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## About the Guide

The Beaverton School District is the 3rd largest district in Oregon. Our nearly 5,000 employees work hard to empower all students to achieve post-high school success. In this age of increased accountability, communicating our stories of success and building support for education in our community is more important than ever. Every employee is an ambassador of the District. As such, we have the unique opportunity to strengthen this support in our communications with students, parents, educators and community members.

This communications guide, prepared by the professionals in the Communications & Community Involvement Department (CCI), will help you in your work as an ambassador. It will help ensure consistency in all two-way and one-way communications. As a resource, this guide contains a wide variety of information – guidelines and expectations for print, electronic and broadcast communications; tips on how to effectively work with the media and community; the importance of customer perceptions; and a style guide to assist in polishing your written and electronic communication.

We are all responsible for maintaining excellence in communications through:

- **Error-free language and usage:** Educational institutions are held to the highest standard for accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation because our proper use communicates to parents and the community our ability to teach students the same. All staff must proofread documents carefully to produce error-free work.



- **Consistent use of brand assets:** logos, colors and images. These assets help us establish a common look and feel across the District. They make our communications and signage recognizable to the public.

This guide is meant to provide clarification for writing or creating materials and community engagement. It is not meant to limit individuality and creativity, rather to provide a framework for excellence. We hope you will find it useful, and we welcome your suggestions for future improvement.

To view an electronic version of this guide go to: <https://bsd.beaverton.k12.or.us/Community-Involvement/Pages/Communications-Guide.aspx>

# About Us

**Contact Information**  
**Communications & Community**  
**Involvement Department (CCI)**  
**(503) 356-4360**

**16550 SW Merlo Road**  
**Beaverton, OR 97003**

Beaverton School District - Official

@BeavertonSD

503-356-4360

**Emergency Information**

Emergency messages, such as school closings due to hazardous weather, will be communicated through District SchoolMessenger messages. (More information on pgs. 4-5)

The CCI Department provides internal and external communications to parents, staff, students, community members and media. The department supports the District’s goal by:

- Delivering clear, concise and timely information to stakeholders through a variety of communication platforms
- Ensuring Strategic Plan measurements and Pillars of Learning are widely communicated
- Maintaining relationships with our community partners
- Increasing trust and transparency by providing accurate and timely information on 2014 Bond projects
- Strengthening employee, student, parent and community engagement through our Integrated Communication and Marketing Plan

As a resource to schools and departments, our work includes stakeholder engagement, crisis communication, branding, editing, graphic design, planning and hosting District-wide events, soliciting media coverage, responding to external inquiries and marketing District programs.

## Strategic Plan & District Goal



### District Goal

**WE** empower all students to achieve post-high school success.

### Our Pillars of Learning



#### **WE EXPECT EXCELLENCE**

- **WE** teach students knowledge and skills for our evolving world.
- **WE** seek, support, and recognize our world class employees.



#### **WE INNOVATE**

- **WE** engage students with a variety of relevant and challenging learning experiences.
- **WE** create learning environments that promote student achievement.



#### **WE EMBRACE EQUITY**

- **WE** build honest, safe, and inclusive relationships with our diverse students and their families.
- **WE** provide needed support so that every student succeeds.



#### **WE COLLABORATE**

- **WE** work and learn in teams to understand student needs and improve learning outcomes.
- **WE** partner with the community to educate and serve our students.



# Crisis Communications

**Stay calm. You have a team to support you.** Reach out to the Public Safety Office (503-356-4444), Rick Puente, Public Safety Director, cell: 971-217-4210 and the Communications & Community Involvement Department (503-356-4360), Maureen Wheeler, Public Communications Officer, cell: 503-888-3717.

How your school or department reacts and communicates in crisis situations will significantly influence the public's perception of our District's competence and capacity.



During an emergency event, the BSD Public Safety Office and the Communications & Community Involvement team will coordinate all messages with law enforcement and/or Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue.

**You need to be able to answer these six questions about an incident:**

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?
- How?

**Preparing Messages**

**1. Principals should prepare talking points so everyone shares the same message**

Most crises or emergencies will create phone calls or visits by parents/guardians. Principals should make sure that staff members who answer phones are provided a short list of talking points to use in providing accurate information. Whenever possible, it is also beneficial to designate the same 1-2 staff members to answer

all calls so the same message is communicated. The District's Public Communications Officer, Maureen Wheeler, and first responders will assist you in writing the talking points. Additionally, Maureen will

handle media communications. **Refer media inquiries** to the Communications & Community Involvement Dept., 503-356-4360. **Contact: Maureen Wheeler, Public Communications Officer, 503-356-4360 or cell: 503-888-3717.**

**2. The District's Tragedy Response Team (TRT) is available to assist principals, staff and students through the grieving process following the loss of students or staff or other significant event.**

**Contact: Leslie Rodgers, TRT Specialist, 503-356-4372 or cell: 503-998-5590.**

**3. Staff need to watch what they say to students**

Any event will become school-wide knowledge within minutes via text messaging among

students. Do not allow students to enter into idle gossip or speculation about the event. Reaffirm their safety and your commitment to a safe school/classroom. It is important to respond with facts and with one voice. Encourage reporting of fact-based information to an adult at the school.

#### **4. Staff need to watch what they say to others outside the school**

If an event occurs at your school and a teacher communicates with to anyone outside the school (including tweets, texts), he or she becomes the voice for the school. Comments may be misrepresented and can impact the entire school. Remind staff what they say cannot be taken back and will be repeated.

#### **5. Staff should be deliberate in their choice of words following any crisis or emergency**

What is said may:

- Interrupt the learning process
- Put others in “crisis mode”
- Encourage copy-cat behavior
- Put stakeholders at ease knowing a plan is in place

#### **6. Staff should listen to idle conversation among students following any event**

Students often knew of the plans or events that led up to the violence and did not report it. They will share that information among friends after an event takes place. Careful, inconspicuous listening may gather information administrators will need as they piece together the information surrounding the event.

#### **7. Staff should take time to encourage those individuals involved in stopping the violence**

A violent act on campus will usually be handled by school staff, first responders and District staff. That can be a stressful event for many people. Take the time to check on and encourage staff

members who may have had to deal with such a situation. It is often after an event that the adrenaline slows and the emotions flow. Deliberate action toward those involved can make a very positive difference.

#### **Sample Crisis/Emergency Messages for Principals**

The Communications & Community Involvement team has developed sample messages for principals to inform parents/guardians, staff, students and stakeholders about a serious event at school. These sample messages are provided as a reference point when it becomes necessary to communicate accurate and timely information. Please personalize these examples to fit your situation. The Communications & Community Involvement team can help review and edit your message. Please contact 503-356-4360 for assistance.

Please remember to translate your materials into Spanish at a minimum, or seek assistance from the Multilingual Department for other languages or for interpretation, 503-356-3755.

#### Sample Messages:

- School Lockout/Lockdown
- Missing student
- Building evacuation due to a threat
- Fire incident at school
- Weapon at school
- Weapon or other incident on the bus
- Bus accident with injuries
- Bus accident without injuries
- Drug incident at school
- Death of a staff member or student

Remember to use a variety of communication channels to send your message.

