

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #832
STUDY SESSION – BOARD OF EDUCATION
Friday, April 27, 2007 - 7:00 AM
Mahtomedi District Education Center - Community Room

The Mission of the Mahtomedi School District No. 832, as a multi-community public school system, is to provide individually challenging, lifelong learning experiences for all people, leading to productive and self-fulfilling roles in a global society, accomplished through partnerships with students, families, staff and communities all committed to excellence.

- AGENDA -

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL OF ATTENDANCE
3. DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS
 - A. Review Proposed List of Expenditure Reductions for 2007-2008 2
Presenter: Denise Sundstrom and Mark Wolak
 - B. Update on Facility Planning Process
 - C. Review Process for School Board/Administration Planning 3
 - D. Report on National School Boards Association National Conference
Presenter: Cathy Dalton, Kevin Donovan, and Mark Wolak
 - E. Report on Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group
Presenter: Mark Wolak
 - F. Report on Middle School Program Review 4
Presenter: Sue Ann Gruver
 - G. Communication Plan 16
 - H. Selection Process for Administrator Vacancies
 - I. Other Items
4. ADJOURNMENT

Reduction Areas 2007-2008

Districtwide

Public Relations	10,000
Integration Reallocation	68,000
Food Service Chargeback	25,000
Special Ed/ Para	20,000
Community Ed Chargeback	18,000
Maintenance/Operations	25,000

Total Districtwide	166,000
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High School

Increase in Parking Fees	11,000
Increase in Athletic Fees/Gates	5,000
Reduce Hs Staff .83 FTE	41,650

Total High School	57,650
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Middle School

Instructional Supplies	12,460
Capital Expenditure	10,000
DAPE Recode to Spec Ed	11,000

Total Middle School	33,460
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OH & WW

Capital Expenditure	14,920
ELL Reorganization	17,335
Volunteer Coordinator	15,875

Total OH & WW	48,130
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ALP

Summer School Staff	3,340
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Total ALP	3,340
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Total School Reductions	142,580
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Total Reductions	308,580
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SCHOOL BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION PLANNING

- 1. Discuss strategic issues and long-range challenges for the District,**
- 2. Identify desired results/outcomes we want to see achieved, and**
- 3. Set the process to improve goals and strategies for 2007-2009**

School Board --- April 30, Monday

Develop agenda for planning session by individual input from each board member with Barbara Sanderson, consultant. Barbara will develop the agenda for May 21 based on the input from all board members.

School Board --- May 21, Monday 8:00 am to noon, off site location (Sanderson, Facilitator)

What is the impact we wish to have on the school district as a leader, and how might we ensure we have that impact together?

What is continuous improvement practice for school board members? For the superintendent? For administration and school teams?

School Board ---Preliminary Discussion with Administrators (date and time to be determined, June ???)

Initial dialogue with administrators in anticipation of end-of-year data and the Balanced Scorecard.

What do we know today from the data we collected this year, what additional data is needed to be successful as a team in September?

Do the processes for involvement we use today work effectively for the community?
What additional ways might we involve employees and students in the process of overall continuous improvement?

Administrative Team --- August 7-9, 2007 Planning Session

Administrators review progress and prepare for session with School Board

School Board and Administrative Team --- August or September (date to be determined based on final student performance information)

What information is available for areas defined on Balanced Scorecard?

What does the data tell us?

What decisions must we make together to improve the performance of the school system?

School Board and Community --- September/October

Host Community Forum to share short- and long-range goals for improvement –accept feedback

Mahtomedi Middle School Program Review
Report to Mahtomedi School Board
April 27, 2007

Sue Ann Gruver, Assistant Superintendent
Mike Hopkins, Educational Consultant

RECOMMEDATION TO SCHOOL BOARD FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM REVIEW

Issues for consideration by the Superintendent and School Board include:

- **Continued Support for Middle School Team Model**
- **Stable Enrollment to maintain class and section sizes**
- **Professional Development resources to support initiatives of differentiation, SMART Board technology, science-engineering focus, conflict resolution training and technology integration**
- **Variety of experiences available to students during the middle school experience (Allied Arts).**

BACKGROUND

As promised in the 2004 levy campaign, the Mahtomedi Public Schools' board and administration is in the process of conducting a thorough review of the programs and services offered at all age levels throughout the district. The purpose of the program review is to examine all programs and services provided by the district and determine those that most impact student learning and development. A thorough program review will likely impact the mission of the district, choice of service delivery models at different age levels, choice in programs and services offered to students and families, staffing, fees assessed, and future district spending.

