



**WALKER-HACKENSACK-AKELEY  
SCHOOLS**

**COMMUNICATION PLAN &  
BRANDING GUIDELINES**

Updated 5.27.26



## Introduction

In order to build and maintain trust among key stakeholders, Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Schools will be honest and transparent in all forms of communication with the public to the extent permitted by data privacy laws and other legal obligations.

## District Mission

In order to build and maintain trust among key stakeholders, Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Schools will be honest and transparent in all forms of communication with the public to the extent permitted by data privacy laws and other legal obligations.

## Key Components of the Plan

- To ensure compliance with data privacy laws and other legal considerations, employees may not make statements to the media, individuals, or entities outside the District relating to student or personnel matters if those statements would result in the release of private data about students, employees, or other individuals. Staff are expected to be mindful of their roles and status as School District employees and should avoid communications that will foreseeably have a disruptive effect on the efficiency of the School District operations. Media inquiries regarding such matters must be directed to Directors and Building Administration. Employees also must not purport to speak on behalf of the School District without express approval. The Director of Community Education and Superintendent will oversee district-level communication and may also be used as a resource on specific inquiries.
- Official communications on behalf of Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Public Schools must be tied to the goals, objectives, and emphasis of the school district mission statement.
- Key messaging should position Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Public Schools as a collaborative, “community centered” school district that is committed to providing an exceptional education for all students.
- Improving the use of communication technology must be a priority if Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Public Schools is to maintain a strong public image.
- While technology has and will continue to expand Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Public Schools’ reach, it will be supplemented with valuable face-to-face interactions.
- Internal communication should strive to be constructive and collaborative whenever possible.
- School building communication should be a major component of the communication effort.
- Effective stakeholder engagement requires interpersonal connections. • Becoming a listening organization requires a commitment at all levels.



Nothing in this plan shall be interpreted or applied to prevent or dissuade any employee from exercising legally protected (or required) speech. This includes but is not limited to speech protected pursuant to the Public Employment Labor Relations Act (“PELRA”); the Minnesota Human Rights Act; the Maltreatment of Minors Act; the Safe and Supportive Schools Act; the Minnesota Whistleblower Act; the Occupational Health and Safety Act (“OSHA”); the terms of applicable collective bargaining agreements; and any other state, local, or federal law or District policy that permits or requires internal or external reporting. Retaliation for exercising any protected activity is strictly prohibited. Additionally, nothing in this plan shall be interpreted or applied to inhibit any employee’s right to speech as a private citizen on matters of public concern, except to the extent any such speech rights are outweighed by the School District’s interest in promoting the efficiency of the

## Target Audiences

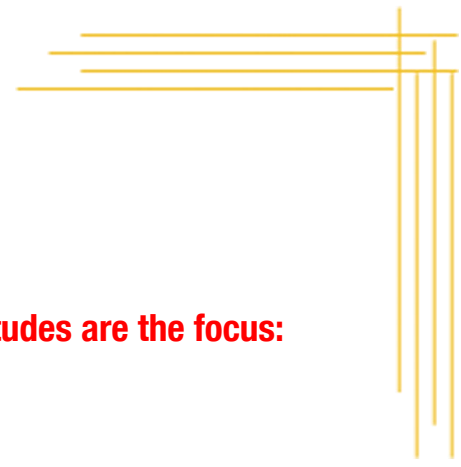
In order to maintain a comprehensive communications plan, target audiences need to be identified. Communication is a reciprocal process and thrives on continual feedback through a two-way process. Every opportunity will be made to make communication reciprocal and engaging. It is important to view these groups as both audiences and communicators.

### Internal Audiences

- Students
- District Employees
- School Board
- Volunteers

### External Audiences

- Parents
- District Taxpayers
- Business Leaders
- Media Outlets (local newspaper)
- Legislative Leaders
- Ministerial Leaders
- PTSA
- Law Enforcement/Fire Department/First Responders
- Regional Media
- Prospective Employees
- Prospective students/parents
- Alumni
- Retirees and former employees



**Through implementation of this plan, the following behaviors and attitudes are the focus:**

**Internal Audiences:**

- Take pride and ownership of the district
- Stay informed on key issues related to the school community

**External Audiences:**

- Feel engaged and involved in their district
- Exhibit community pride and trust in the district
- Support Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Public School District through active engagement
- Feel community feedback is heard, wanted and used
- View the district as fiscally responsible

DRAFT

## **Communications Goals**

- To communicate more effectively, Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Public Schools will work with Internal and External Audiences to move messaging forward
- Provide proactive information with consistent messaging
- Utilize various media outlets to ensure the district mission, goals, achievements are accurately told
- Establish in conjunction with the Human Resources Department, effective employee communication to improve internal communication and employee engagement
- Develop district-wide communications procedures and processes to ensure timely and accurate communication
- Provide training to district leaders in marketing, public and media relations, customer service and the communication skills

