COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The School Board shall engage in meaningful, two-way communication about the issues impacting the education community through effective internal and external communications with key school board stakeholder groups, i.e., parent, students, partners and employees, etc.

Together, the school district leadership and staff will work with members of the community to anticipate and prioritize issues likely to impact the mission of an organization by building and maintaining a dialogue with others affected by issues important to the organization.

This process will be demonstrated through the ongoing integration of communication efforts among schools and departments, in the development and introduction of new initiatives and programs, and the handling of communication during a crisis.

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Policy Adopted: 8/19/97; 4/26/05; 3/06/07

RULES

1.   **COMMUNICATION & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STANDARDS**

    a.   Effective communication and public engagement within and from the school system requires:

    (1)   An organized, systematic integrated process, which is timely and accurate, for ongoing communicating, delivery of information about new initiatives, and for the handling of crisis information at the school and/or district level, and ongoing programs within each unit of the District. The process shall define the audience, identify methods of dissemination, include a process for feedback, and have a defined follow through procedure,

    (2)   Use of all available communications channels to enhance communication and public engagement,

    (3)   strategies for communicating with special populations; i.e., individuals with in accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, speakers of other languages, etc.;

    (4)   an organized, systematic way for identifying participants in communication and public engagement activities (i.e., focus groups, discussion groups, town meetings, etc.) to ensure a wide and diverse sample of the population;

    (5)   a systematic evaluation method for assessing the impact of specific communication efforts.

2.   **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT LOOP**

The Public Engagement Loop has been designed for use only when a major initiative or new district wide program is under consideration. The Superintendent, on his or her own, or when directed by the Board, shall determine which initiatives or programs are sufficient in scope and impact to require implementation of the Public Engagement Loop. This process shall take approximately 60 days to complete, starting with the District Advisory Council (DAC) meeting where staff begins the looping process.

a. Staff shall:

- email information to School Board Members,
- summarize information to be looped with appropriate back up material, contact information and a specific set of questions for input by customer groups. This will be in a standardized format for all customer groups;
- email materials to principals (include a script as needed) to be placed on the next SAC and SAF agenda and published in school newsletter (if time allows); and place on school website, DAC website, and /or District website, as appropriate; follow up discussions and principal input will occur at the next principals' meeting;
- prepare a BECON video to share key information when appropriate;
- share materials with Sr. Management and School Board at a retreat or workshop, where appropriate, for further action;
- mail information to DAC Chair and Secretary, PTA/PTO Chair and Secretary, and ESE/ESOL and Gifted Chairs and Secretaries;
- attend DAC meeting to share information and answer questions;
- post key information and input survey (with translations) on the District website;
- attend Area Advisory Meetings, as requested;
- attend DAC Meeting to receive feedback, answer questions or provide further clarification as needed;
- include feedback gathered through looping in the decision-making process as issues are brought forward; and include all feedback collected in materials provided the School Board.

b. DAC will:

- sequence DAC, Area and school site meetings to allow for appropriate looping;
- forward information to each Area Chair;
- Area Chairs will forward to School Advisory Chairs and Principals.
- Each School Advisory Chair will have access to a computer and a mailbox at the school to retrieve information.
- School Advisory Chair collaborates with principal to put item on the next agenda.
- post notice on DAC website with link to SBBC website;
- collect feedback from SAC and SAF meetings via the Area Advisory Chairs;
- synthesize and prepare feedback for final discussion at the next scheduled DAC Meeting; and
- share feedback and/or position with the Board through Board Reports process.

3.   **COMMUNICATION PROCESS** (excluding Crisis Communication)

(1) When the School Board/Superintendent determine there is a major initiative or new district wide program or emerging issue that requires communication with various communities, the issue will be referred to the Communications Committee to determine:
- What should be communicated (message),
- To whom (audience), and
- What communication vehicles should be used (strategies and tactics).

(2) After a specific course of action is recommended, school board members will be apprised. Key stakeholder group(s) affected/impacted by the issue will be included in outreach efforts. At the conclusion of the process, the effectiveness of the outreach/communication will be measured based on the achievement of program objectives.

(3) The Communications Committee will include representation from departments with ongoing communication responsibilities (BECON, Communications and Media Relations, and Community Involvement: Parents, Partners, Volunteers and Mentors), as well as school based representation. District staff with the identified (emerging) issue shall also be part of the committee when its strategic issue is addressed. Responsibility for following through on the committee's recommendations will remain with key department/staff tasked with addressing the issue.

(4) Should the committee recommend that additional communication steps are needed, staff will summarize information with appropriate back up material, rationale, contact information and a specific set of questions for input by customer groups. This will be in a standardized format for all groups. Information and community feedback will be collected using a variety of methods, including scientifically valid surveys, representative of the community as a whole.

(5) During times of crisis, the superintendent will follow procedures established by the Safety Department, in consultation with the School Board Chair.