

Alexander City Schools Communication Plan



High Expectations and Success For All

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Guiding Principles of ACS

Purpose – WHY we exist as an organization

The PURPOSE of the Alexander City Schools is to provide students with a quality educational experience that fosters a productive and successful life.

Vision – WHAT we want to achieve as an organization

The VISION of the Alexander City Schools is to produce graduates that are successful and empowered to compete globally based upon their own unique talents and interests.

Mission – HOW we want to achieve our vision

The MISSION of the Alexander City Schools is to provide a safe and inviting learning environment with high expectations for ALL, while focusing on the development of the whole child – academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

Core Values/Beliefs – WHAT we stand for & HOW we behave as an organization.

1. Student-Centered Focus
2. High Expectations for All
3. Respect for All
4. Safe, Positive, & Nurturing Learning Environment
5. Equity for All
6. Well-Trained, Highly Qualified, & Professional Staff
7. High Character & Integrity
8. Caring, Compassionate, & Courteous Staff
9. Openness and Transparency

Motto – High Expectations and Success for ALL

System Goals

1. We will provide a high-quality, rigorous academic experience that is standards-based, addresses the whole child, reaches all students, and meets or exceeds all accountability standards.
2. We will provide a safe, positive, and nurturing learning environment for our students.
3. We will provide teaching and learning resources necessary for the success of our students.
4. We will expect every student to graduate and each graduate to be well prepared for success and leadership in his/her chosen path according to his/her own unique talents and interests.
5. We will provide a professional, accountable, and highly qualified staff, who are committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders in order to provide an exceptional educational experience.

Purpose of Communication Plan

The purpose of the Alexander City School System (ACS) Communication Plan is to provide a clear and consistent framework for all communications to and from school stakeholders, both internally and externally. Internal stakeholders include students, teachers, staff, administration, and School Board members. External stakeholders include parents, community members, community organizations, post-secondary education, higher education, government officials, business, industry, and vendors.

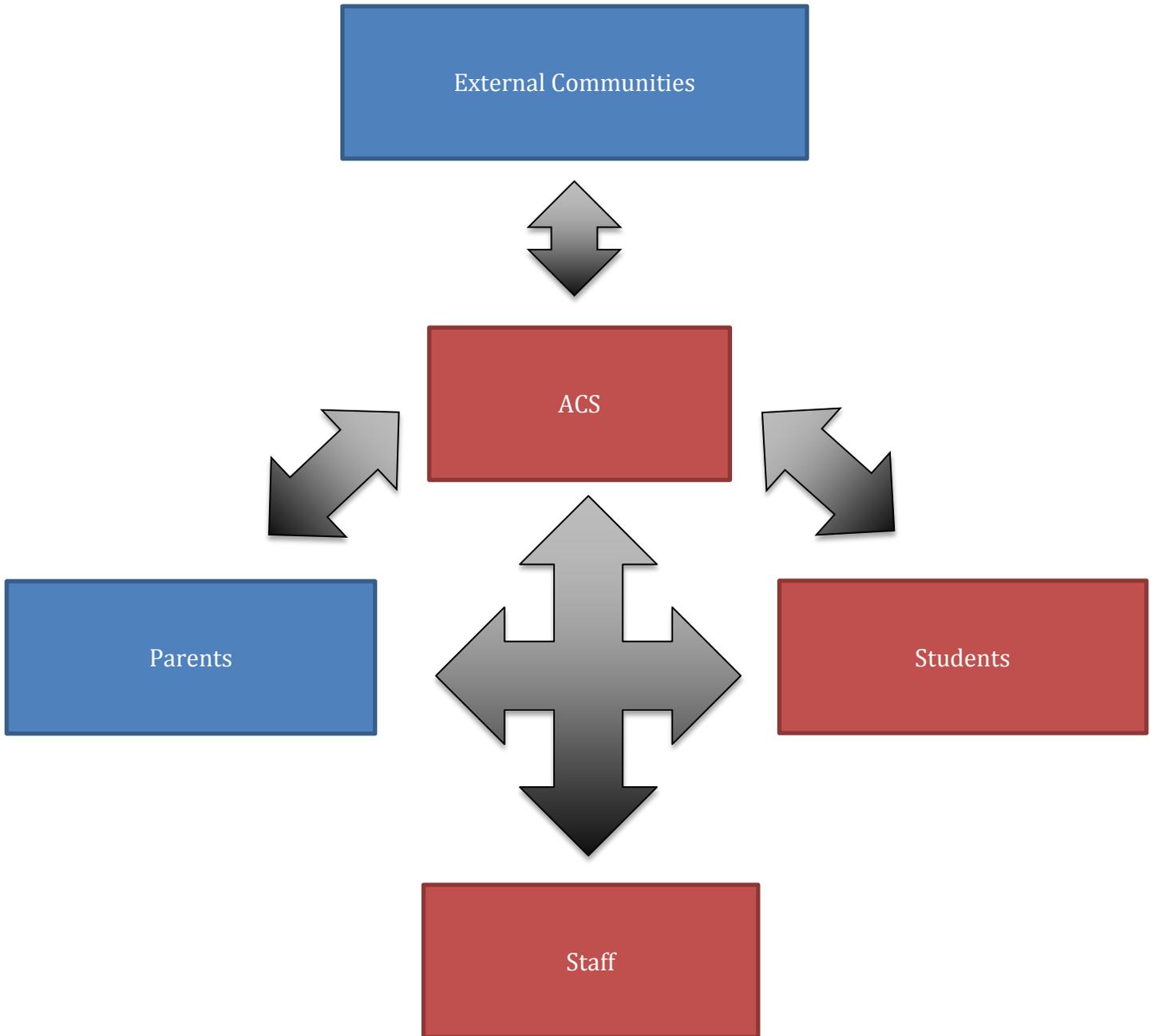
The framework is designed to fully engage all stakeholders in the educational agenda of the ACS. All ACS staff members have a responsibility to communicate accurately and effectively with both internal and external stakeholders.

