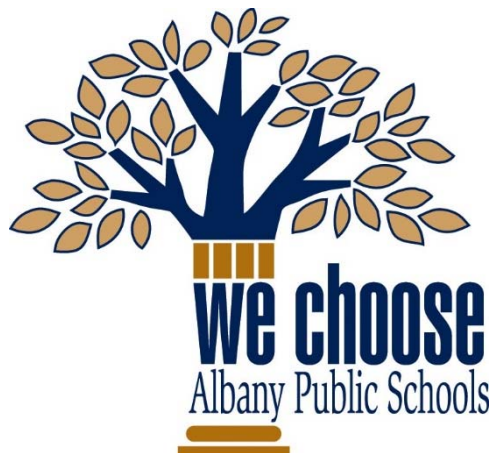


City School District of Albany

Communications Plan

2018-19



Updated February 2019

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Introduction

Effective two-way communication – listening as well as providing timely information and answers – is a foundational element of strong relationships that help all students succeed. The City School District of Albany believes that clear, consistent and honest two-way communication with all stakeholders in our diverse community is a critical component in supporting our vision, mission and goals, as well as a cycle of continuous improvement.

The primary objective of our 2018-19 Communications Plan is to establish a framework to achieve this with all internal and external audiences – Board of Education members, employees, families, students, community members, and business, civic and educational leaders.

Communication done well across an organization supports a vibrant, safe and collaborative school community. It underpins successful outcomes for all students.

Inconsistent communication creates opportunities for inaccurate information, misperceptions and distrust. In the end, inconsistent communication limits our students’ opportunities to learn and grow.

The responsibility to build a communication infrastructure that supports trust and transparency begins with our board, superintendent and Communications and Operations Division. However, we believe that all district employees are integral to that success. The 2018-19 Communications Plan has been developed to guide that work throughout the organization.

District Vision, Mission, Goals and 2018-19 Priorities

Our vision

The City School District of Albany will be a district of excellence with caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their potential.

Our mission

The mission of the City School District of Albany is to work in partnership with our diverse community to engage every learner in a robust educational program designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

Our goals and 2018-19 priorities

- Increase **student achievement** in early literacy, close the achievement gaps and increase graduation rate by focusing on the unique factors that impact student success.

- Continue to develop, implement, enhance and monitor social-emotional supports
 - Continue to enhance and monitor instructional systems for student success including AVID, IB, K-2 literacy, STEM, STEAM, and RTI
 - Address high school and middle school facility needs through Albany High rebuild and middle school configuration
- Enhance the delivery of **quality instruction** by providing our teachers and staff with high-level, meaningful professional development to promote student growth and proficiency.
 - Enhance and implement culturally responsive education best practices
 - Continue to develop, implement, enhance, and monitor how we use data to enhance instructional practices
 - Increase workforce diversity through creative recruiting and by planning for a strong “grow our own” strategy
- Build our **leadership capacity and increase accountability** through ongoing professional growth opportunities designed to improve effective leadership in our organization.
 - Continue to work with building leaders to provide high quality instructional walkthroughs with actionable feedback
 - Increase workforce diversity
 - Implement distributive leadership models in order to build leadership capacity
 - Provide leadership professional development opportunities
- **Empower families** to support the success of their children through relationships of mutual respect and clear and effective communication.
 - Develop and monitor a written district-wide Communication Plan with an emphasis on building level communication and family engagement
 - Implement **schooltool**, our new student information management system
 - Launch the new albanyschools.org
 - Provide customer-service training for faculty and staff to improve school climate and family engagement
- Partner with our **diverse community**, including local businesses and community leaders, to engage and empower stakeholders in the wrap-around services needed to support our students
 - Continue to develop and monitor the Community Schools model
 - Continue to develop and monitor reciprocal community-engagement strategies
 - Welcome community partners in schools

2018-19 Communications Goals

The City School District of Albany Communications and Operations Division has established the following Communications Goals for the 2018-19 school year:

- Successfully realign the Communications structure to provide enhanced support for schools and departments, and increase opportunities to engage families and community members in settings outside of school
- Develop and implement the 2018-19 Communication Plan
- Partner with the Assessment, Accountability and Technology Innovation Division to successfully develop and launch the first phase of the new district website – albanyschools.org
- Establish a monthly district TV program accessible to all community members via Channel Albany (public-access TV) and albanyschools.org
- Work with school and district leaders to develop clear, effective, culturally responsive communications across all channels
- Continue to seek out and develop increased opportunities for family and community feedback (two-way communication opportunities)
- Continue to seek out and develop increased opportunities to engage with our community to provide timely, transparent information about key district initiatives, with a particular focus on more effectively reaching stakeholders who lack access to many traditional communication channels
- Increase professional-development opportunities for Communications and Community Engagement staff:
 - 2018 National Family and Community Engagement Conference, Cleveland
 - 2018 New York State School Boards Association Annual Convention, New York City

Target Audiences and Primary Communication Channels

The City School District of Albany strives to foster open two-way communication pathways with all stakeholders who have a role in supporting the success of our students. These target audiences include both internal and external stakeholders.

Internal audiences

- Board of Education
- Administrators (building and district levels)
- Faculty
- Support Staff

External audiences

- Students
- Parents and guardians
- Parent-teacher organizations
- Neighborhood associations
- Elected leaders
- Law-enforcement agencies
- Business partners
- Community partners
- Local colleges and universities
- City of Albany residents
- Faith-based organizations
- Local media

Primary communication channels

- District website (albanyschools.org, including an online Feedback form)
- Individual school websites
- School News Notifier (SNN)
- Facebook
- Twitter
- “Capital Education” (quarterly city-wide newsletter)
- Annual district calendar
- Other district-wide and school-based publications
- Local media
- Staff presentations at schools and community organizations
- Staff email

Communications, Creative and Community Engagement Departments

The district realigned the Communications and Community Engagement offices in 2018 to better meet our growing needs for clear, consistent and timely two-way communications at both the district and school levels. Fundamental objectives of this realignment were to provide enhanced support for schools and departments, and to increase opportunities to engage families and community members in settings outside of school.

Departmental structure

Director of Communications and Operations Ron Lesko

The director of communications and operations is responsible for long-range planning, and short- and mid-range execution, in the areas of communications, creative development, crisis communications, community engagement, community partnerships, advertising, marketing, photography, social media, video development, website design and content management, charter schools, government relations and transportation.

