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DISTRICT 25's COMMUNICATION GUIDE

JULY 2016

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

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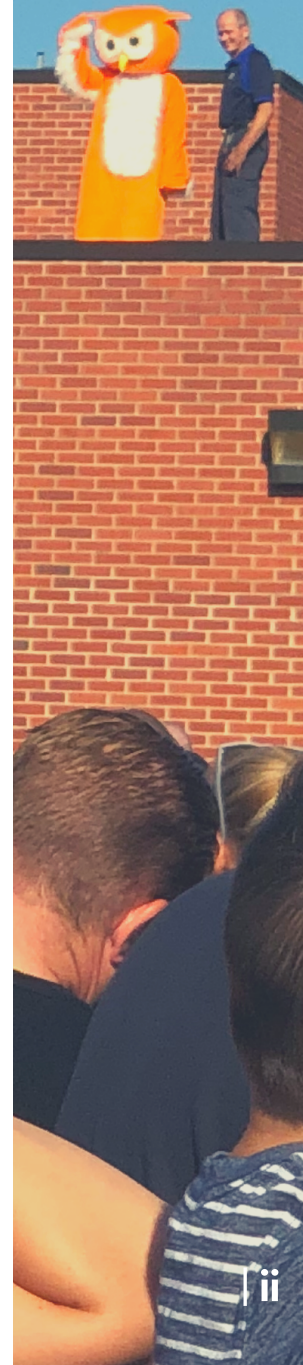
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THE BIG IDEA

Communication is PERSONAL



PURPOSE

This guide provides District 25's Head of Communications and Storytelling, District 25 staff (teachers, administrators, assistants) and the Arlington Heights School District 25 Board of Education a detailed description and feel for how District 25 communicates with the Arlington Heights community.

District 25's message is strong and must be communicated in a strategic and mindful way to best showcase the positive influence this district has on the students and families of Arlington Heights, as well as the Arlington Heights community.

All communication from the District office (no matter the department) must go through the Communications Department, first.

OUR AUDIENCE

Arlington Heights School District 25 serves a proud and dedicated community of 76,000 residents. Arlington Heights is made up of students, parents, families, veterans, volunteers, workers, singles, couples, seniors, and a diverse collection of people of all races and ages. District 25 must reach this wide-range audience in a personal way using the many tools and following the steps/guidelines detailed in this plan.

The Head of Communications and Storytelling must work with the School Board, Administration, teachers and staff to generate a message that coincides with the vision and image found in their Strategic Vision 2020 (www.sd25.org/StrategicVision).

DEPARTMENT'S MISSION

We tell the everyday story of our District by opening the window to the classroom from a place of vulnerable presence and personal connection in order to best engage our community, and create community using all viable communication tools, tactics and strategies.

We also create the space needed for our staff and teachers to fearlessly communicate, by promoting vulnerability and authenticity as the key to communication, which leads to connection.

DISTRICT 25'S MESSAGE: THIS IS PERSONAL.

Everything done here in District 25 is done from a personal place. It is from this personal place that our staff enters our buildings, and our students come to learn. The personal relationships our students have with their learning, and our staff has with our students and the community, is what makes District 25 a desirable place to be.

The District's adaptive, flexible, and passionate learning environment, houses adaptive, flexible and passionate teachers and students. This message of personal connection our students and staff have to their roles is something the Department of Communication is proud to champion using our many tools of communication.

Any written article, written communication, video or message that District 25 puts out to the public should speak to the message above. Any communication that comes from the District office must answer this question in the affirmative: "Does this show how personally meaningful education and growth is to us all here in District 25?"



storytelling

FINDING STORIES

The Head of Communications and Storytelling is often notified by principals or teachers of happenings or special events going on in their buildings, or unique students that would make for a good story. These deserve to be covered and told to our community.

It is also this Department's belief that there is a story in every minute of every classroom, and in order to find those stories, the Head of Communications and Storytelling must be extremely mobile. Working from buildings, being seen, and connecting with the staff at the buildings are all ways to find the everyday stories that make District 25 unique, special and personal. Popping into classrooms must be common practice, and in order to do that, the Head of Communications and Storytelling must be trusted by teachers, principals and staff members to always have their best interest in mind when covering a story.

