



Comprehensive Communications Plan

2024-2025



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MISSION

The Mehlville School District mission is to build a high-performing school system rooted in the community's desire to build a culture of improvement for staff and students.

VISION

The Mehlville School District, a district striving for excellence, focused on each student's challenge to engage in their future.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Personalized Student Preparation:

- Mehlville School District will identify pathways, or career clusters, that identify various career paths and highlight the types of classes and skills needed in order to have success within a particular career.
- Educators and learners in Mehlville School District will co-create profiles, which contain rich, current information regarding each learner, including demographic data, Academy status, learning-related skill sets and potential learning drivers.

Safety

- Mehlville School District will ensure its facilities are safe and secure.
- Mehlville School District will improve staff and student sense of belonging and mental well-being.

Access and Opportunity

Mehlville School District will ensure all students have access and opportunities to programs and services regardless of parental involvement, race, sexual orientation or identity, socioeconomic status, or disability.

Employee Support

Mehlville School District will support its workforce in achieving individual and organizational goals.

Effective and Efficient

Mehlville School District will make the biggest impact possible for its students while being a responsible steward of its resources.

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

Mehlville School District believes that all of our graduates should be creative and critical thinkers, self-aware, persistent, communicators, and ethical and global. We call this our Portrait of a Graduate, and it guides our work with students from preschool through their senior year.



Comprehensive Communications Plan Background

Mehlville School District is committed to transparency – open honest and ongoing communication with our stakeholders. We understand that maintaining two-way conversations with stakeholders is essential for building trusting, productive relationships. These relationships are the foundation of a strong school system.

This communications plan was designed to establish a comprehensive and integrated process for effective communication with all stakeholders. It aligns with the district’s mission, vision, strategic plan and board policies.

This plan is a working document that is regularly reviewed and updated by the Director of Communications under the advisement of the Communications Advisory Committee. In all communications, the Board of Education and Mehlville administrators strive to share accurate and timely information about district policies, programs, procedures, achievements, decisions and critical issues. We strive to eliminate rumors and misinformation, observe confidentiality and other restrictions imposed by law and board policy, and promote a climate of trust between the school district and the community we serve.

Communications Department Mission

The mission of the department of communications is to support Mehlville School District’s mission, vision and strategic goals by promoting transparent and strategic communication; by building trust and productive relationships with employees, parents, the community and other stakeholders; and by celebrating the district’s progress.

Beliefs

We believe we have the responsibility to communicate effectively with our stakeholders. We believe effective communication:

- Is a two-way process involving both internal and external stakeholders.
- Is the responsibility of every employee in the district.
- Supports teaching and learning.
- Helps increase student achievement.

Intent

The Comprehensive Communications Plan is intended to do the following:

1. Implement a communications program that directly helps the district achieve its strategic goals.
2. Foster strong relationships with district stakeholders.
3. Provide focus and direction for messages and communications methods in support of the district's goals.
4. Enable the district to present itself accurately and consistently to audiences.

Guiding Documents

The following documents guide the strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Communications Plan.

- Mehlville School District Strategic Plan (Adopted September 2021)
- Primary Board Policies KB (Public Information Program) and KC (Community Engagement)

Key Audiences and Desired Outcomes

Mehlville School District is committed to ongoing communication within our schools and with the community.

Internal Audiences

- Administration/District Leadership
- Board of Education
- Certified staff (teachers, counselors, librarians)
- Support/classified staff
- Special School District staff
- School Resource Officers

Parents and Students

- Students
- Parents/Guardians
- Parent Organizations
- Student Organizations

External Audiences

- Alumni and alumni association
- Business leaders
- Chambers of Commerce (Southwest Area Chamber of Commerce and Affton-Lemay Chamber of Commerce)
- Civic groups
- Community leaders
- Faith communities
- Government officials
- Law enforcement agencies
- Media
- Prospective residents
- Real estate agents
- Residents without children attending Mehlville School District
 - Senior Citizens
 - Private and parochial school parents (about 24 percent of families with school-aged children attend private schools, according to district demographer's report in 2019)
 - New residents
- Retired Mehlville School District educators
- St. Louis County school districts and neighboring school districts

Through the implementation of this plan, the following desired behaviors and attitudes are the focus:

Internal Audiences – Behaviors and Attitudes

- Take pride and ownership in Mehlville School District. Act as a valued member of the Mehlville School District team.
- Provide excellent customer service to colleagues and to families and residents.
- Keep informed on key issues and be empowered to share accurate information and dispel rumors.
- Work as a high-performing organization with a growth mindset. That means valuing and acting on constructive feedback from stakeholders.
- Exhibit and celebrate Portrait of a Graduate traits, including being:
 - Creative and critical thinkers
 - Self-Aware
 - Persistent
 - Communicators
 - Ethical and Global

External Audiences – Behaviors and Attitudes

- Exhibit pride and trust in Mehlville School District and member schools.
- Be involved and engaged in public schools.
- Choose to enroll children in Mehlville School District because of its academic rigor, dedication to student engagement, continuous improvement and innovation.
- Provide general support to Mehlville School District.

