

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Nova Classical Academy | Adopted February 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a supportive community and through a systematic, accelerated college-preparatory education in the classical tradition, Nova Classical Academy challenges its students to develop intellect, to attain the habits of learning and mastery, and to live a virtuous life of duty and ideals.

Nova Classical Academy Mission Statement

Nova Classical Academy, under the leadership of its Board of Directors and the Executive Director, is focused on informing and engaging its internal and external stakeholders in a helpful, trustworthy and timely manner. The school's communication program is focused on advancing the Nova Classical Academy mission and vision, including the values of a classical education.

With a diverse group of internal and external audiences — all of whom represent essential stakeholders to the strength of Nova Classical Academy — communications work should seek to support these **four overarching goals**:

1. To inspire the highest levels of learning and growth
2. To build awareness, understanding and mutual support
3. To elevate and celebrate the successes of students, staff members and alumni
4. To build community around the strengths and values of Nova Classical Academy

The objectives, strategies and tactics (action steps) outlined in this plan are designed to advance Nova Classical Academy leaders — and the entire school community — toward these goals.

While action steps are often what stakeholders expect in a communications plan, effective communication plans follow a four-step process: research, planning, implementation and evaluation. Similar to the way teachers use formative and summative assessments, communicators begin with research for a baseline understanding and measure results for continuous improvement.. The Fall 2021 Communications Audit provided the baseline data to measure future growth and progress toward Nova Classical Academy's goals.

*“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that **it has taken place.**”*

— George Bernard Shaw

This plan is intended not only to drive the effective use of communication tools for specific outputs. More importantly, it is designed to deliver measured gains in trust, engagement, understanding and mutual support. Implementing this plan with fidelity will position the Nova Classical Academy team to achieve ever higher levels of learning, engagement, understanding and support.

INTRODUCTION

At its heart, meaningful communication forms relationships. The intentional work to build relationships between an educational organization and its internal and external publics is essential to Nova Classical Academy fully realizing its mission, vision and goals.

As a practice, communications is a planned and systematic management function that is grounded in ethical decision making. Following a four-step process — Research, Plan, Implement and Evaluate — a communications plan is designed to help improve the programs, services and reputation of the organization.

Two-way communication processes are foundational as the school seeks to build awareness, understanding and mutual support for the mission, vision and goals of Nova Classical Academy as a whole. The speed of information technology, scrutiny of public schools and charter schools, competition for resources — and an ever-more-discerning consumer — only serve to intensify expectations for school communication that meets its audiences where they are to both inform *and* engage.

Satisfying these expectations requires a shared commitment by all employees at Nova Classical Academy to communicate effectively, build relationships and tell the school's story. Every participant in this learning community is empowered and encouraged to be an ambassador for the school in their daily work and life.

In an environment of scarce resources and high expectations, schools will thrive when they employ effective, strategic communications to answer the call for greater accountability. By articulating key messages and shared goals, the Nova Classical Academy community can work together to create the most powerful opportunities for students and the most compelling story about the importance and value of a classical education in today's world.

COMMUNICATION BELIEFS

"A comprehensive communications program seeks to engage students, staff and other stakeholders in support of student achievement. Two-way communications foster stakeholder commitment, involvement, engagement and support for student learning. The program fosters partnerships and shared responsibility for educating students among these key constituents."

— NSPRA Rubrics of Practice and Suggested Measures

- Classical education benefits individuals and communities.
- Internal and external communications have the power to improve morale and productivity, inspire achievement and significantly contribute to Nova Classical Academy's mission, goals and financial stability.
- Meaningful engagement of internal and external publics generates trust and support.
- Communication efforts should be accurate, helpful, trustworthy and timely.
- Simple language is comprehended more quickly. Even highly educated people appreciate short, easy-to-read information. In an over-communicated world, a lower reading level will improve understanding and retention among even the most educated audiences.
- Collaboration is fundamental to an effective and efficient communications program.
- Integrity will guide the gathering and sharing information.
- A culture of employee wellbeing includes reasonable norms and expectations for employee communications and responsiveness.
- Flexibility is needed to adapt to an ever-changing learning and operational environment.
- Public schools are strengthened by transparency in operation and communication, which includes respect of public inquiry and freedom of the press.
- Communication, marketing and public relations are everyone's job. Each Nova Classical Academy staff member, school and department must make a conscious effort to communicate effectively, celebrate success and earn the trust and confidence of stakeholders.

