

North Boone

Community Unit School District 200

Communications Plan



April 2013

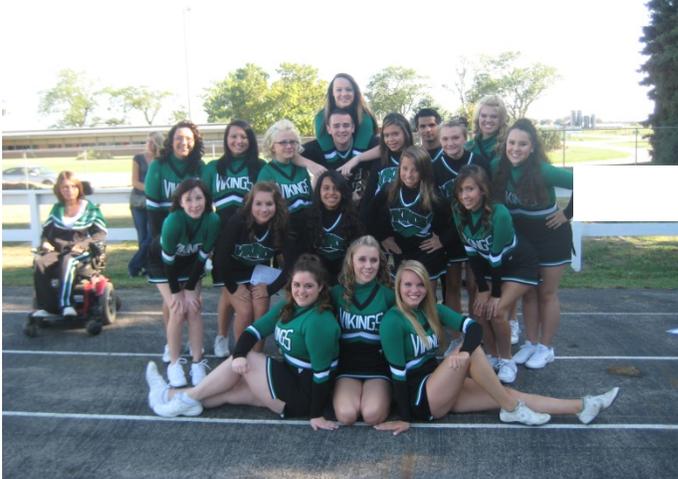
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NBHS Pit Crew



NBHS Cheerleaders

Goals

The Communications Plan is designed to more fully engage the entire community in the educational agenda. This process includes identifying opportunities to deliver the North Boone CUSD 200 message through an approach that is proactive, positive, consistent, multi-faceted and coherent.

Primary Goals:

- **Increase awareness** about the positive impact of North Boone CUSD 200 education
- **Improve public perception** of the individual schools and North Boone CUSD 200 as a whole
- **Generate consistent information flow** for employees
- **Generate engagement and support** for the education of North Boone CUSD 200 students

It is important to highlight in the schools, the district office and to the community that efforts to improve communication are not separate from the educational agenda, but rather, critical to its success. When families and the community are more informed and engaged, they are better prepared to support schools in improving student outcomes.



NBUE Student Lilly Perez & Dr. Sharon Olds

Audience Definition

Communication is a reciprocal process and thrives on continual feedback through a two-way process. The categorization of communication/responses is helpful in that it allows the Communications Office to more appropriately tailor a message.

The audience can be broken down into three primary categories:

Internal	External – Local Scope	External – Wider Scope
Board members District employees Students Volunteers	Existing parents Potential students and parents Prospective employees Local news media Community members (businesses, elected officials, civic leaders, realtors, economic developers, taxpayers, faith-based organizations)	Regional and state-wide news media Prospective employees Potential students and parents Alumni Retirees and former employees State lawmakers and other decision makers Grant awarding organizations

Broad communication efforts may be appropriate for reaching all of these targeted audiences, but it is more effective to convey tailored messaging through strategy and predetermined communication vehicles.

It is also important to view some of these groups as both audiences and communicators themselves. Those who know the district best – the staff, students and families who are in schools every day – are often regarded as the most credible and informed spokespersons. To communicate more strategically, North Boone Schools will work with current families and staff to help describe progress in the District.

Strategies

The North Boone approach to communications work will focus on two key strategies:

Improve delivery of news and positive messages to families, staff and the community

- ✓ Provide proactive public relations with consistent messaging about achievements and improvements in the schools within North Boone.
- ✓ Improve media relations through the increase of news about North Boone.
- ✓ Improve North Boone's access to grants and other resources by improving its profile beyond the local area.
- ✓ Counter myths and misconceptions about the schools and the district with timely, accurate information, personal testimonials and evidence of progress.
- ✓ Coordinate Spanish-language translation services for district-wide communication to parents.

Build capacity among School and District Office to improve communication

- ✓ Develop district-wide communications procedures and processes to ensure timely and accurate communication to stakeholders.
- ✓ Provide training to district leaders in marketing, public and media relations, customer service and other communication skills.



NBMS Golden Apple Teacher, Mike Winebrenner

Strategy: *Improve delivery of news and positive messages to families, staff and the community*

Ongoing communication about the positive stories taking place in North Boone will help foster confidence that greater success is attainable.

In order to generate greater investment and engagement in public education, North Boone must do more to counter myths and misconceptions about the district. The most compelling way to bolster confidence in North Boone is to educate the public about the strategic goals and other efforts already in place to improve the system. We must shine a bright light on the many success stories about our students, families and educators.

The sharing of good news must begin with those already involved in North Boone. Press releases will be posted to the North Boone website under the NEWS heading and will be forwarded to key members of the community and local press.

The district will begin to shine a positive light on the staff at North Boone through the *Staff Spotlight* news releases to be completed bi-monthly.

With importance equal to that of spreading good news, North Boone must be straight forward and honest about the challenges it faces.

Those who take time to visit schools and speak with students and staff often emerge with a much greater understanding and appreciation of the many good things taking place in schools. To that end, North Boone will launch a “*Principal for a Day*” initiative in 2014. The program will provide an opportunity for selected key community members to spend a day in one of our schools as a special guest of the principal. The event will be heavily marketed and will include a special morning introduction and afternoon debriefing period for the principals and their special guests.

