

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communications Rubric

Researchers have shown time and again that highly effective principals are highly effective communicators, engaging their communities in ongoing conversations about teaching and learning. The challenge for today's principal is that while the nature of our messages haven't changed—parents still need to understand a school's vision, community leaders still need to know how to best support our buildings, students still need to find connections between what they're learning in school today and what they'll need to be successful tomorrow—yesterday's communication tools are ineffective. Consider using this rubric to evaluate the currency of your building's communication plan.

Scoring School Communication Plans	
Level	Descriptors
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Messages can be delivered and received anytime and from any place using any Internet connected device.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Messages regularly include interactive content—video clips from school performances, photos from athletic events, podcast recordings of important messages, links to external sites for continued exploration—captured and shared in real-time.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> While customized for individual stakeholder groups and often shared in traditional ways, messages are also accessible to broader audiences and posted in several different social media forums—Facebook, Twitter, YouTube—in an effort to reach out to digitally connected parents, students and stakeholders.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Messages are crafted and delivered instantly at the school-level. Principal has complete control and flexibility over message frequency and content.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Messaging patterns provide ongoing opportunities for two-way interaction between stakeholders and school staff members. Principal transparently demonstrates a willingness to listen and to respond to the community.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Overall, this communication plan shows extensive evidence that the school is listening to—and interacting with—the communities that they serve.</b> They have clearly worked to establish footprints in popular social media services and are regularly initiating conversations with all important audiences. What's more, they are crafting engaging messages likely to catch the attention of today's parents, students and stakeholders. Finally, this communication plan is defined by its versatility, allowing audiences to interact with school messages in a variety of different forums and with a variety of different devices.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Messages are shared in several different formats. Static websites, newsletters, phone messages, community newspapers, press releases, and electronic mailing lists are all used in an attempt to reach wider audiences.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School's website shows clear efforts to craft engaging messages and to capture the attention of today's audiences. Video messages are embedded, audio content is posted, collections of links are updated and maintained.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> While there is no evidence of real-time communication or complete flexibility on the part of the principal to reach out to important audiences, messages are current, reflecting a genuine commitment to sharing school happenings.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Principal regularly responds to interested stakeholders, but those interactions happen in one-to-one situations and are rarely initiated by the school.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Overall, this communication plan shows willingness on the part of the school to share interesting and timely messages with the communities that they serve.</b> Content created is engaging and likely to stand out to today's parents, students and stakeholders. There is little evidence, however, that this school is willing to listen to or interact with audiences. Communication patterns are largely one-dimensional—delivered by staff members and received passively by constituents. Little has been done to establish footprints in popular social media services.</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Messages are generally delivered in only one format—a weekly newsletter sent home with students, a Monday's Message from the principal, an occasional article in the community newspaper.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School relies heavily on a static, text-heavy website to reach online audiences.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sharing messages is a time-consuming, multi-step process that depends on action by several different employees.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Messages shared are often out-of-date, lending a sense of apathy to the school's communication efforts.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There are no opportunities for message recipients to respond to and/or interact with one another.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There are no opportunities for message recipients to respond to and/or interact with school employees.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Overall, this communication plan shows little evidence that the school is listening to—and interacting with—the communities that they serve.</b> There seem to be no efforts to reach out to constituents by establishing footprints in popular social media services. What's more, there seem to be no efforts to provide opportunities for constituents to interact with messages shared by the school. Finally, there seem to be no efforts to craft the kinds of interactive, engaging messages that today's parents, students and stakeholders have grown to expect.</li> </ul>