The middle school program review began with the study of best practice in middle school practices. Members of the Middle School Program Review Committee include teachers from all programs and grade levels, parents, principals and district administration. Dr. Sue Ann Gruver, Assistant Superintendent, led the overall effort. Michael Hopkins, an educational consultant, assisted in planning, facilitating meetings, and documenting the results of the process.

Middle School Program Review Committee:

Ryan Collins	6 th Grade Social Studies
Barb Erickson	6 th Grade Language Arts
Wendy Grandlienard	6 th -8 th Grade Art and FCS
Sue Ann Gruver	DO – Assistant Superintendent
Mike Hopkins	Consultant
Shannon Jacobson	8 th Grade Math
Pam Klinkhammer	Community Education
Bob Merthan	7 th Grade Social Studies
Keith Newman	8 th Grade Math
Linda Niziolek	6 th -8 th Grade Instrumental Music
Amber Plooster	Parent
Scott Regnier	Guidance Counselor
Mary Schnell	School Psychologist, Special Ed.
Kelly Shafer	7 th Grade Science
Becky Shay	Parent
Sharon Zweber	Principal

The program review began during the 2005-2006 school year, with the study of best practices in middle schools across the country. After an intense ten-month study, this group will present recommendations to the school board in May, 2007 for consideration.

Throughout the data gathering process, consistent themes emerged that are noteworthy. These findings are summarized from the following sources: Staff, parent and student NSSE (National Survey of School Effectiveness) results and staff participation throughout the process.

Middle School Staff Input

The Middle School Program Review Committee reviewed the NSSE data from students, staff and parents given in May, 2006. These results were compared with the same survey results of 2000. Five themes for continued work emerged from the survey results and staff input. They include:

- Differentiation
- Options for at-risk students
- Homework
- Advisory
- Student safety

The committee collapsed these themes to three major areas of focus:

- Differentiation
- Student Success (at-risk students)
- Student Safety

Embedded in these three goal areas are the 6-12 Engineering/Science focus and SMART Board technology/technology integration.

In October, 2006, the committee was then led through a goal setting process using the Balanced Scorecard approach. Together they developed the performance indicators, data sources, and evidence of current practice. At that point, the committee members took the goals selected, back to the entire staff to answer the following questions: What is the vision for the future of the MMS? What do we need to add to get there? What are we going to stop doing? What resources are required to accomplish this vision?

In November, 2006, the committee reviewed the feedback from department/grade level teams on the goals and the desired levels of proficiency. The committee chose at this point, to narrow the breadth of the matrix from five levels to three: Ideal, Acceptable and Intervene.

In January, 2007, a strategies column was added to the evolving matrix to guide the future work of the middle school. The final goals and strategies document was developed with the ongoing feedback/input of the entire middle school staff. Although some of the goals and strategies in this document are currently in place, the new areas detailed in this document, will guide the future work of the middle school beginning in 2007-2008.

The final question for consideration by the program review committee was to consider how to adjust the Middle School program if/when the budget constraints impact the middle school. The impact of declining enrollment and limited state support of public education, are placing our district in this unwelcome situation. Sharon Zweber led the group through a consideration of the options previously used in Mahtomedi and surrounding districts. The entire staff will be asked to grapple with these questions on April 11th at a full staff meeting.

**Mahtomedi Middle School
Program Review Timeline
2006-2007**

The Mahtomedi Middle School Review process began in April, 2006 and will conclude in April, 2007.

