



MEMORANDUM

To: Burlington Board of School Commissioners
From: Tom Flanagan, Superintendent
CC: Russ Elek, Communication and Public Relations Specialist
Date: June 7, 2022
Subject: Monitoring Report - Policy Title: 2.11 Stakeholder Communication
Status: In Compliance

Statement: The following document presents the District's progress toward and compliance with **Policy Title: 2.11 Stakeholder Communication.**

Recommended Motion: *I move to approve the recommendation that the Superintendent is in compliance with Policy Title 2.11*

Monitoring Report - Policy Title: 2.11. Stakeholder Communication

Submitted by: Tom Flanagan, Superintendent

Date Submitted: June 7, 2022

Status: In Compliance

Policy Statement

The Superintendent shall not fail to take all reasonable and prudent actions with respect to non-employee stakeholder interactions and communications that are typical for similar and highly effective organizations. Further, without limiting the scope of the foregoing by this enumeration, the Superintendent shall not fail to:

1. Keep students, families, staff, and the community informed about district matters.
2. Communicate short-term and long-term district and school strategic plans describing initiatives and programs to achieve Board ends policies.
3. Provide the public, parents, and students relevant information on student progress toward achieving the Global Ends.
4. Use multiple communication channels including, but not limited to:
 - a. phone calls directly to students and families
 - b. emails directly to students and families
 - c. school newsletters
 - d. press releases to media outlets
 - e. social media
 - f. articles and publications in traditional media
 - g. in-person meetings

Limitation 1

Keep students, families, staff, and the community informed about district matters.

Interpretation

Acting as proactively as possible, Burlington School District, including but not limited to the Superintendent and their office, schools, and school leaders will engage in regular and meaningful communication with BSD stakeholders to keep them informed about priorities, events, and updates.

Status

In compliance

Evidence

In school year 2021-22, the Superintendent's office sent no less than 15 community updates to all families and staff in the District. Once sent, those updates were also posted to the BSD website and shared on social media. We also posted 15 updates and announcements to all 20 Burlington communities participating in Front Porch Forum and submitted a Superintendent column for *North Ave News* every month except for one. BSD maintains a robust social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Last year, each school maintained the practice of sending a regular newsletter during the school year, including OnTop and Horizons, who began this work for the first time this school year. In addition, principals are expected to send regular communication to staff and families and many have social media accounts used for sharing information. We also maintained [a website](#) for District updates, and each school maintains a [website of its own](#).

Each year, BSD publishes a Family Calendar and Handbook which contains as many events for the upcoming school year as possible, in addition to information regarding District policies, procedures, and programs. This handbook is printed and distributed to all families and was translated into six languages in SY 21-22.

This year BSD continued providing regular email communication related to COVID. At the beginning of the year, we sent communication to impacted schools whenever a positive case had been reported in their schools. When the Omicron variant hit, we switched our communication strategy to letting all school communities know about positive cases and when Omicron began to subside, we moved back into a model of sending messages only to impacted schools while also creating a way for staff and families to sign up for every update.

Our multilingual liaisons continue to serve as a bridge to multilingual families, providing one-on-one school support in meetings, translation services for robocalls, and interpretation services for events. This year, BSD also began a partnership with [United Language Group](#) to translate our Superintendent Updates into a number of different languages. We began the partnership in November and our last six updates are averaging open rates of above 30%. These open rates are higher than we initially anticipated and we are excited to continue and expand this partnership.

Limitation 2

Communicate short-term and long-term district and school strategic plans describing initiatives and programs to achieve Board ends policies.

Interpretation

Burlington School District will provide regular communication regarding the progress being made on the Strategic Plan.

Status

In compliance

Evidence

In January 2022, the Burlington Board of School Commissioners adopted BSD's new co-created, [five-year strategic plan](#). This news was shared in a community update on January 21st and in our May 20th Community Update. Leading up to this, we shared significant updates in our September and December Community Updates, at boarding meetings, at all three Superintendent Advisory Groups, and at a public "Coffee with Tom" session at The Bagel.

Our May 20th update featured our new printed materials for the plan. In addition to the complete plan linked above, BSD also created [posters highlighting BSD's Strategic Plan Priority Areas](#). These posters were disseminated to all schools and we have asked that they be hung up in every room.

In recent years, [Burlington School District's Annual Report](#) has served as the vehicle for updating the community on strategic plan progress. In January of 2021, this report began to shift from reporting on the previous strategic plan to focusing on the [six new strategic goals](#) implemented in SY20-21 to bridge the gap between strategic plans. The January 2022 report continued this trend.

Limitation 3

Provide the public, parents, and students relevant information on student progress toward achieving the Global Ends.

