

Communications Plan



Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools
Updated September 1, 2016

Executive Summary

Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools (CTTCS) is committed to open, honest and ongoing communication with our stakeholders. CTTCS understands that maintaining a two-way conversation with stakeholders is essential for building relationships. These relationships are the foundation for the TEAMWORK necessary for a strong school system.

This communications plan was designed to establish a comprehensive and integrated communications process for effective communication with all stakeholders. The plan will be directly aligned with the division’s goals and supportive of the division’s Continuous Improvement Accountability Plan.



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Purpose

The purpose of the CTTCS Communications Plan is to present a clear and concise framework for communicating with our school community. The plan primarily addresses two types of school division audiences: internal (students, teachers, staff, administration and Board of Education) and external (parents, businesses, civic groups, parishes, and other members of the CTTCS community).

Staff support for and involvement in this plan is vital – particularly, teachers and office staff who are highly influential sources of information for the public. The CTTCS staff carries the message of the school division to their families and friends who in turn form opinions about the schools. Clearly communicating our unified message at all times must be a top priority.

Under the supervision of the Director of Education, the division will implement and manage community relations, publications, marketing, and offer leadership on all comprehensive communication services and strategies.

This plan establishes the guidelines, goals, and strategies to accomplish an integrated communications approach to achieve transparent communications that will lead to increased awareness, trust, and advocacy.

Three driving questions for every program or activity will be:

1. How does this benefit our students?
2. How does this promote our Catholic distinctiveness?
3. How do we communicate it to our stakeholders?

This Communications Plan intends to:

1. Establish a communications program that directly helps the school division achieve its strategic goals.
2. Develop and foster strong relationships with those on whom the school division depends for ensuring student success, including diverse audiences.
3. Provide focus and direction for communication messages and methods to support the school division's mission.
4. Enable the school division to engage in a reciprocal relationship with internal and external stakeholders.
5. Create a communications system and protocol that builds trust with all stakeholders through transparent, consistent communications.
6. Share our goals and celebrate our successes.



Mission

Our mission is to create Hope for every child by providing a strong faith-filled educational experience in loving and distinctively Catholic schools.

Communications Vision

CTTCS personnel will use the communications plan to communicate the goals, objectives, and distinctiveness of our division with students, staff, parents and other members of the community as a means to maximize student achievement and success through public support for our schools.



Internal and External Stakeholders

The goal of this communications plan is to establish a system of communications that will build trust with all stakeholder groups and continue moving each toward advocacy. A critical component to accomplishing this goal is to inform internal stakeholders of important policies, programs, general messages and activities in order to influence stakeholder advocacy. As internal stakeholders are moved to full awareness of such messaging and communications, they will then be equipped to promote the division message with consistency and accuracy when interacting with external stakeholders.

School division employees should be knowledgeable in their understanding of the organizational direction so they can deliver messages and positions that are consistent with the strategic goals of the division. Internal stakeholders are the face and voice of the division, and as such, their interactions, demeanor, and professionalism express critical messages that influence what the public thinks about the organization.

The CTTCS Communications Plan is based on building a strong and effective system of internal and external communications. The division will continue to develop, foster and maintain an organizational culture where all personnel understand their critical role with communication to all audiences. Creating a sound and effective system of internal communications will build a foundation for establishing an equally sound and effective system of external communications.



Target Audiences

Internal	
Students	Parents
School Level:	School Community Councils
• Teachers	Parishes
• Support Staff	Priests
• School Administrators	Bishops
Central Office Level:	Elected City Officials
• Teachers	Local MLAs
• Support Staff	Good Spirit School Division
• Administration	Ministry of Education
Board of Education	Parkland College
	Electronic Media – website, email, twitter
	Print Media – newsletters, newspapers
	Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association
	Saskatchewan School Boards Association
	Yorkton Tribal Council
	Rural & Urban Municipalities
	Community Support Services

Assessment and Accountability

The Communications Plan will be reviewed and updated twice a year.



Communications Action Plan

Color Coding for FREQUENCY/PROGRESS in the following Communications Plan Table

Completed on an ongoing basis	Revision In Process	Needs to be completed/New Project
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Division Communications Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal One: Formulate a distinct image for Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools.			
Strategy or Activity	Audience	Responsibility	2016
Refine the division mission statement to provide direction and clarity for the work and initiatives of the division.	Board Staff Parents	Board Approved	
Review the logo design and messages.	Board	Board Approved	
Formalize that the imaging strategy represents the mission, vision and essence of the division story.	Board	Board Approved	
Develop and communicate formal guidelines for the use of the division logo and name.	Staff	Administration	
Create new division letterhead, business cards, and other identifying branding materials.	Staff Parents Community	Administration	
Create continuity among all public relations vehicles, including division website, electronic communications and print publications.	Staff	Administration	



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Goal Two: To ensure that the Board is represented in a manner that reflects our vision, mission and beliefs, key messages must be developed and utilized to communicate clear and consistent information about our system throughout our school communities. Repetition is key, and all messages need to be consistent and simple.