- **Contact Ron:**
 - o – (518) 475-6065
 - cell – (518) 376-0013
 - rlesko@albany.k12.ny.us

Communications Department

The Communications Department is responsible for content development for all district-level publications and collateral material, media relations, photography and social media, and with providing direct communications support to all schools and departments across the organization.

Each member of the Communications staff is designated as a liaison for specific schools and departments as follows:

Assistant Director of Communications Lisa Angerame

- Albany High School/Abrookin Career and Technical Center
- Albany International Center
- Delaware Community School
- Edmund J. O’Neal Middle School of Excellence
- Giffen Memorial Elementary School
- New Scotland Elementary School
- Philip J. Schuyler Achievement Academy
- Thomas O’Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST)
- William S. Hackett Middle School
- Departments:
 - Early Childhood
 - Music
 - Pupil Personnel Services
 - Special Education
- **Contact Lisa:**
 - (518) 475-6066
 - langerame@albany.k12.ny.us

Communications Specialist Abigail Bleck

- Albany School of Humanities (ASH)
- Arbor Hill Elementary School
- Eagle Point Elementary School
- Montessori Magnet School
- North Albany Academy
- Pine Hills Elementary School
- Sheridan Preparatory Academy
- Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School
- Tony Clement Center for Education
- Departments:
 - Athletics
 - Buildings and Grounds
 - Central Registration
 - Visual and Performing Arts
- **Contact Abby:**
 - (518) 475-6079
 - ableck@albany.k12.ny.us

Creative Department

The Creative Department is responsible graphic design, photography, video development, and website design and content management.

Creative Content Coordinator Jake Planck

- **Contact Jake:**
 - (518) 475-6068
 - jplanck@albany.k12.ny.us

Community Engagement Department

The Community Engagement Department is responsible for outreach, engagement and Parent University programming to provide information and support to families and community members, and to solicit feedback about district initiatives and operations.

The department also is responsible for managing the district's community-outreach liaisons, and for the coordination of community partnerships.

Community Engagement Coordinator Cathy Edmondson

- **Contact Cathy:**
 - (518) 475-6067
 - cedmondson@albany.k12.ny.us

2018-19 District Publication Schedule

The Communications and Creative departments take a leadership role in a busy schedule of publications annually, in partnership with divisions, departments and schools throughout the organization, to support important district-wide communications objectives.

2018-19 Student Code of Conduct

(in partnership with Pupil Personnel Services)

Delivery date to printer: Aug. 3, 2018

2018-19 District calendar

Delivery date to printer: Aug. 10, 2018

2019-20 Albany High lottery application

(in partnership with Albany High School)

Delivery date to printer: Sept. 28, 2018

Fall 2018 newsletter

Delivery date to printer: Nov. 2, 2018

2019-20 Albany High course book

(in partnership with Albany High School)

Delivery date to printer: Nov. 30, 2018

2019-20 Magnet lottery application

(in partnership with Elementary Instruction Division, magnet elementary schools)

Delivery date to printer: Dec. 14, 2018

2019-20 Magnet lottery postcard

(in partnership with Elementary Instruction Division, magnet elementary schools)

Delivery date to printer: Dec. 14

2019-20 Albany High School unique pathways booklet

(in partnership with Secondary Instruction Division, Albany High School)

Delivery date to printer: TBD

2019-20 Middle School Curriculum Guide

(in partnership with Secondary Instruction, Curriculum and Instruction divisions)

Delivery date to printer: TBD

2019-20 Pre-K lottery application

(in partnership with Elementary Instruction Division, Early Childhood Department)
Delivery date to printer: Jan. 14, 2019

2019-20 Pre-K lottery postcard

(in partnership with Elementary Instruction Division, Early Childhood Department)
Delivery date to printer: Jan. 14, 2019

Winter 2019 newsletter

Delivery date to printer: Feb. 7, 2019

2019-20 budget newsletter

(in partnership with Business and Finance Division)
Delivery date to printer: April 18, 2019

2019-20 budget postcard

(in partnership with Business and Finance Division)
Delivery date to printer: April 24, 2019

Spring 2019 newsletter

Delivery date to printer: June 10, 2019

Digital Communications and Social Media

The City School District of Albany uses Facebook, Twitter and School News Notifier (SNN) as its primary digital communications tools.

School News Notifier (SNN)

SNN is an email information system that includes a text-messaging option for emergency news such as weather-related closings. There are 29 categories and nearly 5,500 registered users. All family members and community members are encouraged to sign up in multiple categories to stay in touch with what's happening at your school and district-wide. All schools are required to use SNN at least weekly and are encouraged to use it even more frequently as an important communication tool.

The district sent 1,813 SNN messages during the 2017-18 school year, an 11.2 percent increase over 2016-17. That included 844 messages from the schools in 2017-18, a 12.4 percent increase over the previous school year. You can sign up for SNN at albanyschools.org/snn.

Facebook – @albanyschools

Facebook is the district's most popular social-media tool with nearly 5,600 followers. The district makes active use of its Facebook page to share photos, videos and information from

throughout the district.

Twitter -- @albanyschools

The district also uses Twitter as an additional digital communication channel for photos, videos and information. The district's Twitter page has more than 1,450 followers.

Media Relations

Working with the print and digital media organizations in the Capital Region is an important element of the City School District of Albany's overall Communication Plan. The media provide important pathways for sharing information with all of our stakeholder groups. Positive relationships with all members of the media are critical to our overall communications objectives.

The Communications and Operations Division provides the following guidelines to all administrators on an annual basis to assist in maintaining positive relationships with all media organizations.

All news stories provide us an opportunity to shine.

- Stories about our great people and programs speak for themselves.
- Stories about our challenges provide opportunities to assure our community that we are working together, both as district staff and in partnership with our community, to ensure an environment of high expectations, high performance and continuous improvement for all of our students and all of our staff.

All staff members can help build and maintain positive relationships with the media.