GOALS AND AUDIENCES

Four overarching goals define the purpose and work outlined in the Nova Classical Academy communications plan.

1. **To inspire the highest levels of learning and growth** made possible through classical education and empowered by partners in the learning process.
2. **To build awareness, understanding and mutual support** required to achieve Nova Classical Academy mission and goals.
3. **To elevate and celebrate the successes of students, staff members and alumni**, from academics and extra-curricular activities to post-secondary opportunities and achievements.
4. **To build community around the strengths and values of Nova Classical Academy** and equip all stakeholders to help tell the school's story.

The work needed to reach each goal will seek to engage and meet the needs of Nova Classical Academy's key audiences, both internal and external:

Internal audiences

Employees
Students
School volunteers
Board of Directors

External audiences

Parents
Prospective families
Prospective employees
Media
Alumni
Education partners*
Saint Paul community

Each of these audiences represents a distinct perspective and experience with Nova Classical Academy — its people, its programs, its systems and its processes. Each one also plays a critical role in the continued and growing strength of the school.

**Education Partners include: Authorizer - Friends of Education, Minnesota Association of Charter Schools and their members, St. Paul Charter Fair, Minnesota Department of Education, Skyline Athletic Conference and Minnesota Classical Education Conference.*

KEY MESSAGES

Key messages should be clear and easy to use over and over again, exactly as written. Anyone developing a message can copy and paste to get started, fill in the gaps and tie their communication back to Nova Classical Academy's essential values and strengths.

- Nova Classical Academy delivers classical education in a small K-12 public charter school that is ideally suited for building developmental relationships.
- Nova Classical Academy is Minnesota's leader in classical education.
- We empower students to be intellectually curious, to identify their personal strengths — and gain the knowledge, understanding and wisdom to make their world a better place.
- We seek to develop a growth mindset in our students and every member of the Nova community.
- Classical education is a rigorous and formal method that teaches thought and expression of the mind and heart.
- Classical education develops confident, compassionate and articulate graduates who are poised to engage as thoughtful global citizens.
- Nova Classical Academy students are encouraged to discover their unique purpose, interests and abilities beyond the classroom through a variety of clubs, sports, music, theater and other activities.
- The classical teaching method Nova Classical Academy develops active learners who feel seen and heard, resulting in self-assured and confident individuals.
- As they learn how to gain knowledge, Nova Classical Academy students gain exemplary study habits and time management skills that translate to self-discipline and accountability in academics and life.
- The classical search for Truth, Beauty and Goodness and participation in the Great Conversation requires virtues, as well as the desire to serve and help humanity.
- Nova Classical Academy is a welcoming and inclusive environment with a commitment to providing each student the resources, support and academic challenge needed to reach the highest levels of academic excellence.
- It is our job to equip each student with everything needed — knowledge, skills and growth mindset — to become life-long learners.
- Our students develop habits of interacting with others in a thoughtful, kind-hearted manner, thanks to an everyday focus on character values at school.
- Nova Classical Academy students learn [five virtues](#): justice, temperance, fortitude, wisdom, and prudence.

OBJECTIVES & MEASUREMENTS

*“If you can’t measure something, you can’t understand it.
If you can’t understand it, you can’t control it. If you can’t control it, you can’t improve it.”*
— H. James Harrington, CEO, Harrington Institute, Inc.

