

2015-16

Communications Audit



WOODLAND
Public Schools

Prepared by Eric Jacobson, irx LLC

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2015-16

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External Communications – District-to-Community

External Communications include all methods Woodland Public Schools utilizes to reach families, students, and community members.

These methods include a variety of media including traditional newsletters and news releases as well as newer technology including the district’s website and social networking accounts.

The following sections summarize each of the different methods and ongoing releases Woodland Public Schools uses. The sections also include trend and results analysis of the success of each type of communication method.

Woodland Schools Weekly – What, Why, How Often

What is it?

Each week, the Communications Manager produces a feature story about something newsworthy happening in Woodland Public Schools. These stories are released to the Woodland Schools Weekly email list, posted to the district website, posted to Facebook and Twitter, released to the media, and sent to the Woodland Public Schools staff. The stories are also used for the Woodland quarterly newsletters and for other purposes.

All Woodland Schools Weekly stories are archived on the Woodland Public Schools website and are accessible to the public. The archive currently holds more than 35 stories.

Why is it?

In addition to teaching members of the community about the district, the Woodland Schools Weekly stories enhance transparency by providing the district with a vehicle to release information about construction, the budget, academic success, curriculum changes, and other important school news to the community and to the media.

How often is it?

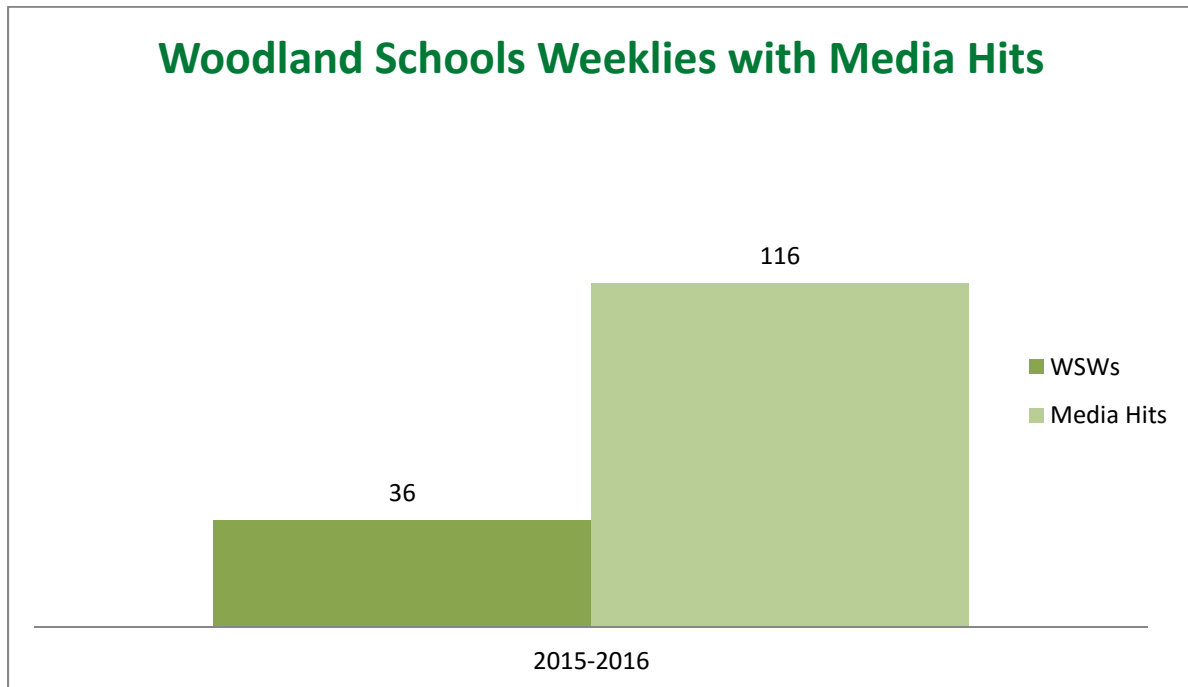
Weekly, except for school holidays (Approximately 30-40 stories per school year).

Why is media coverage important to a school district?

