



LAGUNA BEACH
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Strategic Communications Plan

May 14, 2026



General Systems Theory

The whole is more than the sum of its parts.

(Ludwig von Bertalanffy, 1940)

Wholeness

A system's constitutive characteristics cannot be explained by examining its parts in isolation. **The behavior of any part changes when studied within the whole versus on its own.**

Open Systems

Unlike closed systems, which decay through internal entropy, **open systems** (biological, social, organizational) **sustain themselves by continuously exchanging energy, matter, and information with their environment.**

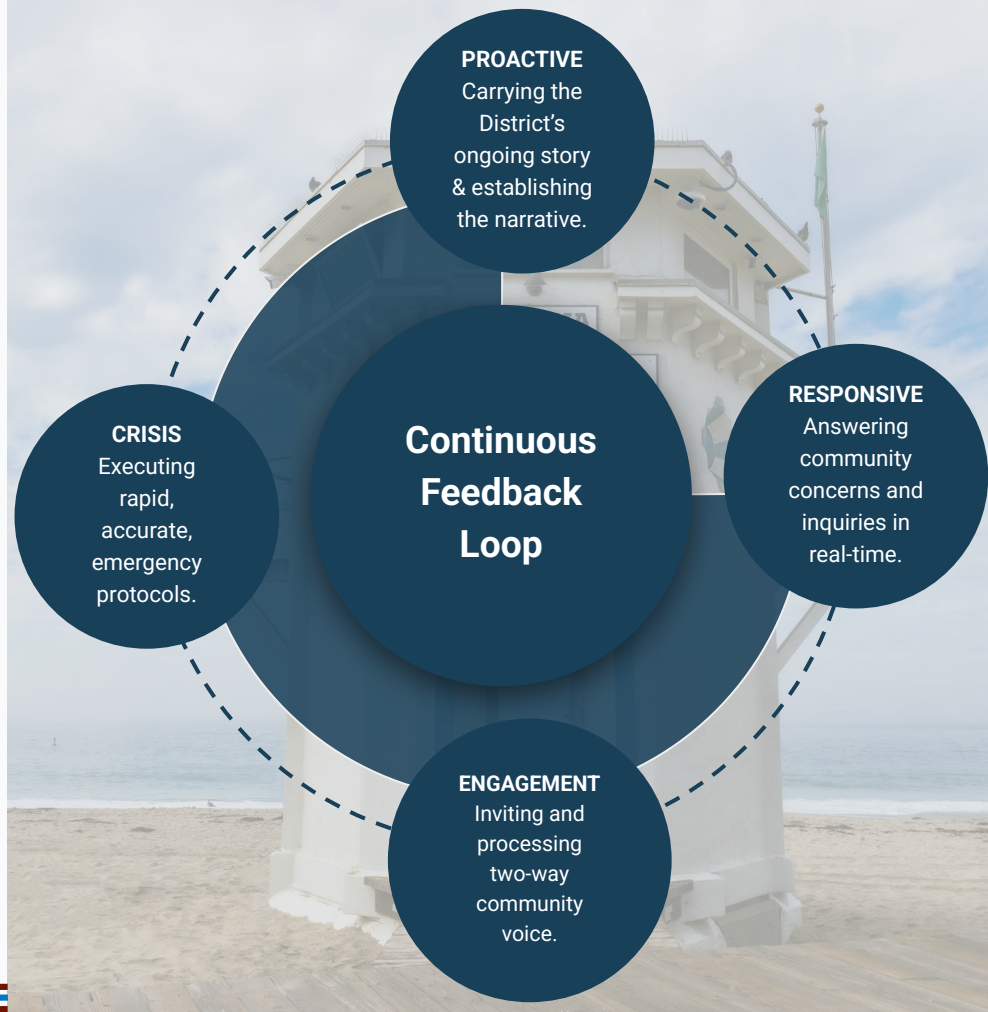
Interaction

A system is "a set of elements standing in interaction." Causality within it is mutual, multiple, and circular; **it is not a one-way chain of cause and effect.**

LBUSD Communications | Open System Framework

LBUSD's communications function operates through four interdependent modes sustained by continuous exchange across its broader information ecosystem. Together they form an open, adaptive system in service of student success.

Within this ecosystem, as custodian of information about and entrusted to it by students, families, and staff, the District must balance openness with the responsibility to protect within every mode.



Segmented Audiences to Target Information Needs

Board of Education

Governance support, fiscal accountability, decision support.

Channels: Weekly Board Update, Board Reports & Presentations, Superintendent Communication, 1:1 Meetings.

