

Developing a District Communication Plan



Social

@MASAleaders

@MOSPRApros

#masacomm

Sage advice from the old supe:

A curriculum mix-up -- forgivable

An error in the budget – survival is probable

A little botulism in the cafeteria – not pretty,
but life goes on

Inability to effectively communicate – get your
résumé ready

Introductions & Expectations for today

Overview of today's session

- ❑ Models for planning
- ❑ Audiences
- ❑ Social Media
- ❑ Generational Communications
- ❑ Internal communications
- ❑ The right communication tool
- ❑ Messaging
- ❑ Project-based communication plans

Today's work is only part of the process

- ❑ Today we frame the plan
- ❑ Take it home
- ❑ Get a date on your calendar and start
- ❑ Get others in on the plan
- ❑ Do your research
- ❑ Develop and execute your comprehensive and project-based communication plans.

Be Strategic in Your Communication Planning

RPIE

- ❑ Research
- ❑ Planning
- ❑ Implementation
- ❑ Evaluation

Be Strategic in Your Communication Planning

Research

- Who are your audiences?
- What communication tools are available?
- What are the most effective tools for your audience?
- What should you communicate on a regular basis?
- What information does your audience want/need?

Audiences

Staff (Certified/Classified)

Students

Parents

Board of Education

Grandparents

Community Members

Booster Groups/PTA

Retired Staff

Alumni

Senior Citizens

Business

Faith Based

Non-Parents (including
future parents)

Civic Organizations

Government Officials

Communication Tools & Methods

Website

Email

Social Media

Apps

Letters home

Publications

Mass Media

Large groups

Small Groups

Video

Auto-calls

Personal calls

Direct Mail

Billboards

Local media

Text Messages

Staff

Backpack Flyers

Marquess

Presentations

Skywriting

When the house is on fire, tell those inside first!

- ❑ Builds trust
- ❑ “When the eagles are silent the parrots will jabber.” (Knocks down rumors)
- ❑ Your best PR team is your staff
- ❑ *Special superintendent survival note: you really want to tell your board first.*

Generational Communications

WHICH GENERATION ARE YOU? YOUR STAFF?

Baby Boomer



(1946-64)

Works many hours
Competitive at work
Career Employment
Work = Center of life
Helicopter Parents

Generation X



(1965-80)

Work/Life Balance
Ambitious at Work
High Parental Expectations
Lawnmower Parents

Millennial



(1981-96)

Work never stops
Flexible work hours
Cyber literate
Men & Woman as equals
Prioritize friends & family

Generation Z



(1997-today)

Resourceful
Realistic
Phygital
Online voice

Generational Communications

Differences in communication etiquette upset people.

We need to focus on output, not hours.

“You’re paid to add value to the organization.”



Social Media - Why should you use it?

- Students, parents & patrons are already there
- Connects school & home
- Real-time communication
- Engage parents, students, & patrons
- Model appropriate social media behavior
- User-friendly
- Humanize your district
- You are the media outlet

Social Media

Why do people use social media?

Social Interaction

Know about others

How can you take advantage of this?

- Behind-the-scenes
- Go “live”
- Explain hows/whys
- Ask questions - encourage comments & sharing
- Shine light on your staff

Social Media

- Follow /Retweet, Like /Share other dist. accounts – helps build followers for all
- Post regularly – Daily, if possible (add reminder to calendar)
- Use photos/images/video
- Tell audience more than once about your social media presence
 - Add social media to signature line in email
 - Post signs in schools
 - Include social media on business cards

Research

Quantitative

- Social Media Metrics/Insights
- Surveys

Qualitative

- Community Engagement
- Focus Groups

What are the most effective tools for your audience?

What should you communicate on a regular basis?

What information does your audience want/need?

Messaging

Whether it is the primary mission of the district or an important issue facing the schools, it's important that the message meets these standards:

- Clear, concise and consistent
- Strategic / Supports district mission/plans
- Relevant and Accurate: Is supported by data
- Compelling – Simple – Memorable
- Be consistent, but messages can be tailored to the audience

