



# Communications PLAN

2021/2022 Update

Learners are innovative thinkers  
who are successful,  
confident, respectful and caring



Lethbridge  
SCHOOL DIVISION



# WHAT IS OUR CURRENT SITUATION?

Lethbridge School Division will be moving into the sixth year with a Communications Plan. The goal is to create a plan that guides senior administration, the Board of Trustees and all staff in the process of communicating and engaging stakeholders.



## Principles Underlying Communication

1. A communications plan is a living, breathing document, subject to change and alteration as needs arise.
2. With the evolving world of technology, and the way our students, staff and stakeholders gather, view and share information, it requires the division to have a complete understanding of how we can best communicate with stakeholders.
3. A plan provides a framework to help our district better communicate its messages, both to internal and external audiences.
4. Working with staff, the Board of Trustees and stakeholders leads to effective and efficient forms of communication.
5. It is the responsibility of all in the district to help foster a culture of open and honest communication to ensure successes and achievements are shared.
6. Effective community engagement informs Board priorities, enhances the breadth of experience for students and provides opportunity for students, staff and the Board to contribute to the community.

## Our organization

- Lethbridge School Division has been educating students in Lethbridge since 1886, and has grown to include over 11,000 students and over 1,200 staff.
- Based in a growing city of over 101,000 people, the division includes a wide range of elementary, middle schools and high schools, along with number of outreach schools.



## OUR TARGET AUDIENCES

- This plan will seek to engage those both directly involved in the education system (internal audiences) and those outside the system (external audiences) who have a vested interest in the education system on some level.
- Internal audiences include Education Centre staff, trustees, teachers, support staff, union representatives, School Councils and students.
- External audiences include parents and families of students, the media, municipal, provincial and federal governments, industry and business and those in the community served by Lethbridge School Division

## COMMUNICATION METHODS IN OUR TOOLBELT

- Our district brand (our name, logo and messaging). The modernization of our division logo is complete.
- Communication methods for schools developed to standardize how we promote events and deal with media.
- Our district website, web portal and social media channels.
- The board newsletter, school administrator email/text lists, SchoolMessenger, Trustee reports to school councils.
- News stories and videos in print, radio and television media.
- Coverage of board of trustees meetings.
- Surveys, town hall meetings to engage the public.





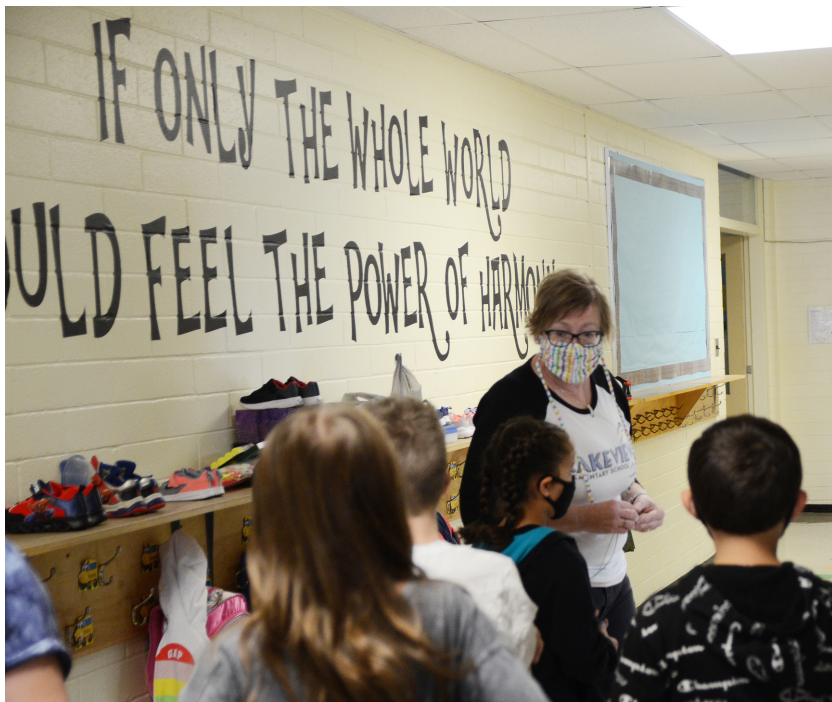
## GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- The Division strives to increase communication at all levels, ranging from internal communication among employees to external communication with parents, media, corporate and community sponsors and taxpayers.
  - Guided by this plan, the Division will use a variety of communication tools, and build capacity among staff on how to best use these tools.
  - Interactive communication processes will be implemented to boost reciprocal, two-way communication, which is key to gathering public feedback.
  - Increase public and staff awareness of Division activities, initiatives, programs and achievements of our schools, staff and students.
  - Maximize enrolment in our schools, and position the Division as the number one choice locally for education.
- .....



