



**Santa Rosa City Schools
Communication Strategic Plan
2024-2027**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Santa Rosa City Schools is the largest school district in Sonoma County and serves approximately 15,000 students to its 24 schools, including nine elementary schools, four middle schools, five high schools, and one continuation high school. The district also has four dependent charter schools, including French and Spanish immersion schools, a K-8 charter school for the arts, and a nationally-recognized accelerated charter school, and one independent charter school.

The reputation and perception of Santa Rosa City Schools is challenged by a number of factors, most prominently, the death of a student on one of its campuses in the prior school year and campus violence incidents during the current school year, which is layered on the challenges related COVID pandemic school shutdowns in 2020 and wildfires that destroyed two district schools and the homes of nearly 900 students and staff members in 2017. This challenge is further exacerbated by local media coverage that focuses on covering negative stories about the district. Further, the district's challenges in meeting funding needs to provide competitive wages to teachers and staff impacts the district's ability to retain and attract employees.

Despite these challenges, the district has incredible opportunities to promote its assets, including: its commitment to equity and diversity, visual and performing arts programs, sports, and magnet programs, its emphasis on A-G requirements and ethnic studies, and the district's historic significance and creativity in community schools. The district also has opportunities to engage and amplify its diverse student, parent and staff voices and perspectives.

The Santa Rosa City Schools communication strategy focuses on five key strategic goals:

- Continue to strengthen and enhance the district's transparency and comprehensive communication program
- Promote the district as a district of choice for families and employees
- Promote the district's diversity and inclusivity
- Enhance and champion the district as a unifying influence in the community
- Enhance participation and engagement in district meetings

KEY FINDINGS

A detailed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis is included in the full strategic plan. The following is a summary of the key findings from the research conducted as part of the strategic plan:

- Approximately 45% of parents have a neutral, negative or very negative opinion about the district as a whole. Approximately 54% of parents have a positive or very positive opinion about the district as a whole. However, 70.5% of parents have a positive or very positive opinion about the education their children are receiving.
- With the exception of diversity and inclusion, there is a lack of alignment between district and community values.
- While current communications efforts are strategic, they are challenged by the district's internal capacity to be fully implemented.
- The school sites are the hub of and key to effective communications, both internally and externally. There is a wide disparity in the communications capabilities among school sites.

KEY FINDINGS, CONTINUED

- Employees and parents feel well-informed and the District uses a variety of communications mechanisms, with varying levels of consistency, proficiency and success.
- As a district, Santa Rosa City Schools has great stories to tell, but it can tell its stories better.

SNAPSHOT OF SANTA ROSA CITY SCHOOLS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The following provides a summary of the Santa Rosa City Schools Communication Strategy. The specific tactics are included in the full Communication Strategic Plan and evaluation metrics and timelines are included in its associated workplan.

Goal: Continue to Strengthen and Enhance District’s Transparency and Comprehensive Communication Program

Key Objectives:

- Increase Representation of Student and Staff Voices
- Expand Communication Accessibility for Families without Electronic Means
- Implement Consistent and Proactive Communication Practices Across School Sites
- Strengthen Crisis Communication Protocols
- Improve Communication Channels and Customer Service for All Audiences
- Address Information Gaps for Employees
- Improve Transparency and Communication of Committees and Student Group Activities
- Increase Communication Office’s Capacity to Provide Proactive District Communications and Increased Media Engagement and Coverage of Positive District Stories

Goal: Promote the District as a District of Choice for Families and Employees

Key Objectives:

- Showcase Academic and Student Achievements and Success Stories
- Establish School Brag/Fact Sheets
- Position the District as the Best Place for Employment

Goal: Promote the District’s Diversity and Inclusivity

Key Objectives:

- Celebrate and communicate Diversity
- Communicate Specific Diversity and Inclusivity Practices

Goal: Enhance and Champion the District as a Unifying Influence in the Community

Key Objectives:

- Establish and Promote Districtwide Shared Values
- Highlight Opportunities for Community Collaboration and Increase Engagement with Community Partners

Goal: Enhance Participation and Engagement in District Meetings

Key Objectives:

- Increase Diverse Representation in Meetings
- Encourage Broader Employee Representation on District Committees

By implementing the strategies and tactics that support these goals and key objectives, Santa Rosa City Schools can effectively achieve its communication goals and objectives, fostering a positive and engaged educational community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- All communication efforts must be tied to the District's goals.
- There is a positive and convincing relationship between communications and family and community involvement, which, in turn, results in improved student academic achievement, including higher grade point averages and scores on standardized tests, more classes passed, higher enrollment in more challenging academic classes, better attendance and improved behavior at home and at school.
- Quality education and effective communication go hand-in-hand. Positive reputations are not developed solely through effective communication. Conversely, a district with quality educational programs will not garner the support it deserves without an effective communication program that keeps its staff and community informed and allows for two-way dialogue and interaction.
- Strategic communication requires research and evaluation.
- Everyone in the District is a communicator and an ambassador.
- The communication effort should focus on engaging stakeholders to take action on behalf of students.
- Leveraging relationships is superior to paper and mass media for engaging audiences.
- Technology is imperative for supporting an efficient, timely and effective system of communication.
- Strategic communication and community engagement is a management function.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The Santa Rosa City School District is the largest preschool-grade 12 school district in Sonoma County, California, located about an hour north of San Francisco.

The district's community is diverse. Students and families speak 49 languages, with the majority speaking English and/or Spanish. There are approximately 2,600 English language learners in the district's schools, which have bilingual family engagement facilitators, to help families make connections. The district values diversity and has been recognized statewide for its Equity and Social Justice Initiative, which has been embraced by the district's 1,600 teachers and staff, who have adopted the district's motto of "Embrace. Engage. Empower."

Given the district's demographic and needs, the district and its community partners provide a variety of different services to support the whole student and their families, including: parent education, health services, and counseling. After the wildfires, the district worked with community partners to open an Integrated Wellness Center, which continues to provide free counseling and referrals, academic support, and school nurse services to any area families.

District Vision: SRCS will send students into the world empowered to find purpose, think critically, embrace diversity, work together, adapt to our changing planet, and live healthy and fulfilling lives.

District Mission: SRCS ensures equitable access to a transformative educational experience grounded in the assets of our students, staff, and community. We nurture the whole student in an engaging, challenging, and safe environment. We recognize and value each student's individuality and our community's cultural wealth.

Primary Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities (SWOT): The reputation and perception of Santa Rosa City Schools is challenged by a number of factors, most prominently, the death of a student on one of its campuses in the prior school year and campus violence incidents during the current school year. This tragedy occurred just a couple of years after COVID pandemic school shutdowns and five years after wildfires destroyed two district schools and the homes of nearly 900 students and staff members. This challenge is further exacerbated by local media coverage that focuses on covering negative stories about the district. Further, the district's challenges in meeting funding needs to provide competitive wages to teachers and staff impacts the district's ability to retain and attract employees.