Communication Channels

The district has a variety of channels for distributing information to stakeholders. A multi-faceted approach to overall communications helps ensure greater impact of messaging. These are the internal and external communication channels available to Mehlville School District along with the primary demographics for each.

Communication Channel	Primary Demographics		
	Internal	Parents/Students	External
Board Notes (email subscription)	X	X	X
Community Education (email subscription)	X	X	X
e-Messenger (2x monthly email newsletter)	X	X	X
Employment Opportunity Alerts (email subscription)	X		X
Facebook (Mehlville School District)	X	X	X
Instagram (@MehlvilleSD)	X	X	X
LinkedIn	X		X
Marquees	X	X	X
Parent Portal		X	
ParentSquare Notifications	X	X	
PeachJar eflyer distribution	X	X	
School newsletters		X	
School/teacher social media pages		X	
Staff Notes email	X		
Survey Tools (Google Forms, Survey Monkey, ThoughtExchange)	X	X	X
Website feedback forms			X
Website (mehlilleschooldistrict.com)	X	X	X
Websites - Schools		X	X
X	X	X	X
YouTube	X	X	X

Print Communications	Internal	Parents/Students	External
Mehlville Messenger	X	X	X
Direct Mail Materials		X	X
At a Glance Factsheet			X
Media	Internal	Parents/Students	External
The Call Newspaper	X	X	X
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	X	X	X
Broadcast TV and radio stations	X	X	X
St. Louis magazines			X
Other news and community websites			X
Community organization newsletters			X
Interpersonal Communications	Internal	Parents/Students	External
Board of Education Meetings	X	X	X
Board Listening Sessions	X	X	X
Leadership team meetings	X		
All Hands meetings	X		
Instructional leadership meetings	X		
Faculty meetings	X		
60+ events			X
Staff recognition night	X		
President's Council meetings		X	
Chamber of Commerce and community organization meetings			X

Communications Goal 1: Develop and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with all stakeholders to strengthen support for Mehlville School District.

District Alignment: Policy: KB and KC; Strategic Plan: Effective and Efficient

Objectives:

- Increase the satisfaction rating for “keeping the public informed about important issues and policies” to 83% (up from 78%) in the 2024 frequent voter survey.
- Increase the number of parents who are likely or very likely to recommend Mehlville School District to 80% (up from 77.8%) in the parent communications survey.
- Maintain opportunities for systematic two-way communication with parents and community members.

Strategy	Audience	Person Responsible	Timeline
Communicate key messages using a variety of media, including but not limited to district and school websites, social media, e-mail, e-newsletters, news releases, print media and direct mail (Messenger).	Parents Staff Students Community	Communications department Supported by district leadership and all district staff	Ongoing
Target key messaging around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic achievement and making sense of school evaluation tools like APRs, MAP scores, etc. • Student engagement and personalized learning • Access to a variety of learning pathways • Stewardship of district facilities and resources, particularly around critical infrastructure improvements and Prop S projects • Portrait of a Graduate 	Parents Staff Students Community	Communications department Supported by district leadership and all district staff	Ongoing
Ensure district representatives are present at key community stakeholder group events, including but not limited to Kiwanis of South	Community	Communications department	Ongoing

County, Southwest Chamber of Commerce, Affton-Lemay Chamber of Commerce and other civic and community organizations.			
Provide opportunities for staff, students, parents and community members to share feedback both formally and informally related to strategic plans and issues facing the district or schools.	Community	Communications Department, district leadership	Ongoing with a formal survey every two years
Provide specific opportunities for district residents without children in our schools to engage with Mehlville School District via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60+ events • Community performances • Community Education • Use of facilities where feasible. • Business partnerships • Alumni events and recognition • Other special events 	Community	Communications Department Community Education Director Director of College and Career Readiness Director of Fine Arts	Ongoing
Encourage authentic reviews and social proof from families and students through Niche, Great Schools and Google	Prospective Families	Communications Department	Ongoing
Ensure district brand compliance on future building signage	Community Prospective Families	Communications Department Facilities Department	Ongoing
Seek out and apply for relevant local, regional and national awards		Communications Department	Ongoing

Evaluation: Frequent Voter Survey, Parent Communication Survey

Communications Goal 2: Refine and review use of digital communications tools to ensure they are used to maximum effectiveness, are streamlined and accessible for target audiences

District Alignment: Strategic Plan: Access and Opportunity

Objectives:

- Increase and maintain reach through digital media channels as outlined below.

