

2019-20

MILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Communications Report - July to December 2019

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COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

It is crucial to effectively and openly communicate to our community of students, staff, parents/guardians, tax payers, and other stakeholders as a public school district with a strong mission and vision.

To support our school community and uphold our strategic plan objective of communications, we carry out an open communications plan across various platforms including: the district website, re-branded district newsletter, new staff newsletter, "Board Meeting Highlights" newsletter, school site and PTA newsletters, social media, and communications campaigns to raise awareness for the great people, programs, and events in our schools and build community.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Communications is one of four objectives of the Mill Valley School District Strategic Plan: "Maintain positive student, staff, parent/guardian, and broader community support for our district and schools."

Strategies include:

- Widely promote the district's vision for all students' success by effectively communicating with students, parent/guardians, staff, trustees, and the community-at-large.
- Proactively communicate future issues, initiatives, and opportunities.
- Encourage open communication (through group interaction between school officials and staff/community).



WEBSITE STATS

Our website is our "home" online and the primary source of information for our community. Home page content is refreshed regularly to provide up-to-date information. The website should be easy to navigate so that community members can find what they need, while also staying in-the-loop with what we're doing as a district.

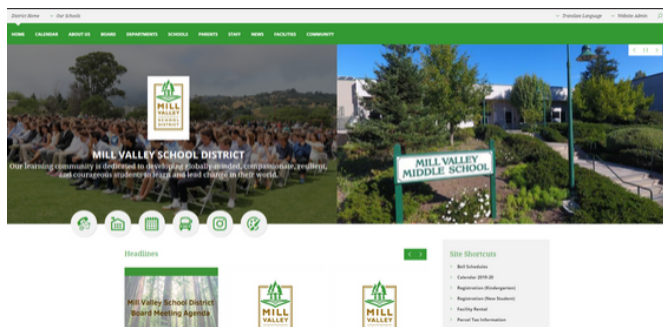
This November, the District launched a new website template to increase usability, to move the main navigation bar to the top, and to re-establish a professional and modern website aesthetic.

Website data is collected via Google Analytics. Our website is most visited on weekdays during school hours, especially Wednesdays at 1pm.

Comparison to other K-12 Schools:

We had higher benchmarking rates than districts with comparable daily website sessions during the first half of the 2019-20 school year in a few main areas. Overall, in comparison to other districts, we had:

- 82% more website sessions
- 60.78% more new users
- 9.15% fewer pages per session
- 16.40% shorter average session duration



BEST MONTH

Our website had its highest traffic in October 2019 - 63,070 page views and 15,804 users.

TOP PAGES

Top pages visited:

- MVSD home
- Middle School home
- Staff Resources
- Middle School Teacher Sites
- 2019-20 School Year Calendar
- Middle School Library

IN JULY TO DECEMBER 2019...

- 67,074 users visited our website
- There were 138,906 sessions on our website - an average of 23,151 sessions per month per month and 2.07 sessions per user.
- We had an average of 56,561 page views per month, with a total of 339,369 page views
- An average of 2.44 pages were visited per session
- 19.43% of visitors were in Mill Valley
- Our largest demographic is women ages 35-44
- Visitors are primarily navigating to our website via organic search (google, bing, etc.) - 64.1%, followed by directly navigating to the site - 32.8%
- Website most visited at 1pm on Wednesdays

NEWSLETTER RATES

During the first half of the 2019-20 school year, the District sent 8 newsletters to the parent community.

The Mill Valley School District Newsletter is formally known as the District Flash! It was re-branded to better reflect current newsletter best practices and to be more clear about its purpose of informing our community. The re-branded newsletter features a simplistic design using the district's shade of green and a white background.

The newsletter is one of the primary communications platforms used by the District to keep our community aware of news and updates district-wide, positive stories to be proudly shared, upcoming events, and messages from the Superintendent.

We are well beyond the educational industry averages for open rates, but there is still room to improve. A new but ambitious goal would be to reach 75% of our audience in 2020. The transition to ParentSquare as our communications platform is a likely explanation for our open rate increase, since parents cannot opt-out of messages. Last year, we were able to track click rates, but ParentSquare does not have that function.

**OPEN RATE IS
14.4% HIGHER
THAN 2018-19
SCHOOL YEAR**

**59.1%
AVERAGE
OPEN RATE**

In the first half of the 2019-20 school year, we had an average newsletter open-rate of 59.1%.

According to Campaign Monitor, the 2019 Education industry average open-rate of 18.90%



October Staff Feature - Chris Hill, Science Teacher at Mill Valley Middle School

Mill Valley School District staff members are amazing, and we want to share more about their passion and contributions to the district! This month's feature is on Chris Hill, a science teacher at the Mill Valley Middle School. [Visit our website to read her answers](#) to questions like "What is the most rewarding part of working in the Mill Valley School District?" and "What is your favorite spot in Mill Valley?"