- Trust all members of the media to do their jobs responsibly.
- Keep the good news coming! If you see good news happening in a classroom near you, please share that information with the Communications Department. Remember these essentials:
 - If it is an upcoming event, please provide Communications with as much time as possible to plan so that we can maximize the coverage and reach.
 - Who (is involved in the event or activity)?
 - What (is the news – an event, an award, etc.)?
 - When and where (is it happening, or when did it happen)?
 - Why (is it important for the community to know about it)?
- Let the Communications team know ASAP about bad news as well – 24/7/365.
- Be accessible – and know that we're here to help. Telling people about our good news isn't enough, we need to show them.
- Personalizing stories – putting a face or faces on key strategic initiatives or important data points – is critical for the media.

- The media love to tell our stories through our students, so please remember those signed Photo/Media Release Forms!
- **Never** feel obligated or pressured to talk to the media if they contact you directly. **Always** redirect them to a member of the Communications team and we will work with them to make all necessary arrangements to tell your story.
- If you or a member of your staff are contacted directly by a member of the media and conduct an interview or allow access to your building or program, please contact Ron Lesko or Lisa Angerame *immediately* to let us know.
 - **Advance notice is greatly appreciated and highly preferred – and as much as possible.**

When you are interviewed.

- **Nothing** is “off the record.”
 - Assume **everything** you say will be published, broadcast, tweeted, shared, etc.
- You are the expert.
 - Remember that the media is coming to you for help to find out about something they don’t know about, and to let the community know about something that they believe is important.
 - The Communications team is here to help you sort through all of the things you know about a topic, and to discern what is important and what is not in telling your story to the public.
- Always prepare in advance.
 - Contact the Communications Department to discuss opportunities and potential “hot spots.”
 - Your Communications liaison will work with you to script 3-5 key messages on the topic to be addressed. These are the most important things you want the public to know about the story.
 - Decide what you won’t say, but avoid “no comment” in response to any question. Reporters have the right to ask you any question they want, and you have the right to answer in any way that makes the most sense for you and the organization based on your knowledge and expertise in the area in which you are conducting the interview.
 - Know your vital statistics.
 - Keep answers simple and avoid jargon.
 - If you don’t know the answer, say so and offer to get the answer.
 - Do not guess at an answer or make an assumption.
 - Accent the positive; do not repeat negative phrasing.

Be sure every student in your building or classroom has a signed Photo/Media Release Form.

- No approval from home means “no” to photos and interviews.
- The form is included in this Communications Plan as **Appendix A** and also available in the Online News Center at albanschools.org.

- Having an updated form for each student will make things much easier and efficient when working with the media and in using school photos for district materials. It will help make it easier for us to share with the world all of the great things that are happening in Albany’s public school!
- **Please note** that the City School District of Albany Photo/Media Release Form applies only to the use of student images or interviews by the district. It does not allow use of student images or interviews by any external organizations. Each external organization needs to have its own Photo/Media Release Form signed by a student’s parent or guardian before being allowed to use student images or interviews.

Emergency Communications Protocol

Clear, accurate, timely communication during an emergency is a critical part of a crisis-response plan and an integral component of the City School District of Albany’s school security protocol.

In the event of an emergency that involves the implementation of security measures such as lockdown, lockout or shelter-in-place procedures or precautions, the district Communications Department is responsible for all communications. This includes all internal and external communications, including social media, websites, staff email, and individual and group phone calls or text messages.

Schools should send no communications in any format while the emergency procedures are in place.

Here is the communication procedure that building and district leaders should follow **urgently** whenever emergency security measures are put in place:

1. The building principal immediately contacts the district security director and appropriate assistant superintendent for instruction.
 - i. ***Building leaders should note that if, in their assessment of the security risk, it is necessary to activate the immediate emergency notification system to the police, they should activate this response as soon as possible in addition to engaging the security director and assistant superintendent.***
2. The assistant superintendent contacts the superintendent.
3. The assistant superintendent contacts the director of communications and operations to begin drafting an initial communication.
 - i. Office – (518) 475-6065
 - ii. Cell – (518) 376-0013

4. The director of communications and operations shares a draft of the initial communication with the following individuals for review and approval:
 - i. Superintendent
 - ii. Assistant superintendent
 - iii. Security director

5. The superintendent must approve all communications before they are sent. Once that approval has been given, the director of communications and operations sends the message using all appropriate communication tools. Messages are sent in the following order:
 - i. Board of Education members (email)
 - ii. External stakeholders (using all appropriate communication tools)
 - iii. Internal stakeholders (building or district-wide email, if applicable)

6. At Academy Park, the secretary to the superintendent distributes all official district communications sent via School News Notifier to all support staff in the Superintendent's Office to use as a script for answering phone calls related to the matter.

7. In the main office of the impacted school, the secretary to the principal distributes all official district communications sent via School News Notifier to all staff supporting the main office to use as a script for answering phone calls related to the matter.

8. The building principal remains in direct contact with the assistant superintendent and district security director at all times while emergency measures are in place.

9. The assistant superintendent remains in direct contact with the director of communications and operations to provide updates. All subsequent communications follow the same review, approval and distribution process outlined in steps 4-5.

10. In the event that the director of communications and operations is not immediately available, the assistant superintendent should contact members of the Communications Department in the following order:
 - i. Assistant director of communications – (518) 475-6066
 - ii. Communications specialist – (518) 475-6079
 - iii. Creative content coordinator -- (518) 475-6068

Advertising

The City School District of Albany engages in strategic advertising as a part of its overall Communications Plan. The district's advertising goals are narrowly focused and value-driven to maximize the impact of key messages with primary stakeholder groups. The Communications and Operations Division plans annual advertising campaigns using the following platforms:

- Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) buses and bus shelters
- JAMZ/96.3 FM
- KISS/102.3 FM
- Landmark Spectrum 8 Movie Theatres

Official Logos

City School District of Albany

The “We Choose” logo is the official logo of the City School District of Albany. The district prohibits the use of any other logo to represent the district. Please contact the Creative Department if you would like to use the “We Choose” logo in any file format.



Albany High School

The Falcon and script capital “A” are the official logos of Albany High School. The district prohibits the use of any other logo to represent Albany High School. Use of the script capital “A” logo is acceptable on a white or black background. Please contact the Creative Department if you would like to use the Falcon or script capital “A” logos in any file format.



All other district schools

Please contact the Creative Department if you would like to use the official logo for City School District of Albany middle and elementary schools.