# Media Relations Plan

DAILY	WEEKLY	MONTHLY
<p>Update social media sites regarding current district happenings</p> <p>Ensure website is current, up-to-date, and functional</p>	<p>Principals and Department Directors updates to internal and external audiences</p>	<p>Food Service menus posted to the website and local newspaper</p> <p>Represent district at Chamber of Commerce, and Rotary</p> <p>Publicly thanks sponsors, donors, grants via news release and social media</p> <p>Communicate School Board updates to self</p>

QUARTERLY	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED
<p>Honor Rolls</p> <p>Recognize and thank volunteers</p> <p>Recognize extracurricular individuals, teams and clubs</p> <p>High School Pepfests</p>	<p>Graduates</p> <p>Class Statistics</p> <p>Parent reminder for contact information</p> <p>Complete review and revision of website</p> <p>Announce new staff members via press release, back-to-school newsletter</p> <p>Conduct a survey including questions regarding the district's communications practices</p> <p>Announce retirees via press release-with written consent</p> <p>Review and revise communication-related policies and procedures</p> <p>Announce TOY and other annual awards</p>	<p>Respond to requests for information or community activities relevant to the school</p> <p>Announce student and staff awards and honors</p> <p>Announce grants</p> <p>Attend job fairs and community events to recruit for best potential employees</p> <p>Attend public meetings to discuss topics of importance to the community</p> <p>Provide training to staff on communications/public relations</p> <p>Voter referendums or other public and district taxpayer information</p>

## Evaluation and Measurement

The following resources may be utilized to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of this communication plan. This plan will continually be evaluated and updated as needed

- Media Survey (direct mail, newsletter, newspaper)
- Employee Survey
- Social Media Data
- Community Feedback
- Website Data

## Public/Private Education Data

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records; Under FERPA, as well as the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (“MGDPA”), written parental permission is required before releasing any personally identifiable information regarding a student, unless the school has designated the data as directory information or valid exception applies. A parent may elect to opt-out of release of directory information by completing and submitting the Directory Information Opt-Out Form.

See School District Policy 515 for more information regarding the proper handling of student data.

## Voice and Tone

Being consistent with elements of our brand, including voice and tone, builds brand awareness and stronger relationships with our stakeholders - making them feel engaged with, and informed about our schools.

### Guidelines:

#### Be conversational and informal

- Try to write in first person (you, we, us)
- Avoid acronyms unknown to the general public
- Use action verbs to avoid past tense

#### Be informative and trustworthy

- Avoid opinion-based information
- Cite where you are receiving information from
- Provide thorough information with fact

## Email Signatures

All outgoing emails must include a signature. An example of a signature block you may use is shown below. Quotes, slogans, graphics or stationary templates should not appear as part of employees' signatures. If sending an email from a smartphone or tablet this signature block does not need to be used; however it should be replaced by "sent from my iPhone" as an example.

Name | Job Title (include grade or subject area for teachers)  
Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Schools | Building or Program Name  
301 4th Street | Walker, MN 56484  
Office #218-547-XXXX  
[www.wha.k12.mn.us](http://www.wha.k12.mn.us)

*The mission of Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Schools is to develop self-directed learners to thrive in a changing global community.*

WALKER-HACKENSACK-AKELEY



# IDENTITY ELEMENTS

## PRIMARY COLORS



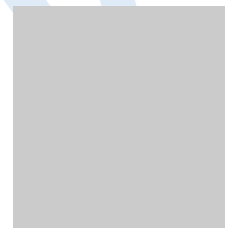
CMYK: 98C 79M 22Y 7K  
RGB: 27R 74G 130B  
HEX: 1b4a82



CMYK: 85C 50M  
RGB: 28R 117G 188B  
HEX: 1c75bc



CMYK: 3C 24M 99Y  
RGB: 246R 193G 25B  
HEX: f6c119



CMYK: 20C 15M 16Y  
RGB: 203R 203 G 203B  
HEX: cbcacb



CMYK: 54C 50M 50Y 30K  
RGB: 101R 95G 93B  
HEX: 655f5d

## FONTS

HEADING FONT | all styles

**Jaeger News Daily**

**A B C D E F G H I J K**

**L M N O P Q R S T U**

**V W X Y Z**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0**

SUBHEAD FONT

**Helvetica Neue LT Standard  
77 Bold Condensed**

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N**

**O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0**

BODY COPY FONT

**Helvetica Neue LT  
Standard 65 Medium**

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N**

**O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

Each font that is part of the branding guidelines has multiple font families that may be used, including Book, Roman, Bold, and Italic. These fonts may need to be installed on your computer.

**WALKER-HACKENSACK-AKELEY SCHOOLS LOGO OPTIONS**



**OTHER IDENTITY ELEMENTS**



**DISTRICT NAME**

**ACCEPTABLE NAME:**

**WALKER-HACKENSACK-AKELEY SCHOOLS**

**WALKER-HACKENSACK-AKELEY DISTRICT #113**