Communications objectives reflect specific intended results that can be measured for progress and success. There are both output (task completion) and outcome objectives (measures of audience attitudes or actions). Together, they are designed to meet the needs of all key audiences and advance progress toward the four overarching goals. The targets provide a measure of accountability for the communications program and should be updated annually. Outcomes may be measured over time through an annual parent and staff survey that includes a few communication questions, along with tracking participation in community building and engagement activities.

2022-2023 PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

Trust is maintained and enhanced through 7Cs of communications

- Family trust 89% or higher on *trust* survey question (89% in 2021)
- Employee trust 89% or higher on *trust* survey question (89% in 2021)
- Website and newsletter reading levels are Grade 8-9 (Grade 13 website content in February 2022)

Families and employees experience consistent communication throughout the year, based on the editorial calendar

- Maintain or increase average open rates in Smore Grammar Gazette, The Herald, Nova News
- Regular communication leadership meetings to collaborate on messages and follow editorial calendar
- Families report 87% or higher on *helpful* survey question (83% in 2021, Q5 in survey)
- Employees report 85% or higher on *helpful* survey question (81% in 2021, Q5 in survey)

Families, community members and prospective families are aware of Nova Classical Academy opportunities

- Retain 95% of current Lower School students in Lower School and 85% of current Upper School students in Upper School (enrolled as of Jan. 1, 2022) for the 2022-23 school year

Key stakeholders involved in strategic planning and express confidence in plan

- At least 400 individuals representing different stakeholder groups participate in formal feedback/engagement processes for strategic plan in 2022
- Families report 70% or higher on *strategic initiatives* survey (65% in 2021, Q11 in survey)
- On an annual employee survey, 80% of employees report confidence in the direction the school is heading
- Formal engagement process is documented for use in future years

Families, employees and community members use the Nova Classical Academy website as a primary source of reliable information

- On the annual parent and employee survey 80% of respondents rate the website as helpful
- 90% of information emailed in newsletters can be found quickly on the website

FUTURE MEASURES (2024 AND BEYOND)

A customer service approach is the standard across all areas of operation

- All front-line employees receive formal customer service training on a continuing basis
- Enrollment journey is defined with all touchpoints and key messages
- Employee journey is defined for proactive efforts in recruitment, hiring, onboarding and retention
- Customer service effectiveness is monitored through the use of recurring secret shopper research

Families, employees and community members use the Nova Classical Academy website as a primary source of reliable information

- At least 8 stories posted annually about classical education and teaching/learning
- Annually increase traffic to the website and improve SEO and brand authority as a charter school
- Members of the parent Facebook group post links to the school website monthly —sharing official information sources

Create a culture of celebration and recognition

- At least 6 student/staff/alumni featured on Board agenda annually
- At least 20 celebration/recognition social media posts annually
- At least 6 website stories annually
- At least 3 news releases sent to media outlets / education partners annually
- At least 3 earned media feature stories/news coverage

Educational partners are aware of Nova Classical Academy’s values and strengths

- At least 1-2 professional learning presentations and/or guest columns submitted annually

Nova Classical Academy is respected as a welcoming and inclusive public school by civic leaders in Saint Paul.

- Nova Classical Academy leaders annually engage with elected officials, school district leaders and city leaders around shared goals: youth development, inclusion and equity, elevating student voice.

ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

This action plan outlines strategic work to advance the goals and objectives already described — and meet the needs of all internal and external audiences.

STRATEGY 1: Coordinate efforts to share helpful information with employees and families consistently.