Despite these challenges, the district has incredible opportunities to promote its assets, including: its commitment to equity and diversity, visual and performing arts programs, sports, and magnet programs, its emphasis on A-G requirements and ethnic studies, and the district's historic significance and creativity in community schools. The district also has opportunities to engage and amplify its diverse student, parent and staff voices and perspectives.

STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES/THREATS, AND OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS

In this section, the Santa Rosa City School District's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) are analyzed from a communications and public relations perspective, based on stakeholder feedback. A summary of stakeholder focus groups and survey responses are included in the appendix, for reference.

Strengths

- Diversity and Inclusion:
 - Commitment to Social Justice:
 - Values align with social justice, inclusivity, and cultural diversity.
 - Clear actions and programs supporting social-emotional learning (SEL) and inclusivity.
 - District's representation of diverse communities highlighted.
 - Consistent strengths in community engagement across generations.
 - Commitment to inclusion and understanding.
 - Emphasis on embracing various cultures.
 - Recognition of progressive approaches and a willingness to do things differently.
 - Support for Diverse Needs:
 - Acknowledgment of efforts to support students learning English or with learning disabilities.
 - Recognition of teachers providing help and contributing to maintaining a good learning environment.
- Positive School Environment:
 - Emphasis on kindness, connections with teachers and students, and a safe and welcoming school environment.
 - Recognition of efforts by teachers and administrators contributing to a positive school experience.
- Student Engagement and Pride:
 - Positive feedback about spirited schools, pride in schools, and students enjoying their time.
- Appreciation for various sources of information, including ParentSquare, social media, and school announcements.
- Professional Growth and Accessibility:
 - Opportunities for professional growth.
 - Accessibility and responsiveness to employee inquiries.
- Programs and Initiatives:
 - Commended visual and performing arts programs, sports, and magnet programs.
 - Emphasis on A-G requirements, ethnic studies, and progressive ideas.
 - Recognition of historic significance and creativity in community schools.
- Communication Sources:
 - Consistent use of platforms (ParentSquare, Remind, email, phone) for communication.
 - Positive views on the potential of social media, especially for student-driven content.

Strengths, Continued

- Caring, Competent and Quality Teachers and Learning Resources
 - Strong recognition of teachers' caring and competent nature.
 - Appreciation for the mix of veteran and newer teachers fostering a diverse teaching community.
 - Appreciation for resources and support available to students
- Commitment to Doing Good:
 - Shared belief that people genuinely want to do good things within the district.
- Dedicated Staff:
 - Positive recognition for staff's dedication and willingness to contribute.
- Benefit Packages and Schedule:
 - Recognition of great benefits and work schedules.

Challenges/Threats

- School Safety and Lack of Information:
 - Concerns about school safety and incidents affecting students' feelings of safety.
 - Lack of information hinders student voices from being heard.
- Negative Perceptions and Misconceptions about Schools:
 - Recognition of misconceptions about specific schools, including misunderstandings about Ridgeway, Comstock, and conflicting views on different schools.
 - Negative perceptions related to underpayment, student safety concerns, school segregation, gang violence, and a lack of responsiveness to the community.
 - Lingering memories of past incidents affecting trust.
 - Perceived racial issues within schools.
 - Negative perceptions include overwhelmed staff, safety concerns, and a reputation for lower pay for admin positions.
 - Negative press coverage impacting the perception of student behavior and the district's image.
 - Misconceptions about district leadership's control and influence, leading to communication challenges.
 - Negative perceptions from past events, impacting families' views of certain schools and student safety.
 - Perceived challenges in communication effectiveness and potential biases in local media.
 - Struggles with negative public perceptions, such as being perceived as radical leftists or facing resistance to change.
- Diversity in Hiring:
 - Difficulty in hiring diverse teachers, possibly a broader issue in Sonoma County.
- Educational Programs and Equity:
 - Challenges in supporting English Learner (EL) programs and language emphasis.
 - Perception of a lack of equity among schools in terms of resources and demographics.

Challenges, Continued

- **Communication Challenges:**
 - Overwhelming email volume and challenges in filtering out important information.
 - Mixed views on internal communication tools like Communicado, suggesting the need for improvement.
 - Concerns about overuse of communication channels, especially ParentSquare and email.
 - Inconsistencies and lack of currency in district websites.
 - Challenges related to data-driven jargon without tangible results.
 - Mixed views on the effectiveness of social media communication.
 - Desire for more positive news and improved communication accessibility.
 - Communication difficulties with the district, administrators, and board members.
 - Common acknowledgment of outdated websites that need an overhaul.
 - Concerns about accessibility for parents without computers or smartphones.
 - **Engagement Challenges:**
 - Challenges in engaging less-involved parents and the broader community.
- **Employee Compensation and Retention:**
 - Concerns about inadequate pay for specific roles.
 - Challenges in retaining experienced staff due to salary caps and higher pay for temporary positions.
 - Taking on extra responsibilities without additional compensation due to staffing shortages.
 - Perception of increased workload, with a shift towards focusing more on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) than academic preparation.
 - **Employee Recognition:**
 - Perception of a district culture where classified staff is not adequately recognized.
 - Individual talents and skill sets of classified staff are not acknowledged at the organizational level.
 - **Staff Retention and Promotion Issues:**
 - Perception of competent individuals leaving while incompetent ones get promoted, affecting staff retention.
- **Cumbersome Administrative Processes and Implementation Gaps:**
 - Comparison of the district to a "lumbering aircraft carrier," highlighting slow processes for implementing changes.
 - Concerns about a myopic view, lack of realistic approaches, and a vision-implementation gap.
 - Inconsistency and lack of follow-through in district initiatives, hindering progress.
 - Bureaucratic hurdles for addressing simple issues, leading to frustration.
 - Recent transitions in leadership and programs, leading to skepticism and challenges in obtaining buy-in from staff.
- **Safety Concerns:**
 - Genuine safety concerns, with reported assaults on staff and a perception that safety issues are not adequately addressed.

Challenges, Continued

- Financial and Enrollment Concerns:
 - Financial challenges and declining enrollment due to various factors.
 - Anxiety and difficulties in planning due to enrollment declines and resource constraints.
 - Broken funding structures and difficulties in diversifying approaches to funding.
 - Struggles in meeting funding needs, especially for a living wage to teachers and staff.
 - Facilities in need of repairs and discrepancies in perceptions about the East vs. West side divide.

