The purpose of the Newport High School Communications Plan is to present a clear and concise framework for communicating with our school community. This plan will provide public understanding and awareness of the learning opportunities provided for students and learners of Newport High School. The plan primarily addresses two types of school district audiences: internal (students, teachers, staff, administration, and Board of Education) and external (parents, businesses, civic groups, religious groups, colleges, universities, and other members of the Newport community).
Target Audiences

Internal
1. Students
2. Staff

   A. District Level
      i. Classified
      ii. Certificated
      iii. Leadership
   B. Site Level
      i. Classified
      ii. Certificated
      iii. Leadership

3. Board of Education

External
1. Parents
2. Parent Organizations
3. Key Communicators
4. Business Community
5. Elected City Officials
6. Civic Groups
7. Senior Citizens Groups
8. Religious Groups
9. Community Groups
10. Education — school districts, local colleges, and libraries
11. Electronic Media—Web site, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, etc.
12. Print Media—newsletters, newspapers, flyers, brochures, etc.
13. Non-Profit Organizations
14. Newport Citizens
Objective

Our objective is to improve internal and external communication systems with the specific goal of creating open, two-way communication between the Board of Education, administration, staff, students, parents and the Newport community.

1. Clarify district flow of information
   Distribute organizational charts to all staff showing decision-making process, reporting, and accountability structure. Charts will include individual areas of staff responsibility for communication. See the Quick Reference System Checklist.

2. Provide ongoing training and support for administrators in effective communication with staff and the public
   Provide continuing training sessions as part of principal’s meetings on how to train teachers and staff to communicate their school’s message. Supply administrators with public relations fact sheets and other easy-to-use communications tools as needed when issues arise and must be preapproved by Superintendent. Provide communications training sessions to site-level staff. Schools will manage upcoming events through the online school calendar posted on school website. Schools will be held accountable for maintaining upcoming events.

3. Provide regular information on district-wide issues
   Distribute information from meetings on need-to-know basis. Distribute external publications and news releases to all employees via email, website, newsletters, postings, and through school messenger. Issue short, bulleted FYI sheets to staff and parents on issues of immediate concern. Formalize a policy for district communication with teachers and site staff.

4. Create a system to encourage flow of information from parents/community to the district
   Encourage parents and community members to sign up for district-wide and school-wide Internet listservs (automatic mailing lists from the internet, Open Houses, orientations, academic/athletic events, and email logs at each school campus). Conduct electronic surveys (email) at district and site levels to provide feedback on flow of information through either school messenger, SharePoint, or Obsurvey. Offer informal meeting opportunities to receive input. Establish informational email account to receive feedback from community. Expand use of the Parent Portal to facilitate communication between parents and schools by placing an icon on district website and advertise through school messenger and newspaper.

5. Publish and distribute informational pieces
   Develop Collateral Pieces. District/School Informational Brochures. Newsletters – to be communicated via e-mail. Press releases as needed.
6. Communicate with civic, community and religious groups
   Include groups in mailings and provide opportunities for them to sign up for our community listserv. Attend community meetings as needed to provide information. Provide district communications materials to key leaders. Develop partnerships with groups.

7. Be visible in the community
   Attend community organization meetings. Encourage participation in local service clubs. Encourage school staff to talk positively about Newport schools to friends, neighbors and community acquaintances. Seek business partnerships through contacts in local groups.

8. Promote the successes of Newport personnel
   Produce a monthly newsletter or presentation focusing on a student, staff member, program, school, department, etc. This is to be shown on District website, newspaper, and/or at Board meetings. Highlight staff with articles in district communications pieces, outside media, and through recognition at events.

Strategies

1. Keep Communications Simple
   ◊ Use clear, concise and non-educational style for all general publications.
   ◊ Vary the types and level of communication to target diverse audiences.
   ◊ Translate communication pieces when appropriate for various language groups.

2. Create Information Sheets
   ◊ Create information sheets on four or five topics such as district and state budgets, school safety, accountability, etc.; update them bi-annually or as needed.
   ◊ Have sheets available on-line for quick reference.
   ◊ Use template for uniformity so that new topics can be addressed rapidly.

3. Communicate Early and Often
   ◊ Prepare information sheets when appropriate to send out to principals, office managers, and other staff as needed.
   ◊ Follow-up with memos or communications to all staff if necessary.
   ◊ Make telephone calls if in doubt.

4. Communicate Face-to-Face
   ◊ The more difficult the situation, the more important it is to communicate face-to-face.
   ◊ Encourage staff to relay messages through personal interaction when appropriate.
   ◊ When possible use natural voice to record messages on School Messenger.

5. Keep Communications Brief and to the Point
   ◊ In order to keep a person’s attention, be brief and to the point.
   ◊ Use bullet points when appropriate.
   ◊ Highlight message in the title.
6. Emphasize Customer Service
   ◇ Customer must leave with an answer to their concern or question.
   ◇ Never be dismissive.
   ◇ Actively listen to understand the message beyond the words.

7. Train Staff
   ◇ Train staff to understand that what they say to friends, neighbors, and people in the community has an impact on how Newport schools are perceived.
   ◇ Use weekly memos to relay important information. These should be given to all schools including, principals, teachers, and secretaries.
   ◇ Engage frontline staff in the conversation, and make sure they have access to information immediately. They are the best link to the parents and community.

