



MEMORANDUM

June 18, 2024
Regular Board Meeting

TO	Board of Trustees
FROM	Shauna Boyce, Superintendent
ORIGINATOR	Mark Francis, Deputy Superintendent
RESOURCE	Jordi Weidman, Director, Strategic Communications
GOVERNANCE POLICY	Board Policy 2: Role of the Board
ADDITIONAL REFERENCE	BP 2: Stakeholder Engagement and Communication BP12: Section 8. Communications and Community Relations AP 600: Communications Principles AP 604: Media Relations AP 640: Social Media
SUBJECT	STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT REPORT (2023-2024)

PURPOSE

For information. No recommendation required.

BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees establishes processes, provides opportunities for input from its stakeholders, promotes positive community engagement within the Division and represents the community's needs, hopes and desires in relation to student programming. The Superintendent takes actions to ensure open, transparent, positive internal and external communications. The strategic communications department has a hand in public relations, advertising, promotions, government relations, and media relations for the Division.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report highlights the work of the department in 2023-2024 and includes a statistical analysis of the Division's media channels, and summaries of engagement and strategic communications carried out throughout the school year.

Administration would be pleased to respond to any questions.

MF:jw



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT REPORT

JUNE 2024

Presented to the Board of Trustees, June 18, 2024

Mark Francis, Deputy Superintendent

Resource: Jordi Weidman, Director, Strategic Communications

Our Students Possess the confidence, resilience, insight and skills required to thrive in, and positively impact, the world.

BACKGROUND

The strategic component of Parkland School Division's Communications Department was front and centre for a lot of the department's work in the 2023-2024 school year. In addition to the usual school-based storytelling, sharing of highlights, and featuring Division events, various topics known to be on the minds of stakeholders required proactive action on the part of the Division in order to 'get ahead' of issues or clearly communicate the facts or issues. From the changing landscape of bus transportation in the province to advocacy efforts of the Board of Trustees, Parkland School Division is proud of the work accomplished in the Communications portfolio during the school year.

The department serves PSD's Executive and Board of Trustees on all internal and external communications matters with careful attention to maximizing the exposure and reach of key messages across the jurisdiction and to targeted stakeholder audiences.

The following summary will address the communications activities in the following priorities: Brand Awareness, Engagement, Strategic Communications, Crisis Communications and Department Support.

REPORT / TOPIC

Brand Awareness

Celebrating the success and highlighting the great work happening in PSD schools is one of the primary functions of the department. Some of those include:

- Terry Fox Run
- Bus Safety Week
- Wabamun Basketball Jersey
- The Truth & Reconciliation Walk
- The Rotary Club Brown Bag Lunch Community Pantry Program
- Westview School's Grand Opening
- Winter Walk Day
- Vive le français
- Annual Visual Arts Celebration
- Ecole Broxton Park School's Drama Production *Willy Wonka*
- High Park School's CTF Aquaponics Option
- Building Futures 2024
- ADCS Road trip to PSD South

- Indigenous Cultural Grad
- Enhanced our web presence with division website and social media platforms

WEBSITES			
MAY 15 2023-MAY 15, 2024			
Site	Sessions	Users	Pageviews
Division	700,835	161,740	1,168,595
ADCS	3,887	2,474	8,617
Blueberry	27,368	12,676	56,088
Brookwood	19,460	9,211	41,762
CFL	64,758	43,080	119,249
Copperhaven	24,594	11,680	54,745
Duffield	12,413	7,489	24,698
Broxton	24,645	11,797	44,910
Meridian	21,288	10,239	38,550
Entwistle	5,790	2,494	10,727
Forest Green	10,535	4,842	20,569
Graminia	24,320	11,555	43,336
Greystone	23,246	10,581	44,139
High Park	18,577	8,840	37,113
Memorial	108,149	42,471	209,049
Millgrove	19,850	9,189	40,755
Muir Lake	14,403	7,622	28,448
PVS	4,907	2,974	9,035
Prescott	31,633	13,897	61,413
SGCHS	124,477	50,979	242,954
Tomahawk	2,988	1,628	6,252
Wabamun	4,673	2,511	9,849
Westview	23,236	11,603	50,904
Woodhaven	27,032	11,872	60,721
TOTALS	1,343,064	463,444	2,432,478

SOCIAL MEDIA	
MAY 15 2023-MAY 15, 2024	
PSD Twitter	
Total followers	2,700
Impressions	60,900
PSD Facebook	
Total likes	4,600
Total page followers	5,600
New follows	683
PSD YouTube	
Views	314,702
Watch time (hours)	12,357
Average view duration	2:21
Total subscribers	20,912
New subscribers	2,097

- Effectively leveraged corporate print editorial via the Reporter/Examiner to celebrate special education-related occasions, outline division-wide program information, and also to communicate general information on important topics to our stakeholders including the advertisement of upcoming Board of Trustees regular meetings.
- Utilized our marquee sign at PSD’s Division Office for key messaging and advertising.