Having a "Yes, and" mentality when asked to help promote, cover, or help out on a project with teachers and staff is essential to the Head of Communication's job. "Yes! I can help, and here's how I am available." Teachers and staff members feel passionately about their projects and classroom and they deserve to feel that same passion from this department. This will go a long way in establishing trust.

TELLING A STORY

Different stories lend themselves to different coverage, but the main focus should be the students, teachers or community. The story needs to be told in a way that aligns with the department's and the District's values, beliefs and brand.

This is Community. This is Personal. – Brand/Value/Belief as of 2019-2020

Storytelling at its core must be genuine and authentic. It is an incredible tool that creates perspective and creates a base for people's opinions about an organization. Giving people the space, both physically and energetically, to tell their story is the best way to generate this type of authenticity.

Storytelling is a powerful tool that stems from curiosity in everything. Asking, "How is that interesting?" when approached with a story idea is essential to finding and covering content. The Head of Communications & Storytelling must use this powerful tool to write their District's own narrative and take control of the way the District is seen/experienced.



WHAT IS A BRAND?

By definition, a brand is the promotion of a particular product or company by means of advertising and distinctive design.

Here in District 25, we choose to look at a brand as how we want people to **FEEL, THINK and ACT** when they **HEAR, SEE or EXPERIENCE** Arlington Heights School District 25.

BRANDING AS AN IDENTITY

District 25's staff and community identifies with its brand. People judge and establish their long-term opinion based on how a logo, color, or image makes them feel or think. The goal for this department is to show our community and any potential resident of Arlington Heights that we are connected, one, streamlined and warm. That goal was carried out with our branding alignment project that began in 2015.

BRANDING PROJECT

During the 2015-2016 school year, the Communication Department began a process to align the schools' logos and give official colors to the schools. This process was done in collaboration with graphic artist and D25 parent, Tom Riesing, alongside each school's administration, facilitated by the Head of Communications & Storytelling.

Mr. Riesing had previously designed the logos and assigned the colors for Dryden and Windsor Elementary Schools, and South and Thomas Middle Schools. The remaining schools, Westgate, Ivy Hill, Greenbrier, Olive-Mary Stitt, and Patton Elementary Schools were in need of a streamlined and set logo and colors, and District 25 proposed that project to Mr. Riesing. Mr. Riesing accepted and over the course of three years, and in collaboration with the principals and the community, created logos for each of those schools.

The students were able to vote to choose one of two logo options presented, giving them ownership in their new logo. As of the Spring of 2017, the logos were all completed and the schools began using them throughout their schools and in spirit wear to create pride, presence and enhance their messages.



branding

APPLYING A BRAND

A brand is more than logos and colors. It is an identity and it is how people FEEL, THINK, and ACT when experiencing District 25. Once the logo project was complete, the principals, in collaboration with the Department of Communications, wanted to find ways to better establish their schools' identities.

The logos and colors were a great place to start, as principals began to find ways to put them throughout the school, creating excitement, warmth and pride. Each principal used these logos and colors in different and creative ways.

The District promoted the overall brand by combining the new school logos and colors with the message of: "This Is Personal." Signage, and pictures and banners went up around the District office, bringing the presence and feel of the schools into the District office, connecting the two.

"I feel more connected to the schools and connected to why I am here doing my job everyday."

- Beth Satera, Department of Business

"It's a great reminder for me here as to the impact I am having on a daily basis."

- Lana O'Brien, Department of the Superintendent

It is the job of the Head of Communications & Storytelling to continue to find ways to create connection through branding. Working with the schools on connecting their personal message to their brands, while finding ways to put that on display, is a major task of the Head of Communications & Storytelling. Also, the HoC&S must work with the community, parents or organizations as they may want to use the District or a school's branding materials and messages. Spirit wear, signage, events and promotions are examples of situations where District 25's Communications Department can lend permission, support and guidance around the use of its brand by the community.

**For more on branding, visit
www.sd25.org/branding.**



The District utilizes several communication tools and techniques in order to distribute our messages and content. In order to use these to their fullest ability, the Department of Communications must have a purpose and desired audience for each one.

YES, AND...

