

# Superintendent / Board of Education Communication Plan

Madison Metropolitan School District  
April 15, 2010 – Revised  
September 27, 2010 - Proposed

## AREAS OF NEED

1. Present information to the Board that is timely, accurate, understandable and sufficient.
2. Provide the Board with information needed for the Board to make decisions and carry out its responsibilities.
3. Respond to Board member requests in an accurate, thorough and timely manner.

## OBJECTIVE

Develop and implement a sustainable system for improving and demonstrating effective communication with the Board of Education.

Provide the Board with information that is deliberative in its context and content such that the Board can carry out its essential responsibilities.

## ACTION PLANS

1. Providing information to the Board of Education in a useful, easy-to-understand, accurate and complete format to make decisions and carry out its responsibilities.

### ***Recommendation:***

Implement a standard format for reports to the Board of Education (see Appendix A).

Information presented to the Board must take into consideration what issues are critical to Board knowledge. Reports should present alternative recommendations with rationale, as needed.

Provide financial reports electronically and continue the two-page summary.

With data presentations, reports should focus on the analysis of the data.

Proposed policy changes will be marked with underlining (additions) and strike out (deletions).

2. Ensuring the Board of Education is updated on announcements and projects before information is known/released by the community and media.

***Recommendations:***

- ✓ An annual retreat is scheduled with the Board of Education that defines Board priorities or goals for the year.
- ✓ A legislative strategy and communication plan will be set bi-annually by both the Board of Education and the administration to effectively advocate on behalf of the district.
- ✓ E-mails will be sent to the Board of Education providing information about upcoming media stories and crisis related information.
- ✓ ~~E-mails and~~ The Weekly Update will be used to inform the Board of Education about issues and projects within and involving the District. Separate e-mails will be used for information requests that have indicated priority/urgency for response.

3. Ensuring all Board of Education members receive the same information in response to questions.

***Recommendation:***

Board members making requests via e-mail or in written form should blind-copy all Board members, allowing the full Board to understand what is being requested. Responses to informational requests made by individual Board members will be provided to all Board members and the Executive Assistant to the Board.

4. Providing information to the Board of Education in a timely manner (Weekly Update versus other means of communication).

***Recommendation:***

The Weekly Update will be continued as the tool to provide all Board members information about issues, ~~and~~ projects occurring within the District, and to respond to non-urgent questions. E-mail updates will also be used to provide more time-sensitive information (for example, police reports, lock-downs, or other crisis situations) to the Board of Education.

When possible, attachments to The Weekly Update will be sent electronically.

When possible, Board members making informational requests should prioritize the requests, allowing the administration to better understand the urgency of various requests (1 = information needed for a committee/board meeting or information needed within the week if not for a committee/board meeting; 2 = information needed within 7-10 days; 3 = information needed 10-14 days).

In addition, the Board of Education will determine the type of information received for specific circumstances and decisions by establishing categories for informational requests.

Information requests by Board members may be categorized as follows:

- ✓ **Anticipated Reports** on program development or district progress monitoring (Strategic Plan updates, quarterly financial reports, Equity report);
- ✓ **Central to Decision-Making** (information that is context oriented, background information, budget trends, history of topic);
- ✓ **Community/District Input** (surveys, city and other governmental decisions, advocacy group correspondence);
- ✓ **Confidential Information** (contract, legal or personnel);

- ✓ **Progress Reports** on predetermined goals (Math Task Force, Technology Plan update, TAG updates).

5. Determining ways Board of Education members can receive quick answers to questions.

***Recommendation:***

Board members having the need for quick answers for information not requiring research, data collection, or a more lengthy written response should directly e-mail the requests to the involved administrator with a copy of the e-mail request sent to the Superintendent and the Executive Assistant to the Board.

6. Developing timely follow-through on information commitments made to the Board of Education in response to board member requests made during formal meetings of the Board.

***Recommendations:***

- ✓ Immediately following Board meetings, a summary will be made of follow-up requests from Board members.
- ✓ These requests will be discussed by the Superintendent and lead administrators at a debriefing meeting.
- ✓ The list of follow-up requests will be sent to the Board and the Executive Assistant to the Board with assignments and timelines to complete the request.
- ✓ Requests for information will be completed by the designated administrator and sent to the Superintendent and to the Board's Executive Assistant.
- ✓ Following review, the response(s) will be sent to the full Board.

## **BOE Presentation Format**

### **Revised 9/22/10**

This document is intended to provide support to individuals who are preparing presentations for the Board of Education. It will create greater consistency in the information provided and ensure that the BOE has both a succinct and brief summary of the issue as well as detailed, in depth information. This format will consistently be used in BOE presentations.

#### **I. Introduction**

**A. Title or topic/Reason for report or presentation**

Provide the title and/or a one sentence description of the topic being addressed and/or what is being proposed. Explain why the report or presentation is being made. If possible reference specific board meeting date and actual language used in the request.

**B. Presenter or contact person for the presentation**

List the name of the person(s) who is(are) making the presentation and the administrator responsible. Also list other staff involved in the project.

**C. Background information**

Summarize information about the history of the topic in the MMSD and any background information needed by the BOE to understand the current context and purpose of the presentation.

**D. Describe the action requested of the BOE**

For example, is the purpose of the presentation to obtain formal approval of a recommendation, to obtain input that will help to shape an approach or recommendation, or to provide information? A time frame should be included here.

#### **II. Summary of Current Information**

**A. Provide a brief synthesis of the topic**

Write a brief summary of each key component of the presentation. In the Math Task Force example attached, there is a synthesis of progress organized around each recommendation from the report. In the Reading Recovery example, there is a bulleted list synthesizing several implementation models. In the H1N1 report, each aspect of the district's response plan is highlighted. Use bulleted lists to break up longer passages of narrative text.

**B. Clearly label any recommendations**

When recommendations are advanced, clearly link them to the information provided. **Also link an alternative recommendation(s) when identified.**

**C. Link each element summarized to supporting detail**

If in depth material is attached, consider making a reference to it within the summary document. In the H1N1 example, explicit reference is made to documents attached.

**III. Implications**

**A. Budget**

State how the initiative is/will be funded and any impact on future budget planning. Provide the total cost of the project by funding source.

**B. Strategic Plan**

Make a link to district priorities as described in MMSD's Strategic Plan

**C. Equity Plan**

Make a link to MMSD/Equity Plan.

**D. Implications for other aspects of the organization**

Describe the impact of the initiative on staff or other departments or divisions. Does the initiative dovetail with other work? If so, what are the links?

**IV. Supporting documentation**