School-based Communications

Supporting clear, consistent and timely communications at the school level in addition to the district level is a critical element of the 2018-19 Communication Plan. Through a cycle of continuous improvement, district and school leaders have identified a gap between what staff believe families and community members know, and what families and community members say they need.

To support school leaders in closing this information gap, the Communications and Operations Division is aligned to assist with school-level communications. This includes assisting school leaders or their designees with the development and distribution of school newsletters, flyers, letters to families and content review for digital communications via School News Notifier (SNN).

District leadership also has assigned school leaders with minimum communication requirements. The district also encourages school leaders, in partnership with their respective liaisons from the district's Communications Department, to research and implement new communication tools that will provide additional pathways to share information and encourage parents and guardians to engage more actively in their children's overall school experience.

School News Notifier (SNN)

The district requires each school to use SNN **a minimum of once a week** to share information with families and to encourage their participation in school activities and events. The Communications Department provides a step-by-step list of guidelines to assist staff members in sending SNN messages (see **Appendix B**).

School newsletters

Each school is required to send home a newsletter updating families about important information, noteworthy achievements and upcoming events **at least quarterly** during the school year. The district also encourages more frequent school newsletters (monthly, bimonthly, etc.).

To assist school leaders in achieving these goals, the district's Communications Department has assigned a liaison to each school (see pgs. 7-8). School leaders and their designees can provide information to their respective liaison by a previously agreed-upon date. The Communications liaison will proof all material and contact the school leader or designee for any questions before laying out the material in each school's approved newsletter template.

Once the school has approved the final content, the Communications Department will print copies of the newsletter in color and deliver the copies to the school to be sent home with each student. The Communications Department also will share each edition of the schools' newsletters via that school's individual SNN category.

Please see **Appendix C** for a schedule and frequency of school newsletters during the 2018-19 school year.

School flyers

To assist school leaders in providing more consistent, easy-to-use information for families, the Creative Department developed fillable flyer templates for the 2018-19 school year. The intent of these templates is to make it easier and faster for school staff to create flyers that also are branded with each school's consistent "look and feel."

School social media

The City School District of Albany encourages the responsible use of social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter as an important tool in an overall school-level communications program. Schools throughout the district of Albany are becoming more proficient in using Facebook and Twitter to engage families and community members in support of student achievement.

Guidelines for social media use:

- School leaders or their designees are responsible for monitoring the content closely to be sure that anything inappropriate is deleted ASAP and that responsible parties are dealt with accordingly (blocked and reported to the appropriate administrator and Communications Department liaison immediately).
- If you or another staff person cannot commit to monitoring the content regularly, schools should not commit to the use of social media tools.
- School leaders should limit the number of people with access to post on the school's page(s). It would be preferable if one person is solely responsible. The principal and the appropriate Communications Department liaison must have all login information for all social media pages.
- Use the official district log as your profile picture.
- Please like/follow the district's Facebook and Twitter pages and share/retweet district-wide info that would be relevant to all families (board meetings, budget votes, Albany High news, etc.). We also encourage schools to share/retweet any information related to schools that feed into your school, or schools to which your students will move on as they progress toward high school graduation. This will help students and families begin to develop positive impressions of the next schools they will be part of along their educational journey.

Information for Families and Community Members

The City School District of Albany employs a variety of communications tools and mediums to share information with families and community members, to allow families and community members to provide input and feedback on important district and school developments, and to provide clear lines of communication that families and community members can use to get timely answers to their questions.

Give us a call!

The quickest way to get the information you need is to call our district headquarters at Academy Park – **(518) 475-6000**. Staff there can direct your call to the appropriate office at Academy Park, or at any school or building throughout the district.

Find us online

Our website – **albanyschools.org** – provides a wide range of information about all aspects of district and school operations. We're in the process of a full design of **albanyschools.org** during the 2018-19 school year, so look for a brand new site with improved functionality and organization – not to mention a fresh new look! – in 2019.

Our site includes a **Feedback form** to allow you to direct specific questions to us via email. Questions sent to us via the Feedback form go to the Communications Department and are distributed to the correct person in the district for a timely response.

Family and Community Communication Guide

New for the 2018-19 school year, we have developed a communication flow chart to help families and community members understand the best places to begin to get answers to specific questions, and the next steps up the organizational ladder if you have additional questions (see **Appendix D**).

Follow us on social media

We use several digital communication and social media tools to help share information and updates. You can follow us on Facebook and Twitter, and also sign up for email communications via School News Notifier (SNN). Please refer to pgs. 10-11 for more information.

When bad weather hits

When wintry weather heads our way, the City School District of Albany has a plan in place to monitor developments and make timely decisions about possible school closures or delays. We encourage all staff, families and community members to rely on multiple sources of information in these circumstances (see Appendix E for the district's full Weather Emergency Procedures document). Please sign up for, follow or tune in to these channels to stay up-to-date:

- Sign up for School News Notifier (SNN) to receive text and email messages about school closings and delay announcements. You can visit **albanyschools.org/snn** to register.
- Follow us on Facebook and Twitter -- @albanyschools
- We'll update our website with information and updates – **albanyschools.org**
- Check out any of the following media outlets:
 - CBS6 Albany (Ch. 6)
 - Spectrum News (Ch. 9)
 - WTEN (Ch. 10)
 - WNYT (Ch. 13)
 - WROW-AM 590
 - WGY-AM 810
 - WTRY AM 890
 - WFLY-FM 92.3
 - WYJB-FM 95.5
 - WAJZ-FM 96.3
 - WTRY-FM 98.3
 - WRVE-FM 99.5
 - WZMR-FM 100.9
 - WKKF-FM 102.3
 - WPYX-FM 106.5
 - **timesunion.com**



City School District of Albany Photo and Media Release Form 2018-2019

SCHOOL _____ CONTACT#/E-MAIL _____

STUDENT NAME _____ GRADE ____ TEACHER _____

The City School District of Albany makes a concerted effort to promote the positive activities, honors and work of our staff and students. District publications and marketing materials, the district's website and the media may be utilized as tools for such promotion. There may be opportunities where students will be photographed and identified by name and classroom or school. However, we understand that some parents may request that we do not identify their children. Please fill out the form below to inform us of your wishes regarding publicity.

