



Three Basic Elements of a Communications Plan

1. Goals--Establish goals, such as:

- Increased public awareness of CSAP (who, what, when, where, why and how)
- Enhanced position as a leader in your commitment to improving student achievement and providing a quality public education for the youth in your community
- Enhanced awareness about how your curricula meets state standards, prepares students to take the CSAP test(s) and drives students/schools to meet state the high academic standards established by the Colorado Department of Education.
- Improved media relations through a proactive program of positive communication and continuous contact
- Increased community relations and school-related community events

2. Target Market--Identify who you are communicating with:

- District/School Personnel
- Parents
- Media
- Business/Civic/Service/Educational Groups
- Public Officials

3. Action Plan--Develop an action plan for each group, for example:

District/School Personnel:

- Adopt a policy of ongoing, two-way communications with district/school personnel, at all levels.
- Provide regular opportunities to give and receive information.
- Keep employees informed about what's going on by providing information in paycheck envelopes, bulletin boards, newsletters, posters, staff meetings and other means.
- Review your current orientation procedures for new staff and make sure information is up-to-date.

Parents:

- Adopt a policy of communicating effectively with parents.
- Establish opportunities that provide continuous involvement of parents, such as Advisory Groups, Open forums, formal and informal surveys, focus groups, etc.
- Develop a new parent welcome packet, to the district and to the school.

- Make sure your CSAP report is made "parent-friendly" (i.e., easy to read and understand).
- Take advantage of your existing communications with parents (i.e., report cards and "Friday folders") by providing additional information that will enhance parents' knowledge of CSAP, state standards and student achievement.
- Develop a program that offers CSAP test-taking tips or provides advice to parents on how to help students prepare for the CSAP test.

Media:

- Adopt a policy of open, honest, ongoing communications with the media.
- Get to know your local media representatives such as editors, publishers and reporters--during non-crisis or non-event times. Provide background information on your school district/school that includes experts on different subjects. Become your local media's CSAP expert.
- Provide press releases that are newsworthy.
- Provide local public service announcements about CSAP.
- Develop and promote special programs in the community that lend themselves to favorable media attention.
- Write a weekly, monthly, quarterly column about CSAP or what the district/schools are doing to improve student achievement and CSAP test scores.
- Always acknowledge a reporter's good work. Likewise, if a story carries incorrect information, follow up with a polite, but factual correction.

Business/Civic/Service/Educational Groups:

- Provide articles of interest for inclusion in the newsletters of business, civic, service and other educational groups.
- Provide community groups an opportunity to learn more about the ways in which your district/school prepares for CSAP. Host an open house or special meeting to share elements of your math, science, reading and writing curricula—demonstrating how the curricula meets state standards and prepares students for CSAP.

Public Officials:

- Get to know your public officials and their staff. Arrange meetings during non-event times to enhance information about your district/local schools and CSAP.
- Provide consistent, honest, direct, and timely information. Become the resource for all matters relating to CSAP and student achievement. Don't wait for them to call. You call them.