

Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

---

Theses

Theses & Dissertations

---

2000

## From the One-Room Schoolhouse to the One-Person School Communication Office

Monica A. Faulkenbery

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/theses>



Part of the Education Commons

---

**FROM THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE TO THE  
ONE-PERSON SCHOOL COMMUNICATION OFFICE**

**Monica A. Faulkenbery, B.A.**

**An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the LCIE Graduate  
School of Lindenwood College in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Corporate  
Communication**

**2000**

## **ABSTRACT**

**Definition:** School community relations is effective communication between the school district, the individual schools and the public. Good school public relations seeks to gain the public's favorable attention by building goodwill and understanding about the work, mission and activities of the school district.

**The Issue:** Today's school communicator wears many hats. Unlike some corporate public relations offices that are segmented by tasks and talents such as media coordination, publications and development, the school communications office, even when that office consists of one person, must be expert in all areas.

Many of today's school communication offices now work in the areas of media relations/publicity, legislative affairs, issues management, research/demographics, publications/graphics/printing, marketing, advertising, special events, volunteerism, business partnerships and PR counseling. It sometimes includes grant development and acquisitions, and the community school program and services. In addition, tax levy and bond issues are often the responsibility of the school communicator, and the Missouri State

Legislature has now added a big annual reporting requirement, which takes an enormous amount of time for the school communications officer to produce. Technology has added the production and maintenance of the district's web pages – many times now the responsibility of the school communication's office.

With downsizing, rightsizing and outsourcing, communication offices are finding that they are lone rangers with less help but more responsibility. (Many of these lone rangers are new to their positions and new to the world of school communication.) No amount of education can prepare a person to step into this kind of work environment.

**Summary of project:** School communicators share unique issues and problems that their corporate (and even other non-profit) counterparts do not. This project examines the trials and tribulations of a one-person school communications office and discusses ways to make the job more manageable. It also contains tips, presentations and handouts to be shared among school administrators and staff in an effort to educate them that "PR" is everyone's job.

The project, designed to serve as a resource to people new to the profession, will be submitted to the National School Public Relations Association for possible publication.

**FROM THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE TO THE  
ONE-PERSON SCHOOL COMMUNICATION OFFICE**



**Monica A. Faulkenbery, B.A.**

**An Culminating Project Presented to the Faculty of the LCIE  
Graduate School of Lindenwood College in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Corporate Communication**

**2000**

**COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF CANDIDACY:**

Associate Professor Michael Castro, Ph.D.  
Director, Communications Program, LCIE

Adjunct Assistant Professor Tom Dehner

Adjunct Assistant Professor Ben Kuehnle

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	1
Committee in Charge of Candidacy .....	i
I. Introduction .....	1
Media Relations/Publicity .....	12
Legislative Relations .....	13
Issues Management .....	14
Publications/Graphics/Printing .....	14
Marketing .....	15
Advertising .....	15
Special Events .....	16
Volunteers .....	16
Business Partnerships .....	17
PR Counseling .....	17
Development .....	18
Public Relations .....	19
Key Ideas and Trends .....	20
II. Review of Literature .....	24
III. Selective Review and Evaluation of Research .....	30
Survey Results .....	36
Current Public Relations Duties .....	36
Non-Public Relations Duties .....	39
Challenges .....	40
Survey Instrument .....	43

IV. Results .....	44
Public Information Coordinator Handbook .....	47
Running a Powerful One-Person PR Program .....	62
Making Your First Year a Success .....	65
Public Relations is Everyone's Job.....	66
PR Tips for Principals.....	68
Monday's Message .....	71
PR Lessons 101 .....	81
Creating Creative Newsletters .....	113
Specialty & Non-Traditional Publications .....	118
Safety Flyer .....	120
Fax Form .....	122
V. Results and Discussion .....	123
Works Cited.....	133
Vita Auctores.....	135



## **Chapter I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

A school district calls for a \$50 million bond election to build a second high school. The current high school is overcrowded, and enrollment will continue to grow according to the district's demographer. The district's finances are excellent and a new school is very affordable. A group opposing the bond election emerges primarily from the football boosters, who can't imagine any dilution in the talent pool. Within weeks this dedicated group has mounted a \$100,000 public relations campaign against the school district in defeat of the election.

What does the school district do? They see what an organized public relations campaign can do, so they create a new administrative position to deal with communications and community relations. However, the opposition's public relations firm had months to plan and implement their campaign, and what little the new person can do in this new position is damage control. The time for pro-active public relations has passed.

According to Tracey and Robert DeBruyn, school community relations is effective communication between the school district, the individual schools and the public. Good school public relations seeks to

gain the public's favorable attention by building goodwill and understanding about the work, mission and activities of the school district (DeBruyn 10). This should have been being done prior to calling for the bond election.