The "yes, and..." mentality is vital to the success of this department. Teachers, students, staff, principals, cabinet members, administration, media, parents, organizations, colleagues, community partners, etc., will all have ideas and proposals that will be brought to the Head of Communications & Storytelling's awareness. Going into all of these ideas with a "Yes, I can help, and here's how I am willing to help..." is vital. These ideas/proposals/stories come from a personal place and they deserve to be validated and covered with curiosity. Also, you never know what will come from saying "Yes."

PICK UP THE PHONE

This is a simple, yet, effective technique. Usually, when the phone rings in the Communications Department, it is a question that is urgent to the caller and easily answered by the Head of Communications & Storytelling. Whether it be a staff member with a question about how to update something on the website, or a media member with a question about a story they are covering, picking up the phone ensures that the request will be given the proper attention, in the moment, and the caller will not need to find an answer on his/her own, often leading to more work for the HoC&S in the long run. Pick. Up. The. Phone.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The District's social media accounts are used to, not only push out our message and stories, but to open the door for interaction, and to create an online community with all of Arlington Heights. The District utilizes the social media accounts listed below. For more on social media, turn to page 9 of this plan.

[Facebook](https://www.Facebook.com/ahsd25) (www.Facebook.com/ahsd25) | [Twitter](https://www.twitter.com/ahsd25) (www.twitter.com/ahsd25)
[Soundcloud](https://www.soundcloud.com/ahsd25) (www.soundcloud.com/ahsd25) | [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/ahsd25OnDemand) (www.youtube.com/ahsd25OnDemand)



tools & techniques

SCHOOL MESSENGER

This is a communication company that specializes in school communications. The District pays for School Messenger, annually. This tool allows the District and Administration to email, text, or send an automated phone call message to the District's parents/guardians. School Messenger collaborates with PowerSchool (the District's online student management tool) to seamlessly pull email lists so specific groups of parents/guardians can be targeted with a message.

WEBSITE - SD25.ORG

This serves as a "billboard" to the greater community and potential incoming families. Our website is also a quick resource for parents looking for a variety of information.

It is the job of the Head of Communications & Storytelling to keep the District website and all of the individual school websites up to date, presentable, and functional. For more on the website, turn to page 17.

SELFIE-VIDEOS

The Head of Communications & Storytelling has developed an easy, fun and effective way to not only tell a story but bring the students and teachers to the forefront of the story. With the selfie-video tactic, the HoC&S covers a story by interviewing the subject (student, teacher, or staff member) with a phone as if they are taking a selfie photo. This gives the students/teachers a casual and comfortable platform to tell the story in their own words. The HoC&S must make sure to do a few things to ensure to get the most out of this video:

- Bring the subject to a well lit area away from the classroom (the hallway or the LMC).
- The HoC&S must be in the video as well.
- Have the subject voice their nerves.
- Casually practice the interview by asking them about their project or subject/topic.

The selfie-video tactic honors the phrase "there's a story in every classroom". This is something that can be utilized without an appointment, or a teacher reaching out to you. These videos are then posted on FB, Twitter, sd25.org, etc.



tools & techniques

CANVA.COM

Canva is an online, graphic-design tool that is easy to use and keeps District 25 on brand. It is used to create social media graphics for posts, flyers, designs for our website, handbooks (like this one) and much more. District 25 pays for an annual subscription to use Canva at a professional level.

DRIFT

This is the live-chat feature used by the District on the website to be available to community members, potential community members, teachers, staff, etc, who need a quick answer to a question while on our website. There is an app that the backend user can download to make sure not to miss any chats/inquiries by a site visitor. This is a free feature.

WALLRUS

Wallrus is a program that displays content from Twitter on a TV, projector, computer, etc. This may be used in the front office or entryway of schools and our District office as a greeting to show visitors fun happenings around the District via Twitter. The Tweets can be filtered, and it is a free program.

SMORE

Smore is an online program that allows for easy design and distribution of newsletter emails. The District 25 Dish is put together on Smore and sent via School Messenger using the embedding feature. Smore requires an annual subscription that the District and other departments pay for. Teachers and principals in the District may use it as well for their weekly or bi-weekly communications to parents.



social media

District 25 owns Twitter, Facebook, and Soundcloud accounts, all of which are managed by the Communications Department. The District's social media pages have blossomed since the establishment of the Communications Department in 2015. A consistent and visible presence, combined with timely and engaging content has opened a window to the everyday life in the classrooms that cannot be shut.