Opportunities

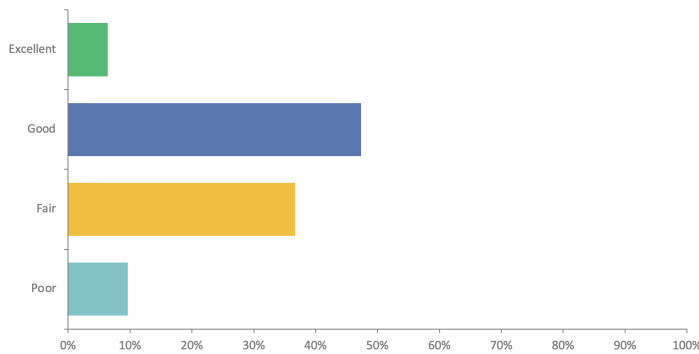
- Increase representation of student and staff voices through expanded “Hearts and Minds” story-telling campaign
- Expand communication accessibility for families without electronic means through targeted outreach
- Implement consistent and proactive communication practices across school sites through expanded resources and capacity building and reinforced crisis communication protocols
- Improve communication channels and customer service for all audiences.
- Address information gaps for employees
- Improve transparency and communication of task force activities
- Increase Communication Office’s capacity to provide proactive communications through increased staffing
- Increase media engagement and coverage of positive district stories

Audiences

Internal Audiences: Internal audiences of the Santa Rosa City School District include the following: current district parents, students, teachers, classified staff, certificated staff, administrators, and board of education members. Some of these audiences are further defined, as follows:

Parents: Parents are increasingly coming from the millennial and Gen Z generations, which has shown a high reliance on online communications, particularly social media use. In addition, with 36.5% of English language learners, SRCS’s parent audience has a variety of communication needs that range from translation to access needs.

Q33: Please rate your overall satisfaction with the district's communications efforts.

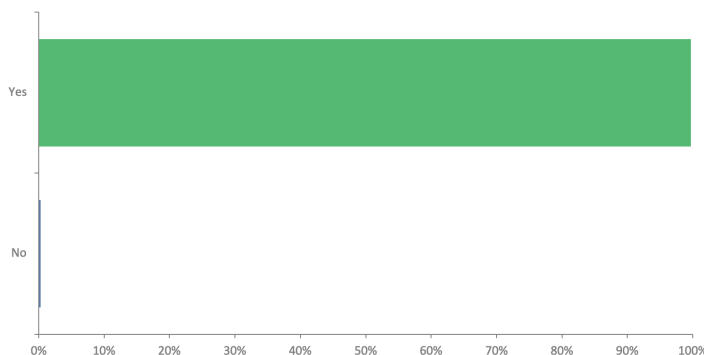


A survey of all SRCS parents was conducted in November 2023, and was available online and printed, and translated into English and Spanish. A total of 891 parents (754-English and 137 Spanish). This survey collected data about parents' access to communication devices, communication preferences, and perceptions and attitudes about the district and its customer service.

This data will be used to establish baseline goals for the district's communication efforts, as well as inform the district's communication practitioners about the most effective means for communication with parents, as well as their communication preferences. The full survey results are included in the appendix, and in the information that follows, a summary of the survey results is provided to highlight parent access, preferences and attitudes about the district and its communications.

Overall, a majority (approximately 62.2%) parents rate the district's communications efforts as good or excellent, with significantly higher ratings among Spanish language parents, which is reflective of the success of the district's diversity and inclusion initiatives. Many of the goals and tactics in this marketing and communication strategic plan are intended to increase the percentage of parents who rate the district's communication efforts as excellent.

Q8: Is your cell phone a "smart" phone (internet-capable)?



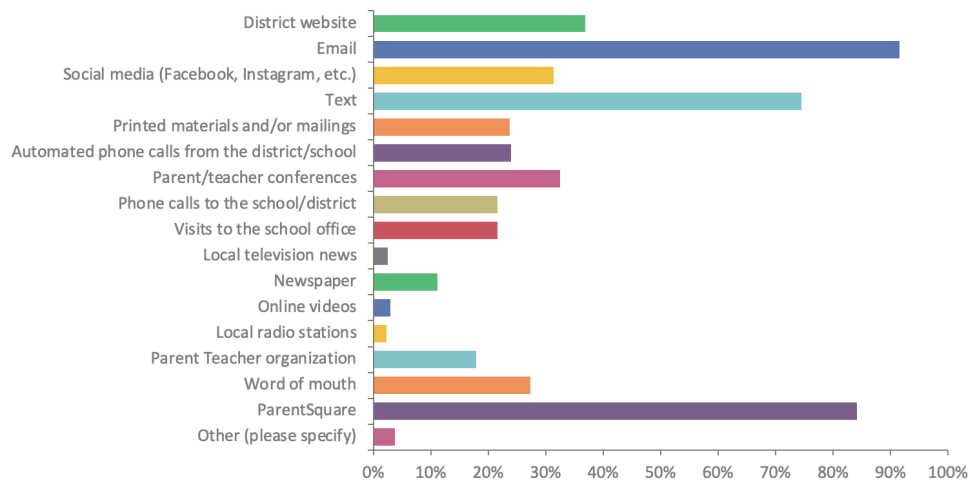
Parent access to communications: Of the survey participants, 97% (94.7% Spanish speaking, 99.7% English speaking) of parents have access to a "smart" (or internet capable) phone, and nearly 100% have access to a cell phone. Santa Rosa City School District is already taking advantage of the many opportunities to leverage its online communications and texting to reach parents, particularly

with its use of the ParentSquare communication platform. At the same time, special care should be taken with the communications means and approaches for the 8.4% of parents who do not have internet access (the majority of which are Spanish speaking). Printed communications, texting and

automated phone calls continue to be highly valued by the majority of parents, and serve as means of communication that do not require internet access. Santa Rosa City School District parents have a number of means--both electronic and printed--to access information about the district. Of the parents who have access to a cell phone, 95% have calling and texting services, and 80-85% have web browsing and mobile application services.

The district and its schools provide parents a number of different ways to receive communications, including email, printed materials, website information, social media, and ParentSquare, which also includes texting to parents. As shown in the table below, email, text, and ParentSquare are the most highly utilized communication methods used by parents. Based on survey responses, 81.4% of parents feel somewhat to extremely informed, though parent focus group responses and open-ended survey responses indicate that parents would like to receive more timely information and updates during campus incidents/crises.

Q9: Please, select all of the communication methods you currently use to receive information regarding Santa Rosa School District schools.

