



Accountability Report

Communications

2021 06 21

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SOURCE DOCUMENTS:

1. Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (SRPSD) Board Policy 1 speaks to Community Engagement and Responsible Governance generally and specifically identifies “relationship with community partners” as important along with an expectation to “communicate regular” with stakeholders.

Policy 1 also includes information about the school division logo that informs the branding and communication process:

2. Board Policy 2.2 states the following in its Role of the Board Accountability:
 - Establish processes and provide opportunities for information sharing with the community and for community input.
3. Board Policy 8.8.4 states the following:
 - As part of its ongoing effort to keep staff and the public fully informed concerning its affairs and actions, the Board expects the Director to institute and maintain effective and appropriate procedures for the prompt dissemination of information about decisions made at all Board meetings.
4. Board Advocacy Plan indicates Priority Area #4:

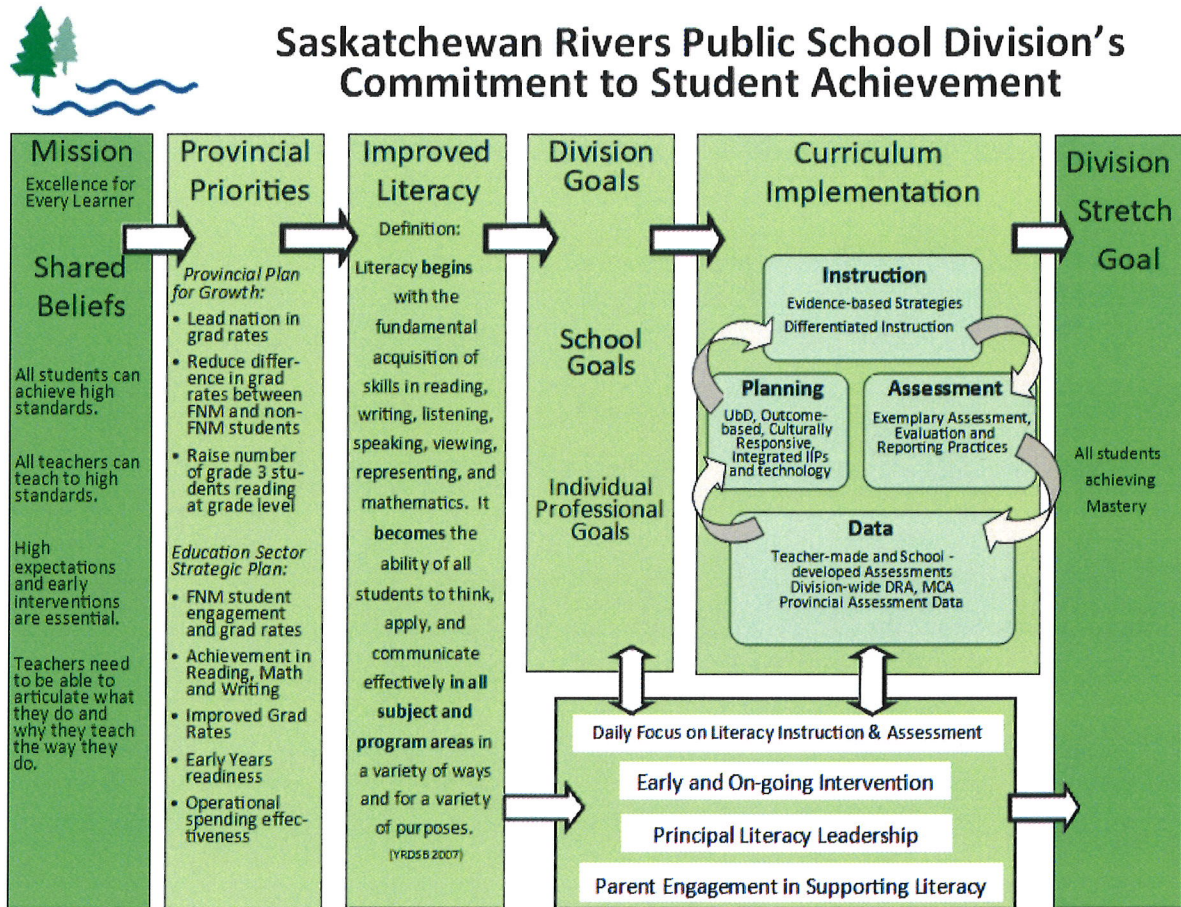
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Board of Education affirms the importance of public engagement and enhancing positive public relations. Positive public relations and the promotion of the Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division’s culture of excellence is seen by the Board as an integral part of advocating for students and providing local voice. Effective advocacy is contingent on the Board’s capacity for strategic communications and developing a robust and positive public relations presence. It also requires the right tools. Due to fiscal restraint in the area of governance, there are limited resources for public relations. This requires a shift in approach.