The local news media, including newspapers, television news, and radio stations, have column inches and hours of airtime to fill. By sending them our news stories, we receive free coverage on their avenues of communication leading to:

- *More affordable.* School districts can't afford to send printed media on a regular basis, however printed media is the best way to ensure the district reaches its entire constituency. By receiving free coverage in the media, the district is able to communicate with the community without paying printing costs.
- *More notoriety.* When a district applies for grants or government assistance, being notable and recognizable can be key in receiving the extra funding. Companies are more likely to support organizations where they know they will receive coverage of their generous work.
- *More credibility.* Even though the local media often runs our stories exactly as we write them, readers hold great credibility in something they read, hear, or see in the news media because the media performs independent research for their stories.

Woodland School Weekly Stories – Trend Data



Number of weekly Woodland School Weekly stories in 2015-16 School Year (August-June): 36

Number of Media Hits in 2015-2016 School Year (August-June): 116

Hits to Release Ratio: Average of 3.2 media hits per WSW

Trends

A media hit refers to a mention of Woodland Public Schools in the local news media which includes newspapers, television news, and radio. For each Woodland Schools Weekly story released in the 2015-16 school year, the district receives 3.2 stories on local news media.

Summary

Regularly releasing weekly news stories caused the media to pay attention to Woodland Public Schools. Now, the local news media relies on the district's Woodland Schools Weekly stories to fill column inches and airtime which extends the district's reach to the Woodland community and offers more ways for community members to stay in-the-know.

As mentioned previously, this extensive coverage also comes with no costs for printing or postage to reach the thousands of residents who want to learn more about Woodland schools.

Board Briefs – What, Why, How Often

What is it?

Following each school board of directors meeting, the Communications Manager works with other district personnel to summarize the events and decisions made during the board meeting. These summaries are called Board Briefs and are released to the community via an email newsletter, the district's website, and the district's social networking accounts. Archives of previous Board Briefs are also stored on the district's website. Board Briefs are also sent to the entire staff of Woodland Public Schools to keep them up-to-date on board activities.

Why is it?

The Woodland community expressed interest in receiving summaries of the district's school board of directors meetings more rapidly than waiting for the approval of the board minutes at the next board meeting. The Board Briefs provides the district with a method to summarize board meetings and reach the community without needing to wait for the next meeting.

How often is it?

Board Briefs are typically released within 1-3 days of the most recent board meeting.

Board Briefs – Trend Data

Number of weekly Board Briefs in 2015-2016 School Year (August-June): 17

Average Open Rate for 2015-2016 School Year (August-June): 45.26%

Trends

The Board Briefs have a higher-than-average open rate at 45.26% with the average open rate for email newsletters typically below 20%.

Summary

With the Board Briefs sent to community members, the media, staff, and interested parties, the Woodland community is able to stay on top of the Woodland Public Schools Board of Directors activities and meetings.

Facebook and Twitter – What, Why, How Often

What is Facebook?

The district's Facebook page permits the district to post stories, photographs, links, and other bite-sized news events on a regular basis. The stories posted to Facebook aren't long enough to qualify as Woodland Schools Weekly, but still offer exciting news to the community.

Why is the district using Facebook?

Some news events are too small for full releases, but Facebook enables those stories to be told to an increasing audience. Facebook's ongoing popularity and relatively low cost (it's free) help the district provide information to people both on-the-go through Facebook's mobile versions and to those who use Facebook from a computer.

Facebook provides another avenue for the district to post school news, closures, and also engage in two-way communication with the community. Community members post questions and comments to the district's Facebook posts which the Communications Manager responds to, offering another method for community members to reach out to the district.

What is Twitter?

Twitter feeds provide content limited to 140-characters per post (called a "tweet"). The district is seeing growing participation in Twitter, and since the large majority of posts made to Facebook are duplicated to Twitter, the low amount of time required to participate in tweeting justifies the district's use of the network.

Why is the district using Twitter?