YES I, (parent/student) _____,
do hereby give consent to the City School District of Albany to photograph my son/daughter or myself (if I am a student 18 years of age or older) for use in any and all district publications, including newsletters, calendars, media projects, brochures, school or district websites, or any other broadcast, online or publication media.

NO I, (parent/student) _____,
hereby **PROHIBIT** the City School District of Albany from photographing my son/daughter or myself (if I am a student 18 years of age or older) for use in any and all district publications, including newsletters, calendars, media projects, brochures, school or district websites, or any other broadcast, online or publication media.

Signature of parent/legal guardian or student (if over 18) _____ Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

***** PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO SCHOOL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE *****

If we do not receive this form back, we will assume that you **do not** wish for your child to be photographed. This form will be kept on file at your child's school. If a situation arises that may change your child's status regarding publicity, please notify the school and the district Communications Office in writing as soon as possible.



CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT of ALBANY

Office of Communications and Community Engagement

1 Academy Park • Albany, New York 12207

(518) 475-6065 • Fax: (518) 475-6069

BOARD of EDUCATION

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Ron Lesko, *Director of Communications and Operations*

City School District of Albany

How to send a message using School News Notifier (SNN)

1. Log in via the Albany SNN icon on the district's home page, albanyschools.org.
2. Once you have logged in, choose "Send Notifications" in the right-hand menu on your Profile page.
3. Choose the link for your school or department. A large email box should open. *If a very small text box opens, please follow the Step 11 below to restore the regular SNN email text box.*
4. Type your message as you would a typical email (Editing tip: You only need to hit "Enter" once to create a new paragraph).
 - See step 11 for an alternative using Word.
5. **Review your message carefully** to make sure that:
 - All the information is correct, including dates, times and locations for events.
 - All information is spelled correctly and uses proper grammar.
 - Your school or department is clearly identified in the message.
6. After you have reviewed your message carefully, complete the "Enter Subject" box at the bottom of the screen as you would for a typical e-mail. Try to make the Subject as brief and descriptive as possible (e.g., SAA Family Night, Early dismissal Friday, Giffen Harvest Fest, NAA Avid Family Workshop)
7. Review your message carefully one final time to check for errors.
8. Choose "Send Email."
9. Choose "Logout" from the right-hand menu.

An alternative way to draft your message:

10. You also can create your message in Word and copy it into SNN. This allows the use of Word editing tools. To do this:
 - Draft your message in a Word document. **Be sure to review your message carefully and use spell-check.**
 - Copy the full text from the Word document.
 - Log in to SNN following steps 1-3 above.

VISION STATEMENT

The City School District of Albany will be a district of excellence with caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their potential.

MISSION STATEMENT

We will work in partnership with our diverse community to engage every learner in a robust educational program designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

- When large the email box appears, choose “Source” on the top left-hand side of the SNN email menu (*If a small text box appears, refer to Step 11 below*).
- Copy your text into the email window.
- Click “Source” again.
- Follow steps 5-9 above to finish sending your message. Please note that after you have copied the text into the SNN template you will have to re-enter the paragraph breaks and any special formatting (bold, italics, hyperlinks, etc.).
 - **Reminder:** You only need to hit “Enter” once to create a new paragraph.

11. If a small text box opens after you click on the link to send a message for your school or department, follow these steps to restore the regular large SNN template:

- In the far top right corner of your computer screen (above the SNN screen), there is a gear or wheel icon underneath the X you would use to close the program. Click on the gear/wheel icon.
- From the dropdown menu, select “Compatibility View settings.”
- The box that pops up will ask if you want to add “neric.org” to the sites with Compatibility View. Click “Add” and then “Close.”
- The regular large SNN message template should appear.

A final note about attachments.

SNN no longer supports attachments of any file type. If you would like to make a flyer or other document available to families digitally, please work with the Communications Department to have the file linked on your school or department page on the district website. You then can include or embed the link to that page in the body of your SNN message.

Call Assistant Director of Communications Lisa Angerame at (518) 475-6066 or Communications Specialist Abigail Bleck at (518) 475-6079 if you have any questions or need additional assistance.

Tony Clement Center for Education



invites you to our



Open House and Hispanic Heritage Celebration

Thursday, Oct. 18
5 - 7 p.m.

Please join us for a first-hand look at your child's learning environment, and to meet with Clement faculty, staff and community partners. We will also be celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month and serving Hispanic cuisine.

**Please note that students must be accompanied
by a parent/guardian to participate.**

For more information:

Contact the main office at (518) 475-6525

Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School



invites you to our

2018-19 Welcome Back Family Barbecue

**Wednesday, Sept. 9
4 - 6 p.m.**

Please join us for a fun evening of as we reconnect for the start of an exciting new school year!

There will be games, activities, raffle items — and, of course, a delicious barbecue!

For more information:

office at (518) 475-6425

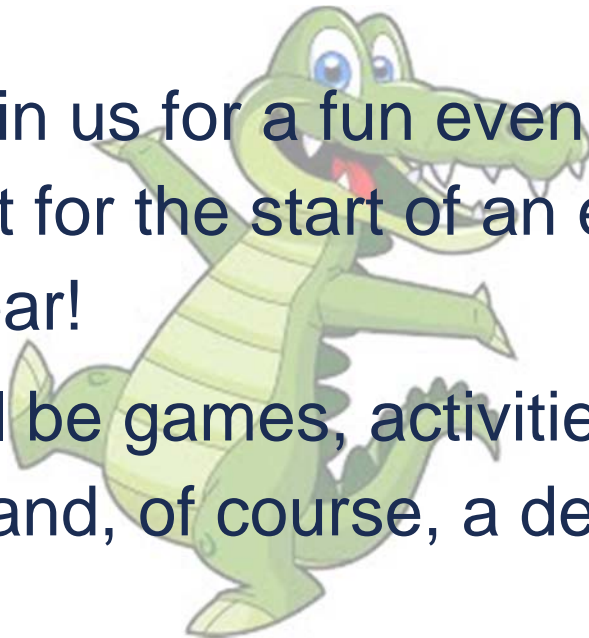
Call the main office at (518) 475-6425

2018-19 Welcome Back BBQ Extravaganza

**Wednesday, Sept. 9
4 - 6 p.m.**

Please join us for a fun evening of as we reconnect for the start of an exciting new school year!