Objective: Develop consistent key message statements which will be structured to address the top division-level communications priorities. Key Messages allow for consistent and clear communications across the division at all levels.

Strategy or Activity	Audience	Responsibility	2016
Review the division’s Annual Report to support the development of key messaging points.	Staff Parents Community	Board Central Admin	
Include key message statements in all communications including news releases, employee newsletters, community and school newsletters, websites and “on-hold” messages for phone systems.	Staff Parents Community	Board Central Admin	
Encourage the board and staff to use the key messages at every opportunity to establish and maintain the image of the board.	Staff Parents Community	Board Staff	



Goal Three: Create a division-wide system for story and photo submission.

Strategy or Activity	Audience	Responsibility	2016
Create a communications framework explaining communications channels and reporting.	School Admin Board	Central Admin	Yellow
Create a photo and story sharing template for schools to submit news releases for consideration to be posted on the website.	Staff	Central Admin	Green
Create a division-wide network of reporters and photographers.	School Admin Staff	Central Admin	Yellow
Provide training and an ongoing system of communications support for the network.	School Admin	Central Admin	Yellow

Goal Four: Create clear consistent message statements during key events.

Strategy or Activity	Audience	Responsibility	2016
Research and outline key events for the following school year (e.g. opening day). See Appendix B	Students Staff Parents Community	Central Admin	Yellow
Create a timeline of these key events.	Central Admin	Central Admin	Yellow
Develop an awareness of issues facing local education. As required, develop information sheets and draft responses.	Board Staff Community	Central Admin	Green

Goal Five: Utilize the division website and social media to provide powerful online tools that encourage increased parent, student, employee and public interaction with Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools.

Objective: Assess and determine the effectiveness of the website to further refine the current design.

Strategy or Activity	Audience	Responsibility	2016
Review and update the division website design twice per year.	Parents Students Staff Community	Central Admin	Green



Internal Communications Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal Six: Establish an effective employee communications plan that supports division-wide information sharing, increases knowledge and awareness of division level strategies, and improves division level understanding of the individual needs of each community school. An informed and involved staff member is the best ambassador a division could have.

Objective: Create an ongoing communications system including a quarterly employee/family newsletter.

Strategy or Activity	Audience	Responsibility	2016
Provide opportunities to subscribe to division newsletters and publications electronically.	Students Parents Staff Community Board	Central Admin	
Provide regular information on division-wide issues through newsletters and email.	Students Parents Staff Community Board	Central Admin	
Distribute information from meetings on need-to-know basis.	Students Parents Staff Community Board	Central Admin	
Distribute all external publications and news releases to all employees and Board members via email.	Staff Board	Central Admin	
Issue short, bulleted FYI sheets via email to staff and parents on issues of immediate concern.	Staff Parents Board	Central Admin	



External Communications Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal Seven: Create a system to support and strengthen the strong positive connection between individual schools and their communities.

Objective: Develop tools and resources to help principals and vice-principals to become more effective in their roles as communicators for the division.

Strategy or Activity	Audience	Responsibility	2016
Review each school’s current communications methods and tools (e.g. newsletters, website, etc.). Identify communication improvements with school administration.	School Admin Staff	Central Admin	
Provide media training that will help school administrators understand how to work with the media and develop skills to communicate appropriate messages for their schools.	School Admin	Central Admin	
Supply administrators with public relations fact sheets and other easy-to-use communications tools as needed when issues arise.	School Admin	Central Admin	
Develop an exit interview with families leaving the division.	School Admin	Central Admin	
Invite key communicators to division events (e.g. religion inservices).	Key Communicators	Board Central Admin	
Invite key communicators to school events (e.g. literacy events).	Key Communicators	School Admin	



Goal Eight: Create and utilize a variety of resources to support and strengthen the strong positive connection between individual schools and their communities.

Objective: Develop resources to deepen the understanding of our parents and the larger community regarding the division's mission, values, goals, and programs.