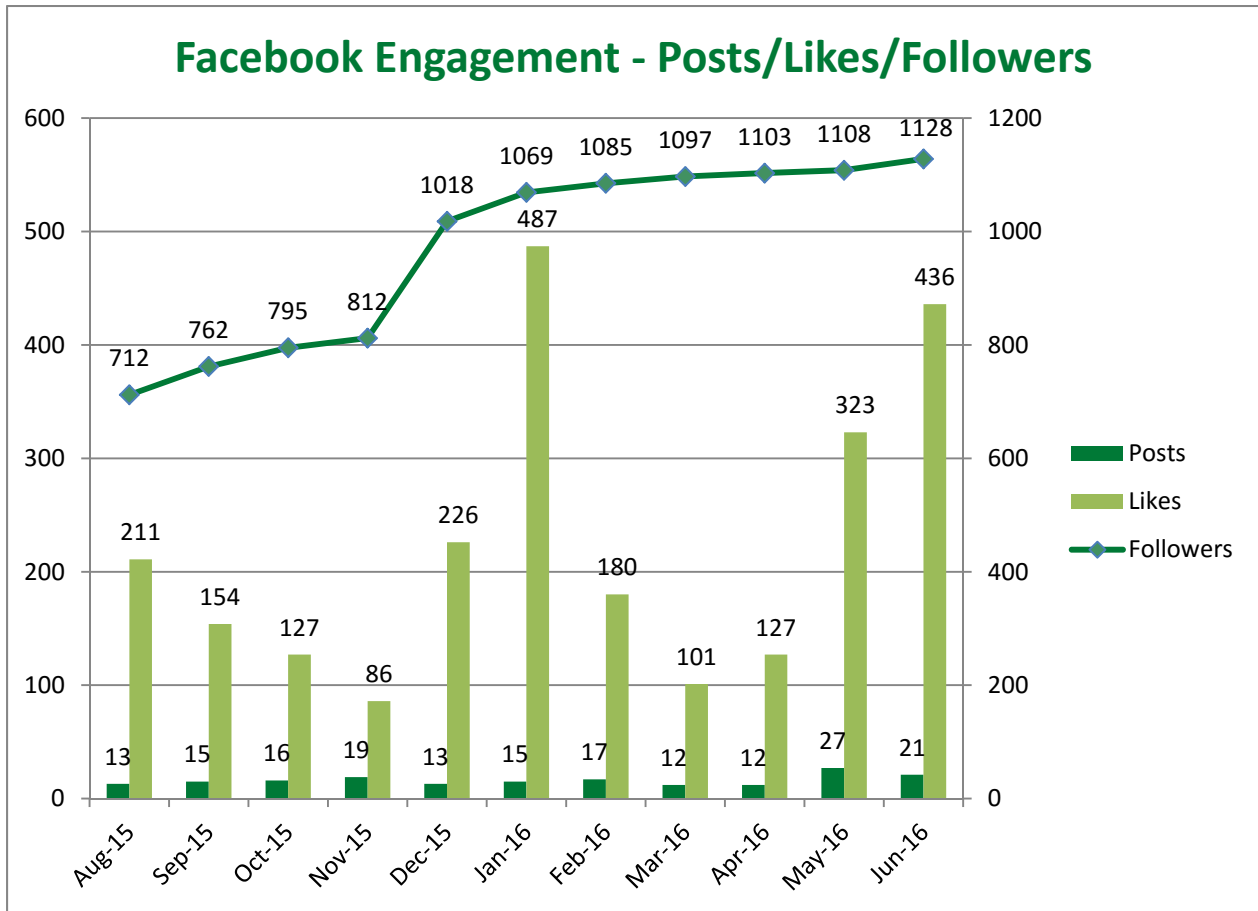
Given that Twitter requires little time investment and no cost, it provides another method for community members to receive news about the district.

How Often?

The district tries to release one Facebook post and Twitter tweet a day, but also tries to limit the number of posts to, at most, only 1-2 per day. Maintaining the balance between providing regular news without becoming too noisy is key to keeping Facebook fans and Twitter followers engaged but not overwhelmed.

More than two posts per day may cause Facebook and Twitter fans to stop following the district's social networking accounts by causing too much "noise" on users' feeds.