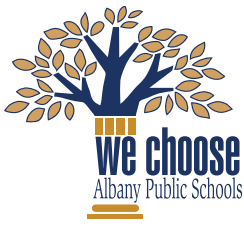
There will be games, activities, raffle items — and, of course, a delicious BBQ!



For more information:

*Call the main office at
(518) 475-6425*





Family and Community Communication Guide

Question	Contact 1	Contact 2	Contact 3	Contact 4	Contact 5
Pre-K academics	Classroom teacher	Building principal or program director	Early childhood director	Asst supt for elementary instruction	Superintendent
Elementary academics	Classroom teacher	Building principal or assistant principal	Asst supt for elementary instruction	Superintendent	
Secondary academics	Course/classroom teacher	Assistant/academy principal	Building principal	Asst supt for secondary instruction	Superintendent
Attendance	Classroom teacher	Building principal, assistant principal or home school coordinator	Assistant director of pupil personnel services	Director of pupil personnel services	Asst supt for secondary instruction
Board of Education	Board clerk	Superintendent	Board of Education president		
Budget and finance	Director of business affairs	Deputy supt for business and finance	Superintendent		
Buildings and grounds	Building principal	Director of facilities	Deputy supt for business and finance	Superintendent	
Communications/ media/social media/ website	Assistant director of communications	Director of communications and operations	Superintendent		
Construction/Capital Projects	Building principal	Deputy supt for business and finance	Superintendent		
Employment	Human resources generalist	Assistant director of human resources	Director of human resources	Superintendent	
Enrollment/changing schools	Central registration	Quality assurance manager	Director of pupil personnel services	Asst supt for secondary instruction	Superintendent
Facilities use	Facilities use coordinator	Director of communications and operations			
Food service/free and reduced meals	Building cafeteria manager	Building principal	School lunch director	Deputy supt for business and finance	Superintendent
Health services	School nurse	Building principal	Health coordinator	Director of pupil personnel services	Asst supt for elementary instruction
School safety	Building principal	Director of safe schools and violence prevention	Director of pupil personnel services	Asst supt for secondary instruction	Superintendent
School taxes	Tax collector	Treasurer	Deputy supt for business and finance		
Special education	Classroom teacher	Building principal	Director of special education	Asst supt for secondary instruction	Superintendent
Student registration	Central registration	Quality assurance manager	Director of pupil personnel services	Asst supt for secondary instruction	Superintendent
Technology	Help desk	Technology coordinator	Asst supt for assessment, accountability and technology innovation	Superintendent	

S C H O O L S

Abrookin Career and Technical Center
(518) 475-6400
Albany High School
(518) 475-6200

Albany International Center
(518) 475-6900

Albany School of Humanities (ASH)
(518) 475-6575

Arbor Hill Elementary School
(518) 475-6625

Delaware Community School
(518) 475-6750

Eagle Point Elementary School
(518) 475-6825

Edmund J. O'Neal Middle School of Excellence
(518) 475-6600

Giffen Memorial Elementary School
(518) 475-6650

Montessori Magnet School
(518) 475-6675

New Scotland Elementary School
(518) 475-6775

North Albany Academy
(518) 475-6800

Philip J. Schuyler Achievement Academy
(518) 475-6700

Pine Hills Elementary School
(518) 475-6725

Sheridan Preparatory Academy
(518) 475-6850

Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School
(518) 475-6425

Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST)
(518) 475-6875

Tony Clement Center for Education
(518) 475-6525

William S. Hackett Middle School
(518) 475-6475

A D M I N I S T R A T I O N

Superintendent's Office
(518) 475-6012

Assistant superintendent for elementary instruction
(518) 475-6012

Assistant superintendent for secondary instruction
(518) 475-6012

Assistant superintendent for assessment, accountability and technology innovation
(518) 475-6075

Board of Education clerk
(518) 475-6010

Business and Finance Division
(518) 475-6020

Buildings and Grounds Department
(518) 475-6160

Central Registration
(518) 475-6125

Communications Department
(518) 475-6066

Communications and Operations Division
(518) 475-6065

Director of Safe Schools and Violence Prevention
(518) 857-5999

Facilities use coordinator
(518) 475-6538

Health coordinator
(518) 475-6730

Human Resources Division
(518) 475-6055

Pupil Personnel Services
(518) 475-6130

Quality assurance manager
(518) 475-6181

School lunch director
(518) 475-6644

Special education
(518) 475-6150

Tax collector
(518) 475-6035

Technology Help Desk
(518) 475-6195

Transportation
(518) 475-6170

Treasurer
(518) 475-6020



City School District of Albany

Weather Emergency Procedures

**Procedures for Weather-Related School
Closing, Delayed Opening, and Early Release**

**Revised
January 5, 2018**

**Mrs. Kaweeda G. Adams
Superintendent of Schools**

SUPERINTENDENT'S CABINET

Kaweeda G. Adams
Superintendent of Schools

Cecily Wilson-Turner, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Lori McKenna
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

William Hogan
Deputy Superintendent of Business and Finance

Karen Bechdol
Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Matthew Petrin
Human Resources Administrator

Eileen Leffler
Administrator of Grants and Program Development

Ron Lesko
Director of Communications and Operations

Kent Baker
**Assistant Superintendent for Assessment,
Accountability and Technology Innovation**

Jack Grogan
Director of Security

Mike Wager
Assistant Director of Security

Brian Dengler
Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds

Denise Towne
Supervisor of Transportation

Lisa Finkenbinder
Food Service Director

WEATHER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- I. Introduction and Overview
- II. Monitoring and Information Gathering
- III. Procedures for School Cancellation or Delayed Openings
- IV. Procedures for Early Release
- V. Shelter-in-Place Procedures
- VI. Weather Guidelines for Outdoor Activities
- VII. Communications

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

One of the City School District of Albany's top priorities is creating and maintaining healthy school cultures. This priority is applicable at all times, including during the transportation of our students to and from school. Although it is the desire of the Superintendent to maximize student attendance and keep schools open each and every day of the school year, circumstances and weather events may create unsafe conditions for students that require adjustments to our normal operating schedule.

