



BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

KELLER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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3C. Report

TO: BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

DATE: July 12, 2004

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT REPORT

Our Mission

To be the primary information source for the Keller Independent School District, fostering an open environment that serves the best interests of our students.

How do we accomplish this mission:

The Communications Department meets its mission through proven historical internal and external communication methods. We continue to seek new opportunities and conduits for disseminating information to our community, and we proactively seek feedback from our parents and staff to ensure that we are meeting their needs.

Our Methods, Accomplishments, and Future Initiatives

- Media Relations
- Community Partnerships
- Parent and Community Relations
- Special Events
- Publications
- Web Site
- Awards
- Upcoming Initiatives

Media relations

Press Coverage

- The Communications Department serves as the main point-of-contact for all of Keller ISD's media relations.
- In the two weeks prior to the opening of Central High School, Keller ISD employees and administrators were featured in more than 40 different television news segments, with a combined earned media total of more than \$500,000. More than 20 televised interviews were given on the morning of August 4, 2003, during the first day of classes.
- All of the region's major newspapers covered the opening of Central High School, and photographs from the first day were covered in newspapers as far away as Houston (Houston Chronicle, August 5, 2003).
- KRLD News Radio covered the opening extensively, and segments were featured within the Texas News Network affiliates of the station – reaching dozens of media markets statewide.
- We have been working very closely with the media during the superintendent search process and the recent announcement of the finalist, Dr. James Veitenheimer.
- Currently, we are gearing up to manage the 2004 Bond Election, and are developing a media plan to ensure KISD residents will be informed of propositions contained within the proposal.

Crisis communications

- KISD Communications Department serves as the media's main point-of-contact in the event of an emergency on KISD Campuses. Jason Meyer serves as a member of the Crisis Communications team, and is on-call 24 hours a day in the event of a KISD emergency.
- We work closely with Director of Guidance and Counseling Janie Casey in developing crisis strategies and communicating those to others in Keller ISD.
- This past summer, we redeveloped the Crisis Communications Guide.
- The Communications Department headed up media relations efforts in several crisis situations during the 2003-04 school year, including the recent meningitis case at Keller High School.

Public Information Requests

- The Communications Department continues to serve as the Public Information Office for the Keller ISD. Since July 1, 2003, our department has received more than 75 official requests for public information. Many of these requests contain numerous items, and can involve several KISD departments and campuses.
- We make sure that the information is provided within the 10-working day time limit set by state law.
- KISD Administration held a Public Information Act seminar on June 15, 2004. The seminar was given by TASB, and attendance was required for all administrators at the director level and above (including their secretaries).

Campus PR reps

- The Communications Department maintains a Campus PR Representative network that keeps KISD Administration informed of campus activities that could be of interest to the media.
- We plan to continue this network during the 2004-05 school year, and will work closely with KISD principals to address other means of keeping KISD Administration informed of campus activities.

Community Partnerships

Partners in Education

- We are currently working with Director of Secondary Education Nika Davis to integrate the program with the KISD Curriculum Department.
- We are working with Cynthia Fisher-Miller of Fort Worth Chamber, and Lisa Cox of Junior Achievement to tap into major Tarrant County employers for partnership opportunities.
- During the first week of summer, the Communications Department re-launched the Junior Career Interns program after a two-year hiatus. More than 30 KISD 8th grade students were placed in 25 companies and government offices.
- We will be working to establish a steering committee, made up of local businesses, to ensure the continued success of the program.
- We are working with the Technology and Instruction Department to integrate the Web Portal launch with the Byte-by-Byte program.

Chambers of Commerce

- Keller ISD joined the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce in September 2003. Since that time, Keller ISD was invited to serve on the Chamber's prestigious Workforce Development Committee. Director of Communications Jason Meyer represents KISD at these quarterly meetings.
- Director of Communications Jason Meyer serves on the BEST Committee of the Northeast Tarrant Chamber of Commerce, and is a current member of the Board of Directors for the Keller Chamber of Commerce.

Rotary

- Director of Communications Jason Meyer joined the Keller Rotary Club in October 2003, and is currently serving as the Club Service Chairman and newsletter editor.
- Acting Superintendent Bill Newton has taken an active role, along with numerous other KISD administrators, in the club's high-profile "Star Spangled Streets" citywide flag program.

