

**Public Relations and Communications Plan**

Public schools belong to and derive their strength from the people in the community. For citizens to be supportive of their schools, the people must be knowledgeable about the aims and efforts of their schools and educational agencies.

The County Superintendent believes it is the responsibility of each Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) employee to actively cultivate a two-way communications program that highlights the educational experiences in the county's public schools and promotes effective SCOE/community partnerships.

SCOE recognizes that community members have the right to know what is occurring in their public school system, SCOE has a duty to see that the community is systematically and adequately informed about education matters, and there is value in providing citizens with information directly from the school system whether the news of a positive or negative nature.

Therefore, SCOE shall:

- Develop and maintain an organizational environment where all SCOE staff members are aware that they share the responsibility for positive and effective communication.
- Keep the public informed about SCOE policies, administrative operations, objectives, and educational programs.
- Adhere to a policy of openness and honesty in communicating with citizens, staff, the news media, and other organizations.
- Make available to the public and news media background materials, excluding confidential materials (e.g., those considered legally exempt such as negotiations, sale or purchase of properties, legal matters, personnel matters, certain student records, etc.), that will help provide a clearer understanding of a matter. Determination of whether materials are accessible to the public or confidential and legally exempt will be made by the Public Information Office or the Superintendent/designee.
- Establish and support appropriate and effective communication between all employees.
- Develop programs and practices designed to provide an open climate that will elicit ideas, reactions, and suggestions from members of the community and staff.

To ensure that the community and SCOE employees are informed about SCOE programs and operations, SCOE's Public Information Officer, in conjunction with the Superintendent/designee will:

- Coordinate SCOE's public communication efforts.
- Maintain a written plan of communication guidelines.
- Maintain an effective working relationship with the news media and community members.
- Prepare publications as needed to inform citizens about educational services, achievements, needs, costs, revenues, and expenditures.
- Disseminate accurate, timely information about policies, programs, procedures, achievements, decisions, and critical issues.
- Assess the public's knowledge and attitudes about schools, and use this information in planning a communications program.

**Policy 1110 (Continued)**

- Support, plan, and execute appropriate direct communications between SCOE; districts; schools; other educational institutions; parents; students; legislators; other city, county, state, and national agencies; and the community members.
- Assist in ensuring that communication skills and excellent customer service exist in each SCOE department.
- Assist with the publicity for all SCOE programs as requested.
- Serve as spokesperson for SCOE and its programs.

Communications Plan

SCOE's communications plan shall identify goals aligned with the organization's vision, goals, and strategic plan. For each communications goal, the plan shall identify:

- key messages, individuals, or groups that can help SCOE achieve its goals,
- strategies tailored for communicating with each target audience,
- timelines,
- personal responsible for each activity, and
- budget implications.

As appropriate for each issue, target audiences may include parents/guardians, the media, local governmental agencies, businesses, community organizations and civic groups, postsecondary institutions, health care professionals, child care providers, senior citizens, community leaders, state or federal legislators or agencies, and/or other segments of the public.

The Superintendent or designee shall regularly evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of SCOE's communications plan and evaluate whether the goals and key issues identified in the plan need to be revised to meet changing circumstances or priorities.

Policy Cross-Reference:

0000 Vision  
0200 Goals  
0400 Comprehensive Plans  
0500 Accountability  
1000 Concepts and Roles  
1100 Communication with the Public  
1112 Media Relations  
1112.1 Working with the Media  
1113 Websites  
1340 Access to Records  
1400 Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools  
1700 Relations Between Private Industry and the Schools  
3580 District Records  
5125 Student Records  
5125.1 Release of Directory Information  
5145.6 Parental Notifications  
6020 Parent Involvement