Every Child, Every Hour, Every Day

Coherence ~ Aligning Our Work

Professional Learning Communities/High Performing Teams

Resource Accountability

Positive, Professional Working & Learning Environment
MISSION STATEMENT

Arlington Public Schools educates all students, preparing and inspiring them to achieve their full potential.

VISION

Student Achievement

Every Arlington student graduates well prepared and motivated for future education and employment.

Staff delivers a research-based, challenging, and aligned curriculum in every classroom, using assessment data to improve instruction.

Students and families are active and integral participants in the learning process.

Safe and Caring Environment

Everyone shares responsibility for a positive school culture/environment.

Safe/efficient facilities and equipment are provided.

Respectful conduct and civility are universally expected.

Diversity is valued and respected.

Stewardship

Everyone shares responsibility for the care of Arlington Public Schools equipment and facilities.

Prudent management of taxpayer investment is expected.

Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement of all programs is expected and supported (based on research and data).

Administrators are accountable for measurable cycles of improvement.

Clear, consistent, and transparent communication is practiced.

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Arlington Public Schools Communications Plan is to present a clear and concise framework for communicating with our school community. The plan primarily addresses two types of school district audiences: internal (students, teachers, staff, administration and School Board) and external (parents, businesses, civic groups, religious groups, and other members of the Arlington community).

Staff support for and involvement in this plan is vital – particularly, teachers and office staff who are highly influential sources of information for the public. The APS staff carries the message of the school district to their families and friends who, in turn, form opinions about the schools. We must have as a top priority the goal of clearly communicating our unified message at all times. The superintendent will oversee the implementation and management of community relations, publications, marketing, and offer leadership on all comprehensive communication services and strategies for the district.
TARGET AUDIENCES

INTERNAL
- School Board
- Students
- Staff (Classified, Certificated, Leadership)

EXTERNAL
- Parents
- Parent Organizations (PTA/PTSA/Booster Club)
- Key Communicators (ACE and those enrolled in ConnectEd Key Communicators)
- Business Community (Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Arlington Business Association)
- Elected City Officials
- Elected State and Federal Legislators
- Civic Groups (Rotary, Kiwanis, Arlington Education Foundation)
- Realtors
- Senior Citizens (Golden Eagles)
- Religious Groups (Ministerial Association)
- Community Groups
- Education (school districts, local colleges and universities)
- Private Schools
- Electronic Media (Web site, Facebook, Twitter, e-news for staff, Videos)
- Print Media (Your Arlington Public Schools Report, newsletters, flyers, guest editorials, etc.)
Strategy 6.1 - Increased Communication with our Community

Issue three (3) editions of Your Arlington Public Schools Report (Fall, Winter, Spring/Summer)

Invite government officials (City, State and Federal), senior citizens and the community to Know Your Schools in October and April.

Invite senior citizens to participate in the Golden Eagles Club and attend the pie social.

Publish Citizens Guide to the Budget.

Provide information for school newsletters (Insights for Families, district information, articles).

State of the District Address.

Guest editorials for the Arlington Times on a monthly basis.

Press Releases to Arlington Times, North County Outlook and Herald as needed.

Meet with parent organizations (PTA/PTSA/Booster) on important issues like levies, and communication needs.

Create and update brochures on specific programs:

- Kindergarten Readiness
- Transition Program
- Manufacturing Program
- Summer Programs
- Stillaguamish Valley Learning Center
- Others, as requested

Meet with the Ministerial Association once or twice per year. Provide updates on areas of need, listen to concerns and find ways to partner with efforts on behalf of kids (Back2School Rally, mentorships, etc.)

Advisory Council for Education - obtain feedback from students, parents, administrators and staff representatives.

Use the web site to communicate activities, events and information for the public.

Use Facebook to highlight student and classroom activities.

Meet with real estate professionals to provide them with packets they can use with their clients.

Use a variety of methods for communications regarding the levy (Facebook, web site, newspapers, Your APS Report, community meetings and presentations).

Use ConnectEd, web site, Facebook and Twitter for emergency communication with parents, students and media.

