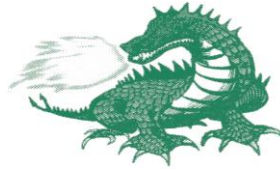


# PICKENS COUNTY SCHOOLS COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION PLAN



The purpose of the Pickens County Schools Communication Plan is to present a clear framework for communicating with all stakeholders. The plan therefore addresses both internal and external audiences. Various stakeholders will be involved in developing and revising the Pickens County Schools Comprehensive Communication Plan. Representative groups will include system employees, school council members, business/community partners, parents, students and board members. Review and/or revision of the plan will occur annually.

The plan is directly linked to the Pickens County School District Strategic Improvement Planning Report. Goal Five of the report states, “We will improve communication both regularly and clearly with all stakeholders in our community.”

Our goal is to create transparent, two-way communications between the Board of Education, administrators, staff, students, parents and all external stakeholders. This plan addresses not only how the School District communicates information but actively solicits responses from external stakeholders.

The Communication Plan will be implemented by all school employees at their individual levels of involvement and will focus on communicating a unified district message to the public. The support of all system personnel at every level is critical to the success of this plan as they are the most influential source of information and they should make it a high priority to share the happenings of Pickens County Schools. Monitoring the communication plan will be handled through the District Strategic Plan and supported by the school district’s organizational flow chart.

Three essential questions for every program or activity within the plan will be:

1. How does this program or activity benefit our students?
2. How can we involve stakeholders?
3. How will we communicate this program or activity effectively to all stakeholders?

Following are details on targeted audiences, specific goals, monitoring, communications methods, and crisis communications. Sample best practices are listed for consideration.

## **Targeted Audiences**

### **Internal Stakeholders**

- Students
- Staff
  - A. School Level: Classified, Certified, Leadership
  - B. District Level: Classified, Certified, Leadership
  - C. Board of Education

### **External Stakeholders**

- Parents/Guardian and Parent/Guardian Organizations
- Business Community
- Elected Officials
- Community Residents
- Religious Community
- Community & Civic Organizations
- Media
- Postsecondary Educational Institution

## **Goals**

### **Identify and utilize community resources.**

- Work with Family Connection, HeadStart, school administrators, school social workers, counselors, and school attendance officers to develop and distribute a comprehensive manual with a list of outside agencies and related services available to assist our families
- Participate and serve on boards of community and civic organizations

### **Foster positive relationships among all students and stakeholders.**

- Publish positive accomplishments through newsletters, newspapers, websites, public address systems, bulletin boards, etc.
- Create a Back-to-School supplemental edition to the local newspaper
- Distribute external publications and news releases to employees via email, website, and/or internal communication processes
- Update both district and school websites
- Recognize business partners at various levels

- Extend partnerships with various agencies and businesses in the community
- Encourage students and staff to communicate happenings
- Encourage school staff to share information about Pickens County Schools with friends, neighbors, and community members
- Use guidance programs, CHAMPS, CARES, and Teachers as Advisors to focus on character education and to foster positive relationships among the student body
- Utilize school functions—athletic, CTAE, etc.--to advertise the Pickens County Schools messages to stakeholders (example: Public Address Systems)

Provide opportunities for stakeholder education.

- Provide training sessions as part of district leadership staff meetings on ways to communicate at the school, district, and board levels
- Supply administrators with public relations fact sheets (talking points) and other easy-to-use communication tools as needed when issues arise
- Distribute information from various meetings as appropriate

Increase stakeholder communication.

- Utilize stakeholder surveys, parent meetings, and other means of communication to foster two-way communication
- Publicize survey results at school, district, and board levels
- Offer meetings where stakeholders are invited and encouraged to have input
- Send home information to parents at the beginning of the school year with useful facts about the schools, helpful websites, and other informational resources and solicit input from parents about their suggestions for improving the Pickens County School District
- Keep information updated on the parent and community resource page on school websites, as well as school contact information
- Hold School Council Advisory Meetings no less than 4 times each year at each school
- Continue to support public participation at Board of Education meetings
- Implement student incentive programs
  - a. Distribute district newsletters with removable portions that contain a question with the answer embedded somewhere within the newsletter for the student to return to the teacher for an incentive drawing
  - b. Utilize the AlertNow Call System as an incentive program whereby at the end of the call, a password is given that can be entered into a school drawing
- Maximize ways to communicate with all stakeholders
- Utilize AlertNow Call System

## **Monitoring**

- Monitor Pickens County Schools student and stakeholder involvement through the District's Strategic Plan
- Provide at least two annual training sessions for increasing media coverage of educational initiatives and for advancing public relations opportunities
- Continue to
  - a. coordinate school, district, and board efforts to ensure media coverage of educational initiatives, programs, and events
  - b. seek opportunities to further promote openness and transparency in all functions of Board of Education initiatives
  - c. expand opportunities to market the school district to prospective students and their families
  - d. provide district representation at civic, school, and community meetings
  - e. establish and build relationships with businesses and organizations within the community
  - f. use social media including Facebook and Twitter as a means of communicating emergency and non-emergency information
  - g. review, update, and expand school district partnerships
  - h. expand various features of the school district's website to more effectively communicate with stakeholders
  - i. encourage all stakeholders to adhere to the chain of command which will facilitate communication at all levels

