

**Special Darien Board of Education
Communications Committee Meeting**

Friday, October 28, 2022

8:30 a.m.

Darien Public Schools' Administrative Offices

35 Leroy Avenue

Board of Education Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Further Discussion of Charge for Communications Committee
2. Discussion of Sample Communication Plans
3. Structure and Topics for Stakeholder Feedback
- 4 Chain of Communication
5. Work Plan Topics
6. Public Comment*
- 7 Adjournment

*** * The Board of Education meeting will be available to the public in person and via Zoom. Wearing of masks is optional and seating is limited by room capacity.**

Those members of the community wishing to participate in public comment may join the meeting via Zoom:

<https://darienps.zoom.us/j/92122055791>

Those members of the community wishing to view only, should do so through the Darien Youtube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUnnvYKBFbFrTWQRuoB6OZA>

In order to reduce audio interference, members of the community are requested not to simultaneously view by Youtube while participating on Zoom.



Memorandum

To: Darien Board of Education Communications Committee

From: Alan Addley, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Marjorie Cion, Director of Human Resources

RE: BOE Communications Committee

Date: October 28, 2022

Providing effective communication and engagement with the community and among all constituents is a priority for the Board of Education and the schools. These priorities are reflected in both the Strategic Plan and the Board of Education Goals (attached).

At our last meeting, the Communications Committee began a discussion of its charge, the possible implementation of a communications plan and the desirability to seek stakeholder feedback.

Charges to Board of Education Communication Committees (enclosed) vary in style from the quite general to fairly specific. It is anticipated that the Committee will function as a work group. The following two drafts are included for the Committee's consideration:

1. The Communications Committee of the Darien BOE will work to ensure clear, concise and timely sharing of information among all stakeholders.
2. The purpose of the Communications Committee of the Darien BOE is to:
 - a. Ensure efficient, effective and varied methods of communication among all stakeholders,
 - b. Support the BOE's function as a liaison between the district and the community,
 - c. Work to align all communications with the District Strategic Plan, Vision of the

Graduate, and District/Board goals, in keeping with the Board's Roles and Responsibilities.

The Communications Committee also discussed the creation of a Communications Plan. A communications plan would reduce redundancies, increase the efficiency of communication and help identify areas of improvement. A few sample communications plans are attached for your review.

When the Darien Board of Education created this Committee, stakeholder feedback was identified as a key means of increasing satisfaction with the District's communications. The Committee identified several issues that should be discussed prior to moving forward with collecting stakeholder feedback. The following are a few guiding questions to facilitate the continuation of this discussion:

1. Who is the target audience for feedback?
2. What are the key areas/questions for solicitation of feedback?
3. When would we solicit feedback?
4. How would we seek feedback?

The District currently publishes a "Chain of Communication" that is included on the District's website. That resource can be accessed by clicking [here](#). As part of its work the administration suggests that the Committee review this document for accuracy and discuss possible means for a broader distribution to parents.

Finally, the Committee will need to discuss some of its next steps/work plan, including the following:

1. Timelines for Committee initiatives;
2. Social Media and branding;
3. Board of Education messaging to a broader stakeholder group, especially during the upcoming budget process.

2022-2023 Approved District Goals

The approved 2022-2023 Board of Education Goals include suggested strategies and measurements that complement the District's Strategic Plan. Quarterly updates will be provided over the course of the school year.

Goal 1	Strategic Work	Measures
Evaluate and maximize safety and security practices for students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review current practices and infrastructure across the District. ● Initiate a security audit and implement findings to refine and update school safety and security measures. ● Maintain partnerships with public safety officials. ● Enhance crisis communication plans. ● Provide additional training for administrators, teachers, staff regarding violence prevention, security, and emergency practices. ● Liaison with the HHR Committee on security matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Completed external safety audit. ● Updated policies and practices. ● Updated Emergency Response Plan. ● Utilization of various technologies for communication. ● Completed and implemented identified training. ● Funding for safety improvements for students and staff.
Goal 2	Strategic Work	Measures
Support systems and practices to address the mental health and wellness needs of students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide a monthly mental health and wellness update to the Board. ● Partner with Darien's Mental Health Task Force and Postvention Team members to provide proactive measures to support student, staff, and family wellness. ● Promote social and emotional learning Pre-K -12+ to support wellness. ● Provide resources to support mental health needs across the District. ● Support District participation in the State Pilot of SEL Screening (Aperture's DESSA SEL Screener) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board of Education updates. ● Annual update from District mental health providers. ● Completed CSDE SEL Screening Pilot participation. ● Administrative recommendations/interventions to support wellness and mental health of students and staff.

