

# Hicksville Public Schools



This document outlines a Comprehensive Communications Plan for Hicksville Public Schools as prepared for the Board of Education's Communications Advisory Committee and Hicksville Public School's Office of Public Information.

## Comprehensive Communications Plan



## **Hicksville Public Schools**

### **Mission Statement:**

*The Board of Education and the entire Hicksville Public School community remain committed to providing a quality educational program for all students in a safe, secure and nurturing environment that will assist them, each in their own way, in becoming caring, contributing and responsible citizens.*

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## Comprehensive Communications Plan

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# Comprehensive Communications Plan

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

The findings and recommendations included in this document are designed to serve as a Communications Plan template for Hicksville Public Schools. The Plan is flexible, in so much as any communications plan should be flexible and responsive to district, school, and community needs. As written, the Plan touches upon all areas of non-emergency communications. As one of the primary vehicles for information dissemination and community engagement, the Plan will also present an outline for the Office of Public Information as it functions in the school community and facilitates the Communications Plan.

Based on four criteria – input from our stakeholders, recommendations from the Board of Education’s Communications Advisory Committee, community demographics, and best practices - the District’s Communications Plan will articulate findings and recommendations for internal and external communications in our school community.

The recommendations included herein are based on the answers to three essential questions posed at the start of the communications audit process begun in September of 2019: **What should we keep doing? What should we start doing? What should we stop doing?**

The Plan will explain the methodologies applied, including documents created and findings gathered, implement a shift toward greater effectiveness and responsiveness in communications with a minimum of budget impact, establish non-emergency communication protocols, make specific recommendations for current and future communication initiatives, and provide a timeline for implementation.

This report was prepared by Dr. Catherine Knight, Public Information Officer Consultant, and Mrs. Joanne Bucci, Digital Media Specialist, with the input from Board of Education Vice President Brenda Judson, Board Secretary Carla Hoene, Board Trustee Linda Imbriale, Superintendent of Schools Marianne Litzman, and members of the Board’s Communications Advisory Committee (CAC). Dr. Knight and Mrs. Bucci would like to thank the Board of Education, the CAC, and District and Building Administration for their support throughout the audit and implementation process.

**NOTE:** The COVID-19 pandemic that began in the early winter of 2020 caused the Governor to shut down all public schools in New York State on March 18, 2020 . The first draft of the

Plan was submitted for review on March 11, 2020. The CAC reviewed the Plan through regular meetings on Google Meet. Committee members made suggestions that were folded into the Plan as presented here. During the lapse from the start of school closure through the end of the 2020-2021 school year, communications being pushed through the website, Broadcast Messaging and social media changed, sometimes daily, to focus on essential messages as directed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH), the Nassau County Department of Health (NCDOH), and the NYS Department of Education (NYSED) in collaboration with District Administration. Website updates, Broadcast Messaging, District newsletters, and media coverage continued throughout the pandemic.

#### **Board of Education Goal #5:**

It is the purpose of this document to present a Comprehensive Communications Plan as directed by the Board of Education in its 2019-2020 Strategic Plan (Goal 5):

***To develop and implement a comprehensive Communications Plan which will strengthen relationships between all District schools and every stakeholder, enhance community pride, and further expand opportunities to welcome families into the schools by the close of 2019-2020 school year (1 year); with innovations continuing through the 2023-2024 school year (5 years).***

#### **a. TERMINOLOGY:**

- i. App: Short for “Application,” an app is a type of software for digital devices that allows the user to perform specific tasks. School districts can use apps for mobile devices to keep parents and community members informed of commonly-searched information such as calendar dates, sports schedules, or meal menus.
- ii. Branding: Branding is the marketing practice in which an organization, such as a school district, creates a unified theme for its visuals and messaging. This may include a symbol and/or design, colors and/or fonts, motto, slogan, or tagline that is easily identifiable as belonging to the organization. A strong branding presence helps to identify an organization and distinguish it from others. Storytelling is an integral part of the branding process.
- iii. Confirmation Bias: The tendency to accept information that aligns with one’s values and beliefs and to discount information that conflicts with one’s values and beliefs.

- iv. Communications Audit: A comprehensive review of existing communication practices in an organization such as a school district.
- v. Communications Ecosystem: The term includes all modalities of communications that serve the school community and all parties acting within the District's communications system. This includes text, email, face-to-face and phone communications, letters, announcements, posters, flyers, banners, news releases, social media, and websites and website postings.
- vi. Communications Plan: A comprehensive plan that takes into account the overall communications outline for an organization, including stakeholder input, best practices, available technologies, and personnel, time, and financial constraints.
- vii. Disinformation: Purposely fabricated false information that is spread with the intent to mislead or harm.
- viii. Echo Chamber: An online space that is isolated from outside ideas, information, or viewpoints that oppose existing beliefs.
- ix. External Communications: Any communication between a District employee or school official and the public.
- x. FERPA: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>) protects an individual's right to privacy.
- xi. Filter Bubble: Algorithms that pre-select news, information, and advertisements based on the user's previous Internet searches.
- xii. Information Incurrent/Excurrent: Refers to the flow of information within a school community. *Figure 1.* shows the informational flow within the communications ecosystem.

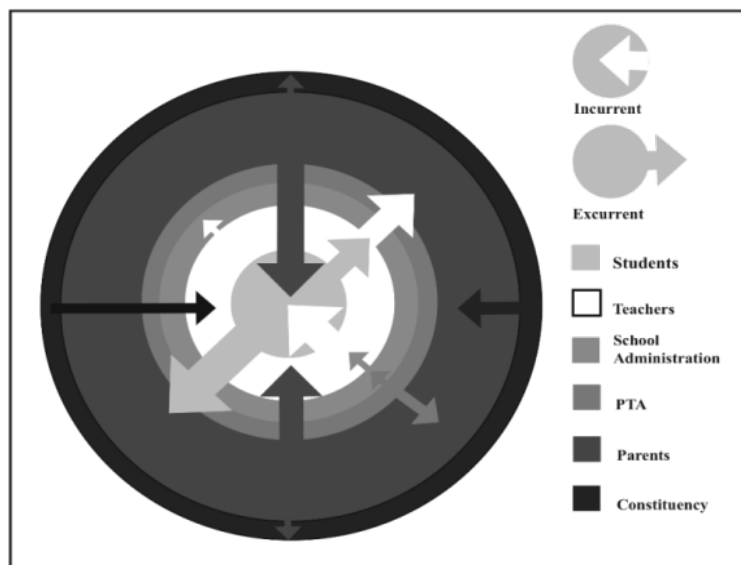


Figure 1. Incurrent/excurrent informational flow chart (Knight, 2013).

- xiii. Internal Communications: Any communication within and among the District employees or officials.
- xiv. Key Communicators: Within the District's communications ecosystem, key communicators play a major role in the dissemination of information and contributing to the knowledge base of stakeholders.
- xv. Logo: A graphic that symbolizes the organization. A logo may or may not include text.
- xvi. Mission Statement: An organization's guiding principles summarized in a few sentences.
- xvii. Motto: A short phrase that embodies the mission, service, or product of the organization. Also known as a slogan or tagline.
- xviii. Office of Public Information: For the purposes of this report, the Office of Public Information is referred to as "PIO" and is responsible for written, electronic, and printed matter produced by the school district for the public. It refers to communications systems and communications created by Dr. Knight and Mrs. Bucci.
- xix. Public Information: Information that can be shared in the public sector that does not include personal information about a student or staff member (FERPA).
- xx. Schemata: The underlying conceptual framework through which an individual relates to the events he or she experiences.
- xxi. Stakeholders: Audiences include all community members: school officials, students, teachers, administrators, PTA, parents, and residents.

- xxii. Storytelling: The oral history or retelling of an event, past practice, accolade, or achievement. The stories told within an organization are a reflection of what it values and stands for. Stories add value by sharing organizational knowledge, history, and personal experiences.
- xxiii. Tipping Point: The point at which a fundamental shift takes place.
- xxiv. User experience: User experience refers to a stakeholder's overall experience of a product, service, or organization, such as a school district. It includes all interactions, from face-to-face meetings to the usability of a district's digital presence. In order to achieve a high-quality user experience, a school district should maintain an overall design that includes standards and guidelines for optimal communications, including communication protocols, branding, and community interface.

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## **2. ABOUT HICKSVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS:**

The Hicksville Public School District is comprised of eight (including BOCES' Willet Avenue) elementary schools, a middle school and a high school with a total square footage of approximately 759,000 square feet and total acreage of 130 acres.

The community of Hicksville has its roots in agriculture and farming. The wide, flat topography of the Hempstead Plains made the land suitable to cattle, sheep, and farming such staple crops as corn and potatoes. As Hicksville's population increased toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Nicholai Street School, Hicksville's first public school, opened to children in 1892. After decades of use, Nicholai School closed and was demolished in 1968. The District preserved the school's original cast iron bell and the 45-star flag, flown above the school in 1896. Both artifacts are housed in the current Administration Building.

The middle school on Jerusalem Avenue was built in 1924 to accommodate students who moved on to the secondary grades from the K-8 Nicholai School. The school served as both the junior and senior high school with new additions being added in 1956 and 1971, until the new high school was built on Division Avenue to house grades nine through twelve.

East Street Elementary opened its doors in 1927 as the District's second elementary school. "Much of Hicksville's mid-20<sup>th</sup> century population expansion occurred after President Truman banned sales of Long Island potatoes, and developers, such as Levitt & Sons, purchased fallow farms to develop as tracts of suburban homes. Hicksville's population surged from 8,000 in 1945-46 to 52,000 in 1962-63," according to Hicksville's Historian, Mr. James Janis.



The school district expanded to accommodate the increasing population by building the following schools:

- 1850: Nicholai Street One-Room Schoolhouse (demolished in 1868)
- 1868: Nicholai Street School (demolished 1968)
- 1901: Hicksville Union Free School District No. 17 was created
- 1924: Hicksville Junior Senior High School, 215 Jerusalem Avenue
- 1926: East Street Elementary, 50 East Street
- 1951: Burns Avenue Elementary, 40 Burns Avenue
- 1951: Dutch Lane Elementary, 50 Stewart Avenue
- 1951: Lee Avenue Elementary, 1 Seventh Street
- 1951: Old Country Road Elementary, 49 Rhodes Lane
- 1952: Woodland Elementary, 85 Ketchams Road
- 1952: Fork Lane Elementary, 4 Fork Lane
- 1954: Hicksville High School, 180 Division Avenue
- 1963: Willet Avenue (currently a Nassau BOCES School), 57 Willet Avenue

In alignment with the District's communications and branding initiatives, a series of news articles was prepared, posted, and distributed to local papers to reintroduce the community to the District's nine schools. These then-and-now "Telling Our Story" features provide important historic details about each school. They can be accessed through the District website:

[https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/departments/public\\_information/telling\\_our\\_story\\_series](https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/departments/public_information/telling_our_story_series)

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### **3. OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION:**

The Office of Public Information (PIO) is comprised of a two-person department that employs one full-time Digital Media Specialist, one part-time contracted Public Information Office Consultant, and representatives from Syntax, a part-time contracted school public relations vendor.

The role of the Department is to generate and facilitate communications within and across the District, to provide information to community residents in print and online, including maintaining the District's 10 websites, managing the District's social media presence, assisting with crisis management, collaborating with building and District personnel for special events during the school year, writing news stories and letters, taking and cataloging photos, maintaining active outreach to the media and the community, and implementing actions to maintain and enhance the District's brand. In the information hierarchy, the PIO works closely with the Superintendent, Board of Education, and central- and building-level administrators to facilitate District-to-community and school-to-home communications.

Maintaining an open dialogue between the District leadership and the PIO is critical. The PIO must practice excellent listening skills and, when crafting messages, be cognizant of all

possible ways a message to be broadcast to the community can be misconstrued. The PIO must also avoid confirmation bias when crafting messages for the public. The PIO should be familiar with school law, and keep current with the State and Federal regulations that govern school systems.

As noted in his seminal work, “The Tipping Point,” Gladwell (2000) identified “connectors,” as people “with a special gift for bringing the world together” (p.38). In the school community, the PIO should have an innate talent for linking people with information and fostering meaningful relationships. Strong connectors, perhaps due to their involvement with many stakeholders and the flow of information in an organizational system, develop a sense of the overall opinion of the constituency. As such, a PIO can serve the District as an important conduit for informal guidance and suggestions to District leadership on a wide range of issues, including liaison work with the media and during crisis communication.

PIO guidelines were noted by Knight in “Media Literacy Research and Applications across All Disciplines” (2019, p. 171):

1. **Check Your Sources:** Be certain to scrutinize the information and its sources before releasing any information to the public or advising the superintendent and/or the school board. Having to send a second notice that acknowledges the previous presentation of information that was incorrect will impact your credibility and the school district’s credibility. Similarly, releasing information that contains a typo and/or incorrect grammar will impact credibility. School districts should model high expectations for precise use of language and punctuation.
2. **Stay Informed:** PIOs must be highly media literate. They must be able to quickly identify and act to correct misinformation and disinformation.
3. **Be Vigilant:** PIOs must stay on top of new developments within their communities and the larger state and national educational landscape.
4. **Identify Opinion Leaders:** By learning and communicating with residents who are the community’s opinion leaders, PIOs can shortcut the impact of negative media.
5. **Remember That Data is Your Friend:** Keep a list of topics that bring people to the microphone during budget meetings. After a few months, what your community values in its schools will become obvious.
6. **Know your district’s Acceptable Use Policy and Social Media Policy:** Annually share these with teacher, staff, and parent groups during meetings.
7. **Establish a Presence on Social Media:** Encourage building principals to do so, as well. Parents spend more and more time communicating through their phones. They want to see images and learn what’s going on in their child’s classroom. Be careful to blur students’ names that are captured in images (such as on desks, poster boards and projects, field trip name tags, and paper birthday crowns). Post no identifying location information (such as classroom numbers or field trip locations).
8. **Be Responsive:** Be the source of information that parents and community members know and trust. Don’t ignore an issue until it becomes a crisis, such as when it goes viral on social media.

9. **Seek the Counsel of Others in Your Field:** There are regional and state organizations, and national organizations, of school public relations personnel that can assist.
10. **Foster Great Relationships:** People are much more likely to give the school district the benefit of the doubt in a difficult situation if they know and trust you.

**a. MISSION:**

The mission of the Office of Public information as it implements the communications plan is to:

1. Inform, connect, and educate all stakeholders.
2. Be proactive, accessible, and responsive.
3. Enhance the District's profile in the community.
4. Celebrate students, staff, and the learning process.
5. Serve as a resource for all stakeholders.
6. Raise trust levels through open dialogue and transparent processes.

**b. VISION:**

The District and Office of Public Information will serve as a model of effective, efficient, collaborative, and relevant communications for all stakeholders using multiple channels.

**c. STRATEGY:**

In order to facilitate effective communications within the District's communications ecosystem, key communicators will provide information that is:

- a. Timely – Information must be published in a timely manner.
- b. Open – Information must provide transparency for all audiences to the extent possible while preserving the confidentiality of student and employee information; information must be easily accessible.
- c. Accurate – Messages must contain accurate information.
- d. Proactive – The District and Office of Public Information should carefully review innovative change and embrace new technologies and methodologies that enhance effective communications.
- e. Collaborative – The District and Office of Public Information should work with all stakeholder groups to identify needs and best practices within the community.

**d. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT:**

The Office of Public Information is responsible for sharing information in an expeditious manner as appropriate to the position and at the level directed by the Superintendent

of Schools. Managing the incoming information and disseminating it quickly and effectively is critical to the role of the PIO. As such, the PIO should utilize all avenues of communication, working closely with District leadership and the Technology Department to facilitate optimal coverage and function.

The Department is tasked with organizing and managing the content of 10 websites, the District Mobile App, and facilitating Broadcast Messaging; social media; new releases, photography and video; and oversight of the District's newsletters and Annual District Calendar & Parent Guide. The PIO writes position statements for the Board and Superintendent, and parent letters, as requested. The PIO serves as the conduit for design and printing requests for informational posters, troubleshooting any website issues, and the intake of new content through the website management section of the e-ticket system, a facilitator and promoter of District events, and liaison to the media and the greater Hicksville community.

The PIO provides staff development and ongoing support for school leaders and teaching assistants as they work to update building and Department-level web pages. The PIO serves as a repository for District history, maintaining contact and information-sharing with the Hicksville Historical Society, the Hicksville Historian, and alums of the school district as practicable.

Informed and reflective practice is integral to the successful functioning of the PIO. As such, the Office maintains contact with and shares resources with school PR specialists across Nassau and Suffolk County through the Long Island School Public Relations Association (LISPRA).

**e. STAFF DEVELOPMENT:**

In order to maintain the highest standards of professional functioning as the PIO assists the Board of Education and District administration, staff development in the field of school public relations for the PIO is highly recommended.

In justifying the expense of school PR employment and their ongoing training, the authors offer the following findings from a three-year study of New York State school PR personnel and their employment impact on budget vote outcomes. The hypothesis that "school districts that employed school PR personnel were more likely to pass their budgets" was supported by the survey findings (1.05% increase in budget passage rates for districts that employed school PR personnel) (Knight, 2013, pgs.93-101). However, the findings also indicated that school districts that employed school PR personnel "who were members of NYSPRA and NSPRA showed a 3.85% advantage for budget passage." (Ibid, p. 101). "In addition, the only district to fail their budget all three years did not employ school PR personnel." (Ibid, p. 98).

## RECOMMENDATIONS for PIO:

### 1. Membership in Professional PIO Organizations.

It is strongly recommended that the District enroll as members in the Long Island School Public Relations Association (LISPR: <http://www.lispra.org/>), the New York School Public Relations Association (NYSPRA: <https://www.nyspra.org/>), and the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA: <https://www.nspra.org/>).

These organizations exist to support professionals working in school public information/public relations, and provide access to invaluable resources, including regular meetings, list serves and email communications, annual conventions for staff development, resource guides and periodicals, and 1:1 guidance in all aspects of school PR, including with crisis communication.

### 2. Complete NYS Department of Homeland Security's Emergency PIO Basic Course.

The NYS Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Services offers free courses for Public Information Officers to ensure they are trained in how to respond to the media and the public in emergencies, including school emergencies. Registration is available at the local NYS Office of Homeland Security: <http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/>

### 3. Seek an invitation to the National Facebook group: *School Communications Pros*

It is recommended that the PIO staff join and stay active in the Facebook group, *School Communications Pros*, to monitor news and trends in school communications across the U.S. This group is free and requires only an invitation by a current member to join.

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## **4. METHODOLOGY:**

In order to create a communications plan tailored to the specific needs and wants of the stakeholders of Hicksville Public Schools (HPS), to elevate the District's profile in the community, and to enhance the public's trust, a two-step process guided research:

1. The PIO conducted a comprehensive audit of current communication practices in the District through school personnel and stakeholder interviews, and a review of the District's online and printed materials made available to the public.