Messaging

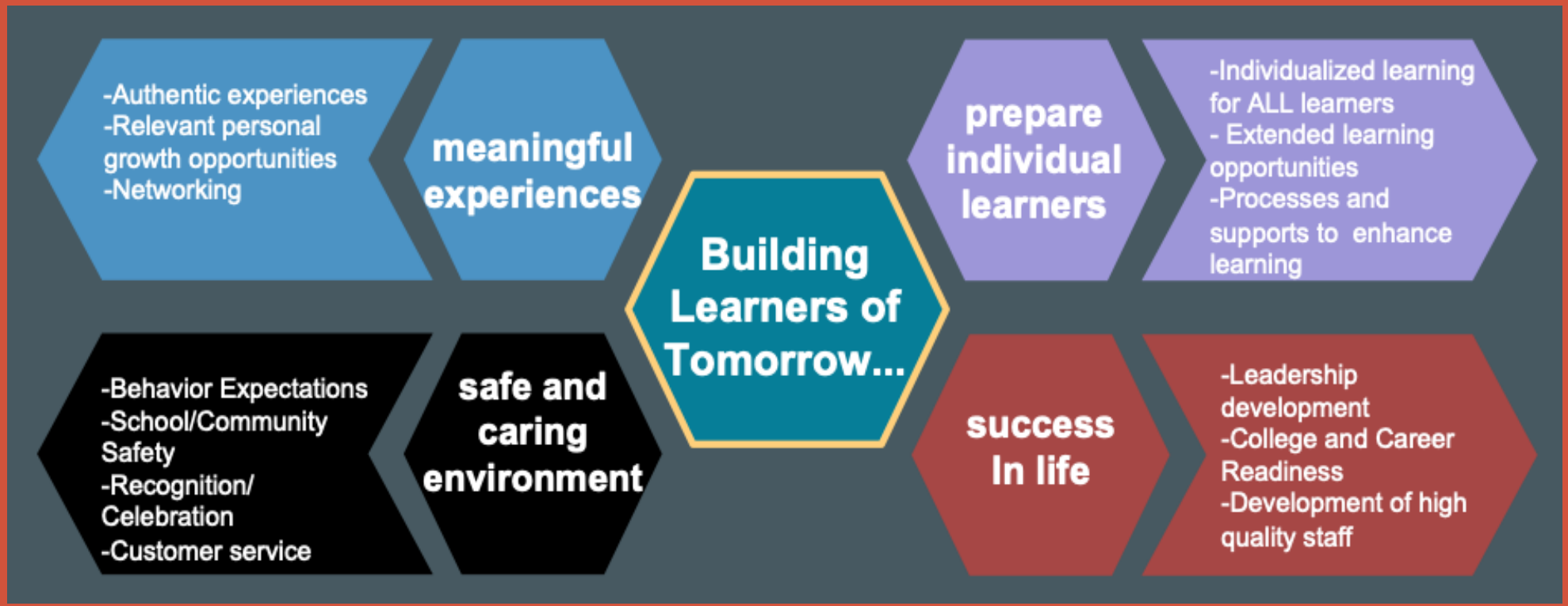
As a school district, all of your messages must keep in mind the benefits to students.

Message Mapping

Building leaders of tomorrow - to prepare individual learners for success in life, Platte County School District provides meaningful experiences in a safe and caring environment.

