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Oyster River Cooperative School District Strategic Plan: Communication Section

*“The newest computer can merely compound, at speed, the oldest problem in relations between human beings, and in the end the communicator will be confronted with the old problem of what to say and how to say it.” Edward R. Murrow*

The reason that communication has its own section in the Oyster River Cooperative School District Strategic Plan is evidenced in the heart of Mr. Murrow’s quote, “...what to say and how to say it.” As with any complex organization attempting to communicate its vision and its goals, the key in doing so effectively is to do so as clearly and comprehensively as possible.

Fundamental to the communication plan is the adopted Vision of ORCSD as the principle driver is quality, *“We create a safe, stimulating learning environments where all students are challenged and excited by the opportunities to learn; where students and teachers alike feel it is safe to take creative risks; and where every member of our community is known and valued.”*

The broad goal of this section of the ORCSD strategic plan is to communicate comprehensively with the Oyster River students, and employees who educate and support in their education and the larger external Oyster River communities that finance and support ORCSD.

Referring once again to the OR Vision statement, *“...we engage all students in developing skills and knowledge they need to further their education; participate as citizens, succeed in the workplace; live healthy lives, and thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”* This section of the vision statement implies accountability. In order to communicate effectiveness, the District must measure student outcomes and report results to the community. Metrics such as graduate rates, dropouts rates, SAT and ACT scores, NECAPs and other quantifiable measures should be communicated, but not exclusively as they measure finite outcomes. Other measures of success to report that are harder to measure include, but are not limited to awards and recognitions, experiences in the arts, and service to the community.

To that end, the District must be in constant communication with its intended audience and be cognizant of the needs of the larger Oyster River communities. The following examples are not intended to represent the complete range of communication tools at District disposal but are indicative of some ways to effectively communicate with traditional means of communicating such as meetings and newsletters, as well as harnessing the power of technology using texts, emails, and Oyster River television.

Those responsible for communicating must be mindful that it is an exhaustive exercise and that there will always be someone who did not get the message, and yet, every effort must be made to constantly communicate. As George Bernard Shaw stated, “The single biggest problem with communication is the illusion it has taken place.”