



Excellence In Education

MEMORANDUM

Date: 01 March 2011
To: Board of Trustees
From: Tim Monds, Superintendent
Originator: Kelly Wilkins, Deputy Superintendent
Subject: **Communications Report**

Recommendation

That the Board of Trustees receives as information the Communications Report as presented at the Regular Board meeting of 01 March 2011.

Background:

Parkland School Division Board of Trustees believes that communication is key to the success of all that happens in the Division. Transparent and open dialogue is intended to engage and inform stakeholders and to provide a platform for questions, comments, feedback and input.

Accurate and effective communication is the responsibility of everyone involved in our work. Trustees, Senior Administration and all staff share a commitment to ensuring that colleagues, partners, families and students, the public and community have access to timely and accurate information.

Specific responsibility for key Division Communications is shared at the Centre for Education in a number of roles (i.e. Senior Executive Secretaries, Web Producer and Deputy Superintendent). All media requests are managed through the Centre for Education. The PSD public website (www.psd70.ab.ca) is the primary communication channel and the primary audience is parents.

There has been an increased emphasis on face-to-face meetings as the new Board and Senior Administration commit to increasing the profile of Parkland School Division as they ensure that positive relationships are at the foundation of their work.

Innovative strategies such as On-Screen Digital advertising, an online Brag Book and Public Information Open Houses have assisted the Board in addressing the ongoing opportunity to build a sense of trust, pride and commitment in serving the students and families of the tri-municipal area.

The Communications Report attempts to provide an overview of the Communication Activities, a work plan for future initiatives and an update regarding the public website.

Administration would be pleased to answer any questions.

KDW/ds

KDW

The Parkland School Division No. 70 Board of Trustees Communications Plan – January 2011

Every child...many opportunities

Our Values...

- Trust
- Respect
- Integrity
- Fairness
- Inclusiveness
- Transparency in communication
- Accessibility

PSD Strategic Directions

The Parkland School Division Trustees are accountable for engaging and working with different key stakeholders in their jurisdiction. These relationships are fundamental to the successful operation of the Parkland School Division and significantly affect the system's long term success. Following are three long-term strategic directions that help direct and provide the foundation for all communications and relationship building.

- Our education system is built on trust and strong relationships
- Our education system encourages meaningful dialogue and partnerships
- Our education system listens and responds to the needs of parents and our community

Stakeholders

Several stakeholders have been identified as important to the success of the PSD. Primary stakeholders are those who PSD Trustees are trying to engage and directly interact with and in some circumstances influence. Secondary stakeholders are those that have influence over the primary stakeholders and have some impact on the PSD, but to a lesser degree.

■ Primary Stakeholders

• **Parents/Guardians**

This stakeholder group is integral to the success of the PSD. It is critical that this group is engaged and actively involved in activities throughout the PSD. Parents must perceive and experience that the PSD and its trustees want to hear from them and that they are sincerely interested in their input and involvement.

• **Staff (both teachers and non-teaching staff)**

Similar to parents, this is a group that determines PSD success in delivering quality education for students. PSD sets the culture and delivers the education.

Priorities:

- ✓ New employees
- ✓ Members of Parkland Teachers' Local 10
- ✓ CAAMSE, Central Alberta Association of Municipal School Employees
- ✓ IUOE, International Union of Operating Engineers
- ✓ NUG, Non-Union Group
- ✓ ARTA and other retired employees
- ✓ Substitute Teachers

• **School Councils and Council of School Councils**

Individual School Councils and Council of School Councils are influential organizations that are viewed as credible and knowledgeable about PSD initiatives. It is critical that the Board closely monitor and feed information and messages into these groups as they communicate with parents, other external stakeholders and staff.

• **Municipalities**

For PSD to be successful throughout the region, municipal politicians and senior staff must support and understand the value that the PSD brings to their local communities in terms of educating future generations and the wealth and job creation that it brings.

Priorities:

- ✓ Mayors and Reeves
- ✓ Council members
- ✓ Senior staff and organizations: Town/County managers, economic development, etc.

- **Government (provincial)**

The support and understanding of Alberta Education is critical for the ongoing development of the PSD as a progressive school system. The department, particularly the Minister, needs to believe that the PSD is a model of excellence in education and be encouraged to become actively involved in PSD key strategic initiatives. Almost if not as important is the support and understanding from local MLAS.