Goal 3	Strategic Work	Measures
<p>Oversee the Year 2 implementation of the Strategic Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide governance and support for Year 2 strategies. ● Utilize the Strategic Plan to guide policies and decision making. ● Revise Strategic Plan where necessary and needed. ● Provide financial resources through the budget development process. ● Establish Superintendent goals that support the Strategic Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implemented Year 2 strategies and actions in the Strategic Plan. ● Approved FY24 Budget that supports the goals of the Strategic Plan. ● Provided quarterly updates to the Board in tandem with BOE Goals update.
Goal 4	Strategic Work	Measures
<p>Enhance Board and District communications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish a BOE Communications Committee. ● Provide continuity of meetings and engagement with the community. ● Audit current communication systems. ● Survey stakeholders to identify preferred means of communication. ● Celebrate students and staff. ● Provide communication on the Strategic Plan. ● Collaborate on shared communication with administration. ● Work collaboratively with the Policy Committee to identify policies and procedures to support and enhance District communications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established communications committee. ● Community presence and voice in meetings. ● Increased quality and variety of communications. ● Published joint communications with the Board and Administration. ● Updated communication methods based on survey results. ● Developed media package that includes logs, template and standards for District communications.

SAMPLE BOE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHARGES

SOMERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (Somers, NY)

The purpose of the Communications Committee is to:

- Assess current communication mechanisms for Board of Education meetings;
- Investigate and recommend new communication strategies to the Board of Education and administration;
- Refine and update the Board of Education presence on the district website;
- Establish a Board of Education social media presence for communicating important information
- Work with the District's Communications Coordinator as needed to effectively communicate information in a timely manner.

KEYSTONE OAKS SCHOOL DISTRICT (Pittsburgh, PA)

This committee advises the administration on school and non-school publications, calendars, websites, social media, radio, television and internet broadcasts and other forms of communication as appropriate to communicate the activities and programs of the District. In addition, this committee's responsibilities are to examine the communication needs of the district and make recommendations on requirements, purpose and costs of communication and related budgetary issues, as necessary.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Rockville, MD)

The Communications and Public Engagement Committee was established on July 9, 2004 to enhance: the Board's use of external and internal mechanisms of communications; the Board's discussions and presentations at the Board table during business meetings; opportunities to gather perceptions and viewpoints from diverse segments of the community and staff; and other means to promote good communications and public engagement between the Board and its stakeholders.

ROCKWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT (Eureka, MO)

The Rockwood Board of Education established the Communications, Outreach and Public Engagement Committee (COPE) to establish connections with the Rockwood school community.

CORNWALL CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY)

The Communications/Outreach Committee shall collaborate, communicate and cooperate within the Cornwall Central School District to publicize events and conduct community meetings to strengthen the entire community for everyone's benefit. The SBAC's specific function is to develop an understanding of the District's budget process and annual budget so that it can assist in educating and communicating to the community on such matters.

GREENBURGH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (Hartsdale, NY)

The GCSD Community Engagement and Communications Committee shall engage the GCSD community by serving as a liaison between the Board of Education and all members of the community by delivering clear, concise, and timely information through a variety of two-way communication platforms.

RIDGEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Ridgewood, NJ)

Discusses district communications policy and practice, including the district website, eNews, Newsline, staff communications, etc.

MILAN AREA SCHOOLS (Milan, MI)

The purpose of the Milan Area Schools Board Communications Ad Hoc Committee is to review the current state of school board communications with the broader community. Please note: this ad hoc committee is only looking at school board communications and not broader school district communications. Broader school district communication issues and ideas will be gathered and referred to the Superintendent.