## WHY DO WE NEED A PLAN?

- A communications plan sets best practices for communication, and outlines the most effective ways to get our message out and receive feedback.
- Recognizing ongoing changes in the way people communicate, through social media in particular, we need to ensure our messages are timely, consistent and accurate.
- The Division needs to stress all employees have a role to play in communication, on some level, to develop positive working relationships with stakeholders.





# GOAL 1

## Effective internal communications

### Proposed actions

#### - ENSURE STAFF ARE WELL INFORMED ABOUT DIVISION PROGRAMS/INITIATIVES AND BOARD PRIORITIES

- Deliver up-to-date information to staff concerning Division priorities, the budget and Board decisions which might impact them.
- Develop information packages for staff on key issues the Division is dealing with, complete with background information, and information on major projects.
- Continue the production of the monthly staff newsletter, The Division Dispatch, along with monthly emails with highlights of each Board of Trustees meeting.

### Proposed actions

#### - CONTINUE TO BUILD UPON KNOWLEDGE STAFF POSSESS ABOUT BEST PRACTICES AND WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING THROUGHOUT THE DIVISION

- Create a list of key contacts for each school (athletic directors, technology experts) who can lend support to teachers in other schools.
- Create effective lines of communication where staff can direct questions to Division leaders and other staff members.
- Support networking of school leaders to provide opportunities to support an organizational approach for collaboration and sharing of best practices.
- Encourage each school to send a monthly list of events to Division office for the creation of a Division-wide event calendar.
- Widely share the Division branding guide, to ensure consistent use of the Division logos, fonts and colour schemes



### Proposed actions

#### - IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH TRUSTEES, SCHOOL COUNCILS AND STUDENTS

- Provide informative and timely information for students online.
- Have the communications officer put together briefing notes for Trustees on hot-button issues impacting the Division, or issues currently in the news.
  - Continue to distribute media releases, Board highlights and Division newsletters to School Councils.
- Continue promoting the Division app, and school-specific apps, which has created another form of communication for school events and emergent situations.



# GOAL 2

## Accurate, timely information for external audiences

### Proposed actions

- BOOST COVERAGE  
OF DIVISION EVENTS,  
ACHIEVEMENTS,  
PROGRAMS  
AND STORIES  
OF INTEREST  
IN THE LOCAL MEDIA

- Develop detailed background information for media kits to distribute to news outlets for reporters covering issues which impact the Division.
- Distribute a monthly calendar of major events going on at local schools.
- Establish a Media Centre tab on the Division website to highlight press releases and host information the media can easily access on past Board decisions.
  - Continue to host media calls for events to promote school dance/drama/art events.

### Proposed actions

- INCREASE EFFORTS  
TO COMMUNICATE  
WITH PARENTS  
AND FAMILIES  
OF DIVISION STUDENTS

- Continue with the development and usage of the Public Engagement website. Promote the site as a one-stop-shop for all of the Division's engagement projects.
- Ensure each school has up to date Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts, to push timely information out to members of their school communities.
  - Continue to facilitate effective communication between school councils and their parent communities, through the School Council Sign-Up forms on each website.
  - Continue to effectively utilize SchoolMessenger to communicate with parents in emergency situations, along with our Division app and websites.
  - Continue to provide livestreams of the Board of Trustees meeting, Division School Council and online access to engagement sessions such as Town Hall.

- DEVELOP TIMELY,  
ORIGINAL CONTENT  
FOR THE 51 WEBSITE,  
UPDATED DAILY  
AND PROMOTED  
WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

### Proposed actions

- Encourage staff and student submissions of writing and photography to post on the Division website.
- Develop a weekly photo gallery of the most interesting events throughout the Division.
  - Build on the video component of the website, and continue to promote and showcase Division events via video.





