsletters are valued as reliable and consistent sources of information. Respondents appreciate their structured format, consolidated details, and focus on school-specific updates. Some also noted that print versions are helpful, while others prefer digital versions for easy access.
- 3. Text Messages for Urgent or Quick Updates** — While email is preferred for general information, text messages are seen as the best way to receive immediate or time-sensitive updates, such as school closures, event reminders, and urgent announcements. Many find texts more accessible than emails, ensuring they don't miss critical information.



QUESTION (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

From which social media sources do you get information about the Sun Prairie Area School District?

FACEBOOK: 51% (547)

INSTAGRAM: 17% (184)

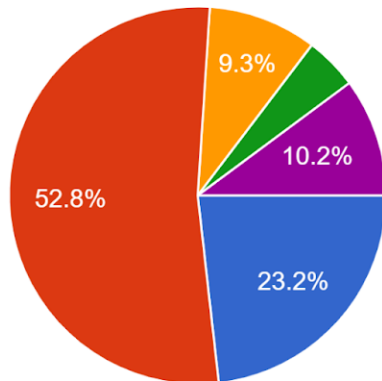
I DO NOT USE SOCIAL MEDIA: 29% (311)



COMMUNICATION SENTIMENT

I am satisfied with the information I receive from the Sun Prairie Area School District.

1,064 responses



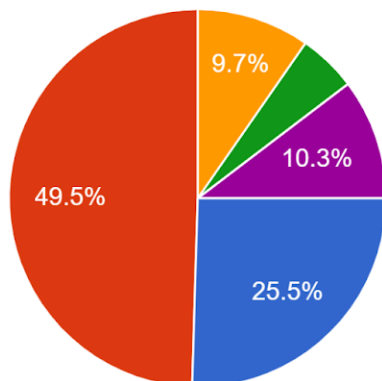
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

76%

Agree or strongly agree

If I have questions or require additional information, I am confident I can get the information I need from the Sun Prairie Area School District.

1,064 responses



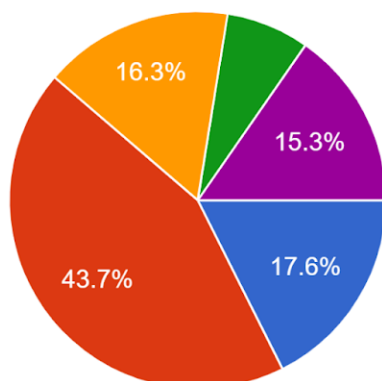
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

75%

Agree or strongly agree

I feel that I have opportunities to share my perspectives, feedback, questions, or concerns with the Sun Prairie Area School District.

1,064 responses



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

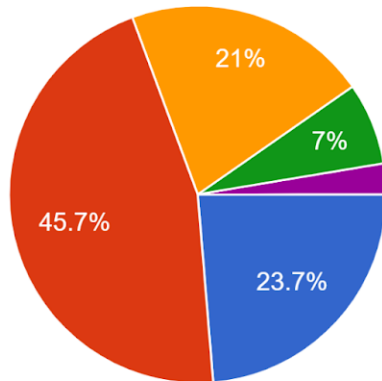
61%

Agree or strongly agree

COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT REPORT

How would you rate your overall impression of the Sun Prairie Area School District?

1,064 responses



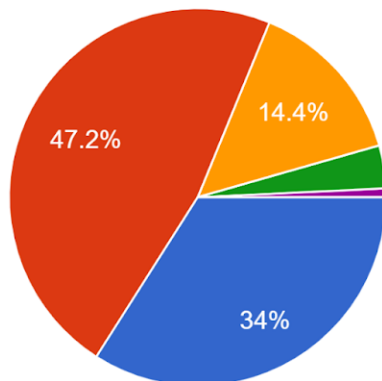
- Very positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Very negative

69%

Positive or very positive

Do you feel that the information you receive from the Sun Prairie Area School District is accessible and easy to understand? (Consider factors such as clarity, reading level, translations, captions, and other accessibility features.)