Students & Families

Student progress, actionable school updates, awareness of opportunities available to their children.

Channels: ParentSquare, Aeries, Principal Newsletters, School Websites, Canvas (secondary)

Staff

District priorities and direction, decisions affecting their work, input opportunities, recognition, internal alignment.

Channels: Surfside, Staff Email,, Site-Level Meetings, Staff Portal.

Community Residents

Stewardship of public resources, civic clarity, district impact, opportunities to engage as community members.

Channels: Resident Outreach List, "It's A Wrap," Annual Report, District Website, Media Coverage, Civic & Partnership Comms.

Partners

Collaborative program updates, advance notice of events and initiatives, clear points of coordination, message alignment.

Channels: Direct Outreach, Joint Communications, Partnership-Specific Comms, Shared Events.

Media

Accurate, timely, newsworthy information; designated spokesperson contact, board-published materials and meeting recordings.

Channels: Press Releases, Direct Outreach, Media Statements/Advisories, Timely Inquiry Response.

Channel Ecosystem & Delivery Cadence

Real-Time & Daily	Weekly & Monthly	Annual
● ParentSquare (mass push notifications) ● District Website (crisis hub & active updates) ● Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn)	● Principal Newsletters (site-specific updates) ● Surfside (internal staff alignment) ● It's A Wrap (governance)	● Annual Report (2026-27) ● Local Control & Accountability Plan (annual update) ● State of the District (2026-27)





From Research to Strategy

Building on the March 2026 Board Communications Update, the May 2026 strategic plan synthesizes audience input, channel performance, and the GrayMatters Communications Review into six actionable priorities for 2026–27. Three insights driving the plan:

- **Internal communication and decision visibility.** Building consistent infrastructure for surfacing decisions, embedding staff input in decision processes.
- **Awareness of events and activities.** Strengthening pathways to support broader awareness across academic, arts, sports, mental health, family engagement and career readiness programs
- **Broader community engagement.** Build community-facing infrastructure to extend the District's reach beyond enrolled families.

Six Strategic Priorities for 2026–27

The plan organizes communications work around six interdependent strategic priorities, each grounded in research and audience input. Five build on continuing work; one is new for 2026–27.

Priority 1.

Strengthening Internal
Communication & Feedback
Loop Completion

Priority 2.

Elevating District Profile &
Broadening Community
Reach

Priority 3.

Elevating Arts Visibility &
Engagement

Priority 4.

Amplifying Student Voice

Priority 5.

Supporting Transparent,
Two-Way Governance
Communication

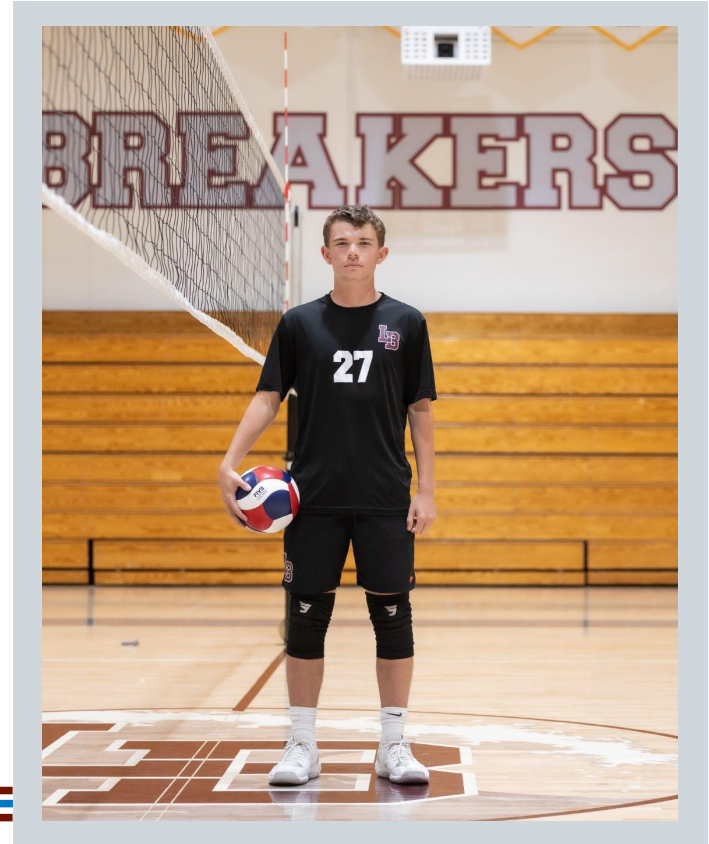
Priority 6.

