

Table 3-5

ILLUSTRATION OF COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Expected Outcomes

Having a communications plan should not be considered an outcome unto itself. It must IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE and produce measurable results, including:

- Enabling the board and administration to ascertain the current level of support for the educational enterprise and specific policies, programs, and services as needed.
- Strengthening parent and community support for District 39's educational programs and services.
- Supporting and facilitating teachers' home school communications.
- Increasing parents' involvement in their children's education.
- Providing the administration and board access to data to improve decision-making.
- Increasing the amount of dialog between community members and the schools.
- Enriching the learning of students, parents, and staff.
- Providing multiple resources for the community to access reliable information.
- Generating ideas for improving the quality of education.

These outcomes are important in their own right but will also enhance this year's theme of "Teaching Tomorrow's Leaders" and deliver powerful "customer service" messages: that we care about each and every child, that the opinion of parents and taxpayers is important to us, and that we are serious about continuous improvement.

Key Components

1. INFORMATION

- 1.1 Residents and staff will receive timely news and information related to district and school operations and events.
- 1.2 The public will have ready access to school and district achievement data—both current and historical.
- 1.3 Parents will have a resource for "backpack" information that "disappears" between school and home.
- 1.4 In the event of a crisis, or a particularly controversial matter, the public will have a reliable resource for facts.
- 1.5 Board business—agendas, minutes, meetings, and archives—will be readily accessible for all community and staff members.
- 1.6 Access to community support services to assist students and families will be available.

2. INTERACTION

- 2.1 The administration will receive specific, prompt feedback on selected “hot topic” issues related to programs, policies, and services.
- 2.2 The Wilmette community will receive timely and accurate answers to questions they have or information they need.
- 2.3 Community members and staff members will participate in forums related to particular issues.
- 2.4 The administration will obtain baseline data on community opinion regarding policies, programs, and services as well as educational and operational issues.
- 2.5 School personnel and the public will have the opportunity to share ideas for improving the educational enterprise.
- 2.6 The administration will check public perception of progress regarding specific programs or services contained in the school improvement plans and District Strategic Plan and have the capability of regularly assessing progress toward improvement goals.

3. INSTRUCTION

- 3.1 Students and parents will have a source for obtaining homework assignments and submitting them electronically.
- 3.2 Students and parents will have ready access to a variety of resources to enrich, enhance, and extend student learning as well as to assist with particular assignments.
- 3.3 Parents will receive “educational briefings” on important issues at the local and state level including assessment, how federal and state legislation impacts us, curricular adoptions, and the like.
- 3.4 The public will be able to track progress on the school improvement plans, the district strategic plan, and quarterly expenditures culminating in a year-end annual report.
- 3.5 Teachers will have resources for enhancing teaching and for their own learning.
- 3.6 Current “greatest hits” research articles related to curriculum and instruction will be accessible.

We all know that effective systems have backups, and effective communications require multiple messages through multiple media. The following matrix illustrates how different media will be used to deliver each descriptor for information, interaction, and instruction.

Communication Vehicles

(P = primary source[s], s = secondary source[s])

Descriptor	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
INFORMATION							
1.1 Timely news	P	P	s		s		
1.2 Test data		P	s	P		s	s
1.3 Backpack	P		s		s		
1.4 Crisis	s	P	s		P		s
1.5 Board business		s	P	s		P	s
1.6 Community services		s	P			s	s
INTERACTION							
2.1 Hot topic feedback		s	P		P		
2.2 Questions answered	s	s	s	s	P		
2.3 Forums			P	P	s		
2.4 Community opinion	s	s	P	s	s		
2.5 Share ideas	s	s	P	s	s		
2.6 Public perceptions	s	s	P	s	s		
INSTRUCTION							
3.1 Homework	P		s				
3.2 Student resources	P	s	s				s
3.3 Briefings		P	s	s		s	
3.4 Track progress		s	P				
3.5 Teacher resources		P	s	s			
Research articles		P	s	s			

Column keys: **A**, School, PTO, PTA, Backpack Notes, newsletters...; **B**, District mailings, publications, BP notes...; **C**, Web; **D**, Focus, PTO/A, face-to-face ...; **E**, Phone, PACE; **F**, Cable television broadcasts, and **G**, Print media.

Project Execution and Evaluation

The key to implementing the plan successfully is execution, which requires personnel, time, and money. Determining the degree to which the plan is successful also requires evaluation of the project based on specific deliverables.

The matrix shows the specific deliverables for each component, the current and targeted practices, the launch date for new items, the project leader, and whether or not it is an item of significant additional cost.