Our efforts to improve communications among stakeholders are not separate from the educational agenda, but rather, critical to its success. It is our belief that ongoing and effective communication among all school stakeholder groups is essential to developing and sustaining effective home/school/community partnerships. When stakeholders are well informed and engaged, they are more likely and better prepared to support our schools.

Goals of Communication Plan

1. To generate timely, positive, consistent, and adequate information to all stakeholders
2. To highlight school, student, and staff activities and accomplishments
3. To improve the public perception of the ACS
4. To ensure the free flow of information among all stakeholder groups
5. To generate engagement and support for the ACS

**Alexander City Schools
Communication Plan
Two-Way Communications Chart**



Target Audiences for Communications

I. Internal Stakeholder Audiences

- A. Students
- B. Staff
- C. Building Level
- D. Certified Staff
- E. Support Staff
- F. Leadership
- G. District Level
- H. Certified Staff
- I. Support Staff
- J. Leadership
- K. Board Members

II. External Stakeholders and Target Audiences

- A. Parents
- B. Parent Organizations
- C. Booster Groups
- D. Key Communicators
- E. Business and Industry Community
- F. City Officials
- G. State Legislators
- H. Federal Legislators
- I. Alabama State Department of Education
- J. Other Educational Institutions
- K. External Educational Organizations
- L. Civic Groups
- M. Senior Groups
- N. Religious Groups
- O. Community Groups
- P. Potential Employees
- Q. Potential Resources
- R. Media
- S. Alexander City Schools Education Foundation