Tactic / Action Item	Assigned to	Timeline	Budget?
Leadership collaborates regularly and uses the editorial calendar to create/send Nova News, Lower School News, Upper School News.	Leadership team	Weekly newsletter cycle	
Newsletters use focused content, predictable schedule and a branded format in Smore.	Leadership team	Weekly newsletter cycle	Yes (Smore Teams)
Weekly employee bulletins with content focus and simple Gmail newsletter format with links to intranet for more detail.	Principals	Weekly	
Standardize activities and sports communication, including registration dates, forms and procedures.	AD/Principals / designees	April-July	
Communicate opportunities to students and families in each issue of the Grammar Gazette and The Herald, with sign-up information one month before registration begins.	AD/Principals / designees	Weekly newsletter cycle	
Use readability tools (MS Word, Google Suite or online calculators) to improve readability index in emails and website communication. Target of Grade 8-9 level enables busy parents to quickly read and retain important and helpful information. (Even highly educated readers don't want to work to understand a newsletter or website.)	Principals / designees	Ongoing	
Conduct an annual survey of family and staff to measure overall satisfaction with Nova Classical Academy experience, including communications.	Executive director	Annually in March	Possibly

STRATEGY 2: Make the school website the best place to find information about Nova Classical Academy and classical education

Tactic / Action Item	Assigned to	Timeline	Budget?
Post and organize all must-know information for parent/student/staff on the Nova Classical website.	Operations Coordinator	Ongoing	
Systematically rewrite website content to improve the Readability Index (currently 13.2 reading level), support SEO strategy and make the site more accessible for text readers and translation.	Leadership Team	Ongoing (2024-2025)	
Post new website content every 1-2 weeks (minimum once per month) that supports key messages and SEO strategy.	Operations Coordinator	Ongoing	
Use newsletters, social media accounts and other channels to link to website content.	Operations Coordinator	Weekly newsletter cycle	
Conduct a regular survey to identify items visitors are looking for, but cannot find.	Operations Coordinator	Quarterly	
Review Google Analytics and search data to understand what visitors are looking for on the website.	Operations Coordinator	Monthly	
Create website content guided by Nova Editorial Calendar .	Leadership Team	Ongoing	
Train and equip school office staff to post basic information and updates on the website as needed (announcements, calendar dates, deadlines).	Operations Coordinator	By (date)	
Integrate Google Calendar with Wordpress to maintain calendar information in a single location.	Operations Coordinator	By (date)	
Establish website oversight with procedures for site mapping, adding pages, removing out-of-date content and updating instead of adding pages and media. (Minimize use of dates and years on website content and write to be timeless when possible.)	Operations Coordinator	By July 2022 (Annual, summer)	
Organize student activity content on the Upper School site; create a content template with basic information (coach, dates, etc.) [sample solution for club pages] .	Upper school principal/ AD/Operations Coordinator	By July 2022	

STRATEGY 3: Use communication and engagement to support school governance

Tactic / Action Item	Assigned to	Timeline	Budget?
Send brief board business and information in Nova News with a link for more information (agenda, minutes, slides presented, etc.).	Executive director	Weekly newsletter cycle	
Establish a strategic plan engagement and feedback formal process to be used 2022 and future years.	Executive Director & Board	2022	Possibly
Post strategic planning progress and results on website; link to this from email newsletters and on social media.	Operations Coordinator	Based on Strategic Plan Timeline	
Share board meeting student/staff spotlights on social media and website when possible.	Operations Coordinator	2024	
Build a bank of Nova Classical Academy stock photos to be used on website and other digital/print materials (Schedule Kemmetmueller for annual session in March .)	Community Engagement Coordinator	Annually	Included in annual student photo contract

STRATEGY 4: Create a culture of recognition and gratitude

Tactic / Action Item	Assigned to	Timeline	Budget?
Develop a student recognition program.	Principals	2024	Possibly
Develop a staff appreciation program.	Leadership Team	2024	Possibly
“Spotlight” standing agenda item to celebrate achievements of students, employees and others.	Leadership Team	Monthly-2024	Possibly
Invite employees, students or others to present exemplary work illustrating the value of Nova and/or classical education.	Leadership Team	2024	
Social media posts about spotlights and success stories.	Operations Coordinator	Ongoing	
News releases about spotlights and success stories.	Operations Coordinator	Ongoing	

Print branded note cards / postcards that leaders use to send notes of appreciation and congratulations to staff and students.	HR Director, Supervisors	Ongoing	Yes
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STRATEGY 5: Tell the story of classical education and why it matters