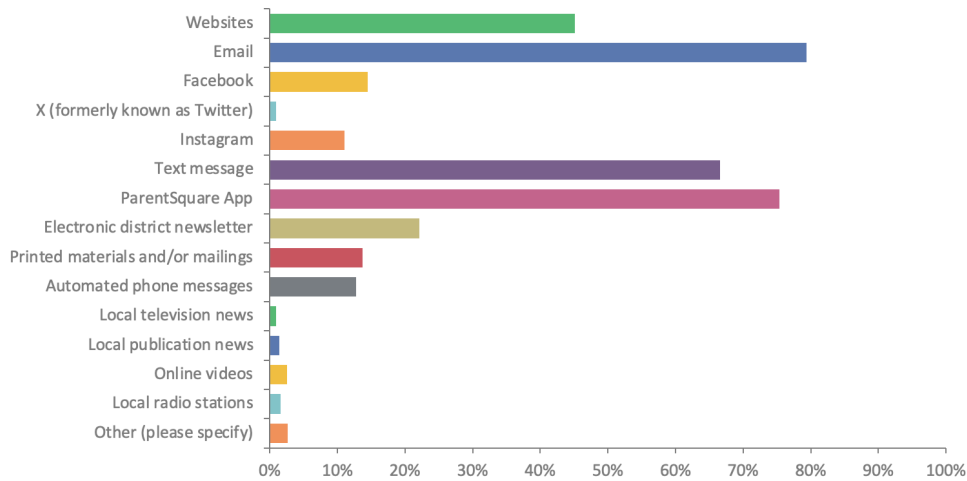


Parent preferences regarding communications:

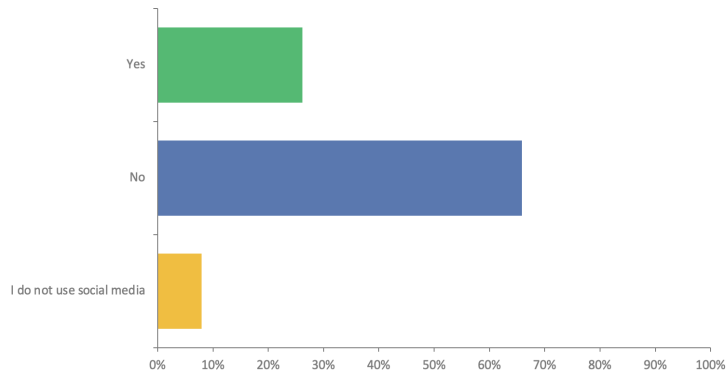
Parents in the Santa Rosa City School Districts are interested in a number of different pieces of news and information from the district, with news, event schedules, their own children’s grades and attendance, and news about student achievement topping their preferred topics of information. Most (81.4%) of parents would prefer to receive information via email, ParentSquare (78.4%) and text (77.5%). Feedback from parent focus groups indicates that periodically mailed printed updates would be well-received by parents, and that they would also prefer more direct updates from the district administration.

Although just 38% of parents use the schools’ websites to obtain information, this number will likely increase when website updates are occurring on a consistent basis and the information is relevant to parents’ preferences and needs. Parents use school websites to obtain information pertinent to their needs, including up to date information about events, parent resources, and news.

Q16: Please select all of the communications methods you would PREFER to use for information about our schools and district



Q17: Do you follow our district on social media?

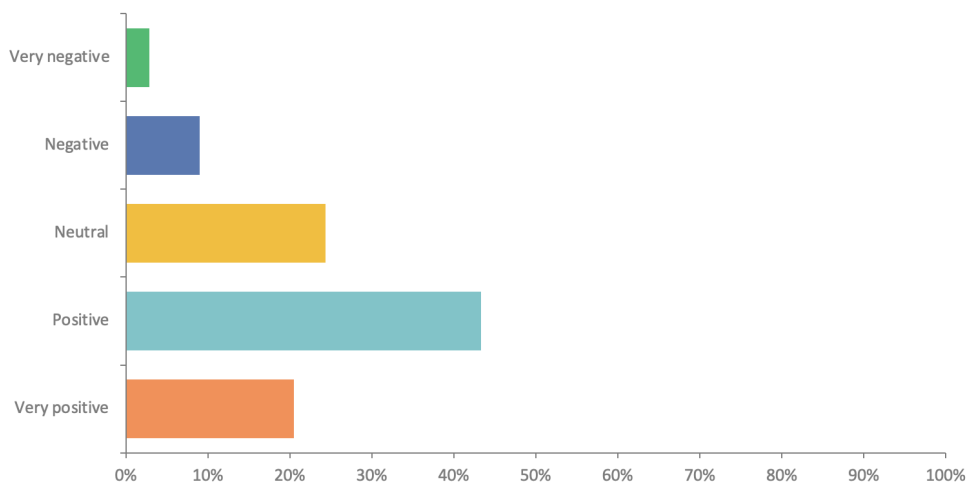


Social Media: The use and preference of utilizing social media as a source of information about the district is fairly low: 31.2% of parents follow the district on social media, and 15.9% indicated that they prefer to utilize a social media platform for news and information about the schools and the district. For schools, approximately 50% of parents follow their child’s school on social media and

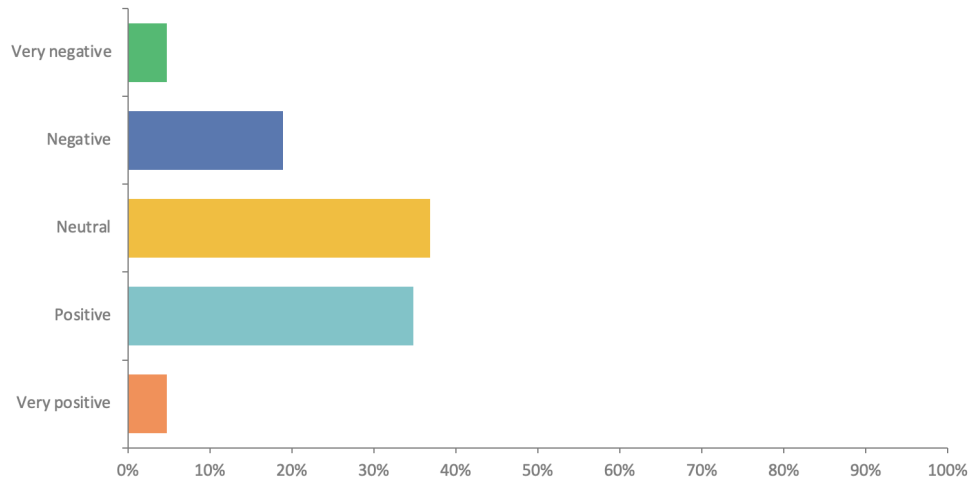
50% do not. The percentage of parents indicating that they are not on social media was low in comparison to the number who responded that they do not follow the district or school on social media, so this is not a significant factor in these responses.

Parent attitudes regarding Santa Rosa City School District: Approximately 45% of parents have a neutral, negative or very negative opinion about the district as a whole. Approximately 54% of parents have a positive or very positive opinion about the district as a whole. However, 70.5% of parents have a positive or very positive opinion about the education their children are receiving.

Q31: Please rate your overall opinion about the education your child(ren) is/are receiving:



Q32: Please rate your opinion about Santa Rosa City Schools as a whole:



As outlined in the Executive Summary, the recent tragedies and ongoing incidents concerning student safety, along with misconceptions about the district’s schools (shared in the focus groups) has a culminating negative impact on parent perceptions.