1,064 responses



- Yes, always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- No, never

81%

Most of the time or always

COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT REPORT

QUESTION (LONG ANSWER)

What do you think the Sun Prairie Area School District does well in terms of communication?

HERE ARE THE TOP 7 THEMES FROM THE RESPONSES (AI-ASSISTED SUMMARIES)

1. FREQUENCY & TIMELINESS

Communications are frequent, regular, and often arrive in a predictable cadence (e.g., weekly emails, newsletters).

Timely updates on emergencies, weather closures, and major events are appreciated.

3. CLARITY, SIMPLICITY & VISUAL APPEAL

Messages are mostly clear and organized.

Visually appealing formats, bullet points, and consistent branding were highlighted as helpful.

Some suggested more concise, at-a-glance formats and better formatting in print and digital comms.

5. TRANSPARENCY & TRUST

Community members appreciate honesty, proactive crisis communication, and the sharing of student support efforts.

Some skepticism about overly polished messages, vague incident reports, or perceived lack of detail.

A few concerns about whether surveys and feedback are genuinely considered.

7. ENGAGEMENT & RELEVANCE

Families like communication that celebrates students and staff, showcases events, and highlights school culture.

Desire for more direct communication about academics, classroom happenings, and curriculum.

A few comments suggested information overload or difficulty finding what's *most* relevant.

2. VARIETY OF COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Multiple platforms are used (emails, texts, calls, newsletters, social media, mailers).

Families appreciate options—if they miss one format, they can catch it in another.

Some note this *variety* as a strength; others mention it's overwhelming or inconsistent across schools.

4. INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY

Translations and simplified language are valued.

Some families still feel more can be done to include multilingual or marginalized communities.

Recognition of improved accessibility in the last few years.

6. SCHOOL VS. DISTRICT COMMUNICATION

School-level (especially teachers and principals) communication is consistently praised.

District-level messages get mixed reviews—some say they're strategic and supportive; others feel they're less personal, too polished, or inconsistent.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

QUESTION (LONG ANSWER)

What information about the Sun Prairie Area School District would you like to receive that you are not currently receiving?

HERE ARE THE TOP 6 THEMES FROM THE RESPONSES (AI-ASSISTED SUMMARIES)

1. EVERYTHING IS FINE / NO ADDITIONAL NEEDS

A large number of respondents expressed satisfaction with current communication.

Common responses: “None,” “N/A,” “I’m good,” “Everything is great,” or “I don’t know what I don’t know.”

2. TRANSPARENCY & TRUST

Requests for more transparency about:

- School board decisions and agendas
- Disciplinary incidents, safety concerns, and staff changes
- How referendum and budget dollars are spent
- Curriculum changes and academic goals

Desire for communication that is clear, timely, and honest, not vague or overly polished.

3. CURRICULUM, ACADEMIC DATA & STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Requests for more transparency about:

- Simplified, accessible academic performance data
- More information about curriculum updates
- Comparisons to state/national standards
- Advance notice and clarity on testing (ACT, reading/math benchmarks, grading systems)

4. SCHOOL-SPECIFIC OR PERSONALIZED COMMUNICATION

Calls for:

- More direct communication from teachers and principals
- Clear identification of which child messages apply to (for families with multiple students)
- Regular updates on student progress, behavior, or special services (like IEP)

5. EVENTS, CLUBS & EXTRACURRICULAR UPDATES

Families want better promotion and advance notice of:

- Sporting events, concerts, plays, and school celebrations
- Clubs and after-school opportunities
- Spirit days and school-specific events

Requests for central calendars and/or weekly roundups.

6. SCHOOL VS. DISTRICT COMMUNICATION

Feedback included:

- Overload of emails, especially with links to more links
- Desire for shorter, clearer, bulleted messages
- Less jargon, more “need-to-know” info
- Requests for mobile-friendly formats and fewer printed mailings

COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT REPORT

QUESTION (LONG ANSWER)

What suggestions do you have for improving the Sun Prairie Area School District's communication with the community?

