



George County School District Communication Plan

2026-2030

The purpose of this communication plan is to ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed of key updates, goals, events, and changes in a timely manner and in alignment with the district's mission.

Organizational Structure

Board of Directors

Christopher Hilbun, Board President
Dr. Matthew Smith, Vice-President
Wade Whittington, Board Member
James "Panky" Hill, Board Member
Jake Davidson, Board Member
Cherie Wade, Board Attorney

The Cabinet

Debra D. Joiner, Superintendent
Dr. Jennifer Mathis, Asst. Superintendent/Secondary Curriculum
Mr. Jeff Mathis, Director of CTE/Logistics
Ms. Patti Wilkins- Seaman, Director of Federal Programs
Mr. James Ray, Director of Operations/Athletics
Mrs. Gina Hataway, Director of Student Assessment/Elementary Curriculum
Mrs. Natasha Henderson, Chief Financial Officer
Mrs. Phyllis McDonald- Director of Human Resources
Dr. David King-Director of Special Education
Mr. Sid Taylor, Director of Student/Alternative Services

Building Administration

Agricola Elementary, Jan French
Benndale Elementary, Sean Riley
Central Elementary, Donna Dixon
George County High School, Jason Holland
George County Middle School, Shelia Taylor
L.C. Hatcher Elementary, Kristi Kirkwood
L.T. Taylor Intermediate- Mitzi Davis
Rocky Creek Elementary, Tiffany Fillingim

Introduction

Effective communication is essential for the success of any school and district. The district must be able to communicate its mission, vision, and strategic plan to stakeholders effectively and efficiently. A communication plan helps to ensure that everyone is on the same page and is kept up to date. It will also help to promote transparency and build trust between the district and various stakeholders, parents, students, and the community.

This plan includes key strategies that are tailored to the district's needs. These strategies include both in-person and digital channels of communication that are easily accessible and consistently utilized. The plan also provides clear and open communication channels for feedback and input.

This communication plan is intended to provide consistent communication that ensures all stakeholders, internal and external, have timely access to information. The plan will identify specific communication channels and strategies for using those channels. In order to ensure that all stakeholders have access to the same information the district will identify and limit the platforms used for communication. When stakeholders know the locations and methods in which the district communicates, it will decrease confusion and miscommunication, as well as reduce the amount of time and resources needed to select and maintain communications on different platforms.

Mission Statement

The mission of the George County School District, along with our community partners, is to prepare and empower our students with the knowledge and skills that are essential in being college and/or career ready

Communication Priorities

It is our priority to define who, what, where when and how information will be communicated. To be clear and transparent about when and where stakeholders can access district and School information.

Communication goals:

- ❖ Selective and consistent with the platforms used.
- ❖ The most appropriate approved channels for each audience.
- ❖ Clear, concise and error free information.
- ❖ Talk to the audience with a focus on customer service.
- ❖ Communicate clearly and visibly.
- ❖ Develop common messaging.
- ❖ Utilize proper communication chain of command.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for feedback.

The George County School District will prioritize effective communication in order to ensure that all stakeholders are informed about the district's goals, initiatives, and events. The district will strive to create multiple channels of communication both in-person and digitally. This includes hosting meetings/events, utilizing social media platforms, and maintaining a district website with up- to-date information about the district. The district should also actively reach out to parents, teachers, and administrators to ensure that all stakeholders are informed about the district and its plans.

The priority of the communication plan is to be clear and transparent about when and where stakeholders can access district information. As technology evolves so do the platforms used for communication. The district cannot utilize every social media or internet platform that our stakeholders may use. However, we will be selective, and consistent, with the platforms that are used. The district will ensure that all stakeholders know the location or avenue for gaining information, asking questions, and providing feedback.

The *Preferred Method Chart* is intended to provide a quick reference to what method of communication the district will utilize based on the type of communication. The information being sent will determine who will receive the information using these methods of communication.

George County School District's Preferred Method Chart

Type of Communication	Website	Phone	Email	Social Media	Press	Mailing	Podcast
Emergency Alerts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Closures/Late Starts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Event Promotion	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Announcements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
General Information	✓		✓	✓			✓
Campaigns	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Other sources of important information:

- ❖ Active Parent
- ❖ School Status- Broadcast messages, phone calls
- ❖ CTE Brochure
- ❖ GC Athletic App
- ❖ GC District App

Communication Strategies

Several strategies can be used for effective communication. The George County School District will focus on these strategies for internal and external communication:

- ❖ The most appropriate approved channel,
- ❖ Clear, concise, and error free,
- ❖ Talk to the audience with respect and a focus on customer service,
- ❖ Communicate proactively (early, visibly, and in multiple ways),
- ❖ Develop a common unified approach to communication keeping cultural differences in mind,
- ❖ Utilize proper communication chain of command and protocols, and
- ❖ Provide opportunities for feedback and questions.