Communication Channels

I = Internal Communication Channel
 E = External Communication Channel

Communication Channel	I	E	Communication Channel	I	E
ACS Purpose and Direction Signage	x	x	PD Needs Assessment	x	
<i>ACS2020</i> (Strategic Plan)	x	x	Phoenix Academy Handbook	x	x
Annual Budget	x	x	Phone Lists	x	
Annual Report	x	x	Program/Teacher Webpages		x
<i>ASSIST</i> Surveys	x	x	Remind 101	x	x
<i>At Home with Kenny Dean</i>		x	Safety Plans	x	
BaseCamp	x		School Marquee		x
<i>Ben Russell Update</i>	x	x	School/Program Newsletters		x
Board Policy	x	x	SchoolCast	x	x
Cellular Communications	x	x	SchoolDude	x	
Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs)	x	x	Sports Broadcast		x
District App	x	x	<i>Sportz Blitz</i>		x
District Brochure		x	Staff Handbooks	x	
District Calendar	x	x	Student-Parent Handbook	x	x
Edmodo	x		Substitute Teacher Handbook	x	
Email	x	x	Teacher Newsletters		x
Emergency Notification Charts	x		<i>The Outlook</i>		x
Extracurricular Publications	x	x	<i>The South's Best Kept Secret</i>		x
Facebook	x	x	Translators		x
<i>FOCUS</i> Groups	x		Twitter	x	x
<i>Good Morning Lake Martin</i>		x	Two-Way Radio	x	
Google Calendars	x	x	Virtual School Handbook	x	x
H.O.P.E. Academy Handbook	x	x	Websites	x	x
iNow Home Portal		x	Weekly Board Notes	x	
Kowliga Radio 97.5		x			
<i>Lake</i>		x			
<i>Lake Martin Living</i>		x			
Organizational Chart	x	x			
Other Media Outlets		x			

Description of Communication Channels

1. **ACS Purpose and Direction Signage** – An important standard area addressed during the school district’s strategic planning process was *Purpose & Direction*. The following guiding tenants for the school district were developed during the process: Purpose, Vision, Mission, Core Values/Beliefs, Motto, and System Goals. Professionally designed signs and posters publicizing these tenants are displayed throughout the school district.
2. **ACS2020 (Strategic Plan)** – *ACS2020* is the current strategic plan for the school district. The plan is a result of an extensive collaborative process involving our staff, students, parents, Board, and business and community leaders. *ACS2020* was developed over an eight-month period using nine different committees and employing the efforts of 96 individuals, plus the general public for feedback before its final approval in March of 2014. *ACS2020* serves as the district’s blueprint in our organization’s daily pursuit of excellence. In addition, it will provide a multi-year direction and focus for our school system, guide all annual operational plans, and serve as a framework for acquiring and distributing resources. *ACS2020* has been published in both digital and paper formats. Paper copies are available at the Alexander City Board of Education and a digital copy is posted on the district website.
3. **Annual Budget** – The school district’s budget is constructed and Board approved on an annual basis. The budget communicates all expected revenues and expenditures for both the school district and individual schools. Two public budget hearings are held prior to Board approval. The first hearing is normally held in August, with the second hearing and Board approval normally following in September. The budget is for the fiscal year, which starts October 1 of one year and concludes on September 30 of the following year. The budget is published on the district’s website.
4. **Annual Report** – Each fall, the ACS publishes an annual report of the previous school year. Included in this document are reports from each school and all departments at the district level. The document is a snapshot of various district, school, and individual accomplishments, awards, events, etc.
5. **ASSIST Surveys** – *ASSIST* surveys are administered annually to parents, teachers, and students as a means of gathering valid and reliable stakeholder perception data. The results, along with other data sources, are used for the continuous improvement process, including the development of goals, strategies, and activities in all areas of the school system.
6. **At Home with Kenny Dean** – *At Home with Kenny Dean* is a local television show that airs on local cable Channel 3 – WAXC. The show airs weekdays between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., except for Thursday when it airs at 12 noon. The show often provides school personnel opportunities for appearances to highlight and showcase school happenings. Beyond appearances, the show also makes other important school announcements.
7. **BaseCamp** – *BaseCamp* is a web-based program-management tool used by ACS administrators and Board members. Many educational matters are sensitive and by law require privacy. This tool allows for secure communications and file sharing of sensitive materials between administrative and Board parties.
8. **Ben Russell Update** – *Ben Russell Update* is a weekly video production by the BRHS Media Team. Each edition is approximately five to eight minutes in length and provides

information on the happenings at BRHS. Editions are made available through YouTube and links are emailed to students, staff, parents, and community members.