2. Simultaneous to the communications audit, the PIO utilized the data and findings from **four criteria** to develop the recommendations included herein:

- a. **Anonymous surveys (2): HPS’s Community Communications Survey; HPS’s Educational Leadership Survey**
- b. **Recommendations from the Board of Education’s Communications Advisory Committee (CAC)**
- c. **Community demographics**
- d. **Best practices in school communications**

Utilizing the aforementioned types of review, testimony, practitioner input, survey findings, and research provided the developers with a solid foundation upon which to construct a “roadmap” to navigate forward with the Comprehensive Communication Plan outlined here.

Each relevant area of communications is reviewed in a “Findings” section, followed by a “Recommendations” section of actions focused on improving communications by recommending many of the least expensive solutions while maximizing existing personnel and services. In this way, the Plan will suggest ways the District can increase its reach and efficacy without incurring major cost increases.

It is important to note that any effective communications plan must remain flexible and responsive, therefore, it is recommended that the District conduct an annual school community communications survey to guide practice and monitor feedback from the school community on an ongoing basis.

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## **5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:**

Giddens Structuration Theory (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/structuration-theory>) provides a theoretical framework (as cited by Hatch, 2006) for the development of a Comprehensive Communications Plan based on the interactions between the school district and community over time as a duality. In other words, organizations develop through a mutual evolution of structure (past action) and action (agency), and, for superintendents, boards of education and school public information specialists in Situational Leadership Theory (<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-situational-theory-of-leadership-2795321>). With its long history of the community’s support for education, including its support of the annual budget, the school district and the greater community have shaped and modified each other in tandem over time.

The PIO posited that the best way to comprehend the users’ experience within the District’s communications ecosystem, that is, the current state of the District’s Communications Program as experienced by those directly connected to the school

community and its stakeholders, was to anonymously survey the community about every aspect of communication from their point of view. To accomplish this task, two surveys were created in Google forms and implemented in November and December 2019: the Community Communications Survey (11/4/19 to 12/6/19) and the Educational Leadership Survey (12-5-19 to 1/17/20).

a. The Community Communications Survey:

The Community Communications Survey, a 34-question survey open to all community residents and middle and high school students, was reviewed by the Superintendent and Director of Technology, and members of the CAC. It was launched on Monday, November 4, 2019 with linked website banners on all 10 of the District's and schools' websites. An invitation to participate was publicized with press releases sent to local hard copy and online media outlets, distributed through the Building Principals standard communications channels, through the PTAs standard communication channels, highlighted at the November, 2019 PTA Council Meeting, Tweeted multiple times through the District's Twitter feeds (@HicksvillePublicSchools; @HPSSuperintend1), and, using copies of an "invitation to participate" flyer, distributed at the Hicksville Parent Center, the Hicksville Public Library, the Hicksville Community Center, and to seniors attending the Fall Senior Luncheon.

The Community Survey was made available in English and Spanish. It was reviewed and beta tested by members of the Board of Education's Communications Advisory Committee (CAC) prior to the public launch. This group is identified as the "Beta" group in the survey findings (Appendix A). A Spanish language version of the Community Survey was prepared by the District's translator, Mrs. Cindy Garcia. Mrs. Garcia also provided translation of the Spanish Language survey responses.

The Community Survey, which was open for a little more than four weeks, utilized multiple choice, Likert-type (a measure of scale, such as most favorable to least favorable), and open-ended narrative questions, asking respondents for information in 11 key areas:

1. Demographics
2. User experiences of and recommendations to improve school-to-home communications
3. User experiences of and recommendations to improve District-to-community information
4. Impressions of the school district

5. Information about respondents' information-seeking and information-confirming practices
6. Social media use
7. District/school website use and recommendations
8. Recommendations for a school district app
9. Recommendations for the District's newsletters/e-newsletters
10. Input about the District's annual Calendar & Parent Guide
11. Information about printed newspaper subscriptions

Upon the closure of the Community Survey on December 6, 2019, the findings comprised 1,500 pages of data. Google forms provided real-time results in the form of pie charts and bar graphs for the multiple-choice responses, bar graphs for Likert responses, and complete narrative responses for the open-ended questions. An analysis of the survey findings was compiled and shared by the PIO with the CAC on January, 2020.

NOTE: The creation and implementation of the Community Communications Survey, including graphic elements used to broadcast it to the community, were made possible through the support of Mrs. Joanne Bucci, Digital Media Specialist, and Mr. Dan Friedman, Director of Technology.

#### The Educational Leadership Survey:

To understand the details of each building-level's school-to-home communication practices, a second survey was designed using Google forms - the Educational Leaders' Survey – reviewed by the Superintendent and administered to Principals on December 5, 2019 (Appendix D). This survey utilized multiple choice, Likert, and open-ended questions querying the District's building principals in eight key areas:

1. Demographics (i.e., years of experience in education)
2. Current modes of school-to-home communications
3. Current frequency of school-to-home communications and home-to-school communications
4. General content of parent-to-school communications
5. Average rate of building-to-District and building-to-building communications
6. Biggest communications challenges
7. Recommendations for District support to facilitate communication



8. Annual invitations to Board of Education members to attend events

The Educational Leaders' Survey (also referred to as the "Principals' Survey" in this report) was delivered to the principals with a letter of introduction on December 5, 2019 explaining the goal of the survey and that the respondents would remain anonymous to the extent practicable, and included a link to the Google form. The survey closed on January 17, 2020. The results were compiled by the PIO and shared with Principals at the January 21, 2020 Cabinet meeting and with the CAC at the February 10, 2020 meeting (Appendix B).

The findings from the Educational Leaders' Survey helped to inform about current communication practices in the District and served as a guide for recommendations for future initiatives.

b. The Communications Advisory Committee:

The Board of Education's Communications Advisory Committee (CAC) formed an integral part of the completed Comprehensive Communications Plan. The CAC met regularly during the school year to review survey findings, plan next steps, and address ongoing issues. As new communication initiatives were launched in conjunction with the Plan, the CAC provided invaluable feedback and guidance.

After a review of the Community Survey findings by members of the CAC, individuals submitted priority lists of practicable recommendations for all areas of school community communications based on the District's constraints of time, personnel, and finances (Appendix C).

b. Community Demographics:

Understanding the school community is critical to the development of an effective plan for communications.

According to the U.S. Census, "Hicksville is a hamlet and census-designated place (CDP) within the town of Oyster Bay in Nassau County, New York, United States, on Long Island. The population of the CDP was 41,547 at the 2010 census."

It is important to recognize that Hicksville Public Schools comprises a stakeholder group that is characterized by dedicated, hard-working taxpayers who value education and a school district that strives to meet the needs of each student. The school community has experienced a great deal of stability in the past decade due to purposeful long term planning by the Board of Education and District Administration, as exemplified by the

approval of the 2017 Bond that has enabled substantial improvements to all buildings, and the addition of a Community Aquatic Center.

A review of the Budget Vote results over the past 10 years confirms that the school district enjoys a high level of community support. In fact, since the tax cap law went into effect in the 2012-2013 school year, the annual budget for the district has passed by over 60%, with an average passage rate of over 70% achieved since May 2014, and the highest approval being 76.35% in May of 2015.

The Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who attend the District come from diverse backgrounds. Forty-eight languages were reported in the District as this report was prepared: Spanish, Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Chinese, Gujarati, Pushto, Bengali, Farsi, Malayalam, Nepali, Korean, Tamil, Albanian, Polish, Teluga, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Greek, Vietnamese, Russian, CRP, Dargwa, Armenian, Filipino, French, Italian, Marathi, Portuguese, Romanian, Tagalog, CPE, CPF, Haitian, Japanese, Mandarin, Berber, Bosnian, Bulgarian, CRE, Hebrew, Jaipuri, Malay, Mandar, Marwari, Sindhi, and Waray.

This diversity is one of the top reasons respondents to the Community Survey cited that they liked about the school district.

Research interviews conducted during this study indicated that Hicksville contains a core group of residents who have remained in the district for generations, including many third generation families, taking great pride in their history in the community and its public schools.

The Educational Leadership Survey revealed that the District's Principals are well-seasoned educational leaders, with the most having between 18 and 38 years of experience in the field of education, with an average of 28 years. The respondents noted (pre-pandemic) that parents communicate with them frequently during school operations, with over 60% reporting that parents communicate "more than once a day" or "once per day."

This aligns with the historically high and stable parent involvement, with PTAs at each building working to support the District and its mission. The District holds PTA Council meetings monthly, rotating among the school buildings, and includes input from the Superintendent of Schools. The PTA Building Directors report on school activities at each meeting, including sharing announcements about, and summaries of, the PTAs extensive fund-raising events in support of the District's students.

Pre-pandemic, the District interfaced with the greater Hicksville community on several levels. The District established the Hicksville Parent Resource Center at Old Country

Road Elementary School and subsequently moved the program to the District Offices as the Hicksville Parent Community Center, reopening on December 13, 2017 to:

- Provide an epicenter for parents to access information, programs, and services to support children's academic, social and emotional needs from pre-natal through adulthood
- Increase parent engagement for district events
- Strengthen the district's collaboration with parents and community based organizations

The Parent Center was closed to the public during the pandemic but was utilized for student testing, translation services and registration. As the schools reopen in 2021, the District will phase in a reopening of the Parent Center to provide the community services described above, as practicable.

During non-COVID times, the District also maintained an Adult Continuing Education Program and supported contracts with four senior citizen groups offering small stipends to the group directors: the Hicksville/Levittown Seniors, the Mid-Island Seniors, Our Lady of Mercy Seniors, and the St. Ignatius Seniors. The District also welcomed its resident senior citizens into the schools for two special events: the Fall Senior Luncheon, and the Senior Prom. "Senior Citizen" passes are offered for free admission to the first performance of all official student plays, productions and shows, and all athletic events.

These important community relations activities will be reviewed for reinstatement as soon as health and safety guidelines permit.

The Board of Education also utilizes stakeholder input with its eight Committees that meet regularly throughout the year: the Communications Advisory Committee (whose input provided guidance for this document), the Curriculum & Instruction Committee, the Facilities Committee, the Finance/Budget Committee, the Policy Committee, the Safety Committee, the Shared Decision Making Committee, and the Special Education Advisory Committee.

c. Best Practices in School Communications:

Every school district is unique. Applying a universal template for communications was not a goal of this Plan. Rather, the recommendations made herein were designed to address the needs and wants of the stakeholders of Hicksville Public Schools as expressed in the survey findings and the feedback from Central Administration, the CAC, students, parents, and residents, and current best practices in the field of school communications.

The school district is a member of the Long Island School Public Relations Association (LISPRA), and, as such, the Department of Public Information maintains a robust dialogue with its counterparts across Long Island on breaking news and trending issues, guidance for best practices, and staff development. Recommendations in this document were aligned with the findings of LISPRA's 2019-2020 Survey of Nassau and Suffolk County School Public Relations personnel working for public school districts and for BOCES.

Dr. Knight is also a member of the national Facebook group: *School Communications Pros*, and monitors news and trends in school communications across the U.S. daily.

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## **7. FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Based on the four criteria areas outlined in the methodology – the findings of two surveys; input from the CAC; community demographics; and best practices in school communications - the following actions are recommended as part of the District's Comprehensive Communications Plan.

### **a. General Communications:**

#### **FINDINGS:**

Research indicated that the District created and distributed guidelines for communications in the 2018-2019 school year to organize the procedures in a step-by-step sequence: [https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_136676/File/Communications%20Procedures%20Flyer.pdf](https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_136676/File/Communications%20Procedures%20Flyer.pdf). This document is highly informative and establishes the communications hierarchy in an easy to understand format. This document should be updated annually.

This report suggests and includes a supplementary document, "Pre-Communications Protocol," (Appendix E) which outlines the four primary questions – **Who needs to know?; What do they need to know?; Who is going to tell them?; and By what means?** - that should be asked and answered before utilizing the District's "Communication Procedures." While appearing simplistic and common-sense based, it has been the authors' experience that when miscommunication happens, the complete answer to one or more of these Pre-Communications Protocol questions was skipped or not fully answered.

In terms of the Community Survey, of which the majority (over 90%) were parents, the respondents' top three answers to the query "In general, what can Hicksville Public Schools do to improve its communications with the Hicksville community?" indicated that they prefer the school district use less paper in its communications, make improvements to the website with

more frequent updates, and that the district is, overall, doing a good job communicating with them. Other top responses to the district-to-resident communications question included that respondents wanted to see more communications, in general, especially about major district projects and initiatives, that the District representatives get out into the community more frequently, that the District should publish more newsletters covering more about each school and a variety of topics, create an app, and utilize social media.

In terms of school-to-home communications, the majority of respondents also indicated that they wanted less paper used for school-to-home communications. They want to receive emails, texts, and Robocalls, with texts being the overall preference. The next most frequent answers were to make the website more friendly (add a site map) with more frequent updates, and “not applicable.” Other top ten responses included creating a digest of upcoming events, parent alerts (when child is failing), email/text immediately (when something happens), add end-of-year summary in PowerSchool’s Parent Portal, and to send parents weekly updates.

Because the top three most frequent answers to both the district-to-resident and school-to-home communications questions were “Nothing” or “Not applicable,” it can be posited that the community, parents included, had a relatively favorable perception of the pre-pandemic school communications. However, using less paper was a clear message. It is highly recommended that an annual community communications survey is conducted to align practice.

The “less paper” responses in both the District-to-home and school-to-home survey questions also aligned with the Principals’ responses on the Educational Leadership Survey. Principals indicated that they used backpack flyers 50% of the time in their school-to-home non-emergency communications. Fully 75% of Principals responded that they would prefer digital capabilities for non-emergency communications home to parents.

Approximately 80% of respondents stated that they use the Internet to obtain their general news and information, and more than 80% responded that they most frequently use their handheld devices to access the Internet.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the results of the two surveys, it is recommended that the district and its school leaders implement the following:

1. Wherever practicable, move to electronic communications for all non-emergency communications.

The pandemic exemplified the need for a focus on electronic communications moving forward. At the time of the survey, parents strongly indicated that they wanted to

receive District information on their mobile devices (text was preferred over emails and Robocalls).

The District contracts for Broadcast Messaging services with School Messenger, using PowerSchool for contact information management. To maximize use of SchoolMessenger Broadcast Messaging, an annual intake of new parent contact information as well as the process of updating any existing parent accounts should be made clear to users of PowerSchool. All contact information should include designated phone numbers for Robocalls and text messages, and an email address for email communications. The need for stronger messaging about parents updating contact information appeared several times in the responses to the Principals' survey (Q# 14 & 15).

A move to electronic "backpack" communications in place of paper flyers would provide savings on paper costs at the district and school building level, in addition to savings realized in the use of personnel time for printing and distributing paper flyers. The move to a more socially-acceptable "green" communications solution also adds to the District's profile as being an environmentally aware and responsible school district. Several companies offer electronic backpack services at a low-cost to school districts. Peachjar (<https://www.peachjar.com/>) is one option.

## 2. Implement a complete reorganization and update to the District and building websites.

Starting in the Fall of 2018, the HPS website was revamped with a new design utilizing SchoolMessenger as the web service provider. In the Summer of 2019, a complete audit was done by the PIO and new goals were set:

- a. To communicate our school values by highlighting our students and their achievements.
- b. To promote classroom and curriculum initiatives of our teachers and Principals.
- c. To provide a complete breakout of the District showing sections such as the Board of Education, District Office Directors, Departments, and Community Programs.
- d. To improve usability and flexibility for our parents, students, and teachers.
- e. To add educational, safety, health, testing, and school resource sections.
- f. To promote the school-to-home connection.
- g. To move toward an environmentally-friendly, paperless environment.

For a comprehensive explanation of the reorganization and updates to the District's 10 websites, see subsection "f" of this report.

3. Continue to investigate and implement innovations in school communications where needed and as practicable.

In order to ensure that the District's Comprehensive Communications Plan continues to be relevant in addressing the needs of the school community and meets the goal of implementing *"innovations continuing through the 2023-2024 school year (5 years),"* the PIO must develop, administer, and evaluate annual community and educational leadership surveys, and monitor and evaluate the efficacy, cost-effectiveness, and user experience of any new communication initiatives.

**b. Internal Non-Emergency Protocols:**

FINDINGS:

As indicated earlier in this report, it is critical to ask the four pre-communication questions outlined in **Appendix E** in any new communications situation.

Research for this report indicated that the District utilizes eight Board of Education Committees to guide practice: Communications Advisory, Curriculum & Instruction, Facilities, Finance/Budget, Policy, Safety, Shared Decision Making, and Special Education Advisory. One concern expressed during this study was the lack of communications among the committees.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Implement the Pre-Communications Protocol.

In order to facilitate expediency and consistent practice for all non-emergency communications, the PIO recommends providing staff with the Pre-Communications Protocol Procedures (**Appendix E**) and providing staff support as needed. Equally important is for staff to understand and practice reflection when a miscommunication happens.

2. Establish Committee descriptions for each Board of Education committee:

Descriptions of each committee should be developed and posted on the District website. Outreach to the public for volunteers who have interest and expertise should be conducted periodically.

3. Share meeting summaries/minutes from each Committee Meeting with all Committee members and the public.

An email list of all Committee members should be created. All Committee Meeting Agendas should be shared with the email group prior to the meetings. One member from each Committee should write a brief summary of the meeting to be shared with the group and the public (once reviewed). This recommendation is important as the issues and decisions made in one Committee often affect another.

**c. External Non-Emergency Protocols:**

**FINDINGS:**

Results of the Community Survey indicate that parents and residents want increased communications. They want the District to provide “more, open and timely communications (newspaper, social media/website)” (was #4 of “Top 10” for Q #5).

District and school communications management requires an articulated chain-of-command, timely information-sharing, and reflective practice. The Board and Administration have established clear, non-emergency chain-of-command “Communication Procedures” protocols and shared these on the District website and in printed form:

[https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_136676/File/Communications%20Procedures%20Flyer.pdf](https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_136676/File/Communications%20Procedures%20Flyer.pdf)

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**1 Implement the Pre-Communications Protocol.**

Distribute the Pre-Communications Protocol palm card as a prompt for all District and building leaders to facilitate expediency and consistency across all non-emergency communications. (Appendix E)

**2. Distribute and implement the External Communications to Media Protocol.**

The PIO created a palm card (Appendix F) to clearly explain to all staff what media outlets are available and how to proceed to submit or request news coverage.

**3. Utilize one host/application for all backpack fliers.**

The PIO will explore no- or low-cost options for e-backpack flyers, design or recommend a template, and move towards implementation for the 2021-2022 school year.



