



**EXCELSIOR SPRINGS**  
S C H O O L D I S T R I C T  
— *Together, Achieving Excellence* —

**COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

**2016-2017**

The Excelsior Springs School District is committed to open, honest and ongoing communication with our stakeholders. We understand that maintaining a two-way conversation with stakeholders is essential for building relationships. These relationships are the foundation for a strong school system.

This communications plan was designed to establish a comprehensive and integrated communications process for effective communication with all stakeholders. It aligns with the district's goals and is incorporated in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).

The plan is a working document that is reviewed on an annual basis by the Board of Education. It is used as a basis for the district's accountability, as well as for providing a framework for future source and budgetary consideration.

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/methods in support of the district's goals.
4. Enable the district to present itself accurately to audiences.

#### Internal Audiences

- Students
- Certificated Staff
- Support Staff Employees
- Principals
- Administrators
- Board of Education

#### External Audiences

- Students
- Parents
- Taxpayers of the District
- Educational Foundation
- Senior citizens
- Business leaders
- Media
- Parent-Teacher Organizations
- Civic leaders/organizations
- Legislators
- Religious leaders
- Social workers/fire/police/first responders
- New residents of the District
- Neighboring School Districts
- Residents without children in District schools
- Prospective residents of the District

## Desired Behaviors and Attitudes

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

### Internal Audiences

- Take pride and ownership in the district.
- Keep informed of key issues.
- Work as a high-performing organization whose employees respect customer feedback.
- Exhibit district values of 'Together, Achieving Excellence'.

### External Audiences

- Feel involved and engaged in their public schools.
- Exhibit community pride and trust in schools and the district.
- Support the Excelsior Springs School District through active participation.
- Support the Excelsior Springs School District through monetary measures.

### Communication Goals

1. Develop and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with all stakeholders to strengthen support for the Excelsior Springs School District.
2. Utilize a variety of media to maximize awareness and support of the district's goals, objectives and programs.
3. Establish an effective employee communication plan to improve internal communication and employee engagement.
4. Achieve coordinated communications, both internally and externally, regarding safety issues and crisis management.
5. Maintain a proactive media relations program to enhance the district's image on local, state and national levels.

The following resources will be used to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of this communications plan:

- Staff survey
- Community survey
- Website hits and traffic reports
- Media coverage
- Community feedback
- Patron Insight surveys

The district can more effectively provide consistent and unified messages by identifying and managing all communication avenues. A multifaceted approach to overall communications helps ensure greater impact of messages. The following list details the internal and external communication channels Excelsior Springs School District utilizes:

#### Communication Channels

##### Communication Vehicles: Electronic

- District Web page
- Excelsior Springs E-mail
- School Web pages
- School Newsletters
- PowerSchool
- Video media
- School Messenger
- Social Media: School App, Facebook & Twitter

##### Communication Vehicles: Print

- Excelsior Springs Standard
- Town and Country Shopper
- Kansas City Star
- School Newsletters
- Brochures
- Targeted mailing lists

##### Communication Vehicles: Personal

- Interpersonal
- Superintendent Advisory Council meetings
- School Forums
- Key Opinion Leader luncheons
- Optimist Club
- Rotary Club
- Administrator meetings
- Education Foundation
- City
- Chamber of Commerce

## Communications Goal #1

Develop and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with all stakeholders to strengthen support for the Excelsior Springs School District.

### **Strategy 1A: Engage community in two-way communication.**

Action items:

- Facilitate connections among community stakeholder groups and district administrators: religious leaders, business groups, and area legislators.
- Proceed with community forums and engagement through Town Hall meetings.
- Expand on external key communication initiatives and share information to promote education with the empty-nester group.

### **Strategy 1B: Continue with electronic communication tools to provide information for all stakeholders.**

Action items:

- Work with Excelsior Springs Technology Department to increase parent usage of PowerSchool and the online teacher grade book.
- Maintain active e-mail lists of key communicator groups.
- Promote Board of Education meetings through Website.
- Implement and maintain social media tools.
- School messenger
- Remind

### **Strategy 1C: Build and maintain partnerships with business and community leaders.**

Action items:

- Provide district representation for community-led meetings: Chambers of Commerce, business partnerships and senior citizen groups.
- Provide strategic marketing counsel to the Excelsior Springs Education Foundation to promote growth in the organization and in fundraising efforts.

## Communications Goal #2

Utilize a variety of media to maximize awareness and support of the District's goals, objectives and programs.

### **Strategy 2A: Use electronic, print and mass media tools to promote awareness and interest in the district.**

#### Web

- Implement and maintain social media tools.
- Manage one centralized public district calendar on the external site.
- Produce District Report Card online and coordinate electronic, video and print channels.
- Develop a process to collect/communicate the results of survey data.
- Train key personnel for effective use of district website using content management strategies.

#### Video

- Broadcast video/media through social networking on Facebook, Twitter and website.
- Produce video/media of Excelsior Springs special events to support internal communications.
- Create video/media (informational and educational in format) for release on website.
- Utilize instructional video/media to build awareness at the school and district levels.