Priorities:

- ✓ Alberta Education Minister
- ✓ Alberta Education
- ✓ Advanced Education and Technology Minister
- ✓ MLAs in Parkland County
- ✓ Alberta Minister of Justice and Attorney General (safe communities)

■ Secondary Key Stakeholders

● **Federal Government**

This is a group that can help increase awareness of PSD's successes and is also a potential funder of key initiatives including education services for FNMI (First Nation, Metis and Inuit) students.

Priorities:

- ✓ MPs located in Parkland County

● **Service groups and businesses in Tri-Municipal Area**

Both of these groups have a vested interest in the functioning of local school systems and their achievement results compared to the provincial and national benchmarks. They are also groups often able to influence government policy and promote new directions.

Businesses can sometimes be skeptical of accomplishments in the public sector. In place of no information, business and service groups can sometimes make assumptions or follow the prevailing opinion -- positive, negative or neutral.

Priorities:

- ✓ Employers in County
- ✓ Service Groups: Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, Lions, Elks Clubs, etc.

● **Influential education opinion leaders/organizations within Alberta**

As credible leaders in the education field, it is important that these organizations are aware of what accomplishments and progressive directions the PSD is taking in educating its students. These organizations can potentially become ambassadors for the PSD and at a minimum present an accurate picture of the PSD.

Priorities:

- ✓ Alberta School Boards Association
- ✓ Alberta Teachers Association
- ✓ University of Alberta - Faculty of Education
- ✓ Public School Boards of Alberta
- ✓ Alberta School Councils Association
- ✓ Association of School Business Officials of Alberta

Note: Alberta Education is already referenced under Government (provincial).

Role of the Media

The media are a communications channel for the PSD to carry its messages to key stakeholders. While they are not a stakeholder group as such, they are an important voice and one that can quickly influence and motivate the community. It is important that good relations are maintained with those media interested in PSD initiatives.

Priorities

- ✓ Rural newspapers in the Tri-Municipal Area
- ✓ Community newspapers
- ✓ Edmonton television, radio and daily newspapers
- ✓ Education journals and websites

Key Messages

- *The PSD Trustees believe all students in its school system have the right to a quality education regardless of ability or interest.*
- *Trustees in the Parkland School Division are accountable to parents/guardians and the community at large for providing an excellent learning organization for students.*
- *The Parkland School Division has the results to show it is offering an excellent education for students.*
- *The PSD Trustees respect and are open to working with different interested groups and individuals with the goal of excellence in education.*
- *The PSD Trustees support and promote open, honest communications in all their interactions.*
- *The Parkland School Division Trustees welcome and want to hear from people in the different communities for ways to further enhance our school system and ensure we deliver the best education possible for all our students.*

PSD Trustees current communication activities

Stakeholders	Communication Activities/Tools
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegation Opportunities • Student Advisory Committee • Student Celebrations (Choral, Visual Arts Festivals) • WordWorks • Speak Out • Media Coverage • Letter from Chair (i.e. Speak Out) • On-screen Messaging – Magic Lantern Theatre • PSD Website • Brag Book (student recognition) on Website
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Council meetings • School celebrations and other events • Delegation Opportunities • Division Education Three-Year Plan • Annual Education Results Reports • Three-Year Reporting Schedule • Monitoring Reports • Three-Year Plan Progress Reports for the 2007/08 school year • Focus Groups • Capital Plan • PSD Budget • School Calendar • Satisfaction Survey Results • Report to the Community • PSD Website • Board Meetings • Board Highlights • Media coverage • Letter (i.e. Harvest Ridge) • On-screen Messaging – Magic Lantern Theatre • Community Stakeholder Meetings • Education Committee • Development of School Websites • Speaking Opportunities • Message from Board Chair / Superintendent • Interactive Quick Poll Feedback Form on website • Brag Book on Website
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School celebrations and other events • Welcome Postcard • Delegation presentations by students, teachers, parents • Division Education Three-Year Plan • Annual Education Results Reports

