

Communications Plan 2010-2011



Casa Esperanza Montessori Preschool and Charter School

2600 Sumner Boulevard #130, Raleigh, NC 27616

Phone: 919.855.9811 FAX: 919.855.9813

Web: www.cemcs.org Email: cemcs@cemcs.org

Communication Plan Mission

The mission of the Casa Esperanza Montessori (Casa) communications plan is to:

- enhance positive relations between our school and the internal and external communities
- enhance stakeholder confidence about the school
- keep both communities informed about charter, language studies, and Montessori education
- inform community stakeholders about school programs, policies, and events
- provide an avenue for feedback and involvement from school community members about the effectiveness of our programs and suggestions for improvement.

All communication is bound by the provisions of FERPA (Federal Educational Right to Privacy Act).

Evidence of Need

Casa's annual parent satisfaction survey, family exit survey, and teacher survey include questions regarding internal school communication.

While enrollment interest exceeds Casa's annual capacity, the need remains for continued, high-quality internal communication, and external communication targeting public education about Casa Esperanza, charter schools, language studies programs, and Montessori education.

Recent parent surveys suggested reducing the amount of papers coming home with children by combining the monthly school newsletter information with the monthly classroom newsletters. A school survey to all parents also revealed that some parents responding have Internet access at home but still prefer to receive paper copies of communication in addition to electronic notices. Faculty members were also surveyed. All of this data was taken into consideration when developing the goals for communication.

Planning

Communication between Casa Esperanza Montessori and its external and internal communities is a top priority. In an effort to ensure proficient communication, school administration and board members monitor and update goals for communication yearly. The communication plan ad hoc committee included: school employees, members of the Board of Directors, parents, and community members. The plan was submitted to the Board of Directors for review and approval.

Execution and Communication

- Goals, objectives, strategies, and measures are listed in the Communication Plan.
- The plan is reviewed annually with school administration and the Board of Directors.
- The approved plan is posted on the school web site.
- Internal and external communications are a responsibility shared between school faculty and the Board of Directors.

Project Scope

Delineated in each goal

Goal Setting

Goals and objectives are framed within the SMART framework: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely.

Specific – Set a specific goal by including answers to the six "W" questions:

- *Who: Who is involved?
- *What: What do I want to accomplish?
- *Where: Identify a location.
- *When: Establish a time frame.
- *Which: Identify requirements and constraints.
- *Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

Measurable - Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. Such criteria might include dates and the answers to such questions as.....How much? How many? How will we know when it is accomplished?

Attainable - Plan steps wisely

Realistic - Goal must represent substantial progress toward which we are both *willing* and *able* to work

Timely - A goal should be grounded within a time frame.

T can also stand for **Tangible** - A tangible goal that can be experienced with one of the five senses (taste, touch, smell, sight or hearing) is more likely to be specific and measurable, and thus attainable.

Goal I: To promote open communication amongst our stakeholders.

Audience:

Stakeholders: parents, students, staff, and community members.

Objectives:

1. Inform our stakeholders of school and classroom events, programs, policies, procedures, and needs.
2. Provide opportunities for our stakeholders to give input for school improvement.
3. Provide information to our stakeholders in a timely manner.
4. Provide opportunities for our stakeholders to communicate with teachers and staff.
5. Develop and use mechanisms for timely and appropriate response.

Strategies:

Parents have access to faculty and staff voicemail.

Each teacher schedules parent/teacher conferences at least twice a year.

Teachers arrange mutually agreeable conference times with parents.

Parent participation is recognized monthly through classroom newsletters.

Head of School writes and makes available web-hosted, comprehensive school calendar to school stakeholders by June.

Executive Assistant posts and maintains year-round calendar of school events on the school web site.

Notes to parents are translated as needed.

All newsletters contain monthly information on school-wide important dates, and spiritual development/community work.

All elementary newsletters contain core academic subject area information.

Train room parents on room parent duties.

Encourage parent volunteer to continue to maintain parent chat Yahoo groups.

Interpreters are used as needed during parent/teacher conferences.

Board Chair informs stakeholders quarterly in writing about the state of school governance.

Board Affairs Chair invites stakeholders in writing in July, November and April to participate in work of Board of Directors.

Board Secretary publishes monthly board meeting minutes on the website.

Finance Committee Chair writes capital and annual fundraising campaign communications in July, October, and January (introductory and follow-up communications).

Board Chair or relevant committee chair speaks at August and January faculty meetings to announce board initiatives.

Board Chair speaks at school orientation meetings in July to introduce the board to the school community.

Board members attend monthly Parent Faculty Association meetings.

New parents are called over the summer by current parent to encourage attendance at the orientation meetings and invited to meet the caller at a specific event.

Evaluation:

Annual board survey of parent satisfaction evaluates our services to the community.

Administrators review monthly classroom newsletters, blogs, web pages, calendar information

Teachers keep records of bilingual communication and parent contacts, and produce records at May summative review.

The school communication plan is continuously evaluated and revised with input from stakeholders.

