



Verona Area  
School District

# COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW

# 2026

Phone: 608-845-4300  
700 N Main Street  
Verona, WI 53593

STAY CONNECTED



# INTRODUCTION

The Verona Area School District (VASD) Communications Team conducted an in-house Communications Review during the 2025–26 school year to better understand the effectiveness of current family communication efforts, families’ preferences for receiving information, and strengths and areas for growth. In addition to the annual Family Experience Survey, the Communications Review included a survey on communication platforms and preferences, interviews with the Superintendent’s Family Advisory, Student Advisories, and Staff Advisory, and input from a Family Gathering/Corre la Voz meeting.

## VASD COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



**Marcie Pfeifer-Soderbloom**

Public Information Officer  
pfeiferm@verona.k12.wi.us



**Karen Berrueta**

Social Media &  
Communications Assistant  
berruetk@verona.k12.wi.us

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

2

Introduction

3

Communications Inventory

4

Communications Survey Report

7

Superintendent’s Advisories and Family Gathering/Corre la Voz Input

12

Analysis

14

Leadership Moves

# COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY



## EMAIL

Like most school districts, VASD uses email as a primary method of communication, especially for informing families and students.



## DISTRICT AND SCHOOL NEWSLETTERS

The district sends a monthly newsletter to all families sharing timely, relevant information, with a message from the Superintendent, a technology update, information from child nutrition, reminders of upcoming school closures, and more.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

The district has a presence on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). VASD posts daily (and often several times per day) to Facebook and Instagram, featuring a variety of positive news, programs, and events in its schools. Additionally, many schools have social media pages of their own. The district also maintains a [YouTube channel](#) where Board of Education meetings are streamed live, and recordings remain available for viewing after the meetings conclude.



## LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The district uses Powerschool as its learning management system. In addition to providing updates on assignments, grades, and other classroom-related items, this platform can also be used as a communication tool.



## TEXT MESSAGES

The district regularly sends text messages to families. These messages provide short blurbs of information or updates, while sometimes including a link to an email where recipients can get more information.



## DISTRICT WEBSITE

The [district website](#) serves as a key communication channel.



## DIGITAL FLYERS

In an effort to reach families effectively and reduce waste, the district sends digital flyers via [Peachjar](#). Families can also find the flyers by visiting the district's Families and Students webpage and clicking on the digital flyers link.

