EXPANDING COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Columbia Public Schools expands Community Outreach and Engagement using CPS-TV

Current Background Information:
The district operates CPS-TV, the district's 24-hour cable-access television channel which airs live and pre-recorded content and streams to the website. CPS-TV is a way for the district to maximize resources and streamline programming to continuously tell the story of CPS to stakeholders. CPS shares the programming schedule on the district's website broadcasts Board of Education meetings and district events. CPS-TV also broadcasts graduation celebrations, building opening and reopening videos, science education shows, fine arts programming, reminders about masks and hygiene, “School Beat” the CPS News Magazine and CPS 360, the student produced news show to address specific content needs, district and state award winners and more. The in-house produced programs and district highlights are also available for instant replay on the website and transcripts are also available. CPS-TV airs on 3 local cable access channels via local cable providers and broadcasts the signal to a web streaming service (Apple TV, Fire TV). The channel includes both live and pre-recorded content. The channel programming is also available on the districts’ CPS-TV page. CPS identified CPS-TV as a tool for directly communicating with stakeholders and seeks to increase stakeholder perception of communication by focusing on programming and CPS-TV usage between 2019 and 2021.

Research: In 2019, as Columbia Public Schools entered the final year of its current Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP), a five-year strategic plan for the school district, it conducted its biannual community perception survey (a telephone survey of 400 randomly selected, registered voters in the district). Research specifically related to Columbia Public Schools Television: the survey results in 2019 indicated CPS-TV continued to have limited viewers. And those who watched “Frequently” or “Sometimes” had very few suggestions for other programming. The number of respondents who watched CPS Television at least “Sometimes” was down slightly from 2017 (19% vs. 25%). The number one response in 2019, again, was “Never” at 58%. Like in 2017, most viewers were watching “Scheduled activities” (51 mentions) or “Programs” (32 mentions). As in the past, respondents struggled to come up with additional ideas for CPS Television programming, with 97% saying, “Don’t know/Not sure/None.” Respondents to the survey indicated they would be interested in more stories about students’ and teachers’ successes in 2019, with 87% interest from the respondents (up from 76% in 2017).

CPS will communicate district data and information to support learning using CPS-TV programming.

Objectives: Starting in August 2021, CPS will maintain time spend on target pages, including the CPS-TV main page, to average more than one minute and 30 seconds (1:30). CPS will increase classroom specific content on CPSTV by 25 percent over the 2020-21 school year. Increase viewership by 5 percent as measured by the biannual survey. Between 2019 and 2022, CPS will work with stakeholders to move “Communication” from an area of improvement to a graded area in the next stakeholder survey to be conducted in summer 2022 (delayed one year because of COVID).

Tactics: Share CPS-TV programs with stakeholders in email communications, CPS-TV owned social media posts and individual school communication and information. Respond to viewer feedback and programming requests. CPS will solicit classroom activity information on a monthly basis from principals. Track opens and clicks using a link shortener and tracker combined with Google Analytics. Include the programming schedule in school newsletters and ask PTAs to promote CPS-TV in their communications. Announce upcoming programming at Board of Education meetings and to civic organizations. Share CPS-TV successes with real estate agents, civic organizations, CPS families, Chamber of Commerce, Visitors and Convention Center, etc.

Evaluation/Results: Between August 1, 2021 and March 25, 2022, the average time on the CPS-TV direct page received was 1:34, however, the time on the target video pages averaged 2:31 with one of our longest videos averaging 3:49. These views do not reflect the live stream views for board meetings, graduations and other events that were initially broadcast live. As those events were re-shared and broadcast from local media outlets, we were unable to track those specific numbers. During the time period between August 1, 2021 and March 25, 2022 CPS-TV produced 25 individual District Highlights videos. Of the 25 videos, 11 or 44 percent featured a classroom project. CPS will conduct the next stakeholder survey in summer 2022 (delayed one year because of COVID). However, anecdotal evidence indicates viewership will be up significantly, particularly for classroom features as each building also shared those videos directly with families in newsletters.

Overall Goal (outlined in CSIP and based on survey feedback): Columbia Public Schools will inform and engage stakeholders to increase transparency and support for the district by enhancing CPS-TV programming.
1. **Stakeholders**
   - **Level 1 Stakeholders (those we exist to serve)**
     - Key Customers
       - Students
       - Parents/Guardians
       - Patrons/taxpayers
     - Staff
       - Administrators
       - Support Staff
       - Certified Staff
     - Board of Education
     - Potential Residents
     - Potential Staff
   - **Level 2 Stakeholders (those that enable us to serve effectively)**
     - Collaborators
     - Volunteers, higher education, neighboring school districts, professional development networks
     - Partners
       - Parent organizations (PTA, Booster Clubs), higher education, neighboring school districts, area youth organizations (athletics, scouts, etc.) city and county departments and officials, chambers of commerce, economic development councils
     - Suppliers
       - Vendors, business services, legislators, etc.

2. **Area of strength include**: Student Safety – currently 60% gave an “A” grade, 31% gave a “B” grade. Quality of school facilities – currently 57% gave an “A” grade, 28% gave a “B” grade. The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event – currently 49% gave an “A” grade, 24% gave a “B” grade. Performance of district teachers – currently 29% gave an “A” grade, 62% gave a “B” grade and Offering innovative curriculum and programming for students – currently 33% gave an “A” grade, 39% gave a “B” grade.

**Identified areas of improvement from the 2019 Patron Telephone survey of 400 head-of-household, registered voters living within the boundaries of the school district include**: “Spend tax dollars wisely/control costs,” “Stress academics over athletics” (51 mentions), and “Communication” (42 mentions).