Teachers and staff are more confident to share news from within their classrooms via Twitter using our hashtag #d25ItsPersonal. Twitter and Facebook have not only created an online community for our parents/community to connect with our teachers/staff, but they have created a space for our teachers/staff to connect and grow with one another.

It is important to keep demonstrating, from a District level, vulnerability on these platforms so that our community and teachers/staff continue to feel what it's like to live, work, learn and be in District 25.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

In May of 2016, District 25's Communications Coordinator worked with the District's Cabinet and the District's lawyer to develop the following social media guidelines. These are meant to serve as general rules for the public to follow when accessing, interacting or posting to District 25's various social media sites. District 25 may choose to take action (block/report) on anyone who doesn't follow these guidelines:

Arlington Heights School District 25's social media pages, including Facebook and Twitter, highlight District and school achievements, events, and activities, and other information. They are intended to provide information to build positive relationships with District 25 families and the Arlington Heights Community, but they are not intended as public forums.

Therefore, District 25 expects comments posted on the District's social media pages to be relevant, respectful, factual, and constructive.

Any personal attacks or insults that name or allude to a specific person or a specific group of people will be deleted, as will posts that violate the privacy of others or Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities.

Examples include, but are not limited to, posts or comments that bully, intimidate or harass; content that is hateful, threatening, pornographic, or contains violence or depictions of drugs; comments or posts that single out or point to a particular group of people or any post that is unlawful, misleading, malicious, or discriminatory. Business and political advertisements will be taken down as well.

Individuals who do not follow these guidelines will have their posts removed and could be blocked. If you have concerns or questions about a specific situation, we ask that you please call your school and voice your opinion. If you have any further questions about the social media experience, please email the District's Head of Communications & Storytelling.

These are posted on our website at www.sd25.org/SocialMediaGuidelines.



social media

#d25ItsPersonal

This hashtag has become integral to the District's message and how it's embraced. It serves as a reminder to all who visit our social media pages that we create, learn, grow, educate, and exist in our schools from a personal place. No story told, picture taken, or lesson taught is more important, vital and impactful than the next. Each holds weight as each comes from a personal place from within, and is filtered using the hashtag #d25ItsPersonal.

TWITTER - @ahsd25

The purpose of the District's Twitter account is to create connection throughout and between our schools, teachers, staff members and Administration. This online community generates ideas, support and celebration among colleagues in District 25. Our parents can also easily follow along on classroom and school-wide happenings.

Parents may choose to follow individual teachers and schools to stay up to date on happenings, to change the conversation for a parent/family member with their child from "what did you learn at school today?" to "I saw your class worked on (blank) today! Tell me about it!"

FACEBOOK **facebook.com/ahsd25**

The District's Facebook page has grown exponentially and is the main place in which our parents and community gather, forming an online community. Videos (such as selfie-videos - mentioned above) are to be posted to our FB page as well as alerts from School Board meetings, the Board Buzz, the District Dish, or any other alert that the community would benefit from knowing. The caption tool on FB must be used when posting a video. Also, comments and messages from the public must be monitored, daily. Alerts for Facebook must be set up on the HoC&S's cell-phone and any feedback or negative comment must be dealt with directly.



social media

SOUNDCLOUD

Soundcloud is a social media site that houses and hosts audio files to be shared with the public. Soundcloud members can follow and interact with District 25 through their Soundcloud account, however, this account is mainly utilized as a way to generate an easily accessible link to the District's "Get to Know Ya," podcast. The links to the podcasts should be distributed via the District's Facebook and Twitter accounts, as well as the District 25 Dish.

PARENT/COMMUNITY INTERACTION

Parents will hopefully take advantage of District 25's presence on social media through direct interaction. The parents, community members and organizations that follow D25's social media accounts are encouraged to submit questions, comments, feedback and thoughts. It is the job of the Head of Communications & Storytelling to engage those interactions and message, comment, or tweet a response as soon as one is available. This is important as it establishes a connection with the community, humanizing the "District" and by publicly getting ahead of any potential complaint or issue.