# COMMUNICATION TOOLS



Smartphone App



RSS Feed



Synergy



Bookmark the BSD website for banner information



Follow Principal on Facebook



Twitter



School Messenger



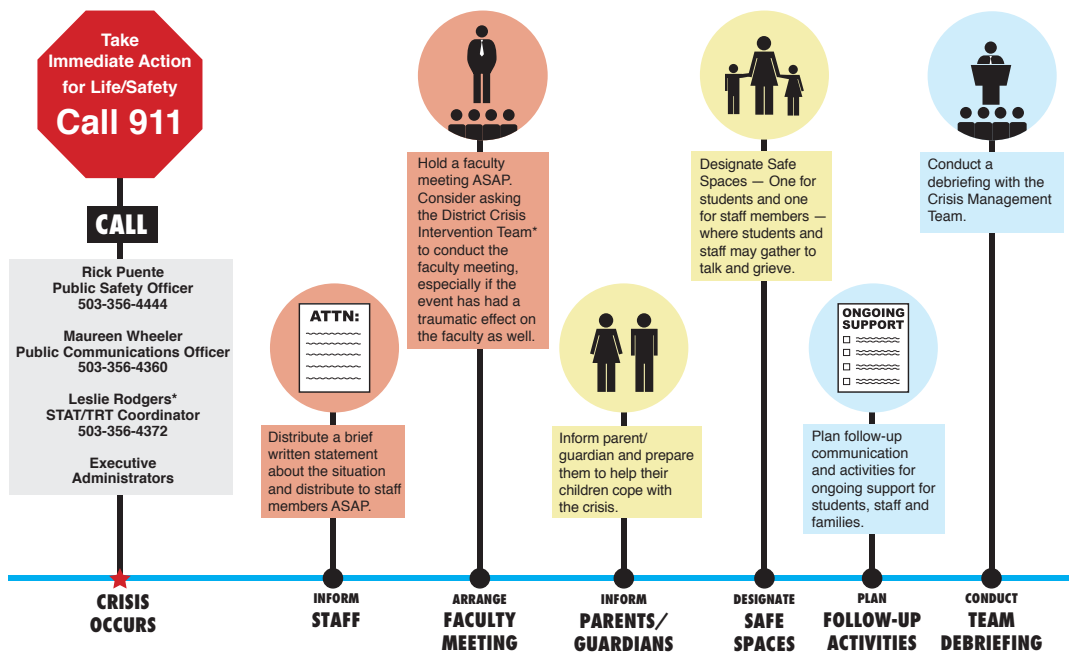
Radio & Television



Flash Alert

# SCHOOL CRISIS RESPONSE

FIRE • FLOOD • NATURAL DISASTER • SCHOOL VIOLENCE • DEATH OF STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY | 503.356.4444



## Working with the Media

Remember to refer media to the Communications & Community Involvement Department, or if you need assistance, please call x64360

### 1. Get the “facts” (what the reporter says happened)

- What is the story? Clarify the reporter’s question.
- How did they find out about it?
- Who else is the reporter talking to?
- Know the reporter who is calling.

### 2. Practice good media relations

- Ask the reporter’s deadline.
- Set a time to get back to the reporter.
- Don’t argue.

### 3. Get the facts (what your people say happened)

- Answer 6 Questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.
- What else can staff tell you (background)?
- What can’t staff tell you?

### 4. Build your story

- Determine spokesperson.
- Develop key messages.
- Develop your game plan.
- Talk through questions and answers.

### 5. Prepare, prepare, prepare

- Keep key messages in front of you.
- Reinforce messages.
- Write it down.
- Practice, practice, practice.



### 6. Manage the interview

- Relax! You usually know more than the reporter.
- Set parameters.
- Be brief. Be honest. Stay on message.
- Meet reporters’ needs.
- Own the interview by leading the conversation.
- Avoid jargon and condescending remarks.
- Admit mistakes and problems.
- Never go “off the record.”
- Avoid saying “no comment.”
- If you don’t know, say so.

### 7. Follow Up

- Provide additional information.
- Build a positive working relationship with media.
- Correct inaccuracies.
- Evaluate coverage. Monitor news stories.

## Public Records Requests

Please refer all public records requests to the Communications and Community Involvement Department.



## Mix it up: Two-way/One-way Communication

The Beaverton School District is held to high standards of consistency and professionalism across communication media and thus, as a District, we are all ambassadors to our supportive community.

Much of the communication done through schools can be one-way communication, such as newsletters and videos. We should strive to connect face-to-face with our families and community whenever possible, utilizing two-way

communications strategies such as focus groups, curriculum nights, speeches at PTO meetings, principal coffee, etc.

When communicating with the public whether through two-way or one-way communication, remember that we are ambassadors and how we conduct ourselves reflects directly on the District. Effective communication builds trust and support with our community.





# SCHOOLMESSENGER®

SchoolMessenger is the District’s mass communication messaging system. It is used primarily for parent and staff notifications, for community outreach and for emergency notifications.

SchoolMessenger is a very effective and timely communication tool, but it can also be a bit challenging to determine which mode of communication is best. To avoid message fatigue with parents/guardians, please avoid overuse of the system for the dissemination of non-essential messages that could potentially overburden or irritate recipients. Keep in mind parents receive District-wide messages as well.

**SchoolMessenger Service & Support**  
support@schoolmessenger.com  
(800) 920-3897

## Guidelines for Non-Emergency Messages

The Federal Communications Commission prohibits the use of automated phone calls for marketing purposes (this includes school fundraising, PTO fundraising, etc). You can still use email for marketing/fundraising purposes.

**\*\* In all communications, please identify the school that is sending the message.**

### Phone call guidelines:

- Please limit to 3-4 non-emergency phone calls/month
- Messages should be 30 seconds or less
- Do not use for more general reminders

When to use phone calls: picture day, testing reminders, important deadlines, conferences, back to school night, etc.

### Text guidelines:

Please limit to five non-emergency texts/month Remember that users must opt-in to receive texts and texts are only sent in English. They need to text “Yes” to 67587. (\*This is a new code. The old code is being retired, but people who previously opted in under that code DO NOT need to opt in again.)

When to use texts: for brief, time-sensitive messages (generally within 24 hours of an event or deadline) and reminders of school-wide events.

### Email guidelines:

While there is no guideline to limit emails, please be aware of message fatigue.

When to use email: sending very detailed information, sending anything with links, events happening more than 24 hours in the future, fundraising, newsletters. Be as concise as possible.

## Resources

- [Quick Guides/Training](#)
- [SchoolMessenger webpage](#)
- [SchoolMessenger InfoCenter](#)

## Newsletters

Newsletters should be informative, timely and interesting. The following information is typically included:

- Upcoming events
- Principal's message
- Student accomplishments
- Testing dates
- Volunteer opportunities
- PTO/PTA updates
- Fundraising opportunities

Schools are also encouraged to browse the District's weekly BSD Briefs newsletter for District-wide stories/messages of high interest to school communities. We are now using Smore, making it easy to copy and paste into your own newsletters.

Use of images is strongly encouraged, but they should be used sparingly within a document. There are many different ways to create school newsletters, but many schools use SchoolMessenger to electronically send the newsletter to parents.

### **Sending/posting newsletters: Best Practices**

There are several options for producing and distributing newsletters to families. Mobile-friendly newsletter services like Smore make it simple and easy to communicate with parents and students. CCI recommends you put the links to your newsletters on your school or department webpage. This allows a broad audience to view the information.

If you are producing your newsletter in Microsoft Word or InDesign, CCI recommends you convert your newsletter to an interactive PDF, post the

newsletter on your school webpage, and then send the link to parents via SchoolMessenger. This format and workflow can save you a big headache if you discover an error after sending out the newsletter. You can simply make a correction to the original document and replace the original newsletter on your webpage, without having to resend the newsletter to every single parent.

## Photos/Imagery

Images are used to reinforce or enhance key messages. They can include photographs or graphics like icons or charts. In the Beaverton School District, we want to ensure our images help to effectively tell our story.

### **Permission for student photos**

The Beaverton School District uses an opt-out policy for student photographs. Before publishing any student photos, please check Synergy to ensure that the students in the photograph have not opted-out of photos. You can find this section by clicking on the "Miscellaneous" tab. If the student has opted out of photos, there would be an "x" next to Photo Exclude. The school's main office staff can also help you determine any opt-outs.

The image shows a screenshot of a software interface titled "Permissions". It contains three checkboxes: "Directory List Exclude", "Photo Release Exclude", and "Digital Permission". The "Photo Release Exclude" checkbox is checked, while the others are unchecked.

# Photos/Imagery

## Photo Archive/Photo Requests

CCI maintains a two-year archive of photos. You can contact Kara Yunck (503)356-4378 or [kara\\_yunck@beaverton.k12.or.us](mailto:kara_yunck@beaverton.k12.or.us) to request general or specific photos. You can also contact Kara to request photos of an event at your school. Schedule permitting, a photographer will be assigned to the event. The photographer will add the event photos to our archive, as well as provide the images to your school/department for use in publications and your school website.