Assist with planning, volunteering and communicating for the Arlington Drug Awareness Coalition for events throughout the year.

Attend school events to connect with families.

Publish the annual Family Handbook containing bus routes, legal notices, forms, etc. each August.
Strategy 6.1 - Increased Communication with Our Community

Produce Annual District and School Reports for each building with updates, demographics, and assessment results.

Conduct annual survey for feedback and measuring success.

Use Key Communicator System to educate our community about events, concerns, and call to action as needed.

Coordinate Super Kid articles with the Herald.

Provide “Contact the District” on our web site for community questions and feedback.

Use of Skyward Family Access system to communicate with parents.

Post important district communication on web site (District Essentials, Strategic Plan, Accomplishment poster, Press Releases, Videos, Board Agendas and Minutes, Calendar of Events, Important Dates, Arlington Times Guest Editorials).

Strategy 6.2 - Increased Regular Internal Communication to Our Principals and Staff.

Send out staff e-newsletters monthly to update staff on exciting things going on in our schools, important information they can share with our families, events, community activities, and “how to” options (i.e. where to find information on the web site, policies/procedures, etc.).

Work with Emergency Management and Response Team (EMART) to update and coordinate emergency procedures and communication.

Email communication, visit classrooms and highlight classroom/building activities throughout the year.

United Way - campaign managing.

Strategy 6.3 Recognition of Staff/Community Contributors.

Recognition of contributions made to the district by staff and community members at board meetings on a monthly basis.

Cabinet recognition of staff members and teams.

Coordinate annual WASA awards to honor educators and community members.
Strategic Plan to Market Arlington Public Schools to Prospective Families

Use videos to capture stories about students, staff and programs.
Meet with real estate professionals and provide them with packets for prospective families.
Use FlashAlert and Our Kids, Our Future (state web site) media systems to send out press releases to media in Snohomish County and other Puget Sound regions.
Provide good customer service.
Work with school web coordinators to improve their sites as a way of marketing our schools.

Strategy 6.5 Levy Information to Staff and Community.

*Your Arlington Public Schools Report* (Fall and Winter editions) talking points:

- Highlight programs covered by levy funds.
- Tell the story (students who have benefited from extra curricular activities).
- Preparing readiness for students.

Presentations:
- Staff meetings
- School community meetings
- Bargaining group meetings

Mailings:
- Your APS Report Facts
- Remember to Vote cards
- Special mailing (graduation rate increase)

Media Contact:
- Press releases to Arlington Times, North County Outlook, Herald
- Radio/TV interviews as requested

Other Communications:
- Posters in schools showing what programs are covered by levy funds.
- Brochures/pamphlets for presentations.
- PowerPoint presentations.
- School-specific fact sheets.
- E-newsletter updates on levy facts.
- Facebook/Twitter: “Did you know....” facts
Keep Communications Simple

- Use clear, concise and non-educational style for all general publications.
- Vary the types and level of communication to target diverse audiences.
- Translate communication pieces when appropriate for various language groups.

Create Information Sheets

- Create information sheets on four or five topics such as district and state budgets, school safety, accountability, etc.; update the sheets bi-annually.
- Have sheets available on-line for quick reference.
- Use template for uniformity so that new topics can be addressed rapidly.

Communicate Early and Often

- Prepare information sheets when appropriate to send out to principals, office managers, and other staff.
- Follow-up with memos or communications to all staff if necessary.
- Make telephone calls if in doubt.
- Develop key communicator groups and deliver message to them as needed. (They will take the message to the community more effectively than district personnel.)
- Maintain a high level of visibility for the District through participation of key staff in various professional and community activities.

Study the Media

- Pay attention to the type of stories aired, published or filmed.
- Note who is generally used as a source of information.
- Develop relationships with editors and education reporters.

Prepare the Messages

- Study issues facing education and be prepared to respond with information sheets.
- Develop responses that represent our school or district message.
- Avoid technical jargon by keeping it simple and using quotable "sound bites," when appropriate.
- Prepare stories in formats that match those used by the local media.
- Refrain from using education lingo and acronyms when preparing messages.