

SD64 Communications Strategy 2.0

A plan for engaging our learning
community, sharing information,
and telling our stories.

Updated: September 2025



About

Gulf Islands School District is a diverse and inclusive learning community committed to supporting students, staff, and families through a culture of caring, respect, and high-quality learning experiences.

The district serves approximately 1500 students, with nine schools, in five island communities: Salt Spring, Pender, Galiano, Mayne, and Saturna islands. Diverse program offerings include a successful Indigenous Education program, a performing arts academy, as well as Ecological Education and French Immersion programs.

The Board of Education has adopted a communications strategy to grow and maintain strong and healthy working relationships with all members of the SD64 learning community.

Purpose

This communications strategy is a living artifact, designed to enhance engagement with stakeholders, build trust across the organization, and support public relations with staff, students, families, and local communities.

It outlines a proactive and focused approach to planning and prioritization of internal and external communications that honours the unique context of Gulf Islands School District. Specifically, this communications strategy provides a framework to increase awareness and assurance of the district's commitment to improving outcomes and opportunities for all students as identified in the Strategic Plan.

Bringing Beliefs and Commitments to Life

Board of Education has committed to a plan for strategic direction that calls for responsible use of available resources to secure and sustain a creative, healthy, and responsive system where every child thrives and flourishes. This includes a Communications Strategy to better engage with the SD64 learning community and effectively communicate the Board's commitments and beliefs.

TRUTHS, REPARATION, AND RESTORATION - learning with open hearts and minds

A commitment to meaningful action; to learning the truths of our history; to increasing visibility and use of language, culture, and land-based learning; to addressing the inequities of our system; to honouring Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

INTEGRITY AND RESPONSIBILITY - walking the talk

A commitment to act with integrity, consideration and honesty; to creating sustainable practices and using resources responsibly; to being good ancestors who leave a positive legacy.

RELATIONSHIPS AND BELONGING - knowing who we are

A commitment to safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environments; to ensuring everyone is connected, supported, and seen; to relating to each other with kindness and compassion; to celebrating the exceptional in everyone.

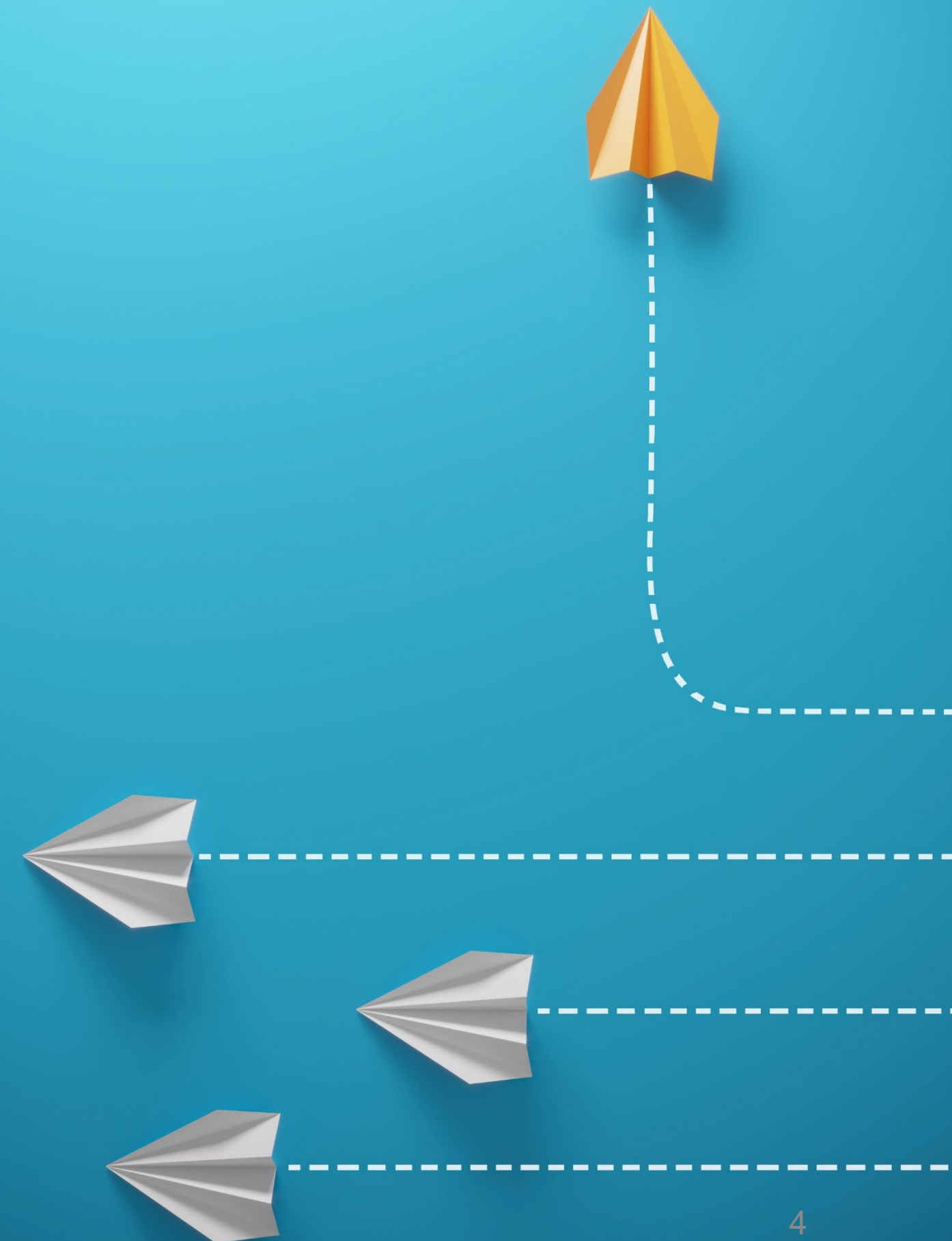
AN ETHIC OF LEARNING - making sense of the world

