



Pittsfield NH School District  
Public Engagement & Communications Plan: Year 2  
Academic Year 2013-14

The following is a plan for public engagement and communications efforts that will be undertaken during the 2013-2014 school year. Many of the activities and product lines that were articulated in last year's Public Engagement and Communications Plan will continue in the coming year; the Pittsfield team has also identified new activities, programs and products that are designed to build stakeholder understanding and support for Pittsfield's redesign efforts in general, and student-centered learning in particular. Note: This plan encompasses all of the communications-related activities in the District, both internal and external. The Communications Team owns many of these activities, but many other individuals and groups own and are responsible for some of what is described below.

Audiences

This year, we will focus on the following three kinds of audiences:

**#1. Audiences who need to be continually involved:**

- Students
- Parents
- Teachers
- Paraprofessionals
- Administrators
- Union Leadership
- School Board
- Good-to Great-Team
- Pittsfield Listens

**#2. Audiences who need to be strategically involved:**

- Business and Influential Leaders (faith, civic, cultural, informal, advocates)
- Elected Officials
- NH Department of Education
- Funders (federal, state, foundations)
- Media

- Neighboring communities in New Hampshire (including, but not limited to, Concord, Barnstead, Alton, Chichester, Epsom, Northwood, Gilmanton, Strafford, Loudon)
- Non-parent residents of Pittsfield

### **#3. Audiences who need to be informed:**

- Statewide Organizations
- Statewide Elected Officials
- Chairs of State Education Committees—House and Senate
- State Board of Education
- Regional organizations
- Federal organizations and officials
- General Public

## Goals

Last year, we articulated broad goals and objectives for Public Engagement and Communications. Five of the six goals and objectives remain entirely relevant; the strategies and tactics may differ slightly, based on what we learned last year and what we anticipate to be the greatest needs in the coming school year.

**GOAL 1:** Increase understanding of and support for The Redesign of the Pittsfield Schools by creating tools and trainings that will help internal and external leaders demonstrate the benefit to the community as a whole.

**Objective 1:** Develop a common language among all leadership stakeholders around the future preparation of Pittsfield, through the creation of materials and through training and technical assistance.

**Tactic 1A:** Continue “Telling Pittsfield’s Story” trainings for stakeholder groups, to widen the circle of ambassadors who can keep the community informed on the progress of the Redesign and build understanding of student-centered approaches to learning. Interactive exercise could include writing authentic letters to the editor.

**Tactic 1B:** Solidify general and project-specific FAQs for posting on the Pittsfield NH School District website and dissemination elsewhere as deemed appropriate.

**Tactic 1C:** Based on input from several groups last year, revise Talking Points and hold follow-up training that enables relevant stakeholders to practice the Talking Points and elaborate upon them through their own stories.

**Tactic 1D:** Engage the Good-to-Great Team in telling Pittsfield’s redesign story and in monitoring the progress of the Public Engagement and Communications Team.

**Tactic 1E:** Identify stories for documentation and create an updated Journey Map

**GOAL 2:** Create a presence for The Redesign in the community at large, highlighting the concept of the “orchestra” with everyone playing their part, and building a sense of belonging and shared fate among citizens, and a sense of hope about the future.

**Objective 1:** Develop an integrated set of communications assets to build recognition and understanding of The Redesign.

**Tactic 2a:** Utilize the content of “The Explainer” to create a one-pager or brochure that can be a “leave-behind” at conferences, community gatherings, legislative hearings, and the like. (First opportunities to distribute brochure and/or Explainer:

August 27<sup>th</sup>: 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation & Teacher Workshop

August 28<sup>th</sup>: First Day of School

September 4<sup>th</sup>: First PTO Meeting

September 5<sup>th</sup>: New Employee Reception

September 11<sup>th</sup>: Pittsfield Parent Connection meeting

September 17<sup>th</sup>: Good-to-Great Team meeting

September 19<sup>th</sup>: Superintendent Presentation to Pittsfield Listens

**Tactic 2B:** Create a dissemination plan for the Explainer.

**Tactic 2C:** Work with Pittsfield Listens to create an LED and virtual Community Bulletin Board (near Dustin Park) that can serve the community in perpetuity, and that can be a key source for disseminating information about The Redesign.

**Tactic 2D:** Create a website redesign team, with the goal of creating a more dynamic site that reflects the dynamism of the District’s redesign efforts.