Interpretation

BSD will provide regular communication regarding student progress toward achieving the Global Ends as found in the School Board's Policy Governance Policy 1.0: "The Burlington School District exists so that every student will graduate having achieved their highest academic, intellectual, and personal potential, and be prepared to thrive in a global community. In achieving this goal, the district will act inclusively and equitably, recognizing the diversity of our student body."

Status

In compliance

Evidence

In November 2021, interim Monitoring Report 1.0 Global Ends was presented to the board containing data gathered from the previous school year.

In addition, throughout the year we shared several student success stories, showing students making progress towards achieving “their highest academic, intellectual, and personal potential” while preparing to “thrive in a global community.” Examples of this include highlighting our US Presidential Scholar and six Vermont Presidential Scholars, BHS State Championship Teams, and National Merit Scholar Semifinalists. Our [Annual Report is another place](#) we highlight student successes as well as share our annual graduation rates.

Limitation 4

Use multiple communication channels including, but not limited to:

- a. phone calls directly to students and families
- b. emails directly to students and families
- c. school newsletters
- d. press releases to media outlets
- e. social media
- f. articles and publications in traditional media
- g. in-person meetings

Interpretation

In a world full of competing priorities and communication channels, practicing good communication necessitates sharing repeated messaging through multiple channels in order to reach multiple stakeholders in a variety of locations.

Status

In compliance

Evidence

The District uses SchoolMessenger to send mass communication to families in the form of phone calls and emails (‘a’ and ‘b’ above, respectively) and text messages. Students are not contacted via phone for District or school announcements unless student numbers are entered into Powerschool during the registration or annual student update periods. In SY 20-21, we began sending high school students the Superintendent’s Community Updates and directed the creation of a list server for BTC students who now also receive these updates. High school and middle school students receive regular email communication from their school leaders and teachers, and, as mentioned in Limitation 1, all schools either currently send school newsletters (‘c’) or have a plan to do so. Secondary students received COVID notification emails as well this year.

As mentioned in Limitation 1, the District maintains a robust social media presence including [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#) profiles (‘e’). In the past year, we posted nearly 120 times to Facebook and have seen our followers increase from 2,329 to 2,376. We have increased from 2015 to 2089 Twitter followers this year, and average about 15 tweets and 10,200 impressions per month (in April we had 116,000 impressions, which is not factored into this average). We posted to Instagram 32 times this school year, and now have increased from 1,167 to 1,252 followers. Our YouTube presence has grown from 316 to 376 subscribers in the last year (and since launching in 2019). We posted about 40 videos last year from a variety of schools and the Central Office, and we have dedicated playlists for many schools and initiatives. As anticipated in last year’s monitoring report, this number is down substantially from the number of videos posted last year due to the loosening of COVID restrictions allowing for more in-person learning and the fact that some departments brought the vast majority of their video content online last year and have not needed to produce substantially more videos. In our first full year of having a LinkedIn profile, we increased our followers from 867 to 967.

As in SY 20-21, BSD sent at least 18 press releases (‘d’), media alerts, or statements to media outlets this school year. Many of these were then often shared on our website and via our social media channels. Many of these releases resulted in the publication of articles and publications in traditional media (‘f’), including stories on the First Annual Ikidarod at EMS, recognition of our property services manager and new hires at Edmunds, and coverage of our new staff member scavenger hunt. We also responded in the media to public acts of racism and homophobia, and our media invite

to the Homecoming Dragball Halftime show resulted in news of this event going national with students participating in interviews with the Boston Globe and featured in nearly all VT outlets. We also make ourselves as available as possible to media who pitch their own stories or who have questions about BSD happenings, and many of these interviews result in traditional media placements. When possible, we seek to share traditional media coverage on our social media channels and occasionally in community updates.

In SY '22, we offered a variety of different ways to connect in-person ('g') with the Superintendent and school leaders, including physical and virtual opportunities. Most notably, we continued the Student, Family, and Teacher Superintendent Advisory Groups who met regularly over the course of the year. We also continued both the Special Education Parent Connection and our Virtual Equity Workshop Series and Superintendent Flanagan attended several NPA and PTO meetings. This year also saw the creation of a Strategic Planning Coalition who met frequently to help co-create our new strategic plan as well as Public Forums dedicated to the BHS/BTC 2025 building project and principal hires. These efforts are in addition to each school offering PTO meetings, and many schools holding town halls and one-on-one connection meetings, such as Principal coffee hours and more. This year we did not hold as many "Lunch with Tom" events as in the previous school year and were only able to offer one in-person opportunity with Superintendent at "Coffee and Tea with Tom;" we intend to put more effort into holding these events more frequently in SY'23.