As one of the first school districts in the state of California to open for in-person learning, Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD) remained committed to frequent and effective communication to the school community of 16,500 students and 2,000 employees. As the Delta and later Omicron variants forced rapidly changing guidelines surrounding the COVID pandemic, we established communication priorities to guide our efforts:

1) Clear and concise
2) Easy to access/translated for our high percentage of Spanish-speaking families
3) Highly engaging to compete with lots of incoming information

In May 2021, we surveyed our family community about the effectiveness of our current communication channels. We also partnered with county and state health departments to research best practices and stay up to speed with rapidly changing guidelines. This in turn helped us formulate our plan.

The Communication team and Superintendent, along with support from the Board and Executive Cabinet, developed a comprehensive communication plan designed to address the communication needs of our families as the pandemic continued. Using the theme “NVUSD: Stronger Together, Better Than Ever,” we focused on building an impactful communication program that would not only inform our community of parents, students, teachers and staff, but also underscore our number one priority: the health and safety of everyone. Our planning stage included identifying key messages and target audiences – with families at our 27 schools as our primary focus. We audited our communication channels and added new ideas to our arsenal, including video which we learned from families was a powerful tool. We also created self-help instructions for parents to access Parent Square – the district’s primary tool for reaching families via email, text and mobile. This required creation of step-by-step instructions, including with video and screenshots, to make it easy for parents to update their contact information and understand where to go when receiving information from the district. Finally, the lack of in-person events due to COVID was especially hard on our tight-knit community which has a
very high percentage of multi-generational families and alumni. As such, we made a concentrated effort to create avenues and opportunities for ZOOM and virtual events as a way to stay connected using visual and two-way communication.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Working throughout spring and in summer, we enhanced our website to include an easy-to-find updated COVID portal that included the latest guideline information, graphics pertaining to quarantining mandates, FAQs, and also a weekly COVID tracker that the team collected and posted to inform parents of COVID case rates. We also debuted a new “5 Things to Know” video series. Our first installment of the series featured “5 Things Families & Students Need to Know about Keeping Schools Open.”

With the goal of showcasing the many positive things happening across the district, we created a State of the Schools video. This allowed us to celebrate NVUSD’s theme “Stronger Together, Better Than Ever” even while the pandemic waned on. Since in-person meetings were still not possible, we hosted Facebook Live events with Superintendent Muccetti and special guests such as our Assistant Superintendent of Instruction. These, along with Virtual Town Halls, allowed us to create two-way engagement and answer questions from parents. We also hosted Virtual Author events for both parents as well as book readings for students such as Johanna Ho, author of “Eyes that Kiss in the Corners.”

We revamped our bi-weekly Family Newsletter - “Let's Stay Connected” - with an improved mobile-friendly design and easy-to-scroll interface. And – to further educate our families across a range of topics – we launched the NVUSD Parent Learning Series in both Spanish and English.

We also worked closely with reporters from the local newspaper, the Napa Valley Register, and other news outlets to garner PR and news coverage on our communication efforts. We felt it was critical to have this third-party information in news channels not only for our NVUSD families, but the community at large. This was an important reputation element for the district, as COVID decisions and external news was dividing communities with regards to school mask mandates and other guidelines.

**EVALUATION**

Parent engagement in our open rates for the Family Newsletter increased 4 percent after our redesign. We also saw an increase in Facebook followers of 8 percent and a three percent increase in Instagram followers..

Our weekly COVID tracker helped validate that masks in the classroom were instrumental in keeping case rates low. This weekly tracker was a communication best practice in our goal to be transparent about what was happening in our schools and ensuring the health and well-being of our entire student body, faculty and staff were a priority.
Due to our PR efforts with local media channels, we garnered state-wide attention. In March 2021, Dr. Rosanna Mucetti was invited by California Superintendent Tony Thurman to participate in a virtual panel of experts on "How to Keep Classrooms Safe for All: Lessons and Successes from California Schools" in which she shared learnings from our own district with other school districts across the state. She also was interviewed by various media outlets such as KCBS radio to discuss our successful reopening.

In addition, as one of the first school districts to open in California, our county was chosen by Governor Gavin Newsom’s office as a backdrop to sign and announce a new package introducing additional education funding. The announcement was made at NVUSD’s Shearer Elementary School and garnered local and state-wide news coverage.

We look forward to surveying our parent community again this May with the same communication questions. This will allow us to identify areas for improvement from our initial baseline survey completed in May 2021.
Welcome to the 2021-2022 School Year!

We were thrilled to welcome all TK-12th grade students last week for in-person learning and a promising new school year. For more information, please visit our Back to School page and our COVID update & guidelines page.

Let's Keep Our Schools Open!

Watch our short video on the 5 Things you need to know to help us keep students in school.
## Parent Learning Series
### 2021-2022 School Year
#### March Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Class and Date</th>
<th>Instructor &amp; Zoom link</th>
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| 5:30-6:30 pm  | Tuesday - March 1, 2022 | **Project Toolbox/Caja de herramientas Toolbox**  
Are you interested in learning more about your child’s social emotional learning program at school? In this training you will be introduced to the new curriculum NVUSD has adopted at all our Elementary schools; the Toolbox Project! We will explore the importance of social emotional learning to academic growth, the Toolbox Project curriculum, and additional resources that can help you continue learning by using the 12 Tools at home!  
¿Está interesado en aprender más sobre el programa de aprendizaje socioemocional de su hijo en la escuela? En esta capacitación, se le presentará el nuevo plan de estudios que NVUSD ha adoptado en todas nuestras escuelas primarias; el Proyecto Caja de Herramientas!  
Exploraremos la importancia del aprendizaje socioemocional para el crecimiento académico, el plan de estudios del Proyecto Toolbox y recursos adicionales que pueden ayudarlo a continuar aprendiendo usando las 12 herramientas en casa!  
*Class will be in English with Spanish interpretation* | Kristin Nelson & Christina Lawrence  
Co-ordinator, NVUSD  
Teacher, Brown Valley NVUSD  
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85934715073 |
| 5:30-6:30 pm  | Tuesday - March 8, 2022 | **Parents as Partners in Math: Supporting your child at home with visual models, strategies and key questions.**  
Families are our student’s “first teachers” and our partners in education. Come join our remote session and leave with lots of resources that you can use to help your child become a fluent and confident mathematician.  
For additional information on Bridges in Mathematics, see this link :  
https://www.mathlearningcenter.org/families  
Padres como socios en matemáticas: apoyando a su hijo en casa con modelos visuales, estrategias y preguntas clave.  
Las familias son los “primeros maestros” de nuestros estudiantes y nuestros socios en la educación. ¡Únanse a nuestra sesión remota a | Pia Hansen  
Curriculum consultant - The Math Learning Center (Bridges Math)  
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81145121132 |
Governor Newsom signs Pre-K and K-12 education package

How to Keep Classrooms Safe for All: Lessons and Successes from California Schools

10 a.m. Thursday, March 25 | Zoom and Facebook.com/CAEducation

In this statewide webinar for all educational stakeholders, hosted by State Superintendent Tony Thurmond, participants will hear from school districts, experts, and leaders in the field on successful strategies for sustaining safe in-person learning in the months ahead, including: available state resources for ventilation upgrades, implementing COVID-19 testing, and more.

State Superintendent Tony Thurmond
Natalie Lee, California Energy Commission
Chris Ruch, National Energy Management Institute
Dr. Barbara Nemko, Napa County Superintendent
Dr. Rosanna Mucetti, Napa Valley USD Superintendent
Paula Villegas, California Health and Human Services

Livestream will begin shortly