The field of public relations is not new. School district's are some of the last institutions to recognize the importance of courting public opinion and to appreciate its value in getting much needed support, including financial, for school programs, etc. The earliest form can be found in Iraq in the year 1800 B.C. when farm bulletins were distributed to influence farmers how to sow crops, irrigate fields, deal with field mice and harvest crops (Cutlip 89).

The power of public opinion to control human affairs has been recognized down through the centuries. Although the term "public opinion" was not coined until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the importance of people's opinions was demonstrated and recognized in ancient times. With recognition of the power of people's opinions, there came, in response, practices we now call "public relations." Public opinion played a part in shaping events among the early Greeks and Romans, even though the publics were small in size and number, the channels of expression limited, and the communications crude (Cutlip 46).

Greek theorists studied the importance of the public will, although they did not use the term "public opinion." The Romans inscribed upon

their walls the slogan, "S.P.Q.R.—The Senate and the Roman People." Later, they coined the phrase "vox populi, vox Dei—"the voice of the people is the voice of God." Machiavelli wrote in his *Discorsi*, "Not without reason is the voice of the people compared to the voice of God," believing that the people must be either caressed or annihilated (Cutlip 46).

In England, public relations was heralded with the "Keepers of the King's Conscience," a body of aristocrats called the Lords Chancellor, that served as a third party to facilitate communication and adjustment between the government and the people. The word "propaganda" was born in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the Catholic Church set up its College of Propaganda to propagate the faith (Cutlip 47).

A bit closer to home, one of the first formal or organized public relations campaigns dates back to the Revolutionary War and the work of Samuel Adams and the "Sons of Liberty." Adams worked tirelessly to arouse and then organize public opinion, proceeding always on the assumption that the majority of mankind is led by their senses than by their reason. Early on, he discerned that public opinion results from the march of events and the way these events are seen by those active in public affairs. Adams would create events to meet a need if none was at hand to serve his purpose (Cutlip 51).

Far more than most realize, today's patterns of public relations practice were shaped by innovations in mobilizing public opinion developed by Adams and his fellow revolutionaries. These men were fighting for their lives – for their freedom and a new form of government. The need to build a consensus among the people was apparent. However, they could not help to build that consensus without advocating their position--freedom...a new form of government against tyranny and oppression.

The field of educational public relations, in which public opinion is at the forefront, is fairly new. Harvard College was the first educational institution on this continent to produce a brochure (in 1641) to raise funds named the *New England's First Fruits*, (Cutlip 91). Public relations offices (in some form) have been in existence at the collegiate level since 1897 with the University of Michigan leading the way when it established a publicity office (Cutlip 517). The first record of school public relations offices came with the emergence of the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA), which began in 1935. According to Rich Bagin, executive director of NSPRA, "At that time, a number of PR professionals and programs were underway and growing. For the most part, the people hired were from the large urban centers, and just about all the advice given at the time dealt with press work and some newsletters" (Bagin interview, 1988).

Somewhat like Adams and his campaign to create consensus, today school districts must bring together their communities, both external and internal. Today, parents have more choices. With school choice available, and school vouchers on the horizon, educators are beginning to understand the need to market their success stories – their products. Public engagement, accountability, one-on-one marketing, business partnerships: all of these are being requested by a more demanding populous...all of these are components of a public relations program. As the business community discovered a decade ago, school boards are now realizing that the school public relations office is no longer a “luxury” but a necessity.

Education touches the lives of virtually every citizen. There are 57 million children in public schools across the United States. Approximately 3.1 million teachers and administrators work in the public education system. Federal, state and local governments spend almost \$300 billion a year for public education (Digest, 1997). With that many people impacted, out of the 14,883 school districts in the United States (Digest, 1997A), there are only 2,500 school public relations professionals (NSPRA, 1998) working in school districts across the country.

Today’s school communicator wears many hats. Unlike some corporate public relations offices that are segmented by tasks and

talents such as media coordination, publications and development, the school communications office must demonstrate expertise in all areas.

Many of today's school communication offices work in the areas of public information, press relations, publicity, photography, publications, graphics, speaker's bureau, community relations, special events, crisis communication (Lober 21).

In addition, tax levy and bond issues are often the responsibility of the school communicator. Some states have added extra burdens on the school PR office, such as the Missouri State Legislature which has now mandated an annual report publication requirement which takes an enormous amount of time for the school communications officer to produce. Technology has added the production and maintenance of the district's web pages – again, many times the responsibility of the school communications office.