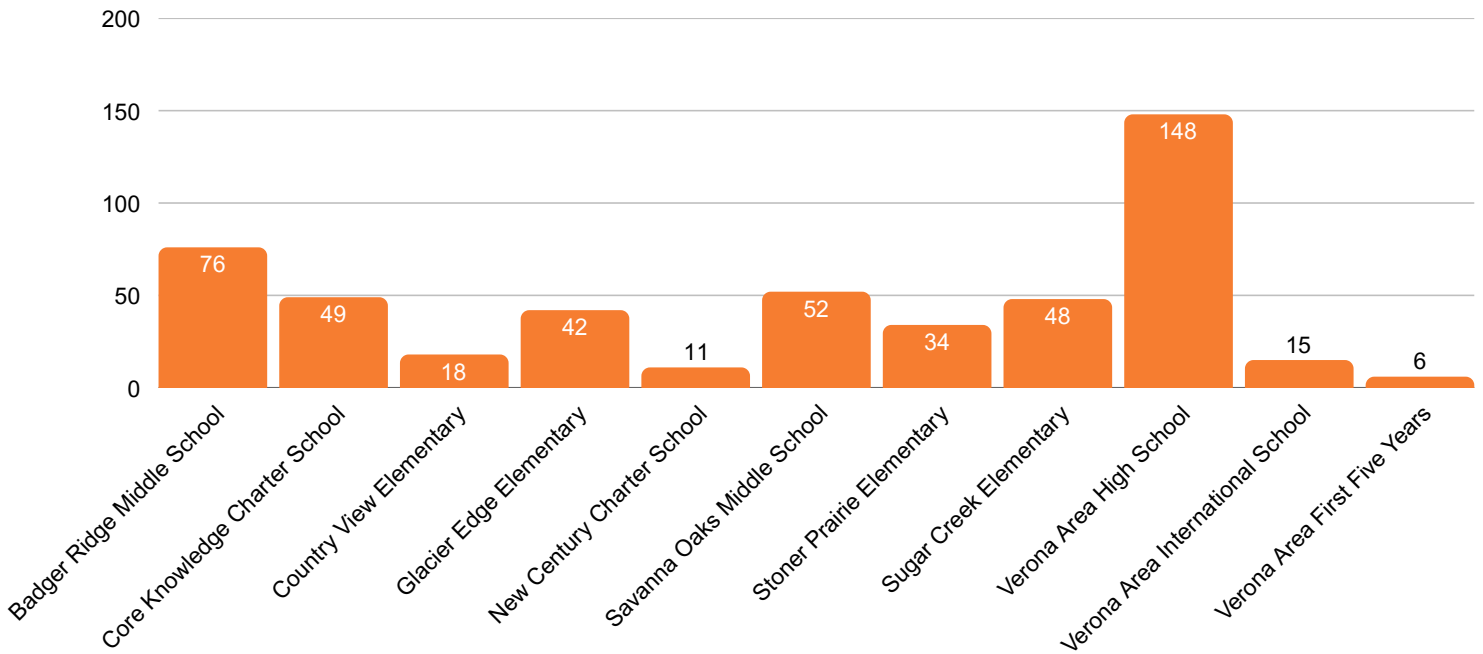


# COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY REPORT

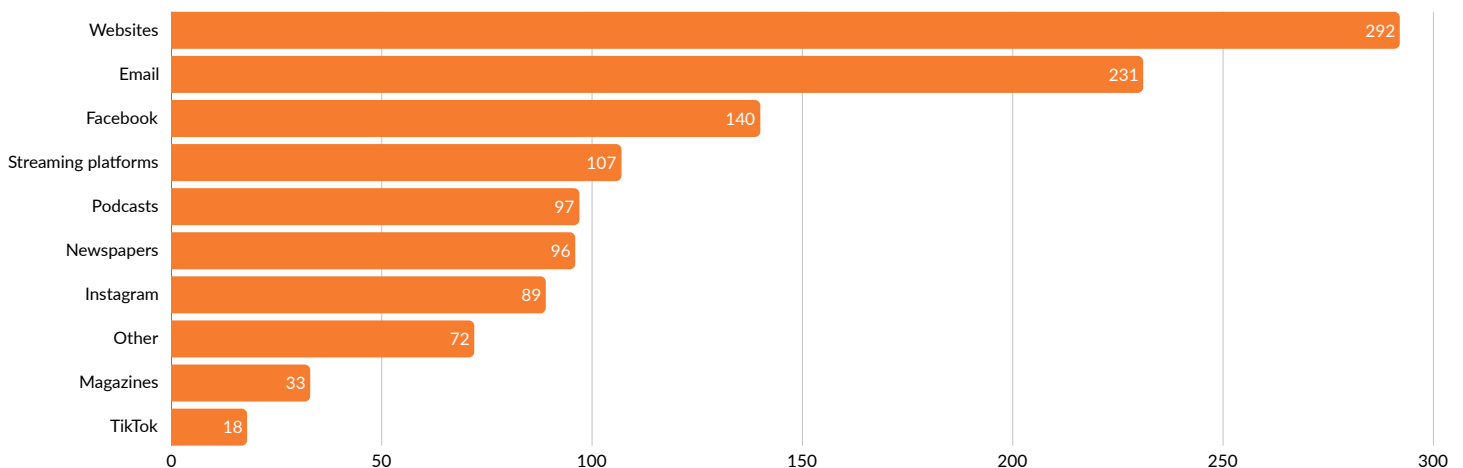
A total of 368 respondents completed a brief communications survey, including 361 in English and 7 in Spanish. Below is a summary of the results from the survey, along with a brief analysis.

## 1. WHICH SCHOOL(S) DO YOUR CHILD(REN) ATTEND?

The survey received a good mix of responses from parents whose children attend each of the district's schools. The largest number of parent responses came from the high school.



## 2. WHAT PLATFORMS AND/OR SOURCES DO YOU REGULARLY USE TO RECEIVE NEWS INCLUDING LOCAL, STATE, NATIONAL, AND WORLD NEWS?