# GOAL 3

## Build communication capacity for all Division employees

### Proposed actions

- HELP EMPLOYEES  
BECOME BETTER  
AT COMMUNICATING  
DIVISION PRIORITIES  
AND SUCCESSES

- Increase the number of spokespeople able to speak on a number of topics, and provide that list to the local media.
- Train employees and develop resources to assist Division staff in dealing with the media, and information requests from the general public.
- Continue to inform all employees about the role of the Division communications officer and the appropriate communication channels staff are required to follow.





# GOAL 4

## Increase quantity/quality of community engagement

### Proposed actions

#### - CONTINUE MOMENTUM GENERATED THROUGH THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

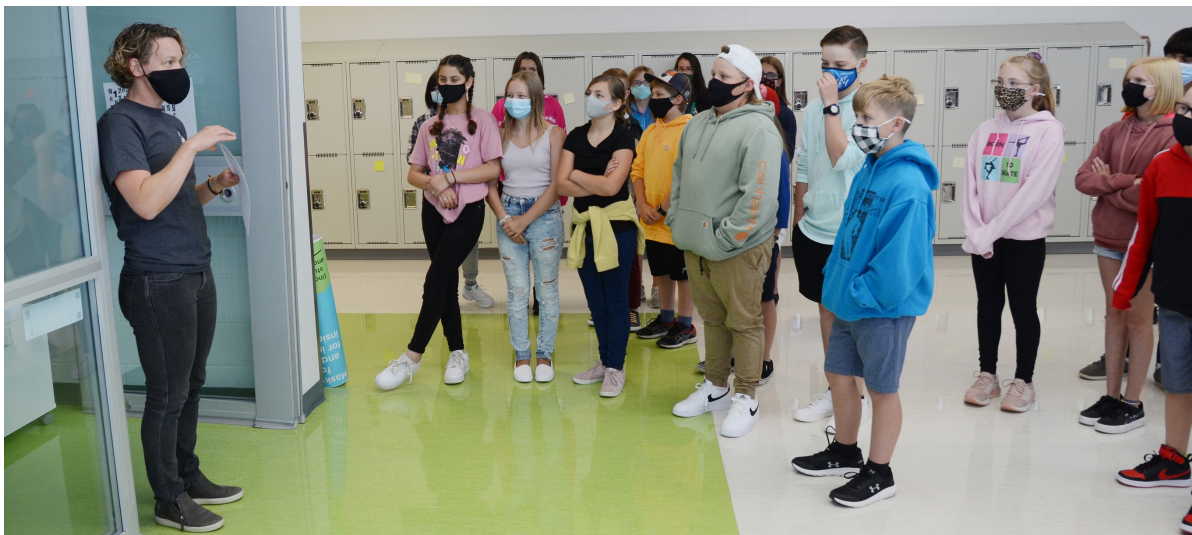
- Build upon the success of the Canada 150 ICE Awards Scholarship Breakfast. Continue to bring in top-notch guest speakers for the annual February event, and, with the help of the committee, promote the breakfast throughout the community.
- Solicit other ideas from the committee, in terms of how the Division can better connect with parents and host other events to collect community feedback and distribute information about the Division.



#### - COLLECT INPUT AND PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PUBLIC TO PROCESS FEEDBACK WE RECEIVE

### Proposed actions

- Provide fillable forms, surveys and discussions boards on the Division and the Public Engagement website.
- Use online surveys to solicit the opinions of parents in regards to issues impacting the Division.
- Provide a summary of feedback received, whether from polls, surveys or open houses, and detail how the information will be used.
- Continue to demonstrate the practices listed above when planning for and reporting on the results from the Division's annual Town Hall.





# GOAL 5

## Develop outside-the-box methods of communication

### Proposed actions

- BE INNOVATIVE  
IN OUR APPROACHES  
TO COMMUNICATE  
WITH THE PUBLIC  
THROUGH CONSISTENT  
AND DYNAMIC  
INTERACTION

- Ensure locations of community-engagement events are convenient for target audience.
- Use multiple media sources more often. Produce short videos to promote and cover events, reveal important information (such as new school designs) and conduct interviews with Trustees to promote Division initiatives and provide more information about important Board decisions.