Strategy or Activity	Audience	Responsibility	2016
Provide support to schools in the development of school brochures with a consistent message.	School Admin	Central Admin	Green
Publish a quarterly division newsletter.	Students Parents Staff Community Board	Central Admin	Red
Develop a Student Support Services brochure.	Students Parents Staff Community	Central Admin	Yellow
Create student handbooks.	Students Parents	School Admin	Green
Create pre-kindergarten brochure/booklet.	Parents Staff	Central Admin	Green
Create kindergarten brochure/booklet.	Parents Staff	Central Admin	Green
Create a secondary course catalogue.	Students Parents Community	High School Admin	Green
Publish regular school newsletters.	Students Parents Staff Community Board	School Admin	Green
Publish school calendars.	Students Parents Staff Community Board	Central Admin	Green
Publish bus route schedules.	Students Parents Staff	Central Admin School Admin	Green
Send thank you cards and sympathy cards.	Staff Parents Community	Central Admin School Admin	Green
Publish Student Assessment information.	Students Parents Staff	Central Admin	Yellow
Publish School Board Annual Report	Students Parents Staff Community	Central Admin	Green



	Ministry of Ed.		
Publish School Learning Improvement Plans.	Students Parents Staff Community Ministry of Ed.	School Admin	
Publish Learning Achievement Update Reports.	Students Parents Staff Community Ministry of Ed.	Central Admin	
Publish Facilities Plan.	Students Parents Staff Community Ministry of Ed.	Central Admin	
Publish Board Policies.	Students Parents Staff Community Ministry of Ed.	Central Admin	
Publish Administrative Procedures.	Students Parents Staff Community Ministry of Ed.	Central Admin	
Publish Annual Report	Students Parents Staff Community Ministry of Ed.	Central Admin	



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Goal Nine: Create a system to encourage flow of information from parents/community to the division.			
Objective: Implement strategies to increase opportunities for two-way communications with families and the community.			
Strategy or Activity	Audience	Responsibility	2016
Attend at least 1 School Community Council meeting.	School Community Council	Board Superintendent	
Encourage parents and community members to sign up for division-wide and school-wide automatic emailing of newsletters.	Parents Community	Central Admin School Admin	
Establish informational email account to receive feedback from community.	Students Parents Community	Central Admin School Admin	
Expand the utilization of Maplewood Online to facilitate communication between parents and schools.	Students Parents Staff	Central Admin School Admin	

Goal Ten: Establish an effective media relations program that enhances the division's image in the community.			
Objective: Proactive media relations create a partnership to ensure the division can provide accurate and timely dissemination of information to division constituents.			
Strategy or Activity	Audience	Responsibility	2016
Create annual packets for all media outlets that provide division and school level contact information.	Media	Central Admin School Admin	
Create media announcement template for use when informing media of upcoming division/school events.	Media Staff	Central Admin	
Create a list of stories to share which are aligned with the annual key communications messages (annual reports, budget releases, etc.)	Staff Parents Community Media	Central Admin	
Create a CTTCS video to be available on the division website.	Students Parents Community	Central Admin	
Create a promotional video for each school to be available on the school websites.	Students Parents Community	School Admin Central Admin Students	
Share school, student and staff successes to increase the awareness of our successes.	Students Staff Parents Community Media Board	Central Admin School Admin	
Produce a series of videos highlighting student and staff achievement and/or events. Video to be published on the division website.	Students Parents Staff Community	Central Admin School Admin	



	Board		
Support the communications process for promoting board meeting dates and times, providing pre-meeting information for the news media and conveying outcomes of board meetings to constituents.	Parents Community Media Board	Central Admin	
Establish a hierarchy of spokespersons who can respond on the division’s behalf to developing situations, critical issues or general media inquiries.	Media	Board Chair Director	
Respond in a timely manner to the media who cover education stories for newspapers, television and radio.	Media	Director Board Chair	
Informally monitor media coverage of the school division.	Central Admin Board	Central Admin Board	
Coordinate opportunities for Media to liaise with school and central office media representatives.	Media Staff	Central Admin School Admin	

Goal Eleven: Establish a visible presence in the community.			
Objective: Give Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools a proactive voice through active community involvement.			
Strategy or Activity	Audience	Responsibility	2016
Attend community meetings and/or events related to the goals of the division.	Students Staff Parents Community	Board Central Admin	
Utilize ongoing communication supports to encourage school staff to talk positively about CTTCS to friends, neighbors and community acquaintances.	Staff Parents Community	Central Admin Staff Board	
Liaise with community organizations to support the division’s mission and goals.	Parishes Community Organizations	Board Central Admin Staff	
Provide division communications materials to key leaders.	Key leaders	Central Admin	



APPENDIX A

Communications Strategy Guidelines

1. Keep Communications Simple and Accurate

- 1.1. Use clear, concise and non-educational style for all general publications.
- 1.2. Proofread documents for errors and clarity.
- 1.3. Vary the types and level of communications to target diverse audiences.
- 1.4. Routinely review and update publications and websites.

