



Akron Public Schools®

APS MARKETING / COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

The role of the APS communications department is to help district schools and departments promote their programs and good news; answer media inquiries and maintain the APS brand in all marketing communications/advertising activities at the school and district level.

We've compiled the following FAQs to help answer initial questions you may have about getting started with a marketing/communications project for your school, department or program.

What does the APS communications department do?

- Maintains the www.akronschools.com website.
- Maintains relationships and works closely with members of the media to tell the APS story.
- Monitors and maintains the APS social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) to keep the community and employees informed of what's going on in the district.
- Manages advertising, marketing, public relations and video production. This includes printed pieces that are sent home to students, displayed on the website or distributed to the public, including fliers, posters, brochures, rack cards, paid advertisements, mailers and many others.

Who is in the communications department and how do I reach them?

Mark Williamson, director of communications
Office: 330.761.2930
Mobile: 330.289.3468
Email: maw45602@apslearns.org

Rene Garrett, secretary
Office: 330.761.2929
Email: rgarrett@apslearns.org

Ryan Hale, webmaster
Office: 330.761.2864
Email: rhale@apslearns.org

Ryan Rittenhouse, TV and video producer
Office: 330.761.3097
Email: rdumont@apslearns.org

GENERAL BRANDING INFORMATION

What is the official name of the school district?

The district should always be referred to as Akron Public Schools or APS (on second reference).

What is the official logo of the school district?

Note: Our logo has been given official registered trademark status by the US Patent and Trademark Office. All logos must have the ® symbol after the word school. Please replace any old logos (no symbol or the TM symbol) with this official format.



If you don't need a color logo, please use the below black and white formats instead of printing the color logo in B&W.



For the full range of approved logo variations or to learn more about our logo guidelines and standards, please visit <http://akronschools.com/apslogo>.

Can I create a logo for my school/department/event?

We do not create logos for individual schools, departments or events; however, we can modify the current APS logo for your school. If you would like printed materials developed, we will design them so they are in compliance with the APS look and brand.

ADVERTISEMENTS

All advertising purchased by any department, program and/or budgetary unit within Akron Public Schools must be approved by the communications department.

No advertisement of any kind should be purchased without approval from the communications department.

What if I need to design something to advertise in a local publication?

Contact the communications department to seek approval for the ad at least four weeks before the ad is due. Required information includes: purpose of ad, audience, ad specs and due date.

MEDIA

What do I say if a reporter contacts me about a story?

Direct them to the communications department. Mark Williamson, director of communications, is the district spokesperson. If they need additional information or a quote from you, Mark will coordinate and act as a liaison with the media.

Contact information:

Office: 330.761.2930

Mobile: 330.289.3468

Email: maw45602@apslearns.org

What if I have information for the media?

Contact the communications department before speaking to the media. The department is experienced in dealing with the media and has long-standing relationships and can help facilitate the process.

What do I do if I have written a news release?

Contact the communications department for proofreading and release. Only the communications department is permitted to send a media release on behalf of Akron Public Schools.

What do I do if I have an event with my class or an in-class project that I think might be of interest to the community?

Our communications department can advise you on what kinds of events or stories might be of greatest interest. APS can tell the community about such events in advance and after-the-fact.

If I want to promote a fundraiser or an event that takes place outside of school for my class or school, how do I go about doing that?

APS promotes events—such as fundraisers with local business partners etc.—on its website and social media. Contact the communications department via email with the information you need to disseminate.

If my school or class has invited an interesting guest in to speak to an assembly, or demonstrate something interesting to students, how might I let the media know about it?

The communications department will extend invitations to media in greater Akron.

Where do I go to get media releases for my students?

The APS media release information is contained in eSchoolPLUS for all students that attend that location.

If I attend an activity or event with my students away from school, how can I promote that within APS and in our local community?

Most of us carry smart phones and can take a few pictures of students engaged in activities. A simple paragraph with some photos is all the communications department needs to create a short story of your event for our website and social media.

PHOTOGRAPHY

I would like someone to take photos at my school or event, who should I call?

APS does not have an in-house photographer who can be dispatched for events, programs, etc. We encourage you to take your own pictures (some phones take better pictures than cameras!) of students engaged in activities. If you would like the event promoted on the APS website and social media, send them to the communications department with a short paragraph. For printed materials, please see below.

