

Portsmouth Public Schools Communication Plan

Goal

The district will have harnessed stakeholder support to create and sustain educational and physical infrastructure that will work for the 21st century.

Recognizing the synergistic relationship between the schools and the community, Portsmouth Public Schools must fully engage the parents and guardians of our students in the process of educating Portsmouth children.

Parents and Guardians

We will lead an effort to enhance communication and involvement of parents and guardians in their children's education. We will:

- Ensure more timely communication when students are struggling
- Increase school and district support of the Parent/Teacher Organizations visibility and efforts
- Offer an outreach and training program for parents of young children to establish a strong foundation for learning
- Strengthen outreach to military families, DCYF, and group homes to ensure full integration of transitional student populations during their time in the district
- Improve online communication with the community using district website and appropriate social media
- Develop an online menu of enrichment or tutorial resources for after-school or summer opportunities that parents may want to take advantage of

Community

- Maintaining transparent communications with community stakeholders including town officials with regards to finances and programming needs
- Work collaboratively with the Town Council to explore areas for shared services
- Establish an information campaign and a district communication strategy to inform all stakeholders about developments, progress and remaining obstacles to provide a quality education for Portsmouth children

Audience Definition

Communication is a reciprocal process and thrives on continual feedback through a two-way process. The categorization of communication/responses is helpful in that it allows us to more appropriately tailor our message.

The audience can be broken down into three primary categories:

Internal

School Committee members
District employees
Students
Volunteers

External – Local Scope

Existing parents
Potential students and parents
Prospective employees
Local news media
Community members (businesses, elected officials, civic leaders, realtors, economic developers, taxpayers, faith-based organizations)

External – Broader Scope

Regional and statewide news media
Prospective employees
Potential students and parents
Alumni
Retirees and former employees
State lawmakers and other decision makers
Grant awarding organizations

Broad communication efforts may be appropriate for reaching all of these targeted audiences, but it is more effective to convey tailored messaging through strategy and predetermined communication vehicles.

Portsmouth Public Schools will focus on two key strategies:

Improve delivery of news and positive messages to families, staff and the community

- Provide proactive public relations with consistent messaging about achievements and improvements in the schools
- Improve media relations through the increase of news releases

Build capacity among School and District Office to improve communication

- Develop district-wide communications procedures and processes to ensure timely and accurate communication to stakeholders
- Provide training to district leaders in marketing, public and media relations, customer service and other communication skills

Strategy: *Improve delivery of news and positive messages to families, staff and the community*

Ongoing communication about the positive stories taking place in the Portsmouth Public Schools will help foster support for the strategic plan and increased student achievement.

In order to generate greater investment and engagement in the Portsmouth Public Schools we must highlight all of the successes in the district. The sharing of good news must begin with those already involved in the district. Press releases, images, and awards will be posted to our website under the “” heading and will be forwarded to key members of the local press.

School Cancellation Plan

A No School announcement will be made when it is determined that a storm will be severe enough to present a hazardous situation for students coming to school. On mornings when conditions warrant (such as icy roads or snow), a delayed opening of school policy MAY be in effect. An announcement will notify parents, students, and staff that the opening of school will be delayed for one hour, and school buses will run their regular routes exactly one hour later.

Parents, students, and staff should stay tuned to the cancellation announcements because if weather conditions do not improve or if they worsen, a delayed opening may be changed to a *"No School Announcement."*

In the event that a "delayed opening of schools" procedure is in effect, the following will occur:

1. Buses will run their regular routes one (1) hour later than usual.
2. Classes will begin one (1) hour later than usual.
3. All dismissals will be at regularly scheduled times.

In the event students are already in school when a storm occurs, students will be dismissed as soon as transportation becomes available. Early dismissal will be announced using our Blackboard Connect notification calling system and on the local television and radio stations.