Tactic / Action Item	Assigned to	Timeline	Budget?
Create a prominent classical education section on the website to replace <i>The Torch</i> .	Executive Director, Academic Director, Operations Coordinator	2024	
Create a glossary page on the website that defines and explains classical education terminology and virtues.	Academic Director	2025	
Engage guest writers (teachers, students, parents, Board, etc.) to create content about classical education for the website.	Leadership team	2025	
Feature guest writers on social media with a link to their website story.	Operations Coordinator	2025	
Create and display internal and external signage (with photos of students) to promote virtues and values throughout the school.	Leadership Team	As budget allows	Yes

STRATEGY 6: Embed a customer service approach across school operations

Tactic / Action Item	Assigned to	Timeline	Budget?
Deliver formal customer service training to all front-line employees who receive public/parent inquiries.	Director of HR/ Executive Director	2023	Possibly
Establish enrollment journey that includes messages to answer a wide variety of common questions and reflects school values.	Community Engagement Coordinator	November 2022	Possibly
Establish an employment journey that maximizes employee experience from application through onboarding and retention and reflects school values.	Director of HR	December 2022	

Monitor customer service effectiveness with secret shopper research.	Executive Director	Annually	Possibly
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STRATEGY 7: Expand and develop use of the Nova Classical Academy brand

Tactic / Action Item	Assigned to	Timeline	Budget?
Redigital branded assets (stationary, signage, website, social media, etc.)	Leadership Team	As budget allows	Yes
Develop graphical patterns to expand visual brand	Director of HR	Ongoing	Possibly

STRATEGY 8: Increase community engagement through enrollment marketing, volunteer programs and development

Tactic / Action Item	Assigned to	Timeline	Budget?
Use Nova Classical orientation program and ongoing communication to increase volunteer familiarity and affinity	Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing	
Develop a referral program to encourage families and alumni to share Nova Classical with prospective families	Community Engagement coordinator	2025	
Identify specific target audiences for enrollment growth (demographics, geographic area, classical education interest)	Executive Director, Community Engagement Coordinator	After Strategic Plan	
Develop digital marketing campaign (organic and paid) to increase awareness and “findability” among target audiences	Operations Coordinator	Use if need arises (low enrollment, etc.)	Yes

COLLABORATIVE STAFFING APPROACH

Role/position	Communication responsibilities	Training required
Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Oversees implementation and accountability of communications duties and roles for Nova Classical Academy leadership team ● Primary communicator with the Board of Directors, leadership team, employees and public ● Ensures openness and responsiveness to stakeholder groups ● Maintains high visibility and availability among staff and community ● Primary communicator of Nova Classical Academy vision, mission and goals ● Sets the tone/culture for communication and relationships with employees, families, alumni, partners and other stakeholders ● Invites and facilitates two-way communication with parents, students, staff and community leaders ● Collaboration to support system-wide email cadence (Grammar Gazette, The Herald, Nova News) ● Collaboration to develop and monitor engaging social media content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educational leadership initiatives ● Media relations ● Public speaking ● Delegation and collaboration ● Crisis communication ● Stakeholder engagement processes ● Hierarchy of effective communication
Operations Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First impressions by phone/email ● Friendly, welcoming ● Knowledgeable, informed team member ● Every interaction with a parent is an opportunity to earn their trust, cooperation and support ● Collaboration to support system-wide email cadence (Grammar Gazette, The Herald, Nova News) ● Collaboration to develop and monitor engaging social media content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Customer service ● Strategic social media use ● Effective newsletters ● Smore, Infinite Campus and Google Suite ● Thorough orientation of Nova Classical with occasional activities to update knowledge and understanding
Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Friendly, welcoming ● Champion of recognition (student, staff, team, etc.) and storytelling ● Every interaction with a parent is an opportunity to build a partnership in learning ● Every interaction with a parent is an opportunity to earn their trust, cooperation and support ● Collaboration to support system-wide email cadence (Grammar Gazette, The Herald, Nova News) ● Collaboration to develop and monitor engaging social media content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Smore and Google Suite ● Writing to engage busy readers ● Communicating with difficult people ● Thorough orientation of Nova Classical with occasional activities to update knowledge and understanding ● Volunteer management
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sets the tone/culture for communication and relationships with prospective, new and existing employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effective communication for various audiences

