



Catholic Diocese of Rockford

School Communications Planning Guide

January 2018

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School Communications Planning Guide

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Overview

This School Communications Planning Guide is designed to guide you and your school as you navigate the ever-changing landscape of both traditional and modern communications. Your staff, students, parents and community members need – and expect – a steady stream of targeted school information and news, and it's up to you to provide the right audience with the right information at the right time.

By following this plan, your school will be able to ensure key audiences are on the same page, proactively sharing timely and accurate content, and also create brand awareness that will aid in retaining and recruiting students and families.

Objectives

- Improve dialogue with parents
- Better engage staff, parents and students at your school
- Reach prospective students and families
- Clearly and consistently communicate information with staff and parents in a timely manner
- Better gauge and be more responsive to communications needs of the school community
- Increase opportunities to share good news about staff, students and school issues
- Reinforce the importance and benefits of the Catholic faith

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Effective Communication

As a rule of thumb, there are four steps for effectively communicating a message. We'll explore each of the steps, outlined below, in greater detail and provide insight that will allow your school to maximize the benefits of both traditional and modern communications tactics and ensure the effective communication of your message. Every time you communicate, consider these four steps:

Step 1: Develop your message.

Determine what you want people to think, know, feel and do. Determine if your message is more simple or complex to determine if you need to determine if you need to draft key messages and/or talking points message map for the announcement.

Step 2: Identify your audience.

Determine who needs to receive your message. Then consider what questions that audience might have, and address those questions in your messaging.

Step 3: Determine the best channel(s) to share your message.

Distribute your message on the channels where your target audience is most likely to go for news or information. Use multiple channels to ensure your audience is receiving the message in a timely manner.

Step 4: Establish a timeline.

Create a timeline for the distribution of your message. Effective communication relies heavily on the timeliness of your message and the appropriate order of communications.

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Step 1: Develop Your Message

Overview: On a daily basis, schools are tasked with communicating messages with varied levels of urgency to a number of key stakeholders both internal and external to the school. For communications to be effective, you must take into consideration what you want people to think, know, feel and do. An effective message will grab the attention of your target audience and make a memorable impact.

Types of Messages: Messages should be targeted to inform, entertain or educate the audience.

Messages that Inform:

- Promotion of school happenings and news (e.g. achievements, events, etc.)
- Time-critical school information (e.g., emergencies, closings, policies, etc.)
- Important parent-related issues and messages
- Ongoing, procedural communications and information

Messages that Entertain:

- Stories of the school's successes and impact on the community (e.g. human interest stories, alumni, sports, photos, etc.)
- Video messages and interactive social content that promote engagement

Messages that Educate:

- Leadership and education improvement ideas (e.g. parent resources)
- School funding and community outreach (including fundraising and recruitment)
- Benefits of a Catholic education

Effective Messages: Good messages have specific attributes that make them more effective. Your messages should be:

Concise: Concise messages are easy to read and comprehend. Highlight the key points of your message and avoid technical jargon.

Tailored: Different audiences require different message styles. Use language that your target audience will relate to and understand.

Compelling: Compelling messages evoke interest, promote engagement and ultimately drive action.

Relevant: Messages should be engaging and provide value to the audience. These messages are timely, informative and actionable.

Memorable: Ensure your message is meaningful and easy for your audience to recall and repeat.



Developing Your Message

For each announcement or communication, you should identify the key messages and themes that you want your audience to remember. Key messages clarify meaning and provide the takeaway headline of the issue you want to communicate. Communications can't always be controlled, but key messages can. The messages might include facts, statistics or other supporting data.

Some of your communication will be simple announcements such as school events or other happenings, whereas other communications may be more complex such as the resignation of a principal or an announcement to open a new technology center. For complex messages, you should work with your organization's communication staff to hold a key message development brainstorm session. Include internal stakeholders who ultimately need to approve the key messages.

Complex Messages (e.g. School plans to increase tuition):

- What is the key message?
- Support key message with facts, figures, statistics, quotes, stories and visuals
- Why is the message important to your audience/what's in it for them?
- What are any barriers or challenges and how will that be addressed?
- What are the next steps?
- Who can your audience contact for more information or with questions?

Simple Messages (e.g. School is hosting Family Reading Night):

- What is the date, time and location of the event?
- Who is invited to the event?
- What group is hosting the event (PTO, National Honor Society, etc.)?
- What activities will take place at the event?
- What does the event support and why is it important?
- Who can your audience contact for more information or with questions?

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Step 2: Identify Your Audience

Overview: Understanding the perspective of the people you're communicating to will help determine how, where and when to share your message. Your school must communicate with a number of different audiences who care about and respond to different things. By knowing your audience and focusing your message, you can enhance engagement and impact.

Internal Audience: Your internal audience refers to individuals or groups who work within or are very closely associated with your school. This audience includes:

- Leadership
- Council
- Staff
- Diocese

External Audience: Your external audience refers to individuals or groups who do not work within the school. This audience may need background information which would be unnecessary when communicating with internal audiences. This audience includes:

- Students
- Parents/ Guardians
- Media
- Community/ Businesses
- Donors
- Alumni

Communicating with Audiences: What each audience needs from you is different and therefore the message should be different for them. When deciding how to best communicate a specific message, consider the following questions:

- Who is the audience?
- What do they care about?
- What do they need to know?

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Order of Communication

Overview: The order of communication is very important when sharing information externally. Sports scores, updates from fun school activities and other announcements can be posted to social media without much approval, but communications around school policies, changes at the school and other announcements that will have a major impact on staff and families should follow a general order of communication. Communications start with the smallest, most internal groups and are expanded increasingly outward to external audiences.



Aligning Communications Channels with Audience

Not all communications channels are meant for every kind of communication from your school and everyone receives information in different ways. Consider the following chart for recommendations on how to communicate with which audience.

Communications Channels	Leadership	Faculty & Staff	Students & Families	Media & Community
Website			✓	✓
Mobile App			✓	
Social Media			✓	✓
Emergency Notification System	✓	✓	✓	
Intranet	✓	✓	✓	
Email	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blog			✓	✓
Video			✓	✓
Media			✓	✓
Community Outreach			✓	✓
Internal Meeting	✓	✓		
External Meeting/ Forum			✓	✓



Step 3: Determine Your Communications Channels

Overview: While each school is unique and has its own communications challenges, every school can benefit from the tools and knowledge to communicate and connect in the manner your audiences prefer. It is important that your school's communications plan include both modern and traditional communications channels so your staff, students, parents and communities get the information they need, when they need it.