#### **d. Broadcast Messaging:**

##### **FINDINGS:**

According to the results of the Communications Survey, parents want to utilize electronic methods in as much of their communications with the District and school buildings as possible. Parents want their communications on-the-go.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

As part of the district's initiative to move forward electronically for all our communications, the district introduced SchoolMessenger Broadcast Messaging (also known as the Communicate Notification System). This notification system extends our commitment to remain personally connected with parents by offering additional and timely communications. All school leadership can send non-emergency messages, including weekly newsletters, daily updates, and event announcements. Broadcasts can also be sent for all school closings, delays, and emergencies. It has been used by the Hicksville High School and Middle School for over three years.

Post-pandemic, it is recommended that information be gathered from building leaders about how they use this system.

This initiative was launched District-wide and introduced SMS text messaging services. Below are the different ways SchoolMessenger can be used.

1. Hicksville Public Schools Communicate website: The main dashboard for all contacts, communication vehicles and templates.
2. The SchoolMessenger ADMIN App: a mobile app for principals and teachers to send out all communications from their devices.
3. The SchoolMessenger PARENT App: a mobile app for teachers who want to utilize the Teacher-Initiated Messaging (group messaging). This is also the app for parents to use as an all-in-one place to find all communications.

The PIO developed a campaign to introduce this system to principals, teachers and parents. The initial rollout was to principals and teachers, providing them with instructional guides, video links and 1:1 tutorials created by the PIO. English and Spanish flyers are being distributed to parents via backpacks. The SMS text-messaging feature was activated, giving parents the opportunity to opt-in. Future parent workshops for Q&As and reminder flyers will be implemented as practicable under the pandemic. Please refer to the following webpages for more information on the campaign launch.

[https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/departments/public\\_information/notifications-teacher\\_principal\\_guide](https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/departments/public_information/notifications-teacher_principal_guide)

[https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/departments/public\\_information/notifications-parent\\_guide](https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/departments/public_information/notifications-parent_guide)

#### **e. Branding:**

This report recognizes the importance of creating a cohesive set of imagery – a logo, font(s), District colors, a motto – and stories that will brand Hicksville Public Schools. The goal of branding for Hicksville Public Schools is to re-emphasize the District’s positive profile in the community by maximizing communications about student and staff successes, sharing stories that add value to the school district and community, and to elevate District, school, and community pride.

#### **FINDINGS:**

A review of District documents revealed inconsistent uniformity of imagery, fonts and colors. **Appendix G** illustrates the scope of the disparity.

An earlier District logo was used on printed documents in past years. The design harkens back to an earlier time in the District’s history. The Town of Oyster Bay has a very similar logo: <https://oysterbaytown.com/>.



#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Pre-pandemic, the Office of Public Information conducted an audit of all materials released to the public for brand alignment and updated with new imagery where needed. The new logo and colors were added to all websites, to the District’s and buildings’ Twitter and Instagram user pages, to cover materials for District printed and e-publications, and used as a design element on custom PowerPoint templates, and on informational posters and flyers, including for the Board of Education. To ensure consistency across all platforms, the PIO created a

branding guide:

<https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/cms/one.aspx?portalId=136760&pageId=24883261>

1. Logo - The District began the process of branding by creating a District logo in 2019. Hicksville High School's AP Art teacher designed a logo that featured the District's colors (Orange: CO, M86, Y100; KO #fo4c23; Black: CO, MO, YO, K95 #333133) within a large "H" and encircled by the names of the District's nine schools.



2. Motto (aka slogan, tagline) – As noted by Godin, “A slogan [motto] reminds the user, ‘Here’s why it’s worth recommending us; here’s why your friends and colleagues will be glad you told them about us’ ” (p.87).  
Pre-pandemic, the PIO implemented a series of workshops to involve students in the development of a District motto in January and February of 2020. Each building organized a Motto Development Team consisting of members of Student Council, Site Base, and RISE students. Each school presented its “Top 3” submissions to the CAC for further “finalists” submissions (Appendix D).
3. Storytelling – The PIO created the “Telling Our Story” series, in-depth news releases posted to the District and building websites, and published in local media and Twitter. The series served three important purposes:
  - a. To add value. As clearly demonstrated in “Significant Objects” (Walker & Glenn, 2012): “Stories are such a powerful driver of emotional value that their effect on any given object’s subjective value can actually be measured objectively” (Introduction, p.1). Purchasing real estate or making a commitment to rent in Hicksville School District generally constitutes an investor’s single highest financial investment over time. Stories that enhance the District’s

profile reinforce residents' beliefs that investing in the community is prudent.

- b. To reintroduce the unique history of each of the District's nine schools, including highlighting each school's leadership. Even for residents who grew up in the community and attended the district's schools, refreshing residents' awareness as to why they have put down roots, stayed in Hicksville, and raised their own children in the community, raises the District's profile.
- c. To provide newcomers to Hicksville with a sense of place, history, and identity. The District welcomes new families to the community each year. Many come from other countries. In order to help assimilate new families, learning about the schools builds a valuable knowledge base.

The PIO also created a "Telling Our Story" graphic to brand the series. See:

[https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/departments/public\\_information/telling\\_our\\_story\\_series](https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/departments/public_information/telling_our_story_series)

4. Graphics:

- a. Custom PowerPoint Templates - The PIO created a series of custom PowerPoint templates and a user guide for Cabinet members to use for public presentations (Appendix H). The PIO provided staff development for use of the templates, and will continue to add to the library of templates.
- b. Signage – The PIO will continue to create a banners and posters to continue to enhance branding. It is recommended that all physical signage be refreshed with new paint using District staff. For example, many of the blue and gold lawn signs at the school buildings have faded:



The PIO noted that the middle school does not have a sign above the main entrance, and the high school's name in metallic letters has little contrast against the blond brick façade.



It is suggested that the metal letters on the high school be freshened with durable, high enamel paint using the District's orange and black colors in a design developed by a high school art student or teacher or as a project by a group such as the Art Honor Society.



As shown in the above photo, District vehicles have magnetic identification tags on their doors. The PIO recommends replacing these with the new tags featuring the District's updated logo.

- c. Letterheads – The PIO created new District letterheads that feature the new logo. Once a new motto is decided, these letterheads can be updated.
- d. Business cards – The PIO recommends new business cards be printed for the Board of Education, and all District Administrators that align with the branding guide. The PIO recommends that Principals and Administrators offer cards to parents and community members at every interaction.

#### **f. District and School Websites:**

##### **FINDINGS:**

Upon the initial review of the District's website, survey respondents felt the website was difficult to navigate, contained broken links, missing information, and lacked in-depth content. Respondents were looking for additional features such as a stronger school-home connection, direct links to important information, and a more personalized experience per school building.

This report acknowledges the public's growing dependence on electronic communications. According to the Communications Survey conducted before the pandemic, 79.8% of people use the Internet as their main source for general news and information (Q#8), and 61.4% use the Hicksville's Public Schools website to obtain school district news and event information (Q#9). These findings, along with the results of the initial website review, confirm users' emphasis that the HPS website be a



complete resource for their district connections. The authors posit that dependence on electronic communications became even more critical during the pandemic.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The reorganization of the HPS website was taken on in several stages.

##### Stage 1: Content Revisions and Additions.

Beginning in the summer of 2019, all website pages were reviewed for broken links, correct information, new additional information, as well a complete design overhaul of typefaces, colors and styles. As the 2019-2020 school year began, all pertinent information, such as faculty directories, district policies, BOE and committee dates, photo galleries, and all news stories were added and updated. All District content taken from the district's calendar was added to the website. The PIO department page was developed:

[https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/departments/public\\_information/district\\_school\\_websites](https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/departments/public_information/district_school_websites).

A HPS "Newsroom" subsection was added to simplify viewers' connection to news stories published in local media:

<https://sites.google.com/hicksvillepublicschools.org/hps-newsroom/home>.

##### Stage 2: New Sitemap Implementation.

After the initial design and content revisions were implemented, a new site map was developed for easier navigation of the website's information. With input from the CAC, the sitemap was implemented by end of December 2019. All policy, privacy, and ADA compliant statements were added. Please refer to Figure 3.

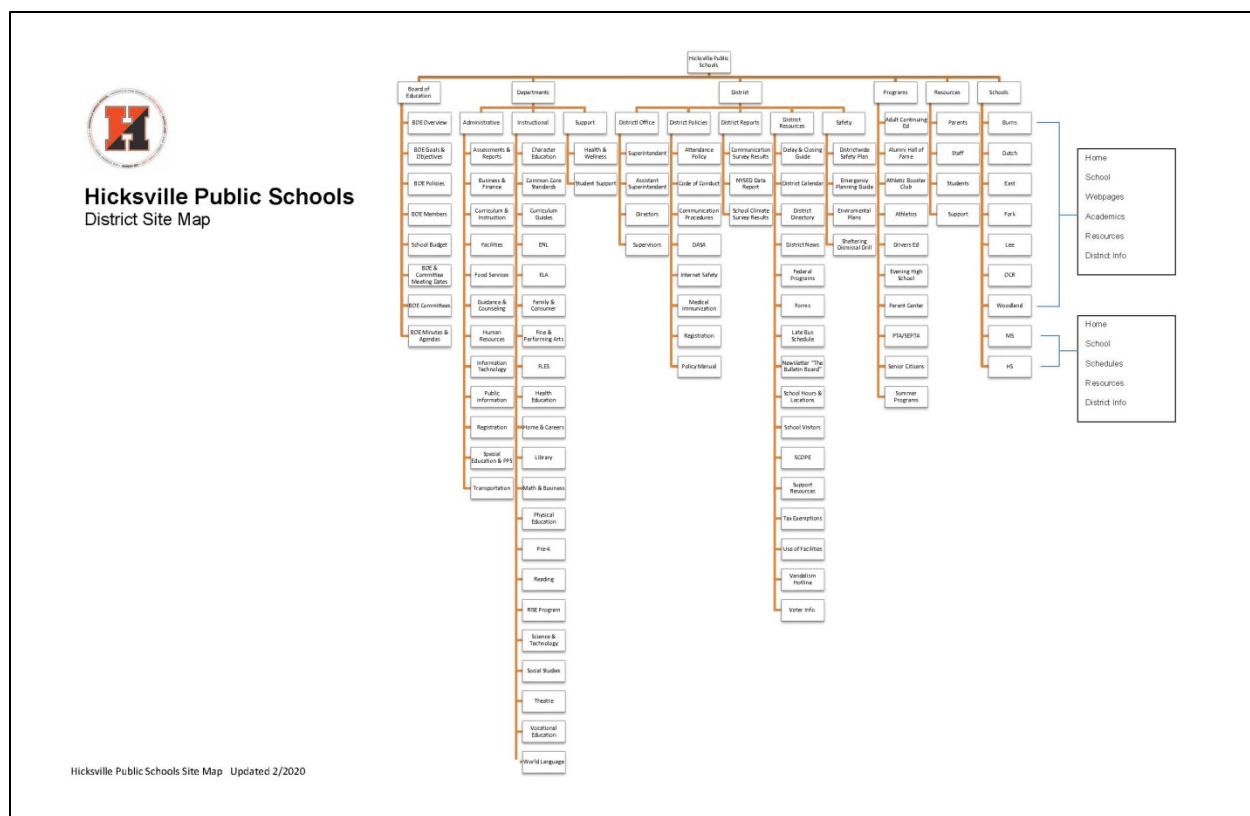


Figure 3. District Site Map (Bucci, 2019).

### Stage 3: New Features and a Mobile Friendly Design.

New features were added to the website for a friendlier user experience. In addition, content such as the District Directory, the Instructional Calendar, and all support resource mini-websites have been given HPS branding. A “What’s New in Hicksville” and an “Important Announcement” banner were added to keep the public informed of changes and important health/District information.

Another priority at this stage was revising the website content to facilitate viewing on a mobile device. This entailed resizing content, displaying content in different website portals, and working with SchoolMessenger for all template revisions.





Figure 4. "New Features" Banner (Bucci, 2020).

#### Stage 4: Future Goals

1. Adding video service: video channels for all schools and Hicksville High School Daily News Broadcasts viewable on the website.
2. Making each academic and instructional department as transparent and informational as possible.
3. Continuing to build parent, staff, and student resources, including FAQs.
4. Adding the ability to link URLs on the "ALERT" website feature.
5. Adding an electronic faculty & staff directory, if possible.
6. Enhancing the web calendar to include school categories and downloadable features.
7. Reviewing the website for important forms and notifications that should include translations.

#### **g. Mobile App**

##### FINDINGS:

As stated in the findings of the Communications Survey, 78.5% of participants would find a mobile app useful in accessing district information (Q#22). A mobile app will serve all stakeholders with an on-the-go resource. Features such as late bus schedules, faculty

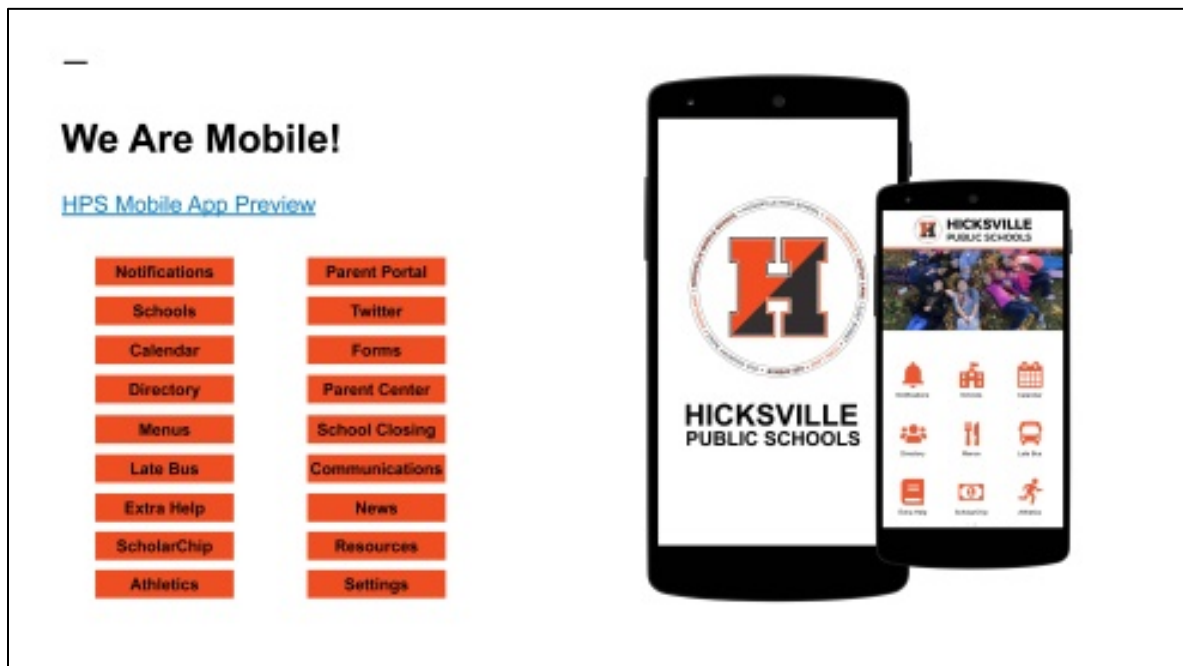
directories, athletic schedules, and direct links to ScholarChip and Parent Portal were features survey respondents wanted included (Q#23 & 24).

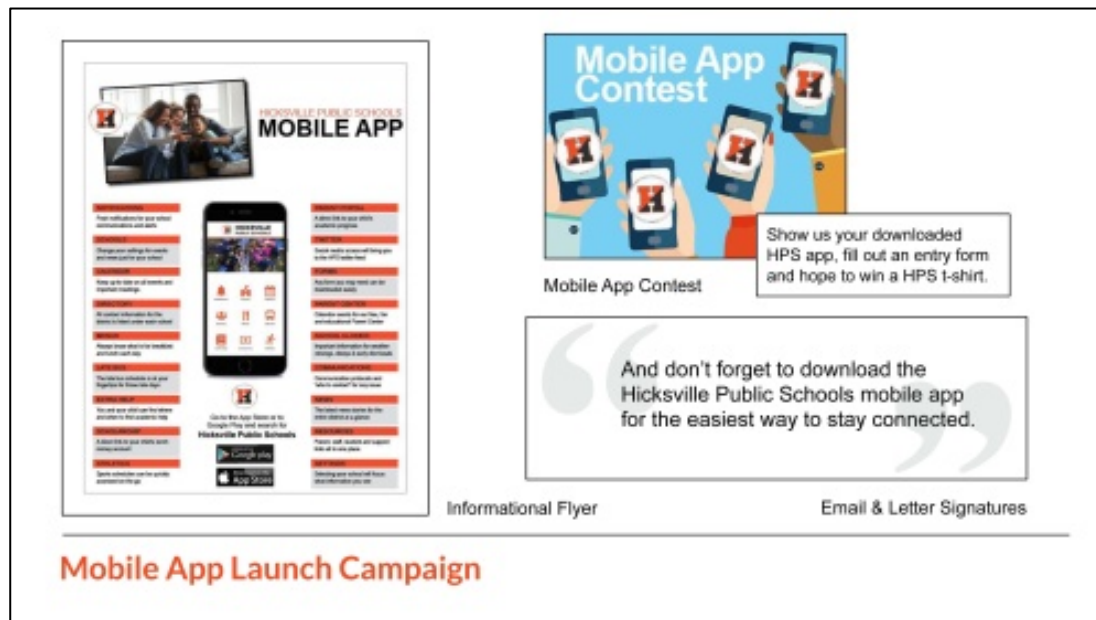
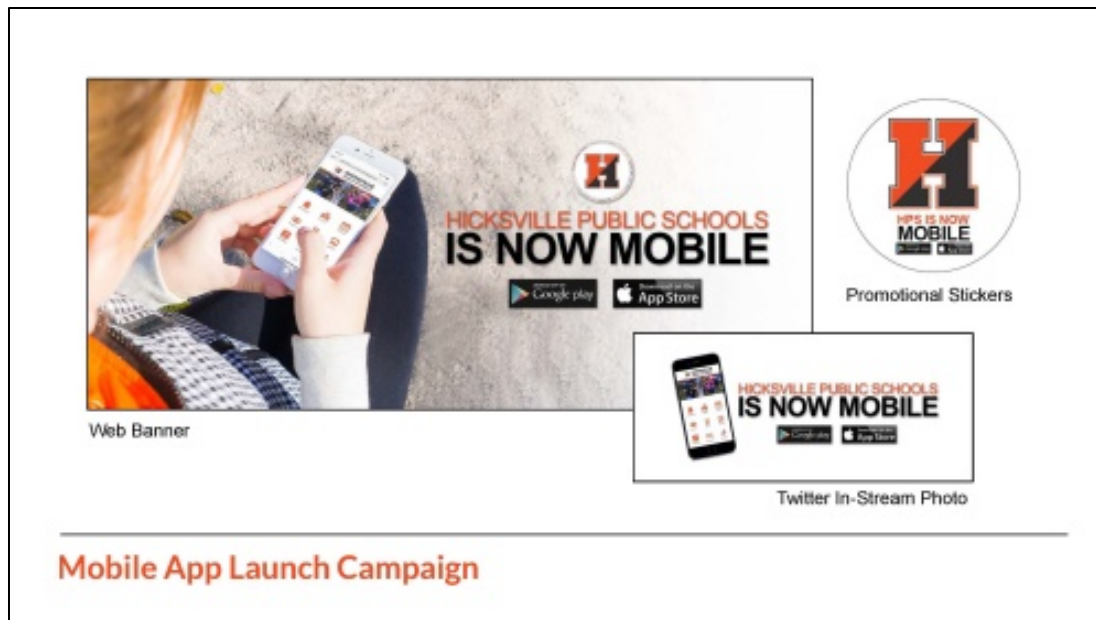
### RECOMMENDATIONS:

A mobile app was created, developed, and finalized in February 2020 by the PIO and SchoolMessenger. The app content includes push notifications, school listings, calendars, directories, menus, late bus schedules, extra help schedules, athletic schedules, district forms, Hicksville's Community Parent Center event calendar, school closing information, communications guide, news, resources and direct links to ScholarChip, Parent Portal, Twitter and Instagram.