Students: All the schools have strong student councils, give a voice to the student councils and positive behavior interventions and supports. Student input was gathered through a focus group that included a cross section of students from various schools and grade levels in the district.

Strengths: Students noted the following strengths about Santa Rosa City Schools, which can be incorporated into district communications and public relations tactics:

Positive School Environment:

- Emphasis on kindness, connections with teachers and students, and a safe and welcoming school environment.
- Recognition of the efforts of teachers and administrators in contributing to a positive school experience.

Support for Diverse Needs:

- Acknowledgment of efforts to support students who are learning English or have learning disabilities.
- Recognition of teachers who provide help and contribute to maintaining a good learning environment.

Students, Continued

Student Engagement and Pride:

- Positive feedback about spirited schools, pride in schools, and students enjoying their time at school.
- Appreciation for various sources of information, including ParentSquare, social media, and school announcements.

Challenges: Students noted the following challenges, which echo those described by parent and staff focus groups:

School Safety and Lack of Information:

- Concerns about school safety and incidents that affect students' feelings of safety.
- Lack of information about how the district works, hindering students from having their voices heard.

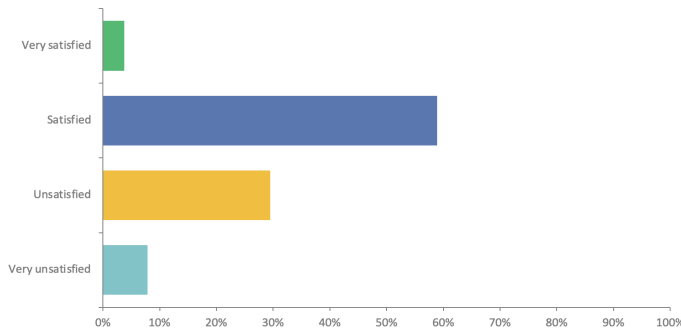
Misconceptions about Schools:

- Recognition of misconceptions about specific schools being portrayed negatively.
- Examples include misunderstandings about Ridgeway, Comstock, and conflicting views on different schools.

Staff

Santa Rosa City Schools has a number of different classified, certificated, confidential and administrative employees, including Family Engagement Facilitators, who support and serve as a liaison for the school, students, and parents.

Q20: Please rate your overall satisfaction with district communications.

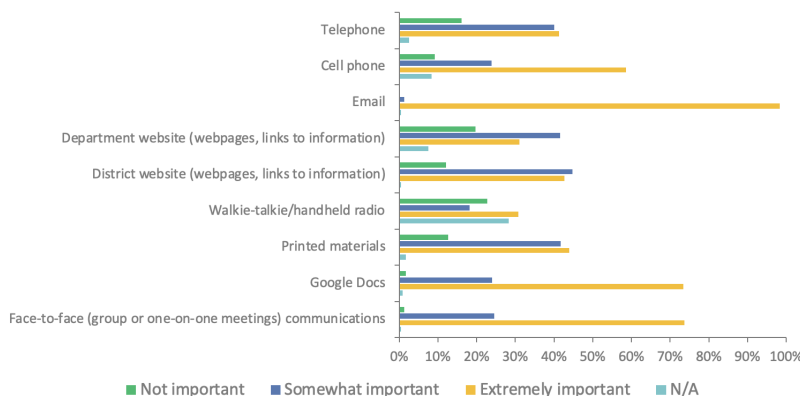


An employee survey was administered online and in a print format (for employees who do not access a computer during their workday) in November 2023. There were 241 employees who completed the survey, the majority of which were school site certificated staff, followed by school site classified staff. This survey collected data

about access, preferences and attitudes of employees regarding district communications. Employees were also included in focus group meetings. In the information that follows, a summary of the survey results and focus groups is provided. The data from the surveys will be used to provide benchmark data in establishing the goals of this marketing and communication strategic plan, as well as providing district communication practitioners information about the most effective means and preferences related to communications.

Overall, approximately 62.6% of employees are satisfied or very satisfied with the district’s communication efforts. Many of the goals and tactics in this marketing and communication strategic plan are intended to increase the percentage of employees who rate their satisfaction as very satisfied in the district’s communication efforts.

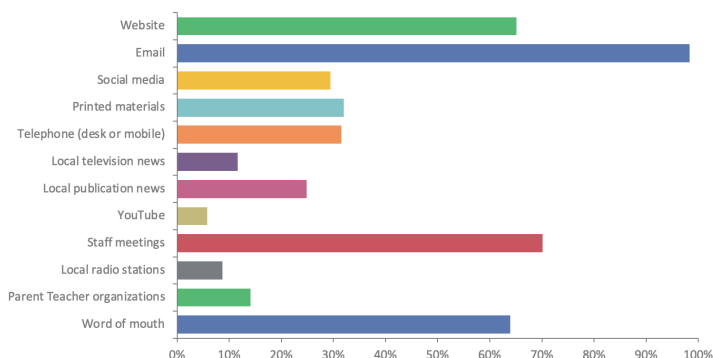
Q6: Please rate the importance of the following as it relates to the manner in which you perform your job functions (communicating with fellow staff members and/or customers):



Employee access to communications: The majority of district employees (97.1%) use a computer as part of their job functions, and 99.6% use email as a communication tool, followed by web browsing (93.8%) and texting (78.8%). Employees rated email as extremely important to their job functions, and 93% indicated that

Google Docs and face to face meetings are important or extremely important to their job function.

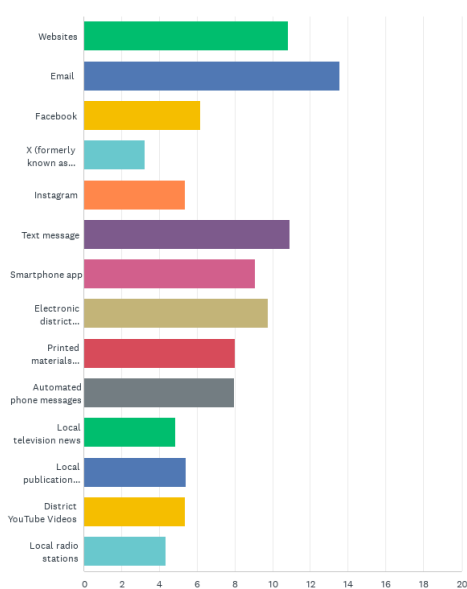
Q8: Which of the following communication methods do you currently rely on for information regarding the district? Select as many that apply.



Similarly, employees obtain information about the district mostly through email, but it should be noted that approximately 92% of employees use the district's websites to obtain information about the district and its schools, and 65.1% indicated that using department web pages is important or

somewhat important to performing their job functions.