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-Year Reporting Schedule • Monitoring Reports • Three-Year Plan Progress Reports • Capital Plan • PSD Budget • School Calendar • Satisfaction Survey Results • Report to the Community • Trustee Communications Committee Meetings • Board/Teacher Advisory Committee • School and other facility tours • PSD Voice Meetings • Note of Recognition to Substitute Teachers during Substitute Teachers Appreciation Week • On-line Newsletter • Education Committee • New Teacher Orientation and Callback • Board Highlights • Message from Board Chair / Superintendent • Service Awards, Excellence in Teaching/Retirement, Edwin Parr • Brag Book on Website
Alberta MLAs and Alberta Government staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Message from Board Chair and Superintendent • One-on-One Meetings • Education Plan / AERR • PSD Public Website • School Tours when appropriate • Media Coverage • Interactive Quick Poll Feedback Form on website
Mayors/Reeves/ economic development in different communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages from Board Chair and Superintendent • One-on-One Meeting • Education Plan / AERR • PSD / Stony Plain / Spruce Grove / Parkland County Dinner • Trustee Municipal Partners Meeting • Board Highlights • Host Shikaoi Delegation • Board Meetings • PSD Public Website • Media Coverage • Interactive Quick Poll Feedback Form on website
Community: Businesses and service groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Highlights • Board Meetings • Business Involvement Reception • Attendance at Community Functions (ie: Winter Games Reception) • Open Houses – Public Consultations • Chamber of Commerce / Rotary Meetings • Media Coverage of Events • On-Screen Messaging – Magic Lantern Theatre

Proposed additional communications

The following communication concepts build on the strong communications already developed by the Trustees. The proposed concepts take the PSD to the next level of communications and encourage dialogue and a level of engagement between stakeholders and Trustees.

- Breakfast and luncheon network meetings with small groups or one-on-one. Purpose of the meetings is to monitor any concerns or potential issues relating to PSD, communicate successes and listen and engage key stakeholders in PSD initiatives. Before these meetings are held, a briefing document should be prepared for the Board Chair or designate on any potential issues within the PSD and some background on the organization and/or individual.
- Speaking engagements with service groups scheduled at least once or twice a month during the school year. The key goal is to encourage meaningful dialogue and build trust and develop strong relationships focused on PSD activities and achievements. A core speech/presentation should be developed and modified throughout the year as key milestones and initiatives occur. Students should be invited to help deliver these speeches.

At the beginning of each school year, the Board Chair might make a speech to the local Chambers of Commerce - *state of the union address on the status of education in the PSD.*

- Quarterly dinner meetings with PSD Board of trustees and other credible public boards in Parkland County and area. The key goal is to establish strong relationships and encourage meaningful dialogue and explore the potential for partnerships as well as outline PSD activities and achievements. If possible, a presentation should be developed, similar to the core speech that also includes photos of students and teachers involved in major initiatives (*a picture is worth a thousand words*).
- PSD Awards program recognizing education leaders in the PSD and community (teachers, parents, grandparents, business leaders, etc.) All staff, teachers and students would provide their input into the key message or theme of the awards program. It would become an annual event that would attract key stakeholders in the community with the municipal and provincial governments involved in some capacity, e.g. handing out awards, etc. and teacher and student leaders invited to attend and share their experiences.
- Opportunities for the Education Minister to become involved in special events and announcements. The goal is to ensure the Minister and his senior staff are aware and believe the PSD and its trustees are doing an outstanding job and also present situations for the Minister to be profiled in the media. Consider similar opportunities for the local Cabinet Ministers and municipal politicians. In organizing these events, it is important to remember that senior

- politicians often require at least two months' notice to schedule an event into their calendars.
- There are communication tools that can be used to support the Trustees in communicating their messages: a welcome letter from the PSD Board Chair along with a Report to the Community in all Welcome Wagon/real estate packages for new homeowners.
 - There are many other communications that the Board of Trustees can become involved in. However, a careful analysis needs to be made on the availability of Trustees given the many demands on their time.

