

Public Engagement and Communications Strategic Plan

Last Updated: November 22, 2017

District Mission	We nurture each student's learning and well-being in a safe, responsive, and inclusive learning community.
District Vision	Each student within our world-class learning community has the opportunity to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations.

Public Engagement and Communications Strategic Plan

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Executive Summary

Communicating with and engaging the public are key to achieving our vision of One Learning Community. As a School District serving about 20,000 students and a population of over 200,000, we have a responsibility to provide essential information and tools for parents and community to use in understanding and engaging with the public education system. We know parents and community partners are key to a student's success.

Board of Education, School District level, and school decision-making should be open and transparent to encourage broad understanding and involvement of students, parents and community. Our schools, Board policy, and District operational decisions are stronger when informed by the needs of the broad community. We must be clear about when and how the public has opportunities to provide input into decisions, and how that public input will be used.

As a District that is responsive to the changing needs of students, staff and the community, we must find ways to be innovative in how we do our work, and strengthen relationships and community networks. As one of the largest employers and land-owners in the Greater Victoria region, we also have an important role in the fabric and vibrancy of neighbourhoods. Schools bring people together. They are a community resource and hub for education, recreation, entertainment, and community connectedness.

It's important that we are mindful of and responsive to what the community needs and the role the District has in supporting community well-being.

Mission	Vision
We ensure the School District, the Board and our schools are accessible and connected with the community. We encourage public input into decision-making.	Our world class public education system reflects the needs and wants of the community we serve. Parents are informed, and the District and Board share and receive quality information through open relationships with parents, students and our local community.

Summary of Goals and Main Strategies	
Goal #1	Increase public understanding and participation in Board of Education decision-making by making meetings, process and decisions as clear as possible.
	<p>Strategies</p> <p>1.1 Advertise and promote Board of Education, Standing committee and ad-hoc committee meetings in multiple channels including District and school websites, social media, traditional media and newsletters.</p> <p>1.2 State online and in print how and when the public can address Board of Education and Standing Committees to express their views and provide input.</p> <p>1.3 Update technology and seating in Boardroom to make it more accessible to the public including ensuring clear vision for attendees and quality technology so all dialogue is heard.</p>

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	<p>1.4 Update and improve policies, regulations and administrative procedures to provide greater transparency and certainty about communications and consultation.</p> <p>1.5 Issue “Board Highlights” to District staff and media, then post on website after each Board meeting.</p> <p>1.6 Adopt best-practice (IAP2) public participation values or principles for guiding how and when public input will be used to inform decision-making.</p> <p>1.7 Develop protocol for correspondence directed to Board of Education. Protocol should include turnaround times, tracking and monitoring and roles and responsibilities of Board Chair, Trustees and staff.</p> <p>1.8 Webcast standing committee meetings, in addition to Board of Education meetings.</p>
Goal #2	<p>Staff is informed and supported as “One Learning Community” and consistently communicates with parents, students and staff.</p> <p>Strategies</p> <p>2.1 Create internal mechanisms for information sharing, including exploration of an intranet for staff recognition, celebrating achievements and quickly sharing “need to know” information with all staff.</p> <p>2.2 Develop an e-newsletter from Superintendent that would be distributed routinely, at a minimum quarterly.</p> <p>2.3 Develop comprehensive orientation program for all new employees that provides an overview of the District values, vision and mission, as well as the community we serve and district composition (geography, students, funding, etc.).</p> <p>2.4 Support staff in developing communications and engagement skills, offering “lunch and learns”, and training/professional development opportunities about topics such as writing for the web, welcoming schools, media training and consultation planning.</p> <p>2.5 Develop annual communications calendar that outlines upcoming dates of note, school-based and District-wide events, activities and deadlines, for internal planning purposes.</p> <p>2.6 Ensure media releases are distributed to all staff, community partners and employee groups, in addition to media.</p> <p>2.7 Publicly acknowledge and celebrate the success and innovation of staff through District website, media opportunities, and e-newsletter.</p>
Goal #3	<p>Parents are engaged because information is easy to access and opportunities to engage are accessible, effective and considerate of the needs of all District parents.</p> <p>Strategies</p> <p>3.1 Develop professional brand standards and templates to support staff in consistently communicating with the community.</p>