For the most up to date listings of closings and delays, the statewide transportation office suggests checking the following sites:

[Turn to 10](#)

[ABC 6](#)

Communication at Portsmouth High School

I. Informing parents and the public:

- The Portsmouth High School website includes
- Publications such as the student handbook, program of studies, senior project handbook,
- The latest copy of the school bulletin
- List of PHS events
- All documents and forms such as athletic permission slips,

- The Guidance Webpage includes:
 - Directions for requesting assistance from a counselor
 - School Counselor student assignments
 - Portsmouth High School Profile
 - Student Support Services
 - School Psychologist
 - School Social Worker
 - Student Assistance Counselor
 - Naviance Program Information
 - Scholarship information and applications
 - Guidance Curriculum and lessons and announcements
 - Upcoming college and military representative visits
 - Links to college fairs, SAT registration, financial aid resources, course registration information
 - The Patriot Listserv:
 - Currently has 965 subscribers
 - Averages 60 messages from the principal per year
 - Blackboard Connect:
 - Is linked to the Aspen database and updated regularly for accuracy
 - Allows messages to be sent by voice, email or text
 - May be used to target certain grades
 - Press Releases
 - Issued by the principal
 - Include [Newport Daily News, Portsmouth Time]
 - Used for public announcements for Open House, Graduation, etc.
 - Used to announce major accomplishments such as National Merit Scholars, AP Honor Roll
 - Principal's Twitter Account
 - Started in August 2015
 - Used for quick updates, show pictures of students and teachers in action
 - Remind 101
 - Text messaging software
 - Used to communicate with Seniors about Senior Project
 - Aspen Parent Portal

- Allows parents access to student grades, homework, attendance, and discipline data
- Accounts are maintained by a PHS teacher during administrative duty
- Four interim dates announced each year where parents may get up-to-date view of student progress
- Individual mailings
- Letters sent home in the event of excessive tardy to school
- Letters sent home for excessive absence from school
- Automatic phone calls to individual homes regarding unverified absences
- Annual Open House
- Third Thursday of September
- Regularly attended by over 600 parents
- Used as “Report Night” to provide data on student achievement

II. Obtaining feedback

- Email
 - Every message on Principal’s listserv may receive a confidential response with a simply “reply” click
 - Every teacher has a published email address for communication with parents
- Surveys
 - Endicott College Survey for NEASC Self-Study resulted in 195 detailed parent responses
 - Survey Share is used tri-annually to solicit feedback on athletic programs
 - Survey Share has been used to solicit student and parent feedback on issues such as:
 - Core Values and Beliefs
 - Use of the A/B Block Schedule
 - Implementation of PRIDE Block
- Face-to-Face
 - The athletic director meets regularly with the athletic boosters
 - The band and choral directors meet regularly with music boosters
 - The Response to Intervention team meets with parents of struggling learners after personal, individual invitations go out to parents

Communication at Melville

I. Informing Parents and the public

- Website
 - Relevant school document, handbooks
 - School newsletter, classroom newsletters, teacher pages
 - Melville calendar of events
- Blackboard Connect
 - Allows messages to be sent by voice or email
 - May be used to target certain grades
- Principal's Twitter Account and Facebook Page
 - Started in July 2014
 - Used for quick updates, show pictures of students and teachers in action
- Individual mailings
 - Back to School Packets at the end of the summer
 - Letters sent home for excessive absence/tardy from school
 - Letters sent home when lunch balance reaching over \$10.00
 - Automatic phone calls to individual homes regarding unverified absences
- Annual Open House
- Content Specific Nights when applicable: Science Night, Math Night, Reading Night

Obtaining feedback:

- Email/Phone Calls
 - Email addresses for all staff shared for easier communication with parents
 - 24 hour response to all parent phone calls and emails
- Meetings

- Parent teacher conferences twice a year
- Title 1 Parent Meetings
- The RtI Team meets with parents of struggling learners after personal, individual invitations go out to parents
- Principal Coffee Hour
- MPTG Meetings

Communication at Portsmouth Middle School

The following outlines Portsmouth Middle School's efforts to harness stakeholder support to create and sustain educational and physical infrastructure that will work for the 21st century as outlined in the Communications Plan.