A commitment to nurture curious, critical and creative learners; to cultivating the freedom to explore new ideas and take risks; to creating spaces for every student to flourish.

Objectives

These objectives represent the District's goals for communications strategies and provide organizational direction for communication tactics and key messaging.

- Increase engagement of external audiences in the Beliefs and Commitments of the Board's Strategic Direction (by sharing regularly about what is happening in SD64).
- Increase awareness and understanding among internal and external audiences of SD64's successes and challenges (i.e. district operations and finance, environmental sustainability, student success and wellbeing.)
- Increase engagement and participation of external audiences (service relationships) in SD64's district and board-level activities.
- Create and maintain a professional look and approach for how SD64 communicates with all audiences.
- Increase awareness of SD64's efforts to address racism and other inequities in the education system.

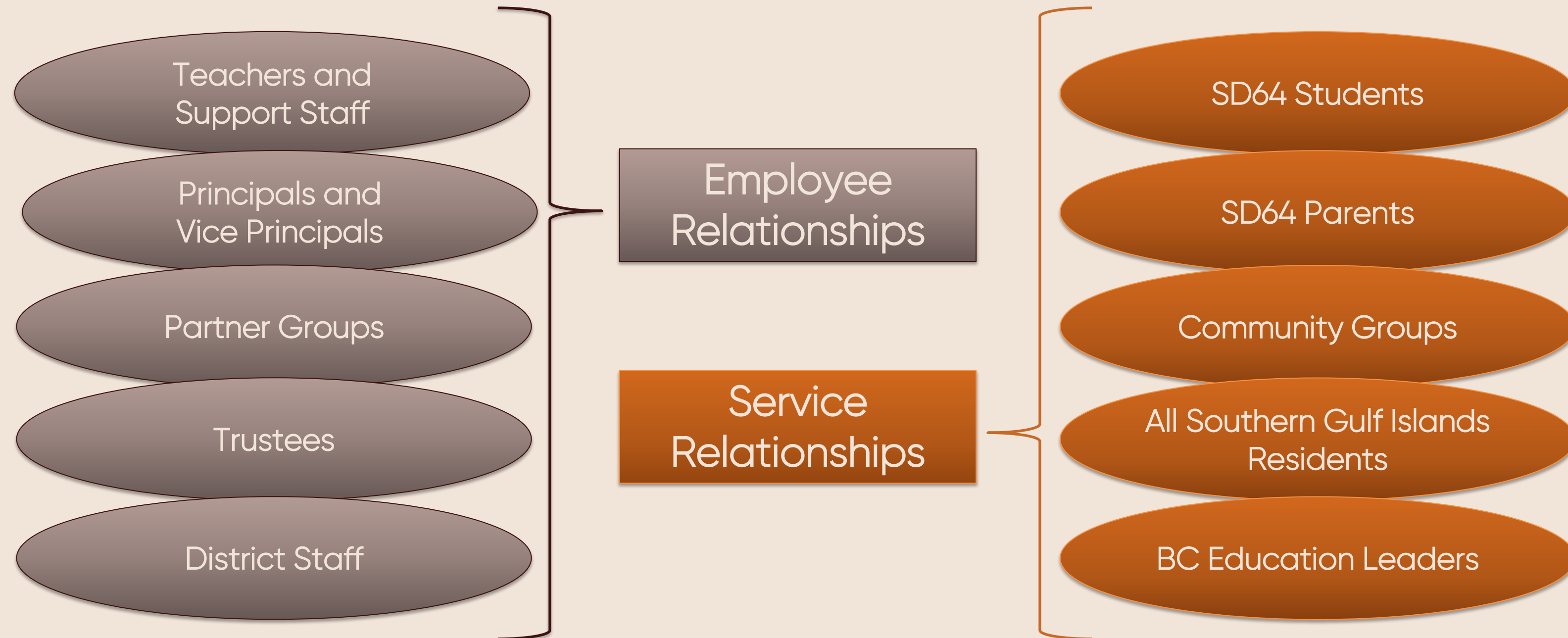


Key Messages

Key messages reflects who we are as a district, how we work together, our values, and our aspirations for the district and the education system as a whole.



Target Audiences



Communications Tactic 1: Embracing a Culture of Telling our Stories

There remains a need and desire to share the wonderful things taking place across the district. Telling our stories is one strategy that honours the unique context of Gulf Islands School District and respects all members of the SD64 learning community. It serves to increase engagement and audience attention and helps establish the narrative. A culture of storytelling supports a dynamic practice of sharing information that is inclusive and compelling and easily understood by audiences. **Above all, sharing our stories connects us to each other.**

1. Make everyone a storyteller – regular calls for material (quotes, stories, photos, videos)
2. Maintain a space for sharing (Spotlight64)
3. Be visible (promote via website – share with partners – post to social media – have schools to share their own stories broadly)

Communications Tactic 2: Regularize Timing of Communications

Regular timing for communications activities increases reach, develops generalized expectations for communications, and grows audience engagement by virtue of predictability. When audiences know when and where to expect information, they are more likely and prepared to tune in.

1. District storytelling
2. Board meeting highlights; agenda packages
3. Local media publications
4. Social media posts

Communications Tactic 3: Enhancement of Online Presence

Best practice would see continued and expanded use of online spaces as key channels for audience engagement and information distribution.

Website and social medias are ideal platforms for sharing stories, important news, key facts, and general information. Public-facing communications, shared through website, mobile app, and social media accounts, is a proactive approach to issues management and community building. Interconnected online spaces extend reach and empower the viewer to further engage and circulate information by following, liking, reposting, and sharing to the viewers own social networks.