**Tactic 2E:** Create a space on the server as an opportunity to share products for dissemination, e.g., the new logo.

**Tactic 2F:** Create a District-wide Facebook page, establishing norms for posting

**Objective 2:** Utilize existing community/trade media to provide ongoing coverage of The Redesign.

**Tactic 2G:** Build ongoing relationships with local media to ensure:

- Regular coverage in the Suncook *Valley Sun*, *The Baysider*, *The Laconia Daily Sun*
- Coverage on New Hampshire Public Radio
- Semi-regular coverage in the Concord *Monitor*, the Manchester *Union Leader*, and other relevant metro daily newspapers and magazines in New Hampshire
- Coverage in educational trade newsletters and magazines
- Send photos and videos to the Nellie Mae Education Foundation for posting on its website.

**Tactic 2H:** Write Op-Eds for local papers and state publications, and for educational trade journals.

**Tactic 2I:** Create media list, including community organizations in and beyond Pittsfield so that many organizations receive press releases and other important notices from Pittsfield.

**Tactic 2J:** Write commentary for *Education Week* about Pittsfield's talent development and position analysis efforts, with a focus on the District's administrative and leadership reorganization.

**Tactic 2K:** Create PowerPoint for Superintendent about the administrative reorganization and how it is driven by the District Redesign and student-centered approaches to learning.

**Objective 3:** Organize community events and seize opportunities at existing events for citizens to learn about aspects of The Redesign and student-centered approaches to learning.

**Tactic 2L:** Continue to create visible presence at relevant community festivals, such as Old Home Day and National Night Out—and at sports events, school events, municipal meetings, and other venues where the community gathers en masse.

**Tactic 2M:** Develop a calendar/schedule for communicating with specific groups, such as Rotary Club, the Select Board, etc.

**Tactic 2N:** Create a more intentional presence at PES, including at Parent-Teacher Conference Days, the Open House in September, and the Curriculum Fair in the spring.

**Tactic 2O:** Continue hosting the ELO presentations several times a year.

**Tactic 2P:** Continue hosting Exhibition Day, extending the invitation to non-parent community members, parents from neighboring towns, and state and local officials.

**Tactic 2Q:** Ensure that the Chamber-sponsored business showcase spreads the word about The Redesign and student-centered learning.

**Tactic 2R:** Continue hosting Community Connection evenings with Pittsfield Listens. This year, we will also deploy newly produced videos to stimulate deep conversation.

**Tactic 2S:** Engage local business leaders to attend school-related events and become more engaged with the life of the schools.

**Objective 4:** Communicate progress and broad impact to internal and external groups.

**Tactic 2T:** Provide regular updates about The Redesign via the Superintendent's report to the School Board, quarterly letters to alumni, and via the website and Annual District Report. Also provide regular updates on the Town website.

**Tactic 2U:** Set norms for Blackboard Connect (the new name of Alert Now)

**Tactic 2V:** Make curriculum available on-line, and inform community of its availability.

**Tactic 2W:** Explore us of Apps

**Tactic 2X:** Clarify internal communications protocol to ensure that everyone working for the District is kept "in the loop."

**Tactic 2Y:** Create an Event Planning Template that includes such tasks as

securing a photographer and/or videographer to capture the event—and whether the event merits professional photography.

**Tactic 2Z:** Create a central repository for stories, videos, photographs of what is happening in the schools, classrooms and the community at large, determining which stories are most appropriate to pitch to the print and electronic media, and which can be shared with the community at School Board, Selectmen and other meetings and events. Repository should be password protected.

**Tactic 2AA:** Create a system for capturing aspects of The Redesign through professional photography and video production. (Two highly produced videos have already been made, with four more in the pipeline. Additional funding is being sought to complete this series.)

**Tactic 2BB:** In collaboration with New Hampshire Listens and Pittsfield Listens, host an event in the fall to facilitate small-group conversations about both internal and external communications related to the District and the community.

**GOAL 3:** Continue to communicate with students about The Redesign, actively seeking input from across the student population, encouraging full participation and engagement, and providing opportunities for leadership development

**Objective 1:** Continuing to increase outreach to students who may not yet be fully engaged in their learning.

**Tactic 3A:** Work with the Site Council to continue building students' awareness of The Redesign and enlist their participation.