HERE ARE THE TOP 7 THEMES FROM THE RESPONSES (AI-ASSISTED SUMMARIES)

1. TRANSPARENCY & TRUST

Desire for honesty about challenges (school incidents, curriculum changes, safety concerns).

Frustration with perceived spin or vague language.

Requests for clearer updates on decision-making (e.g., principal changes, Board actions).

Call for timely, truthful communication rather than reactive "damage control."

2. CLARITY, BREVITY, & RELEVANCE

Too many messages, especially overly long or redundant emails/newsletters.

Desire for simple, plain language that avoids educational jargon.

Suggestions for bullet points, summaries, or key takeaways to make information more digestible.

More targeted communication based on relevance (child's school, grade, activities, etc.).

3. STREAMLINED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Overwhelming number of platforms (Infinite Campus, Peachjar, Band, Seesaw, etc.).

Requests for one centralized hub or consistent source of important info.

Preference for customizable options—let families choose their preferred mode (email, text, app, etc.).

4. CELEBRATION OF POSITIVES & VISIBILITY

Many feel the District doesn't do enough to highlight achievements, student work, or good news.

Suggestions to increase social media usage to showcase day-to-day learning and successes.

Some expressed that negative voices drown out the good, and the District should work to balance the narrative.

(Continued on the next page)

(Continued from the previous page)

5. INCLUSIVITY, ACCESSIBILITY & LANGUAGE EQUITY

Requests for more translated materials (beyond Spanish and Hmong).

Concerns about digital accessibility, reading level, and availability for non-tech-savvy or multilingual families.

Ensuring all families feel seen and informed, not just the most engaged or connected.

6. FEEDBACK LOOPS & TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

Many commenters asked for more opportunities to provide honest feedback.

Some feel the District doesn't act on feedback or uses committees as a checkbox without genuine listening.

Interest in forums, open dialogue, and hearing from staff and students, not just polished messaging.

7. FINANCIAL PERCEPTION & PRINT MATERIALS

Strong negative sentiment around printed, glossy newsletters and flyers—seen as wasteful or unnecessary.

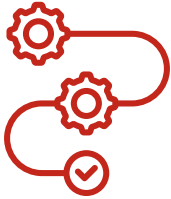
Preference for digital formats or opt-out options for mailings.

Some want more transparency around spending, especially in communications.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sun Prairie Area School District has a commitment to continuous improvement. Based on the survey data, communications committee feedback, and focus group results, there are some opportunities for improvement around District communications. These themes will be included as part of our next Strategic Communications Plan.



SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO STREAMLINE COMMUNICATIONS

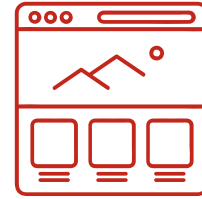
We put great emphasis on communication with our staff, students, and families.

- Evaluation of all communication tools - at the school and at the District level.
- Provide shorter, clearer, bulleted messages or key takeaways to make information more digestible.
- Respondents trust direct messages from teachers and school staff the most, as they provide the most relevant and specific information about their children's education and school events - provide more direct communication from teachers and principals to home.



CONTINUE TO GROW TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION CAPACITY

- Share ways and identify more opportunities for students, staff, and families can share their perspectives, feedback, and concerns. The current survey scores indicate 61% feel they can easily share.



CONTINUE TO IMPROVE OUR WEBSITE

The district's website serves as a hub for all communications. We will seek ways to make improvements in the following areas:

- Improve website accessibility so that there are fewer barriers between families and the information they need to navigate our system.
- Search engine optimization so that this critical information hub is easier for families to find and use across devices.



IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST

- Share the District's challenges in addition to the positive stories,
- Timely and truthful communications about important topics such as: school board decisions, disciplinary incidents, safety concerns, staff changes, how referendum and budget dollars are spent, and curriculum changes and academic goals.
- Improve overall impression of the District - current survey scores indicate 69% positive impression.