### 3.HOW DO YOU GET INFORMATION ABOUT THE VASD (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

SOURCE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
Social Media	217
Friends or neighbors	171
Local newspaper	119
Parent organizations	110
Email/Text	116
Local TV stations	67
School board meetings	31
Website	21
Professional networks/Organizations	18
Newsletters	21

### 4.HOW DO YOU GET INFORMATION FROM THE VASD (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

SOURCE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
Email	356
Text	294
Newsletters from VASD	271
Newsletters from my child's school	244
Other platforms	158
Website	154
Phone Calls	62

### 5. RANK THESE 6 COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED BY THE VASD IN ORDER OF YOUR PREFERENCE FOR RECEIVING COMMUNICATION (1 BEING THE MOST PREFERRED).

RANK	ANSWER
1	Email
2	Text
3	Newsletter
4	Website
5	Other
6	Phone Calls

**6. IF YOU GET INFORMATION ABOUT THE VASD FROM SOCIAL MEDIA, ON WHICH PLATFORMS DO YOU RECEIVE IT (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)?**

ANSWER	# RESPONSES
Facebook	221
Instagram	93
YouTube	8
LinkedIn	4
Other (X, Reddit, TikTok)	3

**Note:** 110 respondents reported that they do not use social media

**7. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE US TO KNOW ABOUT COMMUNICATION?**

The following themes emerged from the 107 open-ended responses.

**BRIGHT SPOTS**

- Overall satisfaction with communication, families feel generally well-informed
- Appreciation for multiple communication options
- Clarity around channel purpose (texts for urgent updates, email for general information, website for reference)
- Appreciation of newsletters and email as core communication channels
- Strong school-level communication at elementary schools
- Appreciation for timely, direct communication

**AREAS FOR GROWTH**

- Communication overload and need for consolidation
- Too many platforms and a desire for simplification
- Lack of clarity about if action is needed
- Mismatch between communication method and message type
- Technology and platform functionality issues
- Relevance, targeting, and missing information

Across themes, the dominant pattern is not simply “more or less communication”, but a need for intentional design with the following components:

- fewer, clearer, better targeted messages
- consistent systems and platforms
- right message, right channel, right time

# SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORIES AND FAMILY GATHERING/CORRE LA VOZ INPUT

The Superintendent has three advisories: student, staff, and family. The goal of the Advisories is to provide a platform for VASD students, staff, and parents to share their insights, concerns, and ideas to enhance the VASD community.

With these groups, VASD intentionally seeks representation of our entire district community to ensure that all perspectives are heard and valued. These groups meet monthly and cover topics ranging from the “education of the future”, course offerings, communication strategies, and more.

Family Gathering (English) and Corre La Voz (Spanish) events are designed to connect families, schools, and community partners through food, fun, music, and meaningful information. These gatherings build relationships and help ensure that all families feel valued, informed, and included in their child's educational journey.

Each Advisory and attendees of a Family Gathering/Corre la Voz participated in an approximately one-hour conversation about communication with families. The sessions began with a brief overview of VASD's communication platform types and purposes, followed by a discussion of the following items:

- *What types of communication are effective with [your] family?*
- *Do you prefer text or email communication?*
- *What communication works best for your family and why?*
- *What other thoughts do you have about how VASD and schools communicate with [your] family?*

## STUDENT ADVISORIES

### WHAT WORKS BEST FOR MY FAMILY

THEME	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
Texts are most visible	Strong	Strong
Email is useful	Strong	Moderate
Email overload is an issue	Moderate	Strong
Students relay information	Strong	Very Strong
Preference for concise messaging	Emerging	Strong

### STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

WHAT'S WORKING WELL	OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT
Multiple channels available	Email overload / length
Strong use of PowerSchool	Improve translation access
Text messaging effectiveness	Clarify purpose of each channel
Direct communication options	Improve clarity/formatting of messages

## HOW MY FAMILY USES MULTIPLE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

CHANNEL	BEST USE
Text	Urgent / high-priority alerts
Email	Detailed information / summaries
PowerSchool	Academic progress
Social Media	Awareness / highlights
Students	Reinforcement / daily updates

## ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

AREA	STUDENT FEEDBACK
Language access	Gaps in translation, especially on social media
Email access	Spam/junk reduces effectiveness
Phone/text	Unknown numbers may be ignored
Platform usability	Broken links, navigation issues

Across grade levels, students describe a communication system that is most effective when it is:

- Layered (multiple channels used together)
- Purposeful (clear role for each channel)
- Concise (especially in email)
- Accessible (language and usability)
- Reinforced (through students and multiple touchpoints)

As students progress from middle school to high school, these same themes remain consistent, but students express a stronger need for prioritization, clarity, and efficiency in how information is communicated.



