Communication Plan

All Kids. All The Time.

Chariho Regional School District

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Executive Summary

“In the private sector no one argues about the need to engage in marketing, positioning and communicating. In the education sector, educators believe their images should build themselves, often with disappointing results.” — Jeremy Cato

Communication is important given the changes taking place in the public school system, and the Chariho Regional School District is committed to open and ongoing two-way communication with our stakeholders. Good communication builds credibility, improves relationships, supports teaching and learning, boosts student achievement and a school’s reputation.

The purpose of this plan is to establish a comprehensive and integrated communication system, in alignment with the goals of the District’s Strategic Plan. Employee support and involvement in this plan is vital - especially teachers and staff, who are highly influential sources of information for the public. This plan is a working document that will be reviewed on an annual basis.

This Communication Plan is intended to do the following:
• Present a clear and concise framework for communicating a unified message with the school community.
• Foster strong relationships with all district stakeholders and allow them to provide input into the educational process.
• Combat negative perceptions of the District locally and throughout the state.
Strategic Plan
Serving the Communities of Charlestown, Richmond and Hopkinton

Mission

The Chariho Regional School District ensures that all students meet high academic standards and are prepared for lifelong learning and productive global citizenship.

Vision

With a commitment to continuous improvement, the District’s highly-qualified staff engages with students in state-of-the-art facilities to master challenging content, to promote creativity and to foster critical thinking. The District is recognized by the community as its greatest asset.

Beliefs

We believe that high academic standards and research informed decision making are critical.
We believe that the larger community must be fully engaged in the learning process.
Goals

1.) All students will acquire knowledge to meet the increasing demands of a globally influenced world.
2.) All schools will meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) and all targets as identified by federal and state law.
3.) All families and the community will demonstrate respect for and value of education.
4.) All schools will be ranked in the top twenty percent among schools in the SORICO region and in the top ten percent of those that are demographically similar in the state. The District will be ranked among the top five in the state.

Strategies and Actions

Strategy #2: Communication

*Create a district-wide communication plan that keeps parents and the larger community informed and engaged in the educational process.*

• Design and implement a comprehensive pre-kindergarten through grade twelve communication plan.
• Create meaningful opportunities for parents and community members to interact with the schools.
• Develop a public relations campaign to raise awareness of the importance of a quality education.
Objectives

1. To improve internal and external communication with the specific goal of creating open, two-way communication.
2. To inform all stakeholders of the issues facing public education at the local, state and national level.
3. To develop school and community understanding of our commitment to the educational process through the mission, vision, goals and beliefs of the school district.
4. To design positive school climates that welcome and encourage family and community involvement.
5. To seek partnerships within the community to provide additional learning opportunities for students.
6. To create a learning organization that is open to new ideas.
7. To promote an environment that encourages cooperation, teamwork and creativity among all constituencies.
8. To reach out to community members who do not have direct contact with the school district.
9. To shape public perception and attitudes toward the school district in a positive way.
10. To instill pride in our district and our students.
Target Audiences

Internal Audiences

School Committee
Administrators
Educators
Support Personnel

External Audiences

Students
Parents
Taxpayers
Business/Industry Leaders
Media
Elected Officials
Alumni
Neighboring School Districts
Local Universities
R.I. Department of Education
Education Associations
Channels

Interpersonal
- Town Hall Meetings & Public Forums
- Staff, Teacher and Administrator Meetings
- Student Assemblies
- Key Communicator Network
- “Charger Country” Campaign

Print & Television
- Local Newspapers
- ClerkBase & Public Access Television
- Press Releases & News Alerts
- Information Sheets
- “State of the Schools” Statement
- Newcomer Packets

Electronic
- District’s website and School websites
- Electronic Newsletters
- Online Surveys
- Social Media
- Listservs
- Powerschool
- OneCall Now Automated Phone System
- Intranet
Key Messages