This also helps to create the online community that is vital in today's world.



Many parents and families enjoy the direct benefits of District 25 by sending their children to one of seven elementary schools or two middle schools within district boundaries. However, the majority of Arlington Heights residents do not send children to District 25 schools for a variety of reasons. It is the goal of AHSD 25 to reach those residents with the same type of transparency and information that is readily and easily available for the parents and students of our District. District 25 utilizes the following options to directly communicate with the greater Arlington Heights community, its constituents and parents/families of District 25.

DIRECT TO PARENT COMMUNICATIONS

This Department's goal is to make sure parents feel informed, connected, and have a voice in District 25 and their schools. In order to accomplish that, the District and the schools communicate with parents a variety of ways.

The District 25 Dish

The Dish is created with the online program that the District subscribes to, S'more. It is then exported and sent out via School Messenger. The purpose of the Dish is to keep parents and families informed of the news from the District and as a tool to tell our story. Along with District and department news, the Dish contains stories from the classroom. It is important to attempt to represent every school in each edition of the Dish in some form. The Dish is sent out every few months, or as news comes up. The news is accumulated for the Dish by the Head of Communications & Storytelling. News is submitted to the HoC&S by the District level department heads or coordinators.

Principal Communications

Each principal sends out a communication to their community either weekly, or twice monthly. Some principals have their own blog, some type out a basic email with all the updates, some put together a video recapping the week, some put together a newsletter, etc.

No matter which method the principals use, it is the job of the Head of Communications & Storytelling to support each one as an individual in their parent/community communication. Offering consultation, suggestions, help and personal guidance with different tools available for communication, is the process that is taken.

As of January 2020:

Dryden: Newsletter (weekly) | **Greenbrier:** Blog, sd25.org (weekly) | **Ivy Hill:** Blog, Weebly (weekly)
Olive: Newsletter (weekly) | **Patton:** Blog, Weebly (weekly) | **South:** Newsletter (15th & 30th)
Thomas: Newsletter (biweekly) | **Westgate:** Blog, Emailed (weekly) | **Windsor:** Newsletter (weekly)



The Board Buzz

After each Board Meeting, the Head of Communications & Storytelling puts together a one page summary of the meeting and emails it to all parents. Examples of past Buzz's can be seen by visiting www.sd25.org/BoardBuzz.

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

INSIGHT Magazine

The District mails out an annual magazine (INSIGHT) to every resident in the District 25 boundaries. The purpose of this is to connect with the residents who do not send children to our schools. The goal is to give an annual update as to what it looks like to attend a District 25 school.

Representation of all major departments (Business & Finance, Student Services, Technology, Personnel, Food Services, Facilities, Student Learning & Superintendent) is typically in this communication, but doesn't have to be. The goal of this mailed magazine is to inform the Arlington Heights taxpayers of where and how their investment is being utilized.

This magazine is designed in collaboration with Mr. Tom Riesing. Mr. Riesing is a professional graphic designer and a District 25 parent. He has worked with the District on other projects like the Branding Project detailed on page 4.

Chamber of Commerce

Every year the Arlington Heights Chamber of Commerce prints and distributes a "guide" named "Community Connections", and each Spring a representative from the Chamber of Commerce reaches out to the Head of Communications & Storytelling asking for an article submission. This is a wonderful opportunity to reach a different audience within the greater Arlington Heights community. This article typically focuses on the feel or theme of the school year while also reconnecting our community with the vision and mission of District 25.

Daily Herald

A great way to cover a story is to write and submit an article and/or picture to the Daily Herald's Neighbor section. That can be done online or, more directly, by emailing Norrine Twohey of the Daily Herald at ntwohey@dailyherald.com. Norrine manages the Neighbor section and accepts submitted articles and photos.

The Daily Herald also will ask District 25 to submit an article for their annual "Resident's Guide". Similar to the submission for the Chamber of Commerce's "Community Connections", the opportunity to submit an article for the Herald's "Resident's Guide" is used to reach a different audience within the greater Arlington Heights community.



emergency communications

There is often very little ability to prevent some emergencies from happening, but it is a goal of District 25's Communications Department to be trained and aware of the established process for communicating during an emergency, unexpected situations, and/or a school closing. District 25 aims to be in control of what they can during an emergency, and that certainly includes communication. The Head of Communications & Storytelling's job is to stay calm, often stay away from the incident, and to manage the media. If there is time, it is important to utilize neighboring districts or communications colleagues for advice, or as sounding boards when communicating in emergency situations.

