

Department of School & Community Relations Update

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Arlington Public Schools





Overview of SCR Department Evaluations

2006 NSPRA Communications Audit:

- Materials review, interviews & focus groups
- Most recommendations implemented

Since then:

- World of communications has changed drastically
- APS has grown by 10,000+ students

2017 Reviews:

- Baldrige Site Visit (October 2017)
- McGinn and Company Evaluation (August – October 2017)
Materials review, interviews & focus groups



SCR Department Staff

2000 SCR Staffing

- 7 E/P-Scale staff
- 2 G-Scale staff

2017 SCR Staffing

- 7 E/P-Scale staff
- 1 G-Scale staff
- Print Shop (*added to SCR in 2003*)
- AETV (*added to SCR in 2011*)
- SCR Stipend Liaisons
 - PR, Web, Volunteer





Team SCR aka “Ms. Erdos’ Class”



Ms. Erdos' Class
School & Community
Relations
2018



Strengths – Baldrige Report

Well-deployed, integrated approach to listen to the “voice of the customer”

Multiple two-way communications

- Social media
- APS School Talk
- Peachjar
- Targeted content – “Engage with APS”



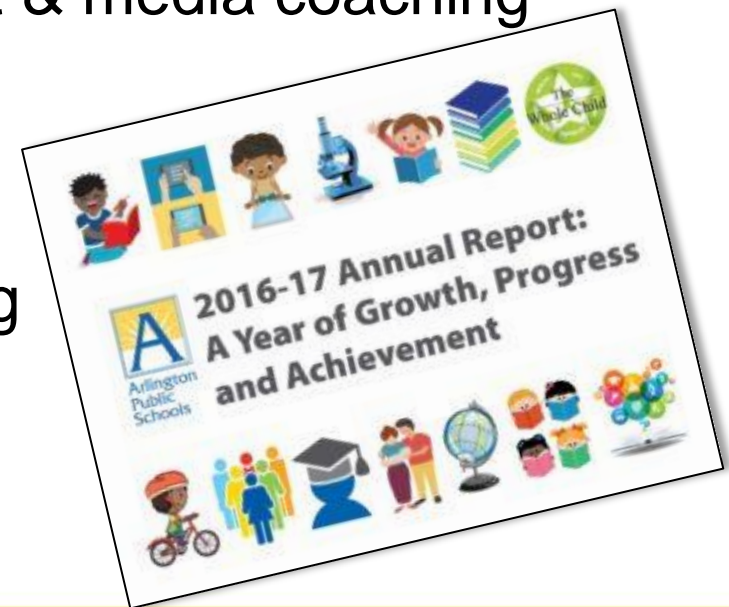
Multiple strategies to communicate with multi-lingual students and families (100+ languages)



Strengths – McGinn Report

SCR provides strong support for APS through the high volume of communications:

- Team of talented and experienced communicators
- Strong framework of communications policies and procedures in place
- Responsive to requests for help
- Excellence in crisis mode support & media coaching
- Innovative liaison program
- High-quality print materials
 - Graphically appealing
 - Clear messaging & branding





Recommendations – Baldrige Report



Develop a systematic and consolidated approach to:

- Receive, respond to and resolve customer questions, complaints, and requests
- Gauge satisfaction and dissatisfaction with services





Recommendations – McGinn Report

- ✓ McGinn recommendations range from small items that can be quickly implemented, to larger more complex items.
- ✓ McGinn evaluators felt that because the SCR staff is already working at full capacity, larger items would most likely require additional resources (contract services, added staff or other resources).
- ✓ Therefore, recommendations should be considered in the context of existing workload, budget and priorities.



Recommendations – McGinn Report

#1 Continue to refine the planning process

✓ **COMPLETE – Revise to reflect 2018-24 Strategic Plan**

#2 Improve communications around controversial issues **UNDERWAY – Implement in FY19**

✓ Develop a Communications Training Plan

✓ Train principals, staff and School Board

#3 Prioritize information so people pay attention

✓ **COMPLETE – Modifications to be made as needed**

✓ New APS School Talk vendor now allows more systematic, targeted messages

✓ Addition of images to help readers visually identify topics

✓ Modify use of staff voicemail



Recommendations – McGinn Report

#4 Communicate APS brand/mission **Future Project**

- FY 2019 funding request to develop a slogan that reflects new Strategic Plan mission, vision, core values and goals
- Develop plan for consistent use in district and schools

#5 Promote SCR's role and its resources **UNDERWAY**

- Distribute SCR “Who to Call” to staff and new hires *(by 4/1)*
- Develop intranet for staff access to news and info *(FY19)*

#6 Encourage Stakeholder Input **UNDERWAY (by 2/1)**

- Continue to Refine and Enhance “Engage with Us” sub-site

#7 Ask for Stakeholder Feedback **UNDERWAY**

- Periodic feedback links on website *(May/October)*
- New Community Satisfaction Survey Questions *(Submitted)*



Recommendations – McGinn Report

#8 Expand Outreach to non-English speaking families

UNDERWAY – *Pilot this Winter*

- SCR developing “Engage 101” workshops
- Fund expanded translation support in FY 2019 Budget

#9 Involve staff earlier for frontline communication support

UNDERWAY

- Expand staff messaging process as part of “Engage”
- Work with cross-department team to develop intranet

#10 Help school liaisons be more efficient and effective

UNDERWAY – *FY 19*

- Explore virtual meeting opportunities with liaisons
- Develop new ways to enhance support for liaisons



Recommendations – McGinn Report

#11 Add bilingual liaisons for non-English family outreach

Future Consideration

- Given financial constraints, not a viable option
- Strengthen bilingual resource and ESOL/HILT support

#12 Continue to refine and assess communications tools

ONGOING

- Explore ways to strengthen communications, engagement, and feedback

#13 Strengthen support of School Board communications

UNDERWAY

- Provide responses, resources and support to Board
- Include Deputy Clerk in weekly editorial meetings

Questions?

Linda M. Erdos, Assistant Superintendent

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