

Maximizing School Communications Without a PR Pro

MASA/MOSPRA 2025

Presenters



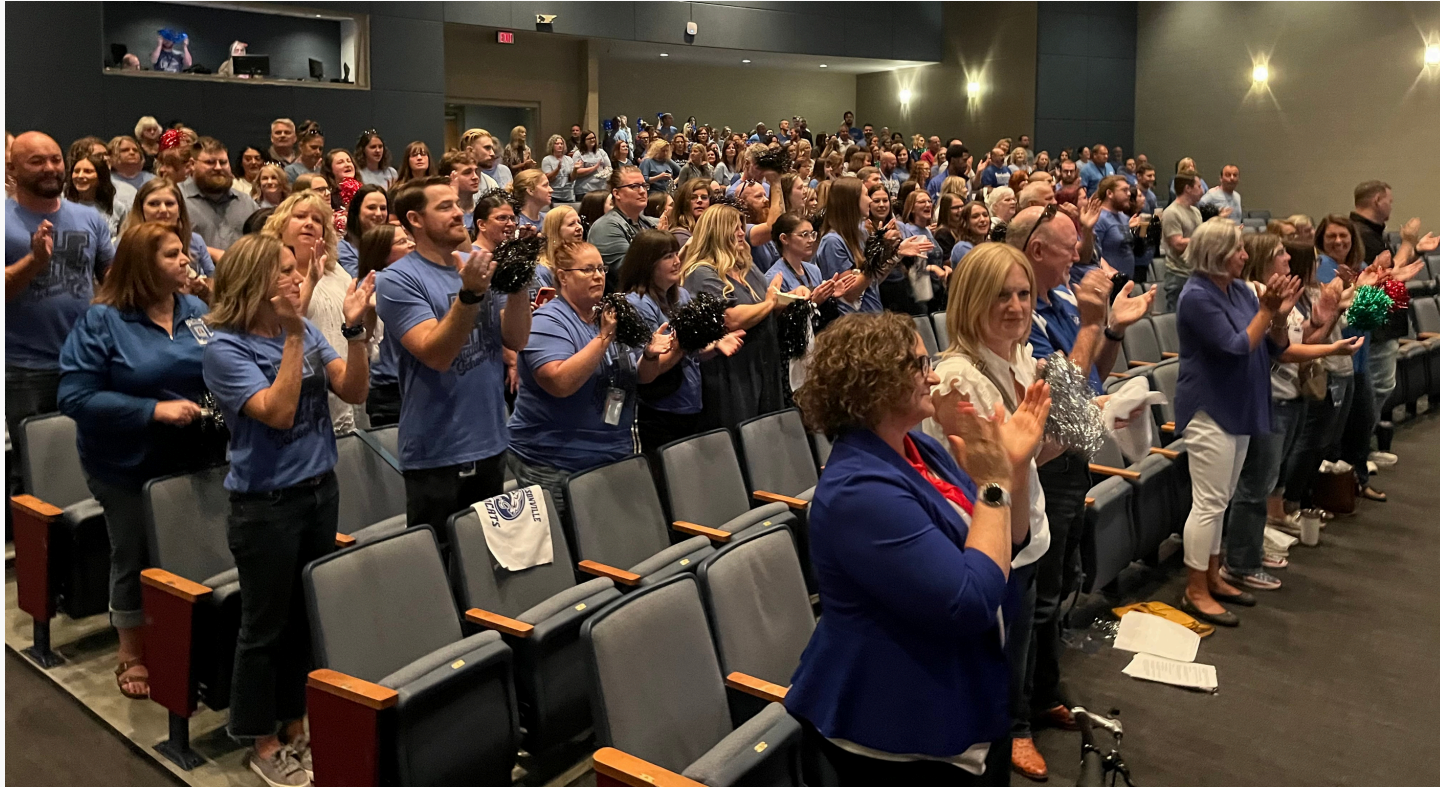
Tennille Banner
Superintendent
Green City R-I School
District