Board of Trustees Meetings

We invite you to join us at our Board Meetings. The next regular meeting is on Thursday, November 14th at 6 pm in the Mill Valley Middle School Library (425 Sycamore Avenue). You may view the [full board meeting calendar on our website](#). Please access board meeting agendas on [Agenda Online](#).



State of the Students 2019 Address



Thursday, November 14, 2019, 5-6 pm
Mill Valley Middle School Gym
Stay for our Board Meeting at 6 pm

Kiddot Survey

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS NEWSLETTER

In 2019, the district launched a new communication - an overview of presentations at each Board of Trustees meeting.

54%
AVERAGE
OPEN RATE

In the first half of the 2019-20 school year, we had an average open rate of 54%.

According to Campaign Monitor, the 2019 Education industry average open rate of 18.90%



Board Meeting Highlights
November 14, 2019 Board of Trustees Meeting

To view attachments related to the presentations summarized below, please view the [board meeting agenda](#).

State of the Students Address 2019

Thank you to everyone who attended the first annual State of the Students Address. Our presentation, as well as a recording of the full event, will be available on our website soon.



7th Grade Student Learner Profile Recognition

Mill Valley Middle School 7th Grade students were selected by their Panther Time teachers to be honored based on an attribute(s) of the [Mill Valley Learner Profile](#). Congratulations to these remarkable students! (see photo above)

Business and Financial Matters - AB 1200 Disclosure Document for MVTA, Tentative Agreement Between MVTA and MVSU; AB 1200 Disclosure Document for Administrators, Confidential, and Unrepresented

The District settled with the Mill Valley Teachers Association (MVTA) on a contract for the 2019-20 and 2020-2021 school years. The settlement agreement included a 3.26% increase on the salary schedule for 2019-20 and a 2% increase on the salary schedule for 2020-21. Additionally, all unit members will receive a \$500 one-time, off-schedule bonus, prorated based on full-time equivalency status. Prior to this agreement, the MVTA salary schedule, which provides salary increases based upon years of experience, offered a \$1,000 salary increase at 24 years of service. This is now increased to \$4,000. In addition to salary increases, benefits (medical, dental, and vision) will once again be fully covered for Employee and Employee +1. Family benefits will be 90% covered for staff members employed with the district prior to 2012 and 79% covered for those employed by the district during or after 2012.

Before approving an agreement, the provisions of that agreement must be disclosed at a public meeting of the District Governing Board per Government Code Section 2547. These disclosure documents require that the District Superintendent and Chief Business Officer "shall certify in writing that the costs incurred by the district under the agreement can be met by the district during the term of the agreement." The Mill Valley School District will maintain the recommended required reserve level as designated by the State.



Annual Organization Meeting - December 16, 2019



The Board Meeting Highlights newsletter was created as a strategic effort to provide summarized, accessible information about presentations to the Board of Trustees. The Mill Valley School District community desires transparency from the district, and this digital publication provides that on meetings for those unable to attend.

In Spring 2019, the Board Meeting Highlights had an average open rate of 46.6%. In the first half of the 2019-20 school year, there have been four board meetings, and the average open rate for the Board Meeting Highlights is 54%, an increase of 7.4% since last school year.

This newsletter was embraced by our community, and the readership continues to grow, likely due to the shift in platform to ParentSquare. Our goal for the second half of the school year is 60%.

OPEN RATE IS
7.4% HIGHER
THAN 2018-19
SCHOOL YEAR

SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to our website and newsletters, another method of sharing updates, information, and fun moments in our schools is utilizing social media platforms. These accounts allow us to interact with and build our community and meet them where they already are.



195

*Facebook followers as of
December 2019*



1,323

*Twitter followers as of
December 2019*



986

*Instagram followers as of
December 2019*

FACEBOOK

During the first half of the 2019-20 school year, we gained 36 new Facebook followers. Our best month on this platform was August, when we had a reach of 934, 848 post engagements, and 236 video views. While our audience is more active on Instagram, maintaining this presence has allowed us to reach those who actively use Facebook and share our content.

TWITTER

Our largest social media audience is on Twitter. However, this audience is less engaged and consists of more professional educators and local public figures. With that in mind, our Twitter content has been more geared toward sharing information that celebrates district educational achievements.

INSTAGRAM

During the first half of the 2019-20 school year, we gained 201 followers on Instagram. Therefore, this remains our fastest-growing platform. Our Instagram audience consists of parents, staff members, and local businesses. August was our best month on Instagram so far this year, with 511 likes and 31 comments which is very high engagement. Additionally, our community has enjoyed our Instagram Stories, which generally receive 125 views and regularly receive celebratory replies from parents.

THANK YOU!

We are thankful to the Mill Valley School District community for supporting us, reading our communications, providing feedback and insight, and providing trust in us for educating your children. We look forward to sharing more with you throughout the rest of the 2019-20 school year and into the future.