Budget

• The School Committee’s FY13 budget is a fiscal roadmap that makes excellence a priority.
• The budget includes Advanced Placement Physics and a course in film studies that will be added to the High School’s program of studies, as well as a Career and Technical Center program in criminal justice, which will include a forensics component.
• Due to the district’s success in science, the budget includes funding for additional GEMSNET science kits that will be introduced in grades six through eight.
• The district will hire an Academic Fellow devoted to the district-wide implementation of the Common Core State Standards in mathematics.
• New athletic programs for high school boys in lacrosse, high school girls in competition cheerleading, and middle school girls in home game cheerleading will promote healthy and productive activities, as well as student responsibility.

Race to the Top

• The K-12 implementation of the new mathematics curriculum, which aligns to the Common Core State Standards, will begin in September of the 2012-2013 school year.
• Chariho educators, in collaboration with eight other districts, are writing an English Language Arts Scope and Sequence curriculum, based on the Common Core State Standards.
• The grade 7-12 implementation of this new English Language Arts curriculum will begin in the Fall of 2012.
1:1 Technology Initiative

• The district is in the process of forming a team consisting of school committee members, parents, educators, and students to study the feasibility of initiating a 1:1 computing model.
• In a 1:1 model, all students and teachers at the secondary level would be issued a personal computing device with the goal of transforming teaching and learning.
• In accordance with our district’s technology plan, all students and teachers will have access to state-of-the-art technology resources.

Achievements

• Chariho Middle School Principal Greg Zenion was named Middle School Principal of the Year.
• Chariho High School has 93 percent of its grade eleven students who are proficient in reading.
• Chariho Middle School had a 12-percentage point increase in reading scores and a 14-percentage point increase in math scores by its grade six students on the 2011 NECAP test.
• Ashaway Elementary School has 88 percent of its grade four students and 78 percent of its grade three students proficient in math.
• Hope Valley Elementary School has 98 percent of its grade four students proficient in reading and 97 percent of its grade four students proficient in math.
• Charlestown Elementary School has 93 percent of its grade four students proficient in reading and 89 percent of its grade four students proficient in math.
• Richmond Elementary School has 94 percent of its grade four students and 93 percent of its grade three students proficient in reading.
Student/Staff Relations

OBJECTIVES #1, #6, #7 and #10

Goals

• Expand distribution of information to students and employees.
• Increase opportunities for students and staff to have input in decisions that affect them.
• Recognize students and staff for their accomplishments.
• Build a culture of trust and collaboration through communication.
• Encourage staff members to build connections and partnerships within the community.

Strategies

• Maintain school-level websites that provide up-to-date information to staff and students.
• Include staff and students, when appropriate, on district committees and boards.
• Manage the district intranet site to promote internal communication among staff members and administrators.
• Continue to recognize and reward excellence in the classroom through the TE@CH (Targeting Excellence at Chariho) program.
• Recognize student and staff achievements during School Committee meetings.
• Support opportunities that allow students and staff to connect and learn outside of the classroom.
• Form a student advisory committee to meet regularly with the superintendent.
Community Relations

OBJECTIVES #2, #3, #4 and #5

Goals

• Develop and maintain strong, positive relationships with all stakeholders to strengthen support for the district.
• Allow for honest and frequent input from all constituents.
• Make district information available and easily accessible for the community.
• Build and maintain partnerships with business and industry leaders.
• Develop a strong network of alumni and encourage interaction between former and current students.
• Increase opportunities for community members to interact with the School Committee and the Superintendent.

