



# Communications Update June 2009

## FINAL REPORT

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### Review of 2005-2009 Communications Program

#### Communications Efforts Driven by the Following Beliefs:

- (1) We have the responsibility to communicate effectively with our constituents;
- (2) Meaningful public engagement supports the district's goals, and
- (3) Effective communication:
  - Is a two-way process involving both internal/external audiences
  - Is the responsibility of every employee in this district
  - Encourages support for our students that helps increase student achievement

The Midview Communications Program has focused its resources (\$3,000 a year) on interpersonal communications that are supported by an issues-focused communication plan. The goals and highlights for this program were:

- Goal #1:** Community relations results in increased public support and understanding of the Midview School District.
- **Increased levy support by 11 points**
  - **Raised nearly \$200,000 in grant funding for technology and programming**
- Goal #2:** Media relations increases the number of positive stories in the media, showcases student achievement, and helps the district communicate with target audiences about increasing student learning, providing educational choice and managing finances in a responsible manner.
- **Made great strides in building local media support local papers, radio and television stations.**
  - **Strong media relationships have been invaluable to help provide information and mitigate rumors during levy time, new construction, budget cuts, times of crisis, and times of celebration.**
- Goal #4:** Marketing creates pride in the school district and builds an understanding that public education is a benefit to the community.
- **Created district brochure and State of the Schools pamphlets to share with community and distributed at local hubs.**
  - **Expanded reach of Midview Messenger to reach every member of the district.**
  - **Significantly reduced cost of annual print calendar through advertising sponsorships.**
  - **Grew traffic to the website by 75%...now average 39.5k individual sessions per month...average of 1,170,652 hits per month.**
  - **Created E-Newsletter, reaching more than 5,000 parents, staff, alumni, and community members.**
  - **Created social media presence on Facebook and Twitter, providing important opportunities for 2-way communication.**

- Goal #5:** Public and employee engagement empowers employees and citizens to take ownership in their schools and the district, and fosters collaborative relationships.
- **Conducted community forums (State of the Schools), coffee dialogue sessions, and a speaker's bureau**
  - **Creation of Make a Difference recognition program honors alumni, staff and volunteer for their contributions**
- Goal #6:** Crisis communications mitigates negative impacts in the community and encourages, fair, objective media coverage
- **Weathered the storms of crises with our students, buildings, friends, and impact of budget cuts.**
- Goal #7:** Student/staff relations increases ownership in the district, builds trust, creates goodwill ambassadors, and fosters a positive environment for teaching and learning.
- **Conducted information forms and dialogue sessions with staff**
  - **Created recognition programs to feature their accomplishments**
  - **Increased levy volunteer base to 367 participants—essential for the success of phone bank, literature drops, Mine + 9, endorsements, letters to the editor**
- Goal 8:** Video production/cable TV provides an unfiltered medium to increase public access and trust by focusing on positive events and programs.
- **Strengthened partnership with GLWB**
  - **Cable casting of School Board Meetings**
  - **Airing of "School Talk" segments**

Thank you for the opportunity to serve this fine district and community. We really have a wonderful thing going here in Midview, and my only regret is that I am leaving this position before I feel my work is done. If I can ever assist you in the future, please do not hesitate to ask.

# Community Relations

**Goal #1:** *Community relations results in increased public support and understanding of the Midview Local School District.*

**Objective 1.1: Increase opportunities for two-way communication**

**Actions:** Coffees, Community Forums, Open Board Meetings, Community Involvement in Strategic Planning, Myth Busters, FaceBook and Twitter, Speaker's Bureau

**Objective 1.2: Increase opportunities for community members to interact with the School Board**

**Actions:** Regularly Scheduled Open Board Meetings, Community Forums, Strategic Planning Initiative, Event Participation, Civic/service organization memberships and attendance

**Objective 1.3: Expand use of technology and other forms of media**

**Actions:** Set up electronic discussion groups, broadcast e-newsletter, web site, social media sites, and cable broadcasts.