UNEXPECTED SITUATIONS

Unexpected situations that require communication to the parents/guardians of District 25 or of a school community come up frequently. The Head of Communications & Storytelling established a Google Folder titled "District 25 'Crisis' Communication" where templates for many unexpected situations and emergencies, live. Often, the principal of a building will reach out to the HoC&S for feedback, guidance and perspective on how to communicate to their community about a certain happening. The HoC&S must be a support to the principal or administrator in any way.

MEDIA

It should be assumed that any communication sent out to the public will be received by the media, so it is important to either write the communication so that it is appropriate for the media to see, or be prepared for media requests. It is important to honor media requests in a timely manner regarding any communication related to an unexpected situation. The media will show up to a school unexpectedly, will call the school, will interview people leaving the school, etc. The media will do what they can to gather information. By giving them what they need and feeding their questions with answers, they will be more likely to adhere to the District's boundaries.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Weather and other circumstances can cause a school closing. When this happens, it is the job of the Communications Department to inform parents, families, students and staff of the closing and, if relative, the reason for the closing, no matter the time of day/night. A school messenger phone call, email and SMS text message must be sent out at the earliest reasonable hour. An automatic alert must be set up on the district and the impacted school's website(s). Social media (Facebook & Twitter) should be utilized as well to inform the public and families of the school closing(s). Using light gifs and 'matter of fact' verbiage is encouraged when creating this type of communication.



public relations

When the media calls, people generally and instinctively react from fear. It is the job and duty of the Department of Communications to connect District 25 and the media under comfortable and beneficial circumstances, while also managing challenging media calls with transparency and vulnerability. This can be done by objectively easing any fears and establishing trust with both the media and any District 25 employee. The job is not to deny the media access, but to act as a filter to fulfill media requests while also putting our staff's best interest first.

A MEDIA PARTNERSHIP

The media is an asset and should be treated as such. Developing colleague-type and trusting relationships with the individual reporters who are assigned to cover Arlington Heights School District 25 is a great way to ensure fair and non-dramatic coverage. Consistent communication, while also being realistic and transparent about how and when the reporter will get an answer to a question, or access to an interview, is a great way to establish a trusting relationship.

MEDIA PROTOCOL

In order for the media and various reporters to gather the most productive information for their story, and in order for District 25 to respect the privacy and importance of teachers, staff and students during a school day, the media must follow guidelines when covering a story or reporting on a topic:

- A reporter must always contact District 25's HoC&S when searching for information or an interview regarding a story. The HoC&S's goal and purpose is to facilitate and deliver information and assistance immediately, or as soon as possible.
- The reporter is not allowed to show up to a school during school hours without an invitation or without permission from a District 25 administrator or the HoC&S.
- It is acceptable for a reporter to take pictures WITH the permission of an administrator or the HoC&S AND the reporter must never identify the student(s) full name in coordination with a particular picture taken and published.
- A reporter must be courteous of a teacher, staff member and student's learning environment when invited to cover a story.
 - Please allow the space and environment for a teaching lesson to continue naturally.
 - Please do not push a particular teacher, administrator, staff member or student to answer a question he/she is not comfortable answering.
 - Lean on the HoC&S for information and answers.



public relations

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

It is to be expected that media will attend every school board meeting, thus the Head of Communications & Storytelling must be there as a guide and informant to assist the media. In cases, however, that the media is not able to attend a school board meeting, it is the HoC&S's responsibility to act as a liaison for them. A school board meeting summary should be put together by the HoC&S and sent to the media, keeping them informed of important discussion or action items that took place. This currently is the Board Buzz (mentioned on page 8).