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	<p>3.2 Develop calendar for The Board of Education that can help forecast annual decisions or initiatives that highlights upcoming plans to support District Parent Advisory Council (VPCAC) and parents efforts to work with the District to communicate with all parents in our District.</p> <p>3.3 Implement an annual “welcome back to school” communications strategy each school year.</p> <p>3.4 Refresh District website with user in mind. Review all content and structure to streamline online experience.</p> <p>3.5 Review current core processes to remove steps, communicate effectively and provide increased digital access opportunities.</p> <p>3.6 Improve information related to emergency preparedness, responsiveness and school emergencies, including ensuring that all schools utilize the same emergency notification system consistently.</p> <p>3.7 Reduce barriers to participation by using plain language, considering childcare needs, transportation routes, and language considerations, and identify ways of reducing any cultural barriers to parent engagement amongst new immigrants and refugee families.</p> <p>3.8 Recognizing that families often have children in multiple schools, seek to establish consistency amongst schools for specific services or elements. E.g. emergency notification systems</p> <p>3.9 Superintendent will work with the District Parent Advisory Council (VPCAC) executive to develop an annual Partnership building workshop, within the context of VPCAC Constitution and Bylaws. The purpose to develop the practice of Parent Advisory Council executive members and administrators working together toward improving the school experience.</p>
Goal #4	Students are involved in the design and delivery of the education system; “for students, by students”.
	<p>Strategies</p> <p>4.1 Superintendent, Trustees or District staff as designated, will meet regularly with secondary Student Representatives Committees to discuss issues and opportunities for students across all secondary schools.</p> <p>4.2 Superintendent, Trustees or District staff as designated to have meaningful presence in various schools, and at various school levels, on a regular basis. For example, teaching classes.</p> <p>4.3 Create opportunities for annual town halls or social “Soup with Super” type of events in each secondary school hosted by the Superintendent with opportunities for Trustees to attend.</p> <p>4.4 Explore participatory budgeting process to encourage student involvement in District or school decision-making, school budgets and potential participation in District budget discussions.</p> <p>4.5 Explore use of digital/social platforms to reach students with District information of relevance and interest to secondary students, including emergency information or notifications.</p> <p>4.6 Utilize video to engage students in various topics, and work with students to help create videos that educate community and parents about district initiatives and activities.</p>

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Goal #5	Community partnerships support parent engagement, high student achievement and development of responsible, engaged citizens.
	<p>Strategies</p> <p>5.1 Share strategic priorities and progress towards reaching goals, with each municipality by end of 2017-2018 school year.</p> <p>5.2 Educate community about value of public education and associated challenges and opportunities through routine and strategic media relations efforts.</p> <p>5.3 Host staff-to-staff workshop with municipal partners to share long term planning information.</p> <p>5.4 Support staff in understanding the community we serve: provide information about industry, socio-economic, planned land-use changes, job creation etc.</p> <p>5.5 Reflect on partnership type models like CityStudio and @CityHallSchool to create hands-on learning opportunities with real community projects partnered with government and community organizations.</p> <p>5.6 Build stronger relationships with agencies that rely on or share District related information. These would include the Real Estate Board, Property Manager associations, Police, Health and Community Associations.</p>

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Strategic Plan Timelines	
<p>December 2017</p> <p>Year One</p>	<p><u>Strategies under Goal #1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1.1 Advertise and promote Board of Education, Standing committee and ad-hoc committee meetings in multiple channels including District and school websites, social media, traditional media and newsletters. <input type="checkbox"/> 1.2 State online and in print how and when the public can address Board of Education and Standing Committees to express their views and provide input. <input type="checkbox"/> 1.3 Update technology and seating in Boardroom to make it more accessible to the public including ensuring clear vision for attendees and quality technology so all dialogue is heard. <input type="checkbox"/> 1.4 Update and improve policies through on-going subcommittee, update and improve regulations and administrative procedures to provide greater transparency and certainty about communications and consultation efforts. <input type="checkbox"/> 1.5 Issue “Board Highlights” to District staff and media, then post on website within 48 hours after each Board meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> 1.6 Adopt public participation values or principles (e.g.IAP2 – Spectrum of Public Participation) for guiding how and when public input will be used to inform decision-making. <input type="checkbox"/> 1.7 Develop protocol for correspondence directed to Board of Education. Protocol should include turnaround times, tracking and monitoring and roles and responsibilities of Board Chair, Trustees and staff. <input type="checkbox"/> 1.8 Webcast standing committee meetings, in addition to Board of Education meetings. <p><u>Strategies under Goal #2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 2.1 Create internal mechanisms for information sharing, including exploration of an intranet for staff recognition, celebrating achievements and quickly sharing “need to know” information with all staff. <input type="checkbox"/> 2.2 Develop an e-newsletter from Superintendent that would be distributed routinely, at a minimum quarterly. <input type="checkbox"/> 2.4 Support staff in developing communications and engagement skills, offering “lunch and learns”, and training/professional development opportunities about topics such as writing for the web, welcoming schools, media training and consultation planning. <input type="checkbox"/> 2.5 Develop annual communications calendar that outlines upcoming dates of note, school-based and District-wide events, activities and deadlines, for internal planning purposes.

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☐ 2.6 Ensure media releases are distributed to all staff, community partners and employee groups, in addition to media.

☐ 2.7 Publicly acknowledge and celebrate the success and innovation of staff through District website, media opportunities, and e-newsletter.

Strategies under Goal #3

☐ 3.3 Implement an annual “welcome back to school” communications strategy each school year.

☐ 3.2 Develop annual District communications calendar that outlines upcoming dates of note, events, activities and deadlines, for internal planning purposes. As well, develop calendar for The Board of Education that can help forecast annual decisions or initiatives that highlights upcoming plans to support District Parent Advisory Council (VCPAC) and parents.