I. Informing Parents and the Public

- Struggling Learners
 - RTI Protocols / Communications
 - Progress Reports
 - Quarterly Reports (IEP updates)
 - Parent Conferences
 - E-Mail
 - Phone Calls
 - Planner Signing / Notes (Daily/ Weekly)
 - Tardy Letters
 - Attendance Calls
 - ETM Meetings
 - 504 Meetings
 - Aspen Parent Portal
 - IEP Meetings
- PTO

- Participate in Monthly Meetings
- Support PTO Events
- Distribute Agendas / Minutes on Connect 5
- Monthly Curriculum Presentations
- Principal Updates
- PTO facebook page
- Foundation for Learning
 - Planner Handbook/Raising Respect Edition
 - Distribute Middle School Years Newsletter
- Military, DCYF, Group Homes
 - Introduce School Liaison Officer (SLO) at Open Houses
 - Transition Meetings with Group Homes
 - Transition Meetings with Surrogates
- Website / Social Media
 - PMS Website
 - Twitter Account
 - Connect 5
 - Curriculum / Course Offerings on PMS Website
 - Schoolspring
 - Sign-Up Genius Website
 - EPSS
 - Online Menu Enrichment
 - Advertising After School Activities / Clubs
 - Summer Work
 - IXL

II> Strategy: Improve delivery of news and positive messages to families, staff and the community

- Principal's Weekly Podcast

- Contact Portsmouth Patch, Sakonnet times, Newport Daily News
- Twitter
- Webpage (School and District)
- Appearance on Portsmouth this Week Cable Access
- School Committee Recognition
- Citizen of the Month Celebrations / Letters
- 8th Grade Presidential Awards / Assembly
- School Wide Celebrations / Recognitions
- Honor Roll
- Morning Announcements
- 3 Open Houses
- Ice Cream Socials
- Scavenger Hunt
- Transition Meetings (Shadow Days)
- New Student Orientation
- Weekly Leadership Notes
- SIT Sub Committee Minutes
- Career Day
- Arts for Life
- New Student Luncheon
- Intergenerational Day

Hathaway Communication

I. Informing Parents and the public

- Website
 - Relevant school documents, handbook
 - Teacher pages, Letter from the Principal
 - Hathaway Important Events
- Blackboard Connect:

- Allows messages to be sent by voice or email
- May be used to target certain grades/audiences
- Hathaway School Twitter Account
 - Started in July 2014
 - Used for quick updates, show pictures of students and teachers in action
- Storify: Week in Tweets sent to all Hathaway families on a weekly basis
- Individual mailings
 - Back to School Packets at the end of the summer
 - Class Placement Letters sent in August
 - Letters sent home for excessive absence/tardy from school
 - Letters sent home when lunch balance reaching over \$10.00
- Phone
 - Automatic phone calls to individual homes regarding unverified absences
- Annual Open House
- Before the Bell Open House
- Principal's Quarterly Newsletter
- Unified Arts Quarterly Newsletter
- Einstein Newsletter (1x/year)
- Home/School Connection Newsletter – sent home monthly
- Celebrating Students: Each student receives a good news postcard from the principal throughout the school year.
- Terrific Kid Awards: Monthly - Luncheon with the Principal
- Golden Apples: Slips go home each time a student receives a golden apple so the child can share how they earned the recognition.

- Media: Whenever possible the media is contacted to cover Hathaway specific events – Week of the Young Child, Arts for Life, Arbor Day, Playground Committee work

Obtaining feedback:

- Email/Phone Calls
 - Email addresses for all staff shared for easier communication with parents
 - 24 hour response to all parent phone calls and emails
- Meetings
 - Parent teacher conferences twice a year
 - RtI Team meets with parents of struggling learners after individual invitations go home
 - IEP and 504 Meetings
 - HPTA Monthly Meetings