Facebook – Trend Data



Current Number of Facebook Fans: 1,128 (58.4% increase since August 2015’s 712 fans)

Number of Posts in 2015-2016 (August-June): 180 posts

2015-16 Average Number of Likes per Post: 13.66 Likes per post

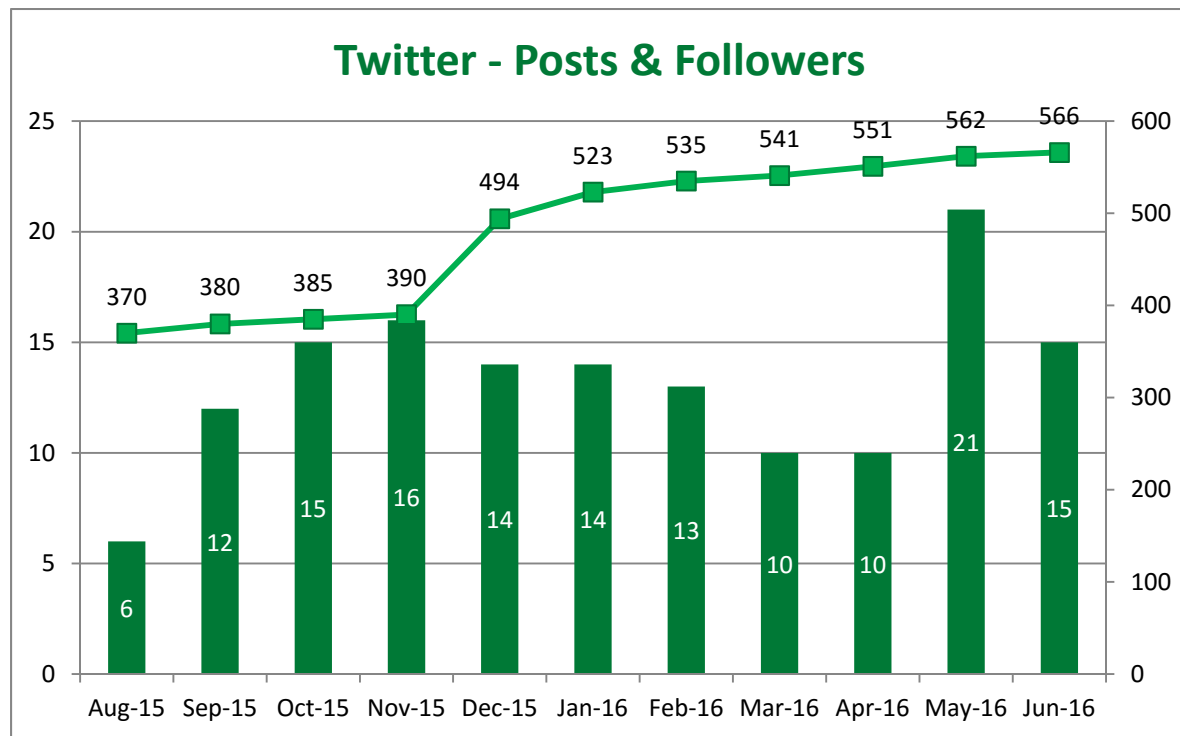
Trends

For a district the size of Woodland Public Schools, the district’s Facebook audience of 1,128 members is impressive, especially given the district started the school year with just 712 fans.

Summary

The consistent results from the Facebook audience in Woodland Public Schools content demonstrates that giving audiences regular news updates via social networking helps increase participation and attention.

Twitter – Trend Data



Current Number of Twitter Followers: 566 (52.9% increase since August 2015’s 370 followers)
Number of Tweets in 2015-2016 (August-June): 146 tweets

Trends

Woodland Public Schools saw a substantial 52.9% increase in its Twitter audience this year growing from 370 followers at the start of the school year to 566 at the end.

Summary

Although calculating Return-on-Investment (ROI) is difficult on Twitter as the network has no ability to “like” posts the same way Facebook users can, the low time investment with no fiscal cost makes Twitter an effective communication method to utilize in order to release district news and updates.

Publications

Our Community Matters Newsletter – Quarterly (three-per-year)

The Our Community Matters Newsletter focuses on in-depth academic and district news stories from all around Woodland Public Schools. In each issue (released Fall, Winter, and Spring/Summer), the district strives to give each school a dedicated story along with at least one story affecting the district as a whole. The Our Community Matters Newsletter is printed and sent to every resident of Woodland. In addition, the current electronic versions and archives are available on the district website.

District Website

URL: www.woodlandschools.org

The district website remains a top priority for district communications as it can effectively, efficiently and quickly provide information for the community at little to no cost for publication outside of the contract with the website provider.