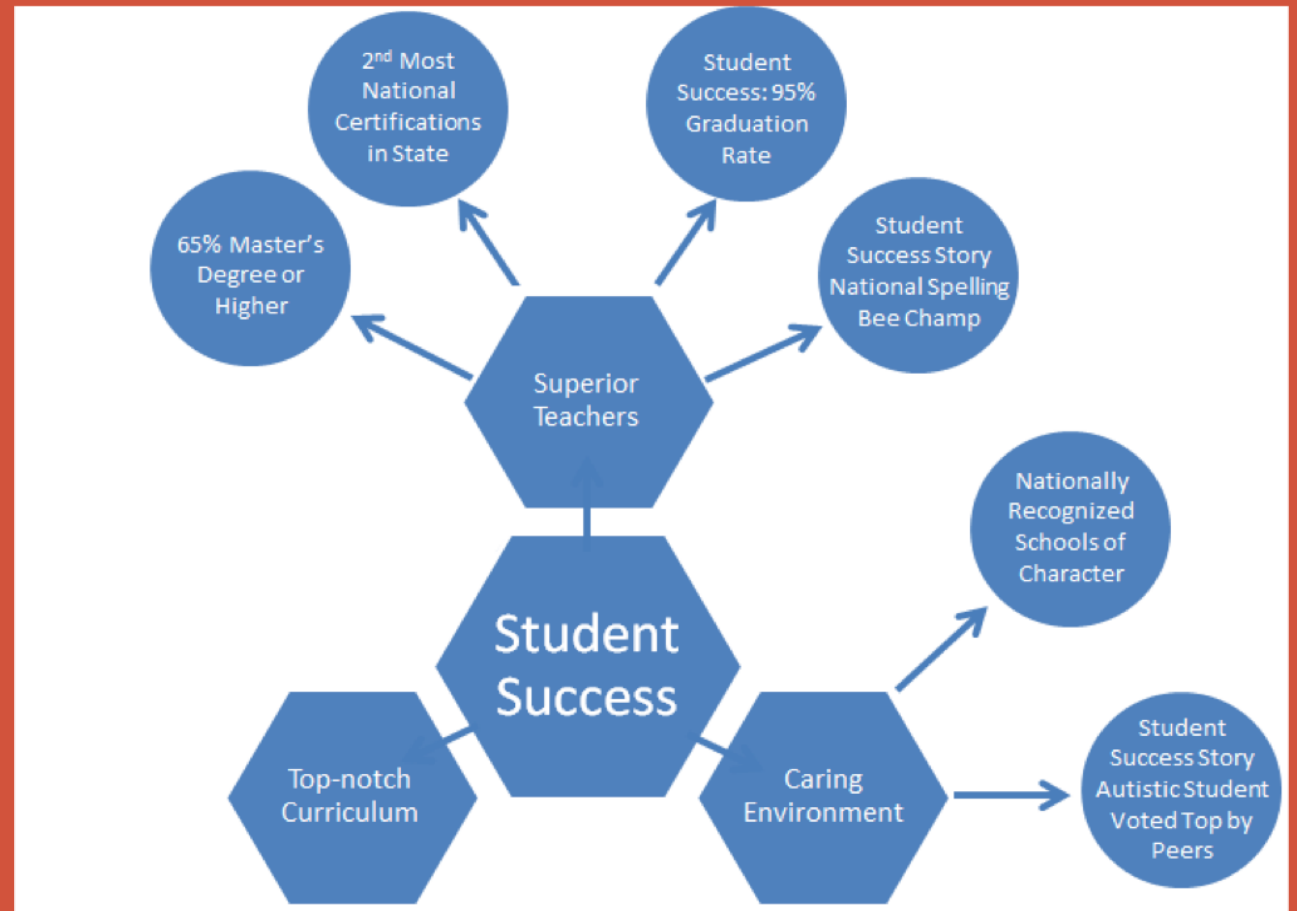
Message Mapping

Building leaders of tomorrow - to prepare individual learners for success in life, Platte County School District provides meaningful experiences in a safe and caring environment.



Message Mapping

“Parkway Schools help all students succeed by providing a great education with superior teachers, an outstanding curriculum and a caring environment. meaningful experiences in a safe and caring environment.”



30-Word Home Base (elevator pitch)

- First 30 words are absorbed by audience
- Main point + 3 supporting points
- Takes 12-15 seconds to say
- About the length of a TV sound bite
- Forms basis of your “message map”

Make This Plan Work for You

Research/Planning

- Will this be tied directly to your district's strategic plan goals?
- What are your district's communication strengths or areas of weakness?
- Does your district have a major issue/project this year?
- What's the purpose of this plan?
- What are your district's Key Messages?
- Is this a one-year plan or longer?

Implementation & Evaluation

- Once the research planning and key messages are in place, it's time to launch.
- Determine timeline
- Evaluate on the fly and make adjustments (formative)
- Conclusion of plan (summative)
- Truthfully, there is no “conclusion.” Apply what you've learned to future endeavors.

Individual/Project-Based Plans

- Use for single event, issue, change
- If annual event, can be reused each year
- Same structure
 - Audiences
 - Tools
 - Messages

(Use the grid provided to create your plan.)

Additional Tips/Advice

- Ensure all plans have opportunity for listening/two-way communication
- Communicate multiple times in varied formats
- Be consistent
- Find your #schoolpr rockstars & use them
- Provide training - communications is not everyone's strength
 - Customer Service
 - Parent Communication

MOSPRA

MISSOURI SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

WWW.MOSPRA.ORG

MASA
LEAD - DEVELOP - SUPPORT

Samples and Next Steps

We will email you a list of websites with good comprehensive communication plans

We'll also email you additional documents and links that will help you in the process.

Don't wait on this! Start the process and begin implementing both comprehensive and project-based plans in the very near future.

What did we leave out?

What burning issues or challenges does your district have?

Do you need crisis communication help?

In Review

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- ❑ Audiences
- ❑ Social Media
- ❑ Generational Communications
- ❑ Internal communications
- ❑ The right communication tool
- ❑ Messaging
- ❑ Project-based communication plans

A little feedback, please

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/N5HXMNT>



We'll email this to you. Please take a few minutes – your opinions help us improve.

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