- Hold occasional lunches with Superintendent and Leadership Team in which students (especially those not in leadership positions) are encouraged to share their thoughts and concerns.
- Participants in the Student Leadership Summit will design the first two days of school; the Site Council will evaluate how the two days went and determine what else might be needed for an effective start-of-school.

**Tactic 3B:** Provide opportunities for student leaders to build their communications capacity.

- Offer a workshop for students on communicating about The Redesign, with opportunities to practice and adapt message.

- Invite student leaders to talk about student-centered learning with younger students

**Objective 2:** Establish a set of norms for staying in touch with students after they graduate, so that they can be role models for current students.

**Tactic 3C:** Send out a letter before graduation expressing the importance of graduates keeping in touch after graduation. Send out another letter in October inviting them to a January event.

**Tactic 3D:** Send out a specific letter to most recent graduates during their first year of college or post-secondary experience, reminding them that Pittsfield is thinking of them.

**Tactic 3E:** Hold an alumni event every January, during which graduates come back to the school to talk about how school connects to the real world and how the Pittsfield Schools prepared them, and to provide alumni with an opportunity to hear how today's students are doing. Create a Planning Team for this event, in partnership with the Alumni Association.

**GOAL 4:** Strengthening the partnership with parents by engaging in authentic two-way communication, ensuring timely and appropriate information, and actively seeking parent input, participation, and opportunities for leadership development.

**Objective:** Continuing to increase outreach to those who have traditionally not been connected with the schools.

**Tactic 4A:** Work with the Pittsfield Parent Connection to build parents' awareness of The Redesign and enlist their participation.

- Distribute the Explainer to Pittsfield Parent Connection
- Create a separate meet-and-greet event for parents so that they can get acquainted with the new administrative team

**Tactic 4B:** Provide opportunities for parent leaders to build their communications capacity.

- Offer a workshop for the Pittsfield Parent Connection on communicating about The Redesign, with opportunities to practice and adapt messages.
- Offer a workshop on communications for Parent Leadership Training through Pittsfield Listens.
- Pittsfield Listens creates short-term Action Committees on various topics.

**Tactic 4C:** Provide regular opportunities for parents to learn about student-centered approaches directly from school personnel and students.

- Host regular meetings for parents to voice concerns and ask questions.
- Pittsfield Listens hosts a two-part session for parents.

**GOAL 5:** Create a short- and long-term strategy for influencing policy leaders and other thought leaders at the statewide and regional levels, driving home the urgency of embracing student-centered learning approaches and competency-based education.

Objective: Build and deepen relationships with key policy leaders and other thought leaders in New Hampshire and beyond.

**Tactic 5A:** Identify key leaders at the state, regional and national levels with whom we want to connect.

**Tactic 5B:** Invite leaders to visit Pittsfield to see evidence of The Redesign, and to attend key community-wide events.

**Tactic 5C:** Organize occasional visits by members of the administration to the State Legislature and State Board of Education to meet with allies and potential allies.

**Tactic 5D:** Work with state education leaders on re-defining the measures of school system/teacher/student success.

**Tactic 5E:** Create business/community/thought leaders list and send them a spring newsletter

### Governance

The Pittsfield NH School District Communications Team will form the governance structure for Public Engagement and Communications, with Ross Morse, part-time Community Liaison, as the point person. Pittsfield Listens is also member of the Team. To implement the Plan, the Community Liaison, the Communications Consultant and the Communications Team will take ownership of the following governance and administrative responsibilities:

- Monthly communications meetings/calls with Communications Team to review upcoming activities, explore communications opportunities and check on progress;



- Bi-weekly phone meetings with Community Liaison, Director of Pittsfield Listens and Communications Consultant;
- Collect and distribute evidence of progress and success;
- Manage and oversee communications activities and serve as editorial review board of materials.

### Measuring Our Progress

Last year's Public Engagement and Communications Plan included a sixth goal that focused on evaluation of our efforts, pending additional funding from Nellie Mae or an arrangement with Education Development Center. This did not materialize. The Team will discuss in the fall how we might find a no-cost and effective way to measure our public engagement and communications progress. The Good-to-Great Team, with its emphasis on continuous progress, might be an avenue for exploration

*For specific information on the rollout of the Public Engagement and Communications Plan, please see separate document titled Timeline/Work Plan.*