Q12 Please rank the the communications methods in the order that you would PREFER to receive for information about the district (1=highest; 14=lowest)



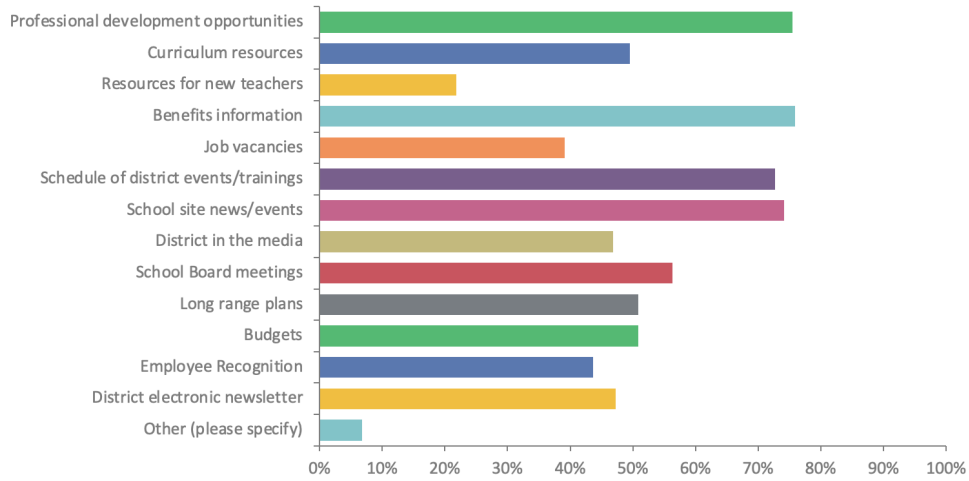
Employee communication preferences: Similar to parents, employees prefer to receive information about the district through email, the website, and text.

There are a number of different areas that employees indicated their interest in receiving more information, some of which coincide with parents' preferences--such as a schedule of events/calendar and school site news and information--and some of which are specifically employee-focused, such as professional development opportunities (75.5%), benefits information (75.9%), and curriculum resources (49.5%).

Due to the fact that these are

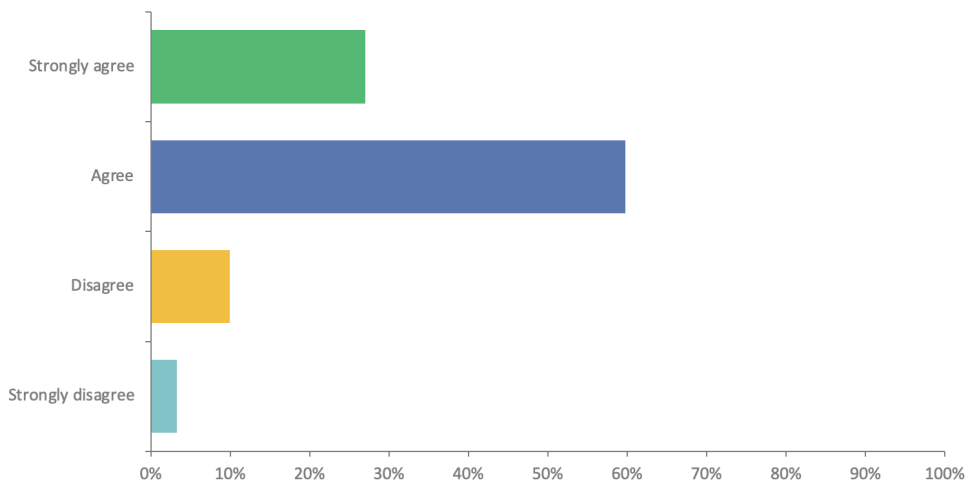
employee, not public, resources, strong consideration should be given to developing an employee-facing intranet site where employee information can be shared and accessed on a regular basis.

Q13: Select all of the information in which you are interested in receiving and/or with which you would like to keep up-to-date.



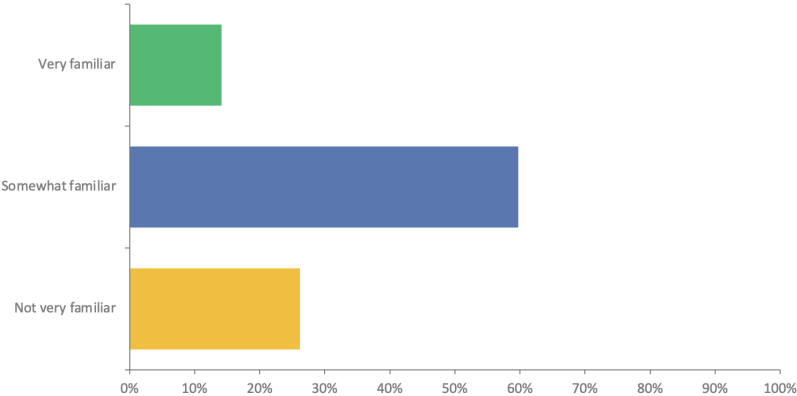
Employee attitudes: In the employee focus groups and surveys, Santa Rosa City Schools employees expressed a wide level of satisfaction in their employment in the district, as well as a strong sense of feeling valued:

Q19: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I am a good ambassador in the community for Santa Rosa City Schools District.

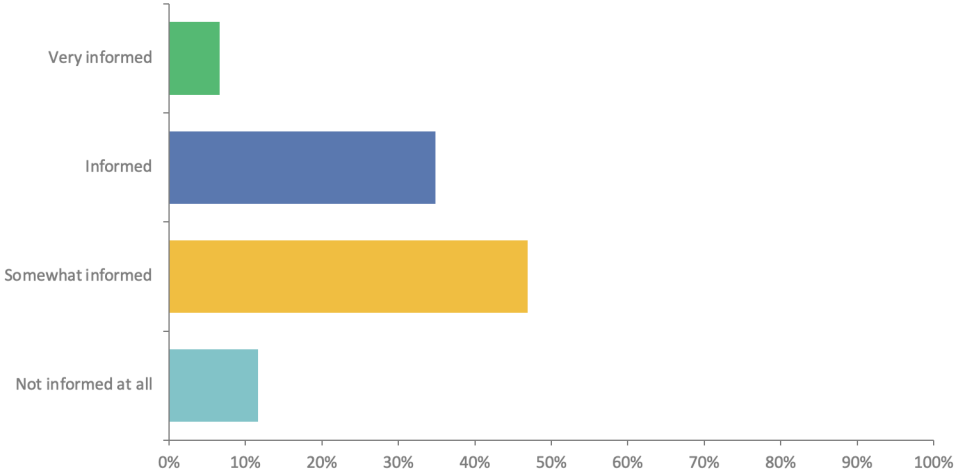


Approximately 87% of employees feel that they can be a good ambassador for the Santa Rosa City School District. This is a high percentage, likely due to the ways in which employees already feel somewhat informed to very informed about the district (89%). This also may be due to approximately 74% of employees indicating that they are somewhat to very familiar with the district's goals.