Jill Filer
Director of
Communications
Harrisonville Schools



Communicate from the inside, out



- Builds trust with staff
- Staff can be your best PR team
- If information is not shared, staff will create their own story
- Creates positive culture/good morale
- Hierarchy of trust with parents/community

Communicate from the inside, out

- Consistent communications w/staff
 - Newsletters
 - Staff Meetings
 - Board Updates

Harrisonville Schools Staff Newsletter - Take Five

- Set expectations for staff
 - New Teacher/Secretary Training
 - Rule of 3
 - Key Messages
 - Use of Social Media (professional & personal)
 - Email



Harrisonville Schools Communications Expectations for Staff

Keep It Simple/Know Your Strengths

Choose one external communications method & do it well

- Newsletter Best Practices

- Regularly distribute
- Consistent information
- Include the “why”

- Post in multiple places - send via email, post on website & social media

- Facebook/Instagram Best Practices

- Post at least 2-3 times per week at “best” time
- Use images or video
- Pro Tips: Be social, humanize your staff, use branded graphics

Helping Our Children Succeed: The Power of Family Support

As families, we play a crucial role in shaping our children's success in school and beyond. With today's fast-paced educational landscape, students need strong support systems to stay on track. Here is how you can help.

Encourage Completion of Assignments with Effort: Schoolwork is not just about getting a grade—it's about developing critical thinking, responsibility, and perseverance. Encourage your student to complete all assignments to the best of their ability.

Ensure Punctuality: Arriving 5 Minutes Early is On Time: Tardiness is a growing concern, especially in high school. Arriving late disrupts learning and sets a poor habit for the future. Help your student establish a morning routine that ensures they arrive at school at least five minutes early. This small habit fosters responsibility and prepares them for the expectations of the workplace.

The habits students develop now—time management, accountability, and effort—are the same skills they will need in the workforce. Remind them that their dedication today will pave the way for future success. By reinforcing these values, we set our students up for success in school and beyond. Let's work together to build strong, motivated, and responsible learners!

Staying Informed: How State Legislation Impacts Our Schools

Public education is shaped by state legislation, yet many families only hear a fraction of the story through news articles that often provide surface-level information. I stay engaged in the legislative process by meeting monthly with our Representative Danny Busick and tuning in to weekly Zoom calls with MASA legislative experts. These conversations provide valuable insights beyond the headlines, helping us navigate the real impact of legislative decisions on our students, teachers, and schools.

If you come across proposed legislation related to public education and want to understand how it might affect our district, please don't hesitate to reach out. **While legislators may listen to school officials, they are especially interested in hearing from families.** Your voice matters, and your engagement can make a difference in shaping policies that best serve our students.


Staying informed and involved ensures we advocate effectively for the best possible education for our children. Let's work together to stay engaged and make our voices heard!

HOMECOMING
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2025

Keep It Simple/Know Your Strengths

But how do I get content/have time?

- Everytime you're in a building/at event, take a few photos
- Find PR rockstars to help
- Schedule Facebook/IG at one time
- Use students
- Set expectations w/families, community re: social media
 - Turn Messaging Off - Email/Phone as expected way to contact school
- Ongoing work on newsletter

 Green City R-1
February 28 at 6:30 PM · 🌐

Mrs Leslie's biology students completed a scavenger hunt as a fun activity for Friday. They are currently learning about the cell division cycle. They had to read phrases and find the answers to their question around the hallway until they completed the hunt.