Goals:

- Establish a culture of two-way communication with stakeholders, within the confines of school board legal obligations and best practices
- Demonstrate transparency through communications standards
- Recognize the varied number of stakeholders of the school board, their varied interests and that communications needs to vary depending on audience
- Make recommendations regarding school board communication for school board approval, e.g. student board member

WAPPINGERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (Hopewell Junction, NY)

The board established a Community Communications Committee for the current school year to assist with the promotion of information and accomplishments of the District. The role of the committee shall be advisory.

The Community Communications Committee shall provide independent advice, assistance, and recommendations to the Board in the oversight of the promotion of important information to disseminate to the public and District stakeholders. The Committee will assist in developing/reviewing the District's communications plan. Furthermore, it will assist at the request of the Board of Education with adherence to District Policy 1000 – Community Relations, and District Policy 1100 – Public Information Program.

SOUTH COAST EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT (Coos Bay, OR)

This committee focuses on all levels of communication (internal, external district and stakeholder), communication programs (website, bulletin/newsletter) etc. It is also responsible for the community outreach program, customer assistance and the development/monitoring of the communication plan.

DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Initial Draft)

The Communications Committee shall review, establish and maintain effective communications among all stakeholders.

Districts with some communications information on their websites:

[Board of Education - Ellington Public Schools](#)

[Communications Committee - Tolland Public Schools \(sharpschool.net\)](#)

[Communications & Community Relations Committee - Bristol Public Schools](#)

[Montville, CT Form Repository \(townofmontville.org\)](#)

[Weston Public Schools Public View - BoardBook Premier](#)

[Communication Committee / Communication Committee \(sau26.org\)](#)

[BOE Communications Committee | Newtown CT \(newtown-ct.gov\)](#)

[Communications Committee - Madison Public Schools](#)

Example - Communication Plan

Deliverable/Description	Type	Target Audience(s)	Delivery Method	Delivery Frequency	Responsible
Status Reports	Mandatory	Sponsor Managers Steering Committee	Paper - Status Report emailed to audience	Monthly	Project Manager
Local Awareness Building Sessions Inform people of the project and the deliverables that will impact them	Informational	Local user community	Stand-up presentations	Schedule twice weekly until all users covered	Lead Analyst
Remote Awareness Building Sessions Inform people of the project and the deliverables that will impact them	Informational	Remote user community	Web cast presentations	Hold sessions three times a week until all users covered	Lead Analyst



SCHOOL COMMUNICATION PLAN

At Woodland Heights Elementary, we intend to provide information to our school community that is timely and relevant. Our communication will include all stakeholders - staff, students and parents - except where student or staff privacy take precedence or school board policy dictates. Communication will be provided in a clear and concise manner. Where the communications from the teacher, school or PTO are leaving questions in your mind, we request that questions be addressed as follows:

- ❖ For Academic and Student Specific Questions: Parent first contacts the teacher, then Principal/Assistant Principal as needed.
- ❖ For Staff Questions: Staff first contacts Grade Level Chair/SIT rep., then Principal/Assistant Principal as needed.
- ❖ For School-Wide Communication Questions: First contact the Principal/Assistant Principal and they will coordinate with the necessary team to provide clarity.

Our objective is to respond to all emails or phone calls within a suggested 24-48 hour business day response time.

<u>ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION</u>	<u>STAFF COMMUNICATION</u>	<u>SCHOOL-WIDE COMMUNICATION</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teacher Newsletter ➤ Teacher Notes in Folder/Agenda ➤ Parent-Teacher Conference ➤ Graded Work/Test ➤ Parent Portal ➤ Phone Call/Email ➤ Report Card/Progress Report ➤ Curriculum Night 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff Meeting ➤ PLC Meeting ➤ Hawk Herald ➤ Staff Monthly Calendar ➤ SIT Meeting ➤ Staff Handbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ConnectEd Phone Message/Email ➤ School Website ➤ PTO Meeting ➤ PTO "In the Know" in Teacher Newsletter ➤ Principal's Coffee ➤ Open House ➤ Social Media--WHE & PTO ➤ PeachJar Flyers ➤ Student Handbook