## Photo Considerations

- Pictures used for print publication should be 300 dpi at their original size. Pictures used for electronic publication should be 96 dpi at their original size.
- Due to privacy issues, student names should be blurred out using a photo-editing program.
- Photos in which students/staff are not complying with District policy should not be used in school publications.
- When resizing images, make sure to retain the proper proportion/aspect ratio.
- When sharing photos on social media, do not tag students in the photos.
- Use clip art sparingly. It can easily become distracting. Often, the artwork doesn't reproduce well in black & white.

## Image Composition



When selecting images, please keep the following goals in mind:

### Student-centered

Imagery should be student-centered and tell a story. Try to use actual BSD students, as opposed to stock images.

### Positive

Ensure our images portray positive and engaging energy.

### Excellence

The contents of the images should communicate a high-quality experience. The quality of the image is also important. Ensure that subjects are well-lit, the image is high resolution and that it is well-composed.





# Webpage

School and department websites are a representation of the District. They are public sites welcoming the outside world to the school and linking students, parents and the community to important school information. Many times, the school website is the first, or only impression the parent or community member gets. Because of this, it is important that sites be kept accurate, up-to-date, professional and easily accessed, viewed, and navigated by parents, students, teachers and community members. Websites should support the educational goals of the Beaverton School District.

Your school or department landing page (home page) should contain images of students learning, exploring, playing, etc., rather than empty playgrounds, classrooms and fronts of school buildings. Webmasters should request the Release of Information Restrictions report in

Synergy from the school secretary to ensure that students' photos may be used.

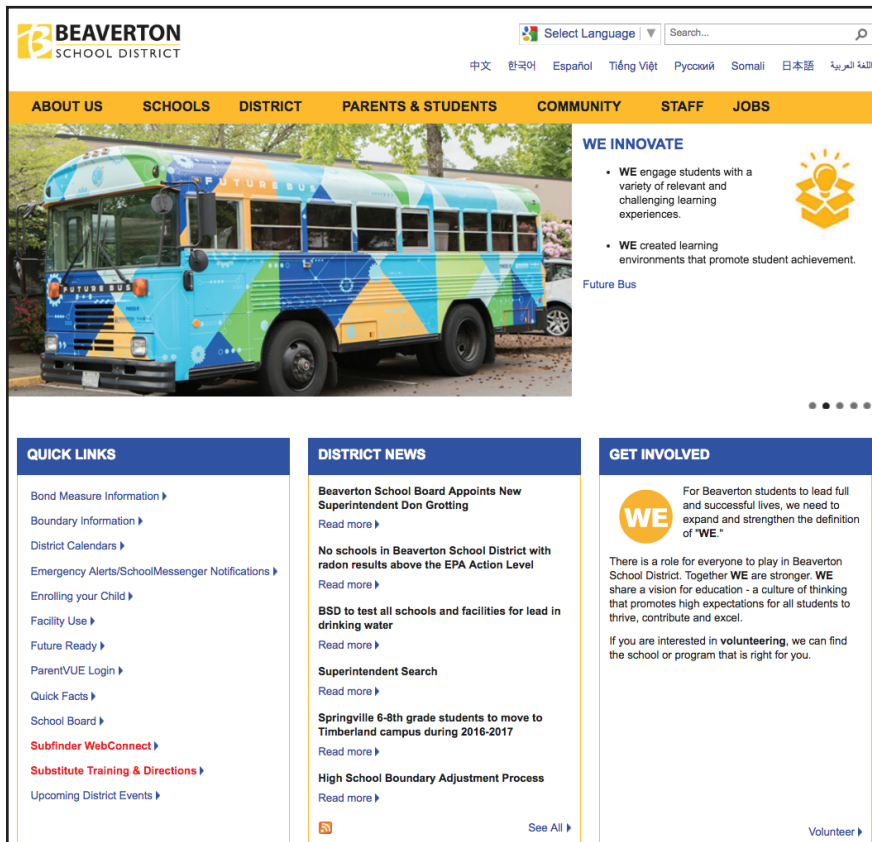
For complete web publishing guidelines, visit: <https://bsd.beaverton.k12.or.us/IT/Webmaster%20Documents/WebPublishingGuidelines.pdf>

## District and Department Webpages

District and Department webpages are created with a common District template to ensure a unified appearance. Content templates for departments can be tailored to meet unique needs. Additions or changes to templates may be made through a Web Help Desk Ticket to I.T.

## School Websites

All school websites follow the same general format. It is understood that each school has its own personality. This is reflected in



BSD homepage

different colors, logos, mascots and academic and enrichment programs that are posted to the website. However, for ease of use, the navigational structure and general layout of each school website needs to be consistent.

Schools will each have a standard home page and supplemental pages on the BSD template. These pages will contain at a minimum a principal message, school demographic, and contact information. The principal message is maintained by the school and the demographic information is maintained by District Office.

All linked documents should be converted to Adobe PDF. If a document is managed at the District level, such as the Enrollment Form, the link to the District form must be placed on the school website.

### Advertising

Unless approved by the Business Office, advertising or direct sale of non-school related goods and services is prohibited on any section of a Beaverton School District website. Promotional educational programs such as “Box Tops for Education” may be listed in the form of a graphic leading to a document indicating the schools support for the program. A direct link to the company may not be included.

### Fundraising

The following policies should be followed when promoting fundraisers on a BSD hosted website:

- With the approval of the Principal, Business Office and Community Involvement, fundraising announcements may be placed on school and District Webpages.
- On a case-by-case basis, online fundraising opportunities may be permitted by the Business Office and Community Involvement.

- With the Business Office and Principal’s approval, schools may provide links to an approved online payment account to accept donations. All such links should open in a new browser.

### Redirects from Non-BSD websites

Beaverton School District does not allow redirects of other websites to a Beaverton School District website. For example, a redirect from <http://www.oakhills.org> to the Oak Hills Elementary School site is prohibited.

### Social Media



School websites may post links to a school Facebook or School Twitter account.



Employees are reminded they are personally responsible for the content they publish on personal blogs, wikis, or any other form of user-generated media.

(More information on pg. 15)

### Teacher Webpages



BSD will provide a mechanism for teachers to post classroom-related webpages consistent with the published standards for teacher web pages. Special attention must be directed toward ensuring student privacy and safety. ([Web Publishing Guidelines](#))

Web editors and teachers posting to classroom

webpages must ensure and maintain appropriate content. The originating link must lead to a page with clear educational value or direct connection to the work of the District. All information on a teacher website must meet the parameters of the Instructional and Materials Selection (II/IIA, II/IIA-AR) and Studying Controversial Issues (INB and INB-AR) policies. District policy regarding firearms, tobacco, and alcohol must also be followed.

**Accessibility, Privacy, Safety and Security**

**Accessibility and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

BSD web pages need to use Alt Tags for images and make every effort to be ADA compliant.

**Family Education Rights and Privacy Act / Student Safety**

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records and student information. The policies described in FERPA help determine whether or not you can publish a student’s name, work, or photo online. Parents must notify the BSD in writing at the beginning of every year if they do not want their child’s picture, name or other identifying information on the website or any other public media. Specific guidelines for the posting of student pictures, names and work products are detailed in [Web Publishing Guidelines](#).

Webmasters should request the Release of Information Restrictions report in Synergy from the school secretary to ensure compliance with FERPA at all times. Additionally, webmasters should not post information that could jeopardize student safety, such as bus stop schedules and school floor plans.

**Information Security**

All material on the District website will be readily available to the public unless there is a compelling reason to limit access. Certain content must be password protected to protect security and safety. Access to information that requires a password should be restricted to:

- Information dealing with the management or operation of District technologies or facilities
- Protection for licensure or proprietary rights.
- Access to services containing personal student and staff information
- Floor plans

**Personal and Partner Organizational Web Content**

Beaverton staff who choose to personally post information related to their job must adhere to the same protections for student security, privacy, and appropriateness detailed in this document.

External organization web pages should have a disclaimer stating they are not sponsored by BSD and should not contain the BSD Logo.

Example: Greenway PTC is a volunteer non-profit organization and community of Greenway Elementary School. The Greenway School PTC website is separate from and is not controlled by the school or the school District and does not represent the school or Beaverton School District.



## Social Media



Social media can be a valuable tool to push out information to parents, students and community members. 76% of all adult internet users are on social media. Of all the adults using social media, 72% use Facebook and 23% use Twitter. Use these platforms to create strong connections, engage and seek input from your school community. Use them to celebrate the successes of your students.