Congratulations, Parkland School Division!

Your district came in **First Place** for **Most Calendar Events Shared to Schools (Average per Year)**. With 2,262, you beat the Rally Family average of 249. Great work!



General Community Engagement

A school division typically employs a variety of strategies to engage the community. From parent and family engagement, which includes regular school-to-home communication, to various advisory teams, partnerships with local businesses and organizations, connecting with the municipalities in which PSD resides, to more formal engagement evenings, PSD connects in as many ways as possible. The intent is to continuously gather stakeholder feedback that informs Division planning and is a key component of the Assurance Model of education planning and reporting.

Furthermore, the Strategic Communications department:

- continued the practice of livestreaming Regular Board Meetings on the Division's YouTube Channel.
- continued the practice of distributing the Board Meeting Highlights PDF for circulation to the division's stakeholders as a way to share news generated from regular board meetings.
- worked in collaboration with members of Parkland School Division's Executive to complete 2024-2027 Education Plan as well as the Annual Education Results Report.
- covered Education Planning Day at Stony Plain's Heritage Pavilion on April 11, 2024. The engagement event provided an opportunity for Parkland School Division to launch a permanent, ongoing engagement tool through our Share-A-Thought survey process.
- covered PSD's annual fall stakeholder engagement at Westview School in November 2023; and
- monitored local social media for trends and issues related to the school board and responded accordingly.

Strategic Communications

In the realm of strategic communications for a school division, particularly when dealing with sensitive topics or emerging issues that are on stakeholders' minds, proactive and deliberate communication strategies are very important. Some examples that surfaced in 2023-2024 that required assistance from the Strategic Communications Department included:

- Assisted PSD's Transportation Services department in public messaging on strains the regional transportation system was under due to a driver shortage. At the beginning of the school year, there were as many as 5 bus routes that started the year without a driver while contractors scrambled with recruiting efforts.
- In an effort to centralize resources and support, and to bring programming offered by the Division's Connections for Learning (CFL) under one roof, PSD began the process of relocating all outreach and virtual learning programming to the École Broxton Park School (EBPS) site. This involved utilizing modular classrooms from other PSD schools. The department executed a communication plan to alleviate concerns percolating from Broxton parents around overcrowding as well as the logistics of high school-aged students sharing a campus with Kindergarten to Grade 9 students.

Crisis Communications

- When called upon, the Communications department will work closely with the Deputy Superintendent and the Office of the Superintendent to manage strategic communications concerning any and all incidents that surface throughout the school year when it comes to crisis communications, trauma response and sometimes Violent Threat Risk Assessment support.

Programs & Department Support

At times, the Communications Department also serves our schools and other departments as a marketing firm providing a wide array of services including graphic design, videography and website support for the promotion and execution of Division events and programs. Some of the highlights in this area include:

- Assisted in the design of the new Compass Companion company newsletter celebrating staff successes.
- Assisted in the design and social media campaigns of additional staff recognition dates throughout the second half of the school calendar year. (Ex. Educational Assistants Day, School Lunch Hero Day, School Bus Driver Appreciation, etc.)
- Other targeted, strategic communications efforts included:
 - Mental Health Week (Hats on for Mental Health)
 - Regular promotion of the Strong Families series. Parkland School Division is proud to partner with Alberta Parenting for The Future to present free information sessions for local families tackling topics like Mental Health Awareness, Supporting Emotional Regulation with Children on the Autism Spectrum, Self-Regulation Through an Occupational Therapy Lens and Teen Mental Health.
 - The 8th Annual Try-Me Try-Athlon

- Continued to build relationships with the local newspaper reporter and editor to maintain a steady stream of editorial content in weekly editions of the Stony Plain Reporter/Spruce Grove Examiner. Sometimes, this strategy involved supplied articles.