9. **Board Policy** – The Alexander City Board of Education formulates policies by which its schools shall be managed. Such policies do not present all the procedures, regulations, or rules carried out in the school district; however, no school procedures, regulations, or rules should contradict Board policy. The Superintendent is responsible for making policy recommendations to the Board for approval. Before the Board approves and implements new policy, the proposed new policy is required to have a first and second reading at two separate public Board meetings. The current Board policy is accessible through the district website. A hardcopy is also available for review at the Alexander City Board of Education.
10. **Cellular Communications** – All ACS administrators and other key personnel are issued cellular communication devices. These devices are used to ensure efficient and quick communications between school personnel. In addition, these devices are an integral component in the effort to provide a safe and secure school environment.
11. **Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs)**– Each school annually constructs a CIP. The principal, a leadership team of certified staff members, parents, and where appropriate, students make up the CIP committee. In addition, other staff and parents are involved in the process, reviewing drafts and making recommendations. Prior to constructing the plan, in order to identify the school’s strengths and areas for improvement, the committee analyzes multiple sets of data. The plan consists of goals, measurable objectives, and related strategies and activities. The CIP communicates to all stakeholders the school’s path for improvement. The CIPs are available for review on each school’s website. Hardcopies are also available at each school and at the Board office.
12. **District App** – The district maintains its own smartphone app. The app provides up-to-date information concerning the school district, such as lunch menus, calendars, and important contacts. The app is free and can be downloaded from the App Store by searching “Alexander City Schools.”
13. **District Brochure** – The district brochure is a one-page document that provides a quick snapshot of the district and each individual school. Quick facts are provided, such as the grades served, current enrollment, and school contact information, as well as school programs and accomplishments. The information in the brochure targets both prospective students/parents and employees. Brochures are available at each school and the district office and used at teacher recruiting events.
14. **District Calendar** – The District Calendar is developed through a committee of various stakeholder groups and approved by the Board. The calendar is normally developed in two-year increments. It is color-coded and provides information such as school days, teacher workdays, teacher professional development days, and school holidays. The calendar is available on the district website.
15. **Edmodo** – Edmodo is the digital learning platform adopted by the ACS. This platform allows teachers to create a social learning network for their students. Teachers are allowed to create various learning groups, connect learners to digital resources, assign homework, schedule quizzes, post discussion topics, and conduct polls. Students use Edmodo to post assignments, engage, participate, and express themselves in a digital learning environment. In addition to the uses with students, the school district uses Edmodo to engage staff members in professional learning networks.

16. **Email** – The school district offers all staff and students an email account. Email communications are used internally for staff/staff and staff/student communications. In addition, staff members use email to communicate with outside parties, including most importantly parents and community members.
17. **Emergency Notification Charts** – The ACS Emergency Notification Chart is a graphic depicting the communication chain used by administrators and other personnel during emergency situations. This communication chain is set into motion by the Superintendent. The action initiated includes phone, text, social media, and *SchoolCast* messages. The chart is primarily used to direct internal communications, but it does set outside communications into motion.
18. **Extracurricular Publications** – Some extracurricular programs create publications and other documents providing information regarding their activities and individual participants. In addition to print publications, many publish information through social media and dedicated websites.
19. **Facebook** – The school district uses the online social networking service Facebook to publish school-related information. The information includes school announcements, highlights and achievements of students and programs, and much more. The page may be found by searching “Alexander City Schools” on Facebook. In addition to the district’s Facebook page, many schools and individual teachers publish Facebook pages to highlight their school-related happenings.
20. **FOCUS Groups** – The Alexander City Schools has an established framework for continuous improvement referred to as *FOCUS*. Seven *FOCUS* groups are established at both the school and district level: 1) Curriculum & Instruction; 2) Parent & Community Involvement; 3) Professional Development; 4) School Programs & Services; 5) School Organization, Finance, & Facilities; 6) Standards & Assessments; and 7) Technology. All certified staff members are members of one *FOCUS* Committee within their school. Chairpersons for each school’s *FOCUS* Committees serve on the district’s *FOCUS* Team for each area. The *FOCUS* framework not only allows for staff participation in the improvement process, but also allows for quick and efficient communication among staff.
21. **Good Morning Lake Martin** – *Good Morning Lake Martin* is a local television show that airs each weekday morning between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. on local cable Channel 3 - WAXC. The show often provides school personnel and students opportunities for appearances to highlight and showcase school happenings. Beyond appearances, the show also makes other important school announcements.
22. **Google Calendars** – The district uses integrated Google Calendars to publicize school events and to provide an internal platform for organizational efforts. The calendars are accessible through the district and school websites and through the district app. Viewers are able to manipulate the calendars so that they only see items related to their interests.
23. **H.O.P.E. Academy Handbook** - The purpose of this handbook is to give the students and their parents an understanding of the general rules and guidelines for attending and receiving an education at the Alexander City Schools’ H.O.P.E. Academy (Helping Our students Pursue Excellence). The H.O.P.E. Academy is an alternative school setting for students in grades K-6. The handbook addresses procedures, rules, and standards for students attending the academy.