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Primary communicator of important, sometimes sensitive employee information ● Inspire others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Customer service ● Communication best practices for hiring and onboarding ● Thorough orientation of Nova Classical with occasional activities to update knowledge and understanding
Office Managers and Receptionist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First impressions ● Friendly, welcoming ● Addresses visitors first, by name if possible ● Knowledgeable, informed team member ● Demonstrates Nova Classical Academy pride and commitment to quality in all interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Customer service ● Thorough orientation of Nova Classical with occasional activities to update knowledge and understanding ● School-based communications systems and processes
Community Engagement Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enrollment communication ● Adult volunteer communication ● Development messaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Digital marketing/advertising ● Effective communication for various audiences ● Customer service ● Thorough orientation of Nova Classical with occasional activities to update knowledge and understanding ● Child protection laws
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Every interaction with a parent is an opportunity to build a partnership in learning ● Every interaction with a parent is an opportunity to earn their trust, cooperation and support ● Frequent and timely communication about student, learning and progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Google Suite ● Infinite Campus ● Classroom newsletter practices ● Effective parent-teacher conferences ● Responding to difficult people ● Thorough orientation of Nova Classical with occasional activities to update knowledge and understanding
Educational Assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Friendly and caring ● Committed to helpful interactions with students, parents and staff to support learning goals and Nova mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Responding to difficult people
Food Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Friendly, helpful, caring ● Committed to healthy children ● Knowledgeable about how nutrition supports student achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effective communication for various audiences ● Orientation for accurate familiarity with Nova Classical Academy

Custodial/ maintenance staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First impression - personally and upkeep of facilities ● Friendly greeter ● Knowledgeable about activities scheduled and building floor plans ● May be the only interaction a non-parent has with school (evening games/activities) ● Demonstrates pride in the school district and a commitment to quality ● Well groomed, professional appearance, in uniform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Customer service ● Thorough orientation about Nova Classical Academy ● Building cleanliness and order ● Expectations clearly communicated and measured
Bus drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Friendly, welcoming, upbeat, positive ● Can make or break a student's day ● Makes student safety the priority ● Instills confidence in parents and other drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Orientation for accurate familiarity with Nova Classical Academy
Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Articulate a clear vision for Nova Classical Academy ● Speak in a united voice through Board action ● Continuously advocate for students ● Champion Nova's success ● Adopt appropriate communication policies and goals ● Inspire through words and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Governance and leadership ● District orientation ● Effective advocacy ● Stakeholder opinion processes ● Effective stakeholder engagement ● Crisis communication roles and responsibilities ● Media training

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

January	February	March	April
<p>Classical education blog, social media, newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin Budget Communications ● Legislative session opens (audience: elected officials) ● Enrollment Application Window Closes ● National School Choice Week 	<p>Classical education blog, social media, newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Black History Month ● I Love to Read Month ● Board Appreciation Month ● Public Schools Week ● Enrollment Lottery ● Bus Driver Appreciation Day 	<p>Classical education blog, social media, newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spring Break ● Summer program opportunities ● School board election cycle begins 	<p>Classical education blog, social media, newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volunteer appreciation ● Earth Day
May	June	July	August
<p>Classical education blog, social media, newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decision Day (5/1) ● Teacher/staff appreciation ● Senior celebrations ● Graduation planning ● Year-end traditions 	<p>Classical education blog, social media, newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Year-End Goals ● Goal-setting ● Seeding Strategic Planning 	<p>Summer programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Hires ● New Board orientation 	<p>Classical education blog, social media, newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Admin Leadership ● New staff welcome ● All-Staff ● Back-to-School ● MN State Assessment Scores
September	October	November	December
<p>Classical education blog, social media, newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National Merit Semi-finalists ● Student activities ● Patriot Day (9/11) ● Grandparents Day (9/13) ● Constitution Day (9/17) 	<p>Classical education blog, social media, newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bullying Prevention Month / Unity Day ● Political speech (audience: employees) ● Hispanic Heritage Month ● Enrollment (10/1) 	<p>Classical education blog, social media, newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prep/test emergency weather notification ● Election Day ● Veterans Day ● Give Minnesota ● Begin study/engagement for major change initiatives or new programs ● Enrollment Application Window Open ● Give to the Max 	<p>Classical education blog, social media, newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Financial Audit ● Authorizer Annual Report