The official launch of the District's mobile app took place on March 9, 2020. The launch campaign included web banners, Twitter In-Stream graphics, an informational flyer, a parent download and user guide, a mobile app contest idea, and email & letter signature recommendations:

[https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/departments/public\\_information/hps\\_mobile\\_app](https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/departments/public_information/hps_mobile_app)





Figures 5, 6, & 7. Mobile App Informational Banners (Bucci, 2020).

#### **h. District Calendar & Parent Guide:**

##### **FINDINGS:**

Pre-pandemic, Hicksville Public School's Annual District Calendar & Parent Guide was sent to all homes in the district and provided to school employees. It was posted to the District website, and an electronic version was available as a scrolling sidebar on all 10 websites.

Under the pandemic, an annual Calendar and Parent Guide was not printed for Hicksville Public Schools in 2020-2021. Because of the uncertainty caused by the Governor's closing of the public schools and the changing health and safety recommendations of the CDC, NYSED, NYSDOH, many Superintendents and Boards opted to NOT print their calendar for the 2020-2021 school year. This practice was consistent across Long Island according to the majority of the PIOs belonging to LISPR.

Previously created by Syntax for HPS, the PIO created a new District Calendar and Parent Guide for the 2020-2021 school year, printable from home computers. It includes an updated Parent Guide that is compliant with all state and Federal legal notification requirements. It also includes hyperlinks to the District website for users who seek further information.

The 2020-2021 District Calendar and Parent Guide resides at the bottom of the district's calendar webpage, along with the District's School Session Calendar, and an electronic calendar: [https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/district/district\\_calendar](https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/district/district_calendar)

All calendars on the website are regularly updated as required. The printable District Calendar and Parent Guide can serve as a template for future printed calendars. The PIO can update the template for the 2021-2022 year based on the 2020-2021 template, and can work with the district's bid-awarded printer to print hard copies for residents.

In our Community Survey for Calendar questions #29-31, over 90% of respondents indicated that they "use the District's printed calendar sent to [their] home." The majority of survey respondents (68%) also indicated that they did not prefer an expanded calendar with each month spread over two pages. The majority, over 75% of all three groups surveyed, would "also use a District e-Calendar."

Respondents to the Community Survey also chose "Calendar" as their second most frequently searched website item when asked about their school website search habits (Q#20). The number one answer for searched items was teacher/staff contacts.

On the Educational Leadership Survey, Principals did not include "Calendar" as one of the items parents cannot find when they are searching the district/school websites (Q#9).

On the summary of CAC recommendations for changes to the Calendar, the majority noted "nothing." Other suggestions (at one each) included "more photos/highlights," "emphasize new logo/motto," "add student art work."

NOTE: In a 10-year analysis conducted by Dr. Knight for a previous school district, an inverse correlation was found between printing costs and mailing costs of the annual calendar, i.e., as the cost of printing the annual calendar went down, the cost of mailing increased. The mailing costs for the calendar eventually outpaced the printing costs so that the District was paying more for the mailing of the calendar than for the actual printing. When that District chose to cut back the printing and mailing to include only then-current parents, the public, with only 38% being parents, reacted negatively. In reaction, the District offered printed copies to non-parents at District Office, and polled residents as to why they wanted a copy. The number one answer was that the Calendar & Parent Guide was the only thing they received for their tax dollars and they wanted a copy. A close second in that informal survey was that they had grandchildren in the schools and wanted to be aware of events they could attend. Many others responded that it was the one calendar they used to write on to track their personal appointments.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

It was consistent across the three groups of Community Survey respondents that they wanted to continue to receive the printed District Calendar & Parent Guide in the mail (Q#29). The current calendar was also acceptable in its current format of one month per page (Q#30).

Moving forward, this report recommends:

1. Starting with the 2020-2021 school year, the District Calendar & Parent Guide is prepared in-house by the Office of Public Information.



Figure 8. HPS's 2020-2021 School District Calendar & Parent Guide (Knight, 2021).

A printable calendar template was created and posted on the district website. Moving forward for the 2021-2022 school year, the PIO should prepare printing specifications and prepare the document for print production. The reasons for bringing the District Calendar and Parent Guide back to the Office of PI are:

- c. Cost savings will be realized by utilizing the PIO personnel, thus reducing the responsibilities of the District-contracted school PR firm (Syntax) to complete the calendar and its production.
- d. To regain control of all input and output of the document, thus decreasing the margin of error when multiple editors are working on the project.
- e. To align the Calendar with the District branding guidelines, adding enhancements as suggested by ongoing review.

2. Beginning for the 2021-2022 school year, initiate a student cover design process for the Calendar.

The District values and champions its music and the arts program. Art students are regularly selected for juried local and regional exhibits including, the Long Island Arts Alliance Scholar Artist Program, Young Artists at the Heckscher Museum of Art, the Art League of Long Island's GoApe Exhibit, Advanced Visions at CW Post, LIU, and more.

High School art students may submit their own cover designs in the spring of 2021 through the High School Art Department to be considered for the cover of the 2021-2022 Calendar. Submitted designs can be selected by popular vote as determined in collaboration with the Board and District Administration. As COVID health and safety protocols permit, all top finalists, including the selected cover artist, can be invited to the September 2022 Board of Education meeting for recognition. Further, middle and elementary students' selected artwork can be utilized within the calendar pages through a principal/PTA/Administration selection process.

Utilizing students' artworks as an integral part of the Calendar process will model to stakeholders how the District values the efforts and creativity of its students. It also furthers the District's brand as a child-centric organization.

#### **i. Newsletters/e-Newsletters:**

NOTE: To clarify, the topic "Newsletters/e-Newsletters" refers to the District's current practice of paper newsletter production through Syntax that supplies an e-doc that is subsequently posted on the District website by the PIO. However, there is a distinct difference in "user experience" for the reader between a posted (but static e-newsletter) and an interactive e-newsletter that includes hyperlinks to additional information, photos and video that can be accessed at the readers' convenience.

#### **FINDINGS:**

Historically, Hicksville Public Schools has published a 4-page paper newsletter, "Bulletin Board," mailed to all residents' homes several times a year. Currently, the District's contracted vendor, Syntax, creates the publication with additional input from Administration, and produces six newsletters: Fall, Winter, Founder's Day, Spring, Budget, and Summer/Graduation newsletter. The 2017 contract also included a special publication that outlined the proposed Bond:

[https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_136676/File/Community/District%20Newsletter/Hicksville-Bond-Newsletter.pdf](https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_136676/File/Community/District%20Newsletter/Hicksville-Bond-Newsletter.pdf)

Copies of "Bulletin Board" are sent to all Hicksville addresses, and posted by the District on the District website:

[https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/district/newsletter\\_the\\_bulletin\\_board](https://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org/district/newsletter_the_bulletin_board)

All preproduction and production costs are built into the annual contract between the District and Syntax.

The majority of the Community Survey respondents (47.3%), found the current District newsletter “moderately informative” with 23.4% finding it “very informative”; 13.5% responded that it was “not very informative”; and 15.8% responded “I do not read the District’s newsletter” (Q#27). Interestingly, the eighth top answer was “I didn’t even know about the newsletter/don’t receive it.”

When asked how the District can improve its newsletter (Q#28), the “Top 3” answers included: “email it”; “publish more frequently (monthly/material too dated)”; and “include more/shorter articles/variety/ academic focus/more pages.” The fourth top answer was to create a “digital version.” As the posted newsletters are digital versions, the District does provide this. However, parent notifications about the newsletter being posted have been inconsistent.

On the Educational Leadership Survey, only one Principal indicated that they offer a “Regularly published newsletter/e-newsletter” (Q#10).

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

After a careful review of the District newsletter’s format, content, frequency, and follow-up communications, and considering the four framing criteria outlined in the Methodology section, the following recommendations are strongly suggested:

##### 1. Produce the District’s newsletters/e-newsletters in house.

To control costs and content, District newsletters/e-newsletters should be produced by the PIO. Hard copy printing can be accomplished using the District’s bid-awarded printer and mailing service.

##### 2. Enhance newsletter/e-newsletter content.

In order to be responsive to our Community Survey respondents, newsletters/e-newsletters should include concise, key facts-type information. In addition to “going digital” with the newsletters, members of the CAC recommend adding “updates from each school” and a “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) feature. While reading an in-depth article is informative, readers’ time is at a premium. The space or spatial “real estate” in each newsletter/e-newsletter is finite, therefore, the publications should include more and shorter stories, such as news or photos with captions from each school.

##### 3. Add two interactive e-Newsletters by the 2021-2022 school year.



As noted above, respondents to the Community Survey want more frequent newsletters, and more and varied information in the District newsletters. The addition of two interactive e-newsletters, a Fall and a Spring edition, will increase the number of newsletters and provide more stories per issue. Interactive e-newsletters also elevate the “user experience” for our stakeholders by involving them directly through their self-directed interaction with the publication using hyperlinks and other interactive features.

The interactive e-newsletters can be created by the District’s PIO, thus maximizing information the Department already gathers for news releases, and web and social media postings. Existing software and electronic distribution systems available to the PIO can be used, so there is no “real dollar” cost increase to the District. Since the Community Survey informs that parents prefer to receive their information digitally, this initiative aligns parent preferences with information distribution by the District.

In a recent survey of LISPRA (Long Island School Public Relations Association) members, who represent a wide variety of Nassau and Suffolk County districts and BOCES, respondents indicated that they produce anywhere from one to seven District newsletters/e-newsletters annually, with most producing four to five. The response was mixed as to whether LISPRA members utilize e-newsletters, with a slight trend toward producing more e-publications.

With the addition of two interactive e-newsletters, the District will provide residents with eight newsletters per year, thus acting on the Community Survey respondents’ desire for more newsletters (Q#28).

#### 4. Feature student work in the newsletters.

To raise the District’s profile and foster pride in its students and their accomplishments, students’ art, music, video, writings, and accomplishments the PIO requested that Syntax add student artwork behind the masthead starting in the Winter, 2020 issue. Each regular newsletter/e-newsletter issue should continue this practice using K-12 student artwork on a rotational basis.

When the PIO begins producing the newsletter/e-newsletter in-house, a centerfold of artwork (submitted by each school’s art teacher) and music accomplishments, such as the lists of All-County and All-State musicians, should be initiated.

#### 5. Follow each newsletter/e-newsletter publication with outreach communications.

One trend noted in the Community Survey was that respondents (primarily these were parents - over 90%), need and want reminders when new information is released by the

District. Therefore, each newsletter/e-newsletter should be followed by a parent e-blast and tweet that this has occurred.

6. Provide support for Principals to publish monthly school e-newsletters.

Respondents to the Educational Leadership Survey revealed that only one Principal produces a regularly published newsletter/e-Newsletter. In order to improve school-to-home communications, it is recommended that each building's Teaching Assistants assist school Administration with regularly publishing a newsletter/e-newsletter for parents. The PIO can provide staff development and support to facilitate. These publications can include important announcements, upcoming events, and photos with captions that capture classroom events of note.

Free newsletter/e-newsletter templates are available using Google docs:  
<https://tinyppt.com/google-docs-classroom-newsletter-template.html>. Word and Publisher also offer free newsletter/e-newsletter templates.

**i. Social Media:**

**FINDINGS:**

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Vimeo and others have offered users a highly effective means to receive digital content. Since social media sites are offered free to users, their popularity and exponential spread is easy to understand. Social media sites are easy to access, easy to use, and allow communications at the users' convenience. They provide a high degree of interaction - the ability to share information, post photos and videos, links to additional information, and provide users the opportunity to build their own audiences. Each platform has its advantages and disadvantages. The problems and pitfalls are also well known – data mining, identity theft, and the spread of misinformation and disinformation. Legally, social media posts have been used in court cases to support the claims of plaintiffs and defendants alike. Still, social media sites remain wildly popular.

For school districts, social media platforms offer a way to reach a broad swath of stakeholders in real time on their personal devices at no real cost to the school district. Our Community Survey found that over 80% of respondents use their personal handheld device to access the Internet (Q#7). Clearly, stakeholders' handheld devices play a significant role in their quest for information at their fingertips, 24/7/365.

According to the Community Survey, 80.7% of respondents indicated they use Facebook, Instagram was second at 48.2%, YouTube was third (39%), and Twitter was

fourth with 23.2% (Q#10). The responses to this question varied for the two additional groups: 75% of our Beta test group uses Facebook, 66.7% use Twitter, 50% use Instagram, and 41.7% use YouTube. For our Spanish respondents, 100% indicated they use Facebook and YouTube, with Instagram being the third choice at 66.7%. Further, only 8.8% of respondents to the survey indicated that they do not use any social media sites.

For Hicksville Public Schools to remain viable as the source of information about the school district, maintaining a presence on social media is critical. However, with so many options available, what platforms are the safest?

It is important to note that, in researching social media for a recent book on media literacy, the PIO specifically singled out Facebook and Twitter for evidence of the frequency of disinformation and outright hacking and identity theft. Two findings of note were revealed:

*Facebook also enabled the political data from Cambridge Analytica to harvest the personal information of millions of voters in the United States so they could be targeted with personalized political advertisements. A significant amount of fake news can be found on Facebook, and for many users, Facebook has become a large echo chamber, where people merely seek out their own views (Liao, p.3).*

Confirmation bias, the tendency to actively seek out information that adds conviction to one's own beliefs and disregards information that conflicts with one's beliefs, can throw another variable into the social media mix by creating an echo chamber of like-minded users. As noted by Nichols (2019): "We all have an inherent and natural tendency to search for evidence that already meshes with our beliefs" (p.41).

In scrutinizing Twitter, on the other hand, Borenstein (2019), in a report for *The Associated Press* stated:

*Scientists examined more than 16,000 U.S. Twitter accounts and found that 16 of them – less than one-tenth of 1 percent – tweeted out nearly 80 percent of misinformation masquerading as news, according to a study in the journal Science. About 99 percent of . . . Twitter users do not spread fake information in the most heated part of the election year, said study co-author David Lazer, a Northeastern political and computer science professor (p.1)*

This research informs that, of the two social media platforms in these particular instances, Twitter is the safer platform for users, including school district administrators.

While at the time of the Community Communications Survey in November 2019, Facebook was the preferred social media site, Instagram (2020) has steadily gained a stronger presence than Twitter (2019).

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

##### 1. Continue a District-wide presence on Twitter and Instagram.

The Twitter initiative was launched in the fall of 2019 with introductory workshops at the November Cabinet and Directors meeting, followed by 1:1 staff development sessions with the Superintendent and each of the Principals and District Supervisors that did not have already have a Twitter presence. Please note that District Administrators self-selected to participate in this social media initiative.

New users were provided with a Twitter “Dos and Don’ts” palm card (Appendix I) by the PIO to guide their use, and a “New Users’ Guide to Twitter” (Appendix J) for teachers on a strictly voluntary basis, both at the Principals’ discretion to offer Twitter to their building’s teachers, and for teachers to opt-in to set up accounts.

The following Twitter accounts were created for the District and its buildings:

District: @HicksvillePS

Superintendent: @HPSSuperintend1

Burns: @BurnsHps

Dutch Lane: @HDutchlane

East Street: @EastHps

Fork: @ForkHPS

Lee Avenue: @hps\_lee

Old Country Road: @HpsOcr

Woodland: @WoodlandHPS

Middle School: @APHMS1

High School: @hps\_hhspride

NOTE: All Instagram accounts can be located by searching by the school name.

##### 2. Cautiously expand use of social media.

In order to continue to serve the needs of the community, the District added Instagram and Vimeo in 2020. These sites are cost-effective (no required subscription fees), however, the maintenance of any social media site requires the use of personnel time for posting, monitoring, and staff development.

In the recent LISPR survey, the majority of school PR personnel responded that their Districts maintain both Facebook and Twitter accounts with 71.4% indicating that they “post everything” and 28.6% stating that they “have administrative support.” Again, the issue of the time required by personnel to post, monitor and troubleshoot needs to be considered.

Members of the CAC recommended using social media to share positive feedback about the District and our schools, as well as one other way to improve and optimize District-to-community communications.

### 3. Monitor Facebook for trends.

According to an informal LISPR poll, most school districts with PR personnel have parent Facebook groups. Monitoring the trends on parent Facebook groups can allay blindsides to school districts. Misinformation can spread quickly and districts should monitor these sites to learn what is trending, be it false information or rumor. The intensity or “traction” of these issues can also be revealed – how widespread is this? How many comments has the post gleaned? Is this one disgruntled person posting multiple times or are many different users involved?

As previously mentioned, it is important to note that monitoring social media sites that run 24/7/365 requires the use of personnel time. To relieve the pressure on school boards, administrators and PIOs, some districts rely on school support groups and/or tech-savvy individuals to alert District leadership when a serious issue is brewing.

### **k. Video:**

#### FINDINGS:

Video is one of the most impactful ways to reach stakeholders. Video is engaging, authentic and, when delivered through communication avenues already utilized by the District, cost-effective.

Twitter allows for up to two minutes of video to be included in a Tweet, so the platform supports one avenue of communication already in use. Vimeo offer public platforms that can allow the PIO to record and edit, upload videos, and post a player to any or all

of the District's websites. Stakeholders can then access video at their convenience, and on their preferred devices.

It must be noted that each phase of video production is time-consuming work. Planning, scripting/storyboarding, location prep, videotaping, audio management, laying supplemental sound tracks, and video editing require minimum equipment but an intensive amount of PIO hours. However, once completed and posted, video is durable and highly impactful.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Moving forward, it is recommended that the PIO explore video options to increase stakeholder interest and impact.

##### 1. Continue the "Telling Our Story" written histories of Hicksville Public Schools with video testimonials.

As noted by Heath & Heath, "Stories are effective teaching tools" (p.205). "Stories also help people understand and remember" (p.304). And, "Stories also improve credibility." (p. 305).