#### Print

- Publish details about Excelsior Springs School District to increase parent knowledge of involvement opportunities within the Excelsior Springs School District.
- Publish Excelsior Springs News to reach patrons with messages targeting key goals and district finances.

#### Media

- Conduct media training with new building principals.
- Maintain updated news releases on the Excelsior Springs website to continuously update the constituents about district initiatives and programs.
- Distribute fact sheets of district goals and objectives to media and update the scorecard report during the school year.

### **Strategy 2B: Develop a process for tracking, monitoring and responding to concerns.**

- Research and define a process to effectively manage concerns from stakeholders.

## Communications Goal #3

Establish an effective employee communication plan to improve internal communication and employee engagement.

### **Strategy 3A: Provide training for school communication teams to facilitate communication among staff and community.**

Action items:

- Continue group and individual training for Web content management with key personnel.
- Continue group and individual training for Parent Teacher Organization volunteers to ensure PTO communication is accurate.

### **Strategy 3B: Provide resources for staff members and parent leaders and encourage their use in order to build connections and partnerships in the community.**

Action items:

- Build and maintain the Web pages on the Excelsior Springs website that will facilitate information and discussion forums among staff members.
- Continue to develop and implement new features for teacher websites.

### **Strategy 3C: Increase opportunities for recognition among leaders in the Excelsior Springs community.**

- Recognize student, staff and parent achievement during Board of Education meetings.
- Recognize student, staff and parent achievement during Chamber of Commerce meetings.

### **Strategy 3D: Provide opportunities and resources to build connections within the district.**

- Create an advisory committee to have regular meetings with the superintendent.

### **Strategy 3E: Work with the Human Resources Department to coordinate clear, consistent messages to staff members.**

Action items:

- Create and implement a staff orientation for the communications plan.
- Develop a staff orientation video that welcomes new employees to Excelsior Springs and includes key messages.

### **Strategy 3F: Provide ongoing professional development and training for staff members.**

Action items:

- Offer communication training to Excelsior Springs administration
- Continue with School Messenger system and training for new system features.

## Communications Goal #4

Achieve coordinated communication, both internally and externally, regarding safety issues and crisis management.

### **Strategy 4A: Develop and sustain relationships with local emergency management officials.**

Action items:

- Develop an emergency content feature on the district home page that can be updated by key safety and crisis management personnel.

### **Strategy 4B: Utilize a variety of communication tactics to share information with staff and parents about safety plans and crisis management.**

Action items:

- Work with district nursing staff to coordinate the sharing of information about health issues with parents.
- Work with the administrative services department to provide crisis information to all staff.
- Manage and update crisis information on the district website.

## Communications Goal #5

Maintain a positive media relations program to enhance the District's image on local, state and national levels.

### **Strategy 5A: Build relationships with media through one-on-one story development.**

Action items:

- Post board minute summaries to website after each board meeting.
- Share information through press releases, briefings and photo opportunities.
- Invite press to campus activities to cover events.
- Encourage staff to submit articles and photos to paper



## CSIP

### Focus Area 1: Student Performance

**Goal:** Develop and enhance quality educational/instructional programs to improve performance and enable students to meet their personal, academic and career goals.

**Objective 1:** The ESSD will improve student achievement by meeting district annual targets as determined by student, staff, and school performance data.

**Strategy 4:** Ninety percent of students will attain 90% or better attendance.

*Action 3:* Utilize School Messenger for daily phone calls home for students who are absent.

*Action 4:* Send attendance letters home.

### Focus Area 2: Highly Qualified Staff

**Goal:** Recruit, attract, develop and retain highly qualified certified staff to carry out the District mission goals and objectives.

**Objective 2:** ESSD will offer a competitive, comprehensive environment of learning with the annual goal of hiring 100% highly qualified certified staff and retaining 90% of newly hired staff as evidenced by data collected from staff surveys as well as outside sources, such as, DESE, MSBA and NEA standards.

**Strategy 3:** Attract, recruit and retain highly qualified staff.

*Action 4:* Provide a public relations pamphlet with information about our district and community.

### Focus Area 4: Parent and Community Involvement

**Goal:** Promote, facilitate, and enhance parent, student and community involvement in District programs.

**Objective 1:** The ESSD will improve the effectiveness of communication with all stakeholders utilizing a variety of accessible methods.

**Strategy 1:** Foster a culture of optimistic outlook regarding the work and impact of the ESSD within the community.

*Action 1:* Develop a positive and professional district brand.

*Action 3:* Regularly maintain and update a user-friendly district website.

*Action 4:* Communicate with stakeholders using emerging technologies.

*Action 5:* Use school messenger as a tool for communication.

**Objective 2:** The ESSD will provide stakeholders a variety of opportunities for community involvement.

**Strategy 1:** Develop and promote opportunities for community involvement.

*Action 2:* Promote an annual career day on the elementary and secondary levels.

*Action 3:* Promote alumni events/receptions (via the website, social media).

*Action 4:* Invite the community members to attend and participate in annual BOE workshops.

*Action 5:* Promote Tiger Friends as a means to involve local mentors.