Communication Protocols

Board-Staff Communication

1. Staff Communication to the Board

- All communications or reports to the Board or individual board members from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members shall be submitted through the superintendent.
- This will not deny any staff member's right to appeal to the Board regarding administrative decisions, provided that the superintendent will have been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed according to the applicable procedures on complaints and grievances.
- When contacting the district please utilize the "Contact Progression Chart" (later in this document). Board Members will ask for clarity and then redirect your calls, emails, etc. as needed to maintain the integrity of the chain of command.

2. Board Communications to Staff

- All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the superintendent.
- The superintendent will employ all such media as is appropriate to keep staff fully informed of the Board's priorities, concerns and actions.

Email Communication Protocol- (Staff to Parents and Staff to Staff)

When done correctly email is a great resource for communicating information. An email should never replace a meeting or face-to-face conversation when those are more appropriate. When communicating via email keep in mind the following drawbacks can include a lack of emotion, lack of immediate feedback, email overload, errors, and security risks. The following strategies should be used when communicating through email:

- Be Responsive (within 48 hours)
- Verify Recipients
- Use Clear Subject Lines
- Personalize Messages
- Use a Professional Tone
- Be Concise
- Use Appropriate Formatting
- Proofread
- Use Attachments, and
- Be Professional

Internal Communication Protocol- Staff to Staff

A significant amount of information is shared daily within the school/district. These are some general guidelines for internal communication:

1. Goals of Internal Communication

- ❖ Provide open and transparent communication.
- ❖ Set clear expectations for when and how to communicate.
- ❖ Foster collaboration through communication.
- ❖ Provide timely information sharing for effective decision making.
- ❖ Include effective feedback loops.

2. Strategies for Internal Communication

- ❖ When possible, communicate face-to-face.
- ❖ Facilitate regular staff and committee meetings.
- ❖ Use email for sharing information.
- ❖ Schedule important dates early and make them available on common calendars.
- ❖ Ask for feedback.

3. Specifics to include for Internal Communication

- ❖ Communicate the goal.
- ❖ Target Audience
- ❖ Method of Communication
- ❖ Who is responsible?
- ❖ Frequency
- ❖ Feedback: When possible, communicate face-to-face.
- ❖ Facilitate regular staff and committee meetings.
- ❖ Use email for sharing information.
- ❖ Schedule important dates early and make them available on common calendars.
- ❖ Ask for feedback.

Social Media Protocols

Ref: GCSD Policy GABBA- Social Media Websites

Website

Having an up-to-date website is essential for effective communication. A website provides a platform to share important information and updates, as well as engage with key stakeholders. It can also be used to showcase events and services, improve customer service and support, and build district awareness. An up-to-date website is the key to staying competitive and staying connected with those who matter most. The district website is the primary source of information for our students and parents. To maximize the potential of an up-to-date website for communication, these strategies will ensure the website is easy to navigate and all information is clearly laid out:

- ❖ Keep the website content up-to-date with fresh content, including any recent news or announcements.
- ❖ Ensure that all content posted to the website is consistent with the school district's mission and vision.
- ❖ Check photo restrictions for students and staff.
- ❖ Maintain an accurate calendar and include new events as soon as they are available.
- ❖ Leverage the website to communicate upcoming events and activities.
- ❖ Utilize the website to provide useful information and resources for families.
- ❖ Utilize multimedia elements such as images, videos, and audio to engage visitors.
- ❖ Make sure the website is accessible to all users, regardless of device or disability. (ADA Compliant)

Facebook, etc.

Social media should not be the primary source of information from the school district as it may not reach all of the school district's stakeholders. Additionally, messages shared on social media can be easily lost among the vast amount of content that is shared on these platforms. The school district website or direct email/phone communication should be the primary source of information as it is more comprehensive and can reach all stakeholders.

Social media can be used to support the official communication provided on the website or through email and phone alerts by providing an additional platform for disseminating information to stakeholders. It is a great tool that can be used to share quick updates, announcements, or reminders with the school district followers. It can also be used to highlight positive stories and accomplishments from the school district, which can help build a positive reputation and create a sense of community.

Social Media Accounts for the District

Any social media account for a district-sponsored activity will need district approval and consistently follow the standards and strategies listed below. Requests for new social media accounts will be reviewed and approved by the administration and will start with the employee's immediate supervisor. The following standards will be used by the district when developing official accounts:

- ❖ Gain district permission to establish an account.
- ❖ Establish a clear purpose for the account.
- ❖ Develop an appropriate name and use consistent district branding.
- ❖ Create a detailed profile that includes contact information, a link to the school district's website, and other relevant information.
- ❖ Ensure that all security measures are in place to protect the account and its content.
- ❖ Provide clear guidelines for staff regarding the use of the official social media accounts.