It is the job of the HoC&S to address any requests for interviews or information that the media asks for after the meeting has adjourned.



website management

MacBook Air

The District's website serves as a one-stop shop for all information, coverage, happenings and things District 25 has to offer its community. This site and all of the school sites serve as a "billboard" to the greater community and potential incoming families. We want potential families and potential employees to visit our sites and think "I want to go to there." We want our community and potential community members to know what it feels like to send their students to a District 25 school. Our website is also a quick resource for parents looking for a variety of information. Any content posted on District 25's website is official and public information.

WEBSITE PRACTICES

This site is to be monitored daily by District 25's Communications Department. It is the responsibility of the Communications Coordinator to know the website intimately and keep it on brand. The content does not need to be "up to date" if it tells an impactful and great story that embodies the District or the schools.

LENDING SUPPORT

Staff members will often call with questions or requests regarding the website. As stated in the tools & techniques section, picking up the phone can often solve an issue, or answer a question about the website in a moment. The Head of Communications & Storytelling knows the website inside and out and can lend guiding support to the staff members with very little effort or time. Patience and genuine support for anyone who needs it will go a long way with the website.

CALENDAR

The calendar is the lifeblood of the District, and even more so, the schools. There are different ways the schools display their calendars on their websites. They are as follows:

- Direct, two-way sync from their school's google calendar.
- Individual entry to their website calendar.
- PTA inputs events for a master calendar for each school to review and approve, to be displayed on the website calendar.



The Head of Communications & Storytelling must attend every board meeting unless indicated by the Superintendent that attendance is not necessary. The HoC&S has many things to do prior to each meeting, during each meeting and after each meeting.

PRIOR TO THE MEETING

As the meeting approaches, there are a few tasks that the HoC&S must complete to be properly prepared for the meeting.

- Thoroughly review the agenda prior to the meeting in order to see if there are any topics of potential interest that the media or the public might jump on. If there are, bring them up to the department head the topic is listed under and review possible PR strategies.
- Wait until the media is emailed the agenda (usually the Tuesday before the meeting) and reach out to the media in order to see if/how many will attend.
- Begin mental preparation on the Board Buzz. Which topics are definitely going to be included?
- Post the agenda and the time and location of the meeting on Facebook and Twitter.

DURING THE MEETING

During the meeting, the HoC&S is responsible for coverage in many ways.

- Arrive prior to the beginning of the meeting in order to be a resource for media to contact with any questions.
- Live tweet the meeting happenings and occurrences and tag each tweet with #d25BOE.
- Take pictures of any recognitions or students/staff members that are honored by the Board of Education.
- Take thorough notes to be used in the Board Buzz.
- Follow up with the media and take notes on any requests or questions they have.
- Coordinate any interviews needed by the media after the meeting adjourns.

AFTER THE MEETING

After the meeting, the HoC&S is responsible for a couple of follow up tasks:

- Create the District 25 Board Buzz and email it to all D25 parents and the media (whether they were at the meeting or not).
- Follow up with any media requests or questions.
- Post the Buzz on social media. Post the Buzz and the board meeting presentations on the website.



The community partnerships District 25 has with the Village, the Library, the Park District, the Fire and Police Departments, the Chamber of Commerce, District 214, District 59, the Arlington Heights Council of PTAs, ABC/25 Foundation, and all local organizations, are vital to the success of our school district. Our role in these partnerships are listed below.

YES, AND...

It is this department's belief that our community partnerships need to be embraced, celebrated and cultivated even further. It is this department's belief that our community partnerships make our Village and School District a place that people want to be raised in and raise their own family in.

In order to enhance these partnerships, the Head of Communications & Storytelling must enter any request from a community partner and/or coverage of a potential story involving a community partner with a "yes, and" mentality. More on the "yes, and" mentality can be found on page 3 of this plan under the "Finding Stories" sub-header.

"Yes, we can help with that, and here's how we can help." - This is a great way to ensure your community partnerships not only remain strong but also grow and find new depths. New projects, new stories, and new levels of partnership can only benefit the District and the community.

VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS

Twitter: @ArlingtonHtsGov | Facebook - @ArlingtonHtsGov

Community Relations Coordinator - Nancy Kluz | nkluz@vah.com | 847.368.5104

The Village will occasionally reach out asking to collaborate on a project (like the Walk Arlington Heights project) for help with development or promotion. The mayor may visit a school or the Village may host students at Village Hall for an educational field trip. These are all worthy of our department's time and resources.