The "Marketing Rule of 7" states that a prospect needs to see or hear a message at least seven times before they'll retain the message and ultimately take action. While online methods of communication should be driving your strategy, those channels should not replace non-digital, traditional communications channels. An integrated approach to communicating your message will ensure your target audience get the information they need or want, in a timely and consistent manner, across multiple channels.

What channels should I be utilizing for my school?

School Website

A website serves as an important tool for schools and acts as a self-service portal for all school information. It also delivers the first impression of the school for parents and students, before they ever step foot inside the building. The website is an opportunity to highlight the school's best qualities and shows how welcoming the school community is, how efficiently the school shares information, and can even position the schools as being progressive and modern. For recommended website updates and enhancements, visit the *Guidelines for School Websites* section of this guide.

Mobile App

Mobile apps are becoming a popular method for schools to communicate. A mobile app can make it efficient to access and share popular information like alerts, calendars, directories, news and lunch menus. A mobile app should not replace your school's website, but should include key information from your school's website.

Social Media

Social media is an ongoing, open dialog with a variety of audiences including current and former students, parents, donors and interested members of the community. The ability to present information to initiate and encourage conversations with and between these parties is the focus of all the activities within this guide. As with all conversations, the information needs to flow in both directions, so 'listening' and responding is as important as sharing. For social media recommendations, visit the *Social Media* section of this guide.

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Emergency Notification System

Critical emergency information and important reminders need to be communicated through a notification system that provides SMS (text), voice and email. See the *Emergency Alerts and Notifications* section of this guide for additional information.

Intranet/ Staff Portal

Utilize internal communication means to share messages with your internal audience.

Email / E-Newsletter

This is a key channel for schools. Email is a great form of one-to-one personal communication to a broad audience. This channel allows the school to provide information of all kinds, in detail if needed. The use of email can range from reminders, policies, registration, newsletters and a variety of announcements. Your school can create a monthly E-newsletter with monthly features, highlights and reminders, but can send “one-off” emails to audiences as needed.

Blog

Blogging is an important communication tactic for schools these days and it’s as much about sharing information with one another as it is about getting your voice out. Blogging positions your faculty as “thought leaders” and gives your students the opportunity to share their voice and learn how to write and engage. Faculty can blog about new teaching techniques or test scores and what they mean, whereas students can blog about what it means to be a student at your school or how to study for a test.

Video

Videos offer an engaging way to promote your school while keeping parents informed. Video works as a way to advertise school events, showcase academic and athletic teams, and show what you’re doing to raise money and improve the school. Multi-media elements are often prioritized in social media, and favored by users.

Consider video when it comes to sharing a personal message, highlighting an event or school production, or telling an interesting story about students or staff. Video is not, however, the best way to depict something time critical.

Media

Media relations is a crucial component to your school’s communications plan and includes earned opportunities that can help you share your message, promote your programs and services and position your school as a thought leader in the community. Media relations includes, but is not limited to, press releases, media alerts, story pitches and bylined articles (See addendum for samples).



Community Outreach

Engaging and showing value through community outreach is key to developing relationships with your current and potential families/students, alumni, community partners, donors and other influencers, spreading the word and enhancing credibility. Outreach opportunities can include external activities such as community events and networking opportunities, but also can include events you plan internally to promote your school. Outreach opportunities, if fully leveraged, also become public relations and social media opportunities.

Internal Meeting

If there are any major changes or decisions that need to be communicated to the school staff as a whole, arrange an internal meeting with the appropriate parties. The more difficult, contentious or complex the information being shared, the more critical it is to allow face-to-face communications as well as question and answer dialog.

External Meeting/Open Forum

Any topic that needs community input or dialogue may be best suited for a face-to-face discussion with families, parents or community members as an external meeting or open forum.

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When to Use What Channel

Not all communications channels and tactics are meant for every kind of communication from your school. However, an integrated approach that includes multiple channels will help ensure your target audience gets the information they need and expect. Consider the following chart for recommendations.

Type of Information	Website	Mobile App	Notification System	Email	Social Media	Video	Blog	Media	Public Relations
Emergency Alerts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Recruitment/ About Us	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Event Promotion	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Special Announcement	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Forms/ documents	✓	✓		✓					
Parent Information	✓	✓		✓	✓				
Human Interest Stories	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academia	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sports	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Donors / Giving	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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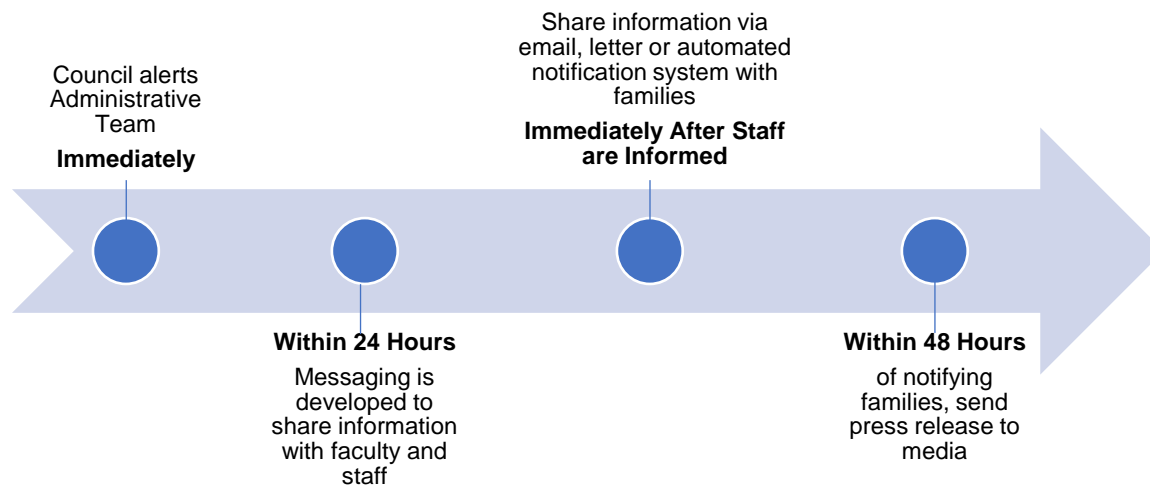
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Step 4: Establish a Timeline

Overview: It is imperative that your internal audience such as your council members, priests and staff are informed about importance decisions prior to families, parishioners and the general public being updated. For each new announcement, you will need to be very deliberate about timing. For example, you may inform your board, priests and principals at an evening meeting, share with the staff at a morning meeting and schedule a communication to parishioners and parents later in the day, then employ tactics to inform the public a couple of days later.

