



Communications Plan 2025 - 2027

Communications Plan

1. Introduction:

The 2025-2027 communications plan was created to complement the [2025-2027 Strategic Plan](#). The goals and priorities of this document are in alignment with the strategic direction of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA).

This document outlines the current, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that ACSTA faces in communicating with the public and target stakeholders as well as a pathway to improve and strengthen ACSTA's communications efforts both internally and externally. The opportunities presented in this document will be accompanied with measurable targets that will be presented to the ACSTA board of directors at quarterly meetings in the form of a Communications Update within the Executive Director's report.

2. Current Climate

The current communications climate within ACSTA and in relation to partners of the organization is marked by a lack of coordination. The organization's online presence is outdated, failing to reflect contemporary standards and potentially deterring engagement from stakeholders.

Addressing these issues is imperative to foster a more cohesive and effective communications strategy that aligns with the organization's goals and enhances its overall effectiveness.

3. ACSTA Communications Partners:

- The Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA)
- Grateful Advocates for Catholic Education (GrACE)
- Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association (CCSTA)
- Conseil de l'éducation de la foi catholique chez les francophones de l'Alberta (CÉFFA)
- Archdiocese of Edmonton
- Diocese of Calgary
- Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan
- Diocese of St. Paul
- Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association
- Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)

4. SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Measured Success: Catholic schools in Alberta achieve high academic and safety ratings (2023 AEAM). ● Supportive Government Alignment: The UCP's commitment to Freedom of Choice in Education aligns with Catholic education's constitutional protection. ● Strong GOA Relations: Frequent, effective meetings with MLAs; successful 2023 MLA reception bolstered ACSTA's credibility. ● Network of Supporters: ACSTA has broad support, including past staff and trustees, who contribute valuable historical knowledge. ● Effective Internal Communication: Tools like the Monday Memo, Media Scan, faith events, and social media enhance advocacy. ● Dedicated Staff: Having a dedicated staff person at ACSTA to oversee and direct communications efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dated Online Presence: ACSTA's website and branding are outdated, making navigation difficult and deterring visitors. ● Lack of Government Relations Strategy: ACSTA lacks a formal strategy, limiting its presence in the Legislature and at key education events. ● Absence of Crisis Communications Plan: No successful working plan in place for responding to media issues. ● Limited Resources for Communications: A small communications team may struggle to fully execute large-scale campaigns or keep up with all communication channels. ● Lack of Communications coordination with Partners: Though relationships with Partners are strong, there is a noticeable lack of coordination among Catholic Education partners. ● Reactive Approach: Communications efforts are most often reactive, responding to issues rather than proactively building a positive narrative.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Content Diversification: ACSTA can enhance communication through varied formats (videos, infographics, webinars) and platforms (email, mobile apps). ● Internal Communications Network: Leveraging the network of communications professionals within Catholic Education can unite efforts for greater impact. ● Media Relationships: ACSTA communications has a positive working relationship with members of both the secular and Catholic media. ● Engagement with Youth: Developing content and campaigns targeting younger demographics can build future advocacy for Catholic education. ● Storytelling Initiatives: Showcasing real-life success stories from students, parents, and educators can personalize and strengthen ACSTA's messaging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Divisive Social Issues: Controversial topics create challenges for advocacy and media responses. ● Media Reputation: ACSTA is not the primary media voice for Catholic education; the media only reaches out during controversies. ● Indifference in Catholic Community: Many people take Catholic schools for granted, leading to apathy until issues arise. ● Competition from Other Education Systems: Other school boards and educational systems could overshadow ACSTA's messages, especially as education choices become more competitive.

