



NSPRA Communications Audit Fact Sheet

National School Public Relations Association Communications Audit

For Robbinsdale Area Schools
September 29, 2005

Goal:

To evaluate and make recommendations for improvement of district-wide communications.

Research:

Nearly 200 people participated in 19 focus groups in May 2005 to share opinions with experienced auditors about Robbinsdale Area Schools. Recent district and school publications were also evaluated.

Report Key Messages:

1. **Solid, strong district.** Overall Robbinsdale Area Schools is seen as a solid, strong district that is praised for the variety of programs and opportunities it offers especially in the pursuit of academic excellence and fine arts.
2. **One clear voice.** Focus group participants felt communication should be clear about how specific strategies are tied to the district's vision, mission and goals so that all communities are able to "speak with one clear voice."
3. **Marketing and customer service.** With increased competition, marketing will become increasingly important to the future of Robbinsdale Area Schools, including components such as customer service, branding and identification of audiences.

Findings:

- Solid, strong school system
- Although positive, image is changing
- Diversity presents challenges, strengths
- Responsive, caring staff
- Rely on "word of mouth" communication
- Establish communication procedures
- Reorganization process well-intentioned but inconsistent
- Standardize communication practices

Recommendations:

1. Develop a strategic communications plan
2. Develop a clear, consistent message
3. Provide rationale for decisions
4. Use branding and marketing
5. Communicate systematically
6. Improve employee communication
7. Emphasize employees as "ambassadors"
8. Create a key communicators network
9. Involve parents/community
10. Improve communication with minorities
11. Guidelines for e-mail/voice mail
12. Communications training for staff
13. Refine public engagement process
14. Make leadership visible
15. Involve the business community
16. Use video more strategically
17. Communications advisory council

Next Steps:

Set a process to determine priorities and draft a 3-5 year strategic communications plan.

More information:

The full NSPRA Communications Audit Report, including notes taken directly from focus group meetings, can be found on-line at www.rdale.k12.mn.us.