24. **iNow Home Portal** – The iNow Home Portal is available to the parents of all ACS students. The web-based portal provides parents with continuous access to up-to-date information related to their student’s grades (excluding JPES), attendance, and discipline record.
25. **Kowaliga Radio 97.5** – *Kowaliga 97.5* is WKGA 97.5 FM radio, a local radio station based out of Alexander City, AL. The station works with the school system to provide important school-related announcements, including any emergency-related closings, early dismissals, or delayed starts.
26. **Lake** - *Lake* magazine is published monthly by Tallapoosa Publishers, Inc. The magazine serves the Lake Martin region of East Central Alabama and often contains school-related stories.
27. **Lake Martin Living** – *Lake Martin Living* is a magazine published monthly by Tallapoosa Publishers, Inc. The magazine serves the Lake Martin region of East Central Alabama and often contains school-related stories.
28. **Organizational Chart** – The school district maintains an organizational chart displaying the chain of command between personnel throughout the district. The chart is used to convey, at a glance, the line of decision-making authority from the top management of the school system down through its school-based administrators and staff. The chart is made available within the *ACS Communication Plan* and to the staff and public through the district website.
29. **Other Media Outlets** – Besides the ones described within this plan, the ACS provides school-related information to the following media outlets - **Television Stations/Programs:** WSFA-NBC 12; WCOV-FOX 20; WAKA-CBS 8; WNCN-ABC 32; Cable Channel WAXC 3; and *Good Morning Lake Martin*. **Radio Stations:** WLWI 92.3 FM; WBAM 98.9 FM; WHHY 101.9 FM; WKGA 97.5 Kowaliga Country; WMXS 103.3 FM; WJHO 89.7; WRFS 105.1, and Praise 88.7.
30. **PD Needs Assessment** – Each spring, the school district administers to its teacher a professional development needs assessment. The purpose is to ascertain information related to interest, needs, and delivery methods for professional development. The information is used to develop professional development focus areas and related plans for the upcoming school year.
31. **Phoenix Academy Handbook** - The purpose of this handbook is to give the students and their parents an understanding of the general rules and guidelines for attending and receiving an education at the Phoenix Academy. The Phoenix Academy is an alternative school for students in grades 7-12. The handbook addresses procedures, rules, and standards for students attending the academy.
32. **Phone Lists** – Several important phone lists are maintained both at the district and school levels. These lists are for internal use only and are important to the safety and work efficiency of the school system.
33. **Program/Teacher Webpages** – Program directors/coaches and teachers in the Alexander City Schools are not required to maintain independent webpages or websites; however, many choose to do so.
34. **Remind 101**- Remind 101 is a communication tool used by various teachers and program leaders to instantly communicate with both students and parents. The platform allows for one-way messages from teachers through text, emails, or smartphone notifications. Two-way chat conversation may also be established.

