



# **School District No. 64 Communications Strategy**

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**Year One Review**

**January 2023**

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**Embracing a Culture of Storytelling,  
Information Sharing, and Engagement**

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# Year One Review

In July 2021, the Board engaged in a communications audit to improve its external communications practices. The audit helped identify areas of strength and challenge and informed the development of a district communications strategy.

As indicated in the Analysis and Review section of the School District 64 Communications Strategy (pg. 13), communications activities should be evaluated annually and a review of the Communications Strategy is recommended each time a new board is elected and/or the district strategic plan is revised. This report provides a summary of the strategies implemented, an analysis of the activities undertaken in the first year, and opportunities for future engagement.

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## Strategies and Tactics Implemented

The Communications Strategy highlights actions designed to engage, inform and inspire. An emphasis has been placed on tactics that foster a culture of storytelling, regularize communications, and enhance an online presence.

1. Storytelling. Spotlight64 is the primary strategy for sharing district stories and is easily consumed by the Gulf Islands learning community. Spotlight64 stories are shared broadly through global email groups including the education leadership team (ELT), administrative assistants, partner groups, and trustees. Stories are posted to the website and pushed out to those who have subscribed to receive automatic email notifications for [SD64 News](#). A total of 21 Spotlight64 stories have been published since starting in September 2021.
2. Regularize Timing. Efforts have been made to establish regular timing of routine communication activities so that audiences know when and where to expect information. In doing so, audiences are more likely and prepared to tune in.
  - a. Spotlight64 stories are published regularly every two to three weeks. Automatic email notification subscription forms are published at the end of every SD64News article (announcement, Sptotlight64, notice) on the website and schools are frequently prompted to encourage staff and families to subscribe.

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- b. Board Highlights are a quick and easy read that summarize the work of the Board and senior staff. These unofficial meeting highlights are circulated to trustees, ELT, admin assistants, and partner groups the day following each regular scheduled public meeting of the board. Highlights are also posted promptly on the [Board Meetings](#) page of the district website.
  - c. The district has begun to regularize advertising in serial publications on Pender, Saturna, Mayne, and Galiano Islands, as well as Salt Spring Island, with expense remaining the primary limiting factor.

Although the communications strategy identifies a quarterly district newsletter as a strategy to be actioned, this has not yet been initiated.

3. Online Presence. Work is being done to refine and grow an organizational online presence.
  - a. The district website homepage sections and menus have been reorganized to improve navigation, readability, and engagement. Recent improvements include dedicated fly out menus for programs under the district tab (previously posted as links on a single “programs” page and not included under the “District” homepage menu). Additionally, a new link has been added to the “Bylaws, Policies and Procedures” page for draft policies and procedures in circulation. This new page link ([DRAFT Policies and Procedures in Circulation](#)) is designed to better engage partners and community members in the policy development and revision process.
  - b. [Gulf Islands School District - 64](#) LinkedIn account was launched in January 2022.
  - c. Administrative procedures have been drafted for the oversight of social media use. Published procedures would provide the necessary direction and expectations for appropriate use of social media and other electronic communications platforms as well as mitigate the school district’s, employee’s and student’s exposure to risk. It is recommended that Social Media Use policy/procedure be adopted before the district expands its online presence into the realm of Facebook or other online spaces.

## Analysis and Review

Website Analytics: sd64.bc.ca

Since the initial reorganization of the district's homepage and site menus in September 2021, engagement has increased significantly. Website visits have grown from approximately 950 per week to just over 1200 visits on average.

Visits by page comparison:

### September 2021

What pages do your users visit?	
Page	Pageviews
/job-information/	2,792
/	2,789
/calendar/	929
/all-schools/	762
/transportation/	408
/saltspring/	312
/gulf-islands-secondary/	291
/district-contacts/	285
/fernwood/	266
/pender-school/	222

Last 28 days ▼ [PAGES](#)

### September 2022

What pages do your users visit?	
Page	Pageviews
/	4,895
/job-information/	3,665
/calendar/	1,428
/all-schools/	1,057
/transportation/	710
/district-contacts/	514
/faculty-tech-support/	302
/policies-and-procedures/	298
/saltspring/	269
/pender-school/	241

Sep 1, 2022 - Sep 30, 2022 ▼ [PAGES](#)

Most visited pages include the homepage, job information, school calendar, schools, transportation, district contacts, and tech support. Specific increases in page/post visits are seen when linked to a homepage banner, including SD64News posts (Spotlight, announcements, and notices).

The number of SD64News subscribers has increased to 97 and continues to grow.

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### Social Media Analytics: LinkedIn

The Gulf Islands School District-64 LinkedIn page is primarily used as a search objective and to direct potential new employees to the district website. Last month, the page drew 1,086 search appearances, up more than 800 from two months prior. The page has 59 followers. This number should increase significantly once the page is cross-directed from our district website. The intent will be to include a link on the district website to the district LinkedIn page once other social media pages (Facebook/Meta) are established.

### Stakeholder Feedback: partner survey, and comments

Not yet undertaken.

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## Feedback and Testimonials

### Board Meeting Highlights

The implementation of regular published unofficial Board Meeting Highlights has been well-received by all partner groups. Partner group reps and trustees have expressed appreciation for Highlights being easily readable, accessible, concise, and timely.

*"These [highlights] are terrific!"*

*"This is really helpful. Thank you very much"*

*"Clear and informative; lets people know what is going on and shows how we are supporting the community"*

*"... a great way to informally share the business of the Board. Trustees can circulate this with their PAC agenda and use meeting time to talk more about whatever peaks parent interest."*

*"Good headlines and clear short summaries, easy reading/scanning. Lovely work!"*

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## Spotlight64

The strength of Spotlight64 is its capacity to unite and empower as well as engage. It is a dynamic way of sharing information that invites others to become storytellers and nurtures a collective voice that is diverse and inclusive. The uptake from all partner groups has been positive, with individuals submitting their own story ideas for publication.

*“Great spotlight!”*

*“This is precisely the kind of proactive communications we need!”*

*“A great addition to my reading.”*

*“This is so awesome ...I'm going to share it ... 😊 I'll put this on our news tomorrow.”*

*“It is one of my goals to complete one or two Spotlight stories this year.”*

*“a fabulous story”*

## Future Considerations

### Facebook

It is recommended that administrative procedures be developed prior to the district engaging deeply into social media. A procedure has been drafted for consideration.

### Style / Branding Guide(s)

Style and branding guides are assets to bigger districts and organizations that rely on brand recognition to capture and secure their audience. While the size and geography of Gulf Islands School District is a limiting factor to both the need and capacity for implementing fulsome communications standards, guidelines for publications would help bolster the professional identity of the district and present a unified vision to the public.

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Branding documents (guides/standards) are best developed in consultation with design experts in the field to ensure high-quality representation and consistency/alignment with industry standards of best practice.

#### School Website and Newsletter Standardization

This item should be considered project work. Time is the biggest resource needed to undertake a full standardization of school websites and newsletters. With the planned migration from Google sites, an opportunity exists for the Board to consider securing a unified communications platform to standardize and brand all district websites, newsletters, and social media accounts. (ie. SchoolBundle, Rally). Product demonstrations and information sessions with relevant web solution vendors will be considered early in the new year in consultation with the district Information Technology Manager.