

Great Falls Public Schools Communication Plan 2026-2027



It is important to foster a transparent, consistent, and effective flow of information among all stakeholders, including students, families, staff, community members, and the broader public. This communication plan aims to build and maintain trust, promote understanding of district goals and initiatives, celebrate achievements, and ensure timely and accurate dissemination of critical information. By facilitating open dialogue and meaningful engagement, we seek to strengthen relationships, support student success, and uphold the district's commitment to educational excellence and community partnership.

Great Falls Public Schools Organizational Structure

School Board of Trustees

Gordon Johnson	Chair
Kim Skornogoski	Vice Chair
Amie Thompson	Trustee
Bill Bronson	Trustee
Paige Henning	Trustee
Craig Duff	Trustee
Marlee Sunchild	Trustee

Central Administration

Heather Hoyer	Superintendent
Lance Boyd	Executive Director
Jackie Mainwaring	Executive Director
Luke Diekhans	Director of Business Operations
Heather Spurzem	Human Resources Director
Jeff Williams	Director of Information Technology
Katelyn Marsik	Executive Director Great Falls Public Schools Foundation

Building Administration

Jamie McGraw	CM Russell High School Principal
Geoffry Habel	Great Falls High School Principal
Yenta Jaques	Paris Gibson Education Center Principal
Reannon Medrano	East Middle School Principal
Brian Miller	North Middle School Principal
Andrea Thares	Chief Joseph Elementary Principal
Barbara Doughty	Early Learning Family Center Coordinator
Karla Miller	Giant Springs Elementary Principal
Katy Kennedy	Lewis and Clark Elementary Principal
Steve Yates	Lincoln Elementary Principal
Brittany Erdman	Longfellow Elementary Principal
Shanda Brown	Loy Elementary Principal
Lyndsey Stulc	Meadowlark Elementary Principal
Jennifer Martyn	CORE School at Morningside Elementary Principal
Kim Marzolf	Mountain View Elementary Principal
Nicole Heintzelman	Riverview Elementary Principal
Ty Moore	Sacajawea Elementary Principal
Durbin Thomsen	Sunnyside Elementary Principal
Dannelle Dyke	Valley View Elementary Principal
Lacey Lewis	West Elementary Principal
Franklin Gilbert	Whittier Elementary Principal

Introduction

Effective communication is the cornerstone of a thriving educational community. At Great Falls Public Schools, we recognize that clear, timely, and consistent communication is essential. It fosters a collaborative environment where students, parents, staff, and community members feel informed, engaged, and valued. This Communication Plan serves as a comprehensive framework to guide our efforts in sharing vital information, celebrating achievements, addressing concerns, and building strong, trusting relationships with all stakeholders. It outlines our commitment to transparency, accessibility, and responsiveness, ensuring that every voice in our district is heard and that our collective vision for student success is clearly articulated and understood.



Vision, Mission, and Beliefs

Vision: *All kids engaged in learning today.....for life tomorrow*

Mission: *We successfully educate students to navigate their futures.*

Belief Statements:

- 1. All students deserve teachers and staff who thrive on student success.*
- 2. Each student will have fair and equitable opportunities for quality instruction and academic success.*
- 3. All students learn when their individual needs are met through a personalized school experience.*
- 4. All students and staff learn and work best in a safe, secure, and nurturing environment.*
- 5. Highly skilled and committed personnel are our greatest asset.*
- 6. Students, staff, family, and community members are partners in a quality education.*
- 7. Dedication to affirming diversity enriches the educational experiences for all.*
- 8. District programs are flexible and adaptable, and our staff strives to provide innovative and creative choices to meet the changing needs of all students.*
- 9. A well-educated community is the foundation of our democracy.*
- 10. District resources and staff are public assets requiring responsible stewardship and community involvement.*
- 11. All students will graduate citizenship ready and prepared for career and/or college.*



Great Falls Public Schools Strategic Goals

Student Achievement

Belief Statement: The District believes that comprehensive systems of support ensure that students achieve the highest levels of academic growth.

Goal: By June of 2027, a minimum of 80% of Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) students will make at least one year's growth each academic year in both math and literacy as measured by assessments and data collection.