**Objective 1.4: Increase audience exposure to district information**

**Actions:** Disseminate information through print and electronic publications, weekly news release campaign

# Media Relations

**Goal #2:** *Media relations increases the number of positive stories in the media, showcases student achievement, and helps the district communicate with target audiences about increasing student learning, providing educational choice and managing finances in a responsible manner.*

**Objective 2.1: Increase the number of positive stories provided to media.**

**Actions:** Distribute weekly news releases, including briefings, photo-ops, and conferences as needed. Created e-network for gathering information from schools, and monthly update meetings with Administration. Creation of fact sheets and brochure about district, schools, and student achievement for easy dissemination upon media request. Wrote and distributed media relations tips for Cabinet, School Board and schools.

**Objective 2.2: Expand professional relationships with members of the media.**

**Actions:** Built relationships with reporters and participate in one-on-one story development. Coordinate and participate in editorial board visits. Coordinate media summits with all local media when news permits.

## Counseling/Consulting

**Goal #3:** *Counseling/consulting supports our schools and departments in developing and maintaining strong relationships with students, staff, parents and the community. Providing strategic messages and counsel to the School Board, Superintendent and Cabinet will improve personal performance in the areas of communication and public relations.*

**Objective 3.3: Improve organization performance in communication and public relations.**

**Actions:** Provide key messages and scripts to Board and Cabinet (principals as needed) as the need dictates. Promote key messages to staff via e-newsletter

## Marketing

**Goal #4:** *Marketing creates pride in the school district and builds an understanding that public education is a benefit to the community.*

**Objective 4.1: Increase the distribution of positive information about the school district.**

**Actions:** Created and distributed district materials for medical offices, hairdressers, realtors, Welcome Wagon greeters. Participation in special events that involve the community. Displays/exhibits at community events (i.e. Harvest Fest). Share good news via Cable TV/Video

**Objective 4.2: Expand relationships with members of the business community.**

**Actions:** Dissemination of information through publications, website, calendar, weekly news release campaign. Invited Key Communicators to public forms. Participation in special events that involve the business community

## Public and Employee Engagement

**Goal #5:** *Public and employee engagement empowers employees and citizens to take ownership in their schools and the district, and fosters collaborative relationships.*

**Objective 5.1: Increase the opportunities for staff and community members to become involved in meaningful public engagement.**

**Actions:** Conducted community forums and dialogue sessions. Assigned monthly presentation/speaker's bureau appointments throughout the district. Created recognition programs at School Board meetings to thank staff members and students for their contributions. Conducted environmental scanning (public perception) by survey. Cable casting and taping of School Board meetings

## Crisis Communications

**Goal #6:** *Crisis communications mitigates negative impacts in the community and encourages, fair, objective media coverage*

**Objective 6.1: Work closely with the media to provide accurate, timely information.**

**Actions:** Appoint or act as district spokespersons with the news media

## Student/Staff Relations

**Goal #7:** *Student/staff relations increases ownership in the district, builds trust, creates goodwill ambassadors, and fosters a positive environment for teaching and learning.*

**Objective 7.1: Expand distribution of information to students and employees**

**Actions:** Conducted information forums and dialogue sessions. Assigned speaker's bureau appointments throughout the district. Provided information through student morning news broadcast.

**Objective 7.2: Expand opportunities for students and staff to have input in decision that affect them.**

**Actions:** Conducted focus groups with the intent to gather student and staff feedback on programs/decisions that affect them. Conducted environmental scanning (public perception) by survey. Set up electronic discussion groups, list serves, broadcast e-mail, and web site (school and district level).

**Objective 7.3: Increase recognition of students/employees internally and externally for their accomplishments**

**Actions:** Featured accomplishments in all district publications, the web site, social media, and news release campaign.

**Objective 7.4: Improve employee morale and trust in the district.**

**Actions:** Featured accomplishments in all district publications, the web site, cable television programs, at School Board meetings and news release campaign. Provided information and accolade through e-mail campaign to staff.

## Video Production/Cable TV

**Goal 8:** *Video production/cable TV provides an unfiltered medium to increase public access and trust by focusing on positive events and programs.*

**Objective 8.1: Expand communication to community members who do not have children enrolled in school.**

**Actions:** Created "School Talk" segments about programs/special events. Cable television and cable casting of School Board meetings.