# GOAL 6

## Constantly review and update our social media and digital citizenship

- ENSURE  
CONSISTENT  
MESSAGING  
IS DELIVERED  
VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

### Proposed actions

- Communicate to staff a set of guidelines for what is appropriate to post on Division and school Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts.
- Ensure the use of social media complies with the Division's ethical and professional principles at all times.

- CONTINUE  
TO CLEARLY DEFINE  
RESPONSIBLE USE  
OF DIVISION  
TECHNOLOGY  
FOR ALL STAFF

### Proposed actions

- Regularly update the Division's Use of Technology policy, taking into account the ever-evolving world of social media.
- Outline staff responsibilities involving identifying and reporting potential threats via social media.





# GOAL 7

## Streamline school-to-parent communication

### Proposed actions

- ATTEMPT TO SIMPLIFY  
SCHOOL-TO-PARENT  
COMMUNICATION  
METHODS AND PROVIDE  
SCHOOLS  
WITH MORE OPTIONS  
FOR MASS  
COMMUNICATION  
METHODS

- Expand the SchoolMessenger text feature for use by all schools.
- Ensure all Division staff understand the full capabilities of PowerSchool, and the options available to them via the Parent Portal and Student Portal.
  - Develop a comprehensive package for parents, which details the communication methods their schools could be using in that particular school year.
- Continue promoting the Division app, which is capable of sending a wide variety of notifications to parents, ranging from emergency alerts to daily information updates.





# Are we improving?

Simply having a plan is only part of the equation for improvement. Part of the process is also determining if those plans are making an impact. We must also devise a set of benchmarks to determine if the communication plan is indeed making a difference, and if our stated goals are being achieved.

## How will we measure success?

- Schools are making use of the Communications Officer to help promote their schools and their events.
- Staff members are satisfied with the level of communication between senior managers and schools.
- Survey results indicate parents are satisfied with their level of engagement with the schools.
- Our message is getting out to the local media.
- Track newspaper, radio and television coverage to see whether or not Division news releases and stories are being used. Monitor media attendance of important Division and individual school events.
- The general public is paying attention to Division and school social-media accounts.
- Track the traffic on our Division and school websites, ensure existing social-media accounts are being used and track increases in followers and likes.
- Routinely monitor school websites and newsletters to ensure information is getting out on a timely basis, and that schools are using communication tools.
- Track participation in online and in-person community-engagement opportunities.





# Communications PLAN

2021/2022 Summary



## GOAL 1

Effective internal communications

- ENSURE STAFF ARE WELL INFORMED ABOUT DIVISION PROGRAMS/INITIATIVES AND BOARD PRIORITIES
- CONTINUE TO BUILD UPON KNOWLEDGE STAFF POSSESS ABOUT BEST PRACTICES AND WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING THROUGHOUT THE DIVISION

## GOAL 2

Accurate, timely information for external audiences

- BOOST COVERAGE OF DIVISION EVENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS, PROGRAMS AND STORIES OF INTEREST IN THE LOCAL MEDIA
- INCREASE EFFORTS TO COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS AND FAMILIES OF DIVISION STUDENTS

## GOAL 3

Build communication capacity for all Division employees

- HELP EMPLOYEES BECOME BETTER AT COMMUNICATING DIVISION PRIORITIES AND SUCCESSES

## GOAL 4

Increase quantity/quality of community engagement

- CONTINUE MOMENTUM GENERATED THROUGH THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE
- COLLECT INPUT AND PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PUBLIC TO PROCESS FEEDBACK WE RECEIVE

## GOAL 5

Develop outside-the-box methods of communication

- BE INNOVATIVE IN OUR APPROACHES TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE PUBLIC THROUGH CONSISTENT AND DYNAMIC INTERACTION

## GOAL 6

Constantly review and update our social media and digital citizenship

- ENSURE CONSISTENT MESSAGING IS DELIVERED VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

## GOAL 7

Streamline school-to-parent communication

- ATTEMPT TO SIMPLIFY SCHOOL-TO-PARENT COMMUNICATION METHODS AND PROVIDE SCHOOLS WITH MORE OPTIONS FOR MASS COMMUNICATION METHODS

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The Division strives to increase communication at all levels, ranging from internal communication among employees to external communication with parents, media, corporate and community sponsors and taxpayers.