On one hand, it is an exciting time for the school PR office because the added responsibility shows an added respect for the position. With a staff to divide up these tasks, the communications office can truly affect positive communication between the district, the schools and the public. But what happens if there is no large staff to which one delegates? With downsizing, right sizing, outsourcing, or just budget constraints within the district, communication offices are finding that they are lone rangers (single staffed offices) with less help but more

responsibility. Many of these lone rangers (communication officers) are new to their positions and new to the world of school communication. Fresh out of college, can these neophytes be prepared to step into this kind of challenge? Even experienced school public relations professionals are finding it hard to keep up with changes in trends and technology. Continuing education is a constant problem.

In 1996, the St. Charles School District saw the need to establish the position of Director of Community Relations. Within the St. Charles County, two of the three other public school districts had already had someone in that position for years, and within the St. Louis metropolitan area, 25 of 26 school districts have professionals employed full-time (one half-time) as community relations professionals.

I took the position at St. Charles after working for four years at the Parkway School District, at which I had a staff of six. Although it was a PR professional's dream to be able to establish a brand new program, I quickly discovered that going from a larger district to a smaller one, and from a nice-sized staff to a staff of one (with a part-time secretary) would have its own set of opportunities and challenges. Initially this new position had no job description, so working with the superintendent, one was developed that ended up being three pages long – which was longer than the superintendent's!

My job description included the following areas: media relations, publicity, legislative affairs, issues management, research, demographics, publications, graphics, marketing, advertising, special events, volunteerism, business partnerships, PR counseling, grant development and acquisitions, tax levy and bond issue coordination, web page development and maintenance, and supervision of the Print Shop and Audio Visual departments. With all these areas, how could I possibly do them all and maintain the integrity of the office? I also had the task of educating the district's employees on what a school public relations office does. Most of the employees equated public relations with publicity, and thought that with the arrival of a public relations director would come a news story about the district in the local newspaper everyday. When that didn't happen, they thought I was not doing my job. However, despite a slow start with the resignation of the superintendent of schools within my first week on the job, I was able to establish a sound public relations program that included planning and implementing the first successful tax levy campaign for the district in 35 years. I was also responsible for creating a program to help at-risk students by recruiting volunteers and training two retired teachers to manage a group of older adults to tutor students in kindergarten through third grade using the model established by the national OASIS (Older Adult Intergenerational Tutoring) program. I also



conducted an image-building campaign with the staff and community that contributed to changing the climate both internally and externally allowing for the passage of the tax levy increase.

Because of severe budget deficits, the St. Charles Board of Education was forced to make staffing cuts, and regrettably the position of Director of Community Relations was eliminated.

I find myself, once again, pioneering a one-person Communications Office at Eanes Independent School District (EISD) in Austin, Texas. Prior to my arrival and the position being upgraded to an administrative post, the position was held by a Human Resources secretary who basically produced some news releases and handled a few special events and recognitions.

Without secretarial support, my days are filled with reactive public relations instead of proactive public relations. Since my arrival, the position of superintendent has been vacated and there are very few staff members who understand the role of a public relations professional within a school district. My position is currently within the Human Resources department, and many of my job responsibilities center around human resource activities. I report to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Communications. In a survey conducted with 129 school districts across the state of Texas, I am the only professional whose primary job responsibility is to direct

public relations/communications for a school district that is not reporting directly to the superintendent. (The position of Superintendent of Schools has now been filled, and upon his arrival, I expect my duties and role within the district will be redefined.)

Role-definition problems are not uncommon with multi-staffed school public relations offices, but they seem to be magnified at the one-person office. A survey of local school public relations professionals (refer to chapter 3) stated lack of time to do "true public relations" was the biggest frustration in their job. Although not widespread, other primary job responsibilities now being given to school public relations practitioners by small to medium-size districts include personnel, student services, community education, and technology (Survey, 1999).

The emergence of technology has made the public relations practitioner's job easier in some ways, but added more responsibilities also. Desktop publishing has made us all "pseudo-graphic designers," and many of us are taking on the job of "webmasters" with web pages now a large part of an overall public relations program. With this new technology and responsibility comes the added problem of continuing education. We receive the added responsibility, but many of us must train ourselves on how to do it. This adds to the frustration level of the school PR professional knowing "what can be done," but not knowing "how to do it."

With all these issues before us, the school public relations professional has to become a strategist – a staff management function versus just a line management function (Cutlip 7). The ideal situation would be to let us operate as a staff management function providing counsel and other services to support line functions, but as a one-person shop, we have to be both.

Education regarding the importance and duties of a school communication office is needed before truly understanding and grasping the role of a school communication professional. It is important to remember that the school community relations director wears many hats on the job, and those various hats depend on the role that the superintendent sets for the office.