35. **Safety Plans** – Safety plans are developed by the Alexander City School System and individual schools in order to provide safer environments that enhance and ensure that learning will be protected for all students and staff. Safety plans are developed according to State guidelines through a committee consisting of faculty, staff, and community stakeholders such as police, fire, and emergency management. Plans are published in both hardcopy and web-based formats (Virtual Alabama) and are communicated internally and externally to appropriate parties.
36. **School Marquee** – Each school uses a marquee to post important messages and dates.
37. **School/Program Newsletters** – Several of our schools and programs publish newsletters that provide school-related information.
38. **SchoolCast** – SchoolCast is an emergency alert system used by the district. Messages may be originated via telephone, smartphone app, or the Internet. A single SchoolCast alert can deliver a message to all school stakeholders within moments via voice, text to speech, SMS text, enhanced email, social media and RSS feeds. The system is available to all ACS administrators.
39. **SchoolDude** – SchoolDude is a cloud-based software used by school staff to communicate transportation, technology, and maintenance needs to appropriate personnel. School management also uses the system to manage requests and assign work to appropriate personnel.
40. **Sports Broadcast** – Games of ACS athletic teams are often broadcast via radio and the local cable television network. All varsity football games are broadcast and other sporting events may be on an occasional basis. Radio broadcast are on *Kowaliga* FM 97.5. Local cable broadcasts are shown on a delayed basis and can be viewed on local cable WAXC Channel 3.
41. **Sportz Blitz** - *Sportz Blitz* is a weekly, live, interactive sports-talk television show broadcast across central Alabama. The show originates in Alexander City, Alabama from the studios of WAXC-LD and is simulcast on WKGA 97.5 FM radio in east central Alabama. The show often highlights BRHS and ACMS athletic teams and players.
42. **Staff Handbooks** – On an annual basis, the principal of each school within the district issues a staff handbook to teachers and support staff. The handbook communicates staff expectations, roles, duties, and responsibilities, as well as other organizational procedures and information.
43. **Student/Parent Handbook** – The district annually publishes and provides each student a copy of the *Alexander City Schools Student/Parent Handbook*. The handbook provides students and parents with a plethora of information, including information related to school contacts, school calendars, enrollment, student dress code, health and safety, student grading and promotion, curriculum and instruction, enrichment and special programs, support services, graduation requirements, student activities, students rights and responsibilities, student code of conduct, attendance, and other important school-related information.
44. **Substitute Teacher Handbook** – This handbook and related training is provided to all substitute teachers who work in the Alexander City Schools. The handbook provides general information concerning rules and procedures, and additionally addresses specific areas such as compensation, professionalism, classroom management, on-campus emergencies, bullying, mandatory reporting requirements, useful resources, and work logs.
45. **Teacher Newsletters** – Several teachers throughout the district publish newsletters that contain a multitude of information, including class news, upcoming events,

announcements, and other important happenings. Newsletters may be published on a weekly or monthly basis.

46. **The Outlook** – The *Outlook* is a local newspaper covering Alexander City and the surrounding Tallapoosa County and Lake Martin Areas. In order to provide important and timely school information to the community, the school system maintains close relations with *The Outlook*.
47. **The South's Best Kept Secret** – *The South's Best Kept Secret* is a local publication of Tallapoosa Publishers, Inc. and the Alexander City Chamber of Commerce. It is published annually and provides information concerning the City of Alexander City and the surrounding Lake Martin region, including school-related information.
48. **Translators** – The ACS provides translators on an as-needed basis. The district currently has several students/parents who speak English as a second language, with Spanish and Korean being the most common foreign languages. Translators are provided for parents at meetings concerning the education of their child. In addition, translators are often used at large school meetings.
49. **Twitter** – The school district has a dedicated Twitter handle - @AlexCityCats1. The social media channel is used to communicate happenings within the school district and to bring positive attention to our students, staff, and programs. In addition to the district Twitter account, many school administrators and teachers use Twitter accounts to promote the school and individual classrooms.
50. **Two-Way Radio** – Schools are equipped with two-way radios in order to provide in-house communication channels between administrators and other key staff members. This communication channel is important for work efficiency and school safety.
51. **Virtual Schools Handbook** – This handbook includes information regarding the ACS Virtual School for all students in grades 9-12 and students of other grades as offered. The handbook addresses procedures, practices, requirements, scope and delivery, student eligibility, performance monitoring, attendance criteria, testing protocols, and student participation in extracurricular activities. The Virtual Schools Handbook is posted to the websites for both the District and individual schools that provide virtual options.
52. **Websites** – The school system and each individual school maintain a website. The websites provide a multitude of information, including news articles, schedules, calendars, program information, contact information, district information, and much more. All sites can be accessed through the district website at: www.alexcityschools.net. In addition to the websites for the district and schools, some individual program coaches/directors and teachers maintain additional websites dedicated to their program or classroom.
53. **Weekly Board Notes** – The superintendent provides weekly notes to all Board members. These notes are intended to keep Board members apprised of both general and sensitive information related to the school system.