2. Keep Communications Appropriate to the Audience and Situation

- 2.1. Identify the most effective communications method.
- 2.2. For stressful communications, interact face-to-face whenever possible.
- 2.3. Use multiple communication media if appropriate.

3. Create Information Sheets

- 3.1. Create information sheets on four or five topics such as division and provincial budgets, school safety, accountability, etc.; update annually or as needed.
- 3.2. Have sheets available on-line for quick reference.
- 3.3. Use template for uniformity so that new topics can be addressed rapidly.

4. Communicate Early and Often

- 4.1. Make sure staff have access to information immediately. They are the best link to divisions, parents and the community, and what they say impacts how the division is perceived.
- 4.2. Be proactive in communicating issues of immediate concern.
- 4.3. Prepare information sheets when appropriate to send out to principals, secretaries, and other staff as needed.
- 4.4. Continue to expand use of website and social media to share positive stories.
- 4.5. Follow-up with memos or communications to all staff if necessary.
- 4.6. Make telephone calls if in doubt.

5. Communicate Face-to-Face

- 5.1. The more difficult the situation, the more important it is to communicate face-to-face.
- 5.2. Encourage staff to relay messages through personal interaction when appropriate.



6. Keep Communications Brief and to the Point

- 6.1. In order to keep a person's attention, be brief and to the point.
- 6.2. Use bullet points when appropriate.
- 6.3. Highlight message in the title.

7. Emphasize Client Service

- 7.1. Client must leave with an answer to their concern or question.
- 7.2. Never be dismissive.
- 7.3. Actively listen to understand the message beyond the words.

8. Train Staff

- 8.1. Train staff to understand that what they say to friends, neighbors, and people in the community has an impact on how CTTCS schools are perceived.
- 8.2. Engage frontline staff in the conversation, and make sure they have access to information immediately. They are the best link to the parents and community.

9. Develop Relationships with our Community

- 9.1. Develop relationships with local businesses by keeping them informed of the school year calendar and supply lists.
- 9.2. Ask for input on areas of concern.
- 9.3. Identify key communicator groups and share key messages with them as needed.
- 9.4. Maintain a high level of visibility for the division through participation of key staff in various professional and community activities.

10. Study the Media

- 10.1. Pay attention to the type of stories aired or published.
- 10.2. Note who is generally used as a source of information.
- 10.3. Develop relationships with editors and education reporters.

11. Prepare our Messages

- 11.1. Study issues facing education and be prepared to respond with information sheets.
- 11.2. Develop responses that represent our school or division message.
- 11.3. Avoid technical jargon by keeping it simple and using quotable "sound bites," when appropriate.
- 11.4. Prepare stories in formats that match those used by the local media.



APPENDIX B

Key Message Opportunities

Time	Events	Responsibility
August	Division opening day	Board Members and Central Admin
August	Staff service awards	Board Members and Central Admin
August	Student and staff recognition awards (to be developed)	Board Members
September	Toonies for Tuition campaign launch	Board Members and Central Admin
	City Wide Registration (Melville, Yorkton)	Central Admin
October	Education Week	Central Admin
December	Christmas social with invites to parish priests/MLA	Board Members and Central Admin
January	Annual Ratepayers	Board Members and Central Admin
February	Staff appreciation week	Board Members
April	Good Spirit School Division	Board Members
May	Annual meeting with SCC chairs, vice-chairs, and principals	Board Members and Central Admin
	Local Collective Bargaining Agreement teacher team meeting	Director and Superintendents
	Toonies for Tuition deadline	Board Members and Central Admin
	Catholic Education Week	Board Members and Central Admin
	School Graduations	Board Members and Central Admin
June	Staff retirement banquet	Board Members and Central Admin
	Supper meeting with the local teacher executive	Board Members and Central Admin
Ongoing	School events	Board Members and Central Admin
Ongoing	School Community Council meetings	Board Members and Superintendents
Ongoing	Local MLA meetings	Board Members and Director
Ongoing	Informal discussion opportunities with students, staff, families, and community	Board Members and all division staff



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