

DEFOREST AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT



DASD

**COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
2025 - 2026**

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Purpose

The purpose of the DeForest Area Schools District’s Communications Plan is to present a clear and concise framework for communicating with our school community. The plan primarily addresses two types of school district audiences: internal (students, teachers, staff, administrators, and school board members) and external (parents/guardians, businesses, organizations, community partners, and other members of the DASD community.)

Note: Crisis Communications are addressed in the DASD Safety Handbook, a detailed internal document shared with our incident command team. For questions related to this type of communication, please contact School & Community Relations at 608-842-6581 or Office of Safety & Operations at 608-842-6561.

Vision

The **DeForest Area School District** is committed to a culture that honors knowledge, respects individuals, demands excellence, fosters life-long learning, and supports relationships that strengthen individuals, families and community.

Mission

The mission of the DeForest Area School District is to provide an excellent education and engage, challenge, and inspire all students to pursue their full potential.

Equity Statement

We believe every student deserves equitable access to high-quality, rigorous, and engaging learning opportunities, so we will ask questions, foster relationships, manage resources, and create systems to increase and sustain access, equity, and safety for all learners.

Motto

Engage, Challenge, Inspire



Our Culture

The DASD culture is a belief and value system that defines the public's perception of us, as well as our perceptions of each other. It influences how we work, how we treat students and each other, and it is something we all have an important role in defining and implementing regardless of the job description we hold.



- We keep students as our central focus.*
- We expect hard work, risk taking and continuous growth.*
- We create an environment for students and staff that promotes understanding, respect, and celebration of individuality and diversity.*
- We engage community in achieving our common vision.*
- We build relationships that support a positive, caring school community.*
- We promote teamwork throughout the district to achieve a common vision.*
- We incorporate joy, fun, and humor in what we do.*
- We develop leadership skills at all levels.*
- We include partners in decision-making processes.*
- We foster effective communication throughout the district.*
- We encourage innovation.*
- We value the efficient and effective use of resources.*



Board Communication Goal

To support the DeForest Area School District's mission and vision by engaging stakeholders through intentional, transparent, and meaningful communication focused on student achievement, Board priorities, and community collaboration.

Framework for Communications

Board of Education communication efforts will:

- **Inform:** Share relevant, timely information to increase awareness and understanding
- **Consult:** Seek input and feedback from stakeholders
- **Involve:** Create opportunities for two-way communication and participation
- **Collaborate:** Partner with stakeholders on shared goals and values
- **Empower:** Support student and community voice in district decisions

What Is Communicated

Core Messages:

- **Board Results:** What is being monitored, how, and why it matters
- **District progress:** Achievement data, strategic initiatives, and goals
- **Feedback invitations:** Seeking input on values, priorities, and experiences

Messages should always clarify the Board's role versus the Superintendent's operational responsibilities.

DASD Communication Goal

The DASD is committed to a two-way communications process that is mutually beneficial to the district and community. The purpose is to establish a clear understanding of the district's stakeholders and to develop an understanding of its role, objectives, accomplishments, and needs of its schools.

Objectives

The overall goal is to **build support, confidence and trust for the DeForest Area School District among all stakeholders**. Strategies include:

1. Focus communication around **Student Achievement & Student Results, Stewardship, Learning, and Culture**.
2. Develop an **Annual Report to Stakeholders** to communicate student progress, strategies, and financial condition.
3. **Engage:** Increase participation and impact of DASD community engagement events and build strong community partnerships through participation in a variety of civic groups.
4. **Market:** Maintain the DASD website as a key information and marketing vehicle, share positive stories across social media platforms.



Actions

1. Clarify district flow of information

- Review Board Policy on communicating with the public

2. Provide ongoing training and support for administrators in effective communication with staff and the public

- Subscribe to the National School Public Relations Association and relay pertinent ideas and information to administrators
- Provide on-going training sessions as a part of principal meetings on how to communicate school's message
- Supply administrators with fact sheets and other easy-to-use communications tools as needed when issues arise

3. Publish and distribute informational pieces

- District or School Building Informational Brochures
- Internal Newsletter - Norski News (for staff)
- External Newsletter - Norski Nation News
- Podcast - Norski News Now
- Budget Documents, financial information
- Press Releases as needed
- Informational items posted on website
- Highlight faculty/staff/student accomplishments

4. Keep communications simple

- Use clear, concise, and non-educational style for all publications
- Vary the types and levels of communication to target diverse audiences
- Translate communication pieces when appropriate for various language groups

5. Provide timely information

- Provide information sheets on key DASD topics of interest such as the district's budget, student achievement information, etc., and update as needed
- Have key information available on-line for quick reference
- Communicate early and often and provide information when appropriate

6. Maintain relationships with our community

- Key communicators' groups, deliver messages to them as needed (*They will take the message to the community more effectively than district personnel*)
- Framework for Our Future
- Ask for input from community partners
- Develop relationships with editors and education reporters

7. Prepare our messages

- Study issues facing education and be prepared to respond with information sheets
- Develop responses that represent our school district's message
- Keep it simple and use quotable sound bites when appropriate
- Avoid use of education lingo or acronyms when preparing messages

Communication Tools

The DASD strives to share our message and bring our school and greater community together with information and timely communications.