For example: *The school principal submits resignation to council*





Communications Best Practices and Recommendations

Overview: Building a successful communications plan is not an end result; it is a process. Your communications efforts must be consistent and present across multiple platforms. This section will guide you through best practices and recommendations for effectively communicating your message across multiple platforms.

Brand and Communication Standards

The following guidelines are to be used to ensure consistent reference to your school in any type of communication that is released from the school.

School Name: Whenever written as text copy, the school name should appear in-full (e.g., St. Bridget Catholic School), in the first reference. After, the school name may be referred to as St. Bridget, St. Bridget Catholic, or SBCS.

School Communications: All official school communications are to be delivered through school stationery items (print or electronic), official school communication channels (email, social media, etc.), or through formats that have been approved by the Catholic Diocese of Rockford.

Stationery: All faculty, staff and individuals representing your school are to use official school stationery (printed or electronic) when sending communications representing the school or any department or program.

When formatting a letter, the text body of a document should be typed in Arial font, regular or normal, at a size 10, 10.5, 11 or 12 point. Spacing between the end of one sentence and beginning of the next is one space.

Logo: Your school logo is the primary graphic identity for your school and the elements of the logo must always be used together to function successfully. Inconsistent or careless use of the logo diminishes its value and weakens its impact. Always use approved electronic artwork to reproduce the school logo.

Email Signature: Ensure your school issues the use of an official school email address to employees. School emails (e.g., first initial last name@yourschool.org) should include a formal signature block.

Sample Signature Block:

First Name, Last Name, Credentials
Title
Your School Name
Address
Phone
Cell
Fax
Mission Statement or Tagline



Spokesperson Roles and Responsibilities: Designate an official spokesperson to speak on behalf of your school. Any person speaking in an official capacity should do so from the standpoint of the best interests of the school and Catholic Diocese of Rockford, not as a representative of his or her own personal ideas or feelings. The spokesperson is responsible for creating and maintaining a positive public image for your school.

Spokespersons should be trained and familiar with school messaging and the basic principles of crisis.

Proofreading and Approvals: Proofreading of all written communications should be done prior to submitting for approval or publication to find and correct all mechanical, grammatical, and typographical errors. At least one additional person should review all communication published on the website or using official school stationery, and the message must be approved by school leadership prior to publication.

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Social Media

Overview: Social media is an ongoing, open dialog with a variety of audiences including current and former students, parents, donors and interested members of the community. The ability to present information to initiate and encourage conversations with and between these parties is the focus of all the activities within this social media posting guide. As with all conversations, the information needs to flow in both directions, so 'listening' and responding is as important as sharing.

Every member of your staff should be proactively looking for social media content to share with followers, but only a select group of users should be granted administrative access. Consider setting up weekly meetings with social media administrators to plan and maintain a strategic social media presence.

All employees and volunteers that serve the Catholic Diocese must abide by the [Code for the Pastoral Use of Technology and Social Media](#).

How should my school use Facebook?

Facebook Overview: While Instagram and Snapchat are the top social media platforms of choice for Millennials and Generation Z, Facebook is the biggest social media platform on the Internet – in terms of use and name recognition. In fact, 72 percent of people on the Internet are Facebook users.

Parents are active Facebook users and social media has become a vital channel for their daily interactions. They use Facebook to keep in touch with family and friends, gather information and share what is important to them. Mothers are more likely to use Facebook than fathers, with 81 percent of moms and 66 percent of dads using the platform. Overall, 75 percent of parents using Facebook, turn to social media for parenting-related information and social support. Because of this, and because Facebook's platform is so easily integrated with other platforms, we suggest that your page be used as the main outlet for all your social posts.

With Facebook, it's all about the content in the newsfeed. According to multiple studies, 90 to 95 percent of fans never return to a page after they like it. Therefore, the biggest, and perhaps only, opportunity you have to influence and engage with your followers is via their newsfeed.

Facebook uses an algorithm which evaluates more than 1 million different factors when deciding what goes in a user's newsfeed. These factors are constantly changing because Facebook says that *"Our goal is to show the right content to the right people at the right time, so they don't miss the stories that are important to them."*

Facebook Strategies: Any time between 9:00 am. and 7:00 p.m. are good times to post. However, typically information posted at 1:00 p.m. gets the most 'shares' and information posted at 3:00 p.m. gets the most 'clicks.' In addition, viewership tends to spike toward the end of the week on Thursdays and Fridays.



Post a variety of content. Facebook users will become more invested in your school when you offer a variety of engaging content. You will earn their engagement and are more likely to appear in their newsfeeds.

Follow partner organizations, donors and special interest groups such as local community groups to ensure your audience is hearing from you.

Remember the personal network that your internal members maintain can serve as an initial launching point for organizational content. Encourage team members to personally interact with, and share, school posts. This will help as an initial launching point for getting content out to a wider audience. In fact, the more users who get involved in a post (e.g. likes it, shares it), the more users will see the post.

Facebook Content: Content that is useful, frequent and meaningful to your followers will help you build loyal fans and encourage positive interaction. The following are the types of content that should be incorporated into daily posts.

- **Link to Positive Stories.** By posting and sharing media stories featuring your school, students or staff, you will be able to leverage that visibility by reaching people who may not have seen the story in the newspaper or on the local news.
- **Photos of Events.** Empower staff, teachers and students to take pictures at band, choir concerts, academic competitions, sporting events, theater performances etc. and post them on your Facebook page. This is an opportunity to show what your school has to offer, engage potential new students/parents and build morale among current students, parents, teachers and staff.
- **Congratulate Students and Staff Who Achieve.** Posts congratulating the student of the week, teacher of the month, an athlete who broke a school record, class that brought the most cans for a food drive or baseball team for a big win is easy to do and is a great way to share good news happening in your school to the wider community.

Facebook Weekly Posts: The very nature of social media requires immediacy and frequency of posts. To manage your Facebook content efficiently, develop a calendar of posts with specific topics for each day. Media mentions, such as newspaper stories and television videos can and should be pushed out through Facebook for additional visibility. Determining the types of content to post each day will make it easier for your Facebook administrators to know what to post and allow for the opportunity to think ahead and craft content that is ready to go each week. Some ideas might include:

- **Monday – School Snapshots.** Give your fans a glimpse into a day in the life at your school and invite students, teachers and parents to submit photos for consideration. To start this off, you may have to ask specific people to submit photos. Encourage participants to get creative – photos could be of students' shoes, cafeteria food, classroom pets, banners in the hallway and so on. These photos should be used on Instagram as well.
- **Tuesday – School Culture.** Catholic schools offer a unique experience for all student so share what differentiates you from other schools – can you identify and share stories (e.g. A high

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schooler working with lower school students? One student's care for another?) that provide real examples of how we show and tell the love of God by making a difference with our heads and our hearts?