The Beaverton School District recommends you maintain a separate personal and professional social media profile and maintain separate friends/followers on your personal and professional profiles. As an ambassador of the District, you are considered a public figure. Think of social media posts like a digital tattoo. They are public. They are permanent. On your school/organization page, always assign at least two administrators. There should never be just one administrator.

If you would like assistance setting up a social media account for your school or department, CCI can provide assistance. The CCI Department is also available to provide a presentation on social media best practices to staff members.

### Social Media – Best Practices

- Produce quality, accurate content
- Be frequent, but not too frequent
- Be responsible
- Be accurate
- Bring value
- Think twice about everything you post/collaborate
- Write guidelines for your Facebook page
- Check opt outs regularly
- Avoid using last names of students
- Do not tag students in photos
- Plan your posts
- Engage & interact
- Ask for feedback
- Respond to negative comments, but do not engage in a debate
- Keep copyright and trademark in mind



# Flyers

Flyers are useful forms of communication for schools to connect with their communities.

Flyers should be specific to their audience and allow for response from the community. Many e-newsletters now incorporate e-flyers. Flyers can be useful forms of communication for back-to-school night, school carnivals, or PTO announcements.

Flyers should follow three simple rules:

- Have concise language and clear intent
- Use graphics when appropriate and balance with copy
- Be error-free in language and grammar

## District Flyer Review Process

The Beaverton School District reviews flyer requests from community-based, non-profit and for-profit organizations on a monthly basis. All flyer requests must be submitted to the Communications & Community Involvement Department prior to distribution.

**Flyers must offer educational and/or extra-curricular learning opportunities for students, parents and staff. The Beaverton School District does not allow commercial advertising at any of its facilities.**

Individual schools may post flyers without going through the above process, if they also meet the criteria (PTO fundraisers, school events).

To submit a flyer, email Karen Brooks at Karen\_Brooks@Beaverton.k12.or.us with the following:

- Name and phone number for contact
- Email address to receive notification of approval or denial
- Who the flyer is targeting: students, parents, or staff
- What grade levels the flyer is targeting – or – indicate which schools shall receive the flyer
- A PDF of the flyer intended for distribution
- Include the following disclaimer in the flyer: ***“The Beaverton School District does not sponsor or endorse the activities and/or information in community flyers.”***

Please contact the Communications and Community Involvement Department with any further questions, (503) 356-4360.



Examples of flyers

## Graphic Design Support

The Beaverton School District is dedicated to creating professional, timely, and effective graphics and photos for many of our District publications and events. As Beaverton School District staff, you have access to request this service for your schools.

The CCI Department offers graphic design services such as brochures, infographics, program guides, posters and business cards. Requests can also be submitted to the CCI Department for photography at District and school events.

In addition to this, the CCI Department offers consultations for media, and publication needs, including document and webpage layout, flyer and poster design, copywriting, presentation and video production, and banner layout.

Please contact the **CCI Department** 503-356-4360 to submit your request for design, photography, or schedule your own consultation with our knowledgeable and creative team.

**THE HELP CENTER**  
Beaverton School District  
Homeless Education Liaison Program

**BRIDGES ACADEMY**

**TEACH FOR BEAVERTON**

**New Student Login!**

**All Student email accounts have changed to your BSD Student ID**

Simply use your student ID number with @bsd48.org to get access to your email and computer login (for example: 123456@bsd48.org)

**BEAVERTON SCHOOL DISTRICT** **FUTURE READY**

# First Impressions

In Beaverton, we want our schools to be warm, welcoming and inclusive. First impressions are lasting impressions. It takes just one-tenth of a second for an individual to make a judgment about someone or something and most likely, that first impression will never change. Making good first impressions is incredibly important because in most cases, you'll only get one shot at it.



## Office Visitors

The front office staff are responsible for setting a positive tone for the rest of the school or department. They are often the first people students, parents and community members meet.

A warm smile and greeting is a good start to welcoming all visitors. This is also a great opportunity to strengthen communication with the school community.

When greeting someone who enters the office:

- Think about what would make you feel welcome when coming into a school or District office.
- Remember, you are responsible for creating a welcoming environment.
- Always maintain a high level of professionalism.
- Know the layout of the building and locations of any scheduled conferences/meetings.
- You are in charge of your attitude. Be caring and empathetic.

## Telephone Etiquette

When answering calls for your school or department, remember:

- Answer promptly (before the third ring, if possible).

- Before picking up, discontinue any other conversation or activity that can be heard by the calling party.
- Identify the school or department name and your name.
- Speak clearly and distinctly in a pleasant tone of voice. Try smiling as you speak – your expression will carry over into your tone.
- Use the hold button when leaving the line so the caller doesn't accidentally hear conversations being held nearby.
- When transferring a call, be sure to explain to the caller what you are doing. It is also a good idea to provide the number or extension to which you are transferring in case the call is dropped.
- You may be the first and only contact this person has with your school or department. That first impression will stay with the caller long after the call is completed.
- If the caller has reached the wrong school or department, be courteous. If possible, attempt to find out where the person should call and to whom he or she should speak. The caller will greatly appreciate your efforts.
- If you do not know how to assist the caller, ask to take a message and return the call after researching their issue/question.



## Email Etiquette

Much like our website and District publications, emails sent from employees represent the District. Emails should be error-free and have proper capitalization, punctuation and grammar. Complete sentences are expected. Text messaging-style communications should not be used.

### Email Guidelines:

- Check your email daily.
- Always specify the subject of the message, clearly communicating the message content.
- Use proper punctuation and grammar, just as you would for any other official communication.
- Do not type messages using all capital letters. This is perceived as shouting and is considered rude.
- Never leave an email inquiry unanswered. Answer within one day, if possible. If a response will take longer than one day to research, consider sending a short message to the sender to let him or her know you are trying to find the requested information.
- Email is not an immediate form of communication. Some people check their email only once or twice per day. Do not send

anything that requires an instant response; use the telephone or visit face-to-face instead.

- Under Oregon Public Records law, all email messages are public records. Refrain from including anything in an email message that you would be embarrassed to have everyone see in The Oregonian or other media outlet.
- Send attachments only if you know your recipient will be able to read them. Sending PDF documents will allow most users to view, even on mobile devices. Large attachments (over 2MB) will be rejected by the server.
- Keep the content and tone of your email message professional. Often, attempts at humor and sarcasm are easily misinterpreted.
- The District email system should not be used for voicing personal viewpoints or conducting personal business.
- Email signatures are recommended for use by all staff in the District. Include your name, position, location and phone number in your email signature.

- 1. Speak professionally**
- 2. No vulgar language**
- 3. Use golden rule**



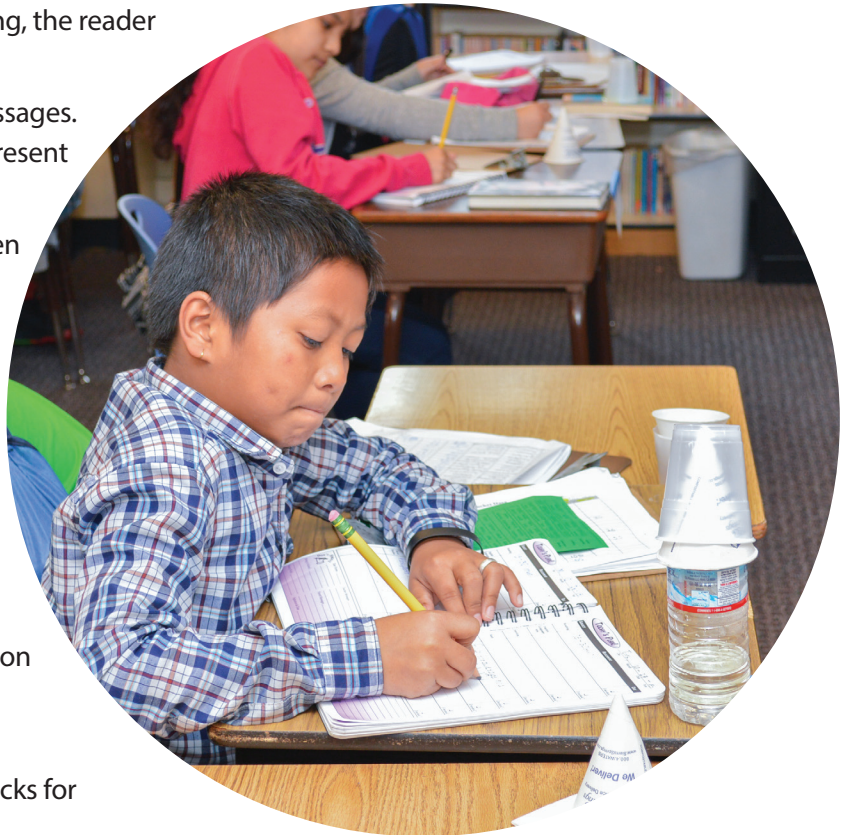
## Writing with Purpose & Clarity

Communication is a personal medium. When crafting a message, your goal should be to help people understand in as few words as possible; maximizing meaning while minimizing wordiness. Remember that the style, and even the mode of delivery, may change depending on the intended audience.

