



*A Community of Learners*

## **Informational Memo-Communication Plan 2018-2019**

TO: School Board  
Superintendent Kocanda

FROM: Kate Hughes, Communications & Community Relations Coordinator

September 25, 2018

### **Background & Overview**

Strategic communications efforts in 2017-2018 included managing communications strategy and community engagement surrounding the *Future Ready D36*, proactive media engagement, managing and promoting the Winnetka Parents Institute (WPI) program, and working toward the Home-School-Community Partnership component of the Reaching ALL Learners goal.

As Communication is a key area of focus in the District's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, efforts have been closely tracked since summer 2015. Over the course of this past three years, progress has been made in several key areas:

# COMMUNICATIONS IN D36

## Telling Our Story

2018 VS. 2015



**1. INCREASED MEDIA COVERAGE**

- 390 articles & items since 2015

WINNETKA TALK  
Bunnies, drones and shaving cream art: Winnetka summer program keeps children engaged

### 2. RECORD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 1,200 guests visited D36 in 2017-2018
- WPI program (19 sessions in 2017-2018)
- Relationships with Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Preschools, Realtors, etc.



### 3. CONSISTENCY IN BRANDING

- Video series highlighting *The Winnetka Experience*
- Shared Vision in action
- Newsletter alignment
- 20 INSPRA Awards (2016, 2017, 2018)



LET'S CHART THE COURSE OF OUR SCHOOLS  
FUTURE READY D36  
HELP US SHAPE THE FUTURE OF OUR SCHOOLS  
WINNETKA KIDSGARAGE

### 4. SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH

-Followers increased by 609% since 2015



### 5. ALUMNI OUTREACH

- 23 stories of alums making a difference
- Regular WINNETKA LIVING column



COMMUNITY VOICES  
D36 Alum Leads Rainforest Conservation and Entrepreneurial Endeavors in Ecuador  
-23 stories of alums making a difference  
-Regular WINNETKA LIVING column

Noteworthy activities and accomplishments in 2018-2019 included:

- ❑ Coordinated community engagement, media outreach and social media efforts surrounding the *Future Ready D36*;



- ❑ Supported the communications efforts surrounding the launch of Extended Day Kindergarten;
- ❑ Earned [Crisis Communication Certification from DePaul University](#);
- ❑ Managed District parent education and engagement opportunities through the WPI Program ([2018-2019 Year-End Update](#));
- ❑ Published seven Alumni Spotlight features in the *Winnetka Wire* and on the District website to showcase how D36 alumni are making a meaningful difference in the world;
- ❑ Continued production of videos to highlight elements of the Shared Vision and Winnetka Experience, with [one large-scale video project](#) specifically focused on the Winnetka Experience;
- ❑ Expanded District photo library for use in District publications and Board presentations, the website, and for media opportunities;
- ❑ [Hosted a record number of visitors for engagement sessions in the District in 2017-2018](#);

- ❑ 45% increase in social media followers since summer 2017 (1,509 followers in September 2018, 1,040 followers in June 2017, 737 followers in August 2016, 213 followers in June 2015);
- ❑ Published [Summer 2018 issue of \*Learners\*](#) in September 2018.
- ❑ 126 articles and items appeared in the national and local media. [74 of these stories secured directly highlighted elements of the District's Shared Vision, the Winnetka Experience, and/or teaching and learning.](#)
- ❑ District 36 was selected as a winner in the 2018 Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association's Communications Contest in seven categories:
  - ❑ Golden Achievement-*Future Ready D36: An Educational Master Facility Plan* (Award of Merit)
  - ❑ Electronic Publications-*Board Highlights* (Award of Excellence)
  - ❑ Electronic Publications-*The Winnetka Wire* (Award of Merit)
  - ❑ Writing-Alumni Spotlight (Award of Merit)
  - ❑ Marketing Materials-Marketing Piece for Current and Prospective Families (Award of Merit)
  - ❑ Marketing Materials-*Future Ready D36* Marketing Materials (Award of Merit)
  - ❑ Special Purpose-Kindergarten Program Overview (Award of Merit)

District communications platforms utilized include the following:

- ❑ *Learners* (bi-annual magazine distributed to all Winnetka residents)
- ❑ *The Winnetka Wire* (monthly e-newsletter)
- ❑ *Board Highlights* (e-newsletter recap sent within 72 hours of Board Meetings)
- ❑ *Connect 36* (bi-monthly e-newsletter for staff)
- ❑ District 36 website
- ❑ 2018-2019 calendar
- ❑ School newsletters
- ❑ Teacher newsletters
- ❑ Annual Report (included in the Summer 2018 issue of *Learners*)
- ❑ Post-conference surveys
- ❑ Blackboard Connect (used for bus route communication and certain emergency situations)
- ❑ Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube.com)
- ❑ Video
- ❑ Direct mail

In 2018-2019, strategic communication efforts will primarily focus on continuing to educate and engage the community and staff on *Future Ready D36*, enhancing and promoting the District's Home-School-Community partnerships, and maintaining a robust selection of WPI opportunities (topics will be informed by data that was collected via parent input forms during 2018 sessions).

### **Alignment with the District 36 Shared Vision**

- ❑ Effective communication is an essential component of everything we do in The Winnetka Public Schools. Defining the 2018-2019 District goals and updating the community on progress is vital to understanding growth and achievement in these areas.
- ❑ Engaging staff, parents, and community members, who are included in the "all learners" reference in the District Shared Vision statement is essential as the District undergoes *Future Ready D36*.

With the Shared Vision in mind, 2018-2019 goals include:

- ❑ Conducting engagement efforts to reach community members (i.e. continuing outreach to realtors regarding *Future Ready D36*; maintaining strong relationships with local civic organizations such as Rotary and the Chamber of Commerce; inviting area neighbors into District schools; expanding alumni network, and continuing outreach efforts with realtors, Preschool leaders, the WPSF, etc.);
- ❑ Providing staff with resources to address communication needs throughout the year, specifically *Future Ready D36*;
- ❑ Maintain at least 90% or greater indication that there was an increase in understanding by parents for WPI sessions.
  - ❑ [2016-2017 baseline](#) = 98% indicated an increase in understanding
  - ❑ [2017-2018](#) = 97% indicated an increase in understanding
- ❑ Increase WPI attendance to 350 guests over the course of 2018-2019
  - ❑ [2017-2018 baseline](#) = 314
- ❑ Maintain the WPI courses focused on student social/emotional health to four per semester.
  - ❑ Baseline (2016-2017) – three per semester.
  - ❑ (2017-2018) -- four per semester
- ❑ In collaboration with Department of Student Services, plan and promote three WPI sessions for parents pertaining to student support in and out of school.

## Next Steps

Move forward with [Communication efforts underway for \*Future Ready D36\* and Communication Plan for 2018-2019 School Year.](#)