- **Wednesday – Focus on . . .** Choose a student organization, sport or individual to highlight. You may want to feature a club that has an upcoming event or a student who has won an award, broken a sports record or even done something that might go unnoticed – a simple act of kindness. You will also want to use Facebook to highlight upcoming events and share photos from the events. You can also highlight teachers and other staff members who have won awards, gone on student trips, achieve advanced degrees, or anything else of note. Ask the teachers what they did and how it benefits the students and use that to develop a congratulatory post.
- **Thursday – Throwback Thursday.** A popular post, Facebook users are familiar with the #TBT hashtag. Schools are perfect organizations to take advantage of Throwback Thursday with the nearly unlimited number of photos of students, teachers and events from years gone by. Throwback Thursday posts help keep school traditions alive and can connect current students with alumni.
- **Friday – School Shout Outs.** Identify current students and/or parents who can provide written (short) or video testimonial of why your school is their school of choice. Additionally, identify alum to do the same – a short written sentence or two, or better yet, a video (can be done with an iPhone or other device) on how a Catholic education has helped them achieve.

Posting Strategically: Regardless of your weekly content, to be successful, it is best to share content strategically. The following are best practices for Facebook posts:

- Include different kinds of interactive posts including questions (solicit feedback), take polls and gather opinions, quizzes and videos
- Always acknowledge specific people and organizations by linking to their Facebook pages through mentions and tags
- Reply to visitors' comments as soon as possible
- Be consistent in posting every day
- Always include photos or videos with your posts
- Set up a content schedule and make sure you are posting a balanced variety of content with topics such as the suggestions above and upcoming school events
- Do not delete posts (unless they are vulgar or discriminatory), but respond to them publicly and/or privately

Facebook Parameters:

The ideal post is only 40 characters. The previous sentence is 40 characters, so you get the idea of how limiting that is. Rarely are posts this short. Try to keep content to 80 characters for a higher percentage of engagement among your followers. Here is an example:

“Our students have been working hard to prepare for a great Christmas Show! Get your holiday spirits lifted tonight at 6pm.”

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At the 400-character mark, Facebook will put the rest of the post under the “See More” link
Ideal length of a video: 30–45 seconds long.

How should my school use LinkedIn?

LinkedIn Overview: LinkedIn is one of the most powerful social networking tools available for professionals. LinkedIn has expanded its reach to the point where it is now widely considered to be the go-to source for a higher level, professional interaction. Whether you want to market your school’s programs and curriculum or learn about the latest trends and statistics from an expert in your field, LinkedIn is the place to be. Following is a list of recommendations to further enhance your school’s presence through increased engagement.

Ask administration and faculty to share information from the school’s page on their own personal LinkedIn pages. This significantly increases the reach of your content.

Communicate using multi-tools, especially photos. LinkedIn posts are especially noticed and commented upon when photos or graphics are utilized. Posts with images, videos and links are more likely to be commented upon, liked and shared.

Connect to other organizations, partners and individuals. One of the benefits of social media is its multiplier effect. By posting, we create the potential for reaching and communicating with new followers. To grow that network, time must be dedicated in developing those connections, inviting organizations, businesses and individuals to interact with the school via LinkedIn.

Post articles and interviews in which your school, teachers or students have been featured. Posts should include links to the media content on the school’s website and always carry a graphic if applicable. Media outlets appreciate you increasing their online presence and recognizing their efforts as well, so using the school’s LinkedIn page to build goodwill is advisable.

Post publications, awards and honors. Whenever possible, showcase published articles, awards and recognitions, community involvement, event sponsorships and more. Sharing these stories helps build trust in the school and in its commitment to the community, its students, families and alumni.

Edit photos to 1200 x 900 pixels. This is the size that works best with mobile and tablet.

How should my school use Instagram?

Instagram Overview: Instagram is a popular platform for tweens and teens, as well as women in the 18-30 age demographic. This is a great platform for candid shots of student activities, faculty, and staff that give a feel-good and engaging vibe.



Unlike Facebook, you can't post too often on Instagram as long as your posts are authentic and relevant. Keep branded or official posts at two or less per day and post images that capture a day in the life of students, faculty and staff as often as you would like. Instagram is moving from a chronological feed to an engagement-based algorithm. This change will make it more important than ever for posts to be regular, fun and diverse.

Because Facebook and Instagram share a platform, your engagement and relevancy numbers from Facebook will have an immediate and profound initial effect on your Instagram account. Your school should leverage that for followers and take advantage of an early advantage in relevancy and placement.

Instagram Recommendations:

- Share at least one image daily. Use Instagram to capture moments and events in real-time through photos and video.
- To gain followers on Instagram, you must be active on Instagram. If possible, post once in the morning and once in the afternoon or evening. Instagram images and video have peak activity during the first four hours after sharing, so to be consistently active, you need to post twice daily. If you cannot be active that often, then sharing one image or video daily is enough activity to build a following over time.
- Add hashtags to captions. Organizations that consistently use hashtags on Instagram have twice as many followers as those that don't.
- Allow a select number of students and all faculty and staff to be responsible for posting real-time special event photos, making sure they use hashtags.
- Always include a short caption.

Instagram Parameters:

- Maximum length of a status update: 2,200 characters, but after three lines of content, it will cut off in the user's feed.
- Good rule of thumb is to make your captions succinct - it's the photos that do all of the work. Here's a sample caption: *Behind the scenes, working to make the magic happen. We can't wait to present the musical Hamilton! Will you be there?*
- After three lines of content, it will cut off in the user's feed.
- Ideal length of a video: 30 seconds
- Edit photos for desktop display to 1080 x 1080 pixels
- Edit photos for mobile display to a minimum of 500 x 500 pixels

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School Website

The user experience is crucial when it comes to engaging potential student families to the school. Typically, the first introduction people have to an organization is via the website. Therefore, the website must project your vision and mission, share what makes yours a school of choice and provide information in an easy and intuitive way.

If you would like assistance with the development or updates to your school website, please reach out to Penny Wiegert, pwiegert@rockforddiocese.org, for a list of available IT resources.

Consider the “Three-Click Rule”: The “three-click rule” is an unofficial web design rule concerning the design of website navigation. It suggests that a user of a website should be able to find any information with no more than three mouse clicks. Putting your navigation in standard places, like across the top of the page, makes your site easier to use. Website navigation should be descriptive and intuitive for visitors.

