

Barnwell School District 45

**District
Communication
Plan**



Barnwell School District 45's vision communicates a commitment to excellence in all areas of district operations.

Vision

Barnwell School District 45—Leaders in Excellence

Mission

Barnwell School District 45 is committed to preparing students for lifelong success by providing individualized learning experiences.

Core Values

Innovation

Integrity

Investment

Community



The purpose of the Barnwell School District 45 Communication Plan is to present a clear and concise framework for communicating with our school community. The plan primarily addresses two types of school district audiences:

Internal (students, teachers, staff, administration and Board of Education)

External (parents, businesses, civic groups, religious groups, and other members of the BSD45 community)

Staff support for and involvement in this plan is vital – particularly, teachers and office staff who are highly influential sources of information for the public. The BSD45 staff carries the message of the school district to their families and friends who in turn form opinions about the schools. We have as a top priority to clearly communicate a unified message at all times. The District and School Administrators manage community relations, publications, marketing, and offer leadership on all comprehensive communication services and strategies for the district under the direct supervision of the Superintendent.

NOTE: Crisis Communications including weather and additional safety threats are detailed in the School Emergency Management Plans.



Targeted Stakeholders

Internal

Students
Staff
District Level

- Classified
- Certified
- Administrators

School Level

- Classified
- Certified
- Administrators

School Board

External

Parents
Prospective Employees
Parent Organizations
Key Communicators
Business Community
Elected Officials
Civic Groups
Military
Law Enforcement
Faith-Based Groups
Community Groups
Colleges and Universities
Private Schools and School District
Electronic Media - Websites, E-Mail, Remind 101, Twitter, Facebook, etc.
Print Media - newsletters, newspapers, flyers, etc.



Objectives

Our main objective is to improve internal and external communications with the specific goal of creating open, two-way communication between the School Board, Leadership Team, staff, students, parents and the BSD45 Community.

Clarify district flow of information.

- Revise and distribute organizational charts to all staff showing decision-making process, reporting, and accountability structure.

Provide ongoing training and support for administrators in effective communication with staff and the public.

- Provide continuing training sessions as part of Administrators' meetings on how to train teachers and staff to communicate their school's message
- Subscribe to school communication publications and organizations (SCASA, ASCD, etc.) and relay pertinent ideas and information to administrators
- Provide administrators with easy-to-use communications tools as needed when issues arise
- Provide communications training to school level staff

Provide regular information on district-wide issues.

- Distribute information from meetings on need-to-know basis
- Distribute all external publications and news releases to all employees via postings on website
- Issue short, bulleted sheets to staff and parents on issues of immediate concern

Create a system to encourage flow of information from parents/community to the district.

- Conduct parent surveys to obtain feedback on flow of information
- Offer meeting opportunities to receive input
- Expand the use of the electronic media usage to facilitate communication between parents and schools

Publish and distribute the following informational pieces.

- District/School informational brochures
- School newsletters
- Budget documents
- Press releases as needed
- Informational items posted on website, i.e. job listings
- Recruitment video
- Recruitment brochure



Communicate with civic, community and religious groups.

- Include groups in mailings
- Attend community meetings as needed to provide information
- Provide district communications materials to key leaders
- Develop partnerships with groups
- Develop programs for touring the district and the schools

Be visible in the community.

- Attend community organization meetings
- Encourage participation in local service clubs
- Host advisory meetings or forums when appropriate
- Encourage staff to speak positively about BSD45 to friends, neighbors and community acquaintances
- Seek business partnerships through contacts in local groups
- Encourage staff attendance at athletic and extra-curricular events
- Collaborate with military organizations
- Participate in community events such as job fairs, parades, “Back To School” events, Relay for Life, etc.
- Develop partnerships with the faith-based community

Highlight Faculty/Staff Accomplishments.

- Recognize faculty/staff accomplishments at School Board meetings
- Salute BSD45 employees who exhibit exceptional customer service
- Highlight staff with articles in local newspaper and on websites



Strategies

Keep Communications Simple

- Use clear, concise and non-educational style for all publications
- Vary the types and level of communication to target diverse audiences
- Translate communication pieces when appropriate for various language groups

Provide Timely Information

- Provide updates on key BSD45 topics of interest
- Have key information available online for quick reference

Communicate Early and Often

- Provide information when appropriate to send out to principals, department heads, curriculum leaders, teachers and other employees as needed
- Follow-up with memos or communications to all staff if necessary
- Make telephone calls if in doubt

Communicate Face-to-Face

- The more difficult the situation, the more important it is to communicate face-to-face
- Encourage staff to relay messages through personal interaction when appropriate
- Coordinate Leadership Team's communication with staff

Keep Communications Brief and to the Point

- Use bullet points when appropriate
- Highlight message in the title
- Proofread all documents for errors

Emphasize Customer Service

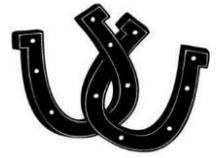
- Provide training for all employee groups
- Reward exceptional customer service with messages from supervisors

Train Staff

- Train staff to understand that what they say to friends, neighbors, and people in the community has a direct impact on how Barnwell 45 schools are perceived
- Engage frontline staff in the conversation, and make sure they have access to information immediately, as they are the best link to parents and the community

Develop Relationships with our Community

- Ask for input on areas of concern



Study the Media

- Pay attention to the type of stories aired or published
- Note who is generally used as a source of information
- Develop relationships with editors and education reporters

Prepare our Messages

- Study issues facing education and be prepared to respond with information sheets
- Develop responses that represent our school or district message
- Avoid technical jargon by keeping it simple when appropriate
- Don't use education lingo when preparing messages
- Prepare stories in formats that match those used by the local media



Methods

We will identify the communication tools that are most widely accepted and preferred by the community. Our communications methods include, but are not limited to:

- BSD45 Reports
- The People Sentinel
- Informational Brochures
- Strategic Plans
- Inclement Weather Notices
- Employee Handbooks and Packets
- Budget Information
- Weekly Memos from the Superintendent to the Board
- E-mail Communications to connect with both internal and external audiences
- Online Publications
- Websites
- BSD45 Guidelines
- Payroll Information
- Salary Schedules
- Employee Vacancies and Applications



Assessment and Accountability

Being that different measurements work best in different situations, various tools will be developed to measure communication effectiveness.

- Check points will be used to ascertain what communication strategies are being implemented in other school districts
- Focus groups will be conducted to collect qualitative information as needed
- Surveys will be used to determine stakeholders' perceptions and to collect quantitative information
- Interpersonal contact will be conducted to gauge the level of effectiveness of the Communication Plan
- The Communication Plan will be reviewed and updated as deemed necessary by the Superintendent