

Methacton School District

Communications Department

Recommendations

Presented to Finance Committee 2.14.24

Agenda

- Recommendations for Consideration
- Communications Audit Overview
- Audit Recommendations
- Key Areas of Improvement
- Staffing
- Department Structure
- Costs
- Process



Recommendations (Board Actions)

February 2024

- Approve the job descriptions for Coordinator of Communications (revised), Marketing and Digital Media Specialist (new), Communications Assistant (revised) and Student Communications Intern (new).

March 2024

- Approve _____ of _____ to assist the Methacton School District with formalizing brand development and messaging.



Communications Audit

- Audit conducted by Chester County Intermediate Unit
- Report provided June 2023
 - Provide an operational assessment of current communication efforts
 - Identify gaps in the MSD communication strategies; and,
 - Recommend operational efficiencies and communication best practices.



Audit Recommendations

- Formalize communication plan
- Strengthen MSD brand
- Engage in strategic internal communication efforts
- Streamline and leverage strength of social media
- Maximize website presence
- Streamline communication



Formalize communication plan

- Further develop the communication plan
 - Plan now includes strategies identified in communications audit
 - Plan now includes recommendations from District Employee Council
- Establish a written communication plan template
 - Established
- Establish points in time to review and evaluate
 - Under development
- Formalize crisis communication plan
 - Completed
- Review communication capacity
 - Completed – Staffing/Strategies recommendations in this presentation



Communications Plan

Communications Plan

Vision: To ensure an exceptional Methacton School District experience for all

Strategic Goals

- Increase constituent favorable feedback by 25% in each of the next five years.
- Increase district ranking by 25 place in each of the next 5 years.

The district will adopt the following sources to communicate and to share and receive information: Website; Social Media; Mobile App; Print; Video (YouTube); Electronic Newsletter (Smore); Zoom; Email; Phone; Text; Home and School; Education Foundation; News Media

| <u>Strategies</u> | <u>Tactics</u> | <u>Frequency</u> | <u>Timeline</u> | <u>Person(s) Responsible</u> | <u>Not</u> | <u>Target Audience/Goal</u> |
|--|----------------|------------------|---|------------------------------|---|--|
| Annual Report: The report provides a review of the district's administration, demographics, academic performance, successes and achievements, partnerships, community outreach, and financials of the preceding year. In addition to serving as an accountability piece, the publication helps to further the district's efforts to | | 1x per year | November Move to February to accommodate financial audit results | Communications Coordinator | Estimated cost to produce Printing: \$2,600 Wafer Sealing: \$490 Mailing/Postage: \$2,500 4 pager (2 pages front and back) January deadline | Target Audience = All Lower Providence and Worcester Twp. Residents - 37K People Goal = Increase constituent favorable feedback |

Current Tactics (snapshot)

- Annual Report
- Showcasing the Pride of Methacton (video series)
- Points of Pride (Website)
- Spirit of Methacton Award
- School Board Notes Newsletter
- Building Newsletters
- K-12 Career Counselor Newsletter
- Pride of Methacton Newsletter
- Community Conversations
- Alumni Spotlight
- Strategic Plan Posters
- Rack Cards
- Niche Site
- District Profile
- High School Profile
- Virtual Town Hall
- Survey Community
- Methacton Happenings
- Press Conferences
- Special Events
- Staff recruitment video
- District Mobile App
- Retiree Presentation/Awards
- Welcome Back to School Video
- End of Year Video
- Op-Ed on Legislative Positions
- Superintendent Advisory Council
- Induction/Welcome New Staff Video
- What's Brewing: Coffee & Conversations with Dr. Zerbe



Strengthen MSD brand

- Initiate a stakeholder brand survey
 - Establish District Committee
 - Seek 3rd-Party Consultant to assist
- Complete a branding workshop
 - Seek 3rd-Party Consultant to assist
- Formalize MSD's brand and key messaging (narrative)
 - Seek 3rd-Party Consultant to assist
- Utilizing the district's yearly theme
 - End district theme – focus on School/District Spirit
- Create a formal brand guidelines document
 - Seek 3rd-Party Consultant to assist
- Incorporate messaging and story-telling into existing materials
 - Website, Social media, Points of pride material
 - Will do following establishment of formalized MSD Brand and key messaging
- MSD brand ambassadors
 - Will develop following establishment of formalized MSD Brand and key messaging



Engage in strategic internal communication efforts

- Prioritize staff communication
 - Will include formal brand/communications guidelines document
- Partner in initiative communications
 - Establish initiative communication/decision process with District Employee Council input
- Increase school business communications
 - Establish communication process with District Employee Council input
- Offer external facing employee recognition
 - Expand on existing efforts and leverage District Employee Council input
- Provide a designated outlet for public sharing
 - Review opportunities/applications to leverage public sharing
- Encourage more cross-building communication
 - Superintendent's weekly memo, "Methacton Message" including school and staff highlights