Make it Mobile Friendly: Don’t forget to consider how your website looks on mobile devices like smartphones or tablets. The average adult spends approximately three to five hours on their mobile device. Mobile friendly websites should feature text and images that can be seen easily without zooming on both desktop and mobile.

Clearly Communicate Contact Information: Make it easy for website visitors to contact you. Clearly display your contact information where they can see it at all times, like in the header or footer and on a specific contact page.

Include Photos and Videos: A website should include more than copy. Images and video help to show who you are and what you do. Include high-resolution images that showcase students in-action during a school activity or athletic event. Create short videos with testimonials, student and teacher successes or a message from leadership.

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What should be included on my school website?

Your website is your most important communications tool and should not only be considered a resource for current students/parents, faculty and staff, but used as a tool for shining a spotlight on the school for potential student families. Here are specific examples of content that should be included on your website:

Contact Information:

- School Information
- Staff Directory
- School and Office Hours
- School Differentiators/ Information

Student Information:

- Student Handbook
- Uniform Information
- Tuition and Tuition Assistance Information
- Conduct Code

News and Events:

- School Calendar
- Holiday Schedule
- Upcoming Events
- Newsletters
- Parent Notifications and Forms

Student/ Staff Highlights:

- Student Projects with Photos
- Student Artwork
- Videos/ Digital Media
- Human Interest Stories
- Positive News
- Sports Updates

Social Media Links:

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- YouTube

Additional Links and Information:

- Search Function
- Parent Portal/ Resources
- Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Faith Forward Information
- Give/ Donate
- Church or Parish Website
- Diocese Website

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Change and Crisis Communications

Overview: An important component of your school change and crisis management plan is the deployment of timely, effective communication to both internal and external audiences.

Communicating Change

Communicating consistently, frequently and through multiple channels is essential when you are communicating any sort of change. It's equally important to develop a written communications plan and timeline to ensure you stay on track. Below are some change management tips to ensure effective message delivery:

- Clearly communicate the why. What is the goal or vision for the change? How does this change make an impact overall? Make sure that in all communications and interactions, you are making this point known.
- Share how this will affect your audience personally. Understandably, your audience ultimately wants to know how this will affect them and their family. Try and put yourself in your audiences' shoes and communicate the message appropriately. Also, make sure you are communicating in terms that your audience can understand. Paint pictures, share facts and use examples as often as possible. Include what their role will be and the timing for any change(s).
- Develop and share the vision going forward. With change comes the exciting opportunity to develop a new vision and efforts that previously may not have been possible. Identify what new programs and activities will now be available and repeatedly ensure you communicate this.
- Communicate early and often. As quickly as information becomes available that you can share, you should communicate it through a number of different channels. In communicating change, repetition is a good thing. Remember, people must see or hear a message an average of seven times before they fully internalize it.
- Consistency is crucial. The best way to lose credibility with your stakeholders is if you are delivering inconsistent messages. It's imperative that your Task Force is sharing the same messages at the same time and that they are consistent.
- Spend ample time with your message ambassadors. It is imperative that you dedicate time to your various ambassadors that will be helping to share the message. It is equally important that you train your ambassadors on how to share the message. A clear, confident and consistent message will help your organization throughout the process, and providing message ambassadors with the tools and techniques will make them that much more effective.
- Allow time for questions and feedback. It's important to provide opportunities for your audience to have a two-way conversation with you. Remember to allow them opportunities to have input in the decision-making process, not just feedback on decisions already identified.

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- Listen. Those with whom you are sharing your message will need to know that their voice is being heard. An important part of the communication process includes listening. Not just hearing what the person is saying, but actively listening and understanding his/her point of view. Often times, you can develop trust and respect just by listening.
- Only answer questions to which you know the answer. If you do not know the answer to a specific question, don't be afraid to say that you don't know. It's better to be transparent about not knowing an answer than to give a wrong answer and then have to try and correct the situation. If you don't know the answer, you can either offer to find the answer and get back to them or use a phrase like, "I don't know the answer to that question, but what I do know is..."

Crisis Communications

While schools want to share exciting information about student successes, often times there are situations where we need to communicate regarding a crisis situation. Communication is a critical part of crisis management. Ensure your team is as prepared as possible to communicate effectively and respond appropriately to any crisis or change situation.

- When a crisis occurs, inform employees as to what is happening as soon as possible. Instruct all employees to refer all information and questions to leadership or the school spokesperson. Remind employees that only designated spokesmen are authorized to talk with news media.

Channels: Intranet/ staff portal, e-mail, Emergency Notification System (automated voicemail or SMS), internal meeting

- Families of students and staff members (when appropriate) must be informed about the situation as soon as possible, including the status of their child or family member.

Channels: Emergency Notification System (automated voicemail or SMS), mobile app, e-mail, website

- School Board/ Council members must be kept informed and updates must be transmitted to the central Diocese office and to other affected schools.

Channels: Intranet/ staff portal, e-mail, Emergency Notification System (automated voicemail or SMS)

- The press must be informed and kept updated. Take initiative and let them know what is or is not known about the situation.

Channels: Statement on behalf of school, press release, interviews, press conference if needed (for major events)

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- Additionally, groups which are a part of the school community (PTA, advisory councils, etc.) are important, as they can assist with getting accurate information to the school community.

Channels: Emergency Notification System (automated voicemail or SMS), mobile app, e-mail, website, social media

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Emergency Alerts and Notifications

Overview: When you have an emergency, it is important that you get the message out quickly, so you can get your parents, teachers and students the information they need to make important planning decisions. It may be for something like a snow emergency or something that is not necessarily an emergency, but timely nonetheless.

Examples of Critical Emergencies and Important Reminders:

In general, the following categories warrant an emergency alert or notification to a large group of your school's community and potentially the entire community:

- School delay, early release or cancellation due to a weather emergency
- Death of a student, a staff member or a community member whose death affects a significant portion of the school population
- Major environmental crisis, such as a flood or fire
- Situation that involves a threat to the physical health or safety of students, like the outbreak of an illness
- Situation that involves a perceived threat to the emotional well-being of students, such as may be precipitated by threats of violence

Where to Send Emergency Alerts and Notifications:

In today's digital age, there are many channels available to distribute an emergency alert or notification. An integrated approach that includes both traditional and online methods of communication is critical. For emergency alerts and important reminders, the following communications channels should be carefully considered:

Emergency Notification System/ Automated Voicemail: Critical emergency information and important reminders need to be communicated through a notification system that provides SMS (text), voice and email. To make the process more effective and efficient, there are a number of effective school emergency notification systems that can quickly share your message across many platforms. Popular emergency notification systems in the education space include:

- Blackboard Connect 5
- Once Call Now
- K12 Alerts
- Rapid Responder
- School Messenger

School Website: When there is a change in normal operating status, post a notification to the website's homepage. For situations where school is open and operating as normal, there is no need to post emergency alerts or notifications to the website.