United Way

- We head up the United Way fund drive every year. This year, Keller ISD employees gave \$41,510 to United Way! That compares to \$39,171 last year!
- We have dozens of high-quality prizes arranged for employees this year, including overnight stays at the Worthington Hotel, dinner at Del Frisco's and Medieval Times, and numerous pieces of sports memorabilia from the Texas Rangers and Dallas Cowboys.
- We will continue to manage this program in the 2004-05 school year.

Parent and Community Relations

Parent e-mail group: Since its inception in March 2002, Keller ISD has signed-up more than 5500 parents for its district-wide e mail list. Every month, our department sends several news announcements that include information like:

- TAKS scores
- Calendar forum information
- Graduation information, including dates and driving directions (included in all seven updates)
- New school names
- Teachers of the Year
- Top 10 graduates
- Links to the latest issue of the Key
- Links to new photos
- School supply lists
- School Board notes
- Programs like Junior Career Interns (JC) and Partners in Education

Calendar forum promotion

- We continue to publicize the calendar hearing through the media, web site, campus newsletters and parent e-mail groups.

Move-in support / Questions and answers

- Our office fields numerous calls every day from people seeking information about Keller ISD.
- We send out general information packets to people who are moving into the area.

Campus support

- We continue to serve our campuses and employees in several vital areas including: drafting letters to send home to parents, designing brochures, and overseeing district-wide web activities.
- We are their first point of contact whenever a member of the media, or community official makes a call to their campus.

Special events

Convocation

- KISD Communications Department is responsible, along with the Instruction Department, for developing the Convocation program every year.
- The 2003-04 theme was "Go For the Gold" and our featured speaker was former Channel 8 news personality, Anita Vanetti.
- "Go For the Gold" banners were given to each campus at the start of the school year, and were draped at the front of the schools.
- Ms. Bette Perot has agreed to be the speaker at the 2004-05 Convocation.

Senior Spotlight Luncheon

- The Communications Department works in tandem with the Keller Chamber of Commerce on this luncheon. This past year, UNT Head Football Coach Darrell Dickey was the featured speaker.

Top 40 Recognition Banquet

- The Communications Department assists the Instruction Department and Superintendent's office with this event.

Employee Banquet

- The Communications Department is responsible for this event.
- This past year we organized the "Night in the Big Easy" New Orleans themed event.
- This event is growing very large, and KISD Administration is looking into different options for employee recognition as our staff size increases.

School Dedications

- Central High School's Dedication was held on December 7, 2003.
- Numerous dignitaries and community leaders were honored guests at the event.
- We are currently planning the dedications for Bette Perot and Woodland Springs Elementary Schools.

Publications

- The Communications Department publishes *The Key* newsletter four times a year, as a direct communications piece for KISD parents and the KISD community, in general. *The Key* received a facelift this past year, and is now a full-color newsletter with a magazine style format.
- Publish E-News, an e-mail publication that reaches more than 5500 parents.
- Developed a newsletter template for the KISD Athletic Department that each campus can use in communicating with parents of athletes.

Web site

- This year, KISD will launch a new and improved website, with new content and a cleaner feel to the design. A web specialist will be assigned to the Communications Department and will be making regular updates and improvements to the site, as well as ensuring that our schools individual sites are meeting a district-wide content standard. The goal is to create a systems-type approach to our external communications process, and our websites serve as our first line in this area.

Awards

- One of the highlights for our department every year is to attend the Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) meeting, where we share ideas with our peers from other districts and get feedback on our work.

- This past year, Keller ISD won more than 15 TSPRA awards, including two “Best of Category” awards for the Central High School Dedication brochure and the Holiday Card.

Upcoming Initiatives

- During the opening weeks of the 2004-05 school year, Director of Communications Jason Meyer will be working with Superintendent James Veitenheimer to introduce him to various civic groups, open our two new schools, and to provide informational sessions and execute our district-wide plan for the 2004 Bond Election.
- The Communications Department will be hiring two new staff-members – the aforementioned Web Specialist, and the replacement for the former Communications Specialist. Both positions should be filled prior to the first week of classes.
- This year, we will initiate a year-round bond campaign that will follow the September election. Because we are in a constant state of growth, it is vital that we provide regular communication with our community and continually update them on the status of that growth. By providing a year-round program, we will not need to gear up each year that the Board takes a bond issue to the public. The Communications Department is planning to provide two newsletters per year, as well as maintaining a separate website, while using a continuous theme throughout.

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Respectfully submitted,

Jason Meyer
Director of Communications