## **Communication Methods**

### School Level

- Email and phone with voicemail for all staff
- Local school councils
- Media
- Surveys
- Parent/teacher conferences, other face-to-face meetings, emails, texts, and phone calls
- PTO meetings
- School and teacher letters/newsletters
- School and teacher websites
- School marquee boards/signs
- Social media (Facebook and Twitter)
- Surveys and Blogs
- Videos
- PowerSchool Parent Portal

- AlertNow automated calling system
- Students' weekly/monthly/quarterly folders
- Parent training sessions
- Parent representatives on various committees
- Shared Google parent/student calendars
- Student handbooks
- Booster club meetings
- Student leadership activities during club times
- Open House activities

### District Level

- GSBA's eBOARD Solutions
- AlertNow automated calling system
- Climate surveys
- District website
- Email and phone with voice mail for all staff
- Informal community presentations
- Community, civic, and business partnerships
- Face-to-face meetings, conferences, email, and phone calls with stakeholders
- Media, including Back-to-School supplemental edition to the newspaper
- District meetings with all stakeholders
- PowerSchool Parent Portal
- Printed publications (newspaper, flyers, etc.)
- Videos and televised meetings
- Public address announcements at various events
- District office representation at community/civic/governmental functions and events
- Social media including Facebook and Twitter

### Board of Education

- GSBA's eBOARD Solutions
- Board meetings (Aired on Knowpickens.com and Fetchyournews.com)
- On-line Board minutes
- Email and phone
- Face-to-face meetings
- Local media
- Online feedback on proposed board policies
- Public participation
- Surveys

- Videos
- Attendance at community events, functions, meetings, civic activities, etc.
- Public address announcements
- Social media including Facebook and Twitter
- Attendance at school events, including extracurricular, CTAE, performing arts, etc.

## **Crisis Communications**

### Objectives

- Utilize superintendent or superintendent's designee as spokesperson for the district
- Counsel school principals and staff in managing crisis communications
- Counsel school board members on appropriate role in crisis or emergency
- Provide timely, accurate information to internal and external audiences
- Work closely with the media to provide accurate, timely information
- Serve as emergency management coordinator and crisis response team leader
- Chair the district's safety and security committee

### Strategies

- Revise Crisis Management Plan annually at all schools
- Schedule Crisis Management and Communications training
- Provide onsite and central support in emergencies
- Perform immediate and ongoing counsel to principals, key staff members, and district leadership on crisis issues and events that have the potential to become crisis situations
- Present the crisis communication plan to various audiences
- Supply written materials, including talking points, fact sheets, social media, and/or letters for schools, as needed in emergencies

The following is a list of stakeholders that were instrumental in the development and revising of the Pickens County Comprehensive Communication Plan:

Jonathan Ry	North Georgia CAA, Inc.
Jacqueline Childers	Pickens County Family Connection
Jennie H. Smith	Jasper Elementary School Counselor
Tom Huber	Pickens County Family Connection
Dr. Lula Mae Perry	Superintendent, Pickens County Schools
Amberle Godfrey	Parent Involvement Coordinator, Pickens County Schools
Kayci Crowe	Pickens County Chamber Of Commerce
Fran Bishop	CARES/ Weekend Snacks
Natalie Whitehead	Appalachian Children's Center
Jamie Brown	Appalachian Children's Center
Amy Sehl	North Georgia Mountain Crisis Network
Joey Sullivan	Pickens High School, Counselor
James Bond	Pickens High School, Counselor
Sandy Singleton	Pickens County Health Department
Keri Cortolans	Georgia Hope
Don Russell	Chief Executive Officer, Pickens County Thrift Store
Patti Page	North Georgia Pregnancy Center
Harriett Wilder	Harmony Elementary School, Counselor
Larry Sanger	Our Lady of the Mountains St. Vincent
John Mauldin	Life Prescription Counseling
Whitney Carnes	Social Worker, Pickens County Schools
Shelly Cantrell	Attendance Officer, Pickens County Schools
Dana Callan	PCMS & PHS Parent Representative
Mandy Walker	JMS & HCES Parent Representative
Dave Garner	ETC Communications
Vicki Sams	Parent Representative
Denise Duncan	Pickens County Chamber President, HES Parent Rep.
Lynda Wallace	Principal, Harmony Elementary School
Joeta Youngblood	Principal, Hill City Elementary School
Dr. Carlton Wilson	Principal, Jasper Elementary School
Dr. Deb Longshore	Principal, Tate Elementary School
Neil Howell	Principal, Jasper Middle School
Dr. Chris LeMieux	Principal, Pickens County Middle School
Eddie McDonald	Principal, Pickens High School
Wendy Lowe	Chair, Pickens County School Board
Byron Long	Vice Chair, Pickens County School Board
Peggy Andrews	Pickens County School Board
Dr. Dan Fincher	Pickens County School Board
Mike Cowart	Pickens County School Board
Carole Maddox	Good Samaritan
Amy Denny	Chattahoochee Technical College
Victoria Reaves	Life Prescription Counseling
Margy Lohman	Pickens County Prevent Child Abuse

Beth Ray  
Dr. Lonnie Dikowski  
Sherry Martin  
Anita Walker  
Stephanie Hall  
Jennifer Halko  
Sheila Wilson  
Martha Segers  
Destini Shope

MUST Ministries  
Director of Special Education, Pickens County Schools  
Director of Federal Programs, Pickens County Schools  
Academic Coach, Pickens County Schools  
Learning Support Specialist, Pickens County Schools  
Learning Support Specialist, Pickens County Schools  
CTAE Director, Pickens High School  
Administrative Assistant, Pickens County Schools  
Assistant Principal/Academic Coach Tate Elementary  
School