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Mobile App: For those subscribers who have elected to receive emergency alerts and notifications, send an update regarding the crisis or change.

Be judicious when using emergency alerts – like alerts via mobile apps, overusing notifications will quickly desensitize and annoy recipients. Situations that involve only a few students, especially when trying to maintain privacy or confidentiality, are better addressed through means other than an emergency alert or notification.

Email: This is a great channel for sharing important reminders, and should be used to share notices that do not require immediate action. While this channel reaches a broad audience, you should not assume that your audience is checking email regularly throughout the day.

Social Media: Social media should be used as a complimentary channel for sharing critical information and reminders. Ensure that all internal audiences and key stakeholders are aware of a situation prior to posting on social media.

Traditional Media: In case of snow, ice, or other unusual conditions such as power outages and excessive heat that might affect regular school hours, your school may need to alert local TV and radio stations. Most media have a submission form for these types of school closures and emergencies.

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Legal Considerations in Communications

The process of protecting your school and school information continues to change with the increasing number of regulations required to communicate legally.

For example, if a student or staff member's image might show up on your website or in a social media post, it is imperative to have his or her permission. To protect your school and your students, make sure your school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and consent forms are easily accessible on your website and intranet/ staff portal. You might consider including these forms in the school registration packets.

There are several laws and legal considerations to consider when planning your school communications:

Diocese of Rockford Safe Environment Program Protecting Children and Young People: The Diocese's Safe Environment Program provides for the proper screening of those who wish to be employed by and/or volunteer for a parish, school, or other diocesan entity; the proper safe environment training of our employees and volunteers working with youth, and the chastity and personal safety training of our children in our schools and religious education programs; and compliance with Diocesan safe environment policies and the Charter for Protection of Children and Young People. [Learn More.](#)

Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA): The TCPA was recently expanded by the Federal Communications Commission to regulate automated voice and text messages many schools are using. If your school uses a notification system for more than emergency situations, require all recipients who subscribe to the notification services to provide consent. Without consent, your school is legally exposed to potential fines for contacting subscribers without their permission.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): Under FERPA, families have the right to request and receive their child's education records and they have the right to submit those requests via email or an online submission form. Consider creating a dedicated email address for such requests so parents can easily make those requests and you can respond to them in a timely manner.

The Americans with Disabilities Act: In addition to ramps, handrails, parking spaces, etc., the Americans with Disabilities Act extends to your website. Your website should be ADA and 508 compliant and designed in such a way that makes it easy for those with poor vision to navigate. Include clear headings and text structure so screen readers can easily scan text. Protecting students with disabilities includes your website.

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment: This regulation protects minor students from disclosing personal information if their parents don't wish to disclose the information in question. This includes surveys, polls or other questionnaires. Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment regulation, schools must get consent from parents before asking children about specific personal information. This can be done via email or included in the school registration forms.

These regulations, among others, should always factor into your communications planning. Involve your school's faculty and staff to ensure your school is communicating legally.

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Developing a Communications Plan for Your School

Overview: A communications plan will serve as the foundation to your school communications efforts and messaging by outlining an effective and proactive approach to communicating effectively and appropriately to key stakeholder groups.

Integrated Approach

A successful communications plan employs a three-pronged approach involving a combination of earned, owned and paid opportunities. Like a three-legged stool, hitting from all three perspectives keeps your message sturdy, sound, reliable – and visible. Focus efforts in these three areas to build awareness and shape perceptions among the target audiences you want/need to reach.

Communications Strategy

The Three-Legged Stool



The most effective communications strategies integrate and balance earned, owned and paid content to meet operational objectives.

Earned: Earned opportunities involve garnering no-cost visibility through aggressive media and public relations strategies via local and regional media and industry influencers. This includes pitched stories, bylined articles, speaking opportunities and other thought leadership activities. Since they are presented by objective third parties, earned opportunities raise the level of an organization’s credibility. Earned opportunities can significantly impact consumer awareness and perceptions, and have the potential to enhance SEO (as they are evidence of credibility and relevance on topics).

- **Public Relations:** Actively pitching the media will increase your school’s level of visibility and raise its “top of mind” presence among its targeted audiences. Securing positive stories about your school or stories that feature faculty and staff as thought leaders will also ensure your school’s name is front and center as a top choice school. The following tactics should be implemented throughout the year:
 - Actively identify and pitch the media
 - Secure guest column and Op-ed opportunities
 - Take advantage of educational awareness events to generate media interest

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- Provide advice, insight and direction for reactive media issues/concerns

Owned: Owned strategies develop and leverage the content from your organization’s website, social media platforms and any other communication channels you use. All outreach, advertising, collateral, website, newsletters, social media, special events and other ‘owned’ communications must align with the message, continuously reinforce a unique point of view, and effectively extend the life and reach of earned opportunities. Consider the following tactics to enhance your school communications:

- Website Updates
- Marketing Collateral
- Social Media
- Annual Report

Paid: Developing advertising campaigns in appropriate media/online outlets ensures your message, voice and visuals are strongly and consistently placed in front of targeted audiences. Paid strategies can focus on driving volume as well as brand identity, sometime simultaneously. In the online world, digital advertising is highly analytic and targeted, providing marketers with more concrete data to measure campaign effectiveness and adjust accordingly. Sponsorship activities also would fall into the paid category. Examples of paid opportunities include:

- Print Ads
- Digital Ads
- Billboards
- Sponsorships
- TV Commercials
- Radio

Combining earned, owned and paid recommendations and opportunities will ensure that you reach your target market efficiently and effectively.

Gathering and Planning Content

Each individual school needs to identify and gather information about upcoming school events and community events that present opportunities for outreach, social media and public relations exposure. For examples of content you want to share, visit the *Develop Your Message* section of this guide.

Gathering Content: Use technology to make it easy for your school to community to solicit and submit ideas for content:

- Create a specific submission form or dedicated email address on your website (e.g., news@yourschool.org)
- Routinely ask for news and story ideas through your school’s social media channels, intranet/ staff portal, newsletters and mobile app.

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Planning Content: Use the content ideas you've gathered to populate your communications calendar, assigning each event to a specific month and determining whether it's a media relations, outreach or social media opportunity.