# PARENT ADVISORY AND FAMILY GATHERING/CORRE LA VOZ

## WHAT WORKS BEST FOR MY FAMILY

THEMES
Families use multiple access points: email, text, PowerSchool, conferences, report cards, and conversations
Text for urgent communication, matters related to safety
Email for routine communication, detailed information
Communication from my school's principal (e.g., attending PTO meetings and providing updates, video newsletter)
Phone calls

## STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

WHAT'S WORKING WELL	OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT
Multiple channels available	Email effectiveness (families prefer fewer, more consolidated emails, easy to skim structure, content within email rather than attaching a PDF to an email)
Access to academic information (PowerSchool, report cards, conferences)	Consistency across schools in newsletter cadence (weekly, monthly, quarterly)
Principal-level communication and transparency	Use of texts that direct families to check their email or click links
Formats that allow revisiting information (emails, videos)	
Digital flyers (using PeachJar platform)	

## HOW MY FAMILY USES MULTIPLE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

CHANNEL	BEST USE
Text	Urgent / high-priority alerts
Email	Primary channel, summaries/detailed information
PowerSchool	Primary tool for monitoring academic progress
Students	Updates, insight on social emotional health
Social Media	Awareness (not reliable due to algorithm limitations)

## ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

AREA	PARENT FEEDBACK
Platform limitations	Social media is not reliable, algorithms limit visibility
Information accessibility	Attachments can be barriers to accessing information
Clarity of academic systems	Support needed to understand grading practices
Inconsistency across schools	Variability in practices leads to uneven access to information

Families describe a communication system that is strong and effective overall, particularly due to the availability of multiple channels and consistent access to academic information.

The most significant opportunity is not adding more communication, but refining how communication is delivered by prioritizing clarity and brevity, defining clear roles for each channel, and promoting consistency across schools. Families are asking for communication that is easier to navigate, easier to prioritize, and easier to act on.

# STAFF ADVISORY

## WHAT WORKS BEST FOR FAMILIES

THEMES
Core academic communication tools: PowerSchool, report cards, conferences, Individualized Education Plans
Multiple communication channels (email, text, newsletters, Seesaw, Google Chat)
Texting and direct messaging for timely and one-to-one communication
Email for routine communication and detailed information
Routine structures (attendance notifications, Friday folders, newsletters)

## STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

WHAT'S WORKING WELL	OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT
Strong systems for communicating academic progress	Platform overload and fragmentation with too many tools that can create confusion for families and staff
Availability of multiple platforms	Clarity of communication, sometimes with inconsistent or unknown sender names that can reduce trust and recognition
Ability to communicate in real time when needed	Staff want to communicate with families with easy-to-use tools and without using personal phones
Use of both digital methods to reach families directly and non-digital methods such as flyers to share information in public spaces	Communication needs to be mobile-friendly and use more standardized formats such as S'more for newsletters

## HOW FAMILIES USE MULTIPLE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

CHANNEL	BEST USE
Text	Urgent/high priority matters, one-to-one communication (currently limited by staff needing to use personal devices to communicate this way)
Email	Primary channel, summaries/detailed information
PowerSchool	Primary tool for monitoring academic progress and attendance
Social Media	Promoting events and building general awareness
Students/Word of Mouth	Updates and information

## ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

AREA	STAFF FEEDBACK
Language access	Need translation beyond Spanish to meet the needs of more families
Technology and device access	Communications must be mobile-friendly because many families rely on phones rather than computers, some platforms have lower data requirements for families and may be more accessible
Platform fragmentation	Multiple tools can create barriers for families trying to navigate systems
Program-specific access gaps	Families of students in programs located off-site (e.g., Pre-K/4K, 18-21 Program) may have less access to school-based information
Communication clarity	There is misalignment between standards-based grading and report cards that creates confusion for families

Staff describe a communication system that is strong in structure but challenged by complexity.

Staff see the most significant opportunities for growth as follows:

- Streamline and align communication platforms
- Improve consistency and clarity across schools and systems
- Enhance accessibility for diverse family needs (language, device, program access)

Staff are asking for greater coherence, usability, and equity within the system.