Strategies

• Establish a Key Communicator Network.
• Continue Superintendent’s Open Forums and Town Hall Meetings.
• Promote access to School Committee meetings through ClerkBase and Public Access Television.
• Utilize the OneCall Now Automated Phone Alert System.
• Publish an annual “State of the Schools” address that is distributed throughout the community.
• Grow the number of businesses involved in student scholarship and award programs.
• Develop a Chariho Alumni Association.
• Encourage district representation at community meetings, programs, and events, as well as in state and national associations.
Media Relations

OBJECTIVES #2, #8, #9 and #10

Goals

• Maintain a reciprocal relationship with the media to enhance the public’s perception of the district.
• Increase the number of positive stories provided to the media.
• Showcase student and staff achievement.
• Help the district communicate with “difficult to reach” audiences.
• Maximize awareness and support of the district’s goals, objectives, and programs.
• Increase the use of social media tools to augment traditional media efforts.

Strategies

• Design press release and news alert templates for easy distribution and uniformity.
• Distribute updated fact sheets that promote the district’s key messages.
• Develop stronger relationships with media outlets and reporters.
• Highlight positive media coverage throughout the district and online.
• Implement and maintain appropriate social media tools.
Web Communications

OBJECTIVES #1, #2 and #9

Goals

• Reach all audiences, even those without direct ties to the district, through the accessibility offered by electronic communication.
• Emphasize the importance of two-way communication through the Internet.
• Design district and school-level websites that are visually appealing and user-friendly.
• Develop a branded look for all online designations.
• Promote the district’s website as a source of information for all stakeholders.

Strategies

• Maintain active listservs and use them to reach target audiences.
• Create and distribute electronic surveys to obtain feedback from all stakeholders.
• Increase parent usage of PowerSchool and interaction with teachers through email.
• Publish monthly electronic newsletters and distribute through the district-wide listserv.
• Redesign district homepage by highlighting all communication efforts (i.e. - twitter feed, photos, newsletter, media coverage, etc.) to attract and retain viewers.
Marketing

OBJECTIVES #8, #9 and #10

Goals

• Create key messages and talking points about the district to establish one, clear voice throughout all communication channels.
• Increase the distribution of printed materials that highlight the district’s mission, vision, beliefs, and goals, as well as recent achievements and accomplishments.
• Create a branded image that helps build a strong reputation.

Strategies

• Design templates with district branding for use among all employees to ensure message and design consistency.
• Increase the distribution of printed materials by making them available at all building sites.
• Create newcomer packets to provide to kindergarten parents, relocated families and realtors in the area.
• Develop and implement a “Charger Country” campaign.
• Host special events that include students, parents, educators, school committee members and the larger community.
RACE Flow Chart

**Research**: Goal setting is based on research and direct involvement with stakeholders to determine the key messages.

**Analyze**: Communication efforts are planned on a systematic basis to support the achievement of the organization’s goals and strategic directions.

**Communication**: The appropriate channel to reach the determined audience is employed.

**Evaluation**: Determine that the communication practices were successful and the audience has a high level of satisfaction with the results.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH</th>
<th>ANALYZE</th>
<th>COMMUNICATE</th>
<th>EVALUATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Develop key messages</strong></td>
<td><strong>Develop who needs to know</strong></td>
<td><strong>Find the best channel for the audience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rate the effectiveness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct involvement with stakeholders to determine needs for information and knowledge.</td>
<td>School Committee Administrators Educators Support Personnel Students Parents Taxpayers Business Leaders Media Elected Officials Neighboring School Districts Local Universities R.I. Dept. of Education Education Associations</td>
<td>Interpersonal Public Forums Staff Meetings Student Assemblies Key Communicator Network “Charger Country” Campaign</td>
<td>Engage in formal and informal evaluation of practices. Determine the audience’s level of satisfaction with the practice. Upon evaluation, create, modify or discontinue practice or project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research audience perception, desires, interests, and opinions.</td>
<td>Use qualitative and quantitative research to establish information needs.</td>
<td><strong>Print &amp; Television</strong> Local Newspapers ClerkBase Public Access Press Releases Information Sheets “State of the Schools” Newcomer Packets</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Key messages developed with useful and usable information.</td>
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<td><strong>Electronic</strong> Websites Listservs E-Newsletters Surveys Social Media PowerSchool OneCall Now System Intranet</td>
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