The "Telling Our Story" series created by the PIO has gained positive community feedback since its launch in December 2019. Once the written series is completed in the spring of 2020, a video compilation of the history of the school district is the next step, and has the potential to reach an even larger audience. The PIO will outreach through community groups to gather alums and past school leaders for video testimonials and overlay the audio with historic and current photos and graphics to further tell the story.

##### 2. Collaborate with the high school Video Department to highlight student work.

The PIO will collaborate with the High School Video Production classes to maximize student-created videos and broadcasts.

#### **I. News:**

#### FINDINGS:

While much of stakeholders' news consumption has gone digital, there is still a need to share student and staff achievements through traditional print and online news outlets. Since these outlets publish District and school news stories for free, their use is cost-effective. Even during the pandemic, a segment of Hicksville's population subscribed to hard copy newspapers from *Hicksville News* and *Mid-Island Times* and/or subscribed to online news services such as *Patch*. It is important for the District to maintain its media

presence. Both of the District's Official newspapers: *Mid-Island Times* and *Hicksville News* - maintain an online presence, as does *Newsday* (subscription-based).

Currently, the PIO and Syntax regularly submit news releases to *Newsday*, *Hicksville News*, *Mid-Island Times*, and *Patch*, and all news releases are published on the District/school websites, and to the PIO "Newsroom" web page:

<https://sites.google.com/hicksvillepublicschools.org/hps-newsroom/home>

To provide a sample of the frequency and content of news releases, the PIO created a "Press Release Log" to reveal how many and who published the submissions (Appendix K).

The pre-pandemic log reveals that approximately 10-12 releases are sent to the media and published on the District and schools' websites each month. An estimate of the total releases sent per 10-month school year would be approximately 100-120 releases. This is in line with the average number of annual stories produced by LISPRAs colleagues across Nassau and Suffolk school districts and BOCES. Surveyed LISPRAs members indicated a range of 20-300 stories per year, with 120 as the average. Although the individual newspaper editors decide if and when a release is published, the PIO has experienced that most submitted pieces are published.

As of March, 2020, local editors and circulation directors shared the following, *Hicksville News*, an Anton Media Group publication, had a circulation of 1,925 and *Mid-Island Times*, a Litmor Publishing Corporation publication, had a circulation of 1,800.

The majority of respondents to our Community Survey (54.1%) indicated that they "Hardly ever notice our students or our District in the news" (Q#32). Our Beta group answered similarly at 42.9%. However, our Spanish respondents indicated that they "never" see our students or District in the news.

These responses make sense since 80.6% of respondents indicated that they do not subscribe or regularly purchase a printed newspaper (Q#33), with 71.4% of our Beta group and 100% of our Spanish respondents.

When queried as to what papers they do subscribe to or purchase, *Newsday* was #1, followed by *Hicksville News*. No respondents subscribed to *Mid-Island Times*.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Hicksville's schools and the District itself are very active places. There are health and safety guidelines that must be disseminated, new initiatives, leadership changes, and notices that the public needs to be aware of.

### 1. Continue to build a relationship with local media.

Since the local media outlets publish District and school news for free, it is cost-effective to continue to build a relationship with these providers. The District benefits from the print and online coverage, and the media outlets can enjoy increased subscriptions when readers who identify with the school district subscribe. As the pandemic lifts, re-solidifying relationships with the media is critically important.

### 2. Encourage use of the District's online news submission site.

To aid the PIO, the Department has established an online news submission form so administrators and teachers can submit news stories online. Teachers should be encouraged to incorporate documenting lessons and activities into their pedagogy. Submitting stories online streamlines the process of news collection.

### 3. Subscribe to the local papers.

In order to facilitate the flow of information, District and Building Administration should renew subscriptions to the local papers. This not only informs when a District/school news piece is published, but the local weeklies are a great source of community information.

As of March 2020, *Mid-Island Times* charge \$20 per year; *Hicksville News*, \$26 per year for 52 weeks of local news. Both papers offer an incentive program that reduces the cost to schools while helping organizations like the PTA with fundraising.

Both *Hicksville News* and *Mid-Island Times* have rolling subscriptions that will notify when renewal is due. Clipping and posting news releases about students that appeared in the local papers on a bulletin board in the school is an effective way to gain a second, beneficial use of published news for all viewers.

When asked how much time and effort the District should dedicate to providing information to the media, the top response from members of the CAC was to subscribe and work with the local newspapers to strengthen District-media relations and raise the District's profile in the community.

### 4. Submit news to media outlets that serve non-English speakers.

This report recommends submitting news stories to non-English papers such as the Spanish language newspaper *El Diario* or the *South Asian Times*, if these media outlets will publish for free.



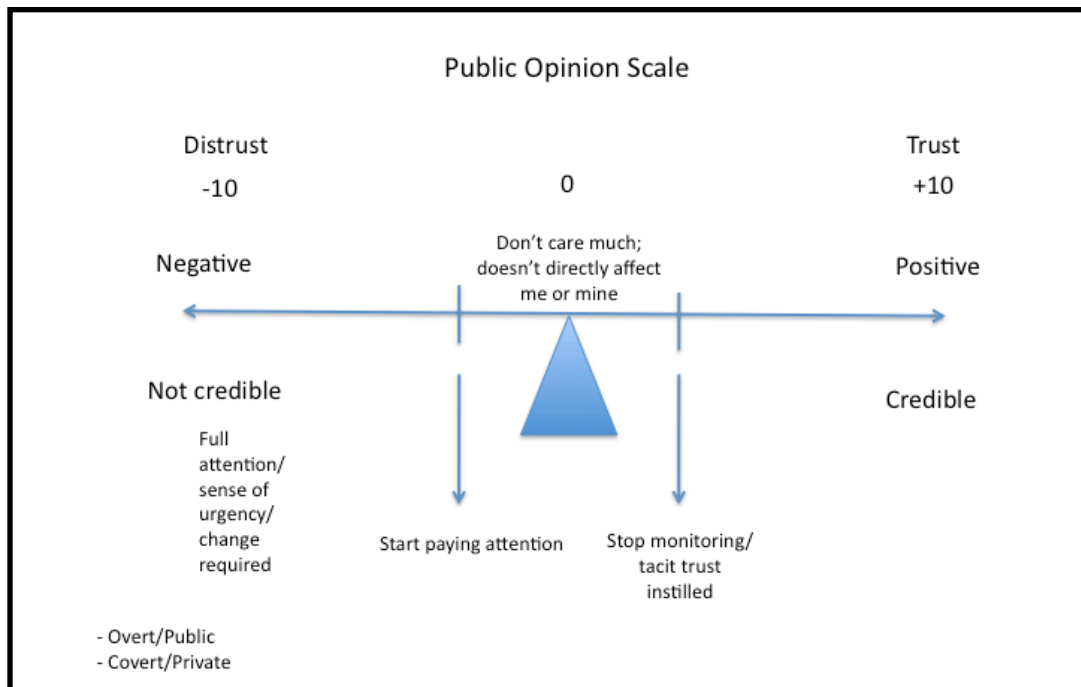
If our District translator provided translations for a smattering of important stories, the personnel costs could be minimized. Utilizing Google Translate is another option. Since our Spanish respondents to our Community Survey indicated that 0% regularly purchase or subscribe to a printed newspaper, exploring this option may help integrate new families.

#### 5. Maintain the community's trust.

When charged with writing and information-sharing for the school and the community at large, it is critical that the PIO maintain credibility and trust. Transparency in all areas is key. The PIO must function free from confirmation bias, serve without editorializing, and guard against creating an informational echo chamber. As noted by Levin,

*Every day, our schools ask millions of people to entrust their children to us. We also ask for billions of dollars in public funds to operate the school system. These aren't trivial requests. The strength and future of public education depends on the extent to which people believe their children and their money are in good hands, especially given the many other demands for public funds. (p.93).*

The credibility of the school district impacts public opinion, and public opinion is key to positive community relations, especially as it affects the annual budget vote. As illustrated below, the PIO must be vigilantly aware of public opinion and work to correct misinformation and disinformation.



barrier, getting information after the community, the ability to get information to large groups of people.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

##### 1. Raise the District's profile in the community.

In terms of recommendations to improve District-to-community communications, the CAC suggested holding meet-and-greets (pre-pandemic), adding/improving our District-wide signage, improving outreach to local community organizations/businesses/government representatives (pre-pandemic), and making more use of social media. Much of this work was underway prior to the pandemic and it is recommended to phase-in more outreach as health and safety guidelines permit.

##### 2. Repeat, repeat, repeat.

One of the cardinal rules of a successful communications program is repetition. Using all modalities, the District and schools must never assume that the message has reached the recipient if only one means of communications is utilized. The CAC recommended improving school-to-home communications by schools sending reminders to parents to check emails, sending more texts and emails to parents, and categorizing emails by standardized subject lines (see "4" below).

##### 3. Utilize multiple channels.

The District, building leaders, and the PIO should utilize all broadcast means to release messages as appropriate to the contents.

##### 4. Categorization of messages.

Utilizing standard practice for subject lines in emails and texts will help parents and residents to understand the content before opening the message. The communication should categorize the content by **sender and message content**.

As examples for subject line categorization:

**"HMS – Change in MS athletic schedule"**

**"HPS – Coronavirus Health Notice"**

**"Woodland – Tomorrow, 1/7/20, is Jersey Day"**

**"HPS – Requests for Out-of-District Transportation are DUE Tomorrow"**

## **“HHS – AP Exam Schedule”**

## **“HPS – URGENT – District Closing Due to Inclement Weather”**

Implementing this simple, standardized practice may seem obvious, but it was mentioned by several Community Communications Survey respondents. The CAC recommended implementing this action as well.

### 5. Standardize phone greetings.

Anyone answering a call, whether from a resident, parent, or colleague, should identify the school/office and their name they before asking how the staff member can assist the caller.

### 6. Translation of Important Messages.

HPS is a diverse community and to facilitate welcoming the newly-emigrated, translation services should be added for all important notifications sent by the District and the schools. Our websites offer translations in 10 languages, so many viewers have access in other-than-English, however, the translation does not include pdf documents that are posted to the website, or informational flyers sent home.

### 7. Additional.

#### i. Media Relations:

Unlike social media, one advantage for school districts working with the media is that credible news organizations follow journalistic standards. News reporters and outlet editors fact-check, and understand that a news story filled with misinformation and typos and poor writing does not sell newspapers. News features that highlight student and staff achievements, school-community storytelling, and important announcements help media strengthen their communication with the public. It is important to foster and maintain professional relationships with journalists and editors.

All District employees should also follow the “External Communications to the Media” (Appendix F) protocols outlined in this report in order to publicize an upcoming event, student or professional achievement, or news story.

#### ii. Events (as health and safety protocols permit):

Community events to which the public is invited are essential to maintaining a strong school-community connection. Whenever practicable and with the

support of security, community members beyond parents should be included in District and school events that occur outside of school hours. Athletic events, school plays and musicals, concerts, meet and greets, and special events for senior citizens should be encouraged. One recommendation to strengthen District-sponsored events is to review attendance by senior citizens and design ways to increase interest and participation. Repackaging an existing event with new ideas can renew and refresh.

### iii. Hicksville Community Parent Center:

As noted previously in this report, the Hicksville Community Center fulfills an important role in transitioning new families and students into the District and community. As such, when activities at the Parent Center can recommence, the PIO should regularly publicize events and workshops held at the Center. The District should also work to maximize the Parent Center by dovetailing the rollout of new initiatives with informational sessions at the Center.

Integral to the efficacy of the Parent Center are personnel working to bridge any district-to-community gaps. It is recommended that the District explore the option of employing a Parent Coordinator to liaison with the school community and seek out new opportunities for parent and community engagement.

### iv. Community Organizations:

Another important role of the PIO is to initiate and maintain connections to community organizations, as health and safety guidelines permit. Key to facilitating the District/school-to-home connection is maintaining regular contact with the Hicksville PTA. It is recommended that a representative from the PIO attend the monthly PTA Council Meetings. The information shared at these meetings is an invaluable resource. Learning what issues are at the forefront, and assisting in getting out in front of issues that might not be articulated in the same way at a public Board of Education meeting can go a long way toward building the community's trust.

Community outreach extends beyond the school community and PTA. The PIO should identify and reach out to community organizations, businesses, and local and regional government officials. Prior to the pandemic, the PIO opened dialogues with the Hicksville Chamber of Commerce, the Hicksville Historical Society, and the Hicksville Public Library. More work is needed in this area, and the PIO should include plans to meet with local civic groups and businesses owners as health and safety guidelines permit.

## **8. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:**

The Department of Public Information has outlined the timeline of implementation of the recommendations included in this report (Appendix N). The Plan is designed to be flexible as new initiatives, regulations, directives, and needs dictate.

## **9. CLOSING STATEMENT:**

One tenet followed during the communications audit process was to adhere to learning answers to the three questions posed at the start of this process: **What should we keep doing? What should we start doing? What should we stop doing?**

The Communications Plan outlined in this report, although it spanned the unprecedented times of the closing of schools during a pandemic and the shift of teaching and learning to the home during remote instruction, endeavored to thoroughly answer these important questions with a focus on maximizing use of existing communications systems the District already uses and pays for, making recommendations for new initiatives based on the four criteria – the results and analyses of two surveys, the recommendations of the CAC, community demographics, and best practices in school communications – and to accomplish this in the most cost-effective way.

Much of the items outlined in this Plan have already been implemented. Outreach to the community and building leaders, and collaborative work with the Superintendent, and District Leadership have driven much of the internal relationship-building needed, even under the COVID restrictions, to accomplish Goal #5 of the Board of Education’s Strategic Plan.

Evidence of the implementation work by the PIO is broadly available. It includes:

- The function of the Office of Public Information has been created and the roles of the Digital Media Specialist, PIO Consultant, and contracted vendor Syntax were defined.
- A comprehensive audit of the District’s current communications program was completed; two surveys developed, launched, and results analyzed and published.
  - The District’s 10 websites were reorganized and are monitored and updated daily.
  - The creation and rollout of the HPS app was completed.
  - Implementation of Broadcast Messaging was completed.
  - Guidelines for external and internal communication protocols were created.
  - District-wide social media (Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo) accounts were activated.
  - Branding initiatives have been implemented, including:
    - The development of a branding style guide.
    - The creation of multiple posters, cover designs, brochures, and PowerPoint templates.

- The completion of the “Telling Our Story” series to reintroduce the community to our schools and their histories.
- The development of building-level Motto Development Teams to create a new District motto.
- A review of signage.
- Relationships with the local media editors have been re-established.
- Outreach to the PTA and local community groups continues.
- The district-owned Calendar and Parent Guide printable template was completed and published online.
- Plans to move toward e-newsletters and backpack flyers for 2021-2022 are underway.
- Staff development and support in new technologies and the new communication initiatives are ongoing.

Dr. Knight and Mrs. Bucci would like to acknowledge the support of the Board and Superintendent of Schools, the members of the Board’s Communications Advisory Committee, District and building leadership, our teachers, staff, students and their parents, the PTA, our local support organizations, and the greater Hicksville community for their assistance in formulating the District’s Communications Plan.

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## **12. APPENDICES:**

### **Appendix A: HPS's 2019 Community Communications Survey**



## Hicksville Public Schools 2019 Community Communications Survey

A Google forms survey was created by Hicksville Public School District's Public Information Department in October and November of 2019 following discussions by the District's Communications Advisory Committee (CAC). The goal of the survey was to uncover a broad range of information about the District's current communications program and demographic data about the respondents. Findings from the survey will guide the creation of a customized Comprehensive Communications Plan for Hicksville Public Schools to meet the Board of Education's Goal 5:

*To develop and implement a comprehensive Communications Plan which will strengthen relationships between all District schools and every stakeholder, enhance community pride, and further expand opportunities to welcome families into the schools by the close of the 2019-2020 school year, (1 year); with innovations continuing through the 2023-2024 school year (5 years).*

The HPS Communications Plan Survey consisted of 34 questions including multiple choice, Likert, and open-ended narrative options. The survey was open to all adult residents, resident staff members, and MS/HS students. Respondents were asked to complete the survey only once and were assured their identities would be anonymous.

The survey was made available to respondents in English and Spanish. The Spanish version of the survey and translation of the Spanish responses were accomplished by Cindy Garcia, the District's translator.

Before the survey went live, a test run of its functionality and content was run through a Beta test group comprised of 12 members of the CAC. Once the Beta group's suggestions were applied, the survey went live from 11-4-19 to 12-6-19 on the District and all school websites. The survey was also accessible using handheld devices.

Additional announcements requesting the public's response were posted through Twitter; email requests and a draft parent letter were sent to Principals to alert parents; an announcement and information about the purpose and goal of the survey was made at the November PTA Council Meeting; a press release about the survey was emailed to Hicksville News, Mid Island Times & Patch, palm card invitations were distributed at the November 7<sup>th</sup> Fall Senior Citizen Luncheon, and placed at the Hicksville Community Parent Center, the Hicksville Public Library, and the Hicksville Community Center.

Included here is a summary of findings. Highlighted figures represent the majority of responses.

Respondent totals as of the 12-6-19 survey closing:

**Community: 228**

**Beta: 12**  
**Spanish: 3**  
**Total: 243**

**NOTES:**

1. For questions where the answer was optional, respondent totals are listed. If no total is listed, then all respondents listed above answered the question.
2. Where respondents could choose multiple answers, totals will not equal 100%.

