

Lynchburg City Schools

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE FOR ALL



LYNCHBURG CITY SCHOOLS

Revised: September 11, 2024

PURPOSE

In an effort to maintain strong partnerships with families, staff, and the community, Lynchburg City Schools (LCS) must provide consistent, clear, accurate, and timely communications. Effective communication ensures transparency and lays the foundation for successful school-community relations.

The Communications Plan provides a concise framework for how the division communicates with the LCS community. This framework allows the school division to streamline communication efforts to best support the [LCS Comprehensive Strategic Plan](#), as well as Section K: School-Community Relations of the LCS Policy Manual.

As highlighted in [Policy KB](#), the Lynchburg City School Board recognizes the importance of providing information regarding the school division to the community. The Board will utilize all appropriate means and media in order to:

- Explain the programs, achievements, and needs of the school division;
- Keep students, parents/guardians, and staff members fully informed about Board policies and procedures as well as their own rights and responsibilities;
- Communicate factual information regarding the school division: and
- Involve students, parents/guardians, and the community in discussions regarding education programs, student activities, and Board policy.

POINTS OF CONTACT

Austin Journey

Supervisor of Communications

journeyat@lcsedu.net

(434) 515-6068

Shannon Gage

Communications Specialist

gagese@lcsedu.net

(434) 515-5059

Scott Kirkwood

Communications Specialist

kirkwoodms@lcsedu.net

(434) 515-5025

AUDIENCES

Stakeholders consist of a wide range of external and internal audiences, and LCS must consider all stakeholder groups when communicating.

- Parents/families
- Students
- Staff
- Governmental organizations
- Community groups
- Non-profit organizations
- Businesses
- Alumni
- Lynchburg residents and other members of the community
- Media

METHODS

There are many tools and methods which LCS utilizes to foster effective communication.

Mass Notifications

LCS uses a mass notification service to schedule emails, phone calls, and text messages to parents, students, and staff. This service is used for regular communications, as well as during crises and weather events.

Websites

The LCS website, www.lcsedu.net, provides information and resources to the entire LCS community. It also highlights news updates from across the division. School websites are built into the LCS website, as well. LCS aims to meet ADA compliance standards outlined in Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA.

LCS Commons is the internal staff website for forms, manuals, and resources.

Social Media

Social media is an important way to communicate and engage with audiences. LCS actively posts content on the following platforms: Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter), YouTube, and LinkedIn. Social media content inspires community engagement with the school division while shining a light on the amazing work being done by LCS students and staff.

Publications

[Lately at LCS](#) is the external community newsletter, emailed monthly. Community members can subscribe to the newsletter to receive news and updates from across the division.

LCS Essentials is the internal staff newsletter, emailed weekly. *LCS Essentials* provides staff with important information and division updates. *LCS Essentials* also highlights positive news and accomplishments from across the division to help build a stronger sense of community among staff members.

The *State of LCS* report is produced annually, and other publications are created, as needed.

Media Relations

Strong media relations help LCS inform the public about division programs, activities, and accomplishments. Press releases and media advisories are sent to media contacts regularly, and quarterly media meetings are held throughout the year. All media inquiries and requests, with the exception of athletics, are handled through LCS Communications.

Flyers

Governmental and community organizations can submit outside materials through a [request process](#). Materials may be distributed in the schools if activities are related to the educational mission of LCS and meet all approval requirements.

Events & Broadcasting

Communications staff works with schools and departments to support and broadcast a number of events throughout the school year such as School Board meetings, convocation, community feedback events, the Partners in Education Recognition Breakfast, Education Foundation events, and graduation.

Marketing Campaigns

Communications staff develop public information advertising campaigns, as needed. Campaigns throughout the school year include enrollment, kindergarten registration, employee recruitment, special program applications, and registration.

Marketing campaigns may include paid advertising through social media, out-of-home media, local TV outlets, radio stations, periodicals, and more.

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

LCS is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for all students and staff. In the event of a crisis or emergency, it is important that LCS communicate effectively with emergency personnel, families, students, staff, and the community.

In the event of an emergency or crisis situation, LCS administrators will follow these communications procedures:

1. **Initial Crisis Notification:** When an incident occurs, the Superintendent's Office is immediately alerted and an initial crisis notification will be sent within minutes to families, students, and necessary staff. This initial notification includes standard emergency messaging which allows for a timely alert.

2. **Crisis Updates:** Within 30 minutes of the initial crisis notification, and every 30 minutes thereafter, Communications staff will send updates to families, students, and necessary staff. These updates will include additional factual information, as available. Updates will still be communicated, even if no additional information is available, to make community members aware that LCS is continuing to monitor the situation.
3. **Crisis Resolution Notification:** Communications staff will send an update to families, students, and staff when the Superintendent's Office is made aware that a crisis situation has been resolved.
4. **Follow-Up Communication:** As determined by the Superintendent's Office, school principal, or Communications staff, a follow-up communication will be sent outlining the following information: the crisis event itself, the response by LCS staff, and resources for families, students, and staff, as needed. If this was a school-based incident, the school principal will send the follow-up communication; otherwise, Communications staff will send it.

If the media inquires about a crisis event, Communications staff will share the most recent update sent to LCS families, students, and staff.

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC GOALS

The Department of Communications has developed a **Communications and Engagement Strategic Plan** that outlines four goals to enhance communications efforts across the school division through 2027.

1. **Communicate LCS Excellence:** Communicate and promote Lynchburg City Schools programs, events, and opportunities, highlighting LCS as the top choice for education in the area.
2. **Support Effective Communication:** Support effective communication throughout Lynchburg City Schools to ensure the entire LCS community receives relevant and timely information.
3. **Strengthen Community Presence:** Strengthen the presence of Lynchburg City Schools in the community through partnerships and increased visibility.
4. **Encourage Family, Community, and Alumni Involvement:** Encourage active involvement from families and the community to support Lynchburg City Schools students.

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