

Montgomery County Public Schools Office of Communications

Background

The Office of Communications is responsible for coordinating systemwide internal and external communications aligned with the MCPS strategic plan. The office supports schools, students, and staff; supports school system central offices and business operations; and informs stakeholders, including the public, about the school system. The office includes two units: the Department of Public Information and Web Services and the MCPS Television unit.

Coordinating Systemwide Internal and External Communications

Two-way communication is implemented using Web, print, video/TV, email, phone, and face-to-face interactions in multiple languages to 22,000 employees, 145,000 students, 97,000 families, and almost 1 million county residents, with an emphasis on regular customer feedback.

- Publish weekly staff bulletin in web format
- Administer the MCPS Web with 200 school sites and 175 office sites
- Handle emergency communications via print, phone, e-mail, Web, and television
- Build and maintain searchable online staff directory
- Coordinate community forums, focus groups, and informational meetings
- Produce television programs and videos for parents in six languages on school system programs and resources
- Provide programming on two MCPS cable channels
- Administer foreign language mini websites for parents in five languages
- Produce informational brochures and other multimedia resources, for parents, students and staff
- Cablecast and webcast closed-captioned Board of Education meetings
- Cablecast monthly Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Association (MCCPTA) business meetings
- Respond to media inquiries and fulfill *Maryland Public Information Act* requests
- Conduct press conferences and provide support for elected officials' press events at schools

Supports Schools, Students and Staff

The majority of the office's resources and services are deployed to support and facilitate instruction, staff development, and daily operations for all schools and offices.

- Manage the Web Publishing Migration project providing schools with new web designs, improved content, and a process for quick and easy updates
- Publish online high school course bulletin, online High School Assessment prep course, and online academic resources for students
- Produce television programs to assist students in academic areas
- Produce multimedia resources to support staff development in the areas of literacy, math, reading strategies, grading and reporting, diversity, and assessments
- Train and support school/office webmasters
- Develop and support systems that enable schools and offices to stream video, administer online surveys, access e-mail and ePaystubs, register for professional development courses, access substitute calling system, accept résumés and access job vacancies
- Produce training videos on emergency preparedness, pre-/post-trip bus inspections, financial management, dispute mediation and asbestos abatement
- Provide support to schools for maintenance of cable-casting equipment and studios

Supports School System Central Offices and Business Operations

Playing an important role to ensure the school system operations run smoothly and efficiently.

- Manage 30 web servers for the MCPS Web
- Manage multiple web-based systems that allow the school system to accept electronic résumés, maintain an online staff directory, and access e-mail and ePaystub system, log on to systems for staff development, data analysis and financial management.

Informs Stakeholders, Including the Public, About School System Operations

Providing strategic outreach to our diverse community and ensuring accountability and transparency of important school system functions.

- Ensure functionality of the MCPS Web 24/7 with less than .001% downtime, providing continuous access to information, data, and systems that help stakeholders interact with the school system
- Maintain key MCPS websites including web pages for the Board of Education, superintendent of schools, budget office, emergency website, home page and other top level web pages
- Assist schools with parent outreach and communication efforts
- Collaborate with various parent and community organizations, including MCCPTA, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Parent Council, Linkages to Learning, Identity, Impact Silver Spring, and the Asian American Parent Advocacy Council, among others
- Provide emergency crisis communication
- Partner with Montgomery County Government to provide emergency information via Alert MCPS
- Responsible for media and *Maryland Public Information Act* requests

Data at a Glance – The Office of Communications:

- Receives 40 million page views on websites for 200 schools and 175 offices, and 1 million PDF downloads a year
- Provides timely information to more than 38,000 QuickNotes e-mail news subscribers, and more than 2.1 million e-mail messages sent per year
- Trains and supports 1,000 school and office webmasters
- Assists 2,400 students each year with questions posed on Homework Hotline Live! television program
- Produces more than 400 educational and informational videos annually with over 100 videos in languages other than English
- Students took more than 200,000 practice tests and answered more than 1.5 million practice questions on the High School Assessment online website over the course of a year.
- More than 7,000 students use the High School Course Bulletin worksheets for planning schedules
- Responds to 150–200 media inquiries each month and conducts 10–12 press conferences each year