5. Measurable Goals

Overarching goal: to establish ACSTA as a unifying voice providing spiritual and political leadership for publicly funded Catholic education.			
Item #	Measurable Goal	Outcome	Output
1	Raise the Profile of ACSTA	To appear more credible to Stakeholders	A refreshed and modernized brand that is inclusive of all our members.
2	Establish strong relationships with Catholic and Secular Media outlets	List of media who are favourable to our position.	To increase positive media coverage for the Catholic Education community.
3	Establish relationships with Trustees and other members of our Catholic Education Community	A means to be able to quickly identify the knowledge base needed when crisis events arise.	Provincially coordinated communications responses.
4	Execute Regular Public Relations Strategies to build relevancy	To be public facing champions of Catholic Education and our Faith; to have a more relevant online presence.	A regular schedule of PR tactics to raise more awareness of ACSTA and the value of Catholic Education.
5	Produce "leave behind" items to showcase ACSTA and our priorities	Increased relevancy so politicians and other stakeholders come to ACSTA as the experts in the field.	An Annual Report & educational pieces to support our position.
6	Invest in relationships with school boards to increase capacity and effectiveness of our communications	To maximize the reach of our Catholic Education Communications efforts.	Better relationships with strong communicators in our school boards, CCSSA and GrACE to create more effective communications products.
7	Inform and update membership at regular intervals	To broaden the reach of ACSTA's advocacy efforts and maximize on our opportunities to meet with political leaders and ensure every member is effective in our unified advocacy efforts.	A predictable reporting schedule and end-products to ensure members of ACSTA and our partners are up to date on current goings-on
8	Celebrate the successes of our Catholic Schools	To increase awareness of the effectiveness of our schools based on provincial and other relevant datasets.	Engage and collaborate with GrACE in a joint communications effort.
9	To guide and onboard the next generation of Trustees	Updated documents for trustee onboarding.	To prepare the next generation of trustees and ensure a seamless continuity of important knowledge and skills.
10	Expand our network	To strengthen our position (especially if in conflict with the current government)	In collaboration with Education partners, ensure we have contacts to distribute messaging in times of crisis or need.

6. Action Items

Audience	Deliverable	Goal #	End Result	Description
Catholic Education Community	Social Media Strategy	1 4 8 10	Yearly Calendar	To maximize ACSTA's social media presence, this calendar will ensure ACSTA plans ahead for important days of the year including national/provincial/global holidays, religious holidays, important feast days...etc.
Catholic Education Community; Public Figures	Annual Report	1 5 7 8 9	Annual Report	To increase ACSTA's profile and have a document that can be presented to political leaders, school boards, schools, school staff (etc) . The annual report provides a year in review in a concise reference and will be delivered by hard copy to the membership at the ACSTA AGM.
Members	Handbooks	5 6 7	Update handbooks regularly.	Ensure handbooks for trustees including <i>Serving as a Catholic School Trustee: A Handbook for Prospective Candidates</i> are updated in a timely fashion for use in school divisions.
Public	Website Refresh	1 7 8	Updated ACSTA Website and Platform	ACSTA has a very dated online presence which is a detriment to the organization. An updated website will raise the profile of ACSTA and better organize our website to be more useful to both our members and the public. Renew website, logo, colour palette, templates, fonts, etc. by September 2026.
Members	Website - Members Section	7	Ensure content on the members section is up to date.	To ensure the members are fully informed of ACSTA governance and to provide content related to professional development is added to the website in a timely fashion.

Public	Re-Brand	1	ACSTA Style Guide; New Logo; Creative Asset Package	ACSTA's online presence is dated and lacks a formalized Branding Style Guide. The current logo requires an update to accurately reflect our membership and to be inclusive for the territories.
Staff & Executive Committee & Members	Consistent use of positioning and brand	1	Feedback loop to ensure consistent use of branding materials	To ensure consistency, ACSTA will ensure to analyze and ensure our brand is being used properly and not added to materials without our knowledge.
Trustees	Municipal Election Materials	5 6 7 9	Updated Election Materials (pamphlet, guide, posters...etc)	The Municipal Election will take place in the fall of 2025. Updates are required to the various ACSTA election materials.
Executive Committee	Media Training	1 7	Establish yearly process for media training for Executive Committee	To prepare the Executive Committee and ensure they are up to date on current issues and messaging.
Members	Media Training	1 7	Expand media training to ACSTA members.	To ensure message consistency provincially, provide media training opportunities for school boards at their request.
Public	Traditional Media Strategy	1 2 3 4	Create list of on-side media outlets and personnel	To have a list of media who will be favourable or unfavourable to our position; a process document to ensure media are approached appropriately when issues arise.
Public	Catholic Education Reporter	1 2 3 4	Working with favourable media outlets, pitch good news stories for both secular and non-secular outlets.	The Communications team at ACSTA will pitch article ideas to media outlets. In addition, working with CCSSA and GrACE, will write articles for use on the ACSTA website and GrACE newsletter to report on good news stories.
Members	Meeting Talking Points	7	To provide members with suggested talking points as required.	To assist with meetings with the government or other stakeholders, provide members with suggested talking points to assist them in their conversations and to ensure message consistency provincially.