No matter what title the superintendent places on the school PR office, most of the verbiage is used synonymously in the world of communications. Many organizations feel that “public relations” carries a bad connotation, so there are a variety of other words used for titles and departments such as community relations, public affairs, public information, communications, community services, etc. Yet another definition of public relations as “reputation management” has gained currency.

Despite whatever name is used, the definition of public relations is “the management function that establishes and maintains mutually

beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends (Cutlip 3). Just as human relations and interpersonal relations describe the study and management of relations among individuals and international relations deals with relationships among nations (Cutlip 1), likewise, public relations applies when the level of concern is an organization's relationship with others (Cutlip 1).

Effective school public relations seeks to gain the public's favorable attention by building goodwill and understanding about the work, mission and activities of the school district.

Overall, a successful community relations program involves media relations/publicity, legislative affairs, issues management, publications/graphics/printing, marketing, advertising, special events, volunteerism, business partnerships, PR counseling, etc. It sometimes includes grant development and acquisitions, the community school program and services, and other areas depending on the resources and organization of a school district.

#### Media relations/publicity

Media relations and publicity in particular are the areas most commonly thought of by staff and the community when dealing with community relations. To develop a successful community relations program, we must not depend on the media to get our message out to

the public. With a shrinking hole for news and more competition for space (both print and electronic media are seeing less space for news with advertising taking over what previously was reserved for news and features), we must be more creative when planning our Community Relations programs.

Developing a good working relationship with the local media is essential and healthy for any community relations office – there are many rules and general guidelines that will be outlined in Chapter 4 regarding working with the media.

#### Legislative Relations and Governmental Affairs

Although a public entity cannot spend money on “lobbying,” its political officials for the intent of influencing legislation, we can work to build and maintain relationships with our local and state officials (Cutlip 17). We should keep them informed and work to build a good working relationship with them. This would include the local mayor and city council members, fire chief, police chief, and state and national legislators. This is done through the Community Relations office working in tandem with the superintendent and other administrators, as well as Board of Education members.

### Issues Management.

Issues management is the proactive process of anticipating, identifying, evaluating and responding to public policy issues that affect organizations and their publics. Two elements capture the essence of the concept of issues management: (1) early identification of issues with potential impact on the organization, and (2) a strategic response designed to mitigate or capitalize on their consequences (Cutlip 17). In the past, I have written issue papers on such topics as Sex Education, AIDS/HIV, electromagnetic fields (EMF); and other issues that were “hot” topics at the time. The CR Director, with the assistance of the administrative team, should draft “issue position papers” addressing the topics to help the public understand the Director’s position.

### Publications/Graphics/Printing

A school district’s image can be portrayed through the publications that it produces. While I worked at St. Charles School District, I produced one internal publication for employees, *The Staff Bulletin*, distributed every two weeks during the school year; one external publication, *District News*, which was distributed quarterly to all District patrons; and *The Board Notes*, distributed to employees and select patrons following each regularly scheduled Board meeting. In addition, most schools produced a principal’s newsletter that was sent

home to parents. Surveys of both staff and patrons, conducted annually, reported that communications from the district was ranked very high and was a positive attribute.

### Marketing

Marketing is the management function that identifies human needs and wants, offers products and services to satisfy those demands, and causes transactions that deliver products and services in exchange for something of value to the provider (Cutlip 7). In a school district, the product of value that we offer is a quality education, a safe environment in which to learn, and a quality teaching and support staff from which to learn. Our "sales" staff is the community, realtors, and our own employees.

### Advertising

Advertising is information placed in the media by an identified sponsor that pays for the time or space. It is a controlled method of placing messages in the media (Cutlip 10). At Parkway, and now at EISD, I produced a biweekly one-quarter page ad titled "News and Views," in which I place information that I want to make sure is placed in the newspaper the way I want it to be received. This includes Board meeting information, controversial issues that might have been portrayed in a negative manner by the media, calendar items, etc.

### Special Events

District special events can include special recognition ceremonies for staff, students or community members; a back-to-school rally for staff; a retirement luncheon/recognition; special Board recognitions; and on and on. Many are considered “press agency” in that they are creating newsworthy stories and events to attract media attention and to gain public notice (Cutlip 13). They also work to increase both internal and external morale. Everyone likes to be thanked, to be recognized for a good job or a special accomplishment. Many of these “special events” take very little money but go a long way in establishing goodwill. It takes time to be nice to people, but it is time well spent.

### Volunteerism

Volunteerism in a school district is the life-line of the district. Volunteers include all the members of the PTO/PTA/Booster Clubs, Band Boosters, Athletic Associations, etc. It also includes special partnerships with business leaders who are invited to talk about a career in their business field or to read to a first grader. It also includes retiree’s through the OASIS program who provide valuable time tutoring at-risk students. The District’s volunteer program needs



to be monitored and expanded, and it is the job of the CR Director, with the assistance of the school principal to do this.