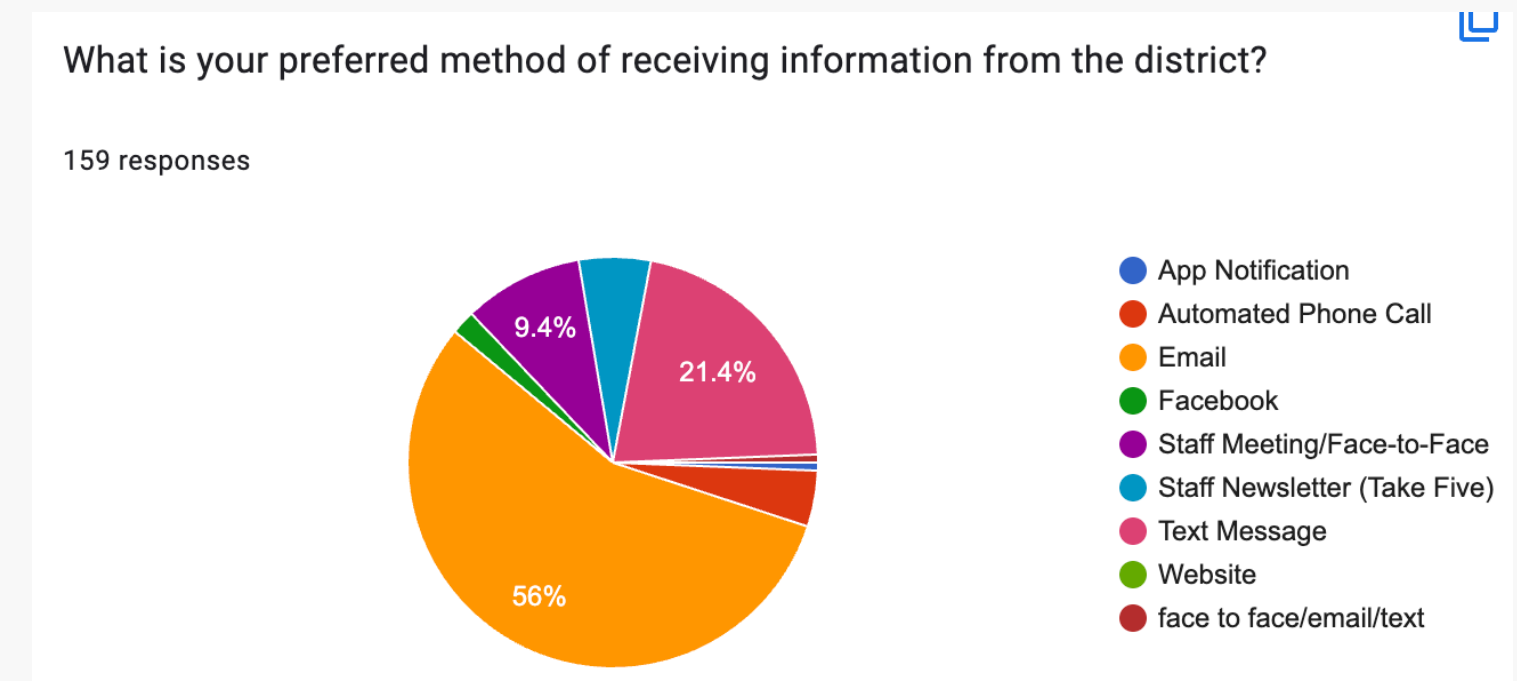