APPENDIX: COMMUNICATIONS POLICY SAMPLE

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

I. PURPOSE

Effective communications and public relationships are essential for the success of the [SCHOOL] as a public entity. The purpose of this policy is to ensure effective, results-oriented communications with a goal of increasing awareness, understanding, interest in, and support for the students, staff, programs, and goals of the district – a learning community whose mission is [INSERT MISSION HERE].

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The School Board is committed to providing factual, honest, accurate, and timely information and engaging stakeholders in the mission of the district. All school and district communication will be guided by our values: honesty, integrity, and [INSERT LOCAL VALUES].

The School Board directs the administration to implement a communications and public engagement program with the goal of stimulating understanding of the goals, needs and accomplishments of the organization in fulfilling its mission for students.

The School Board understands the district’s communication program can only be effective if everyone in the organization accepts responsibility for communicating effectively, building relationships, marketing the organization, and serving as ambassadors of the district as they meet and greet people during their daily work.

III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The School Board is responsible for ensuring a planned and effective two-way communications and public relations program. The School Board authorizes the expenditure of public funds to support communication goals.
- B. The School Board delegates to the Superintendent the development and coordination of a public relations and communications program in accordance with School Board policies.

- C. The responsibility for effective building level or department level communications lies with the principal or department supervisor.
- D. All school employees serve as representatives of the schools during their daily work. Employees have a responsibility to communicate accurately and effectively about their school, the District, or issues within the realm and scope of their professional responsibility and knowledge. District employees should make appropriate efforts to be knowledgeable about the District, its programs, services, accomplishments, challenges, plans and priorities.

IV. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The school district's public relations and communications efforts will:

- A. Encourage formal and informal communications;
- B. Be a planned, systematic flow of information among school employees, families and community members;
- C. Provide clear channels for individual and public inquiry, input, feedback, and resolution when ideas, questions or problems arise among students, staff, parents, and community members.
- D. Be guided by the pursuit of truth, accuracy, and fairness. Incorrect information shall never intentionally be released. Unintentional release of incorrect information shall be rectified immediately upon discovery.
- E. Protect and respect the privacy of students, families, and employees. Students and staff private data shall not be released, except as provided by law or by other Board policy.
- F. Inspire District employees and School Board members to act in concert with high ethical standards (in public and in private).
- G. Use positive, inclusive language and personalized communication, which are the most effective communication practices for understanding and support.
- H. Leverage appropriate communication technologies to efficiently and effectively communicate across generations and engage stakeholders.

- I. Strive for openness in decision-making, provide appropriate access to public information, and respect the First Amendment, the ideal of free inquiry and the opinions of others.
- J. Ensure all major change initiatives or new programs have a written communications plan, which anticipates constituent issues, needs, and expectations in addition to District needs.

Cross References: Policy XXX: Open Meetings and Closed Meetings
Policy XXX: Public Participation in School Board Meetings
Policy XXX: Compliance with Data Practices Act
Policy XXX: Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records
Policy XXX: Records of Employees
Policy XXX: Respectful Workplace
Policy XXX: Employee Use of Social Media