To ensure that all district and school-level staff are prepared, included herein are procedures for school closings, delayed openings, and early releases resulting from weather-related conditions that may jeopardize the safety of students. Both our internal and external stakeholders will be advised of our procedures, which include but are not limited to:

1. School board
2. District and school-level administrators
3. Collective bargaining units
4. School faculty and staff
5. Albany City Council PTA
6. Local law enforcement agencies
7. Mayor of Albany
8. City departments
9. Other community organizations

All comments and suggestions regarding these procedures should be directed to the Superintendent or the Director of Security.

II. MONITORING AND INFORMATION GATHERING

1. Decisions regarding school closures, delayed openings, and early releases are informed by multiple sources. Among these sources are:
 - a. Weather forecasts from local, state, and national services
 - b. Current and anticipated conditions of local streets and roads
 - c. Condition of district facilities, including parking
 - d. Condition of school and city buses
 - e. Decisions or anticipated decisions of surrounding school districts.

It is important to note, especially during months when cold weather is prevalent, that schools closures, delayed openings, and early releases can be caused by factors other than snow. Extreme cold air temperatures and wind-chill also are factors the district takes into consideration when considering the safety of students, families and staff members. For example, frostbite can occur on exposed skin in about 30 minutes in adults at -25°F and in as little as 10 minutes in adults at -40°F. It takes less time for children. Yet, frostbite can occur in children even before temperatures and wind chills dip into these extreme numbers; it just takes a little longer.

- a. No one should be outside with unprotected skin with *wind-chill factors of - 40° F*. This would be *a medical indication for school closure and suspension of outdoor activity, including all interscholastic outdoor sports*.
 - b. Injuries can occur sooner and at higher temperatures. As we are approaching *wind chills of -25°F*, it may be time to *consider late arrival or early dismissal*, especially for elementary children.
2. The district has created and will maintain a Weather Emergency Response Team that will be activated each time snow or other weather-related crises or emergency conditions develop or appear imminent. The Superintendent (or designee) will serve as the team's coordinator and will convene the team as needed to review current conditions and to ensure optimum readiness for closure, early release, or delayed opening by school and district staff. They will also ensure that all staff have up-to-date information on the status of decision-making relevant to weather-related events. Membership includes:
 - a. Superintendent
 - b. Cabinet members
 - c. Director of Security
 - d. Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds
 - e. Technology Coordinator
 - f. Supervisor of Transportation
 - g. Others as needed

3. The decision to close or delay school openings will be based on national and local weather reports; existing or potential road conditions; conditions of schools, including walkways and parking areas; and buses. When snow or other weather-related crises or emergency conditions appear imminent, the Director of Security and Transportation Supervisor will monitor and collect information on potential or existing hazardous street and road conditions from the following:
 - a. Local, state, and national weather services
 - b. Mayor of the City of Albany
 - c. Albany Police Department
 - d. Albany Fire Department
4. The Superintendent will monitor and collect information from the City of Albany departments of operations and transportation to assess the status of facilities, personnel, and programs planned that involve students, staff, and parents.
5. The Superintendent or her designee and the Director of Security, Supervisor of Transportation and Supervisor of Operations and Maintenance will consult with their colleagues in surrounding school districts.
6. All decisions regarding make-up days and pay issues resulting from emergency school closing, delayed opening, and early release will be made within 72 hours of the event.
7. During ongoing weather emergencies (multiple days) the Superintendent, Cabinet members and the Director of Security will conference call with Board of Education members for daily updates and recommendations.

III. PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL CANCELLATION OR DELAYED OPENINGS

1. The Weather Emergency Response Team will meet in a timely manner prior to a potential severe weather event to examine all information collected by the Director of Security, Deputy and Assistant Superintendents and Supervisors of Transportation and Buildings and Grounds, including weather reports; existing or potential road conditions; conditions of schools, including walkways and parking areas; scheduled events; and buses.
2. If the team needs to meet and confer during a weekend, team members may be asked to meet at the district administrative building or by phone conference as determined by the Superintendent.
3. Each Principal and their Assistant Superintendent for Instruction will maintain for each school a bell schedule reflecting both a one-hour delay and a two-hour delay start for staff and for students. Breakfast will be served with appropriate accommodations extended to late-arriving students as needed.

4. On the evening prior to a potential closing or delayed opening, the Director of Facilities will provide a weather update to the Superintendent.
5. Between 3:30 and 4:30 a.m., the Director of Facilities provides a weather update to the Superintendent as well as a review of the current conditions of roads and facilities. This information, combined with information from other local school districts, and in coordination with the Director of Transportation, informs the recommendation to the Superintendent.
6. The Superintendent will recommend closing or delaying opening by **5:30 a.m.** on the affected day and will communicate her recommendation to the Director of Communications to ensure social media (SNN, Facebook and Twitter) and media outlets have correct information. The Director of Communications also will communicate this information to all staff via e-mail.
7. School cancellations or delayed openings will be applicable to all district school sites serving students unless otherwise noted.
8. All district offices will be open and district office staff is expected at work unless otherwise announced. **When district offices will be closed or opening is delayed, a separate announcement will be made.**
9. The Director of Communications and Operations will communicate district-wide the decision to close or delay opening as follows:
 - a. Send an all-staff e-mail and social media notifications, including School News Notifier (SNN) text and e-mail messages, no later than 5:30 a.m. informing all recipients of school closure or delayed openings.
 - b. Communicate with all local media affiliated with the The School Closings Network the decision to close or delay opening. All staff and parents should monitor the TV or radio media for announcements of school closures or delayed openings.

IV. PROCEDURES FOR EARLY RELEASE FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER

1. On days when there is a strong forecast for inclement weather, the Weather Emergency Response Team will convene to review information provided to the Superintendent by the Director of Security, Supervisor of Transportation and Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds as indicated in the Monitoring section of these procedures. This information includes, but is not limited to, updated weather forecasts; street and road conditions; and other pertinent information.