Healthy Safe and Secure Schools

Belief Statement: The District believes that a comprehensive educational environment addresses the health, safety, and social/emotional needs of all students and staff.

*Goal: By June of 2027, Great Falls Public Schools will implement evidence-based strategies and opportunities to increase appropriate behavior among students. This will be measured by a 5% decrease in major incidents by increasing student opportunities to demonstrate skills, traits, and characteristics identified by the GFPS *Profile of a Learner*, as reported by school-based and district-level data.*

Stewardship and Accountability

Belief Statement: The District believes our resources and staff are public assets requiring responsible stewardship, accountability, and community involvement.

Goal: By June of 2027, Great Falls Public Schools will develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan to improve communication between the district, staff, parents, students, and the community by increasing parent and community member engagement by 10% as measured by responses to surveys and attendance/participation at events, conferences, and meetings.



Board Policy

Great Falls Public Schools has adopted board policy related to communication. See the applicable policies below:

[4120 Public Relations](#)

[4125 District Social Media Presence](#)

[4310 Public Complaints](#)

[4340 Public Access to District Records](#)

[1401 Records Available to Public](#)

[1401R Records Available to the Public](#)

[1402 School Board Use of Electronic Mail](#)

[1420P Notice Regarding Public Comment](#)

[1441 Audience Participation](#)

[5450 Employee Electronic Mail and On-Line Services Usage and District Equipment](#)

[5450F Staff Computer Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Agreement](#)

[5460 Electronic Resources and Social Networking](#)



Communication Priorities

Our communication priorities are centered on ensuring clarity, consistency, and accessibility. We prioritize proactive communication regarding academic programs, student safety, district policies, and important events to keep our community well-informed. During times of crisis or urgent matters, our priority shifts to rapid and accurate dissemination of information that can be shared to ensure the safety and well-being of our students and staff. We are committed to fostering a two-way dialogue and actively soliciting feedback from our stakeholders.

District communication must be predictable. Stakeholders must know where to access information. Our stakeholders have a variety of preferences in communication platforms. We will not be able to utilize every communication platform. However, we will be selective and consistent with our use of platforms. We will also work to advertise our communication tools in order to ensure our stakeholders know where to find information.

We will employ a diverse range of communication methods. These include, but are not limited to, the District website, Facebook and Instagram, email, text, newsletters, parent portals, direct mail, and traditional media outreach. We will also utilize public meetings, community forums, and school-based events to facilitate in-person engagement and discussion. Communication methods will be strategic, tailored to the specific audience and the nature of the message, and ensure that information reaches its intended recipients.

The chart on page 9 illustrates District methods of communication. The type of information or the situation will determine the method and the recipient. Emergency alerts will be sent to the guardians of students as listed in Power School, our student information system platform.



Communication Strategies

Effective communication is paramount for a public school district to foster a strong, supportive, and informed community.

Reasons for Communicating

1. Student Safety

We share information about safety, transportation, and ways we care for students at school.

2. Learning and Growth

We communicate what students are learning, how we teach, important academic dates, and ways to support each child's success.

3. School News and Updates

We provide important information about budgets, policies, and other decisions that affect families.

4. Working Together

We invite staff, families, and community members to get involved through volunteering or partnerships.

5. Celebrating Our School

We highlight student and staff accomplishments, special events, and school traditions.

6. Join Our Team

We share opportunities to work or volunteer in our schools and share the ways our district is a great place to learn and grow.

How We Communicate with Families

Because strong communication builds trust and helps families feel connected, we use many ways to share information and celebrate our school community. Our goal is to make sure families receive clear, timely updates in the way that works best for them. Below are the main ways we communicate with parents, guardians, and community members.