☐ 3.4 Refresh District website with user in mind. Review all content and structure to streamline online experience. As well, ensure currency of all web content available.

☐ 3.6 Improve information related to emergency preparedness, responsiveness and school emergencies, including ensuring that all schools utilize the same emergency notification system consistently.

☐ 3.7 Reduce barriers to participation by using plain language, considering childcare needs, transportation routes, and language considerations, and identify ways of reducing any cultural barriers to parent engagement amongst new immigrants and refugee families.

☐ 3.8 Recognizing that families often have children in multiple schools, seek to establish consistency amongst schools for specific services or elements. E.g. emergency notification systems

☐ 3.9 Superintendent will work with the District Parent Advisory Council (VCPAC) executive to develop an annual Partnership building workshop, within the context of VCPAC Constitution and Bylaws. The purpose to develop the practice of Parent Advisory Council executive members and administrators working together toward improving the school experience.

Strategies under Goal #4

☐ 4.1 Superintendent, Trustees or District staff as designated, will meet regularly with secondary Student Representatives Committees to discuss issues and opportunities for students across all secondary schools.

☐ 4.2 Superintendent, Trustees or District staff as designated to have meaningful presence in various schools, and at various school levels, on a regular basis. For example, teaching classes.

☐ 4.3 Create opportunities for annual town halls or social “Soup with Super” type of events in each secondary school hosted by the Superintendent with opportunities for Trustees to attend.

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	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 4.4 Explore participatory budgeting process to encourage student involvement in district or school decision-making, school budgets and potential participation in District budget discussions.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4.5 Explore use of digital and social platforms to reach students with District information of relevance and interest to secondary students, including emergency information or notifications.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4.6 Utilize video to engage students in various topics, and work with students to help create videos that educate community and parents about district initiatives and activities.</p> <p><u>Strategies under Goal #5</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5.1 Share strategic priorities and progress towards reaching goals, with each municipality by end of 2017-2018 school year.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5.2 Educate community about value of public education and associated challenges and opportunities through routine and strategic media relations efforts.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5.3 Host staff-to-staff workshop with municipal partners to share long term planning information.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5.4 Support staff in understanding the community we serve: provide information about industry, socio-economic, planned land-use changes, job creation etc.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5.6 Build stronger relationships with agencies that rely on or share District related information. These would include the Real Estate Board, Property Manager associations, Police, Health and Community Associations.</p> <p><i>Please note: All initiatives will remain on-going for year two and three of plan.</i></p>
<p>July 2018</p> <p>Year Two</p>	<p><u>Strategies under Goal #2</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2.3 Develop comprehensive orientation program for all new employees that provides an overview of the District values, vision and mission, as well as the community we serve and district composition (geography, students, funding, etc.).</p> <p><u>Strategies under Goal #3</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3.1 Develop professional brand standards and templates to support staff in consistently communicating with the community.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3.2 Develop annual District communications calendar that outlines upcoming dates of note, events, activities and deadlines, for internal planning purposes. As well, develop calendar for The Board of Education that can help forecast annual decisions or initiatives that highlights upcoming plans to support District Parent Advisory Council (VCPAC) and parents.</p>

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	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 3.5 Review current core processes to remove steps, communicate effectively and provide increased digital access opportunities.</p> <p><u>Strategies under Goal #5</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5.5 Reflect on partnership type models (e.g. CityStudio and @CityHallSchool) to create hands-on learning opportunities with real community projects partnered with government and community organizations.</p>
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STAKEHOLDERS	INTERESTS
<p>Municipalities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victoria • Saanich • Esquimalt • Oak Bay • Highlands • View royal <p>Indigenous</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Nations Education Council • Esquimalt Nation • Songhees Nation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land, shared land and permitting • Partnerships • Youth engagement • Childcare • Community access to school facilities
<p>Interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental • Cultural • Recreation • Childcare • Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum • Access to school properties
<p>Community Organizations and Leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner to deliver or inform curriculum • Access to school facilities and students – behavior change and operations • Advance mandates focused on youth – Aboriginal education, health, safety
<p>Parents and Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCPAC - Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils • Parent Advisory Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay current on student learning and progress • Easy access to information needed to support student
<p>Community/lay people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and non-parents without children in schools • Taxpayers • School neighbours • Landlords, realtors • Alumni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested ins school property and changes • Value for tax dollars • Public education system and student achievement overall • School locations, catchments, access.

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Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future/new students • Elementary • Middle • Secondary • French immersion • Adult • International Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to supports and opportunities for achievement • Input into decisions that affect them
Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Principals and Vice-Principals • Administrative Support staff • Facilities staff • Exempt support staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input into decisions that affect them • Recognition of achievement • Working conditions • Supports available • Culture and team-building
Unions & Associations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GVTA – Greater Victoria Teachers' Association • CUPE 947 • CUPE 382 • ASA – Allied Specialists Associations 	