# ANALYSIS

The 2025–26 Communications Review reflects input from multiple sources, including the Family Experience Survey, a targeted communications survey, feedback from the Superintendent’s Family, Staff, and Student Advisories, and a Family Gathering/Corre la Voz.

Across all groups, a consistent pattern emerged: VASD’s communication system is strong, multi-layered, and widely valued, but complexity and inconsistency reduce its effectiveness.

Families, students, and staff consistently shared the following:

- Communication is frequent and timely
- Email, text, and newsletters are the most effective and preferred channels
- There is general understanding of how different channels are used (e.g., text for urgent updates, email for detailed information)

VASD has established a robust communication ecosystem that includes email, text messaging, newsletters, websites, social media, and learning platforms. This system:

- Provides multiple access points for families
- Supports both districtwide and student-specific communication
- Enables timely sharing of important information

This reflects strong alignment with Operational Expectation 9, particularly in ensuring access to information and opportunities for engagement.

Despite its strengths, the system is experienced by some as difficult to navigate and, at times, overwhelming. Families and staff report too many platforms and tools, creating confusion. Messages are sometimes lengthy, duplicative, or difficult to prioritize. Information may require navigating across multiple platforms or links to access fully. High communication volume can lead to disengagement or important information being missed. Variability in communication practices, such as differences in format, cadence, and sender identification, can create uneven experiences for families, particularly those with multiple children across schools. Feedback consistently points to the need for greater clarity and alignment in how communication is delivered.



Families, students, and staff described the importance of:

- Clear alignment between the message and the channel (e.g., text for urgent updates, email for detailed information, website for reference)
- Communication that is concise, easy to read, and well-organized
- Consistent enough structures and practices to help families know where to look for information, while still allowing flexibility across schools

Access and usability also emerged as important considerations:

- Communication must be mobile-friendly and easy to navigate
- Attachments and platform design can create barriers to accessing information
- Language access and program-specific communication gaps remain areas for continued attention

Together, these findings reinforce that the opportunity is not to expand communication, but to ensure it is clear, coherent, and accessible to all families.



# LEADERSHIP MOVES

Considering all the data collected and analyzed, we will implement the following leadership moves.

## **Establish a Shared Communication Framework**

- Define guiding principles for communication across the district (e.g., clarity, brevity, accessibility)
- Clarify the intended role of major communication channels
- Develop a Communications Playbook to support aligned (but not identical) practices across schools and departments

## **Improve Coherence Across Communication Systems**

- Identify opportunities to streamline and better connect existing platforms
- Reduce unnecessary duplication across channels
- Support a more coordinated experience for families, while maintaining appropriate flexibility at the school level

## **Strengthen Consistency Where It Matters Most**

- Establish shared expectations for clear sender identification, mobile-friendly formats, and predictable structures for recurring communications (e.g., newsletters)
- Provide optional templates and examples to support clarity and usability

## **Prioritize Clarity and Usability in Message Design**

- Emphasize shorter, more focused messages, place key information prominently, and reduce reliance on attachments when possible

## **Enhance Access and Equity**

- Continue to strengthen language access and translation practices
- Ensure communications are mobile-friendly and accessible across devices
- Identify and address gaps in access for families in specialized programs

## **Support Staff in Effective Communication Practices**

- Continue exploring tools that reduce reliance on personal devices and support uniform, consistent, effective, timely communication

## **Monitor Progress and Adjust**

- Continue to use survey data and group feedback to assess progress
- Monitor improvements in clarity, accessibility, and family experience
- Report progress through the annual monitoring process in alignment with Operational Expectation (OE) 9: Communicating with the Public

The Communications Review confirms that VASD has a strong foundation in place. The next phase of work is to enhance coherence, clarity, and accessibility, ensuring that communication is not only frequent but also easy to navigate, understand, and use for all families.

This approach will maintain flexibility across schools and programs while strengthening a shared commitment to effective communication districtwide.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to the following individuals and groups for participating in the 2025-26 Communications Review:

- 861 parents and caregivers who participated in the Family Experience Survey
- Superintendent's Student Advisories from Badger Ridge Middle School, Core Knowledge Charter School, Savanna Oaks Middle School, and Verona Area High School
- Superintendent's Staff Advisory
- Superintendent's Parent Advisory
- Family Gathering / Corre le Voz



**STAY CONNECTED**



**VERONA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Phone: 608-845-4300 | Fax: 608-845-4321  
700 N Main Street | Verona, WI 53593