

# COMMUNICATION PLAN 2009



## MISSION

To improve the Middletown City School District's image, to promote & market the many positive aspects of the Middletown City Schools District, increase community support using a comprehensive public engagement program that builds, promotes and supports mutually beneficial communication between the district and all segments of the community.

# Basic Assumptions

- The district community relations/communication specialist responsibility is to develop and manage the structure and the framework of the communication plan
- It is everyone's responsibility to strengthen the public image of Middletown City Schools
- Successful image building is the result of cooperative efforts
- A formalized plan cannot replace quality, daily interactions all employees carry out with students, parents, community members, and fellow employees.

# Basic Assumptions

- The district constantly sending out messages. What these messages are - positive or negative - is up to each individual.
- This plan combines methods that are currently in practice with initiatives designed to increase positive publicity for the school district. All strategies – current and proposed – are supported by proven school public relations theories.
- Middletown City Schools must constantly grow and change through a process of review, selective abandonment, and enhancement to meet the needs of the school and its stakeholders.

# PARAMETERS

- Base our plan/work on all available current research
- Evaluate our plan/work annually and as needed measure effectiveness

# MAIN CHALLENGES

- To communicate the district's plan and accomplishments to the community with the goal of building support.
- To work to change the fading image of the school district.
- To generate the same confidence in the district's new focus and plan among the teaching staff. It is the teaching staff who will carry the plan into the classroom with the goal of improving poor test scores.
- To develop and communicate a program that addresses the need for a safe and orderly educational environment.

# STRATEGIES

- I. **Ensure all employees are well informed about the District goals, initiatives, points of pride**
  - A. Provide communication consultation and training within district
    - Collaborate with staff to develop communication plans - as needed
    - Collaborate with all departments to provide visually appealing and easily understandable information
  - B. Participate in community events
    - United Way
    - Heart walk
    - Free school supplies
    - Coats for kids
    - National Night Out
    - Multi Cultural Festival
    - Business Expo
    - Together We Can Back To School Celebration

# STRATEGIES

## C. Engage internal stakeholders as ambassadors for Middletown

- Customer service training for staff
- Annual Principal for a Day program
- Media Relations consultation
- Internal Newsletter (Inside Scoop)

# STRATEGIES

## II. Management and delivery of information

### A. Promote image enhancement

- Middie Stars
- Alumni Pride
- Teacher/Staff Highlights
- Promote new academic program initiatives
- Promote district products and activities
- Research
- Brand Development

# STRATEGIES

B. Evaluate components of two-way information delivery system for effectiveness and add, enhance, selectively abandon, or maintain as appropriate.

- Organize public forums (as needed)
- Conduct formal and informal research
- Cost analysis of product
- Student handbooks
- Emergency closings
- Customer Service Center (phone and Web based)
- Communication Committee

# STRATEGIES

## C. Maintain regular publication schedule

- Middie Link
- Outdoor Advertising (exploring options)
- Annual Events Calendar
- “Did You Know” postcards

## D. Expand the use of mass communication vehicles to reach community members

- Web Site – Redesign as marketing and informational tool
- Expand usage of Middletown TV
- E-newsletters
- Automatic Outreach Messaging
- Key Communicators Network (Comm. Committee)

# STRATEGIES

## E. Media relations

- Maintain clip reports for content analysis
- Act as liaison between district officials and media
- Act as spokesperson
- Provide information to the media as needed
- Maintain regular, personal contact with members of the media
- Increase media awareness of district news, events and activities
- Provide candid and concise messages for transmission through the media

# STRATEGIES

F. Inform, publicize and promote the district's goals, needs, programs, status, services and activities, and special events

- Produce / purchase promotional materials as needed
- Manage crisis communication
- HR materials
- Design / produce levy campaign information as needed
- Annual State of the Schools report by the board president

# STRATEGIES

## III. Build Support for Change

A. Before major communication or change

initiatives are started, appropriate public relations research is conducted to guide planning

- Hold open meetings to explain planned change
- Speak to civic groups
- Engage in effective conflict management
- Hold open discussions to debate competing views
- Include minority opinions

# STRATEGIES

## IV. Support Enhancement of Learning

### A. Provide customer service to staff and community

- Customer service web site
- Customer service center

### B. Support volunteer programs

- Revitalize partnership Initiatives
- Volunteer coordinator
- Parent Engagement

### C. Web Site Infolinks

- Parent Resources
- Links to Learning

# STAKEHOLDERS

- I. Board of Education
- II. Staff
  - Administrative
  - Certified
  - Classified
  - Volunteers
- III. Students
- IV. District /Community Committees / Board Created

# STAKEHOLDERS

## V. Parents

- Parent groups / members such as PTOs, Boosters, etc.
- PASS – Parents of Academically Successful Students
- Prospective Parents (new to district, and new to building)
- Disengaged parents (why are they disengaged and how do we engage them?)

## VI. Business community

## VII. Churches and Church Organizations

## VIII. Service organizations

## IX. Community/general public

## X. Media

# KEY COMMUNICATION TOOLS

## **Broadcast (via TV Middletown Channel 24)**

- Special programming
- Bulletin Board – postings for both district & community announcements, activities, events and programs.
- Radio – Public Service Announcements
  - WPFB
  - REBEL 105.9
  - Commercial stations as available for PSA and positive PR

# KEY COMMUNICATION TOOLS

## Electronic

- [www.middletowncityschools.com](http://www.middletowncityschools.com) District Web Site content development and management
  - Redesign to reflect marketing as well as information
  - Customer Service Center
- Supt. E-newsletter
- Athletic Director E-newsletter
- Internal E-newsletter “Inside Scoop” (response to survey)
- Customer Service Center

# KEY COMMUNICATION TOOLS

## Media

- Clip Report – a compilation of news clippings to be maintained in the Communication office
- Media Advisory – upcoming event calendar distributed to local/regional media as needed
- News releases – distributed as needed to local/regional media, and community contacts, as needed
- Media response – respond to media requests with accurate information and in a timely fashion.

# KEY COMMUNICATION TOOLS

## Publications

- Middle Link district newsletter produced quarterly and mailed to every home in the school district
- News cards produced as needed and mailed to every home in the school district
- School newsletters
- Annual Events Calendar

## Board meetings

- Coordination of Recognitions at Board of Education meetings and other special event programming

# KEY COMMUNICATION TOOLS

## Grass Roots Communication Network

- Key Communicators
- Support Our Schools Email Listserve
- Internal Email All Distribution List



[www.middletowncityschools.com](http://www.middletowncityschools.com)