Example #1: Your school is hosting a canned food drive benefitting the food pantry in November.

- Pitch story to local media to attend food drive and interview participating students and faculty
- Share pictures of students collecting canned goods and post on social media pages. Be sure to tag the local food pantry in the post.
- Write a press release announcing the final donation amount and send to local media.

Example #2: Your school is hosting a booth at the upcoming county fair, highlighting its STEM program.

- Take photos of the booth during setup and during the event, and post to social media encouraging people to visit the booth.
- Provide an engaging activity to attract families to the booth to learn more about the value of a Catholic education.

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12-Month Integrated Communications Calendar

Overview: This Integrated Communications Calendar features earned, owned and paid recommendations and opportunities to leverage your school’s visibility. There are topics for pitching to secure additional media coverage, outreach opportunities and social media prompts. These ideas are relevant to all schools within the Catholic Diocese of Rockford and should be customized to reflect your school’s personality.

JANUARY				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
01/01	Social Media	Happy New Year	Facebook/ Instagram	Wish students, families and community a Happy New Year. Share ideas for spiritual New Year’s resolutions.
01/28-02/03	Community Outreach	Catholic Schools Week	Service Project	Volunteer at a local non-profit or nursing home in the community during Catholic Schools Week.
01/28-02/03	Media Relations	Catholic Schools Week	Local Media	Invite media to cover story about students participating in service project during Catholic Schools Week.
01/28-02/03	Community Outreach	Catholic Schools Week	Community	Work with local city/county administration to get your community leadership to make a public proclamation at council/board meetings about the importance of Catholic education to your community.
01/28-02/03	Community Outreach	Catholic Schools Week	School Community	Host an open house at your school, and invite the community to attend. This is a great opportunity to showcase the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to our church, our communities and our nation.



JANUARY, cont'd.				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
01/28-02/03	Social Media	Catholic Schools Week	Facebook/ Instagram	Share photos of Catholic Schools Week service activities at your school.
01/30	Social Media	Day of Giving	Facebook/ Instagram/ LinkedIn	Catholic schools change lives and now is the time to give back! Encourage the school community to donate during this 24-hour event!
01/30	Social Media	Day of Giving	Facebook/ Instagram	Create a video featuring students and encourage the community to donate during this 24-hour event!
FEBRUARY				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
2/13	Social Media	Fat Tuesday	Facebook/ Instagram	Share what your school is doing to celebrate Fat Tuesday and share the meaning behind this holiday.
2/14	Social Media	Ash Wednesday	Facebook/LinkedIn	What is the meaning behind Ash Wednesday? Share a post about Ash Wednesday and share photos of students who received their ashes.
2/14	Media Relations	Ash Wednesday	Local Media	Invite the media to your school during your Ash Wednesday services.
2/14	Social Media	Valentine's Day	Facebook/ LinkedIn	Share photos of Valentine's Day art projects and a bible verse about love.
2/17	Outreach	Random Acts of Kindness Day	Local Community	Hold a Random Acts of Kindness Day for students – plan a day of activities for students to go and tell the love of God to the community.
2/17	Media Relations	Random Acts of Kindness Day	Local Media	Pitch a story to the media about this positive local news topic. Invite media to various community service events.



MARCH				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
March	Social Media	Music in Our Schools Month	Facebook/ Instagram	Month-long celebration which engages music educators, students and communities from around the country promoting the benefits of high quality music education in our schools. Highlight your music programs.
3/4-3/10	Media Relations	Teen Tech Week	Local Media	Pitch a story about your school's STEM and STEAM programs.
3/17	Outreach	St. Patrick's Day	Local Parade	If your community hosts a St. Patrick's Day Parade, consider participating by walking in the parade or building a float. Hand out information about your school to parade goers.
Late March	Social Media	Spring Break	Facebook/ Instagram	Share Spring Break information and ideas for activities families can do together during that time.
3/30	Social Media	Good Friday	Facebook/ Instagram	What is Good Friday? Create a post that shares why we celebrate Good Friday.
APRIL				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
4/01	Social Media	Easter Sunday	Facebook/ Instagram	Create a post wishing students, families and community a Happy Easter. Share the true meaning behind Easter.
April	Social Media	Math Education Month	Facebook/ Instagram	Highlight your STEM and STEAM programs.
April	Social Media	School Library Month	Facebook/ Instagram	Create a video of the school librarian giving a tour of the library and talking about the importance of reading.
4/26	Outreach	Take Your Son/ Daughter to Work Day	School Community	Encourage parents to take your students to work with them on this day. Have students share what they learned with their class.

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APRIL, continued.				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
4/26	Media Relations	Take Your Son/ Daughter to Work Day	Local Media	Pitch a story to media sharing how your school has encouraged families to participate in this event. Follow a family to their workplace and interview a faculty member on its importance.
4/30-5/4	Social Media	Teacher Appreciation Week	Facebook/ Instagram	Highlight the teachers at your school throughout the week. Create short videos where students share why the teachers at your school are so great.
MAY				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
5/10	Social Media	Ascension of Jesus	Facebook/ LinkedIn	Share what your school is doing to celebrate and share the meaning behind this holiday.
Early May	Media Relations	Graduation	Local Media	Pitch a story idea about your school's graduating class. Are all of your students heading off to college? Is a student doing something unique after high school? Is this your largest graduating class?
May	Social Media	Graduation	Facebook/ Instagram	Congratulate graduates and share photos from graduation.
5/20	Social Media	Pentecost	Facebook/ Instagram	Share what your school is doing to celebrate Pentecost and share the meaning behind this holiday.
05/28	Social Media	Memorial Day	Facebook/ Instagram	Share a post honoring Memorial Day.
5/28	Outreach	Memorial Day	Local Parade	If your community hosts a Memorial Day parade, consider participating by walking in the parade or building a float. Hand out information about your school to parade goers.



JUNE				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
June	Social Media	Alumni Accomplishments	Facebook/ Instagram	During the summer months, share success stories from former students. Show off those accomplished alumni!
June	Outreach	Alumni Gathering	School or Local Restaurant	Host a networking event for local alumni. Share current events at your school and encourage donations. Consider having a current student speak about his or her success at your school.
June	Outreach	Local Farmer's Market	Local Farmer's Market	Host a booth or table at a local farmer's market and share school information for prospective students and families.
June	Social Media	Local Farmer's Market	Facebook/ Instagram	Post photos from farmer's markets showcasing staff and student involvement.
JULY				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
7/04	Social Media	Independence Day	Facebook/ Instagram	Post a 4 th of July message to students, families and communities.
7/04	Outreach	Independence Day	Local Parade	If your community hosts an Independence Day Parade, consider participating by walking in the parade or building a float. Hand out information about your school to parade goers.
June	Outreach	Local Farmer's Market	Local Farmer's Market	Host a booth or table at a local farmer's market and share school information for prospective students and families.
June	Social Media	Local Farmer's Market	Facebook/ Instagram	Post photos from farmer's markets showcasing staff and student involvement.
July	Social Media	Summer Reading List	Facebook	Post a summer reading list for students with suggestions about great books to read.