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EVIDENCE:

1. An internal communications document, which is sometimes used as part of external communications, is commonly referred to as “**the one pager**”. This document summarizes how various aspects of operations are align with the mission of the Board.



2. The Board’s **Strategic Plan**, despite being in the midst of renewal, is still a helpful tool that not only guides the direction and work of the staff in the division, but also is used to communicate the division’s focus on student achievement, our goals, targets and strategies. The introduction and summary page especially serves this communication function both to internal audiences and to external audiences including partners and the Ministry.
3. The division **website** is a valued tool for staff as a repository for many documents, forms, information summaries and other resources that communicate important information to across the division. Anecdotal reports indicate the website is seen as informative and easy to access but the public use of the website is primarily parents seeking information about schools, bus reports and some other information. Media, the public and staff also access the website to find information about the Board meeting schedule, agendas and minutes from previous meetings that are normally posted the day after they are approved.

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- 4. The **Splash Page** is one specific part of the website that is a tool for branding and setting the celebratory tone for highlighting student success. Schools or individual staff submit items and published items are selected for their alignment with the brand of excellence for every learner and their demonstration of a focus on literacy, citizenship/character, or outstanding achievement.
- 5. Social media platforms, including **Remind101**, **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **Twitter**, are used by individual schools, staff members and Trustees to share with the public both celebratory and informational items with the community and the wider public. Some samples are below:



Birch Hills Public School

June 13 at 9:21 PM · 🌐



Grade Four students Kohl Swales and Jacey Bird decided to enter the magnet market and made a profit of \$615.75. They used that revenue to purchase items to donate to the local spca. Thank you for sharing and for your leadership in our community! #entrepreneu... See More



👍❤️ 81

9 Comments 6 Shares

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Christopher Lake Public School

June 9 at 8:40 AM · 🌐



This new library piece is just a sample of what will be coming from the moose hide that we prepared and tanned in March. Again, thank you to SRPSD's Indigenous Perspectives coach, Tyson Fetch, and CLPS's Mr. McDonald for helping us through the process of pr... [See More](#)



W.P. Sandin Public High School

June 4 at 5:56 PM · 🌐



Thank you Mrs. Boettcher for your leadership on this beautiful tribute and to our grade 6-10 students for putting their whole heart into this project. To the victims of the Kamloops residential school - we see you, we honour you, we remember you. It is thr... [See More](#)



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Social Media has had a growing impact on the Divisions communications in the last the school year. Most schools relied heavily on these media platforms to communicate and engage with students, families and the public, especially during periods of classroom or school COVID-based isolations. There are some tensions with the reduced effort to connect with mainstream media because those who rely on mainstream media see less of school activity within it, while schools with active social media presence report an increased level of activity and engagement both with parents and with the broader community.

With some discretionary funds, Precision Marketing has been contracted to provide guidance and action on social media efforts. This has included:

1. **Social Media Training Workshops** for school social media account managers
2. Establishment of a **Division Facebook Page** along with regular posts.
3. Creation of a Google Ad-words campaign has increased the reach and directed traffic to School Registration information on our website.

An initiative to support schools in re-connecting students who had been separated from school because of COVID provided was successful in many ways. While some schools had already exhausted most avenues of re-connection, others found support in the additional division support. For example, during the 2 month initiative one school went from over 100 disconnected student to only 22 students and another reduced their number of disconnected students from over 60 to less than 20. In addition, this initiative provided resources to schools to support the student registration process both for initial school entry and transition from grade 8 to grade 9.