**FINDINGS:**

**1. Are you a resident of the Hicksville School District and a . . . ?**

English:	Beta:	Spanish:
93% (212) Parent	41.7% (5) Parent	100% (3) Parent
4.8% (11) Student (MS/HS)	33.3% (4) Resident	
2.2% (5) Resident w/no student in HPS	25% (3) Staff	

**2. What age are you?**

English:	Beta:	Spanish:
48.2% (110) 41-50 yrs	58.3% (7) 41-50	66.7% (2) 41-50
30.3% (69) 31-40 yrs = 90.3%	25% (3) 61-70	33.3% (1) 31-40
11.8% (27) 51-60 yrs	16.7% (2) 51-60	
5.7% (13) student under 21 yrs		
2.2% (5) 61-70 yrs		
1.3% (3) 22-30 yrs		
0.4% (1) 81-90 yrs		

**3. If you are a parent of a current Pre-K to 12th grade student(s), please check all the district schools your child(ren) currently attend(s):** NOTE: Having students in multiple schools is possible:

English:	Beta:	Spanish:
(217 respondents)		
Burns: 6.5% (14)	16.7% (1)	(0)
Dutch: 7.8% (17)	16.7% (1)	33.3% (1)
East: 8.3% (18)	(0)	(0)
Fork: 6.9% (15)	16.7% (1)	(0)

Lee: 12% (26)	(0)	(0)
OCR: 11.1% (24)	16.7% (1)	(0)
Woodland: 6.9% (15)	(0)	(0)
MS: 50.2% (109)	16.7% (1)	33.3% (1)
HS: 33.2% (72)	16.7% (1)	.3% (1)

**4. If you are a parent of a current Pre-K - 12th grade student(s), what can your child(ren)'s school(s) do to improve its communications with you?**

English/Beta/Spanish combined (Top 10 answers – 203 respondents):

1. Less handouts/paper – email/text parents: 54 (text pref.; want more of both)
2. Nothing/doing well on communications: 31
3. NA: 12
4. Website is difficult to navigate/needs timely updates: 12
5. Create a digest of all major events coming up-deadlines/photos days, etc.): 8
6. Parent alert when child is having difficulty/failing: 7
7. Email/text immediately when something happens: 7 (priority info. first)
8. Send parents weekly emails: 7
9. Power School is difficult to track grades – add end-of-year grade summary/respond to questions promptly: 6
10. Likes receiving Robocalls: 5

**5. In general, what can Hicksville Public Schools do to improve its communications with the Hicksville community?**

English/Beta/Spanish combined (Top 10 answers – 178 respondents):

1. Email & text & phone (less paper): 36 (again, text preferred; text daily announcements)
2. Improve website/more user friendly/more frequent updates/post site map: 18
3. Nothing/good/great job: 17
4. Communication by social media: 11
5. More, open & timely communications (newspaper/social media/website): 10
6. NA/don't know: 9
7. Get out into the community!/more invites to events/involve civics: 8
8. More newsletters: 5
9. Create an app: 5
10. Publish plans on active SD projects; Project Management Template as to help digest and execute on communication of Projects. Status communication regularity/monthly bulletin: 4

**6. List three things you like about Hicksville Public Schools:**

English/Beta/Spanish combined (Top 15 answers – 190 respondents):

1. Teachers (excellent/caring/amazing/responsive/work ethic/passionate): 79
2. Academic program (selections; sequencing; rigor; quality; continuous improvement): 37
3. Diversity: 31
4. Caring, welcoming school community (small; traditions; culture): 29
5. Staff (pleasant/professional): 28
6. Facilities/maintenance/construction & updates/buildings & grounds: 26
7. Music program: 21
8. Security/student safety: 19
9. Clubs: 15
10. Good communications (calls; notes home; messaging): 14
11. Attention to students' needs (passion; commitment; concern; services): 13
12. Sports: 12
13. Principals: 11
14. Art program: 11
15. Administration/leadership/Superintendent: 9

**7. How do you most frequently access the internet (please select one)?**

English:	Beta:	Spanish:
Computer/laptop: 31.6% (72)	41.7% (5)	0% (0)
Smartphone/iPad/handheld device: 80.3% (183)	83.3% (10)	100% (3)
Other-than home computer: 7.5% (17)	0% (0)	0% (0)

**8. What sources do you use to obtain your general news and information? (check all\* that apply): \*NOTE: totals will be > 100%**

English:	Beta:	Spanish:
TV: 57.9% (132)	66.7% (8)	33% (1)
Radio: 21.1% (48)	16.7% (2)	0% (0)
Internet: 79.8% (182)	66.7% (8)	100% (3)
Newspaper/magazine: 18.9% (43)	58.3% (7)	0% (0)
Social media:		

60.5% (138)	41.7% (5)	66.7% (2)
Friends:		
38.6% (88)	33.3% (4)	0% (0)

**9. What sources of school district news do you most frequently use to obtain information? (check all\* that apply):** \*NOTE: totals will be > 100%

English:	Beta:	Spanish:
Website:		
61.4% (140)	91.7% (11)	66.7% (2)
Newsletters:		
38.2% (87)	41.7% (5)	33.3% (1)
PTA/SEPTA:		
42.1% (96)	66.7% (8)	0% (0)
Social media:		
43% (98)	41.7% (5)	0% (0)
Friends:		
33.8% (77)	16.7% (2)	33.1% (1)

Other: Child(ren) (4), Emails (3), 1 each: staff, cell texts, mail, Seesaw, flyers, called office

**10. What social media do you use? (check all\* that apply):** \*NOTE: totals will be > 100%

English:	Beta:	Spanish:
Facebook:		
80.7% (184)	75% (9)	100% (3)
Twitter:		
23.2% (53)	66.7% (8)	0% (0)
Instagram:		
48.2% (110)	50% (6)	66.7% (2)
Snapchat:		
14% (32)	0% (0)	0% (0)
YouTube:		
39% (89)	41.7% (5)	100% (3)
None:		
8.8% (20)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Other:		
4.4% (10)	0% (0)	0% (0)

Other: Whatsapp (5), Reddit (2), TikTok (2), RemindMe (2)

**11. When you need to confirm information you heard, what source do you most frequently use?** NOTE: totals will be > 100%

English:	Beta:	Spanish:
School/District Main Office:		
54.4% (124)	66.7% (8)	33.3% (1)
PTA/SEPTA:		
24.1% (55)	33.3% (4)	0% (0)
Friend:		
25.4% (58)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Internet:		
24.1% (55)	8.3% (1)	66.7% (2)
Social media:		
22.4% (51)	0% (0)	0% (0)
District/School website:		
61.4% (140)	33.3% (4)	66.7% (2)
Local Papers/news media:		
7.9% (18)	0% (0)	33.3% (1)
Trusted teacher/staff:		
0.4% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Other: 1 each: email, child, teacher		

**12. How often do you attend Board of Ed Meetings?**

English:	Beta:	Spanish:
(219 responses)	(11 responses)	
Attend all:		
2.7% (6)	54.5% (6)	0% (0)
2 or more per year:		
18.3% (40)	27.3% (3)	0% (0)
Only for Budget presentations:		
9.6% (21)	18.2% (2)	0% (0)
Never:		
69.4% (152)	0% (0)	0% (0)

**13. Did you vote in the May 2019 Board election and Budget vote?**

English:	Beta:	Spanish:
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Yes: 61.4% (140)	75% (9)	0% (0)
No: 38.6% (88)	25% (3)	0% (0)

**14. Would you like to learn more about the role and scope of the responsibilities of the Board of Education members?**

English: (223 respondents)	Beta:	Spanish:
Yes: 63.7% (142)	100% (12)	66.7% (2)
No: 36.3% (81)	0% (0)	33.3% (1)

**15. Have you ever contacted the Board or a Board member with a concern?**

English: (224 respondents)	Beta:	Spanish:
Yes: 21.4% (48)	58.3% (7)	0% (0)
No: 78.6% (176)	41.7% (5)	100% (3)

**16. Please explain how you feel the Board can more effectively communicate with our community?** English/Beta/Spanish combined (Top 15 answers – 142 respondents):

1. Periodic informational emails/texts to the community (include link to Agendas): 29
2. NA/don't know: 13
3. Board newsletters: 11
4. Hold meet and greet /coffee at events/get involved with the community/schools: 11
5. More notifications about when the board meetings are happening and what the topics will be: 11
6. Good the way things are: 9
7. Get BoE on social media: 8
8. Make BoE meetings earlier/shorter: 6
9. More transparency: 4
10. Live steam BoE meetings: 4
11. Forum/discussion page on website: 4
12. Post the minutes to the school website and email that this has been done: 4
13. Mailings: 4
14. Attend PTA meetings: 3
15. Don't know who is on the BoE/what they do/how to contact them: 3

**17. How often do you visit the district/school website?**

English: (225 respondents)	Beta: (7 respondents)	Spanish:
Once per day: 8.9% (20)	14.3% (1)	0% (0)
2 or more times a week: 33.3% (75)	42.9% (3)	66.7% (2)
Monthly: 49.3% (111)	42.9% (3)	0% (0)
Never: 8.4% (19)	0% (0)	33.3% (1)

### 18. How easy do you find the district/school website to navigate?

(1 = easy; 5 = difficult)

English:	Beta: (7 respondents)	Spanish:
1: 13.2% (30)	0% (0)	33.3% (1)
2: 18.4% (42)	0% (0)	66.7% (2)
3: 28.1% (64)	57.1% (4)	0% (0)
4: 25.9% (59)	42.9% (3)	0% (0)
5: 14.5% (33)	0% (0)	0% (0)

### 19. What can the district change to improve website navigability?

(English, Beta, Spanish combined - 141 responses):

1. Menus in alpha order/consistent across site/more user-friendly/simplify/fewer layers/clear tabs: 46
2. Nothing/it's better/improving: 23
3. There is outdated/missing information/broken links/get kicked back: 13
4. NA/don't know: 12
5. Add a better search function/make larger: 8
6. Not user-friendly: 8
7. Too many clicks: 8
8. Make teacher directory easy to find: 6
9. Timely Calendar/bulletins/content: 5
10. Larger school tabs/put school tabs across the top: 4

### 20. What do you most frequently search for when visiting the district/school website?

(English, Beta, Spanish combined - 186 responses):

1. Teacher/staff contacts/information: 57
2. Calendar: 49
3. Upcoming events/announcements: 48

4. PowerSchool (grades): 24
5. News (District/school/parent): 21
6. Athletics: 15
7. Homework: 14
8. Teacher/school/classroom web pages: 14
9. Clubs: 10
10. Menus: 9

**21. What additional feature(s) would you like to see added to the district/school website?**

(English, Beta, Spanish combined - 116 responses):

1. NA/don't know: 10
2. Nothing: 9
3. More photos/gallery/news: 9
4. More sports info./updates: 5
5. Make it easier to find calendar/lunch accounts/forms: 5
6. Add school district app: 4
7. Updated teacher web pages: 4
8. Make email directory easier to use: 4
9. More club info./photos: 3
10. List of resources & services w/links: 3
11. PTA Board contacts/schedules/info.: 3
12. Add FAQs page: 2

**22. Would you find an app of the district website for your mobile device more useful than accessing the district website from your phone?**

English:	Beta:	Spanish:
	(7 responses)	
Yes: 78.5% (179)	100% (7)	100% (3)
No: 21.5% (49)	0% (0)	0% (0)

**23. If so, what features would you want to see included (check all that apply):**

English:	Beta:	Spanish:
(201 responses)	(7 responses)	
Parent Portal: 82.6% (166)	100% (7)	100% (3)
Lunch menus: 59.2% (119)	57.1% (4)	100% (3)
Bus schedules: 44.8% (90)	42.9% (3)	100% (3)
Athletic info./schedules: 59.7% (120)	42.9% (3)	66.7% (2)
Latest news/announcements: 59.7% (120)	85.7% (6)	100% (3)

District Directory: 68.2% (137)	100% (7)	100% (3)
Extra Help Schedule: 68.2% (137)	14.3% (1)	100% (3)

Other: Meeting dates/times/locations (4); Club info. (4); extra-curricular (2); calendar (2); direct communication with teachers (2); 1 each: FAQs; PTA; teacher web pages; teacher pages w/homework assignments.

**24. If you answered "Other" to Question # 23, please explain:**

(English, Beta, Spanish combined - 34 responses):

1. Want Club/specials daily schedules/activities: 6
2. Want app (can't receive phone calls when at work) 3
3. PTA information: 2
4. Theater production times/costs on website: 2
5. Too many clicks: 1
6. More web accessibility on mobile device: 1
7. Talk directly to teachers: 1
8. Lunch account balances: 1
9. ScholarChip app (for funding): 1
10. Half-days/test days: 1
11. Access main calendar: 1
12. FAQs at each level: 1
13. School bus tracking app: 1
14. Teacher directory: 1
15. School-centered photo albums for entire year: 1
16. Calendar of events: 1

**25. How often do you communicate with your child(ren)'s school principal?**

English: (217 responses)	Beta: (6 responses)	Spanish:
Often: 18.9% (41)	50% (3)	0% (0)
3 or more times per year: 8.3% (18)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Once or twice per year: 29.5% (64)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Never: 43.3% (94)	50% (3)	100% (3)

**26. How often do you communicate with your child(ren)'s teachers?**

English: (218 responses)	Beta:	Spanish:
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Often: 42.2% (92)	50% (3)	0% (0)
Four or more times per year: 21.6% (47)	33.3% (2)	0% (0)
Rarely: 21.6% (47)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Only at P/Teacher Conferences: 12.4% (27)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Never: 2.3% (5)	16.7% (1)	100% (3)

**27. "Bulletin Board," the district's printed newsletter, is periodically mailed to homes. How informative do you find the district's newsletters?**

English: (222 responses)	Beta: (7 responses)	Spanish:
Very informative: 23.4% (52)	42.9% (3)	33.3% (1)
Moderately informative: 47.3% (105)	42.9% (3)	33.3% (1)
Not very informative: 13.5% (30)	14.3% (1)	33.3% (1)
I do not read the district's newsletter: 15.8% (35)	0% (0)	0% (0)

**28. How can the district improve its newsletter?**  
(English, Beta, Spanish combined - 89 responses):

1. Email it: 13
2. Publish more frequently (monthly/sooner – material is too dated): 12
3. Include more & shorter articles/detailed information/variety/academic focus/more pages: 11
4. Digital version: 9
5. NA: 9
6. It's good/OK: 6
7. More about what's going on in the schools (not just MS/HS): 6
8. I didn't even know about the newsletter/don't receive it: 4
9. Don't know: 4
10. Add a must-know/FAQs: 3

**29. Do you use the district's printed calendar sent to your home?**

English:	Beta: (7 responses)	Spanish:
Yes: 91.2% (208)	100% (7)	100% (3)
No: 8.8% (20)	0% (0)	0% (0)

**30: Would you find a printed calendar where each month was spread over two pages with larger daily boxes more useful than the current format of a single month on a single page?**

English:  
(220 responses)

Beta:  
(7 responses)

Spanish:

Yes: 31.8% (70)  
No: 68.2% (150)

28.6% (2)  
71.4% (5)

33.3% (1)  
66.7% (2)

**31: Would you also use a District e-Calendar?**

English:

Beta:  
(7 responses)

Spanish:

Yes: 74.1% (169)  
No: 25.9% (59)

100% (7)  
0% (0)

100% (7)  
0% (0)

**32. How often do you notice our students or our district in the news?**

English:  
(218 responses)

Beta:  
(7 responses)

Spanish:

Often: 25.7% (56)  
Hardly ever: 54.1% (118)  
Never: 20.2% (44)

28.6% (2)  
42.9% (3)  
28.6% (2)

0% (0)  
33.3% (1)  
66.7% (2)

**33. Do you subscribe to or do you regularly purchase a printed newspaper?**

English:  
(222 responses)

Beta:  
(7 responses)

Spanish:

Yes: 19.4% (43)  
No: 80.6% (179)

28.6% (2)  
71.4% (5)

0% (0)  
100% (3)

**34. If so, which one(s)?** (English, Beta, Spanish combined - 58 responses):

Hicksville News (Illustrated): 10  
Newsday: 32  
NY Times: 9  
Washington Post: 2  
Daily News: 2

Mid Island Times: 0

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## Appendix B: Hicksville Public School's Educational Leadership Survey



### Hicksville Public Schools 2019 Educational Leader Communications Survey

A Google forms survey was created by Hicksville Public School District's Public Information Department in December of 2019 following discussions by the District's Communications Advisory Committee (CAC). The goal of the survey was to uncover a range of information about the District's current school-to-home communications program. Findings from the survey will contribute to the development of a Comprehensive Communications Plan for Hicksville Public Schools in order to meet the Board of Education's Goal 5:

*To develop and implement a comprehensive Communications Plan which will strengthen relationships between all District schools and every stakeholder, enhance community pride, and further expand opportunities to welcome families into the schools by the close of the 2019-2020 school year, (1 year); with innovations continuing through the 2023-2024 school year (5 years).*

The HPS Principals' Survey consisted of 16 questions including multiple choice, Likert, and open-ended narrative options. It was introduced through an email request on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and a reminder was announced at the December 17<sup>th</sup> Cabinet meeting. The survey was open to the District's principals from December 2, 2019 through January 14, 2020. Respondents were asked to complete the survey only once and were assured their identities would be anonymous.

Included here is a summary of findings. Highlighted figures represent the majority of responses.

Respondent totals as of the 1-14-20 survey closing:

**Respondents = 8 of 9**

**NOTES:**

1. For questions where the answer was optional, respondent totals are listed. If no total is listed, then all respondents listed above (8) answered the question.
2. Where respondents could choose multiple answers, totals will not equal 100%.

**FINDINGS:**

**1. What school level are you?**

75% = elementary

12.5% = MS

12.5% = 12.5%

**2. How many years of service have you logged in the field of education?**

38 years = 1

33 years = 1

26 years = 2

23 years = 1

22 years = 2

18 years = 1

**3. Please rank the means of communication you use to share non-emergency news with your parents, from most frequent to least frequent:**

Most frequent (4 responses): Backpack flyer (50%)

Least frequent (1): email

**4. If you send paper backpack flyers home, would you prefer digital capabilities?**

Yes (6) = 75%

No (2) = 25%



**5. On average, how frequently do you communicate information to your parents?**

1. Once per week (4) = 50%
2. Two or three times per week (3) = 37.5%
3. Twice a month (1) = 12.5%

**6. On average, how frequently do you hear from parents?**

1. More than once per day (3) = 37.5%
2. Once per day (2) = 25%
3. (3-way tie) Two or three times per week (1); Once per week (1); Twice a month (1)
4. Once per month (0) = 0%

**7. On average, what is the nature of parents' correspondence with you?**

Most frequent (2-way tie): Requesting a meeting to discuss a specific issue (4) = 50%;  
Least frequent "Other" (4) = 50%

**8. If you answered "Other" for the previous question, please explain.**

1. Calls are non-stop on every topic imaginable!
2. To ask a question
3. Email
4. Monthly PTA meetings
5. To provide positive feedback
6. Myriad of things
7. Providing specific information about a child
8. Matter pertaining to parent contact are primarily due to private matters outside the scope of the choices above

**9. If parents are reaching out to you requesting information they cannot locate on our/your website, what are they most frequently looking for?**

(5 responses)

1. PowerSchool Questions/information (2)
2. More calls on things they need from us, students on/off bus etc. . .
3. Lunch information
4. Last year (18-19), parents expressed frustration navigating the website and expressed having trouble finding the information they needed quickly

**10. Does your school produce a regularly published newsletter/e-newsletter?**

No (7) = 87.5%

Yes (1) = 12.5%

**11. If your building does produce a newsletter/e-newsletter, how frequently do you publish?**

1. Weekly/monthly (1)

**12. On average, how frequently would you say you communicate to district office?**

1. Weekly (5)

2. Daily (2)

3. 3x per month

**13. On average, how frequently would you say you communicate building-to-building?**

1. Daily/regularly (3)

2. Monthly (2)

3. Several times per week

4. Weekly

5. Depends on the building

**14. As an educational leader, please explain your biggest communications challenge.**

1. (2-way tie) Parents reading what was sent to them (2); lack of current parent information/email information (2)

2. Accuracy of what I hear

3. Language barrier

4. Getting information after the community - BOE meeting results - not all emails replied to, if they are, no follow up to the original request

5. The ability to reach large groups of parents. Example bus issues

**15. How can the district better support your school-to-home communications?**

1. Use e-mail blast and the ROBO calls!

2. Robo calls in different languages

3. Email and text parents information

4. Robo call Training, Use of the Remind App or something similar

5. District facilitating the inputting of email information for parents

6. Robo calls - they were introduced - no follow through - email blasts - why don't we have these capabilities like other districts?