8. Develop Relationships with our Community
   ◇ Develop relationships with merchants by keeping them informed
   ◇ Ask for input on areas of concern through surveys, Board email address, school email addresses, and through the Notifyme section on the District website.
   ◇ Develop key communicators groups and deliver message to them as needed. They will take the message to the community more effectively than district personnel. This includes Newport Chamber of Commerce and the Newport Drug Awareness Council.
   ◇ Maintain a high level of visibility for the District through participation of key staff in various professional and community activities.

9. Study the Media
   ◇ Pay attention to the type of stories aired or published.
   ◇ Note who is generally used as a source of information.
   ◇ Develop relationships with editors and education reporters.

10. Prepare our Messages
    ◇ Study issues facing education and be prepared to respond with information sheets.
    ◇ Develop responses that represent our school or district message.
    ◇ Avoid technical jargon by keeping it simple and using quotable — sound bites, when appropriate.
    ◇ Prepare stories in formats that match those used by the local media.
    ◇ Don’t use education lingo when preparing messages.
Methods

We will identify the communication tools that are most widely accepted and preferred by the community through quarterly assessment and adjust accordingly. Our current communications methods are:

1. **Printed Materials**
   - Electronic Newsletters—sent to employees, parents, business and media contacts
   - Memos from the Superintendent—as needed.
   - Weekly Memo- the most important facts to relay to the public

2. **E-mail Communication** – Newport School District has a community Facebook that individuals can sign up for on the District web site. This gives us the ability to send periodic notices including links to the latest information:
   - Publications
   - Board minutes, agendas and notes
   - Press releases
   - Talking points memos
     * All schools should send out a monthly email communication and encourage parents to “like us” on Facebook. Paper communication could be greatly reduced over time.

3. **Publications Posted On-line** - We can save money and time by continuing to provide the majority of our printed materials on our district’s web site and begin to move away from paper communications. Our on-line archives include:
   - Board agenda/notes/minutes
   - Student and Master Events Calendars
   - Link to School and District Websites
   - School Newsletters
   - Weekly memo

4. **Online Message Board** - Establish a message board on our website to be used for district-level communication and crisis situations.

5. **Radio Announcements** –
   - Coaches Corner- academic spotlight
   - Emergency Situations
   - Back to school announcements
Assessment and Accountability

Because different measurements work best in different situations, a tracking system will be developed to measure communication effectiveness.

◊ **Surveys** - electronic surveys will be used to ascertain people’s opinion and to collect quantitative information.

◊ **Email** receipt requests - counters will be used on the website to measure the number of hits for each story.

◊ **Interpersonal Contact** - Informal word-of-mouth surveys will be conducted to gauge the level of effectiveness of Communications Plan. The Communications Plan will be reviewed annually or as deemed necessary by the Superintendent, Board of Education and/or Communications Committee.

**Internal Communication:**

- Weekly Instructional Leadership meetings and Principal Meetings will be held to communicate new programs, ideas, concerns, policies, procedures, staff development, and announcements.
- Provide newsletter on a monthly basis, highlighting educational and school issues, staff achievement and service, and other employee issues.
- Encourage the use of e-mail to convey information and to communicate with principals, teachers, and staff on an “as-needed” basis.
- Continue to hold new staff members’ orientation.
- Provide information and opportunity for training on effective communication.
- Develop a board agenda calendar for long-term planning for recurring projects and deadlines that are addressed each year.
- Provide student handbooks to all parents at the beginning of the school year.
- Use of Weekly Memo to inform internal stakeholders of relevant information.

**External Communication:**

- Use newspaper articles to promote the district’s mission.
- Arrange interviews and media coverage to promote the district’s mission.
- Honor volunteers and community partnerships at the district level.
- Continue the development of the district web site and individual school sites.
- Develop and distribute packets of school information upon request to parents and businesses.
- Communicate significant dates such as the opening of school, student orientations, National Education Week, National School Nurses’ Week, Red Ribbon Week, through local newspapers, radio, announcements, school snow assignments and website.
Provide the public with the opportunity to provide written or oral concerns or statements to the board through board email address and submit news on the district website.

- Encourage central office staff and school staff to become involved in civic opportunities.

Possible Publications Tools:
- All-School calendar of activities and events
- Weekly “In Our Schools”
- Special event/activity brochures
- Building Level newsletters
- Principals Newsletters
- School Messenger
- Weekly Memo
- Emails to businesses and parents
- Student Generated Newsletters

Newport High School
Outgoing Correspondence and Publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Types of Publications</th>
<th>Sent Out</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Newspaper District Website</td>
<td>Quarterly Updated Every Monday Monthly As needed Sent out as needed Sent out as needed</td>
<td>Kevin McCormick Kelly Middleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District Newsletter Channel 15 School Messenger E-mail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newport High School</td>
<td>Marque Weekly memo Newsletter Website Facebook E-mail Mailings Twitter All Call Infinite Campus</td>
<td>Updated weekly Weekly (Sunday) Monthly Updated on Mondays Updated as needed As needed As needed As needed As needed</td>
<td>Tony Watts/Donna Watts Tony Watts Bonnie Stacey April Walsh April Walsh Staff Tony Watts Tony Watts Teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>