1. District and school websites
2. Mobile app
3. Facebook page(s)
4. LinkedIn

Strategies

| Strategy | Channel | Objective | Audience | Frequency |
|--|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| Spotlight64 | website/social media | storytelling | all | monthly (min.) |
| Board meeting highlights | email/website/app | promote/inform (Board activities) | partners, parents, staff, community | after each public Board Meeting |
| Superintendent/Board Chair message | email/website/app | storytelling, information sharing, branding | partners, parents, staff, community | as needed |
| SD64 mobile app | website (push notifications) | information sharing (notices, announcements, news) | partners, parents, staff, community | regular/on-going |
| Social media accounts | Facebook LinkedIn | F: information sharing, storytelling (outward facing) L: recruitment, retention | F: parents, community L: staff (new/potential) | F: regular/as needed L: as needed |
| Website organization | District and school websites | improved access, user experience, utility | all | regular review |
| Media relations | SS Exchange, Driftwood, other Gulf Islands publications | information sharing, issues management | partners, parents, staff, community | as needed |
| Style/branding guide | shared document | branding, consistency, visual appeal | district staff | expected use |
| Standardize school newsletter/websites | school newsletters/websites | branding, consistency, visual appeal | parents, staff | in-progress |
| Annual messaging schedule | website/social media | storytelling, information sharing, branding | partners, parents, staff, community | yearly |

Analysis and Review

An audit process provides opportunity to review the organization's needs and ensure that communications goals match the needs of target audiences. Regular review of communications strategies will help determine what is working, what isn't, and what needs to be improved.



- **Website Analytics** analysis of visitors, by page, referral roots, and length of engagement
- **Social Media Analytics** analysis of mentions, sentiment, followings, and interactions
- **Communications Activities** reviewed annually to assure alignment with budget and resources
- **Communications Strategy** reviewed each trustee election and/or renewal of the district strategic plan
- **Stakeholder Feedback** surveys, focus groups etc. to gain insight and gauge effectiveness

Summary

Increasing engagement and strengthening relationships with community and partner groups are the central focus of this plan. Clear, transparent, and accessible communications are the key to achieving plan objectives.

Through targeted communications, School District 64 demonstrates its ongoing commitment to strengthening relationships and improving the experience of all Gulf Islands learning community members.

Listen

Inspire

Share

Engage

Celebrate