Dickinson Public Schools Brand Est. 2020

In 2019, Dickinson Public Schools (DPS) hired the first-ever communication position in the district. Since then, we have grown to a two-member department. The DPS Communications Department serves as a conduit of information to our parents, students, staff, and community. In addition, our goal is to develop and maintain external communication platforms that build relationships centered on trust and transparency with those we serve and those we are accountable to.

Research
As there was no communications department prior to 2019, the Dickinson Public Schools brand was hardly ever developed. Without an established brand, we were unable to unify our staff and community behind DPS. After losing two high school referendums, our district was plagued with a negative school climate and a lack of community support. COVID-19 and a teacher grievance only furthered frustrations as we saw an unprecedented shift in attitudes towards education. We understood the importance of building trust, transparency, and growing DPS pride with all these new challenges. However, how could we build district pride without recognizable branding? How could the students, staff, parents, and the Dickinson community trust the school district when our branding did not reflect our story? We understood the importance of these questions and set out to build trust by establishing the Dickinson Public Schools brand. We researched a variety of districts that were similar in size to ours and districts with larger student enrollment. We focused on the use of branding in their websites, social media, and digital and print marketing materials.

Planning
The biggest challenge was building our department and brand from zero. The first step in establishing the Dickinson Public Schools rebrand was designing a new district logo.

In February 2020, we went from this:
The re-design of our new logo, the introduction of branding guidelines, new typography, and brand colors opened the door to establishing a unified Dickinson Public Schools brand. The following essential steps were creating branding guidelines for each school, designing new vision and mission statements and posters, and a new district website that reflected the rebranding of DPS. Other design elements we planned on developing were letterheads, business cards, email signatures, step & repeat, and social media content. We also produced a video with the help of an outside contractor to help tell our story.

Implementation
Following is a list of the items we re-designed starting in the summer of 2021 to establish our new brand:

1. **New District Website**

Designing a new website was an essential step in establishing who we are and continuing to build trust in our district. We understood that our old website's lack of organization and user-friendliness increased frustrations among our current staff, students, and family members and affected prospective families and stakeholders.

Working on launching a new district website involved thoughtful planning with a focus on ADA compliance and user-friendliness. After transitioning all the information from the old website to the new, the real work began. We re-structured the primary navigation and created various new content.

In November of 2021, we went from this:
Another big part of building our new website and the rebranding process was ensuring that all the schools' sites have branding that meets ADA standards. We developed **branding style guides** to help our building school-level techs navigate the future branding of their school websites. The branding style guides helped our school sites remain consistent throughout our district with both the school logos and colors.

### 2. Mission and Vision Poster

The next step in establishing our brand was creating mission and vision posters that reflected DPS beliefs. The mission and vision posters can be found in our schools and district buildings. Along with posters, we designed a **retractable** and **step and repeat** to be used in district events.

### 3. Business Cards, Email Signatures, and Letterheads

The central administration offices are the headquarters of our district. Due to the CAO employees’ daily communication and work with staff, parents, and the community, we
implemented business cards, email signatures, and letterheads that showcase the DPS brand and a unified look.

4. Social Media/ Facebook Cover Photo
5. **We Are Dickinson Public Schools - Mission Video**

This video aims to build pride in our DPS family and bring our mission, vision, and beliefs to life. We worked hand-in-hand with a local videographer storyboarding, building the script, and planning shots that encompassed the many layers of our schools. The graphic elements of the video, reflect our district colors and branding. Due to working with the same videographer prior, we were able to utilize a mixture of footage from pre-COVID-19 and the shoot in May 2021. We kicked off our 2021-2022 school year with this video at our Back-to-School Staff Breakfast. It was a huge success, and our community received it well. We currently host the video on the homepage of our district website, Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube.

**Evaluation**

This past year we have worked on establishing a recognizable brand. With that has come many challenges and many opportunities for growth and reflection. We have learned through establishing a brand that trust is essential in building relationships; however, trust is strengthened through time.

Initially, when the communications department was first introduced at DPS, we witnessed confusion within the district regarding our purpose and role. As we continued to develop our brand and story, we began to see a shift in how staff, students, and the community viewed the communications department. Where before, people in our district scoffed at hiring a communications position in education, we are witnessing the same people thanking us for our work.

With a focus on building trust, our staff, students, and community are now seeing the power of district branding and its pride. We have taken big steps in developing our brand and recognize there is still much work to be done. We are excited to continue building the Dickinson Public Schools brand with the support of our district. We are so proud of what we have accomplished so far, and we believe our district is too!