### Business Partnerships

Business partnerships are another job of the CR Director (along with the school principal). As mentioned earlier, business leaders are often invited to be guests in classrooms to talk about their specific careers. Some years back, there was a program called "Adopt-A-School" in which businesses "adopted" a school and helped them obtain equipment, guest lectured, gave money for parties, etc. The program has since expanded and is now called "Business Partnership." At EISD, this program is called "Ventures," and it is a successful program bringing the schools and the businesses together as partners in the education process of the community. With the continued financial strain that is placed on school districts, these types of programs need to be expanded and nurtured.

### PR Counseling

Among the many roles of the Community Relations Director is the role of counselor. The CR Director has a key role in shaping the ethics of organizational decisions and in implementing the decisions. As a counselor, she is a problem finding and problem solver or preventer, as well as interpreter – a communication link. This comes with being a

PR counselor to the administration and Board. The most valuable type of public relations activity involves planning to prevent problems or at least to solve them while they are still small.

### Development

Development is the specialized part of public relations in non-profit organizations that builds and maintains relationships with donors and members for the purpose of securing financial and volunteer support (Cutlip 20). Education foundations are beginning to emerge in school districts, and many times the CR Director is the administrative liaison between the foundation and the administration. At both Parkway and St. Charles, I served as the link between the Foundation and the Superintendent and Board.

### Community Service

The school district is owned by the community. We must be accessible to the community. School districts do this by making available both inside and outdoor facilities for use by the community, providing evening classes through the Community School offerings, and being an active participant in the Chamber of Commerce and other community-based organizations.

## Public Relations

Public relations is all the above. Public relations includes communication about the day-to-day activities as well as the ongoing work and mission of the schools. Public relations involves describing the functions of the schools and of the people who work to fulfill the purpose of the schools. And, it involves describing how students benefit from this work and mission. Its messages always revolve around the foundations upon which our educational institutions were created and the reasons those institutions are maintained. Therefore, public relations is often educational or informational in nature. Good and effective public relations communications are designed to build and develop understanding and confidence in the whole of a community on behalf of the schools in the district. One of the tasks of public relations efforts is to enhance the schools, and establish a reputation of service and benefit to the whole community.

Without the public relations function, organizations tend to become insensitive to changes occurring around them and become dysfunctional as they get further and further out of step with their environment (Cutlip 22).

### Key Ideas and Trends

Research has shown that there is still not a wide understanding of the importance of word-of-mouth communication that comes from relationships (Jackson). The following information was derived from previous research by school communication experts.

- 1) Key publics and opinion leaders should be identified and cultivated as a communications vehicle. Key publics that should be reached can be ranked in the following order based on ability to help or hinder the educational process.
  - a) Opinion and power leaders.
  - b) Leaders of senior citizen and “empty nesters”
  - c) Teachers and staff.
  - d) Parents and families of current students.
  - e) Other elected and appointed officials.
  - f) Other “alumni” of recent students and families.
  - g) Current students.
  - h) PTA/PTO advisory bodies, support groups and other members of the school family. (These groups are at the end of the list only because they are already on the team/list.) (Pyle 3).

- 2) The best place for school messages is not mass media. The influence of the mass media is greatly limited—their influence is shaped by interpersonal communication and social interaction (Lowery). In a 1978 study, Phi Delta Kappan, Inc. (Pyle 4) reported that both parents and non-parents stated that their best source of information about schools is word-of-mouth (ranked highest at 70 percent). Other sources were local newspapers at 37 percent; with school publications at 7 percent. This can change depending on the dynamics of a school district. When I was at Parkway, we did a survey and the majority of current parents indicated they received the majority of their information from the Principal's Newsletter, then through word-of-mouth.
- 3) Personal communication is being used increasingly by leading organizations. The weekly public relations newsletter, *PR Reporter*, recently identified 12 trends of cutting-edge organizations. Seven of the trends involve the following forms of personal communications (Pyle 4):
  - a) One-on-one personalized relationship program.
  - b) Feedback systems.
  - c) Culture change through open communication.
  - d) Going directly to key audiences with messages, avoiding media as intermediaries.

- e) Keeping a low profile, communicating to narrow target audiences rather than trying to reach everyone.
  - f) Employees as #1 audience; communicating with them through supervisors.
  - g) Lateral communication and relationship building.
- 4) Knowledgeable employees are vital to the success of organizations. Employees talk to reporters, publishers, politicians, regulators and others with power in school communities, often without realizing their power to impact the school's future. Research by a metropolitan hospital found more than half of the people living in its service area knew at least one employee personally (Pyle 4).
- a) Only about three percent of people in school districts make decisions about schools based on reading school newsletters (Knagg).
  - b) Employees of schools are responsible for more than 80 percent of a school's public image (Pyle 4).