“Write only what is needed to present your message.”

Here are general guidelines when crafting a message:

- Keep in mind, if you do not completely understand what you are writing, the reader will not understand it either.
- Be concise. Include 2-3 key messages. Write only what is needed to present your message.
- Double or triple check all written material before release to the public. Have someone other than the person producing the publication check for content, grammar, style and spelling errors.
- Always have someone who knows nothing about the publication read it before printing or sending. If that person understands the context, your audience should as well.
- Computer spell-check only checks for spelling, not context.
- Avoid strings of prepositional phrases.
- Favor active voice over passive voice.
- Eliminate unnecessary words.



# Leadership Decision Making Process

Leaders are regularly confronted with a range of issues that require solid decision making skills. Utilizing a protocol that outlines the situation, considers who may be affected by the issue and then planning for engagement and communication will ensure a healthy process and final outcome.

**Decision to be made:**

**Final Decision/Recommendation:**

**Participants:**

**Consultants:**

## Analyze

**Leaders will determine:**

- Why is this decision important?
- Who will be impacted by the decision?
- What information is needed to assist the decision-making process?

## Process

**Leaders will establish:**

- What kind of decision will this be?
- Who should be responsible for making the decision?
- What are the steps that will create a healthy process?

## Communicate

**Leaders will articulate:**

- Who needs the communication?
- What is the timeline of the communication(s)?
- What will be the most effective communication strategy/mechanism?
- How will the success of the decision be measured?

# Communications Planning Made Simple

A communication plan does not need to be overly complex. It's simply a matter of identifying what you need to say, who you need to say it to, and the most effective way to say it. Start with a brief statement of what the issue is and how it will impact various stakeholders. Try to keep it to 25 words or less.

## Situation analysis

Next comes a brief analysis on what has brought about the issue. It might be the changing of a schedule, the start of an initiative or an incident that needs continuing communication.

## Identify your stakeholders

Who needs to know? Who will be affected or potentially affected? Don't forget the media as one of your stakeholders. Think parents, staff, volunteers, and community partners.

## Determine Key Messages: What do we need to tell them?

Determine your 3-5 key messages in concise sentences. Refer to these on an ongoing basis. This will help to ensure you stay on message and provide the essential information your stakeholders need.

## Determine Communication Channels: How are we going to tell them?

Your next step is identifying the best way to tell your stakeholders what is happening. You will need to use several communication strategies to reach your audience. These might include: personal letter, newsletters (online or printed), website, flyers, banners, posters, social media and face-to-face meetings.

## Assign Tasks to the Appropriate People: Who is responsible for doing it?

Assign communication tasks to the people who are going to help you. Set timelines/deadlines. Check in frequently to make sure you are on schedule. Stay flexible as you may need to adjust your plan as new information comes forward.

## Evaluate

Did your message hit the mark? What have you heard from your stakeholders? Learn from it.

For a communication planning grid, please refer to Appendix A.



# Facilitating Communications

## Focus Groups

A focus group is a small group of six to ten people led through a discussion by a skilled moderator. The group needs to be large enough to generate rich discussion but not so large that some participants are left out.



The focus group moderator nurtures discourse in an open and spontaneous format. The moderator’s goal is to generate a maximum number of different ideas and opinions from as many different people in the time allotted.

The ideal amount of time to set aside for a focus group is anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes. Beyond that timeframe, most groups are not productive and it becomes an imposition on participant time.

Focus groups are structured around a set of questions – usually no more than eight. The moderator should encourage discussion. Ideally, participant comments will influence the thinking and sharing of others. Some people may find themselves changing their thoughts and opinions during the session.

It takes more than one focus group on any one topic to produce valid results – usually three or four. You’ll know you’ve conducted enough groups (with the same set of questions) when you’re not hearing anything new from participants.

A focus group is not:

- A debate
- A conflict resolution session
- A problem-solving session
- A promotional opportunity

**For more assistance about conducting focus groups, please contact the Communications & Community Involvement Dept. at 503-356-4360.**



# Volunteer Programs

Community engagement in our schools is a critical aspect of helping our schools run efficiently on a day-to-day basis.

There are many ways our BSD staff can engage and encourage volunteerism in our schools such as, mentoring a student, helping out in



classrooms, coaching an after-school activity, or school beautification projects. Making these exciting and helpful opportunities known to your communities is the first step in helping to promote active volunteers in all of our BSD schools.

The Beaverton School District Volunteer Management System (VMS) allows for a streamlined application process, including required background checks. It is important that all BSD staff is familiar with the [requirements and policies](#) for all volunteers within our schools.

All new volunteers in our District must complete an online application from [Better Impact](#), which includes the appropriate [background check](#):

- [Parent/Guardian Volunteer and Background](#)

[Check Application](#)

- [Community Volunteer and Background Check Application](#)

Please take the time to review our District policy for Criminal Records Checks/Fingerprinting by visiting our [webpage](#).

Each school has a volunteer coordinator to support this process that should be greatly utilized. Volunteers in our schools contribute each day to the advancement of **WE**, and by facilitating proper volunteer practices, this will continue to grow and impact our schools in numerous ways.

For further information please contact Volunteer Services at [Johanna\\_Shrout@Beaverton.k12.or.us](mailto:Johanna_Shrout@Beaverton.k12.or.us) or at 503-356-4443.

# Community Partnership Teams

Each school has a Community Partnership Team comprised of several existing entities that bring parents and community into the school. Based on principal feedback, they already meet with many of these groups separately. Bringing these groups together creates a collaborative approach at the school level that is supported and encouraged at the District level and by the School Board. The teams streamline and magnify many efforts that are underway to support each student.



Department leaders may also work with community partners to meet defined needs.

The Community Partnership Team includes:

- School principal
- School volunteer coordinator(s)
- Parent group leader(s) or designee
- Faith partner(s)
- Business partner(s)

However, this is not an exclusive team, and principals, with their school community should identify others to expand this group, if desired.

Additional partners could include:

1. Current staff
2. Retired teachers, classified staff or administrators
3. Senior citizens, retirees, grandparents of students
4. Neighbors near the local school
5. Neighborhood Associations (City of Beaverton=NACs)
6. Community Participation Organizations (Washington County=CPOs)
7. Homeowners associations
8. Social service agencies
9. Non-profit organizations

## Roles and Responsibilities

1. Promote and assist with developing collaborative, school-based community outreach, engagement and volunteer activities amongst parents, nonparents, business, faith communities and community organizations. The Community Partnership Team and the school principal shall meet on a regular basis to assess school needs, and collaboratively and strategically set measurable goals, plan activities, track progress and evaluate outcomes.
2. Provide progress reports to the School Board and the Superintendent. These progress reports will be included in the School Board Business Meeting Packets.

Team members also serve as a communication link between the public in their school attendance area and the Board. Each school should regularly publicize their Community Partnership Team goals, work and accomplishments in their school newsletters, social media, at school gatherings, etc. The District will also use these success stories to further community engagement and understanding of the work happening in our schools.

3. The team participates in three District-level Community Partnership Team meetings per year to learn best practices, highlight and celebrate accomplishments and be briefed on District-level issues by the superintendent and his staff.
4. The Community Partnership Team will assist the principal and District with building use requests or issues as needed. For example, if a boundary adjustment was needed in a particular school attendance area, representatives of the Team could be asked to provide input to the District prior to final decisions. Other examples of District-level engagement would be bond measures or local option levies.