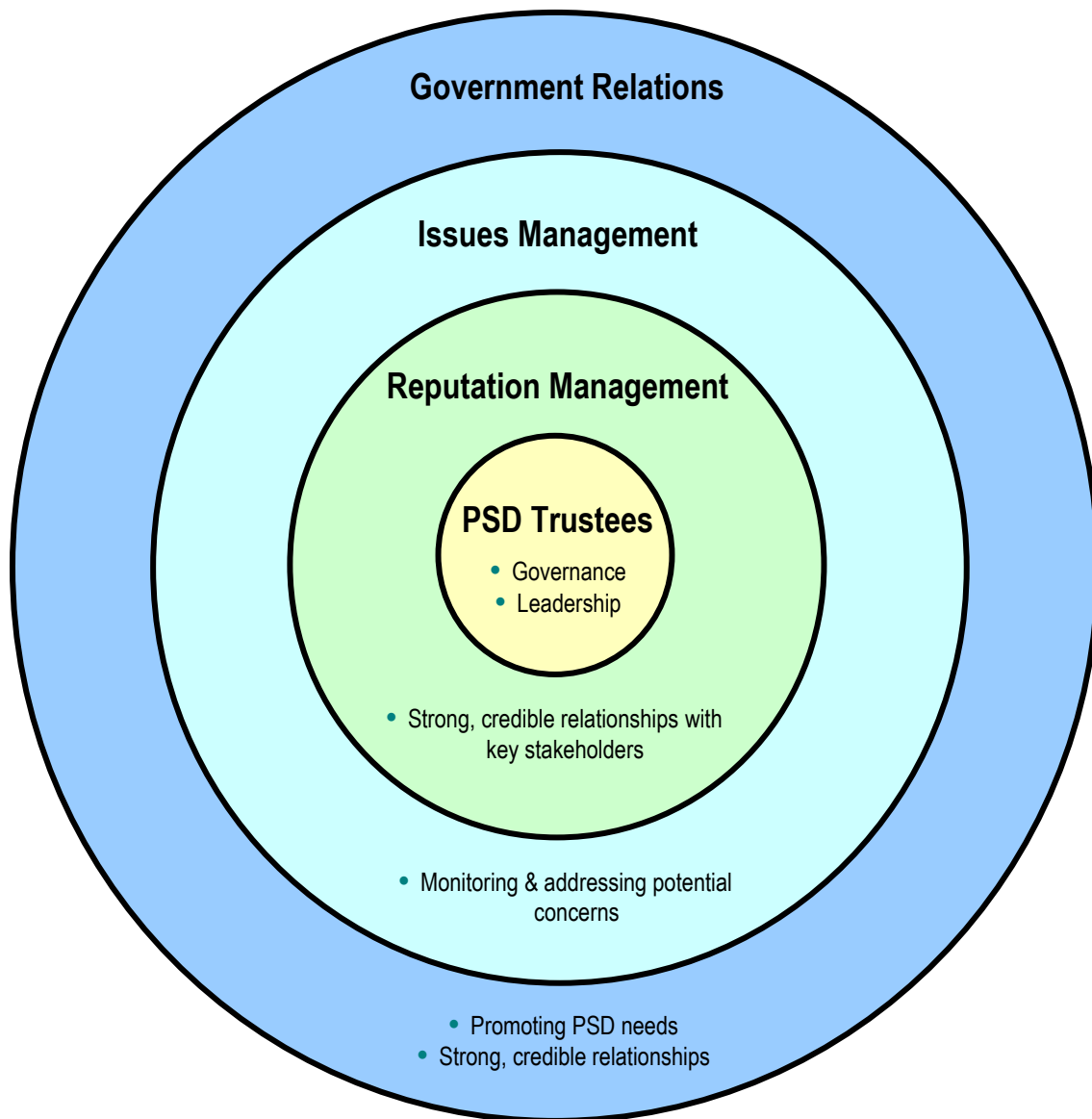
Provincial and federal officials – relationship building

Above all else, these officials need to know the impact of their actions, or lack of action, on education.

- Don't wait until MLAs are in session to make the first contact. Arrange a time to meet while your representatives are in their home offices.
- Make sure they receive all print and electronic communications that you send to parents and others in the community.
- Provide basic enrollment, demographic, and funding information about your jurisdiction.
- Write or call them regularly to let them know how you are spending public funds. Don't open the conversation by saying you need more.
- Illustrate the point that needs are still unmet by telling them how many students are being served and how many are left unserved. Give them the opportunity to decide whether more funding is needed.
- When you have stellar programs, share stories about those programs with MLAs; why they have worked, who is benefiting from them, and how you provided or obtained funds to do the job.
- Survey your school board to determine how many have personal connections to, or are friends with, provincial or federal officials. Find out if trustees would be comfortable contacting their acquaintances about issues affecting your school jurisdiction.
- Ask MLAs if you are providing enough information for them to make informed decisions about education.
- Encourage all trustees to contact MLAs. Elected officials talking to elected officials is very powerful.
- Learn about other issues which they are dealing with. Be able to discuss education needs as they compare and contrast with other requests for provincial resources.

- Above all, remember to thank elected officials for the support they give to education. Pick up a pen and write a quick thank you note whenever it's warranted.
- Over time, the relationships you develop with MLAs will provide strong support for our jurisdiction and for public education.

Communications Framework



In implementing the Board Communications Plan, there are several resources that have been developed:

- Business Leader Network List: Business leaders in the County (Appendix A)
- Community Contact List: Listing of service groups and other non-business organizations (Appendix B)
- Board Relationship List: Key public boards in the Parkland County area (Appendix C)

(Due to the confidential information contained in these resources, they are not public information.)