April 19, 2006	Welcome by Mark Wolak Overview of process by Sue Ann Gruver Mike Hopkins, a consultant facilitating the review process asked the group to articulate norms for their work together. Reviewed <i>Examining the Teaching Life</i> by Wiggins & McTighe
May 18, 2006	Reviewed PLC Responses to Strengths and Challenges Discussed <i>Breaking Ranks in the Middle</i> Reviewed and responded to Ed. Leadership "Teaching the Tweens" Identified areas to research during the summer

- August 24, 2006 Shared Research findings
Developed a plan to share results with the rest of the staff
- September 19, 2006 Reviewed NSSE Parent, Student and Staff Survey results
Received feedback from PLC's – 5 themes emerged:
Differentiation, Options for at-risk students,
Homework, Advisory and Student Safety
- October 24, 2006 Sue Ann and Sharon shared a Balanced Scorecard approach that included:
Performance Indicators
Data Sources
Current Practice
Vision for the future
What do we need to add to get there?
What are we going to stop doing?
Resources required (time, money, training, etc.)
The group divided into 5 teams of three and each addressed one of the themes developed at the previous meeting. After discussion, the group decided to focus on three major themes - Differentiation, At-Risk Students, and Student Safety. The group then began working on a scoring guide for each area, beginning with "Concern" and "Vision." Members were asked to share with their PLC's and to provide feedback at the next meeting
- Nov.14, 2006 Reviewed the Three Themes – Differentiation, At-Risk Students (renamed Student Success) and Student Safety
Received feedback from department grade level teams on the themes and levels of proficiency
Discussed including 3 levels of proficiency in the Goals and Strategies matrix – Intervene, Accept and Ideal - and the need to set weight percentages for each strategy
- January 9, 2007 Discussion of the matrix generated at the November 14th meeting led to recommendations that specific technology indicators be added under Student Success, and that a "Strategies" column be added to the matrix.

Scott shared insights from *School Violence: Fears vs. Facts* by Dewey Cornell, including data that indicates programs designed to improve social competence reduces school violence. An update on bullying/incident reports was then shared for the current school year.

At the next meeting the committee will consider how to adjust the Middle School program if/when the budget gets tight (for example, if a demographic shift leads to a large reduction in the number of students that attend the Middle School)

February 27, 2007

Sharon led the group through consideration of a variety of options. She suggested beginning by looking at the discretionary monies – the capital budget (based on number of kids) and the instructional supply budget – before looking at any staffing changes. And she noted that the best answer is to bring in more students.

The question of the impact of the School Board approving an Open Enrollment Policy was raised. Sue Ann responded that there is hope that it will draw more students, but it takes time. Over the next 18 months, we hope to attract enough kids to maintain the full Middle School program. But we need to be prepared, in case we don't.

Sharon indicated that we should be fine next year, and the following year, 08-09, we'll be fine in 7th and 8th grade. It's predictable that we have to do something at 6th grade in 08-09 ... and as that cohort moves through the program.

In the short term, options will come back to this group ... cuts won't likely be one position, but nibbling from other sources, or from several positions.

It would be a good idea to go to parent advisory and keep them informed... not alarmed. The NSSE Survey coming up in April ... it might be a good way to gather specific information from parents – and from staff. At a team level, consider items to be added to the survey.

February 28, 2007

A scheduled meeting with the whole Middle School faculty was postponed due to weather. The meeting will be rescheduled at a later date.

Sharon Zweber worked with staff to craft questions to be included in the NSSE Survey for parents, staff and students. The survey will be given to all three groups in April. No other means of information gathering are considered necessary at this time.

April 11, 2007

Sue Ann Gruver met with the middle school staff to review the process and the findings – including potential steps to be taken to address a funding shortfall necessary in the future.

Members of the committee will meet with the School Board to present their findings and recommendations for Middle School in 2007-2008 on May 10, 2007.

MIDDLE SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SCHOOL BOARD:

There are four underlying assumptions that support the future of the Middle School program in Mahtomedi. To insure the ongoing vitality of the current programming at the middle school the following values need support:

Continued Support for Middle School Team Model

The middle school team model is the structure that allows horizontal (grade level) and vertical (content area) teams to interact frequently to benefit the students they serve. This time is embedded during the school day to allow teachers time to meet in professional learning communities to discuss student progress, teaching methods, test results and changes needed to maximize learning.