All written (bilingual and monolingual) communications are archived.

Meeting/event attendance is tracked.

Goal II: Provide school-wide events within a safe and family-oriented environment

Audience:

Stakeholders: parents, students, staff, and community members.

Objectives:

1. To establish an atmosphere of collegiality, cooperation, and partnership in a safe and nurturing environment.
2. To provide events parents find informative and helpful

Strategies:

Create a parent and faculty-sponsored Student Council Club for Elementary and Middle Grades students.

Administration coordinates faculty member attendance at a minimum of eight PFA monthly/executive board meetings.

The Student Council advisors and members organize and implement service projects such as collections for the animal shelter, contributions to the Red Cross Disaster Relief, and other not-for-profit ventures.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer at school.

Teachers encourage parents to visit classrooms for special events, projects or student presentations.

The Volunteer Appreciation Committee plans two volunteer appreciation events/activities annually to recognize and thank volunteers and business partners.

Selected fourth grade students are posted in hallways and in the parking lot to assist students during carpool.

The school administration plan scheduled evening events that feature student performances, visiting artists, local musicians, academic informational events, and parent education information.

Continue coffee with the principal and dessert with the principal forums.

Casa Esperanza Montessori receives yearly grants from the United Arts Council to fund quality artists and performers.

Local restaurants host Casa "Family Fundraiser Nights" and donate a portion of the receipts to the Casa PFA.

Teachers and students plan and implement field trips and speakers to enhance curriculum studies.

Maintain excellent relations with students, faculty, parents, and board members to unify efforts.

PFA and student ambassadors are present in front hallway for first weeks of school to help students find rooms.

Evaluation:

Level of volunteer service is surveyed through teachers; incorporate statistics into "Casa Story."

Day and evening events and attendance are recorded.

A record of articles written about Casa and published in local newspapers and on local websites are archived in a binder in the front office and posted on the school website.

Events at which Casa Community members present are recorded on the school website.

The Casa Esperanza Montessori Communication Plan is evaluated and revised annually with input from stakeholders through the parent satisfaction survey.

Teachers plan and implement field trips and speakers to enhance curriculum studies.

The PFA creates an annual yearbook.

The board tracks school climate through annual satisfaction surveys to families and faculty.

School calendar includes events for recognition and appreciation.

The board tracks success of meeting parent education needs through annual parent satisfaction survey.

Goal III: To provide publications in a variety of formats in order to ensure quality communication with our stakeholders.

Audience:

Stakeholders: parents, students, staff, and community members.

Objectives:

1. Give stakeholders the opportunity to provide input for school improvement.
2. Provide school publications regularly, frequently, bilingually, and in a variety of formats.

Strategies:

Teachers send progress reports quarterly to school age families and thrice annually to preschool families.

Monthly classroom newsletters are emailed to stakeholders and posted on our school web site.

School administration sends notices to local newspapers about visiting artists and musicians.

Administrators providing support to school board members to deliver messages to the media and to the public which promote a positive image of the school.

Administrators produce monthly newsletter information to be disseminated by classroom monthly newsletters, and securing other methods of communication as needed.

Board members and faculty are provided with public relations and media training.

Board of Directors authors annual report.

Board funds an upgrade of website to platform that supports auto translation.

Evaluation:

Board survey is sent to parents annually to evaluate Casa's services to the community.

The administration reviews and provides feedback to teachers regarding classroom newsletters.

The Casa Esperanza Montessori Communication Plan is evaluated and revised annually with input from our stakeholders.

Annual report written by board, distributed to families, and published on school web site reporting previous year no later than January 1 following fiscal year end.

Goal IV: Increase representation of Casa Esperanza and the charter movement within the legislative, business and governance communities

Audience:

Business, legislative, civic, and governance community members

Objectives:

Promote charter schools as successful, innovative, public education change agents

Increase Casa's profile within business leader community

Strategies:

Board arranges annual engagements with local civic organizations.

Board serves as a liaison between the school and media outlets by setting up stories; writing and submitting news releases.

HOS serves as Casa spokesperson in order to ensure accurate information is disseminated.

Board members write and distribute a variety of communications, including a monthly board meeting minutes.

Board and school administration author press releases using a variety of media including email, print, newspapers, television/radio broadcasts and the school website.

Board member and administration serves as liaison between Casa and local and state government representatives.

Board Affairs Chair invites community members in writing to participate in the work of the Board of Directors via committee structure in July, November and April.

Finance Committee Chair writes capital and annual fundraising campaign communications in July, October, and January (introductory and follow-up communications) to external community members.

Evaluation:

Head of School and Board members represent Casa as speakers at two or more civic events annually.

Head of School and Board Chair combine efforts to submit news stories/releases to media outlets.

Head of School serves as media spokesperson during times of crisis or informational interviews

School administration and board member post board minutes, press releases, and news items to website monthly.

Head of School and Board Affairs chair attends minimum of one local/state government event quarterly.

Written communications are archived.