PSD Board of Trustees Communications Work Plan – January to September 2011

Strategies:

- ✓ Our education system is built on trust and strong relationships (internal and external stakeholders)
- ✓ Our education system encourages meaningful dialogue and partnerships (internal and external)
- ✓ Our education system listens and responds to the needs of parents and our community

Timeframe: January to September 2011

Action	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Board Chair presents <i>State of the PSD</i> in late Sept/Oct. 2011 to Spruce Grove Chamber of Commerce	Fall 2011	Chair
2. School Council meetings with parents and staff	Monthly	All Trustees
3. Regular sessions with municipal officials to identify areas of common interest and opportunities to work together	As necessary	Chair Superintendent
4. Open Houses to address questions and develop understanding	As necessary	All Trustees Senior Administration
5. Superintendent and Board Chair online messages	Monthly	Chair Superintendent
6. News releases and articles posted on PSD website quoting Board Chair	On going	Deputy Superintendent
7. Produce public report on three-year education plan and annual education results	Yearly	Senior Administration
8. Board meetings (Highlights, Minutes)	Monthly	Trustees, Sr. Admin.
9. Develop a Report to the Community that focuses on <i>Safe & Caring Schools and Educational Technology</i>	June 2011	Deputy Superintendent
10. Create a YouTube site for PSD – host video material that positions PSD as an innovative learning organization	June 2011	Deputy Superintendent
11. Host Public/Partner event Re: Safe Schools/Communities	Fall 2011	Deputy Superintendent
12. On-screen Messaging – Magic Lantern Theatre		

Parkland School Division Website

Website Vision

Reflecting PSDs position as one of Alberta's greatest school divisions, PSD70 is the best school division website in Alberta and among the best in Canada.

Website Objective

The objective of the Parkland School Division website is to establish an internet presence that is an engaging and trusted source of credible and dynamic information. This means a Divisional website and school websites that our customers, both internal and external, feel compelled to revisit. Our online presence will contribute to the success of Parkland's vision of being a learning organization dedicated to the development of children.

The World Wide Web has become one of the most effective tools for information dissemination; therefore Parkland School Division's web presence is a very important communications channel that allows us to share information not only with our community stakeholders but also with school divisions all over Canada. Our website is an on-line interactive brochure to the world.

Website Highlights

- Launched new Division Website June 2010
- Developed and implemented content management system that will be reused for every school website which results in huge cost savings
- Developed foundational documents to support new environment and sustain our new web presence:
 - Content and Web Writing Style Guides
 - Content Management User Training Guide
 - Technical Style Guide
 - Web Governance Guidelines

Web Analytics

Web analytics are used most commonly to analyze the habits of users.

Since the launch of our website in July 2010 we have had:

- 891,175 unique page views.
- 92,147 users visited our Schools pages
- 91,857 users visited our Employment pages.
- 194,687 users visited our Division pages.
- 10,892 users visited our Board pages.

Did you know?

- On January 10, 2011, our website had 17,843 unique page views. 6,087 of those visitors landed on our home page, 2,184 went directly to the bus schedule page.

What's Next

School Websites Project

This project will evaluate and enhance the individual websites of PSD schools. The aim is to increase design consistency across the sites, thus improving the customers' online experience, as well as increasing efficiency in content management in implementing future enhancements.

A template will be prepared for the 21 schools, to create a unified, cohesive, user-friendly experience for all PSD Schools customers.

Each school will have a Subject Matter Expert (SME) assigned to manage the website on behalf of the school.

To achieve these objectives we will:

- Design and implement a new graphical look and feel for Parkland Schools' websites.
- Design and implement a template for the sites, including information architecture and a user interface that permits efficient and effective navigation and allows users to locate information quickly and with minimal effort.
- Migrate all content from the existing school websites to the new template embodying the required changes in information architecture, navigation, aesthetic and content arrangement. Facilitate website content management by authorized Parkland School staff.

Where We're At

Working with Principals to:

- Provide understanding of the importance of sustaining their new web presence post launch.
- Identify Subject Matter Experts responsible for sustainment.
 - Set up training for Subject Matter Experts
- Share information architecture and communicate next steps.
- Share conceptual graphical mock-ups.
- Obtain initial content to populate new websites prior to launch.
- Test new school environment in preparation for launch

It is expected that all schools will have their new websites operational during the 2010-2011 school year.