Q16: How familiar are you with the district's goals?



Q15: As a Santa Rosa City Schools District staff member, I feel



The goals and tactics outlined in this marketing and communication strategic plan address ways in which the district can use its communication channels and employee ambassadors to increase

employee knowledge of district goals and information, and serve as ambassadors in the community and to new employees.

External Audiences: External audiences of the Santa Rosa City School District include the following: media representatives, including a local newspaper (Press Democrat) as well as the Bay Area media market (television, radio and newspaper); community and business partners; and the greater Santa Rosa and Sonoma county community.

Communication Platforms

The Santa Rosa City School District currently utilizes a few different means to communicate to its internal and external audiences, including email, committee and board meetings, the district website, social media, ParentSquare and the Communicado. A brief assessment of these communications is provided below:

Website

The district and schools websites use the Finalsite content management system, which recently implemented structural and aesthetic updates to all of the district's and schools' websites. The district and schools were challenged with the timing of these updates by Finalsite, which did not allow for time to clean up and update content before the changes occurred, and therefore resulted in some confusion by parents and staff. These updates will be completed in the near future, and the communication strategy incorporates tactics that highlight the need for consistency in information across all school websites.

Social Media

The district maintains Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) profiles. On Facebook, the posts are up to date, and the content is well-written with some engagement and interactions. The district has 5,000 followers on Facebook, 1,495 on Instagram (where there is a higher amount of engagement and interactions) and 1,300 on X (with a lower amount of engagement).

Overall, the district has an effective social media strategy that balances consistent posting of news, information/announcements, stories and engaging posts. Continuing to keep the focus on highlighting people (students and staff) also shares the assets of the district and the positive impact of its programs.

Parent Square: Text, Email, and Phone Communications

The district utilizes ParentSquare for text, email and phone communications with parents and high school students.

Communicado: The Communicado is the internal staff communication page for district management, and includes departmental updates provided by department managers and administrators. Some challenges were noted by staff and administrators pertaining to the volume of information, and staff's inconsistency in reading the Communicado. The communication strategy addresses evaluating staff communication and identifying improved methods of employee communication.

Email: Though email is the preferred and most used communication method by parents and staff,

the volume of email was noted as the biggest challenge associated with email. Because of the high volume of email sent and received, staff members noted that they have missed important notices related to providing input on the district's facilities plan, and other input opportunities. The communication strategy addresses evaluating staff communication and identifying improved methods of employee communication.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Santa Rosa City School District values proactive communications, and its stakeholders believe that the district is communicating well. The district has and is utilizing various communications channels. The current platforms being used for district communications can be improved upon and strengthened, and used more consistently to allow the district the opportunity to increase its district's reputation, tell its story, and deliver excellent customer service to each of its audiences, and strengthen its relationships with its stakeholders. Furthermore, the district has opportunities to develop communications systems in order to more efficiently, consistently and more frequently communicate with its audiences. The district's communication goals, objectives and tactics are outlined below. Each goal listed is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and associated with a specific timetable. With each goal and listed objective, effective monitoring and tracking should be a part of the Santa Rosa City School District's evaluation method.

Goals:

- Continue to Strengthen and Enhance District's Transparency and Comprehensive Communication Program
- Promote the District as a District of Choice for Families and Employees
- Promote the District's Diversity and Inclusivity
- Enhance and Champion the District as a Unifying Influence in the Community
- Enhance Participation and Engagement in District Meetings

Objectives, Strategies and Tactics

Goal: Continue to Strengthen and Enhance District's Transparency and Comprehensive Communication Program

Objective 1: Increase Representation of Student and Staff Voices

- Strategy: Launch the district's "Hearts and Minds" campaign.
- Tactics:
 - Establish a dedicated section on the district website for testimonials.
 - Video interviews with students and staff to share on social media platforms.
 - Encourage school newsletters to feature monthly testimonials.
 - Utilize the stories in the district's newsletter.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Tactics, Continued

Objective 2: Expand Communication Accessibility for Families without Electronic Means

- Strategy: Implement a targeted outreach program.
- Tactics:
 - Appoint outreach assistants through Family Engagement Facilitators to facilitate communication.
 - Create and distribute printed newsletters and updates to non-electronic families.
 - Establish a Parent Help Center and helpline for families to receive information via phone.
 - Host in-person information sessions in community centers and libraries.

Objective 3: Implement Consistent and Proactive Communication Practices Across School Sites

- Strategy: Develop a set of best practices, processes, and protocols for communication across all school sites.
- Tactics:
 - Provide training and resources to schools site support staff to facilitate the adoption of consistent communication practices, including ParentSquare, crisis communication support.
 - Establish a consistent website and newsletter content topics that each school will utilize when keeping families updated
 - Full implementation of ParentSquare and its functionalities across the district, as outlined in SART goals.

Objective 4: Strengthen Crisis Communication Protocols

- Strategy: Enhance the District's ability to provide timely and accurate information during emergencies.
- Tactics:
 - Conduct training sessions with Cabinet members and site administrators to ensure readiness in crisis communication, including providing crisis communication protocols for school sites to use in emergencies.
 - Implement and achieve 100% adherence to crisis communication protocols within the next six months.

Objective 5: Improve Communication Channels and Customer Service for All Audiences

- Strategy: Tailor communication to audience preferences and needs and establish consistent customer service approaches.
- Tactics:
 - Utilize survey data to inform parents' and employees' preferred communication channels and frequency of communications.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Tactics, Continued

- Consider establishing internal email communication policies and practices to reduce the volume and reliance of email as a communication method. Incorporate an employee awareness campaign to educate employees of these practices.
- Provide customer service training to all employees, and then on an ongoing basis to all new employees, to ensure consistent customer service approaches are being used throughout the district.
- Establish an online customer service form for employees and families to provide direct feedback and streamline responses and follow through by district staff.
- Clearly communicate to parents, staff and community members the board of education's approach and practices to email responses.
- Fine tune email, newsletters, and social media to reach diverse audiences.

Objective 6: Address Information Gaps for Employees

- Strategy: Establish or utilize an existing employee committee to provide ongoing feedback on internal communication
- Tactics:
 - Simplify the internal communication platform accessible to all employees.
 - Implement regular information sessions during breaks or off-hours.
 - Encourage team leaders to cascade communications to their teams.
 - Establish regular superintendent check ins with employees (monthly at varying sites) to keep the pulse on employee concerns and input.