Methods of Communication

1. Direct Personal Communication

- In-person meetings
- Phone calls
- Text messages

2. Digital Communication Tools

- Email
- ParentSquare
- School or district website

3. Printed Communication

- Flyers
- Letters
- Postcards

4. Public Displays & Announcements

- Reader boards

- Notes to neighbors

5. Media & Community Outreach

- News media (TV, radio, newspaper)
- Community non-profit boards
- Community partners

6. Social Media Connections

- Facebook, Instagram, or other school social platforms
- Community and Student Life, School news and information, District identity and values

7. Emergency Alerts

- Notifications through ParentSquare, text, or phone for urgent messages



GFPS Communication Method Chart

Communication Need	Direct Personal	Digital	Printed	Public	Media	Social Media	Emergency Alerts
Student Safety	x	x			limited	x	x
Learning and Growth	x	x	x				
School News		x	x	x	x	x	
Working Together	x			x	x	x	
Celebrations	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Join our Team		x		x	x	x	



Contact Us

For effective resolution of questions or concerns, our community is encouraged to first contact the individual or department most directly involved with the matter. For instance, questions about a specific class should begin with the teacher, while enrollment inquiries should be directed to school office staff. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved at this initial level, or if the concern extends beyond that scope, the individual is encouraged to then engage with the next appropriate school or district administrator. This approach ensures that concerns are addressed efficiently by those most knowledgeable and equipped to assist. The following chart can assist in navigating points of contact. When emotions are high, it may also be helpful to wait 24 hours before making contact with the school. School and District phone numbers can be found on page 12.



GFPS Point of Contact Chart

Topic	1st Contact	2nd Contact	3rd Contact	4th Contact	5th Contact
Behavior/ Discipline	Teacher	Principal	Executive Director	Superintendent	School Board
Buildings and Grounds	Principal	Director of Buildings and Grounds	Director of Business Operations	Superintendent	School Board
Classroom/ Instruction	Teacher	Principal	Executive Director	Superintendent	School Board
Curriculum	Teacher	Principal	Curriculum Coordinator <i>or</i> Executive Director	Superintendent	School Board
Extra Curricular & Co-Curricular	Coach, Teacher, or Advisor	Principal	Athletic Director, Fine Arts Director <i>or</i> Executive Director	Superintendent	School Board
Food Service	School Office	Principal	Director of Food Services <i>or</i> Director of Business Operations	Superintendent	School Board
Scheduling	Counselor	Principal	Executive Director	Superintendent	School Board
School -other	Principal	Executive Director	Superintendent	School Board	
School Safety* **	Principal	Executive Director	Superintendent	School Board	
Student Wellness* **	Counselor	Principal	Executive Director	Superintendent	School Board
Special Education	Teacher/Case Manager	Principal	Special Education Director	Superintendent	School Board
Technology	Teacher	Principal	Director of Information Tech <i>or</i> Executive Director	Superintendent	School Board
Transportation	Principal	Transportation or Big Sky Bus Lines	Executive Director	Superintendent	School Board
*	Please call 911 in the case of an emergency.				
**	988 Suicide Hotline can be called at any time.				



GFPS Contact Phone Numbers

Contact	Phone Number	Contact	Phone Number	Contact	Phone Number
ELF Center	406-268-6400	Chief Joseph Elementary	406-268-6675	Giant Springs Elementary	406-268-7045
Lewis & Clark Elementary	406-268-6705	Lincoln Elementary	406-268-6800	Longfellow Elementary	406-268-6845
Loy Elementary	406-268-6885	MeadowLark Elementary	406-268-7300	CORE School Morningside	406-268-6960
Mountain View Elementary	406-268-7305	Riverview Elementary	406-268-7015	Sacajawea Elementary	406-268-7080
Sunnyside Elementary	406-268-7115	Valley View Elementary	406-268-7145	West Elementary	406-268-7180
Whittier Elementary	406-268-7230	East Middle School	406-268-6500	North Middle School	406-268-6525
CM Russell High School	406-268-6100	Great Falls High School	406-268-6250	Paris Gibson Education Center	406-268-6600
GFPS District Office Building	406-268-6000	Executive Directors	406-268-6006 or 406-268-6008	Superintendent	406-268-6001

Communication Expectations:

Each communication situation is unique and will be handled accordingly. We will do our best to respond in a timely manner and follow-up similarly. During working hours, our community will generally find our initial response time to follow a 24-48 hour time frame. Some scenarios require further investigation or follow-up.

Resources

Portland Public Schools. (2023). *Communication Plan*. Retrieved from <https://www.portlandk12.org/about/communication-plan>

Gemini. (2025, July 16). *Gemini conversational AI* (No version number). Personal communication.