### **School Level Formation and Action Steps**

1. Community Partnership Teams will meet at each school regularly to plan, evaluate and adjust volunteer and community engagement activities based on ongoing school needs assessment, in collaboration with the school principal. By bringing all partners together, a more comprehensive and cohesive plan will be developed and executed to support the varied needs at each school. It is community building and relationship building at its best.

Examples of some resources to assist school teams:

- a. [Needs assessment](#)
  - b. [Schools and faith-based partnerships](#)
  - c. [Guidelines for developing business, community and education partnerships](#)
2. Community Partnership Teams will keep

Board members and the Superintendent apprised of their successes, challenges and progress by submitting regular updates to the Superintendent's Office for inclusion in the School Board packet.

### **Progress Reports**

Progress reports should include a synopsis of the activity(ies), results achieved including the number of volunteers, hours donated through planning and execution and student achievement data, if appropriate. In addition, anecdotal or qualitative evidence from staff and partners are encouraged. Stories and results illustrate the power of Community Partnership Teams and inspire even greater engagement to help all students succeed.

In addition, these reports should also include advice for the School Board concerning the needs and perspectives of the individual school community.

There are many examples of effective partnerships and community engagement activities. A resource bank is available to assist Community Partnership Teams.

### **District Support**

The team shall participate in three District-level Community Partnership Team meetings per year. The District meetings should be generative and engage and recognize our partners and partnerships. In addition, these meetings develop more people who are informed 'key communicators' who get things done in a positive way to help move our District forward, and help to develop a culture of innovation. Community Partnership Teams

fit into the WE Collaborate Pillar of Learning.

- October meeting: District Kick-Off Breakfast for all principals and partners; sets an inspiring and energizing tone for the school year; share District messages and/or requests for assistance.
- February meeting: Celebration of activities underway or completed; learning about best practices and helping each other succeed; share District messages and/or requests for assistance.
- May meeting: Annual celebration of successes and accomplishments; energize for the coming year.

Teams are also supported by the District's Communications and Community Involvement Department. They will promote and assist schools and departments in developing collaborative and inclusive Community Partnership Teams, helping to assess needs and making connections as requested with community partners and resources.

Contact:

**Christina Mackin**  
**Community Resource Coordinator**  
**503-356-4360**



# Engaging All Families to Improve Achievement

Research strongly points to the impact families have on their children’s achievement in school and in their future lives. Schools play an important role in encouraging families to be involved at home and at school. This involvement helps students achieve at higher levels, no matter what their background.



## Research Findings

### Families of all backgrounds are involved at home

Several studies show that families of all income and education levels, and from all ethnic and cultural groups, are engaged in supporting their children’s learning at home. White, middle-class families, however, tend to be more involved at school. Supporting more involvement at school from all families may be an important strategy for addressing achievement gaps.

### Programs and special efforts to engage families make a difference

One example is teacher outreach to parents, which results in strong, consistent gains in student performance in reading and math. Effective outreach practices include meeting face-to-face, sending learning materials home, and keeping parents in the loop about student progress.

Workshops for parents on helping their children at home are linked to higher reading and math scores. Schools with highly rated partnership programs make greater gains on state tests than schools with lower-rated programs.

### Higher-performing schools effectively involve all families and community

Schools that succeed in engaging families from diverse backgrounds share three key practices:

- Focus on building trust, collaborative relationships among teachers, families and community members
- Recognize, respect and address families’ needs, as well as class and cultural differences
- Embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared

## Effective Practices

### Link your school’s parent involvement efforts to student learning

Ask yourself how your program or activities will help parents:

- Know more about what their children are learning
- Promote high standards for student work
- Help parents assist their children at home
- Promote discussion about improving student progress

### Strategies to try:

- Include information about school expectations, standards and learning targets in regular communications and face-to-face meetings
- Show student work throughout the school and at back-to-school nights and open houses
- Engage parents and students in math and reading games at Family Nights

- Explain where students' skills need to be stronger. Use scoring guides and show parents how to use them
- Use the school newsletter and face-to-face meetings to discuss test results and what students are doing to meet higher standards

## Match practices to grade levels

Programs that lead to gains in children's learning take their age and developmental needs into account.

### Strategies to try:

#### Families with young children

- Arrange for home visits from trained parent educators with cultural backgrounds similar to their own or with knowledge of their culture
- Create lending libraries that offer games and learning materials to build skills at home
- Offer discussion groups with other families about children's learning
- Provide classes on how to stimulate their children's mental, physical and emotional development

#### Families of elementary and middle school students

- Provide workshops on topics that parents suggest, like building their children's vocabulary, positive discipline strategies, and supporting children through crises
- Encourage periodic calls from teachers (not just when there is a problem) about how their children are doing in class
- Provide learning packets in reading, science and math, with training on how to use them
- Schedule conferences with teachers to talk about their children's progress and what they are learning



#### Families of high school students

- Encourage meetings with counselors to help plan their children's academic program including courses students should take to be prepared for college or other post-secondary education
- Provide information about program options, graduation requirements, test schedules, and post-secondary education options and how to plan for them
- Provide information about where to find academic support, such as help with tutoring
- Financial aid information

#### Facilitate transitions

Children of all ages do better when they make a solid adjustment to a school, especially as they enter a new school or level. Schools can help students feel more comfortable and respected, feel like they belong at school, and are supported by teachers.

### Strategies to try:

- Offer families and students tours of the school and opportunities to visit and observe in the classrooms
- Meet with students and families at the feeder schools or programs to introduce staff, explain the school's programs and answer questions
- Make home visits the summer before school starts to begin building a relationship with families
- Work with families to prepare children for the next level and help them plan for post-secondary education and a career

## Develop families' sense of confidence and power

When parents have a sense of confidence and power, their children do better in school. We want parents to feel they can help their children do well in school and be happy and safe. We also want parents to feel they can overcome negative influences on their children and have a positive impact on the school and their neighborhood.

### Strategies to try:

- Engage families in planning how they would like to be involved at school
- Seek to engage a representative sample of parents and families, not just the parent-teacher organization leaders, about school policies and proposed actions
- Make it easy for parents to meet and discuss concerns with the principal, talk to teachers and guidance counselors, and examine their children's school records
- Facilitate families' connections with youth groups and programs
- Create a school directory so they can contact other parents
- Offer workshops on communicating with their children, about topics they suggest, such as talking with children about drugs, dating, problems with friends or family and values
- Give families information about how the education system works
- Keep voter registration forms and information about local government agencies in the school office
- Open the school to community meetings and collaborate with local organizations that can reach out to and organize parents and community members

## Develop the capacity of school staff to work with families and community

All school staff from the principal, to the custodian and nutrition services lead can benefit from learning more about how to work with parents and community members. Design ongoing educational opportunities for all school staff.

### Strategies to try:

- Help staff recognize the advantages of school, family and community connections
- Explore how trusting and respectful relationships with families and community members are achieved
- Enhance staff's ability to work with diverse families and understand their cultural backgrounds
- Explore the benefits of sharing power with families and community members

*Source: A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement. Henderson and Mapp. 2002.*



## District Identity



The purpose of a brand is to build a relationship with both current and potential stakeholders. Effective branding helps people connect positive experiences to an organization, fostering trust and confidence in that organization's mission. In this way, the Beaverton School District's own brand is a powerful asset.

### Logo Standards

The Beaverton School District logo is the signature of the District's brand. It is a visible reminder of our vision and commitment to students and community. Care must be taken to ensure that the unique look and style of the logo be maintained at all times.

The official logo should appear on all external and interdepartmental/school publications and documents produced by each school and department within the District. Please help us use the logo in a consistent manner to ensure that we present the proper image to the public.

The CCI Department has prepared a detailed outline to help achieve a consistent image that represents the Beaverton School District for electronic and print applications. ([See Logo Standards for Use Guidelines](#))

Please refer to these guidelines when preparing documents and publications for both internal and external use. If you have questions about proper use, please contact Communications and Community Involvement at (503) 356-4360.

## Conventions/Style Guide



### Titles/Capitalization

Capitalize the District's name: Beaverton School District. Variations of the name, such as Beaverton Schools or the District should also be capitalized.