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AUGUST				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
Early September	Media Relations	Back to School	Local Media	Provide tips to help students at every grade level prepare for the year ahead.
Early September	Social Media	Back to School	Social Media	Share tips to help students at every grade level prepare for the year ahead.
September	Social Media	Welcome Back	Social Media	Share photos from the first week back to school.
SEPTEMBER				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
September	Media Relations	New School Year, New Opportunities	Local Newspaper	Pitch an op-ed on behalf of your school principal on the topic of the new school year and the importance of partnerships between the school and community. Talk about the benefits of a Catholic education.
09/03	Social Media	Labor Day	Facebook/Instagram	Share a post honoring Labor Day.
Early September	Social Media	Extracurricular Activities	Facebook/ Instagram	Getting involved in student clubs and organizations can set students on the path to success. Tips on choosing the club that's right for you.
September	Social Media	Family Engagement	Facebook/ Instagram	When schools and families work together to support learning, students succeed not just in school, but throughout life.
September	Social Media	Kickoff of Fall Sports	Social Media	Share an update about the sports teams for the Fall – post game schedules and photos.
OCTOBER				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
October	Media Relations	National Anti-Bullying Month	Local Media	Highlight student groups at your school that are working to combat bullying in your school and community.



OCTOBER, cont'd.				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
10/15	Social Media	World Teacher's Day	Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn	Highlight a teacher at your school with a unique teaching style, project or plan.
10/7-10/16	Outreach	Teen Read Week	Local School or Pre-School	Teen Read Week is a national literacy initiative of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association. Have students read to younger students in your school or at a local pre-school.
10/7-10/16	Social Media	Teen Read Week	Facebook/ Instagram	Talk about why it is important that teens read for fun. Share reading suggestions.
NOVEMBER				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
11/01	Social Media	All Saints Day	Facebook/ Instagram	Post about the history of All Saints Day. Share what your school is doing to celebrate this holiday.
11/01	Social Media	National Family Literacy Day	Facebook/ Instagram	National Family Literacy Day, take a trip to your local library or bookstore.
11/12-11/16	Media Relations	American Education Week – Nov. 16 - 20	Local Newspaper	Develop an op ed touting faculty and staff members who are making public schools great for every child.
Mid November	Outreach	Thanksgiving Food Drive	Local Food Pantry	Host a food drive at your school and encourage students and community members to donate to families in need this Thanksgiving.
Mid November	Media Relations	Thanksgiving Food Drive	Local Media	Invite media to the food pantry while students deliver the food items they collected.
11/22	Social Media	Thanksgiving	Facebook/ Instagram	Wish your school community a Happy Thanksgiving.



DECEMBER				
Date	Category	Topic/Event	Outlet/Association	Details
12/02	Social Media	Advent	Facebook/ Instagram	Share the meaning behind this holiday and what your school is doing to celebrate.
12/08	Social Media	Feast of the Immaculate Conception	Facebook/ Instagram	Share the meaning behind this holiday and what your school is doing to celebrate.
December	Media Relations	Season of Giving	Local Media	Pitch a story to media about how your school is giving back during the season of giving. Highlight donation drives or other community outreach.
December	Social Media	Holiday Performances	Facebook/ Instagram	Share event information about holiday programs along with photos from the performances.
Mid December	Social Media	Holiday Schedule	Facebook	Post the holiday break schedule to remind students, families and community.
Mid December	Social Media	Winter Break	Facebook	Share a list of activities appropriate for different age levels that students can participate in over Winter Break.
Mid December	Social Media	Christmas	Facebook/ Instagram	Share photos of classroom Christmas parties or art projects.
12/25	Social Media	Christmas Day	Facebook/ Instagram	Post a "Merry Christmas" message to students, families and community.

News-Driven Media Opportunities: Throughout the year, there will be specific “news” events that take place and provide great opportunities for your school to be quoted as a source. We cannot predict when these opportunities may occur, but some advanced planning and quick coordination can position administrators and faculty as a ‘go-to’ source for breaking news.

Evergreen Media Opportunities: There are always story opportunities that are not timed around a specific season of the year but rather are ‘evergreen’ in nature and can be pitched throughout the year based on the media outlet. It ensures ongoing media coverage interspersed during the monthly campaigns and timely media opportunities.



Press Release Template (Print on School Letterhead)

Overview: A press release is a written communication that reports specific but brief information about an event, circumstance or other happening. It is typically provided to the media via e-mail, and should be followed up with a phone call to media contacts. Consider drafting a press release to introduce a new faculty member, celebrate a milestone or anniversary, or announce an award, event or the launch of a new program.

For more information, contact:
Contact Name
Email
Phone Number

Header *Sub-Header*

City, State, (Date) – Include a lead paragraph that states the who, what, when where and why of your announcement.

In the second paragraph, add additional facts or supporting information.

If appropriate, include a quote from a school official.

Include background on the person or event that is featured in the story, as well as a way to learn more or get in touch.

About XYZ School

(Insert a short background paragraph about your school, often referred to as a “boilerplate.”)

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Media Alert Template (Print on School Letterhead)

Overview: A media alert is a one-page announcement of an upcoming event, intended to secure media coverage of a specific event. A media alert is typically provided to the media via e-mail and should be followed up with a phone call to media contacts. Consider drafting a media alert to secure media coverage of a newsworthy school event, like a fundraiser, ceremony or open house.

MEDIA ALERT

For more information, contact:

Contact Name

Email

Phone Number (Day of event)

Date, Year

Header

WHAT: Include details on what the event is and why it's important for the media to attend. Share details on whether there will be interview and photo opportunities and if possible, include who will be available for interviews.

WHEN: Day, Date
Time

WHERE: Location
Address

###

Rockford

120 West State St.
Suite 305
Rockford, IL 61101
815.282.9976

Madison

4230 East Towne Blvd.
Suite 292
Madison, WI 53704
608.239.0745

Quad Cities

677 Avenue of the Cities
Suite 346
East Moline, IL 61244
309.738.1662