

Strategic Communications for Governance

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Communications: The New Governance Risk

- The Conversation is Always Happening.
- **Core Job:** Maintain Public Confidence & Organizational Trust
- **Challenge:** The speed demands a professional, strategic response

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Our Strategic Pillars

- 1. Readiness** (Media & Crisis)
- 2. Relationship** (Engagement & Strategy)
- 3. Rules** (Social Media Governance)

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Pillar 1: Readiness - The Single Voice

Protect the Single Voice:

- Board talks **Why** (Policy)
- Superintendent talks **How** (Action)
- **Result:** Clarity protects confidence and prevents inconsistencies in the media.

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Readiness: Media Protocol

When the Reporter Calls, Ask yourself:

- Who is the official spokesperson for the district?
- Is your comment aligned with the district? Aligned with the rest of the Board?
- **Best Practice: Use 3 Step Script**
 - Thank them for calling
 - Get details on their question
 - Let them know someone will call them back

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Readiness: Crisis Response

In an Emergency: Community needs Fast, Clear Information.

- Board Job: Be the Referral Source (PIO/Superintendent is the official source)
- Don't guess or repeat rumors.
- Crisis Plans: Must be Reviewed & Practiced, not "shelf-ware"

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Scenario Discussion

A parent is scared and calls you for details about a building incident.

- Where do you get information?
- Where are you referring people?

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Pillar 2: Relationship - Strategic Outcomes

Communications is a Governance Tool

- It drives outcomes (e.g., student enrollment, bond passage, staff retention).
- Investment: Underspending on communication is a governance risk.

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Relationship: Relational Capital

Trust = Money in the Bank

- Deposit: Listen to stakeholders.
- Withdrawal: Happens when a tough issue hits.
- Empty Account = Trouble!

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Relationship: Proactive Marketing

Aggressively Own Your Story.

- **Marketing Mindset:** Tell your district's value proposition.
- **Highlight:** Student success, effective use of taxpayer money, and top-tier programs.
- **Goal:** Maintain enrollment, attract top talent, be good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

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Relationship: Closing the Loop

The Hard Part is Closing the Loop.

- **Listen** (Surveys, Town Halls, Committees).
- **Respond**: Show how input informed the decision (or explain why it didn't).
- **Example**: Dedicate a newsletter item to summarizing input from a forum.

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Pillar 3: Rules - Governance & Law

- The OMA Trap: Your Biggest Legal Risk.
- Do not use social media, email, or group chats to deliberate district business.
- **Quorum + Deliberation = Illegal Meeting.**

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Rules: Social Media as a Leader

Treat Social Media as a Communication Platform, Not a Governance Platform.

- **Can Do:** Share official district news/agendas; Announce the Board's final decision.
- **Must Do:** Direct policy questions/complaints to the formal process (Superintendent/PIO).
- **Front Page Test:** If you wouldn't wanted it printed, don't post it

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Communications Recap

- 3 Pillars:
 - Readiness
 - Relationships
 - Rules
- Questions?

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