

Clear communication is essential, particularly during school interruptions. The Department strongly encourages all school systems to develop and implement dedicated and centralized communications plans, [aligned with emergency policies](#), to help maintain consistent messaging. School systems should take the following steps when planning for and implementing communications plans.

- [Set a Communications Protocol](#)
- [Share Information and Response Plans](#)
- [Streamline Communications](#)
- [Send Frequent Updates](#)

**Set a Communications Protocol.** Preparedness should focus on strengthening the systems and structures that support effective and well-coordinated communication, and not solely on the development of communication messages.

- Create and maintain internal communications plans – a process for reaching staff through a combination of emails, intranet postings, check-ins, and [FAQs](#).
- Create and maintain external communications plans – a process for reaching families, the community, and the media through messages, a [dedicated landing webpage](#), [newsletters](#), [news releases](#), and social media.

*Communications plans should identify simple, key messages, a reliable process, and the ability to provide continual updates and collect feedback.*

**Share Information and Response Plans.** External communications plans take into account accessibility for various audiences, including but not limited to English Learners and those with disabilities.

- Create and maintain a [designated landing page](#) on your website that is easy to find and navigate.
- Send emails with information about your landing page and response plan.
- Utilize automated messaging to share updates and news. View [FirstLine Schools](#) and [Monroe City Schools](#) Case Studies as examples.
- Use social media platforms to share links to your landing page, response plan, and other timely, important information.
- Ensure key information is widely accessible. When possible, translate documents into various languages, provide closed captioning on videos, and enable read-aloud functions on webpages.

**Streamline Communications**—updates, information, and resources—directly on your website. If possible, provide a prominent web banner or pop-up message with a link to a designated landing page. Be sure to state facts and keep your messages simple, specific, and aligned to the information your school system is communicating. Provide links to information and resources when applicable. Include the following:

- School interruption updates, including messages from the superintendent, press releases, waivers, memos, guidance, and contact information. View the [Department’s COVID-19 Library](#) for examples.
- News releases: Reference newsrooms from the [Department](#) and the [Office of the Governor](#) for the most up-to-date news releases.
- Responses to Frequently Asked Questions: Utilize the Department’s [K-12 Frequently Asked Questions](#) and [Early Childhood Frequently Asked Questions](#) documents for guidance.

- Links to external information sources from the [Department](#), [Office of the Governor](#), [Louisiana Department of Health \(LDH\)](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), and local emergency contacts.

*Allow for two-way communication: Families should be able to submit questions, comments, and concerns, providing administrators with the ability to remain connected and respond promptly to concerns.*

**Send Frequent Updates** through multiple avenues of communication, making sure to identify and meet the needs of those who do not have internet access. Provide consistent information and utilize automated messaging, texting, and/or local media to share updates and resources on your website and on social media, providing information including but not limited to:

- Continuous learning for all students. Examples of continuous education resources can be found on the [Department's COVID-19 page](#).
- Access to technology
- Canceled and postponed events
- [Meal services](#)
- Guidance from local, state, and national authorities and experts
- How to [combat discrimination and bias](#) during school interruptions

*Consider [retweeting timely information from the Department](#), local authorities, or experts to help families stay connected and informed.*

Please contact [doecommunications@la.gov](mailto:doecommunications@la.gov) for assistance with communications.