7. Note sure
8. Create a protocol where parents are required to submit their email addresses prior to gaining initial access to report card information or accessing essential web based information provided by the District. If this occurs we would have a valid email on file where we could communicate more efficiently and effectively with parents

**16. Have you or are you planning to invite a Board member to an event(s) at your school this school year?**

Yes (7) = 87.5%

No (1) = 12.5%

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## **Appendix C: Recommendations of the Communications Advisory Committee**



### **Hicksville Public Schools 2019 Community Communications Survey**

#### **Board of Education Goal 5**

*To develop and implement a comprehensive Communications Plan which will strengthen relationships between all District schools and every stakeholder, enhance community pride, and further expand opportunities to welcome families into the schools by the close of the 2019-2020 school year, (1 year); with innovations continuing through the 2023-2024 school year (5 years).*

#### **Communications Advisory Committee Recommendations**

**Considering the constraints of our personnel, time, and financial resources, what are our priorities?**

**SUMMARY**

**Respondents: 9 (of 14)**

Question 4: How can we improve **school-to-home** communications:  
(8 responses)

- Weekly reminders for parents to check emails: 3
- More texts and emails: 2
- App: 2
- Robust calendar of events in each school: 2
- Categorize subject line: (Academics/Grade/Planning; District; FYI) 2
- School newsletter: 1
- Consolidated emails: 1
- Robo calls: 1
- More photos of kids (no language barrier w/images): 1
- Email flyers on Twitter: 1
- Make sure parents know their child(ren)'s contact information (letter that is signed? Or email reply?): 1

5: How can we improve **District-to-community** communications:  
(8 responses)

- Meet and greets: 3
- Billboards/signage: 2
- FYI Flyers to orgs./Business/Gov. Reps.: 2
- Social media: 2
- Community-based events/outreach: 2
- Facebook: 1
- Texts/emails/Robo calls: 1
- Activate School Messenger texting: 1
- Newspapers: 1
- Website: 1
- Art shows @ Broadway Mall: 1
- Informational flyers for each school/grade: 1
- Announcements at Town Meetings: 1

6: How can we better share **positive feedback** about HPS?  
(9 responses)

- Social media: 3
- Website ticker news: 3
- Signage: 2
- Cross promotion @ events: 2
- More local news articles: 2
- Testimonials: 2
- Timely Twitter: 1
- Online papers: 1
- Quarterly Superintendent web messages: 1
- Monthly highlights: 1
- Principals push out two-sentence stories about teachers: 1
- Student Ambassadors: 1
- More photos: 1
- Newsletters to local businesses: 1
- Facebook: 1
- Develop Outreach Committee to raise community spirit: 1
- TV: 1
- Teacher bios: 1
- Program descriptions: 1

7- 11: Knowing what sources respondents use to gather information about HPS, how can we **optimize our communications**?  
(9 responses)

- App (user-friendly): 4
- Timely/informative website(s): 3
- Facebook: 2
- Address internal disconnects (such as Transportation delay notification): 1
- Tip line: 1
- Nip negative Moms FB concerns: 1 (utilize point person)
- Concise texts: 1
- Robo calls to cell (not home): 1
- Continue social media/Twitter: 1
- Consolidate information: 1

- Make sure website is mobile friendly: 1
- Digital newsletter: 1

12-16: How can we **raise the profile of the Board of Education** in our community?  
(7 responses)

- What Board does (timed to election/age-appropriate): 3
- More interaction with community (Chamber/Civics): 2
- More interaction with PTAs: 1
- Town Hall meetings: 1
- Written updates: 1
- e-newsletter: 1
- Be transparent: 1
- Celebrate accomplishments: 1
- Live stream meetings: 1
- Meet and greet: 1
- Keep Agendas current/easy to find on website: 1
- Include one topic monthly allowing social media feedback: 1

17-24: Knowing what respondents want from our **website and an app**, how do we proceed to address their concerns and requests?  
(7 responses)

- More local/Nassau news inclusion: 4
- Parent check email reminder: 1
- Continue what's been started: 1
- Text information about upcoming events/announcements: 1
- Staff development/training: 1
- Add school tabs at top of website:
- Calendar: 1
- Incorporate respondents' ideas: 1
- Twitter survey: 1
- Add a Suggestion Box on web/app: 1
- Point-of-contact person for Q&A: 1
- Update website/fix broken links: 1
- Conduct Periodic surveys: 1

25 & 26: What can we do to encourage **more parent-to-teacher/principal** interaction?  
(6 responses)

- Quarterly/weekly email messages from each school: 2
- More classroom photos: 1
- Face-to-face meetings: 1
- Meet & greet: 1
- Open events: 1
- Coffee/snack hours: 1
- Home visits: 1
- Meal with the Principal: 1
- Parent-to-teacher emails (same day response): 1
- Conduct HMS and HHS parent-teacher conferences: 1

27 & 28: Knowing what our respondents want in a **District newsletter**, how can we better utilize the newsletter format?

(7 responses)

- Go digital/email it: 6
- Add FAQs/did you know: 2
- Updates from each school: 2
- More alum news: 2
- Monthly (not quarterly): 1
- Giving back section: 1
- Upcoming events: 1
- Key facts (while you drink your coffee): 1

29-31: Do we need to make any significant changes to our annual District Calendar?  
(7 responses)

- Nothing: 3
- e-Calendar: 1
- More photos and highlights: 1
- Emphasize new logo/motto: 1
- Monthly Calendar sheets should be separate on the website: 1
- Put meeting dates on page one: 1
- Add student art work: 1
- Keep lists of Committee meetings: 1

32-34: How much time and effort should be dedicated to providing information to the **print media?**  
(7 responses)

- **Work/subscribe to local print papers: 3**
- **More emphasis on e-newsletters/e-backpack: 2**
- More digital: 1
- Emphasize go green: 1
- OTHER: Very helpful guidepost: 1; Place on each school's websites for fundraisers by Clubs, PTAs, Student Councils, Sports: 1; Parent teacher Conferences at Els should coincide with report cards: 1; Special area teachers at Els should have a comment section: 1; ScholarChip app: 1; Move to 21<sup>st</sup> century: 1; Continue to work with local legislators: 1; Freshen/clean HHS and HMS; exteriors: 1; Set up educational websites: 1

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#### **Appendix D: Motto Development Teams' Submissions**



#### **Hicksville Public Schools Student Motto Submissions**

##### Burns:

Advisers: Katie Alvino; Dawn Homatas  
Student Council President: Erijah Britto; VP: Katerina Fragopoulos

- **Engaging Minds and Hearts in a Caring Community**
- **Our Diversity is Our Strength**
- **Inspiring Students Day by Day**

##### Dutch:

Adviser: Janine Rossi  
Student Council President; VP: N/A



- **Be Smart, Be Kind, Be Extraordinary**
- **Hicksville – A Place to Learn and Succeed**
- **Be Brave, Be Caring, Be Kind**

#### East:

Advisers: Pam Johnson, Mary Shurley, Maria Mezzanotte, Denise Woods  
Student Council President: Olivia MacFarland; VP: Astrid Flores

- **Learning with Pride**
- **Dreams are our Future**
- **Learning is our Superpower**

#### Fork:

Advisers: Site Base Team  
Student representatives: Riley Masterson, Ethan Unger, Markos Philippou

- **Touch the Heart and the Head will Follow**
- **Hicksville is Where the Heart is**
- **Diversity is our Unity!**

#### High School:

Adviser: Cathy Temps  
Student Council President: Steven Goubran; VP: Roman Charan

- **We enter to learn and leave to achieve**
- **Teaching students, building communities, inspiring diversity**
- **Pride, Respect, Integrity, Discipline, Excellence**

#### Lee:

Advisers: Christina Marconi, Kristine McAllister, Maureen McMorrow  
Student Council President/VP: N/A

- **East or West, Hicksville District is the Best**
- **All People Big and Small, Hicksville is for All**
- **Our Quest is to be the Best**

#### Middle School:

Adviser: Janice Fitzgerald

Student Council President: Jack Beaudette; Matthew Kilfeather

- **Sparking the Flame for the Future**
- **Discovering Potential, Achieving Success**
- **Developing Minds, Soaring Imaginations**

OCR:

Adviser:

Student Council President: Lincoln Guida; VP: Arion Gjoni

- **Caring, Creative, Community**
- **Smart from the Start**
- **Cool to be Kind**

Woodland:

Advisers: Ms. Cervantes; Sue Simon

Student Council President: Krishing Gupta; VP: Mujhda Azimi

- **The Future Heroes of Tomorrow**
- **United in Diversity**
- **The Hope of Tomorrow Begins Here**

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**Appendix E: Pre-Communications Protocol** (creates two palm cards)



### ***Pre-Communications Protocol***

**All parent and community questions should be answered within 24 hours.**

In order to facilitate expediency and consistent practice in all non-emergency communications, please ask yourself the questions below.

**1. Who needs to know?**

Does this information impact building and/or student/staff safety and security? If so, call 911 & follow emergency protocols.

-----  
If a non-emergency, how broadly distributed should this information be? Will it affect students, parents, teachers/staff, the community? Will it affect subsequent planned events and deadlines?

**2. What do they need to know?**

What information is the most pertinent? Be clear and concise with all messages. Stay away from including too many inconsequential details.

**3. Who is going to tell them?**

Who should be the source? Is this sensitive information restricted by FERPA?

**4. How is the information delivered?**

What are the best avenues of communication to use? Broadcast Messaging? Social media? Website? Parent Robocall/eBlast/Text? Newsletter? Press release? Video? All of the above? Who can help you in this communication? District? PTA? PIO? Local Organizations?

**When acting on new information, your decisions are dependent on the specific issue – is this an emergency? If so, follow emergency protocols without delay.**

**Post-Communications Debrief:** As straightforward as the above questions are, after a situation has happened, communication problems that occurred can usually be attributed to a missed step in the protocol. It's important to reflect on the situation to understand why a communication breakdown happened in order to prevent the same situation in the future.



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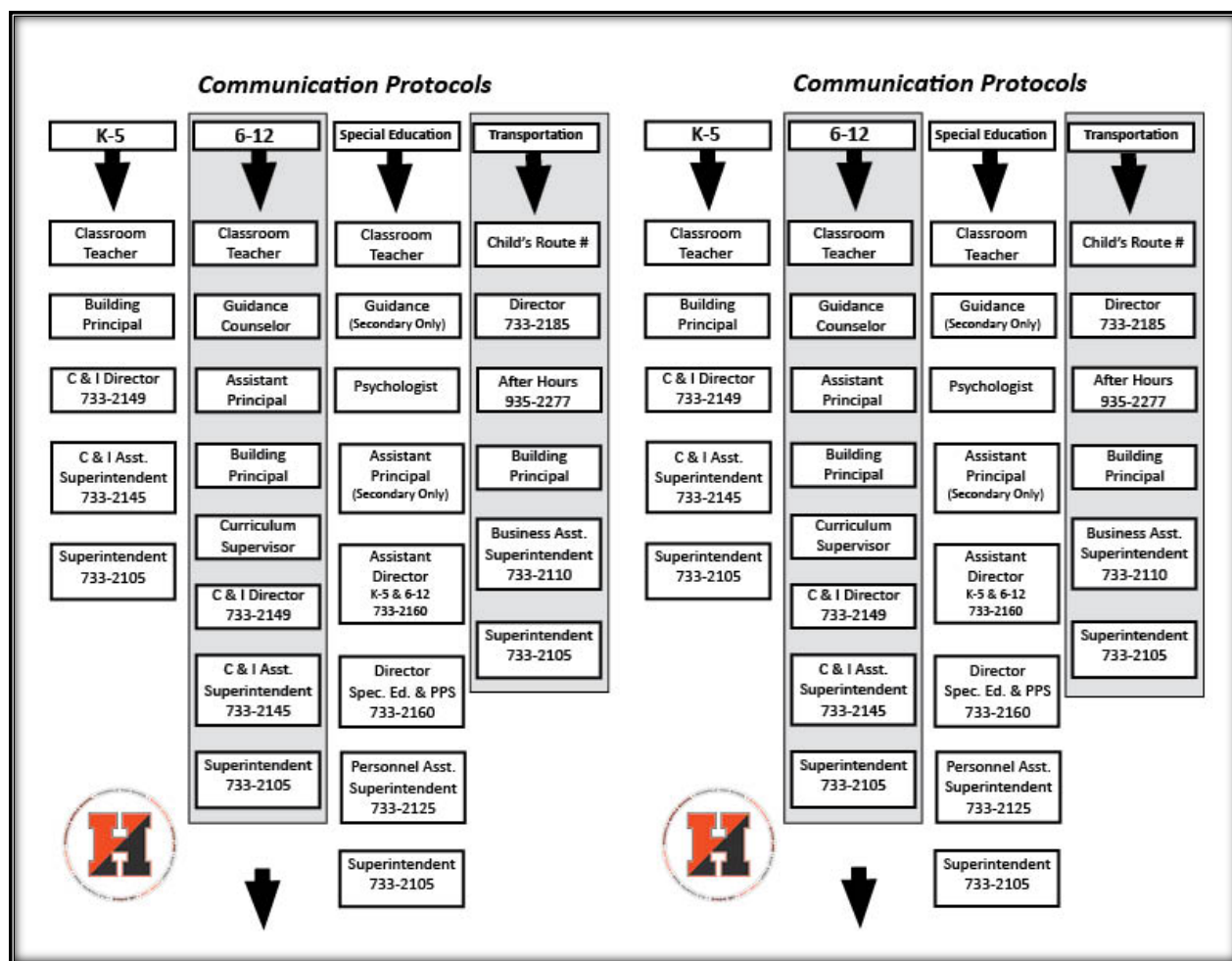
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## Appendix F: External Communications to the Media (creates two palm cards)



### **External Communications to Media**

#### **Requesting Media Coverage:**

Sharing important news and stories about events, initiatives, and happenings in our school district is critical to maintaining positive school community relations. If you would like to publicize

an upcoming event or share an interesting story, please utilize the flow chart on the reverse side of this card.

#### **News Submissions:**

For news submissions, please utilize the "Submit a Story" e-form under the "Public Information" Department drop-down on the District website. All print media run on production schedules. Any time-sensitive materials for print media should be prepared and submitted well in advance. Editors cannot guarantee publication but generally do publish all submissions for the District at no cost.

#### **Print Media Outlets:**

Hicksville News (Anton Media Group)  
Mid-Island Times (Meg Morgan Norris)  
Newsday (Newsday Media)

#### **Online Only:**

Patch (Hale Global)

#### **Television/Radio Coverage:**

The District can facilitate coverage to the major Long Island and Metro area television or radio stations as deemed appropriate to the story. Contact the Office of Public Information with ideas and requests.

**NOTE:** While carrying out your professional duties, please do not speak to any member of the press directly. Refer any requests for comment to your immediate supervisor and to the Department of Public Information: 733-2189.



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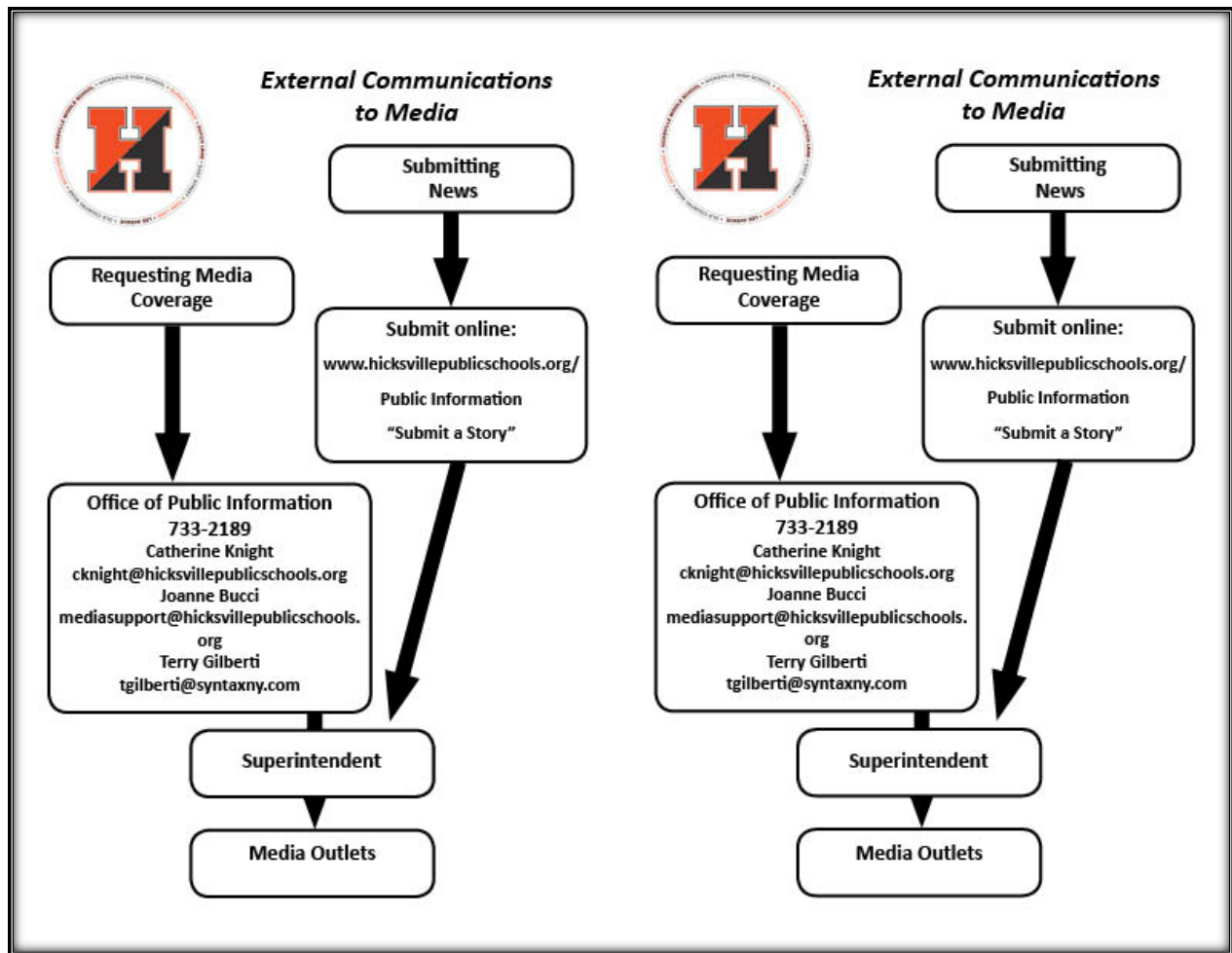
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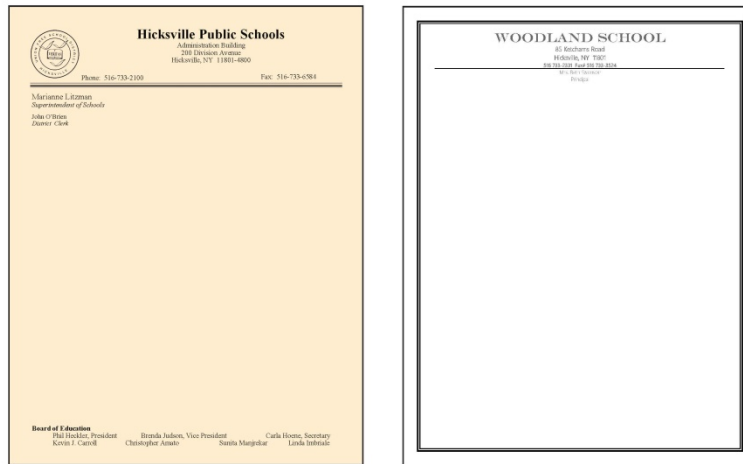


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## Appendix G: Current and Updated Graphics

## BRANDING

current pieces for 2019/2020



Letterhead

## BRANDING

current pieces for 2019/2020



Collateral Material - Syntax



## BRANDING

current pieces for 2019/2020



Printed Calendar - Syntax

## BRANDING

current pieces for 2019/2020



Guide & Handbook Covers - Internal













current pieces for 2019/2020

[illegible][illegible]

## District Resources - Internal

current pieces for 2019/2020

The screenshot shows the Hicksville Public Schools website. At the top is the school district logo and name. Below the header is a navigation menu with links like Home, About Us, Academics, and more. The main content area displays the "Emergency Release/Dismissal Request" form. The form includes a title, a description of the request, and a section for "Requester Information" with fields for Name, Email, and Phone. There is also a section for "Request Details" with a dropdown for "Reason for Request" and a text area for "Comments". A "Submit" button is at the bottom of the form.