When asked what advice she would give to someone new to the school communication's office, Dorian Martin, past president of the National School Public Relations Association, stated "develop a communications plan that includes your internal audience. We tend to focus on the media and forget what's in our own backyard" (Martin interview 1999).

Annell Todd, executive director of the Texas School Public Relations Association, stated that the novice needs to bring the skills and confidence to the job to earn the respect of the administrative team and the Board that will allow him or her to act as the PR counselor and spokesperson (Todd interview 1999).

How does a one-person school communications office, in this veritable sea of job responsibilities, develop an effective public relations program? I will attempt to bring all these facts, figures and tasks together in a practical guide for the one-person office. School communicators share unique issues and problems that their corporate (and even other non-profit) counterparts do not share. It is my intent to compress much research and years of experience down to an easy, how-to-guide for both the novice and the one-person school communications office. It will include strategies and strategic-tips for the one-person school communications office on how to enhance the image of the school district with no support or clerical staff and a small budget.

## Chapter II

### Review of Literature

Although the field of public relations has been around for a while (especially in the corporate arena), very little is written specifically on establishing a self-contained public relations office in a school or school district setting.

The intent of the textbook, “School Promotion, Publicity, & Public Relations...Nothing but Benefits” by Tracey H. DeBruyn and Robert L. DeBruyn, is to give administrators (untrained in public relations) a basic understanding on “how to implement a program of publicity, promotion and public relations in a school or school district.” Although somewhat unorganized and laborious to read, the book contains good information for the novice and serves as a refresher for the current school public relations professional.

The book includes a series of 225 “public relations ideas” which are actually practical public relations principles and thoughts on a wide range of topics. These topics include positive reinforcement, mass communication vehicles, face-to-face communication, rumor control methods, special event planning, etc. The “ideas” are written in a way that is easy to understand and embrace.



In comparison, the “Complete Book of School Public Relations: An Administrator’s Manual and Guide” is hard to follow and understand. The book was written by Donovan R. Walling, a former English teacher with no formal public relations education or experience as a school public relations professional – the closest coming as the student newspaper advisor. Walling writes his book in two parts. The first part focuses on planning and the second part emphasizes developing ideas into action plans. It is a difficult book to follow but many of the examples and guidelines are usable.

Irene Lober, the author of “Promoting Your School: A Public Relations Handbook,” has written a hands-on, practical approach guide to school public relations. Although not a school public relations practitioner herself, she has compiled information from school public relations professionals throughout the country that can be used by all schools and school districts. The book covers such topics as public opinion, elections, media relations and planning.

“Effective Public Relations,” a textbook by Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center and Glen M. Broom, is used as the main reference book in the accreditation exam for the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) and the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). The textbook is extremely good and focuses on all aspects of public relations. The history and evolution of the field of public

relations is extremely thorough, and the definition of each issue related to public relations is provided. The book also explains the R.A.C.E. formula and goes into each component – Research Methods, Action Planning, Communication Planning and Evaluation.

“Building Community Support for Schools” by Jack Pyle focuses on the R (Research) in the RACE formula. The workbook is a “step-by-step method to gain support for schools using relationship-building techniques.

According to Pat Jackson, PRSA Fellow, “this book will guide the most at-risk school system, the most novice of school leaders as well as the most experienced practitioner, toward building relationships of consequence that will help our schools be whatever they need to be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

A 1999 survey of 146 school public relations offices across Missouri and Texas further demonstrates that the school communicator continues to wear many hats as they battle with school officials to develop an understanding of the importance of having an integrated, comprehensive school public relations program. In particular, the one-person school office seems to receive more diverse job duties than even other school communication offices. With a response rate of 53 percent, many similar issues came to light from both one-person offices and large offices.

A review of the early archives of the School Public Relations Association (founded in 1935 and later renamed the National School Public Relations Association) was a walk through time citing the formation of public relations offices in both the education and government arenas. It contains good information about the beginnings of the school PR office, originally formed to primarily promote the teaching profession.

The December/January 1945-46 issue of Trends in School Public Relations stated, "from New York City comes news of encouragement in the field of public relations. The Board of Education has voted for funds for the employment of specialized personnel and the formation of a Department of Public Relations."

Just recently, the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) produced a book titled "School Public Relations: Building Confidence in Education." Perhaps due to the facts stated in the beginning of this chapter, a group of school public relations practitioners submitted chapters for publication on a wide range of topics pertaining to school public relations. In the Introductory Chapter of the book, the editor writes, "For many years, those of us in the school public relations profession have been asked, 'Why do schools need to do public relations?' This book, in a very practical way, gives you hundreds of answers to that question."

