1. **Communicate Proactively**: As the locally elected education leader, you must provide transparent and accountable communication as you lead your school district.

2. **Identify and Research**: Think about major stakeholders, such as teachers, students, parents, taxpayers, administrators, education support professionals, legislators, community members, and local media. How do they communicate? How do they like to receive information? Who is your best spokesperson for each group? What are the demographics of your district? You may want to do targeted communication to subsets of these broad groups to be more effective in particular messages, especially to ELL parents, voting community members, groups affected by boundary changes in zone X, etc.

3. **Assess and Evaluate**: What are your communication vehicles (i.e., print, electronic, social media, key communicators network, internal/external)? Are they regular? Are they working and effective?

4. **The Elevator Speech**: Identify, memorize, and practice three examples – with simple statistics – of what is going well in your district. Frame your stories around improving student achievement.

5. **Keep it Simple**: Use photographs and graphics to tell compelling stories. Create communication pieces that are easy to share. Invite participation through social media.

6. **Inform**: Let your communities know the outcomes of their investment in the schools. Share what it means for the students. Think of ways to engage the public, whether it be through community coffees, writing opinion/editorial pieces or letters to the editor for local news media, engaging on social media, or airing information or ads on the radio.

7. **Invite**: Ask the public and policymakers to come to your schools. Consider how to make this easiest for people by considering times that can help you meet your target audience. Some districts have found it effective to provide child care or translators, for example.

8. **Go**: Get involved in your communities. Take on speaking opportunities with civic and charitable groups and engage with virtual communities through social media.

9. **Gain Input**: Communication is at least two-way. Create ways to listen to groups’ ideas and concerns; this builds buy-in and support. You might consider community coffees with a small group of board members, or whole-board listening sessions in addition to board meetings.

10. **Consider how you will approach this as a board**: Will you designate liaisons to specific groups? Will you report out at board meetings to strengthen the connections with your communities?