Stable Enrollment to maintain class and section sizes

Open enrollment is a positive step to maintain stable enrollment at the middle school. In addition, the efforts to embed the science-engineering focus in the middle school years are making an impact on parent interest in our schools. The sixth grade class entering the middle school in 2008-2009 will be a major challenge for the middle school. At this time, there are only 184 fourth graders in this class compared to the traditionally 220+ students. It is hoped that this class will remain in open enrollment status through the fall of 2008 in order to bring these numbers to a healthy number.

Professional Development resources to support initiatives of Differentiation, SMART Board technology, science-engineering focus and technology integration

Resources for professional development are essential to continue the staff learning in the areas of differentiation, SMART Board technology, the 6-12 science-engineering focus, conflict resolution training and technology integration.

Variety of experiences available to students during the middle school experience (Allied Arts).

The Allied Arts include art, health, industrial technology, family consumer science, music, Spanish, and reading. Each of the above areas provides rich experiences for middle year students. The engineering focus is embedded in both the areas of IT and art in 2007-2008.

Middle School Budget Reduction Scenarios for Future Consideration

The current economy mandates continued reductions district-wide in order to maintain the 3% cost of living. In addition, declining enrollment impacts the viability of maintaining programs. These lower numbers of students will arrive at the Middle School in the fall of 2007-2008. As part of the review process middle school staff was asked to grapple with this complex issue. Given the fact that it is difficult to ask staff to reduce staff/services, the following scenarios were presented by Principal Zweber and shared with the full staff.

1. Continue to recruit students back to our Middle School through ongoing tours, marketing and excellent programs.
2. Currently there is now an 8 period day –could drop to 7 (which includes lunch) and change the way allied arts & PE are delivered. Currently the middle school has a rich allied arts program ... which is valued, and gives students a chance to get acquainted with the full range of arts ... and full year of PE. This option impacts all grade levels. One grade level cannot have fewer periods than the others.
3. Increase class size ... and reduce the number of teachers. In the past some teachers have had to teach multiple grade levels ... now the core subject teachers don't cross grades. (While this option would only affect one grade level – it would do so for each year – 6th, then 7th then 8th grade – and how big would classes have to be?)
4. Add study halls and reduce the number of course offerings – and have current staff provide coverage for them (or you don't save an FTE).
5. The Science Engineering focus might draw enough additional students – in time to offset a dramatic drop in middle school enrollment. The program will start next fall. Several families have expressed interest - some home school students and those currently attending parochial schools are now registered for 2007-2008.

Gateway to Technology will include 8 units, 4 are developed and the 5th is in progress. Units will be embedded across 6th and 7th grade and 4 will be 8th grade courses (18 weeks long). Some elements – like technical reading – can be included in English, for example. Software training will be embedded early on.

6. District administration could be asked to come up with a solution and bring it to the faculty and invite their involvement. The administration could develop some scenarios for middle school to consider with final recommendations coming from district after input from middle school staff and administration.

GOAL #1: DIFFERENTIATION OF INSTRUCTION

Performance Indicator	Weight	Data Source	Level 1 Concern	Level 2 Accept	Level 3 Ideal	Strategies
Increased Student Growth on Standardized & Curriculum Based Measurement	70%	Map scores: Reading, Math, Language	RIT Scores go down or remain flat	70% of students reach or exceed expected growth	100% of students reach or exceed expected growth	Good instruction; analysis of strengths and weaknesses
		Pre-Post Assessments	Teachers do Pre-Assessments < 25% of the time	Teachers do Pre-Assessments < 50 % of the time	Teachers do Pre-Assessments 100 % of the time	Group & regroup based on student assessments; make appropriate curriculum adjustments; differentiation
		MCA II Results	Less than 25% of students meet state standards	75% of students meet or exceed state standards	100% of students meet or exceed state standards	Familiarity with what is tested; getting copies of sample assessments in hands of teachers to inform instruction; make sure whatever is being tested is being taught. Student ownership of testing results is key.
Students' Satisfaction with Level of Challenge	10%	Student NSSE Survey Data (5-07)	Less than 25% of students are satisfied with level of challenge	75% of students are satisfied with level of challenge	100% of students are satisfied with level of challenge	Use survey data to assess level of challenge; teachers seek student feedback on challenge within units; ensure that students have a voice – which is acknowledged.
Teacher Documentation of Differentiation	10%	Know, Understand, Do (KUD's)	Teachers develop KUD's for few lessons	Teachers develop KUD's for 50% of lessons	Teachers develop KUD's for all lessons	Coaching by UVA delegates incorporated in new teacher evaluation process
		Class Observation, Lesson Plans, Homework	No evidence of differentiation	Limited evidence of differentiation	Strong evidence of differentiation	