“It is intended to provide a conceptual framework of public relations and practical examples of good PR for school board members, superintendent of schools, school administrators, principals, parents and others. It can be used as a source book for college courses on school public relations and for beginning school PR practitioners” (NSPRA 3).

Chapters include such topics as engaging the public, issues management, school foundations, crisis management, and internal communication. It is an excellent primer for both the novice and veteran.

Due to the fact that very little is written specifically on school public relations, it was necessary to conduct a few personal interviews and a survey of school public relations professionals, both those who are new to the field and veterans in the field.

Interviews were conducted with Rich Bagin, executive director of the NSPRA based in Rockville, Maryland; Dorian Martin, immediate past president of NSPRA and communications director of the Texas Elementary School Principals Association; and Annell Todd, executive director of the Texas School Public Relations Association based in Austin, Texas. These individuals were chosen because they represent a large segment of individuals who work in the school public relations arena.

All the interviews were invaluable. Bagin divulged a historical background of school public relations from the past 65 years and what changes the Association had witnessed in the school PR position. His remarks were more global in nature. Martin was able to concentrate more on the day-to-day events and changes in the school PR office, having at one time worked in a one-person shop. Todd limited her remarks to how to increase the importance of the school PR professional within his or her own school district.

The survey of school public relations offices in Missouri and Texas, although helpful, was not very surprising. The biggest frustration stated by the school professionals was the lack of time to work on "true public relations" activities. Although not widespread, other primary job responsibilities now being given to school public relations practitioners by small to medium-sized districts include personnel, student services, community education and technology. With added responsibilities and a lack of clerical support, the school PR office cannot adequately conduct a comprehensive community relations program. In a future survey, we may find out that job burnout may be the result.

## Chapter III

### Selective Review & Evaluation of Research

As stated in Chapter Two, very little has been written specifically on establishing a self-contained public relations office in a school or school district setting.

There are a few books or textbook chapters with the word “school” or “education” in the title, but they tend to focus on a broad-based approach to public relations for many fields and not specifically addressing the needs of a one-person school public relations office.

For instance, in the textbook by Cutlip, Center, Broom, “Effective Public Relations,” only one chapter is dedicated to education although this textbook is used as the sole source study aid for the National School Public Relations Association’s public relations accreditation exam. In fact, the chapter, titled “Nonprofit Organizations, Health Care, and Education,” is not solely dedicated to the field of educational public relations, but shares it with other nonprofit organizations and the health care industry as noted by the title.

Why hasn’t more been written on the one-person school public relations office? One possibility is that there are not enough one-person offices to warrant literature on the subject. Since recent experience and surveys suggest otherwise, another explanation could be that those in

charge of public relations for school districts have been so busy defining and defending their roles and applying the principles of practical public relations that little priority has been assigned to writing such a publication.

The school public relations books that I did find were written by non-school public relations professionals. They had experience in the field of education, as an English teacher, superintendent of schools, or administrator, but they had no formal training or experience in a school public relations office.

I often hear school public relations professionals stating, "everyone thinks they can 'do' PR." Well, it would be nice to read a publication written on school PR by a school PR practitioner!

I don't think I am necessarily pioneering a new movement, but I am seeing a more concerted effort in developing programs on this subject. (I have just recently been asked to speak on this subject at several state and national conferences), so I predict that this is a temporary publication void that will soon be filled as the field of educational public relations continues to evolve.

In fact, just this year a book was written and sold to NSPRA members titled "School Public Relations: Building Confidence in Education." A group of veteran school public relations professionals submitted chapters for publication on a wide range of topics pertaining

to school public relations. These chapters were compiled and the book produced by NSPRA. Chapters include such topics as engaging the public, issues management, school foundations, crisis management, and internal communication. It is an excellent primer for both the novice and veteran.

There are two publications, although rather laborious to read, that I found helpful. Promoting Your Schools by Irene Lober and School Promoting, Publicity and Public Relations...Nothing but Benefits by Tracey and Robert DeBruyn.

Dr. Lober's book intended her textbook to be a "practical body of knowledge for use by administrators, supervisors and by those currently involved in graduate work in educational administration,"—yet another argument for the need for a publication to assist the school PR office novice. I found it interesting that she wrote the book at all. The book's "forward" mentions that she is the former superintendent of schools for University City, Missouri. The University City Public Schools did not have a school public relations professional until just a few years ago when they hired a very creative young woman who has had to fight to keep the program alive.

Despite the fact that Dr. Lober does not understand the role of public relations professionals in a school district setting, the book does



contain good information about public engagement and public engagement strategies.

Although Lober has no formal training or experience in school public relations, she was able to gather information from school public relations practitioners from around the country. The book offers a hands-on, practical approach of proven techniques that are used by these many districts throughout the country, and that can easily be adapted to all schools and school districts.