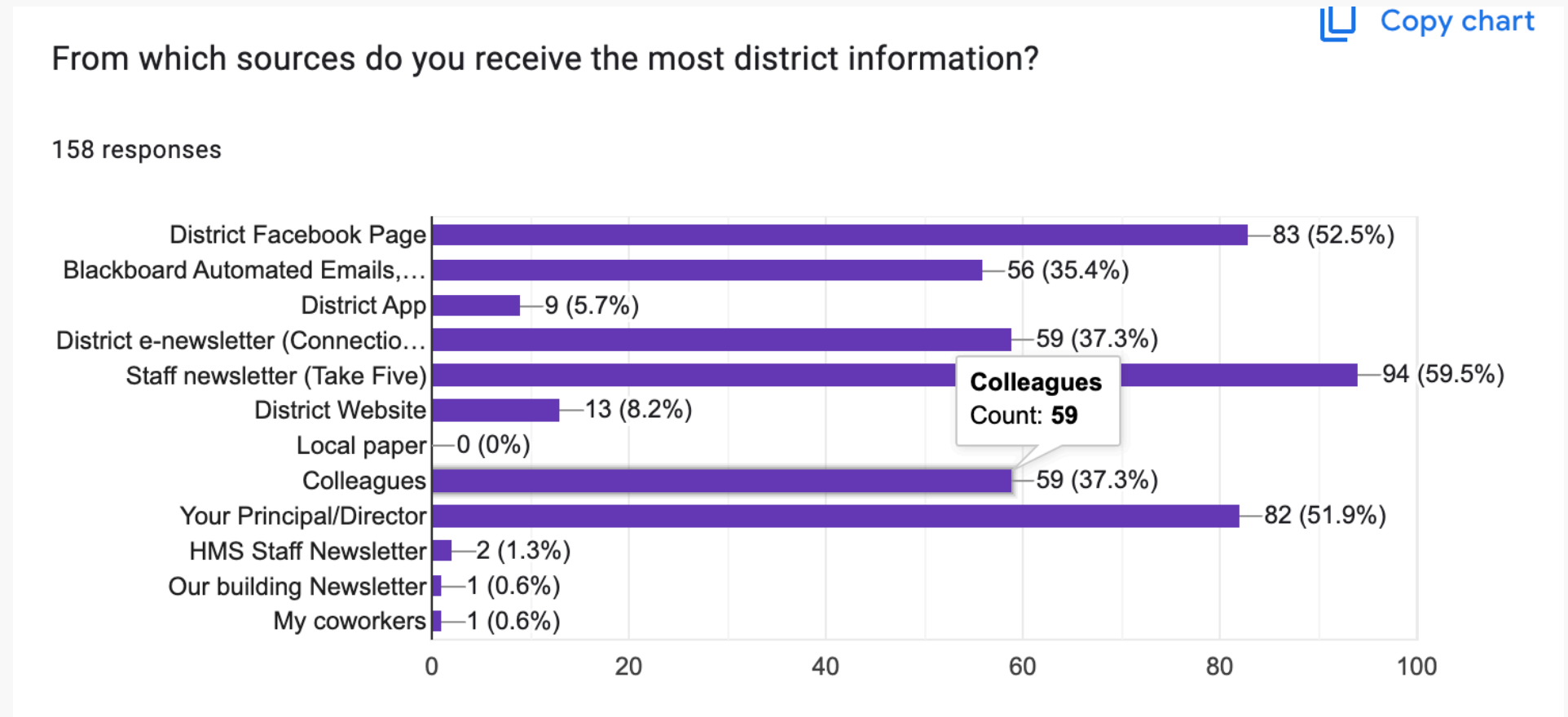
 Green City R-1
October 14, 2024 · 🌐