Performance Indicator	Baseline (Nov. 8, 2023)	Goal (June 1, 2025)
Facebook followers	12,594 followers	13,000 followers
X followers	3,324 followers	Monitor
Instagram followers	3,378 followers	3,750 followers
LinkedIn followers	1,182 followers	1,300 followers
e-Messenger subscribers	21,449 subscribers	<i>Maintenance Goal:</i> 21,500 subscribers
ParentSquare Parent Contactability	99.6% of students have parents who can be contacted via ParentSquare.	<i>Maintenance Goal:</i> 99.5% of students have parents who can be contacted via ParentSquare.
Website Accessibility Score (SiteImprove)	78.6%	80%

Strategy	Audience	Person Responsible	Timeline
Continue to provide ongoing training on ParentSquare to teachers and support staff.	Parents Students	Communications Department Principals	Ongoing
Regularly review ParentSquare metrics to ensure parents can be contacted via the platform. Fix outdated contacts.	Parents	Communications Department Principals and school secretaries	Quarterly reviews
Continue to follow best practices that have resulted in expanded reach and engagement in social media. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use social media primarily for celebrations and to 	Parents Prospective Parents Community	Communications Department	Ongoing

<p>showcase the learning happening in classrooms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use invite feature on Facebook posts with a large number of likes to encourage more page likes. • Invite recent graduates to connect with Mehlville School District via LinkedIn. • Use Facebook events for Board of Education meetings. • Promote subscriptions to e-Messenger, Board Notes, Community Education and Employment Alerts. • Use alt-text or descriptions for all photos shared on social media to allow for screen-reader use and translations. 			
<p>Review district and school websites to ensure they contain accurate information that is easy to find and that is accessible.</p>	<p>Parents Students Staff Community</p>	<p>Communications Department</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Evaluation: Monthly social media reports, reach statistics, Parent Communications Survey, ParentSquare usage and “contactability” dashboard

Communications Goal 3: Establish effective employee communication programs to improve internal communication, district climate and consistency of external messaging.

District Alignment: Strategic Plan: Employee Support, Effective and Efficient

Objectives:

- Create a growth objective after collecting one year of baseline data via new employee climate and culture survey questions:
 - “Information is communicated effectively in my school/department.”
 - “My school/department assures staff voices are heard and respected.”
- Maintain employee satisfaction ratings in employee climate and culture survey questions as follows:
 - More than 80% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the statement “I feel like a valued member of our staff team.”
 - More than 85% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the statement “I enjoy coming to work.”

Strategy	Audience	Person Responsible	Timeline
Publish at least a monthly employee newsletter via ParentSquare to improve accessibility and two-way communication.	Staff	Communications Department, Department Directors	Ongoing
Collect feedback via an annual staff climate and communication survey.	Staff	Communications Department, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources	Annually
Recognize employees for 5, 10 and 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 years of service.	Staff	Communications Department, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents	Each school year
Meet with building staff at least once a semester during faculty meetings. Ensure an agenda item includes gathering feedback.	Staff	Superintendent	Ongoing
Support Human Resources with employee recruitment to help ensure a qualified and diverse candidate pool.	Staff	Communications and Human Resources departments	Ongoing

Support Human Resources with retention efforts related to employees in their first few years on the job.	Staff	Communications and Human Resources departments	Ongoing
Highlight staff in newsletters and media relations for their expertise related to instruction and support of students.	Staff Parents Students Community	Communications Department	Ongoing
Provide staff with speaking points, frequently asked questions, or other information related to new initiatives, ballot measures and other situations as needed.	Staff Board of Education	Communications Department	Ongoing

Evaluation: Collaborative Climate and Culture Survey

Communications Goal 4: Achieve coordinated communication, both internally and externally, regarding safety issues and crisis management.

District Alignment: Strategic Plan: Safety, Employee Support, Effective & Efficient; Portrait of a Graduate: Communicator

Objectives:

- Increase the satisfaction rating for “How would you rate the district at communicating emergency information?” to 90% very good and good (up from 86.85% in 2022).
- Provide timely, accurate information to internal and external audiences as evidenced by communicating any LOCKDOWNS within 15 minutes of it being called.
- Serve as part of the district’s crisis team.

Strategy	Audience	Person Responsible	Timeline
Ensure district and building crisis plans include crisis communications component. Work with Safety Committee to review building crisis plans.	Administrators	Director of Communications, Executive Director of Planning and Development	Ongoing
Maintain and update library of crisis letters and alerts, and checklists, for use in emergencies	Administrators	Communications Department	Ongoing
Provide immediate and ongoing counsel to principals, administrators and other key staff during a crisis. Manage all external communications during a crisis with the goal of initial communication occurring within 15 minutes of a SECURE, LOCKDOWN, EVACUATE or SHELTER.	Staff Parents Community	Communications Department	Ongoing
Continue participating in crisis management/communication training		Communications Department	Ongoing
Debrief with crisis team following emergencies to develop better responses in the future		Communications Department	Ongoing

Evaluation: Parent Communications Survey, emergency communications records/timelines