

Community Relations/Communication Strategic Plan Committee Update

By Chris Kniss

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The Community Relations/Communication Strategic Plan Committee has been meeting bi-monthly since February, 2016. The committee members are: **Chris Kniss, Michael Brand, Deb Lautermilch, Ryan Hite, Jennifer Bishop, Sherry Emerine, Jessica Puperi, Stevie Brown, Robert Weddell, and Tim Myers.**

During our meetings, we have been focusing on communication issues that we feel need to be addressed at VB and then determining how those issues might be corrected. Some issues that have emerged as critical and require immediate attention are:

- School website update, refreshed more frequently, and usable across any device
 - Include links for parents to do day-to-day business with the school
 - Include photos of administration
 - Include short informative videos and/or highlights
 - School forms need to be online
 - All financial transactions with stakeholders may be done online
- Transportation Communication needs improved
 - Use Ohio Alerts when a bus is late, or involved in an accident
 - Require a dispatcher to remain by telephone, radio, and student data, until fleet has returned at end of day
 - Become more consistent in determining 2 hour delays/cancellations
- Make rules/procedures more consistent throughout the buildings
 - Attendance policies aligned
 - Registration for school, especially kindergarten, needs to be well-advertised/promoted
 - Consistent use of calendars/newsfeeds and news releases
- Reach all of our stakeholders, including non-digital ones
 - Knightly News-update mailing database, revamp to make more appealing
 - Place print media in areas where non-digital stakeholders are likely to interact with it
 - Continue to provide opportunities for all stakeholders to interact with us

Not all communication improvements are critical. The following suggestions will provide benefits to us in improved overall image and goodwill within the community.

- SELL what we do. More Public Relations type communication
- Develop business relationships that lead to career education for our students
- Open houses for key groups ie: realtors, businesses, retirees
- Link to area and locally owned businesses, with logos
- Automatic mailing of Knightly News with new student enrollment
- FAQ section on school finances on school website
- Produce an annual State of the Schools Report
- Begin accepting credit cards for all transactions, including event tickets
- Encourage and/or pay for administrators' memberships into Lions, Rotary, and other service organizations
- Create a school app for smartphones
- Encourage students to become involved with community service
- Use of social media to continue to communicate good things concerning our schools
- Develop an alumni organization and through that a recognition program for alumni (athletics, arts, academics)

So far, the Communication/Community Relations Strategic Plan committee has determined one goal and several action plans to accomplish that goal:

GOAL: Increase effective communication with school and community stakeholders and provide that communication consistently through appropriate channels.

Action Plan 1:

Improve our web presence through reorganization of school website

Action Plan 2:

Reach out to all stakeholders and provide the information they need in a timely manner.

Action Plan 3:

Streamline school processes; allow for simple and convenient day-to-day interaction with the school.

Action Plan 4:

Maintain a positive school image and openness by using various media, including social media.

The overall goal of any strategic planning event is to make improvements to the entire school condition. The Communication/ Community Relations Committee recognizes that for all strategic plan committees to be successful they must communicate their ideas effectively. To that end, we understand that communication will be a critical component of any successful plan implementation, and it is likely that communication strategies and enhancements have been discussed among these groups during the past months on a regular basis. We welcome any comments and/or suggestions to extend or improve our work.