3rd grade is learning about static electricity. 1/2 of the class was able to have their head rubbed with a balloon to make their hair stand up with static electricity (with each student having their own balloon). Be watching tomorrow for when the other 1/2 of the class will be participating too!



Listen

- Plan opportunities to listen
 - One-on-one/small group
 - Surveys
- Informal, Formal
 - Car rider line
 - Advisory groups
- For Staff
 - Listening Posts
 - Rounding
- When you take action on something you heard, tell people



Develop Your Message/Tell Your Story

- What are your district's key messages?
- Ensure the key messages are evident/included in your communications
- Use key messages for all “big” initiatives, events
- Get your staff on board



Be proactive with “bad” news

- Today, there is no hiding the flaws -- as noted, tell your story, or someone else will
- Fill your bucket all the time (see previous slides)
- Transparency is vital
- In crisis, communicate often as info is available with those who need to know
 - Develop Holding Statements/Key Messages
- You can apologize for the situation & admit mistakes
 - Be human
- “Admire & Acquire” crisis communications templates, letters, phrases
- Ensure everyone knows their role/back-up, know who you can call for help

Be proactive with “bad” news

- Alert, Inform, Reassure
 - Student safety is our top priority.
 - Contact me with questions, concerns
 - We follow our board policy.
 - We cannot comment on specific situations, but our discipline policy states that.....
 - We are aware of the situation. We have activated our crisis response team. We'll update you as soon as we have more info

Harrisonville Schools Emergency Communications Plan

Be strategic

- Plan your communication for effectiveness, success
- Start small - event/change communication plans
- Note Key Messages
- RPIE
 - Research
 - Plan
 - Implement
 - Evaluate



Event/Change Communications Planning Guide

Event/Change: Summer School 2021

Event Date: May 24-June 21

Audience: Parents, Staff, students

Key Messages:

1. Incoming grades 1-5 @ McE from 8-2 p.m., Incoming grades 6-8, 8-2 p.m. @ HHS
2. Incoming grades 9-12 online w/Edgenuity
3. Centralized pick-up/drop off for buses for K-8
4. Breakfast & lunch offered
5. Initially open for students by invitation; open enrollment in mid-April
6. Limited capacity due to buildings under construction
7. COVID protocols - masks, social distancing will be followed
8. K-8 using Summer Journey program to teach Summer School

Communication Method	Date(s)	Who's Responsible
Summer School info for staff in Take Five	3/18	Jill/Kristi
Individual teacher calls to families re: invitation to attend; siblings will be eligible too	By March 26	Individual teachers, K-8 (Kristi script)
Email Google form to invitees to complete; forms due by 4/16	4/5	Buildings (email composed by Jill/Kristi)
Open Enrollment Email to families, send home in backpacks - limited capacity; due by 4/30 - close if we reach capacity	4/21	
General summer school info - sent as part of summer info - meal pick-up, Just 4 Me, etc.	Week of 3/22	Jill
Notification/confirmation of enrollment	May 3	
Details re: summer school to those enrolled - drop-off/pick-up procedures, COVID reminders (bring mask & water bottle), etc.	May 17 (one week before)	

A few reminders...

- Use PR rockstars - students, staff
- Use Data
- Use Facebook Strategically - only positive
 - Targeted messaging for potentially controversial info
- Humanize Your Staff
- Use Your Resources
- Reuse/recycle content on multiple platforms
- Repeat information

 **Green City R-1**
August 13, 2024 · 🌐

Welcome Mrs. Davis!

Heather Davis

MS Social Studies and Junior Sponsor



Attended Buena Vista
4th year in Education
Lives in Kirksville
with husband, Dan,
and son, Dax
Hobbies include golfing,
shopping, and cooking

 **Harrisonville Schools**
March 7 at 8:00 AM · 🌐

At Harrisonville Schools, our staff are more than educators—they're artists, adventurers, creators, and so much more! Beyond the Classroom is a weekly feature highlighting the unique hobbies and passions that bring joy to our [#WildcatFamily](#) outside of work.



Allison Kirch is a third grade teacher [Harrisonville Elementary Wildcats](#). When she is not teaching she competes in BBQ competitions with her husband.

What hobby/interest do you enjoy pursuing when you're not at work?... [See more](#)

Friday Fun-Day

Beyond the Classroom

Get to know our [#WildcatFamily](#) as they share their hobbies & interests



DOUBLE BONUS TIP: ChatGPT is your friend.

- Writing Facebook posts
- Editing email to families for clarity or tone
- Thought Partner - Brainstorming
- Summarizing survey responses

Always edit everything to ensure the district “voice” is maintained.

In Summary...

- Inside-Out Communications
- Keep It Simple & Know Your Strengths
- Incorporate Listening
- Develop Your Message/Tell Your Story
- Be Proactive (especially with bad news)
- Be Strategic

Contact Us

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