Streamline and leverage strength of social media

- Consider consolidating accounts
 - Work with Athletics/Activities Office to establish protocol
- Designate target audiences and strategies
 - Located in communications plan – further develop
- Editorial calendar
 - Covered under Marketing & Digital Media Specialist
- Social media management tool
 - Covered under Marketing & Digital Media Specialist
- Incorporate additional best practices
 - Incorporate branding in the account descriptions
- Responsiveness
 - Covered under Marketing & Digital Media Specialist
- Guidelines
 - Covered under Marketing & Digital Media Specialist
- Continuous learning



Maximize website presence

- Maximize existing site
 - Covered under Marketing & Digital Media Specialist
 - Theme evaluation
 - Transition to Finals site
- Stronger Building Banner Image/Video
 - Covered under Marketing & Digital Media Specialist
- Utilize District Images Throughout the Website
 - Weave in brand
 - Covered under Marketing & Digital Media Specialist
- Real-time website updates
 - Covered under Marketing & Digital Media Specialist
- Consider a new website template and design
 - Responsive design
 - Website review
 - App ready



Streamline communication

- Define leadership communication roles and expectations
 - Job Description Updates
 - Develop communications guidelines
 - Establish process for information sharing
 - Covered under Marketing & Digital Media Specialist
- Condense/visualize information
 - Transition from word heavy to image/video heavy
 - Covered under Marketing & Digital Media Specialist
- Streamline communications
 - Consolidate communications channels and create grid
 - Covered under Marketing & Digital Media Specialist



5 Key Focus Areas of Improvement

- Address recommendations in Communications Audit
- Build and maintain school spirit/brand
- Leverage analytics to make informed, strategic decisions
- Execute timely publications (digital and print) to tell our story of pride
- Form Communications Advisory Committee



Staffing

- Coordinator of Communications
- Communications Assistant
- Marketing and Digital Media Specialist
- Student Communications Intern (2)
 - HS Jr/Sr



Proposed Department Structure

Coordinator of Communications

Act 93

- Responsible to coordinate the internal and external communications needs of the school district
- Provide strategic communications support to the office of the Superintendent
- Provide assistance to district staff and administration
- Oversee community education programs
- Manage volunteer system
- Plan special events

Marketing and Digital Media Specialist

MESPA

- Responsible to support the internal and external communications needs of the school district
- Provide strategic communications support to the Communications Department
- Provide assistance to district staff and administration
- Maintain the editorial calendar, social media presence, district website, print/digital media
- Assist with special events as needed
- Responsible for monitoring KPI and analytics associated with the district communication plan strategies/tactics

Communications Assistant

MESPA

- Assist the Communications Coordinator with internal and external communications needs of the school district
- Assist with providing strategic communications support to the office of the Superintendent
- Assist district staff and administration
- Assist with operation of community education programs
- Assist with the volunteer clearances system, and assist with special events.

Student Communication Intern

(2 HS Students)

- Photograph after-school events/activities and people at school buildings throughout the district.
- Editing photos (Sports/Activities/Clubs/ComEd/District Events) using Photoshop or comparable photo editing software.
- Writing compelling summaries of events to accompany photographs
- Assisting with various Communications Department Activities



Costs

- 2023-2024 Department Budget
 - Staff - \$272,275 (2 staff)
 - Department Budget
 - Supplies/Fees/Subscriptions/Postage etc.
 - \$156,120
 - \$150,000 (Communication Services)
 - Total Budget: \$578,395
- Proposed 2024-2025 Department Budget
 - Staff - \$381,976 (3 staff + 2 Student Interns)
 - Department Budget
 - Supplies/Fees/Subscriptions/Postage etc.
 - \$161,320
 - \$20,000 (Communication Services)
 - Total Budget: \$563,296



Process

- 2/9/2024 Present response to audit and job description recommendations to President/Vice President
- 2/14/2024 Present response to audit and job description recommendations to Finance Committee of Board
- 2/20/2024 Present response to audit and job description recommendations to Board of School Directors; Place job description recommendations on Board agenda
- 2/21/2024 Establish District Branding committee
- 2/27/2024 Board approves job descriptions
- 3/4/2024 Review branding vendor/costs/timeline/expected outcomes
- 3/13/2024 Place Branding vendor on Finance Committee agenda-review selection process/costs/intended outcomes
- 3/19/2024 Place vendor recommendations on Board agenda for March approval
- 3/26/2024 Board approves vendor
- 3/27/2024 Work with vendor begins