Alexander City Schools Inclement Weather/Early Dismissal Procedures

In the event of inclement weather, school may be cancelled, delayed, or dismissed early. Related announcements, outside of regular school hours, will normally be made before 5:45 a.m. The information will be posted on the following school district outlets:

- **Website:** www.alexcityschools.net
- **Facebook:** Alexander City Schools
- **Twitter:** @AlexCityCats1

In addition, the following media outlets will be notified:

- **Television Stations/Programs:** WSFA-NBC 12; WCOV-FOX 20; WAKA-CBS 8; WNCN-ABC 32; Cable Channel WAXC 3; *Good Morning Lake Martin*
- **Radio Stations:** WLWI 92.3 FM; WBAM 98.9 FM; WHHY 101.9 FM; WKGA 97.5 Kowaliga Country; WMXS 103.3 FM; WJHO 89.7; WRFS 105.1, Praise 88.7

The school district also uses an automated telephone system, *SchoolCast*, to make school-related announcements to staff and contacts of students. *SchoolCast* will call those contacts listed on the students' registration forms; therefore, students and parents should make sure all contacts are regularly updated as needed. Anyone who receives a *SchoolCast* call and wishes not to be contacted with future calls may call 256-234-8600 to request their name be removed from the list. The same number may be used to request a number be added for future calls.

**Emergency Closing
Media Notification**

TV Stations	Telephone	E-Mail	Contact Preference
WSFA NBC 12	334-613-8203	AllWSFAProducers@raycommedia.com sduff@wsfa.com	Scott Duff/email
WCOV FOX 20	334-420-3250 Call this # 1st	dbaxley@waka.com	David Baxley/email
WAKA CBS 8	334-271-8888	dbaxley@waka.com	David Baxley
WNCN ABC 32	334-270-3200	dbaxley@waka.com	David Baxley
Channel 2 Good Morning Lake Martin	During hours: 256-234-6221 Cell (Allen): 256-276-3184	ayatesfm975@gmail.com FAX 256-234-0088	Allen Yates
Channel 33-40	205-403-3340	Passcode: Storm chaser Gary Kelly	newstips@abc334.com newstip@abc3340.com
WAXC TV	256-749-1282	ssculberson@gmail.com	Steve Culberson

Radio Stations	Telephone	E-Mail	Contact Person
WKGA 97.5 FM Kowaliga Country	256-234-6221	jfktiger@gmail.com	Jeremy
**WLWI 92.3 FM	334-240-9274	Bill.hardin@cumulus.com	Bill Harden
WBAM 98.9 FM	334-244-0961	wbam@bluewaterbroadcasting.com	Lauren
**WHHY 101.9 FM	334-240-9274	Bill.hardin@cumulus.com	Bill Harden
**WMXS 103.3 FM	334-240-9274	Bill.hardin@cumulus.com	Bill Harden
WJHO 89.7	205-402-4266	wjho@wjhofm.com	Jon Walden
Praise 88.7 FM	334-705-8004	Cassie Keys cell 256-750-3888	Cassie Keys
WRFS 105.1			
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