6. **Radio communications** is a mechanism to reach a large audience with consistent branding and informational messages. Although budget restrictions have reduced our radio presence, the division runs ads at peak times during the year such as prior to school start-up, PreK/K recruitment and high school Open House season. Sample ads used this year are below

#1

FV: *At Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division, our board is focused on a mission to achieve excellence in education. To consistently improve and provide the best programs possible for over nine thousand pre kindergarten to grade 12 students in 32 school communities.*

BH: *This is Board Chair Barry Hollick; consider the advantages of an SRPSD education for your child. Fully rounded learning... individual growth and achievement; find out more at "SRPSD 119 dot CA". Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division, excellence for every learner.*

#2

Student: *Today, education is more than just preparing students for their future. It's also supporting us as we face the challenges of today.*

Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division provides extensive mental health support and has counselors OR Social Workers in every school. The schools support my well being so I can focus on learning.

RB: *This is Robert Bratvold Director of Education; consider the advantages of having SRPSD support the education for your child. We do things differently to enhance your children's learning. Learn more at "SRSD 119 dot CA". Saskatchewan Rivers School Division, excellence for every learner.*

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In the recent school year the division tested an expansion of radio broadcasting with Missinippi Broadcasting. Initial indications suggest it may be helpful to reach many of our families who originate in Northern Saskatchewan or those within the division that appreciate the Cree Language component of their programming. Additional radio ads in English and Cree will air in late summer and early fall 2021.

7. Relationships with local media reporters and organizations helps to ensure that **coverage in the local media** continues to be overwhelmingly positive. Occasional auditing of media during select weeks of the school year indicate a strong positive representation in the media towards SRPSD in PA Herald (print and online), paNOW, and the Shellbrook Chronicle.

Although there have been occasions of inaccurate or critical news coverage, the hiring of an Education reporter at the Herald has resulted in a significant increase in media requests for information and comment and a corresponding increase in coverage in the Herald for Education and for SRPSD specifically.

8. Commercial website advertising through **paNOW** is also helpful in communicating and branding. Our year round SRPSD message campaign featuring online website messages and a special message campaign during K registration, Grade 8 open houses, Congratulations Grads, Welcome Back. We are not able to track hits on our ads specifically, but paNOW has over 2,000,000 site views per year and our business card size ads on the site are regularly present all year and the banner ads run at feature times.
9. Print media is less dominant than it once was but we participate in several special issues of the various print media including the **PA Shopper's** Community Directory and Grad tabloid including a message from Board.
10. In order to enhance our capacity to communicate to all schools, parents and staff uniformly or by selected audiences, administration continued the implementation of **School Messenger** and **Safe Arrival**. There are concerns with the new provincial student software system, MySchoolSask (MSS) as this system does not fully integrate with the established platforms. MSS does replace the school messenger platform effectively, but the Safe Arrival continues to be a challenge.
11. A **reallocation of duties** for Education Centre staff enabled Lisa Dryka to dedicate more of her time towards communication efforts in the 2020-21 school year. Her work to ensure Facebook, splash page and social media channels are more active and the traditional media have more access to the division information has been productive.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

1. Continue to provide a robust communications strategy informing our staff and the public about the excellence that SRPSD offers. In addition to our strong commitment to student achievement and our focus on literacy, we teach morals, characters, and citizenship.
2. Strive to infuse consistent branding messages in most or all communication to internal and external audiences and encourage staff to do the same.
3. Seek further efficiencies and strategies to maximize the communication impact with a significantly reduced budget.

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GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS:

1. The Board is encouraged to maintain current direction for ensuring communication about the Division is consistently provided to the public.
2. Trustees are encouraged to continue seeking opportunities to communicate with staff, parents, students, and the community through presence at events (virtually if required), personal interaction, through social media communication. Messages should focus on the motto/brand (excellence for every learner), strong academics with a focus on literacy, and the inclusion athletics, morals and character education in our schools.