2. Based on information gathered, including the recommendation of the Security Director and the Weather Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent will decide not to release students early or to commence with an early release of all schools either one, two or three hours earlier than their typical dismissal time. It is our desire on early release days to have a minimum of four (4) hours of instruction.
3. All principals will be notified by noon of early release by telephone and e-mail by their assistant superintendents within fifteen (15) minutes of the Superintendent's decision.
4. * In the event of an emergency (e.g. a significant number of students still remain in the building awaiting pick-up) the Principal will remain and seek volunteers. If there are no volunteers, the Principal shall remain until all students are dismissed.
5. The Supervisor of Transportation will call the Superintendent to inform her or her designee when all students have been safely discharged.
6. On early release days due to inclement weather, **ALL** after-school activities including athletics, professional development, adult evening school and other activities are cancelled unless otherwise announced. The secondary principals (high school and middle school) should contact the Athletic Director to coordinate scheduling of interscholastic athletic contests, when applicable.
7. Decisions and announcement for all non-school sites will be made separate from decisions affecting school sites.
8. The Director of Communications and Operations will communicate **early release** decisions to:
 - a. Principals via e-mail
 - b. Media outlets (TV, radio, newspaper, etc., via The School Closings Network)
 - c. Parents via all social media tools and district website informing them of school closure or delayed openings.
9. Saturday and Weekend Programs/Activities – In the event of an emergency closing of schools on Friday, a determination will be made at that time regarding weekend activities. The appropriate program/activity coordinators will be notified by their Assistant Superintendent of any cancellations.
10. The Business Administrator will communicate with and ensure timely execution of responsibilities by the following:
 - a. Food Service Department
 - b. Transportation Department
 - c. Buildings and Grounds Department

V. SHELTER-IN-PLACE PROCEDURES DURING WEATHER-RELATED EMERGENCIES

1. In the event that inclement weather prohibits or places at great risk the transportation of students, district office will enact “Shelter in Place” procedures.
2. Principals or site administrators will activate the school or facility’s emergency plan. Follow reverse evacuation procedures to bring students, faculty, and staff indoors. If there are visitors in the building, provide for their safety by asking them to stay and not leave. When directions are provided to shelter in place, everyone must take those steps immediately, where they are, and not drive or walk outdoors.
3. Principals or site administrators will provide for answering telephone inquiries from concerned parents and families of staff by having at least one telephone with the school’s listed telephone number available in the room selected to provide shelter for the school secretary, or person designated to answer these calls. There should be a way to communicate with people in all rooms.
4. Principals or site administrators will ideally, provide for a way to make announcements over the school-wide public address system from the room where the top school official takes shelter.
5. If the school has voice mail or an automated attendant, Principals or site administrators will change the recording to indicate that the school is closed, and that students and staff are remaining in the building until authorities advise that it is safe to leave.
6. Principals or site administrators will have employees familiar with your building’s mechanical systems available.
7. Principals or site administrators will gather essential supplies, such as nonperishable food, student medications, bottled water, battery-powered radios, first-aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, and plastic garbage bags.
8. Principals or site administrators will select a room(s) that has adequate space for everyone to be able to sit. Avoid overcrowding by selecting several rooms if necessary. Classrooms, libraries, meeting rooms, auditoriums, and gymnasiums may be used.
9. Principals or site administrators will have a hard-wired telephone in room(s) you select for emergencies to communicate status reports to parents and school officials.
10. If, Principals or site administrators will allow children that have cell phones to use them to call a parent or guardian to let them know that they have been asked to remain in school until further notice, and that they are safe.
11. Principals or site administrators will write down the names of everyone in the room, and call your schools’ designated emergency contact to report “who” is in the room with you.

VI. WEATHER GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Rationale and Overview

Outdoor activities can be an integral part of the school day. Weather conditions, temperature, and wind chill must be reviewed in order to determine if it is safe for students and staff to engage in outdoor activities. Severe climate conditions in which temperatures and wind chill dip into certain extreme ranges can cause medical concerns for the safety of children and adults.

Procedure Steps and Decision Points

- When temperatures are below 20 degrees Fahrenheit, including wind chill, outdoor activities should be suspended, including outdoor sports, physical education, clubs, and playground/recess.
- Weather conditions and wind chill should be reviewed daily in order to determine if the conditions are too risky for outdoor activities.
- When students engage in outdoor activities, they should be properly clothed for the weather conditions.

Cold Weather * (Based on wind-chill temperatures)

Above 25 degrees F	Regular outdoor activities
16-25 degrees F	Sunny days – regular outdoor activities Overcast days – limited outdoor activity (10-15 minutes)
10-15 degrees F	Sunny days – limited outdoor activity (10-15 minutes) Overcast days – no outdoor activity
Below 10 degrees F	No outdoor activity

**Proper dress is required to take part in outdoor activities.*

Hot Weather (Based on heat index temperatures)

Above 95 degrees F	No outside activity
90-95 degrees F	Limited outdoor activity (10-15 minutes)
Below 90 degrees F	Regular outdoor activities

Air Quality Index

Above 200	No outdoor activity
150-200	Limited outdoor activity (10-15 minutes)
Below 150	Regular outdoor activity

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

1. The Director of Communications and Operations will ensure that announcements for closings, delays, or early releases are posted on the district website, social media (School News Notifier/SNN, Facebook and Twitter), and media outlets via The School Closings Network. In the event of early release, the announcements will include any pertinent changes to bus stops.
2. During early release, bus companies must provide the district hourly status reports as buses are dropping students at their stops or homes. This information will be used to provide updates to parents by principals and/or district-level staff at a minimum of every hour, or more frequently as needed via School News Notifier or phone calls. Parents may call the district's call center (518-475-6010) for additional information.
3. The Superintendent and Director of Communications and Operations will receive regular updates at a minimum of every hour, or more frequently as needed from the Security Director on the status of schools during early release.
4. During early release, the Superintendent or her designee will consult and update every two hours:
 - a. School Board
 - b. Mayor's Office
 - c. Police Department
 - d. Office of Public Works
 - e. Others as needed
5. During early release, principals must call or e-mail their Assistant Superintendent when all students have vacated their buildings.
6. During delayed openings, principals must call or e-mail their Assistant Superintendent when all buses have arrived.
7. The Director of Communications and Operations will provide status reports to the media as approved by the Superintendent.

DELAYED OPENING PROCEDURES

PRINCIPAL'S CHECK-LIST

- ┌ Schedules updated to reflect one-hour and two-hour start times for staff and for students
- ┌ Review schedule with staff immediately upon completion
- ┌ Identify staff member(s) covering supervision for early student arrivals and location where it will occur
- ┌ Identify staff members covering breakfast
- ┌ Identify staff members overseeing student sign-out
- ┌ Update and regularly maintain student emergency contacts in the event of early dismissal