Changes for 2015-16:

- **Added Newsroom Section**
The Newsroom provides visitors with access to district press releases, the Woodland Schools Weekly news story archives, and Board Briefs board meeting summaries. The Newsroom serves as both the location to get the most up-to-date news as well as review archives of previously-released stories.
- **Revamped Homepage Design**
In collaboration with the district's IT department, the homepages for the district and each school were revamped to allow for dynamic content changing. Each homepage features the related Twitter accounts and also allows for new stories to automatically populate the rotating image banner.

Key website features:

- All printed publications are offered electronically on the website prior to their mailing.
- The Woodland Schools Weekly and other news messages are updated in each of the rotating image banners on the various homepages.
- Required district communications such as meal programs, RFP/RFQs and employment requests can be posted via the website.
- Shortcuts to athletics, employee benefits, Skyward Family Access, maps, and much more are immediately accessible from the homepage.

Special Projects

New Woodland High School Grand Opening

- Google Slides Presentation – WHS Construction Photos
- Hot Spot Poster Creation and Design – 17 total
- Invitation Design – Community and Personal
- Map Creation – Teachers/Room Numbers, Hot Spots, Self-Guided Tour
- Creation of Program of Events and Save-the-Date Postcard
- Grand Opening Speechwriting – Michael Green, Janice Watts, Jared Cloud, John Shoup, Chris Lilley

Woodland Public Schools Employee Appreciation Awards Ceremony

- Online Nomination Form – Creation and Design
- Staff Party Announcement/Invitation – Layout and Design
- Staff Party Awards and Photos Presentations – Layout and Design

Job Fair Material Redesign

- Job Fair Display Boards – Redesign and Layout
- Job Fair Business Cards – Redesign and Layout
- Job Fair Brochure – Redesign and Layout

Employee Handbook Redesign

- Complete Handbook Layout and Resdesign
- Content creation and revision

Paper Tigers Movie Event

- Invitation – Redesign and Layout
- Invitee List Creation and Email

Non-DYK Press Releases

- District Security Improvements (August 3, 2015)
- Press Tour of new Woodland High School (August 4, 2015)
- Elementary School Reconfiguration (August 11, 2015)
- Grand Opening of Woodland High School (August 19, 2015)
- Woodland Public Schools seeking Board Director (September 3, 2015)
- New Board Member Selected (October 6, 2015)
- Woodland Public Schools appoints new Board Member (October 9, 2015)
- Board Member Retirement (November 10, 2015)
- Water Testing Results (June 2, 2016)

Internal Communications – District-to-Staff

Woodland Public Schools reaches out to the staff utilizing internal newsletters in an effort to improve morale and increase awareness of district decisions affecting the staff. Future plans include additional methodologies to improve two-way communication between the staff and district leadership.

WSD News

Total for 2015-16 School Year: 36 newsletters

What is it?

The staff of Woodland Public Schools receives an internal email newsletter letting them know what coverage the district received in the news media. Special thanks and acknowledgments are given to those staff members who helped put together story either by suggesting it or helping arrange for interviews, etc.

Why?

WSD News emails help increase staff morale by demonstrating the success of coworkers and giving credit for those who help tell the exciting stories happening around the school district. In addition, the emails serve as a weekly reminder to share stories going on in the classrooms with the Communications Manager for release to the public.

How Often?

Ranges from weekly to monthly depending on the number of media hits received.

Possible Future Projects

Two-Way Community Communication – Online/Paper Surveys

- Utilizing Google Forms, Woodland Public Schools can conduct low-cost online surveys to engage the community and received feedback about curriculum, academics, athletics, facilities, and much, much more. Paper surveys can also be utilized through the district to engage community members with no Internet access.

Good News Postcards/Mailings

- Sent on a bimonthly basis, postcards containing important district news and upcoming events could be sent to the community, increasing community awareness and reaching all members including those without Internet access. Using a postcard design layout reduces postage and printing costs over a larger newsletter. The district would continue to send three newsletters each school year.

Two-Way Staff Engagement – Surveys and Feedback Forms

- To improve staff engagement with administration and the board of directors, surveys using Google Forms could be implemented and analyzed on a regular basis throughout the school year. In order to increase staff participation, surveys should be conducted on a quarterly basis as more frequent surveys may result in less participation.
- In addition to surveys, the district may offer an anonymous feedback/suggestion form on the district's website accessible to the staff where they could submit suggestions and feedback regarding district decisions and future plans.