Communication methods are divided into three categories:

Category	Key Activities
Print Material	<i>Press releases to local media, Special publications, Student/Family Handbooks, and Annual Academic and Budget reports</i>
Electronic Media	<i>DASD Newsletter, Student/Family Handbooks, Public Web Site, Building/Classroom web sites, Family Access (Skyward), Staff Bulletin, Social Media (Facebook, Instagram), and ParentSquare (messages, calls, texts)</i>
Personal Contact	<i>Presentations to local civic/social organizations, Parent organizations (PTOs), Business/Community Partnerships, “Linkage” meetings with the Board of Education, and “Framework for our Future” conferences</i>

Current communications methods include but are not limited to:

- Annual Academic Report and Annual Budget Report
 - » Published yearly and are available on our website
- Board of Education Regular Meeting Broadcast (*available through the DASD YouTube Channel*)
- Building Walking Hours
 - » Communicated to our community members on our website, district newsletter, and social media
- Calendars (*print annually and online: Public and Buildings, Fine Arts, Athletics*)
 - » Public calendars are available on our website (Google Calendar) and print calendars are available annually in buildings and district office
- Class Reunions (*school district hosts building tours*)
- Community 4th of July Parade (*band and student clubs participate yearly*)
- Daily Announcements for Grades 7-12
 - » Daily information for students and families is posted using ParentSquare, also available on TV monitors at the High School
- Norski TV (*Audio Visual Technology Network, high school student group news reports*)
- Outdoor electronic signs at all school buildings
 - » Signs are updated frequently to list important dates and events
- ParentSquare (*communication tool for families, staff/coaches, and students*)
 - » District, schools, and staff communications are shared with families and students (currently Middle and High School students) daily and weekly; staff and families have the ability to direct message each other for specific requests/questions
- Press Releases
 - » Shared via social media and the community paper



- School Lunch Information (*account balances/menus, on district website and Mealviewer browser*)
 - » Families can check student lunch account balances in Skyward Family Access and add money as needed; menus for each building are available at Mealviewer
[\[https://schools.mealviewer.com/district/DeForestASD,Wi\]](https://schools.mealviewer.com/district/DeForestASD,Wi)
- Skyward Family Access
 - » Families/Guardians can view attendance and grades, view and pay fees that have been applied, and find busing and health information
- Social Media - Facebook, Instagram
- Staff Phone Calls to/from Parents
- The Star (*local community paper submissions*)
- TV Monitors at the High School, Intermediate School, and District Office
- Websites: *District, Schools, Activities, Athletics (through badgerconference.org)*

Outcomes

- 1. Increased public awareness of all school programs and activities.***
- 2. Improved staff morale through recognition of their students and programs.***
- 3. Stronger relationship among district municipalities, DeForest Windsor Area Chamber, Dane County and school district that will promote the community as a whole.***

Public Relations & Social Media

General Statement of Policy

DASD is committed to partnering with our community. The district will coordinate and share regular and ongoing communications through a variety of means, including, the Superintendent will prepare and publish, on behalf of the Board, an annual progress report to the public that includes data indicating student progress, information about district strategies, programs, operations, and the district's financial condition.

Information Sharing

Information sharing is guided by the **Spectrum of Communication and Participation model**, defining five levels of engagement. This tool helps guide the decision of what type of communication is used based on its purpose:

- 1. Inform:** To provide balanced and objective information (e.g., Newsletters, Annual Report, News releases).
- 2. Consult:** To obtain feedback from stakeholders on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions (e.g., Surveys, Focus groups).
- 3. Involve:** To work directly with stakeholders to ensure concerns are understood (e.g., Key communicator groups, Task forces).
- 4. Collaborate:** To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision (e.g., "Framework for Our Future" sessions, Advisory committees).
- 5. Empower:** To place final decision-making in the hands of the public (e.g., voting for Referenda, Board of Education elections).

Assessment & Accountability

Accountability is managed through:

- **Annual Report:** Production of an Annual Report to Stakeholders based on the Board's Results policies.
- **Surveys:** Periodic administration of parent, staff, and student surveys to assess stakeholder satisfaction.
- **Two-way Opportunities:** Public comment periods at Board meetings.

Communication Tools & Resources

Key tools utilized in DASD communication include:

- **Public Web Site**
- **ParentSquare**
- **Norski Nation News** - district newsletter
- **Norki New Now** - podcast
- **General contact email:** info@deforestschoools.org

School District Employee Social Media Expectations

School district employees are expected to:

- Not create an alias, false, or anonymous identity on any social media.
- Consider whether a particular posting puts their **professional reputation and effectiveness as a district employee at risk**.
- Be cautious of security risks when using applications that work with social networking sites.