Always capitalize when making a direct reference to the Superintendent or using it in place of his/her name. It should not be capitalized in general references.

Examples: Superintendent John Smith; John Smith was the 13th superintendent of the Beaverton School District.; The Superintendent will issue a statement on the new policy.

Never capitalize teacher unless it is part of a formal title.

Example: The new policy affects all teachers.; Attendance is required at New Teacher Orientation in August.

Always capitalize formal meetings of the School Board, including Business Meetings, Work Sessions, etc. Each elected member of the School



Board is referred to as Board Member. Board is always capitalized, and Member should only be capitalized when it is used as a formal title.

Here are the correct spelling and capitalization rules for some common technology terms:

- download
- Facebook
- hashtag
- Internet
- iPad, iPhone, iPod
- social media
- Twitter, tweet, tweeted, retweet
- website, webpage
- YouTube

Internet and Intranet should always be capitalized. Internet and World Wide Web are proper nouns and should always be capitalized. Do not capitalize website, webmaster, webpage, etc.

Do not capitalize names of curriculum areas, except when a language or other proper noun is included. Example: math, science, Spanish, physical education. Use capital letters with official course titles (not general subjects). Example U.S. History.

Do not capitalize grade levels: third grade or kindergarten.

## Punctuation

### Apostrophe

Use an apostrophe to indicate that a noun is possessive. Add an apostrophe and "s" to singular nouns and only add an apostrophe to plural nouns ending in "s."

Example: Boy's backpack or Boys' backpacks

If the noun is singular but ends in "s," add an apostrophe and an "s." If the noun is plural and does not end in "s," add an apostrophe and an "s."

Example: Lois's book or Children's books

Do not use an apostrophe for sports teams. The team consists of a group of girls or boys. They don't own the team.

Example: The boys basketball team went to state.

Example: The girls soccer team won the championship.

Do not use an apostrophe and "s" to show possessive when using possessive pronouns:

Examples: its, ours, theirs, his or hers

### Additional Tips

- For plural nouns ending in s, add only an apostrophe: the girls' toys, states' rights.
- For singular common nouns ending in s, add 's: the hostess's invitation, the witness's answer.
- For singular proper names ending in s, use only an apostrophe: Descartes' theories, Kansas' schools.
- For singular proper names ending in "s" sounds such as x, ce, and z, add 's: Mark's theories, the prince's life.
- For plurals of a single letter, add 's: Mind your p's and q's, the Red Sox defeated the Oakland A's.
- Do not use 's for plurals of numbers, or multiple letter combinations: the late 1980s, RBIs, MCAs, IEPs.

## Comma

Use a comma to separate items in a list. A comma before the word “and” in a list (the Oxford comma) may be used if it will add clarity. While it is acceptable to either use the Oxford comma or not, you should apply it consistently within your document.

Example: Bring books, pens and pencils to class.

Example: Research newspapers, Internet, radio and television reports, and magazines.

## Dashes and Hyphens

Hyphens (-) are used to form a single idea from two or more words. Use a hyphen for a compound modifier, when two or more words modify a noun or verb (except with the word “very” or “ly” adverbs). Note that there is no space before or after a hyphen.

Example: She is well-known in the community.

Hyphens are also used to express ranges that include more than two of anything.

Examples: 1983-1990

Grades 6-12

A dash (—) is used to denote an abrupt change in thought within a sentence or an emphatic pause.

Example: The fourth grade science class will go to the lake on Friday — if the weather cooperates.

Example: This is the first day — in a long time — that we went to the beach.

### To create a dash in Microsoft Word:

Type the word you want to precede the dash. Press the hyphen key twice and type the word

you would like to follow the dash, followed by a space after the second word. If you would like to include a period after the last word, simply type in the space and delete it once the dash is created.

Press the ctrl + alt + hyphen keys at the same time. Note that this is only available using the hyphen on the numeric keypad not the main keyboard.

### To create a dash in Mac OS X:

Hold down the option and shift keys and type a hyphen.

## Exclamation Points and Periods

Exclamation points should only be used to express a high degree of surprise, incredulity or other strong emotion. Do not use multiple exclamation points.

Example: We won the state competition!

Use a period for mildly exclamatory sentences.

Examples:

- Our class will visit the science museum on Thursday.
- Periods are not used in acronyms or abbreviations, except for “a.m.” and “p.m.”
- IB Diploma
- IEP meeting
- AP courses

When using quotation marks, the period always goes inside the quotation marks.

Example: The teacher suggested I “stop running in the halls.”

## Quotation Marks vs. Italics

Use quotation marks around articles in periodicals and newspapers, parts and chapters

of books, short stories and essays included in books, short poems, radio and television programs, songs and official titles of art exhibits.

Example: I was listening to “Hungry Like the Wolf” on the radio today.

Italicize titles and subtitles of books, pamphlets, brochures, periodicals, newspapers, collections of poems, plays, essays, and short stories, plays, movies, operas, CDs and works of art.

Example: I read the book *Duran Duran in Their Own Words* during summer break.

### Spaces

Use only one space between sentences. This helps on the formatting end when text is translated into graphic or web layouts.

### Colon

The colon acts as a pause, which introduces related information. It indicates that the reader should look forward to information that follows on from the earlier statement. They can be used to present an explanation, draw attention to something, or join ideas together.

Examples:

- We covered many of the fundamentals in our writing class: grammar, punctuation, style and voice.
- My roommate gave me the things I needed most: companionship and quiet.
- Shakespeare said it best: “To thine own self be true.”
- Many graduate students discover that there is a dark side to academia: late nights, high stress and a crippling addiction to caffeinated beverages.

### Semi-colon

The semi-colon looks like a comma with a period above it, and this can be a good way to remember what it does. A semi-colon creates more separation between thoughts than a comma does but less than a period does. Here are the two most common uses of the semi-colon:

To help separate items in a list, when some of those items already contain commas.

Example: The STEM conference speakers were: Dr. Theo Anderson, Engineering; Dr. Susan James, Robotics; Ms. Kay Okonjo, Physics; and Prof. Jim Domashev, Mathematics.

To join two sentences

Example: They couldn’t make it to the football game and back before curfew; they decided to go to a movie instead.

### Formatting with Bullet Points

There are multiple formats you can use for bullets, just be consistent throughout the document with the formatting.

Capital letter and full stop/period (this is the most common format)

Example: Mrs. Ellingson led the following activities on field day:

- Capture the flag.
- Bicycle relays.
- Foursquare.

Lowercase letters and no end mark.

Example: Mrs. Ellingson led the following activities on field day:

- capture the flag
- bicycle relays
- foursquare

Punctuate like a sentence (be aware that not all your bullet points will lend themselves to this structure, so it is often difficult to maintain consistency throughout a lengthy document if you choose this method).

Example: Mrs. Ellingson led the following activities on field day:

- capture the flag,
- bicycle relays, and
- foursquare.

Punctuate like a sentence with semicolons (to be grammatically pure, you should only use this formatting when your list items contain commas).

Example: Mrs. Ellingson led the following activities on field day:

- capture the flag;
- bicycle relays; and
- foursquare.

Ensure all your bullets make sense with the words of introduction. Here is an example that doesn't:

Example: Mrs. Ellingson provided the following snacks at field day:

- apples
- granola bars
- a participation ribbon

Create parallel lists. In other words, use a similar-looking word for the first word in each bullet. Here is an example that doesn't:

Example: Mrs. Ellingson taught the students how to:

- Be a good sport

- Listen to instructions
- Cheating is not allowed

## Commonly Confused Words

### **affect, effect**

These words have slightly different pronunciations and quite different meanings. Affect means to influence, to cause, a response; it is always used as a verb. Example: This music will affect my mood. Affect can also mean to assume, to be given to or to pretend. Example: She affected a cheerful manner of presentation. Affect as a noun has to do with emotion and empathy.

Effect as a noun means result, accomplishment.

Example: What was the effect of this assessment?

As a verb, effect means to cause or to bring about. Example: The new principal will effect great changes in our school. In plural form, effects can mean goods or property. Example: His effects were left in his locker.

### **alot, a lot, allot**

- Alot is not a word.
- A lot means "a large number."
- Allot means "to parcel out."