Parent Satisfaction with Level of Challenge	10%	NSSE Parent Survey	Parents are unaware of differentiation	Parents are aware of differentiation	Parents are very satisfied with level of differentiation	NSSE Parent Survey to take place in May, 2007 – use to evaluate parent satisfaction with 2005-2006.
		Focus Group				Invite parents to share their perspective on differentiation for their children – beginning a year after initiation.

Goal 2: Student Success

Performance Indicator	Weight	Data Source	Level 1 Concern	Level 2 Accept	Level 3 Ideal	Strategies
Students making adequate progress	70%	Number of students on the D & F list	No decrease of students on the D & F list	10-20% decrease of students on the D & F list	No D & F list	Mid term reports; School View; Peer tutors; TAT Teams; Teachers meet with students; offer MLC program / intervention
Regular School Attendance	5%	Daily attendance records and on-time arrivals	More than 3 unexcused absences or 7 excused absences plus class failure	Less than 7 excused absences	Students attend every day, unless they are sick	Taking hourly attendance; holding kids accountable, detention after 3 first-hour tardies; calling home, etc.
Enhanced satisfaction with school	5%	NSSE Student Survey	(Sharon has the stats to work with)			Make climate welcoming and inclusive; conferences, handbooks, & websites to help with transition; Clubs and Extra-curriculars (Giraffe club, Jazz band, sports, place for kids that love art); Adult support / advocacy for individual students.
		Vandalism Data and Survey Data	Serious Vandalism incidents	Occasional minor vandalism incidents	No vandalism incidents	Having to go to sign-out forms or other monitoring process

Discipline Referral Review	5%	Discipline Referral Forms	Increased number of referrals / frequent and serious incidents	Decreased number of referrals / infrequent and minor incidents	No referrals / No incidents	Rules are clear and consistent, and everyone hold students accountable. Discipline is being taken care of in classrooms, hallways, etc.
Involvement in Co-curriculars	5%	Participation records	Decreased participation	Maintain current participation level	Increase participation level	Offering a variety of options – for example, after school exercise class offered by teachers; offering movies or bowling after school; “Energy Club”
Engineering Science Focus	5%	Number of students that elect to take Project Lead the Way Courses	Not enough enrollment to offer electives in 8 th grade.	Minimum number of students enroll to offer electives	Number of sections expanded to meet increased demand	Work in progress for 2007-2008; Teacher training; IT Courses re-worked; Science & Social Studies units in 8 th grade, Photography in art.
Technology	5%	Use of SmartBoards	Unused SmartBoards or used minimally	SmartBoards used for selected lessons or activities	SmartBoards used in most / all lessons to enhance student learning	Purchasing list for next year; year one and two training offered; monitoring use; more visitors / demonstration opportunities over next 2 years; commit to completing purchase of SmartBoards before making other purchases
		Use of Websites	Websites not updated	Minimal updates	Interactive websites (ex. download assignments)	Teachers now updating websites – moving to becoming more interactive; increased training and peer coaching opportunities
		New Initiatives to enhance student learning	Resistant to new initiatives	Talking about new initiatives	Resources available to implement new initiatives that enhance student learning	Openness to new ideas – ex. TIES Conference, visiting other sites / exemplars; leadership of technology team; New Technology Plan – 2007-2010 in process