Objective 7: Improve Transparency and Communication of Committees and Student Group Activities

- Strategy: Implement a continuous task force committee, student group and communication plan.
- Tactics:
 - Provide a clear scope of responsibilities, timelines and actions to task forces and committees, including when expected actions need to be taken by the committees/student groups.
 - Establish regular check-ins with committee/student group members.
 - Provide transparent updates on ongoing initiatives through newsletters and updates.
 - Host periodic town hall meetings for open communication and updates from task forces/committees.
 - Celebrate milestones and achievements with the community through virtual events, district communications, press releases.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Tactics, Continued

Objective 8: Increase Communication Office's Capacity to Provide Proactive District Communications and Increased Media Engagement and Coverage of Positive District Stories

Strategy: Increase the staffing for the Communication Office and establish PIO as management position

- Tactics:
 - Establish a full-time communication office assistant to help ensure the district's continuity of its positive stories, support the PIO during crisis/incident response, support social and other digital media communications.
 - Continue to send regular press releases highlighting district achievements.
 - Continue to cultivate relationships with local journalists and media outlets.
 - Host media days showcasing innovative programs and initiatives.
 - Provide media training for key district spokespersons, including Cabinet members and school principals

Goal: Promote the District As a District of Choice for Families and Employees

Objective 1: Showcase Academic and Student Achievements and Success Stories

- Strategy: Create an academic excellence showcase.
- Tactics:
 - Develop an annual report highlighting student academic achievements and innovations.
 - Feature success stories in local newspapers and community bulletins.
 - Engage with alumni to share success stories and achievements.
 - Establish regular news sharing and connections between feeder schools.

Objective 2: Establish School Brag/Fact Sheets

- Strategy: Develop fact sheets about each school that highlight programs, schedules, electives (where applicable), clubs, parent engagement opportunities and utilize as the schools' website content, information to provide to realtors and prospective families, as well as prospective school employees
- Tactics:
 - Develop an annual report highlighting student academic achievements and innovations.
 - Feature success stories in local newspapers and community bulletins.
 - Engage with alumni to share success stories and achievements.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Tactics, Continued

Objective 3: Position the District as the Best Place for Employment

- Strategy: Launch an employment brand campaign.
- Tactics:
 - Develop a dedicated careers section on the district website.
 - Create video profiles of staff members highlighting their positive experiences.
 - Develop a clear brand proposition of why it's great to work in the district, what is different about the district, and what it's like to work there.
 - Develop district-branded informational rack cards that highlight different jobs in the district.
 - Implement employee testimonials in recruitment materials, for the district website and to use on the district's LinkedIn and social media pages.
 - Utilize employees as district ambassadors for recruiting new employees and representing the district at employment fairs and community events.
 - Increase posting of jobs and engaging posts on LinkedIn.

Goal: Promote the District's Diversity and Inclusivity

Objective 1: Celebrate and Communicate Diversity

- Strategy: Promote diversity through storytelling, through the "Hearts and Minds" campaign
- Tactics:
 - Develop a series of video stories featuring diverse students, staff, and families sharing their stories of how the schools/district help them feel included and welcomed.
 - Highlight cultural events and celebrations in newsletters and on social media.
 - Host virtual panels or events showcasing the experiences of diverse community members.

Objective 2: Communicate Specific Diversity and Inclusivity Practices

- Strategy: Develop an inclusive practices awareness campaign.
- Tactics:
 - Create visually engaging infographics and posters showcasing inclusive practices.
 - Feature success stories of inclusive initiatives in newsletters and on the website.
 - Consider hosting parent engagement events that celebrate the cultures throughout the district; utilize these events to educate parents about how they can help their children succeed.
 - Encourage student-led projects that promote diversity and inclusivity.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Tactics, Continued

Goal: Enhance and Champion the District as a Unifying Influence in the Community

Objective 1: Establish and promote districtwide shared values

- Strategy: Develop districtwide shared values
- Tactics:
 - Organize a community forum with parents, staff, students and community members to discuss and develop shared district values based on campus/employer culture, PBIS, MTSS, and restorative practices.
 - Incorporate ongoing student input/feedback through the Student Advisory committee
 - Synthesize these values and communicate these districtwide through a yearlong campaign that utilize integrated communication approaches.

Objective 2: Highlight Opportunities for Community Collaboration and Increase Engagement with Community Partners

- Strategy: Establish a community partner engagement plan.
- Tactics:
 - Schedule regular meetings with the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Santa Rosa City Council/City of Santa Rosa city manager's office.
 - Host collaborative events with educational institutions and community organizations.
 - Participate in community forums and roundtable discussions.
 - Implement a stakeholder feedback mechanism through surveys and feedback sessions.
 - Regularly recognize community partners through the district's communication channels and an annual event.
 - Utilize employees as ambassadors with community partners at district and community events.
- Strategy: Foster community engagement events.
- Tactics:
 - Organize and promote regular community forums to discuss and provide input on district initiatives.
 - Partner with local organizations for joint events and projects.
 - Host district-wide volunteer opportunities.
 - Establish a community collaboration task force to identify opportunities to bring the community together in a variety of ways.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Tactics, Continued

Goal: Enhance Participation and Engagement in District and School Meetings

Objective 1: Increase Diverse Representation in Meetings

- Strategy: Implement a community engagement plan for diversifying parent representation in school site committees.
- Tactics:
 - Implement focused outreach to diverse communities by engaging, FEFs, site staff, or parent volunteers who share the same language and cultural background as the target communities that the district aims to connect with.
 - Diversify meeting formats, including virtual, in-person, and themed sessions.
 - Establish a community advisory board to provide input on meeting topics.
 - Offer incentives or recognition for diverse participation.
 - Promote meetings through multiple channels to reach a broader audience.

Objective 2: Encourage Broader Employee Representation on District Committees

- Strategy: Launch an employee involvement initiative.
- Tactics:
 - Promote advisory committee opportunities through internal communication channels.
 - Provide training on the benefits and responsibilities of committee involvement.
 - Establish a rotation system to ensure equitable representation.
 - Recognize and celebrate the contributions of committee members.

The full workplan of these goals, objectives, strategies and tactics includes timelines, resources and evaluation measures associated with each tactic.

CONCLUSION

The Santa Rosa City Schools District values proactive communications, and its stakeholders believe that the district is communicating well. The district has and is utilizing various communications channels. The current platforms being used for district communications can be improved upon and strengthened, and used more consistently to allow the district the opportunity to improve its reputation, tell its story, and deliver excellent customer service to each of its audiences, and strengthen its relationships with its stakeholders. Furthermore, the district has opportunities to build capacity and develop communications systems in order to communicate with its audiences more effectively, consistently and in a more timely manner.

Through focusing on the key goals, the Santa Rosa City School District will position itself as “the district of choice” for quality teaching, learning and student achievement, and establish, execute and support well-planned, organized and centralized communications and public relations for the district and its schools.

APPENDICES

[Communication Survey Response Summaries](#)- Employees, Parents-English Speaking, Parents-Spanish Speaking

[Focus Group Response Summaries](#) (includes Student, Parent, Classified, and Certificated, Administrative focus groups, and Board Interviews)