	<p><b>Hicksville Public Schools</b> Notification of Parent/Guardian</p>	<p>DATE: 11/20/2018 SCHOOL: Hicksville TEACHER: Mrs. [Name] STUDENT: [Name]</p>
		<p>STUDENT'S GRADE: 4th</p>
<p><b>NOTIFICATIONS</b></p> <p>[Text about student progress and upcoming events]</p>		<p>STUDENT'S GRADE: 4th</p>
<p>[Text about student progress and upcoming events]</p>		<p>STUDENT'S GRADE: 4th</p>
<p>[Text about student progress and upcoming events]</p>		<p>STUDENT'S GRADE: 4th</p>
<p>[Text about student progress and upcoming events]</p>		<p>STUDENT'S GRADE: 4th</p>
<p>[Text about student progress and upcoming events]</p>		<p>STUDENT'S GRADE: 4th</p>
<p>[Text about student progress and upcoming events]</p>		<p>STUDENT'S GRADE: 4th</p>
<p>[Text about student progress and upcoming events]</p>		<p>STUDENT'S GRADE: 4th</p>

**Hicksville Public Schools**  
Mobile App Download Guide

**MOBILE APP**

The Hicksville Public School District is excited to introduce our mobile app. The app will allow you to stay up to date on your students' school progress, official announcements and more within any app store or on the go. For more information, please visit the link below for the QR code (located in the Group Box) from your device screen.

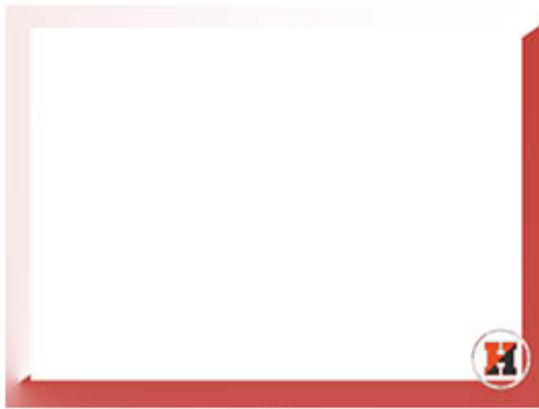
## Instructional Guides - Internal

current pieces for 2019/2020



.....

*HPS Custom PowerPoint Templates*



#1



#2



#3



#4



#5



#6

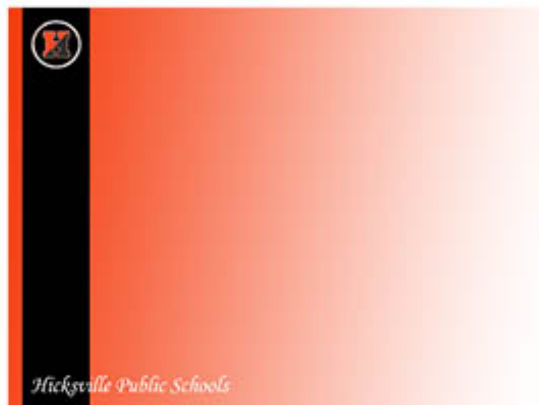
### *HPS Custom PowerPoint Templates*



#7



#8



#9

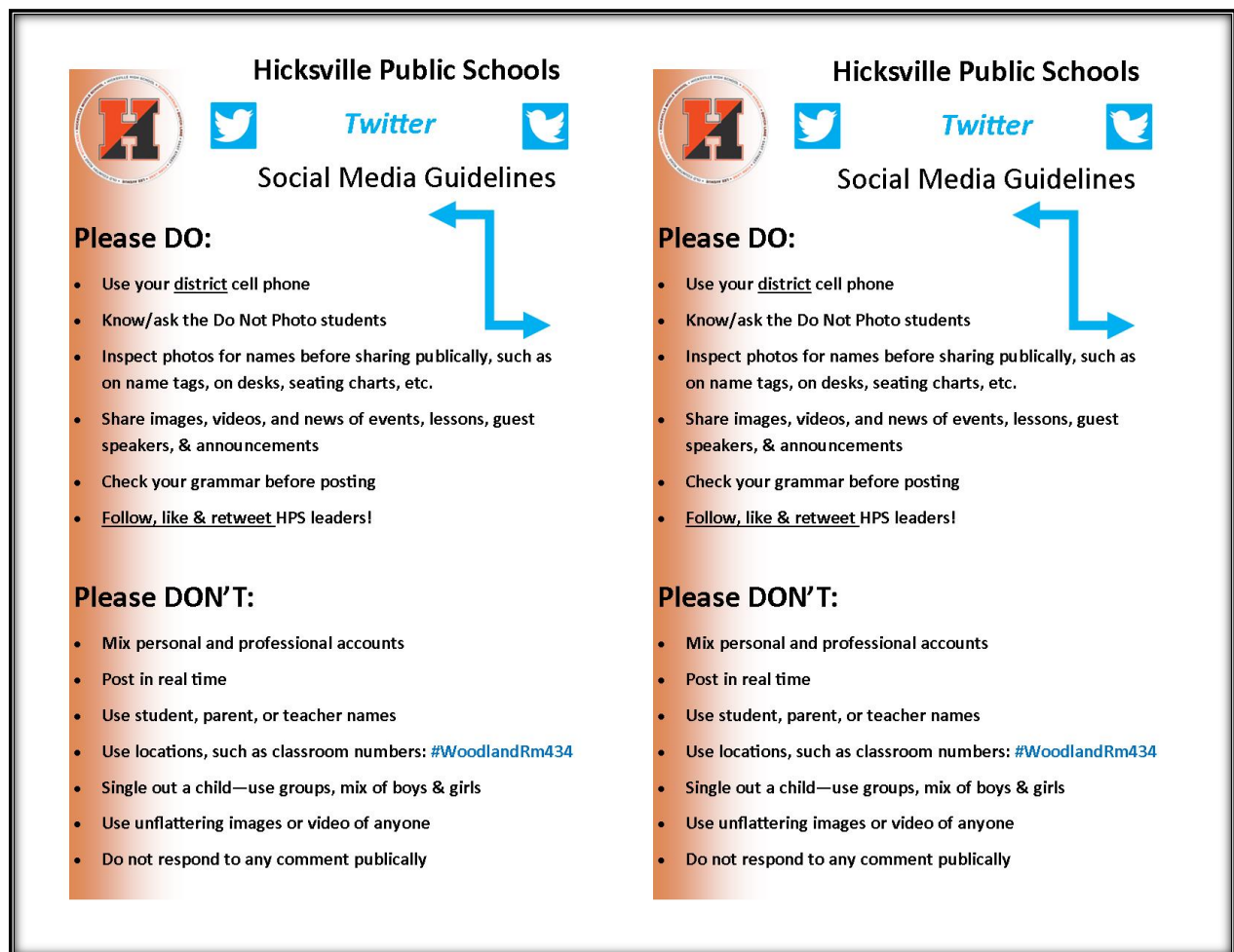


#10

Ten new templates will be created as soon as the Board of Education approves the District's new motto.

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## Appendix I: Social Media Guidelines - Twitter Dos & Don'ts (creates two palm cards)



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## Appendix J: New Users' Guide to Twitter (creates two palm cards)



## Getting started on Twitter

Why Twitter? Twitter is a global social network of 126 million users. It is a micro-blog that gives educators the option to connect with colleagues, parents, students, and community members.

### Twitter:

- Is easy to understand and control.
- Lends itself to short passages (280 characters, including spaces).
- Is designed to capture and share messages, images and videos (up to 2 mins.) taken with your smartphone and uploaded to your district computer.
- Allows you to delete a Tweet after you've posted it (but not edit).
- Minimizes comments by compartmentalizing them in the talk "bubble" (lower left) of the Tweet.
- Allows you to build a "timeline" of positive messages documenting the great things that are going on at your school and in your classroom. Even if you Tweet once or twice a week, it takes no time at all to build a positive timeline of your school/content area.
- Takes seconds to post important news, announcements and information. Twitter is a communication tool that fits well into our busy lives for both users and readers.
- Allows you to share articles from your favorite educational journals with your followers (parents, students, colleagues, community members), add links to news stories or video links, or retweet information posted by others.

Please follow our HPS leaders who are already on Twitter, and "like" (heart icon) and retweet (circling arrows icon) to build positive feedback:

Marianne Litzman: @HPSSuperintend1  
 Susan Guiliano: @susanguiliano  
 Lisa Estrada: @EnlHps  
 Ben Tangney: APHMS1  
 Dr. John Comer: @BurnsHps  
 Janine Rossi: @HDutchlane  
 Laura McConnell: @HpsOcr  
 Jean-Marie Serra: @EastHps  
 Beth Swanson: @ WoodlandHPS  
 Stephanie Stam: @hps\_lee

## How to set up your account:

1. If you already have a Twitter account, you will need to create a new one that you use only for professional purposes. Using your district computer, and not your personal Smartphone is the best way to do this.
2. To begin, go to: [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com) on your district computer.
3. Click "Sign up."
4. Complete the name, phone (use your district email instead) and birthday fields—you don't need to use your actual name, you can use a descriptive name such as "WoodlandKinders." Use your district email account instead of your phone number. You can make up a birthday if you'd like—this information does not show anywhere, Twitter just sends you a birthday greeting on your birthday. After each step, click the "Next" button.
5. Undick the "Personalized ads" and the "Track where you see, ..."
6. Click "Sign Up"
7. Twitter will email you a verification code that you will need to enter to activate your account. Twitter will also ask you for a password. Save this to a safe spot.
8. A few more pop-ups may appear—just click "Skip for now" - you can always revisit your profile once your account is active. You can edit your profile at any time, add or change your photo (your profile photo can be of your classroom, school, or whatever you'd like) or you can choose to use no photo at all.
9. Once your Twitter account becomes active, A new page will pop up that only you, as the account administrator, can see and have control over. Your Twitter user name will appear under your account name on your dashboard—it will begin with "@" - this is the way people can find and "Follow" you. They only need to have a Twitter account and type in your user name, e.g., "@WoodlandHPS," in the "Search" bar to find you.
10. To begin Tweeting, just begin typing in the space "What's happening?" space. You can add a photo or video (up to 2 mins.) to your Tweet using the image icon below your Tweet.
11. When you've checked your spelling and are happy with your Tweet, just click the blue "Tweet" button to post to your timeline.
12. Once you have posted a Tweet, you have access to "Delete," "pin" (fix one Tweet to appear as your top Tweet to all followers—"unpin" will allow the Tweet to resume its place in your timeline) and analytics. These options are accessed by clicking the small down arrow that appears on the upper right corner of your Tweet.
13. That's it—you're off and running! Your Tweets will scroll on your feed with the most recent on top. Kindly remember the district's "Dos and Don'ts" of social media as you begin your Twitter timeline. Please know that ads and other content may appear on your feed—this is how Twitter funds itself - not to worry, just ignore these and continue posting your content. Tweets from colleagues or district administrators you "Follow" will also appear on your timeline. If you have any questions, please email Dr. Catherine Knight, Public Information Consultant: [cknight@hicksvillepublicschools.org](mailto:cknight@hicksvillepublicschools.org).

## 14. Happy Tweeting!

## Appendix K: Sample Press Release Log

**\*= Syntax ; \*\* = all releases are published as appropriate on the district and school websites.**

### 2019-2020:

### Published\*\*

9/6 SCD	9/12 (MI Times)
9/6: Opening Day	9/12 (MIT)
9/6 Opening Day*	
9/10: Backpacks	9/19 (MIT)
9/11 Nat'l Merit Scholarship*	9/11 (Patch); 9/19 (MIT)
9/ Elementary Open Houses	9/19 (MIT)
9/23 Coverage of 9/11*	9/23 (Patch); 9/26 (MIT)
9/30 All-State*	9/30 (Patch); 10/11 (MIT)
10/2: Senior Luncheon	10/3 & 10/10 (MIT)
10/? Pep Rally for Kindness – Dutch Lane*	10/3 (MIT)
10/10: MS Mindful Quilt	

10/11: HS Pep Rally	10/24 (MIT)
10/? Hispanic Heritage*	10/3 (MIT)
10/? Woodland Reading to Dogs*	
10/21: Parent Center	10/24 (MIT)
10/21: Twitter	10/23 (Patch); 10/25 (MIT); Hicksville News (12/3)
10/? HHS Safe Halloween*	11/7 (MIT)
10/? HHS Marching Band 3 <sup>rd</sup> *	11/7 (MIT)
11/4 HPS Communications Survey Launch	11/7 (MIT)
<u>11/4 HHS's Top Ten Class of 2020</u>	11/7 (MIT)
11/4 Board of Ed Recognition*	11/14 (MIT)
11/4 HPS NMS Semifinalists*	11/11 (MIT)
11/8 Homecoming*	11/8 & 11/11 (HN)
11/13 Senior Citizen's Luncheon*	11/21 (MIT)
11/13 Lee Ave Author Visit*	10/24 (MIT)
11/18 Fire Poster Winners*	11/18 Patch
11/19 HHS Robotics	11/21 (MIT)
11/19 HMS World Kindness*	11/21 (MIT)
11/26 Nursing Program	12/3 (HN)
<u>11/26 Kiwanis/HPS Turkeys</u>	12/5 (MIT)
12/3 Telling Our Story: Burns	12/19 (MIT)
12/3 Woodland Giving*	12/3 (HN); 12/12 (MIT)
12/5 Alumni Day*	12/13 (MIT)
12/12 HPS Holiday Card*	12/20 (MIT)
12/15 MS Wearable Electronics*	12/19 (MIT); 12/17 (HN)
12/20 HS Moot Court*	12/20 (MIT)
12/17 Rich Hoffman @ HMS	
12/17 Aquatic Center Groundbreaking	12/26 (MIT)
12/17 Parent Center	12/26 (MIT)
<u>1/3 HMS Patriot Pen*</u>	1/14 (HN); 1/23 (MIT)
1/7 Telling Our Story: Dutch Lane	2/4 (HN)
1/14 Regeneron*	1/16 (MIT)
1/15 HMS School Store	12/27 (HN); 1/15 (HN)
1/22 Telling Our Story East Street	1/30 (MIT); 2/17 (HN)
1/22 HHS Voice of Democracy*	2/6 (MIT)
1/23 Olweus Kickoff (Dutch@ BOE)*	2/6 (MIT); 2/5 Patch
1/27 Dutch Coding*	1/27 (HN)
2/3 All-County -HS*	2/6 (MIT)
2/3 Telling Our Story – Fork Lane	2/6 (MIT)
<u>2/6 HHS Essay Contest Winner*</u>	2/6 (MIT)
2/11 Olweus Kickoff – District Coverage	2/20 (MIT); 2/13 Patch
2/13 HHS Model UN*	2/13 (MIT)
2/18 HHS Science Olympiad	2/27 (MIT)
2/18 Nat'l Choral Comp. SemiFinalists*	2/27 (MIT)
2/18 LISFA Chamber Ensemble*	2/27 (MIT)
2/19 HHS Wrestling????	2/19 (MIT)
2/25 Lisa Estrada Award*	3/5 (MIT)
2/26 HHS Art Ex. @ IKEA*	3/5 (MIT)
3/4 HHS Positive Smiles*	

3/3 Coronavirus

3/3 Patch

3/4 HHS Inside Albany\*

3/5 100<sup>th</sup> Day @ Lee\*

3/6 HMS FLL

[March 18, 2020 – Schools Close]

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## Appendix N: Timeline for Implementation

Year	Initiative	Status
2019-2020	Website reorganization; design; in compliant	Complete/ongoing
	App	Complete
	Broadcast Messaging	Complete
	Health & Safety Campaign	Complete/ongoing
	Social Media (Twitter/Instagram)	Complete/ongoing
	District Video Channel	Complete
	Branding	In Progress
	Community Communications Survey	Complete
	Building Leadership Survey	Complete
	Community Outreach	Ongoing
	Media Relations	Ongoing
	Press releases	Ongoing
	Telling Our Story	In Progress
	District Communication Plan	In Progress
	Communications Advisory Committee	Ongoing
	Health & Safety Campaign – Be a Hicksville Superhero	Complete/ongoing
	Academic Achievement	Complete
	Call to Action	Complete
	Learning Reimagined	Complete
	Press releases	Ongoing
2020-2021	Media Relations	Ongoing
	Parent Educational Plan Surveys (2)	Complete
	COVID-19 Parent Handbook	Complete
	COVID-19 Staff Handbook	Complete
	District Calendar & Parent	Complete



	Guide – District-owned; interactive; compliant	
	Telling Our Story	Complete
	District Communication Plan	Complete/ongoing
	Communications Advisory Committee; Book Circle	Ongoing
<b>2021-2022</b>	Launch In-district Newsletters/e-Newsletters	
	Community Communications Survey	
<b>2022-2023</b>	Community Communications Survey	
<b>2023-2024</b>	Community Communications Survey	