Goal 3: Student Safety

Performance Indicator	Weight	Data Source	Level 1 Concern	Level 2 Accept	Level 3 Ideal	Strategies
Bullying	30%	NSSE Survey Results of parents, students and staff	Increased concern about bullying of all three audiences	Decreased concern about bullying	Bullying is a non-issue	Anti-bullying committee meets regularly; ongoing work annually
Fire / Tornado / Lock Down Drills	30%	Records of Drills, observation	Failure to meet benchmarks	Regularly meet building benchmarks	Drills are taken seriously, no procedural errors	Practice lockdown drills in '06-'07 A packet was prepared for staff to help debrief the experience with students after lockdowns.
Building Procedural Safeguards	30%	Observation of Traffic Patterns	Procedures not followed	Procedures are regularly followed	Procedures have become a non-issue	Staff monitoring hallways
Visitors in Building		Observation / visitor documentation	Unidentified visitors in the building	All visitors are identified with badges	Consistent visitor use of badges	Signs posted on front door; use of visitors badges, staff monitoring hallways and asking unknown strangers to check in.
Building Maintenance	10%	Observation / documentation of timeliness of needed repairs	Repairs not made, cleanliness issues apparent	Timely repairs made, clean and welcoming environment	Proactive maintenance, repairs, and cleanliness	Lead custodians do an excellent job of maintaining the building, quick to respond to repair and or maintenance issues.

**MAHTOMEDI PUBLIC SCHOOLS
COMMUNICATION PLAN**

April 23, 2007

SECTION I: SUMMARY

A review and evaluation of Mahtomedi Public Schools' external communication efforts was conducted to determine the effectiveness of communication between the school district, its parent community, and the community at large. At the same time, a review and evaluation of the district's internal communication efforts was conducted to determine the effectiveness of communication between the district and staff members.

The overall goal of the project is two-fold. First, it seeks to determine the best methods for informing the school district's external audiences about district news, events, and accomplishments. Not only will such communication vehicles contribute to overall community-building efforts, but they also represent essential outreach methods that assist in marketing efforts. Second, the communication plan will develop a stronger pipeline between the district and staff for the exchange of important information.

The specific objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Identify existing communication efforts at the district level.
- Evaluate effectiveness of communicating (a) from district to broader community (b) from district to parent community (c) from district to staff.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of communicating what recipients *want* to know.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of communicating what recipients *need* to know.
- Identify strengths of existing efforts.
- Identify challenges of existing efforts.
- Determine the best approaches to informing internal and external audiences.

Regardless of the outreach method, all communication efforts should keep the reader in mind by providing interesting, vital news in formats that will be easy to read, easy to navigate, and that provide links to additional sources and information.

SECTION 2: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations for implementing district-level communication efforts. To properly implement the people and products necessary for improving the district's internal and external communication systems, I am recommending a four-phase approach — communication processes, communication deliverables, site-based initiatives, and evaluation. Each phase will involve a development and implementation period that will enable those involved to provide feedback.

PHASE ONE: IMPLEMENT CORE COMMUNICATION PROCESSES

Communications Committee: To consistently gather feedback and recommendations regarding district-level communication efforts, it is recommended that the district develop a permanent communication committee with representatives not only from each site but also from each function within the district (e.g., administrator, teacher, paraprofessional, part-time) as well as community members with interests at each site and/or program. Under the direction of the superintendent and the guidance of a communications coordinator, this committee would review both internal and external communications for Mahtomedi Public Schools. The key roles of the committee will be to:

- Establish communication goals and timelines.
- Report developments at site-based staff meetings.
- Contribute communication ideas and tasks.
- Provide communications committee with site-based feedback.
- Evaluate communications deliverables.

Rationale: Depending upon the scope of the tasks and deliverables, communications can be a far-reaching effort that will impact everyone in the district. Therefore, it is necessary to seek staff and community member support and feedback and assure them that any such efforts have been made and will continue to be made with their guidance. The committee members should be vocal members of their respective communities and comfortable with the responsibility of carrying communications between their entity and the committee.

Communications Coordinator: Hire or subcontract a part-time communications coordinator to oversee and execute communication-related efforts. Staff repeatedly expressed concern about the ability to manage additional projects in addition to their current job responsibilities. The communications coordinator will work directly with the superintendent to undertake all of the processes necessary to take contributed ideas from raw form to completed deliverable. The key roles of the coordinator will be to:

- Become the central point for information collection and dissemination.
- Evaluate site-based communications for either internal or external district-wide distribution.
- Gather, write, edit, and seek necessary approvals for communication material as well as work with other professionals to facilitate necessary functions such as newsletter design, web site updates, etc.