PRINTED MATERIALS

Can I design a printed piece myself for my school/department/program/event?

Most internal documents do not need to be designed or approved by the communications department. This would include general parent correspondence, classroom materials, handbooks, manuals, agendas, classroom or curriculum instructions, permission slips, waivers, etc. However, we do ask that you follow our APS brand and logo guidelines (see page 1).

There are some instances where an internal project or correspondence is big enough or important enough that we can and should help (see list below). Always, if in doubt, contact us to find out how to proceed.

All external printed materials for APS should be coordinated through the APS communications department. This includes, but is not limited to, any printed pieces that are sent home to students, displayed on the website or distributed to the public.

More specifically, if your project falls into one or more of these three categories, then please contact the communications department:

- **Urgent/important district-wide communication** – media alert, news release, letters to the community/parents/students, All-Call
- **Informational piece** – brochures, posters, newsletters, manual/handbooks, policies and procedures, guidelines, videos, etc. with a goal of teaching or informing your audience vs. promoting
- **Marketing** – brochures, sell sheets, rack cards, signage, banners, posters, invitations, fliers, letters, mailers, videos, advertisements, etc. with a goal of raising awareness, attendance or support for APS or an individual program or event.

What type of initial information do I need to request a printed piece?

- The type of project you are working on
- The intended audience
- Quantity
- A timeline – the date you would like to receive and/or mail the finished piece
- Any copy you may have already written
- Photo/graphics requests if applicable
- If you are mailing:
 - Date of mailing (timeframe)
 - Mailing list (or do you need us to obtain a list for you?)
 - Quantity

If I have text/copy for my materials, what is the best format to use?

We prefer that you send us everything in a plain Word document. We will also accept Google docs as long as they are not locked.

How long does it take to fill my request?

That greatly depends upon your request. It is best to allow us as much time as possible to fill it, but no less than four weeks.

Can you take my Publisher document and “spruce it up” a bit?

We prefer to create things from scratch. We do not work in Publisher. We use professional industry standard software (Adobe Creative Suite). Text/copy should be sent in a plain Word or unlocked Google doc.

If I request work from communications and I have photos to provide, will you use them?

We want your product to be top quality and that includes good quality images. We will look at your photos and let you know if they will work for your publication. We use high resolution images and also pay close attention to the composition of the image. Images taken with a cell phone, pulled from the Web, and taken with many regular cameras may not have a high enough resolution for print publications.

Can I have photos taken?

The communications department does not have an in-house photographer, but in special circumstances, we are able to hire an outside photographer if they are necessary to finish your project. Usually, we have photos that can be used for your project or will purchase stock photography. Contact the communications department to figure out the best solution for your project.

WEBSITE

Akronschools.com is maintained by the communications department. The Hub, the APS intranet system, is maintained by the IT department.

Where do I go to get something on my school's website?

Each school has a building tech whose responsibility is to post news items about your school and calendar events. Contact your school to find out the name and contact information for your building tech. Please remember that akronschools.com is for public information only. Internal documents should be placed on The Hub.

Who do I contact to submit an announcement, news item or event to be featured on the main APS website?

Please contact Mark Williamson, director of communications.

Contact information:

Office: 330.761.2930

Mobile: 330.289.3468

Email: maw45602@apslearns.org

I am experiencing technical problems and would like assistance, who do I contact?

Please submit a service ticket via the Helpdesk in the APS Portal. If it is an emergency, you may contact the APS webmaster directly, but only if it is an emergency. We are doing our best to serve all building techs and website users in a timely and efficient manner. Your cooperation in using the Helpdesk is greatly appreciated.

Where is the best place to go if I have information on something that might be of interest to my colleagues?

Any teacher-to-teacher or school-to-school communications should be directed to The Hub.

Who do I contact if I have an edit or update for a district group on the website (department or program)?

Please submit a service ticket via the Helpdesk in the APS Portal. If it is an emergency, you may contact the APS webmaster directly, but only if it is an emergency. We are doing our best to serve all building techs and website users in a timely and efficient manner. Your cooperation in using the Helpdesk is greatly appreciated.

VIDEO

What do I do if I would like a video produced for my program or event?

Please contact Ryan Rittenhouse, TV and video producer for APS. Ryan is experienced in video production for the district and can help you figure out the best solution for your project.

Contact information:

Office: 330.761.3097

Email: rdumont@apslearns.org