



*A Community of Learners*

## **Informational Memo-Communication Plan 2019-2020**

TO: School Board  
Superintendent Kocanda

FROM: Kate Hughes, Communications & Community Relations Coordinator

August 26, 2019

### **Background & Overview**

Strategic communications efforts in 2018-2019 included managing communications strategy and community engagement surrounding the Educational Master Facility Plan (EMFP) and Referendum, 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.

Noteworthy communication-related activities and accomplishments in the District in 2018-2019 included:

- ❑ Organized community engagement, media outreach, direct mail, and social media efforts surrounding the EMFP and Referendum;
- ❑ Managed District parent education and engagement opportunities through the WPI Program ([2018-2019 Year-End Update](#));
- ❑ [Hosted a record number of visitors for WPI sessions in 2018-2019 \(513 guests\)](#);
- ❑ 30% increase in social media followers since summer 2018 (1,965 followers in August 2019, 1,509 followers in September 2018, 1,040 followers in June 2017, 737 followers in August 2016, 213 followers in June 2015);
  - ❑ Instagram has surpassed other platforms as the District's fastest-growing social media outlet (642 followers as of 8/23/19)
- ❑ Expanded District photo library for use in District publications and Board

- presentations, the website, and for media opportunities;
- ❑ 106 articles and items appeared in the national and local media in 2018-2019.
- ❑ Served on the New Trier Communications Committee in order to help create the Community Engagement, Partnerships, and Governance framework for the New Trier 2030 strategic plan
  - ❑ Will continue to serve on the strategic planning subcommittee in 2019-2020, focusing on the New Trier 2030 year one goal: *Create publications and develop new and enhance current programs to more directly connect younger students and their families to New Trier.*
- ❑ Served on the INSPRA Board for 2018-19 as Regional Director, Greater Chicago/Cook County
- ❑ District 36 was selected as a winner in the 2019 Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association's Communications Contest in ten categories:
  - ❑ Annual Report-*Learners*
  - ❑ Electronic Publications-*Board Highlights*
  - ❑ Writing-*Alumni Spotlight*
  - ❑ Writing-*Learners*
  - ❑ Writing-*Year-in-Review*
  - ❑ Financial Information-*Financial Report*
  - ❑ Marketing Materials-*Learning By Doing*
  - ❑ Calendar/Handbooks-*Kindergarten Program Overview*
  - ❑ Special Purpose-*Annual Plan 2018-2019*
  - ❑ Website-*Educational Master Facility Plan*

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 (currently used for bus route communication and certain emergency situations)

- ❑ Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube.com)
- ❑ Video
- ❑ Direct mail

In 2019-2020, communication efforts will primarily focus on communication surrounding the timeline and process for Redistricting 2020; the 100th Anniversary of Carleton Washburne's arrival and Progressive Education in The Winnetka Public Schools; District 2020-2025 Strategic Planning (in winter/spring 2020); and maintaining a robust selection of WPI opportunities (aligned with the District's Social Emotional Learning goal).

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

- ❑ Effective communication is an essential component of everything we do in The Winnetka Public Schools. Defining the 2019-2020 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 moves forward with its Educational Master Facility Plan.

### **With the Shared Vision in mind, 2019-2020 goals include:**

- ❑ Conducting engagement efforts to reach community members (i.e. meeting regularly with a Winnetka Communicators Committee with representatives from the Village, New Trier, Park District, and Library; maintaining strong relationships with local civic organizations 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 Redistricting 2020;
- ❑ Maintain at least 90% or greater indication that there was an increase in understanding by parents for WPI sessions.
- ❑ In collaboration with District Administration, plan and promote additional WPI sessions specifically focused on Social Emotional Learning.

### **Next Steps**

**Move forward with communication efforts underway for Redistricting 2020 and [Communication Plan for 2019-2020 School Year](#).**