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS PARK DISTRICT

Twitter: @AHParkDistrict | Facebook - @ahparkdistrict

Supt. of Marketing & Communications - Anita Pacheco | apacheco@ahpd.org | 847.506.7141

The CAP program, offered to District 25 students for before and after school guidance and care is of great benefit to our families. Coordination with communicating about that program and any other partnerships should be done with Anita Pacheco.



community partnerships

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Twitter: @ahml | Facebook – @arlingtonheightslibrary

Director of Communications & Marketing - Mary Hastings | mhastings@ahml.info | 847.506.2613

Often, District 25 and the AHML will partner on an event or will host an author together. Working with the AHML Communications Department to promote and cover these events reaches a greater audience. Each spring the AHML hosts the Annual D25 Art Show (27th as of May 2019) and both communications departments will coordinate on promotion and coverage.

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Twitter: @ArlHtsChamber | Facebook – @arlingtonheightschamber

Executive Director - Jon Ridler | jridler@arlingtonhcc.com | 847.253.1703

Businesses that belong to the Arlington Heights Chamber of Commerce often give back to our schools by donating their time and expertise to our students. For example, many schools (Greenbrier, Windsor, Olive-Mary Stitt) have a World of Work Day where students learn what it's like to work a morning in a local business in Arlington Heights.

OTHER CONTACTS

Arlington Heights Police Department

Twitter: @ArlHtsPOLICE | Facebook – @AHPD1

School Resource Officer - Rick Veenstra | rveenstra@vah.com | 847.368.5310

Arlington Heights Fire Department

Fire Chief - Andrew Larson | firemail@vah.com | 847.368.5450



professional development

The organizations below provide professional development opportunities such as seminars, emails and webinars, but the most important thing that they supply is a platform to establish professional relationships. The Head of Communications & Storytelling should lean on these relationships for ideas, support and feedback as time goes on in this ever-changing industry.

NSPRA

NSPRA (National School Public Relations Association) connects and unites school communication efforts across the entire nation. The benefits of being a member of NSPRA are the professional development opportunities through webinars and through the annual NSPRA National Seminar. This seminar is held in the summer and brings all members together for a three-day conference where ideas, strategies and tactics are shared and learned, which enhances District 25's communication and transparency with the community.

The major benefit from joining NSPRA is the support system one can build with colleagues in an ever-changing industry. Building a community through NSPRA to lean on and bounce ideas off of should be a main focus of the Head of Communications & Storytelling.

This requires an annual membership fee.

INSPRA

INSPRA (Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association) connects communications departments for school districts within the state of Illinois only. The major benefits of INSPRA are the contacts, committees, frequently asked questions section on their website for members, and the Tips & Tactics workshops that the association puts on. INSPRA requires a yearly membership fee, and the Tips & Tactics workshops need to be paid for to attend as well. INSPRA has already brought District 25 closer with its parent district (District 214) and surrounding districts in the immediate area. District 25's Communications Coordinator is able to call on those districts when in need of advice and/or assistance when communicating to the public.

This requires an annual membership fee.

CHARMM'D FOUNDATION

The Charmm'd Foundation creates intimate professional development groups who have similar professions with different views. District 25's Head of Communications & Storytelling currently belongs to a Charmm'd group and has benefitted immensely. The group is made up of fellow communications professionals from all over the northwest suburbs who communicate for libraries, senior centers, park districts, villages and more. This is a free PD opportunity.



the big idea

COMMUNICATION IS PERSONAL

There are many responsibilities that the Head of Communications & Storytelling has. In fact, there are 21 pages worth listed in this guide. The Head of Communications & Storytelling must manage all social media, all parent communication, all community communication, the brand of the District, every emergency communication, every page of the website, and more. But at its core, the Communications Department was created to simply tell District 25's story.

Who works here? Who are our teachers? Who are our administrators? Who are our students? What motivates us? What motivates this community? What does it feel like to live, work, and learn in Arlington Heights School District 25?

Asking and answering these questions upon tackling every responsibility listed in this guide will ensure the HoC&S is headed in the correct direction. Go toward what feels like District 25. Go toward what feels personal, and this job will become easeful, comforting, rewarding, and impactful.