- Manage the district's overall graphic identity, including the district's logo, tagline, and identity elements, as well as any desired alterations to the current approach.
- Copyedit and standardize all written materials that go out of the district to the broader community.
- Develop, write, distribute, and follow up on press releases.
- Develop relationships with local media to facilitate the publishing of press releases.
- Serve as a “go to” communications resource for district staff.

Rationale: A professional or professionals with expertise in the areas of communication, graphic design, web design, copy editing, writing, etc. can carry out the district's communication responsibilities in such a manner that the day-to-day impact on current staff will be minimal. In addition, the communications coordinator will assist in the development of site-based efforts within the context of the “whole” district perspective.

Key Communicators: The district should launch an coordinated efforts across all schools and programs to develop a list of “key communicators” who essentially serve as those first approached with selected district news. It is important that this group remain open to those who express interest. In terms of a first draft of such a group, people who are community leaders, very involved volunteers, etc. should be approached as they are the most likely to share accurate, essential information across a variety of social and community groups.

Rationale: In a small, close, involved community such as Mahtomedi, it is essential that the district open numerous lines of communication that provide administrators with several options for disseminating important information and/or dispelling incorrect information.

Mahtomedi Public Schools Identity: The district should conduct a comprehensive review of its current graphic identity, including district and site logos, the district tagline, and graphic design elements. Regardless of the final scope of this effort, the step will enable the district to:

- Manage its graphic identity by taking the guesswork out of such decisions as key colors, fonts, etc.
- Develop templates reflecting the district's graphic identity that will greatly reduce development time.
- Develop guidelines by which the logo, tagline, and graphic identity are used by the school community with the expectations that these guidelines will be enforced at all levels.

Rationale: Mahtomedi Public Schools does not have an established graphic identity outside of school colors that would enable community members to recognize literature upon sight. Overall, in light of marketing efforts on behalf of neighboring districts as well as the district's efforts to attract and retain open enrollment students and quality staff, the district must establish an image within the educational community. However, such a process needs to remain cognizant of individual site identities and establish guidelines for the use of district and site logos and taglines.

PHASE TWO: IMPLEMENT CORE COMMUNICATION DELIVERABLES

External Newsletter: Fortunately, the district already has a well-established and well-regarded communication vehicle in The Globe. In light of rapidly changing communication modes, the numerous electronic methods now available, and the amount of time required by district administrators to produce current Globe content, it is recommended that the district scale back the size of the Globe with the focus on creating a hardcopy communications vehicle for the non-parent community members. The key goals of the redesigned Globe will be to:

- Serve as the primary information vehicle between the district and the non-parent community.
- Provide information that reinforces the value of the district in the community.
- Distribute site-based information to audiences beyond school parents. This will be achieved by pulling site-selected news items from daily/weekly bulletins re: student/staff accomplishments, upcoming events, etc. and distributing them to the broader community.

Rationale: Community support has always been important to healthy school districts. But in light of the growing need for community support at the polls via levy and bond referendums, such support is critical. An external newsletter such as The Globe that communicates the great work done by the school district for the community will continue to bolster community support. In addition, it provides a natural communication pipeline in the event of future levy and bond efforts or critical communication need. Though the recommendation is to reduce the size of The Globe, it is possible to produce more issues per year and focus issues on particular groups or topics.

District Marketing Collateral: The district is urged to develop a "stepped" brochure (master district brochure with coordinating school and program brochures) that promotes the district as well as site and program offerings. The key goal of brochure development is to:

- Provide a single source of key district information.
- A concerted effort to eliminate numerous efforts to describe the district, school, and programs by gaining agreement on consistent language.
- Guide readers to sources for additional information.