### **assure, ensure, insure**

Assure means to convince or to guarantee and refers only to persons.

Example: I assure you this is the right way to go.

Ensure means to make certain.

Example: Our schools ensure quality curriculum opportunities.

Insure means to guard against loss.

Example: Please insure the receipt of this letter.

Insure and ensure are applied to both people



and property.

**different from, different than**

- The word “different” is used to draw distinction. In general, if a noun follows “different” use from.

Example: Facebook is different from Twitter.

Example: The Twitter experience is different than I thought it would be.

e.g., i.e.

- e.g., literally, “for example.” A comma should follow. Not interchangeable with “i.e.”
- i.e., literally, “that is.” A comma should follow. Not interchangeable with “e.g.”

**further, farther**

- Further is used to indicate figurative distance.
- Farther is used to indicate physical distance.

Example: If you complain further about the weather, I will move my chair farther away.

**I, me**

- I, a subjective pronoun, is used when the pronoun is the subject of a verb.

Example: Sara and I are attending a conference this year.

- Me, an objective pronoun, is used when the pronoun of the object is a verb.

Example: Can you attend the conference with Sara and me?

**into, in to**

- The word into is a preposition that answers the question, where?

Example: Peter walked into the classroom.

Example: Paul went into business for himself after college.

- When the words in and to happen to end up next to each other, they should remain separate words.

Example: Mary walked in to see her boss.

**it’s, its**

- Shows possession: The dog chewed on its bone.
- A contraction of it is: It’s very nice outside.

**less, fewer**

- Less is used to indicate uncountable amounts and volumes.
- Fewer is used to indicate countable, individual things.

Example: I need to spend less time on Pinterest and pin fewer than 50 pins a day.

**lose, loose**

- Lose has multiple meanings, among them: to fail to win, to misplace, be too late for, waste, become absorbed in, become worse off, become flustered.

Example: She tends to lose her patience when she is running late.

- Loose also has multiple meanings, among them: unfastened, not tightened, inaccurate, immoral, not close-sitting.

Example: The rules about what you can wear are pretty loose.

**that, which**

- That is used to introduce a restrictive clause: You can’t get rid of the word “that” without changing the meaning of the sentence. The “that” part of the sentence is not surrounded by commas.

Example: People who drive cars that are designed for racing get more speeding tickets than people who drive hybrids.

- Which is used to introduce a non-restrictive clause. You can remove the clause containing “which” and it won’t change the meaning of the sentence. Non-restrictive clauses have a comma before and after them (or only before the clause if it comes at the end of a sentence).

Example: Lamborghinis, which are fast, often elicit envy.

## **then, than**

- Then is a description of time.

Example: I ate lunch, then I went on a bike ride.

- Than is used when making a comparison

Example: I can type faster than you can.

## **there is, there are**

- There is (or there’s) is used when writing (or speaking) about one thing.
- There are is used when writing (or speaking) about multiples.

Example: There are two good reasons to consider setting up a Facebook Page: it’s fun and there is a good chance your friends are already there.

## **there, their, they’re**

- There is an adverb meaning place and is also an introductory subject.

Example: There are many people who work in our office but who weren’t there today.

- Their is a possessive pronoun.

Example: Their Instagram has a million Likes.

- They’re is a contraction of “they are.”

Example: They’re going to the Instagram meetup this weekend.

## **who, it**

- If you’re writing about people, always use who.

Correct: The staff who arrived early today received donuts.

Incorrect: The staff that arrived early today received donuts.

- If you’re writing about a place, always use it.

Correct: Starbucks said it would give everyone free coffee today.

Incorrect: Starbucks said they would give everyone free coffee today.

Better: Starbucks is giving out free coffee today.

## **who, that**

- Who is used to modify people. That is used to modify things.

Correct: We recognize the students who gave of themselves in service to others.

Incorrect: We recognize the football team that gave time in service to others.

## **who, whom**

- Who refers to the subject of a clause.
- Whom refers to the object of a clause.

Example: Who has a better YouTube channel – Jimmy Fallon or Jimmy Kimmel? They’re both funny, but whom do you prefer?

## **your, you’re**

- Your is the second person possessive adjective and is used to describe something as belonging to you.
- You’re is a contraction of “you are.”

Example: You’re going to wish that your company had used an app to collect email addresses from the 1,000 people who entered your contest.

## **Word Choice**

### **student, child, teen**

Teachers have students; parents have children or teens. When addressing children in the classroom, refer to them as students. When

referring to parents about their children, refer to them as child(ren), son(s), daughter(s) or teen(s).

### parent, guardian, family

When writing a formal salutation, it is appropriate to address parent and guardian. Example:

“Dear Parent or Guardian.” In less formal communications, it is allowable to address “family,” i.e., “Dear (your school name) Families.”

### singular, plural

Maintain singular nouns with singular pronouns, plural nouns with plural pronouns. If referencing a singular object, “their” should not be the pronoun in the sentence: “The teacher brought in her favorite treat for the class.” Sometimes “their” is used to avoid using he or she. However, this is not grammatically correct and should not be used. Rewrite the sentence to avoid grammatically incorrect phrases.

Incorrect: Each student should talk with their teacher.

Correct: All students should talk with their teachers.

When a singular pronoun is needed, it is acceptable to use “he” or “she,” but not both.

Example: The kindergartener was thrilled when it was her turn to use the SMARTBoard. Another student smiled when his name was called.

Incorrect: We asked each student to talk with his or her parents.

Correct: We asked all students to talk with their parents about homework.

Something, no one, everyone, everybody, everything, somebody, and nobody are all singular nouns requiring singular pronouns and verbs.

## Avoid Redundancy

It is easy to become redundant in an effort to add emphasis. Use no more words than are necessary to convey your meaning. In these examples, the words in bold are redundant and should be omitted.

- they were **both** alike
- **a total of** 68 participants
- instructions, which were **exactly** the same as those used
- **absolutely** essential
- has been **previously** found
- small **in size**
- **one and** the same
- **completely** unanimous

## Dates, Numbers & Time

**Dates & Years:** For dates and years, always use figures. Do not use st, nd, rd or th with number dates. Always capitalize and spell out months unless it is used with a number date. When used with a date, the following months may be abbreviated: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. Ensure consistent use of spelled/abbreviated dates throughout the communication.

Example: January 1, 2017; Oct. 24, 2017; NOT February 2nd, 2017.

Commas are not necessary if only a year and month are given, but commas should be used to set off a year if the date, month and year are given. Use the letter s but no apostrophe after the figures when expressing decades or centuries. An apostrophe should only be used before figures expressing a decade if numerals are left out.

Example: Classes begin Aug. 25; Oregon State University was founded October 27, 1869; The

semester begins in January 2017; The 1800s; The '90s.

School years should appear as follows: 2016-2017 or 2016-17, Not 16-17.

Capitalize days of the week, but do not abbreviate.

## Numbers

Spell out all numbers below 10 and use figures for 10 and above. Some exceptions:

- Act 1, Scene 2
- a 5-year-old girl
- a 2:1 ratio
- a 4-3 score

Always use figures when referring to ages.

- a 5-year-old boy
- the boy is 5 years old
- the law is 8 years old
- the race is for 3-year-olds
- the woman is in her 30s (no apostrophe)

Use figures when using a percent and spell out the word "percent" unless you are using it in scientific context or labeling a graph.

- 99 percent of families responded to the survey.

Spell out a number at the beginning of a sentence. The only exception is if it is for a calendar year.

Page numbers should be included on any document that exceeds two pages.

Hyphenate numbers when referring to grade levels.

- first-grade reading list
- seventh-grade band uniforms

## Time

Times should always be accompanied by a.m. and p.m. - lowercase and separated by periods. Always spell out noon and midnight. Example 1:00 p.m.; 9:00 a.m. – noon; 10:30 p.m. – midnight.

## Common Acronyms

When using acronyms in your writing, always spell out the acronym on first reference, followed with the acronym in parentheses immediately after. Avoid using multiple acronyms in the same sentence. The CCI Department maintains a [list](#) of acronyms used within the District.



Appendix A



PROJECT/ISSUE:

Overall Deadline:

Task	Audience	Person Responsible	Notes/Description	Timeline/Due Date