The District must do a better job of communicating with non-English speaking parents. We are working to ensure that all important communications from the district are distributed and available in English and Spanish.

Strategy: *Build capacity among school and district staff to improve communication*

Ensure that the procedures for disseminating information are well understood by all staff and that they proactively forward newsworthy information to the district for dissemination via electronic or print methods.

Staff will continue to be offered training in developing and maintaining a website to communicate with parents and students. Similarly electronic learning management tools will be used for the same purpose at the secondary level.

Selected staff will be provided additional training through regional and staff associations to improve their communication abilities and skills as necessary to reach the goals of the first strategy.



Mr. Jake Hubert congratulates Illinois State Scholar, Alexandra Wood

Actions/ Deliverables and Timelines

Daily	Weekly (when in session)	Monthly
Update Twitter and Facebook postings regarding district happenings Ensure the website is up and Facebook/Blog and Twitter accounts are functional	District blog is updated Principals send out a building update / e-mail or blog posting Weekly update to the Board	Recognize student and staff achievements at Board of Education Meetings Food service menus are posted to the website Hold building meetings

Bi-Monthly	Quarterly	Semester
Release a new Staff Spotlight & post in each building Principals distribute school newsletters and they are posted to the school/district website Conduct a principal for a day activity in a school Hold Labor-Management meeting	Post Honor Rolls for NBMS/NBHS Recognize and thank volunteers Recognize extra-curricular accomplishments	Announce graduates and class statistics Remind parents to update contact information

Annually	As Required
Complete review of the website to ensure information is accurate and correct (June/July) Revise the NBHS School Profile (June/July) Review district publications (June /July) Provide training for new teachers on web development and communications (Aug) Announce new teachers/staff via press release (Aug) Encourage each staff member to apply for a grant (Aug/Sept) Post school report card and press release communicating important information from same (Oct) Conduct a survey including questions regarding the district's communications practices (Dec- Feb.) Offer training on web development during staff in-service (Oct or Mar) Review/revise/update communications related policies and procedures (May/June) Announce retirees and hold a retirement reception (May)	Response to Freedom of Information Act requests Publically thank grant awarders, fundraising sponsors and other donors Announce student and staff awards and honors Announce grant awards Respond to requests for information Arrange appropriate interviews with news media Attend job fairs and otherwise recruit for the best potential employees Hold public meetings to discuss topics of import to the community Hold special informational staff meetings as appropriate Provide factual information regarding upcoming voter referenda Create surveys to elicit input to various district programs (PT Conferences/calendar, etc.) Provide training to selected staff on communications/public relations

Evaluation Criteria

The Communications Plan Goals will be evaluated annually using the following minimum criteria.

Goals:

Increase awareness about the positive impact of North Boone CUSD 200 education;
Improve public perception of the individual schools and North Boone CUSD 200 as a whole
and

Generate engagement and support for the education of North Boone CUSD 200 students:

1. Increase the traffic on the district website
2. Increase the Facebook traffic for North Boone Facebook page
3. Increase readership of the North Boone Blog and principal blogs (where used)
4. Increase the number of Twitter followers for NBCUSD200
5. Increase the number of respondents to public and staff surveys
6. Maintain or increase the number of press releases developed by the district each year
7. Distribute five Staff Spotlights during each school year
8. Develop an effective method for communicating with alumni
9. Ensure all FOIA requests are dealt with as required by law

Goal:

Generate consistent information flow for employees:

1. Ensure faculty meetings are being held
2. Ensure Labor-Management meetings are being held
3. Post news releases and Staff Spotlight in building workrooms, etc.
4. Increase the number of respondents to staff surveys
5. Review the responses from the annual budget/communications surveys and staff climate surveys for methods to improve communication

Appendix A: Principles of Communications

The North Boone Board of Education, the Superintendent and all staff have a responsibility to communicate accurately and effectively with families, students, colleagues, partners and the community. Ongoing communication with all community members is essential to developing and sustaining effective home/school/community partnerships for improving student achievement.

North Boone CUSD 200 affirms the following principles:

- ✓ Families and citizens have a right to know what is occurring in their public schools.
- ✓ All employees have an obligation to ensure that the public is kept systematically and adequately informed.
- ✓ North Boone staff and families benefit from improved sharing of information – positive and negative.
- ✓ Written and verbal communication from schools and employees should reflect the North Boone commitment to supporting all children and families, with a focus on student achievement through high-quality teaching and learning.
- ✓ Effective communication requires an ongoing two-way exchange between schools and constituents, including thoughtful mechanisms at the school district levels for seeking family, student and community perspectives on critical issues and decisions.
- ✓ Language used to communicate with families and the community must be free of educational jargon, acronyms and other terminology unfamiliar to non-educators.
- ✓ It is the responsibility of every school in North Boone to adhere to these procedures and to execute additional strategies for effective communication.