Social Media Use by District Staff

The following strategies shall be used by staff utilizing social media for district communication:

- ❖ Make sure all posts adhere to the school district's mission and vision.
- ❖ Post content that you know has already been communicated through the chain of command.
- ❖ Use social media to promote important messages and updates from the school district.
- ❖ Always refer back to the district's website.
- ❖ Share positive stories and accomplishments from the school district.
- ❖ Utilize social media to promote upcoming events.
- ❖ Don't post any non-school related, confidential or sensitive information.

The George County School District App

- ❖ Keep App updated with current announcements and information

Press Releases

To submit a press release, send your information to the following contacts:

Sid Taylor
sidney.taylor@gcsd.us

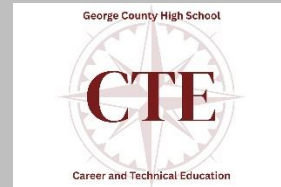
Jennifer Flowers
jennifer.flowers@gcsd.us

District Branding

District Logo's (Branding)

It is important to follow district branding in order to ensure consistency and cohesiveness in all communications. Branding helps to create a unified message and identity for the district, and it helps to establish trust and recognition with stakeholders. By following district branding, the district can ensure that all of its communications are professional, on-brand, and recognizable to those outside of the district.

To protect the district brand and ensure proper usage of logos, all usage of these logos requires consent from the George County School District Superintendent. To inquire about the usage of these logos please contact the Superintendent Office.



Feedback/Stakeholder Input

Feedback – Stakeholders, Parents, Community, and Staff

It is important that any time information is shared by the district that a method for feedback is available. Feedback loops can serve as a process to collect input for future operations. Feedback loops serve as a way to create input, capture and store input, analyze input and use the insight gained from the analysis to make decisions. Effective use of feedback loops will help build trusting relationships and show continued transparency with our stakeholders, parents, community and staff. *For example, many social media apps share the following basic loop: a user posts something, people see it, people click a button to “like” it, and the likes are presented back to the user. Email has a strong, simple loop: log in, see new emails, respond as applicable.*

Analytical information from the district’s website, Facebook, and email communications will be used to monitor input/feedback that can improve communications across all platforms.

The most efficient way to expedite, gather information, and to gain feedback is to communicate with the person who is closest and has the most information on the situation. The point of contact chart below provides a progression of contacts that can be used to effectively gather information and work through situations. When contacting the district please utilize this progression chart. District staff will ask and redirect your calls as needed to maintain the integrity of the chain of command.

Point of Contact Chart

Ref: GCSD Policy CD- Line and Staff Relations

Point of Contact	1 st Resource	2 nd Resource	3 rd Resource	4 th Resource	5 th Resource	6 th Resource
Classroom Instruction	Teacher	Principal	Dr. Jennifer Mathis- Secondary Mrs. Gina Hataway- Elementary	Superintendent	School Board	
Academics	Teacher	Counselor (Secondary Only)	Principal	Dr. Jennifer Mathis	Superintendent	School Board
Curriculum	Teacher	Principal	Dr. Jennifer Mathis- Secondary Mrs. Gina Hataway- Elementary	Superintendent	School Board	
Behavior/Discipline	Teacher	Principal	Sid Taylor	Superintendent	School Board	
Special Education (related services, 504, speech, etc.)	Teacher	Principal	Dr. David King	Superintendent	School Board	
Athletics	Coach	Local Athletic Coordinator	Principal	James Ray	Superintendent	School Board
Extracurricular	Advisor	Principal	James Ray	Superintendent		
Technology	Teacher	Principal	Erin Weaver	Jeff Mathis	Superintendent	School Board
School – Other	Principal	District Director	Superintendent	School Board		
Transportation	Transportation Supervisor	Principal	James Ray	Superintendent	School Board	
Food Service	FS Supervisor- Local school	Principal	Sarah Crenshaw	Superintendent	School Board	
Buildings & Grounds	School Custodian	Principal	Richard Maples	Jeff Mathis	Superintendent	School Board
District Protocols/Policies	Sid Taylor	Superintendent	School Board			
School Safety	Principal	Caleb Davis, Chief SRO	James Ray	Superintendent		
Student Mental Health	Counselors	Principal	Sid Taylor	Superintendent	School Board	
Finance/Human Resources	Supervisor	Principal	Natasha Henderson- Finance Phyllis McDonald- Human Resources	Superintendent	School Board	
Communications	Supervisor	Principal	Sid Taylor	Superintendent	School Board	

Evaluation and Measurement

Evaluation and Measurement

The following resources will be utilized to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of this communications plan annually:

- ❖ Employee Surveys
- ❖ Community Surveys
- ❖ Media Hits – Review Data Analytics for all social media and websites.