Strengthening Family
Communication &
Engagement

Priority 1 – Strengthening Internal Communication & Feedback Loop Completion

Building consistent infrastructure for surfacing District decisions, embedding staff input in decision processes, and closing feedback loops on the input staff provide. New for 2026–27:

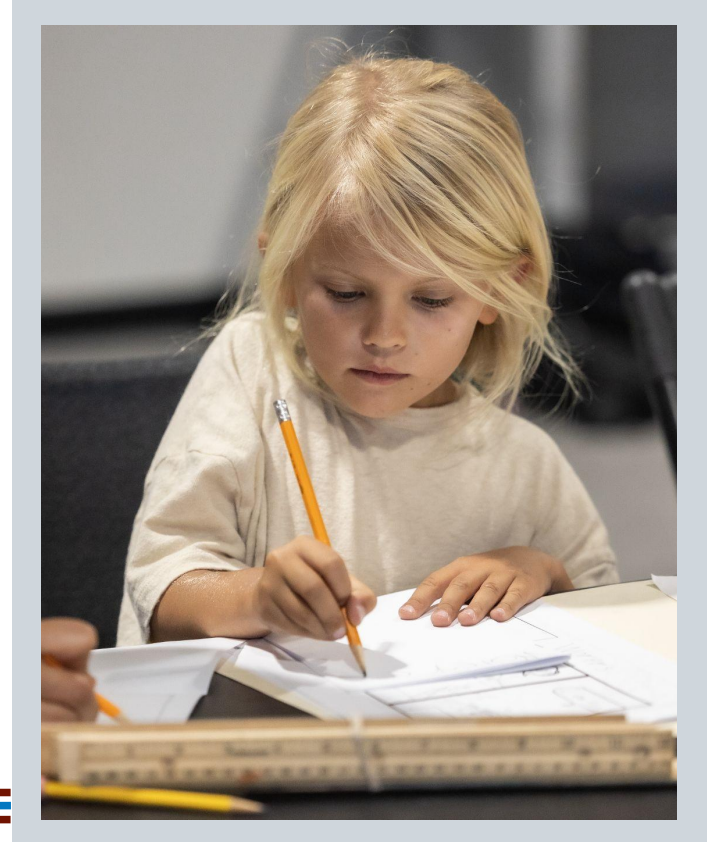
- **Cabinet Communications Planning Standing Item** — communications planning embedded in cabinet's regular agenda.
- **School Site Calendar and Website Maintenance Protocols** — supporting consistent information availability across sites.
- **LCAP Three-Year Update Cycle Study Commitment** — assessing current practice on decision-making input during the 2026–27 LCAP cycle.



Priority 2 – Elevating District Profile & Broadening Community Reach

Extending consistent district-to-community pathways beyond enrolled families and beyond LCAP cycles, strengthening institutional credibility and supporting the fiscal foundation for District work. New for 2026–27:

- **Annual Report Relaunch** — community-facing publication with professional design, copyediting, and audience research support.
- **State of the District Event** — facilitated community discussion of District direction (cross-priority with 3, 4, 5).
- **Thought-Leadership Content Pipeline** — staff conference presentations and external publications.



Priorities 3 & 4 – Arts Visibility + Student Voice

Two priorities centered on student experience – coordinating LBUSD's distinctive arts strength as a communicated identity, and surfacing student perspectives across the framework.

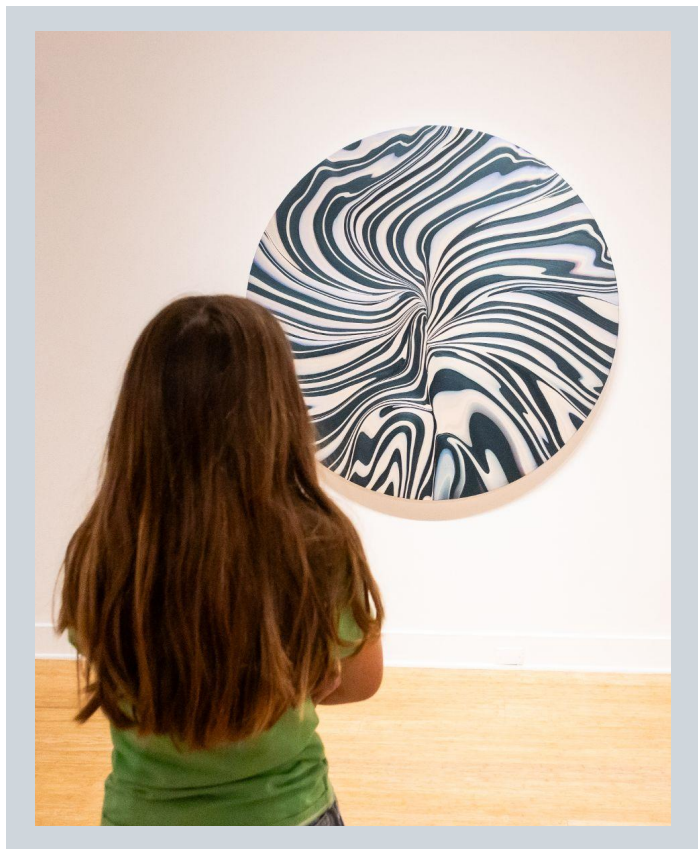
Priority 3 – Arts Visibility & Engagement | New for 2026–27:

- **Arts Calendar Coordination Protocol** – coordinating arts and main District calendars.
- **Family Newsletter Arts Stream** – dedicated arts content in the new district family newsletter.

Priority 4 – Amplifying Student Voice | New for 2026–27:

- **Editorial Pathways for Student-Generated Content** – structured channels for student content in District communications.
- **Student Communications Internship Program.**
- **Hidden Voices Student Engagement** – outreach to students whose voices are less commonly surfaced.

Priority 5 – Supporting Transparent, Two-Way Governance Communication



Supporting the Board's governance work through coordinated communication intended to strengthen public trust and the framework's accountability function. Continuing:

- **Next-day It's A Wrap communication** following Board meetings, with defined content parameters and Board President coordination.
- **Press-release-style summaries for major Board decisions**, with expanded distribution across media, District channels, and community organizations.
- Weekly Board Update and Board reports.
- New for 2026-27, is the State of the District event with a governance component

Priority 6 – Strengthening Family Communication & Engagement

Building direct district-to-family communication infrastructure to close the gap between district-level and school-level family connection. New for 2026–27:

- **District Family Newsletter** – direct district-to-family channel, distinct from principal newsletters and It's A Wrap.
- **Family Resource Center Awareness Campaign** – strengthening family awareness of FRC services.
- **Hidden Families Outreach Strategy** – outreach to families whose engagement is less surfaced.



2026–27 New Initiatives at a Glance

New initiatives across the six priorities advance feedback completion, community reach, and family-district communication infrastructure.

- **New Channels.** District family newsletter; State of the District event; Annual Report relaunch.
- **New Infrastructure.** Cabinet Communications Planning Standing Item; School Site Calendar and Website Protocols; Arts Calendar Coordination Protocol.
- **New Student Pathways.** Editorial pathways for student content; Communications Internship; Hidden Voices Student Engagement.
- **New Family Engagement.** FRC Awareness Campaign; Hidden Families Outreach; Family Input Accessibility Enhancement.



Key Performance Indicators for 2026–27

The framework's strategic priorities each have associated measurement approaches.

Priority 1 (Strengthening Internal Communication and Feedback Loop Completion)

- LCAP staff survey
- Surfside engagement
- Listening session feedback

Priority 2 (Elevating District Profile and Broadening Community Reach)

- Secured media coverage, conference participation, program award recognitions
- Resident outreach list engagement; It's A Wrap analytics; LCAP Survey; annual report distribution

Priority 3 (Elevating Arts Visibility and Engagement)

- Content audit data and social media analytics specific to arts content
- Attendance and participation at student arts performances & exhibits
- Earned media tracking on arts events

Priority 4 (Amplifying Student Voice)

- Content audits
- Student participation tracking in District forums
- Student-reported indicators of engagement, relevancy, and sense of connectedness from CHKS, LCAP, and Challenge Success surveyS.

Priority 5 (Supporting Transparent, Two-Way Governance Communication)

- Channel analytics on board-related content
- It's A Wrap open and click-through performance

Priority 6 (Strengthening Family Communication and Engagement)

- District family newsletter adoption and engagement once launched
- ParentSquare adoption growth
- LCAP family communication data
- Family Resource Center awareness

Implementation & Reporting Rhythm

The plan's new initiatives roll out across the 2026–27 school year, with progress tracked through the framework's established reporting cadence.

- **Weekly Board Update.** Continuing recurring communication on framework operation, emerging issues, and District news.
- **It's A Wrap.** Following each Board meeting, surfacing governance actions and broader District work.
- **Annual Comprehensive Update.** LCAP-aligned synthesis of progress on the six strategic priorities, channel performance, audience sentiment, and resource considerations.
- **As-needed updates** on significant initiatives, events, or matters requiring Board awareness.





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Thank you.

Questions, Feedback, & Discussion

May 14, 2026