Woodland Heights Elementary School Communications Plan

Academic Communication				
STRATEGY	PURPOSE	TIMELINE	AUDIENCE	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Open House/ Curriculum Nights	Informational meetings to introduce parents to a new school year and curriculum procedures for success	Annually	Parents and students	Administration/Teachers
Parent-Teacher conferences	Individual meetings to discuss student progress and academic growth	Once in the fall, once in spring	Parents and students	Teachers
Student progress reports & report cards	Communicate successes and opportunities for improvement to parents	Quarterly	Parents and students	Teachers
Graded work, tests and assignments sent home Parent Portal	Keep students and parents updated on academic progress within the classroom	Ongoing Update grades in Parent Portal (Gradebook) weekly	Parents and students	Teachers
Teacher messages in student's folder/agenda	Inform parents of pertinent information not included in weekly newsletters	As needed	Parents	Teachers
Teacher newsletter (email blast)	Update parents on curriculum and instruction, class news, Enhancement curriculum	Weekly	Parents	Teachers
Chain of Concern: Parent→Teacher→Principal/Assistant Principal				

Woodland Heights Elementary School Communications Plan

Staff Communication				
STRATEGY	PURPOSE	TIMELINE	AUDIENCE	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
School newsletter & Monthly Staff Calendar (Hawk Herald)	Updates, news, dates, recognitions, “know & dos”	Weekly	Staff	Administration
Staff Handbook	Communicate updates of policies and procedures relevant to staff	Annually	Teachers	Administration
Staff meetings	Open communication with staff regarding news, updates, professional development, and school-wide calendar	Monthly	Teachers	Administrators
PLC meetings <i>(Professional Learning Communities)</i>	Teachers meet to discuss curriculum issues/concerns and student data	weekly	Administration, IF, teachers, and students	Administration, IF, all teachers
SIT meetings <i>(School Improvement Team)</i>	School financial, administrative, and professional development concerns/decisions discussed	Monthly	Parents, students, staff and community	Administration and SIT members
Chain of Concern: Staff Member → GLC/SIT member → Principal/Assistant Principal				

Woodland Heights Elementary School Communications Plan

School-wide Communication				
STRATEGY	PURPOSE	TIMELINE	AUDIENCE	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
PTO Newsletter “In the Know” <i>(Parent-Teacher-Organization)</i>	PTO news, events, dates, fundraising info	Weekly	Staff and parents	PTO Board
ConnectEd	School news, events, dates, important school information	Weekly	Staff and parents	Administration
School Website	Keep current and vital school information updated on the website.	Ongoing	Staff, students, parents, prospective students and their families	Webmaster, Administration, Teachers
School Facebook & Twitter	Keep community abreast of newsworthy events and information	Ongoing	Parents and community	Administration and assigned staff
Media	Networking with media venues to keep community abreast of newsworthy events and information	As needed	Parents and community	Administration and assigned staff
School-wide flyers and other materials sent home when necessary (Peachjar)	Announcements/reminders of important dates and information	As needed	Students and parents	Administration/PTO/ community groups
School Handbook	Update and distribute at the beginning of the year to outline school procedures and expectations for the year	Annually	Teachers, students and parents	Administration/Teachers
Admin & Teacher phone	Communicate with parents	As needed in a timely	Parents	Administration/Teachers

Woodland Heights Elementary School Communications Plan

calls/emails	on urgent matters or matters that require more personal interaction	manner		
Principal Coffees	Interested parties meet with principal to discuss school-wide events/updates	Monthly	Parents, students, staff, and community	Administration
PTO Meetings <i>(Parent-Teacher-Organization)</i>	PTO updates, events, dates, fundraising info	Monthly	Parents, staff	PTO Board
PTO Facebook <i>(Parent-Teacher-Organization)</i>	Keep community abreast of newsworthy events and information	Ongoing	Parents and community	PTO Board
Chain of Concern: Question/Clarification → Principal/Assistant Principal				

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Communication Plan Components

Audience	Message Type	Delivery Method	Schedule	Message Source
Identify the audience for the project, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residents• Clusters• Committees• Working Groups• Board of Directors	Determine the messaging type (may vary by the audience): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter• Face-to-face• Status Report• Project update	Determine appropriate delivery method: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting• Informal• Presentation• Formal Presentation• Mail/Email	Determine frequency <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weekly• Monthly• Quarterly• Milestone• As Needed	Determine the source of the message: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RA Board• CEO• Director of Capital• Projects• Project Manager
Who?	What?	How?	When?	Owner?