Board of Directors	Crisis Communications Protocol Plan	7	Document to outline process/external and internal committee during crisis events.	Continue to work with CCSSA and the Bishops (and their communications teams) on media messaging regarding contentious topics, best practices in engaging with media, and develop a shared list of media contacts.
Board of Directors	Non-crisis Communications Protocol Plan	7	Document to outline process/external and internal committee during non-crisis events. Additional product would be a messaging handbook for members.	This would ensure our membership is unified when it comes to the stance of ACSTA on particular non-crisis topics. Messaging will stem from position statements that are developed and approved at the yearly AGM.
Trustees, Superintendents etc.	Monday Memo & Media Scan	7 8	Weekly email to provide updates to members and community.	Email to be sent every Monday (or Tuesday if Monday is a holiday) to provide updates about ACSTA events, other relevant events and a weekly media scan.
Board of Directors	Key Messages	7 8	Quarterly memos following board meetings.	To help the Board of Directors communicate the key messages from the quarterly board of directors' meetings.
ACSTA Members	President's Update	7 8	Monthly message from the president to the ACSTA membership.	To increase transparency and report on the activities of the Executive Committee and administration.
New Trustees	Welcome Letters	9	Send a letter to any new trustees.	To ensure awareness of what ACSTA is for newly elected trustees, ACSTA will send a letter of welcome from the President outlining our activities.
Public	Catholic Education Week	1 3 5 6 10	Products and committee to prepare for the yearly Catholic Education Week.	Each year CEW will take place in the Fall (pending approval of ACSTA Board). A working group which includes ACSTA, CCSSA & GrACE will be formed to develop yearly products.

Public	Jubilee Year	1 3 5 6 10	Products and committee to prepare for the 2025 Jubilee Year	Working with the Jubilee Committee, work with partners to develop products for us in Catholic schools.
Members	Event Communications Strategy	1	Event Communications Strategy Template	ACSTA's events are opportunities to capture photography and videography to assist in our online and social media presence. Going into events with a communications plan will assist ACSTA in ensuring it gets the maximum benefit from each event in regards to unique content
ACSTA and Partners	Media Monitoring	7 8	Media Monitoring Guidelines	ACSTA currently doesn't have any protocols in place for media reporting. Setting standard guidelines will ensure ACSTA and its Catholic Education partners remain informed about current events in an appropriate timeline.
Public	Instagram Account	1 4 8 10	An updated ACSTA Instagram Account	To increase our reach on social media. Instagram will offer us another means of reaching out to members, parents, and grassroots to support our PR efforts.
Public	Youtube Account	1 4 8 10	Create a platform for ACSTA to showcase video footage	To increase our reach on social media. Youtube will offer us another means of reaching out to members, parents, and grassroots to support our PR efforts.
PR Campaigns	Deliverable		End Goal	Description
Public	Public Relations Campaign (<i>Who is ACSTA?</i>)		To showcase Trustees and other members and staff.	To raise public awareness of who and what ACSTA is.
Public	Public Relations Campaign (<i>Value of Catholic Education</i>)		Showcase school divisions and staff; good opportunities include awards/achievements of note.	To raise public awareness of the value of Catholic Education and how it compares to the Public system, to support enrollment and growth.

Public	Public Relations Campaign (<i>Testify!</i>)		A better public awareness of what it means to be a trustee and why it is desirable to become a trustee.	The Municipal Election in Fall of 2025 is an opportunity to attract newcomers to the role of trustee especially if an incumbent is no longer running.
Additional to be added				

7. Closing Statement

As ACSTA moves forward with the 2025-2027 communications plan, the foundation for a more cohesive, impactful, and strategic approach to both internal and external communications is now in place.

By leveraging our strengths, addressing our weaknesses, seizing new opportunities, and mitigating potential threats, we are positioning ACSTA to be a stronger voice for Catholic education in Alberta, Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Through measurable goals and targeted action items, we will continue to build relationships and enhance the visibility of our organization and its mission.

This plan serves as a guiding document to ensure that our communications efforts remain aligned with the strategic direction of ACSTA, enabling us to effectively advocate for publicly funded Catholic education while fostering a deeper sense of community within our network. We are confident that with ongoing collaboration and commitment, ACSTA will continue to thrive as the trusted leader and advocate for Catholic education in Alberta, Yukon and Northwest Territories.