Rationale: Marketing is a relatively new "need" for school districts and part of that effort involves providing professionally produced materials that give a snapshot of the district and the students served. Brochures provide great vehicles for core district accomplishments. Such material are valuable for prospective students and staff as well as any opportunities district staff may have to present district information.

www.mahtomedi.k12.mn.us: The school district has a well-established web site that is updated and maintained by a web professional. The district should undertake an evaluation of its web site to ensure that it is functionally accessible to first-time users as well as parents, staff, and students. The web site evaluation will seek to:

- Confirm effectiveness of current web site navigation and ability for users to access critical information.
- Evaluate quality and depth of information re: district, sites, and programs that may be sought by first-time users.
- Expand current efforts to post brochures, newsletters, etc. as part of effort to continue its role as a powerful information source
- Add "news" function to district, school, and program home pages that will include latest news.
- Identify areas of potential expansion of web site offerings.
- Ensure grammatical integrity of the site as a communications vehicle.

Rationale: The web site is especially important in light of fact that potential students and their families often access the web site to gather information about the school district. In addition, any new communication materials (newsletters, brochures, etc.) should be posted on the web site as they may decrease the amount of required paper/printing while providing an additional opportunity to draw people to the district web site.

Staff News: Redesign the current staff news effort to include information employees identify as of interest to them. Such items could include staff member news, staff-related activities, HR information, and site-based news. Key redesign elements will include:

- Bulleted, "hot" headlines at top of document
- Information limited to 2-3 sentences per item (If news requires additional information the item will include a link to the web site.)
- Electronic distribution to majority of staff with hardcopy for those who do not have dedicated computers

Rationale: Staff members want to read the staff news but need short, concise information that they can quickly scan for what applies to them. They also want information about their coworkers and staff events — both of which further the sense of "community" within the district. By linking staff news items to the web site for further information (e.g., HR highlights with in-depth details on the web site) it develops the web site as an information source for the internal community.

Press Release/News Alert Functionality: The district needs to centralize the press release process under one person. Staff should also have the online capability to submit press release requests. In addition, the district needs to create a news alert function that enables the administration to quickly respond to urgent news-related

matters. The key goals of revising the press release strategy are to:

- Broaden the relationships with local media.
- Centralize local media contact point within district.
- Disseminate information re: news events that reinforces the district's impact on students, parents, and the community.
- Enable the district to manage statements to the media (via a news alert capability).
- Potentially expand news alert function to include parent community and key communicators.
- Better utilize the many internal and external communications options available to the district.

Rationale: Press releases are part of a basic process of distributing items of interest to the media. However, to truly develop media relationships, the district should centralize such processes as release creation and follow-up to get the biggest impact for its effort. In addition, as part of the goal to establish an identity within the educational community, the district needs to reach beyond its local newspapers and provide information to the Twin Cities media that would be of interest to readers beyond the district's boundaries. The ultimate goal is to inform people within the greater Twin Cities Metro Area of the benefits of Mahtomedi Public Schools.

PHASE THREE: ADDRESS SITE/PROGRAM COMMUNICATION NEEDS

During the evaluation process it became evident that the individual sites had broad communication efforts well underway that were considered effective for targeted audiences. To ensure that these efforts continue to be effective and are well-documented, it is recommended that the schools/sites/programs develop communications plans of their own.

PHASE FOUR: EVALUATION

The final phase of the communication plan will be the evaluation of processes and deliverables. Through internal and external focus groups and surveys the goal will be to identify those communication deliverables that are successful, those that require additional work, and potentially identify projects for the next stage of the district's communication evolution.

TASK	April-May 2007	June-August 2007	Sept.-Dec. 2007	Jan.-March 2008	April/May 2008
Establish cross-functional communications committee		X (set guidelines, identify members, hold 1st meeting)			
Develop district graphic identity	X (meet with graphic designer, evaluate examples, create draft design for discussion, finalize)				
Redesign Globe	X (meet with graphic designer, evaluate examples, create draft design for discussion, finalize)	X (publish first redesigned issue)			
Evaluate web site			X		
Redesign staff news		X	X (publish first redesigned issue)		
Develop press release/news alert functionality		X			
Develop district marketing collateral	X	X			
Develop site/program communications plans					X
Develop templates		X (develop templates using new graphic identity/send out redesigned releases)			
Evaluate				X (focus group and one-on-one discussions with internal, parent, and external audiences to discuss district communication efforts)	