Although the text was written over seven years ago, the information is still relevant in today's schools. She states, "schools today are experiencing pressures that have never been faced before, and these pressures are having devastating effects on the operation of the schools" (Lober xx).

"The status quo is no longer acceptable, regardless of how well the school district may be doing. Not knowing how their district is doing, voters respond negatively. We find that the three R's in education and are no longer reading, writing and arithmetic, but reform, revise and refocus. Many taxpayer groups are clamoring for revolts, refusals and reductions" (Lober xx).

The intent of the textbook, "School Promotion, Publicity & Public Relations...Nothing but Benefits" by Tracey H. DeBruyn and Robert L. DeBruyn, is to give administrators (untrained in public relations) a

basic understanding of “how to implement a program of publicity, promotion and public relations in a school or school district.” As stated earlier, the book is somewhat unorganized and laborious to read, but contains good information both for the novice and as a refresher for the professional.

I liked a quote by John W. Hill found in the first chapter of the book – *“The purpose of public relations in its best sense is to inform and to keep minds open...”* An analogy in the book brought this to light.

The authors were asked to assist a private school (referred to in the book as the XYZ Hearing School) to develop a solid public relations program. After a tour of the facility, one of the authors asked what they did there. The school officials did not understand the question.

“Do you teach deaf children to hear?”

“Of course not,” the school official stated. “You can’t teach a deaf child to hear. We teach deaf children to speak!”

“Then why do you call yourselves the XYZ Hearing School?”

Stunned, they replied, “That’s what the name has been for the last 25 years. We’ve never even given it a thought.”

How often do we hear that answer or undertake a project just because “that’s the way it’s always been done”?

The book provides the reader with a series of 225 “public relations ideas” which are actually practical public relations principles and

thoughts on a wide range of topics. These topics include positive reinforcement, mass communication vehicles, face-to-face communication, rumor control methods, and special event planning that will enable us the possibility of looking outside the “that’s the way it’s always been done” box, and think of things that we may have begun to take for granted.

A survey of 146 school public relations offices across Missouri and Texas further demonstrates that the school communicator continues to wear many hats. In particular, the one-person school office seems to receive more diverse job duties than even other school communications offices. With a response rate of 53 percent, many similar issues came to light from both one-person offices and large offices.

As stated in chapter one, the names of public relation offices are varied. In the survey, 41 percent of school public relations offices in the state of Texas were called Public Information; 27 percent were named Communications; and Community Relations and Public Relations had nine percent of the responses. Other names included Public Relations and Grant Writing, Community Education and Public Information, Communications and Public Relations, Community and Communications, Communications and Community Relations, School Information, Communications and Community Outreach, and Personnel and Community Relations.

There was no clear discovery on whether a one-person office was only at small districts; however, the largest district with a one-person office had an enrollment of 16,000. The smallest had 2,550 students. There were a few small districts (under 8,000 enrollment) with more than one professional on staff. The majority of respondents had at least a part-time secretary or some clerical support. For those small shops that did not have clerical support, they reported that void was a huge challenge and deterrent to their job productivity.

Of those responding to the survey, 83 percent reported directly to the superintendent of schools. A few of those who reported directly to an assistant superintendent were members of the Administrative Team or Superintendent's Council.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

### **Current Public Relations Duties:**

- Advisory Committees
- Alumni Relations/Associations
- Birthday/holiday cards (staff & community)
- Board meeting (attendance)
- Board recognitions
- Bond related information pieces
- Business Partnerships
- Counseling (public relations) to Board, administration and staff
- Crisis Communications
- Development/Grant Writing
- District Media Liaison/Spokesperson
- District Publications
- District Reports
- District representative on community committees
- Donations/Donor Relations
- Liaison with business & community service organizations
- Information Dissemination (internally/externally)
- ITV Station
- Marketing

- Media Relations
- News Release Writing
- Open Records Requests
- Partnerships in Education
- Photography
- Presentations
- Print Shop Supervision
- Public Information
- Realtor Packets
- Realtors Information Program and Tours
- Research
- Senior citizen Gold Card program
- School/Community Liaison
- Script Writing
- Special events including:
  - Awards Ceremonies
  - Banquets/Breakfasts
  - Graduation Ceremonies
  - Receptions
  - School Dedications
  - Service Banquets
  - Special Recognitions

- United Way
- Speech Writing
- Student Handbooks
- Support of campus-based PR efforts
- Surveys
- Teacher of the Year program
- Television
- Monthly cable TV show
- Public Access Channel
- Tours
- Training/Orientations
  - Administration
  - Board
  - Media
- Video Production
- Volunteer Coordination/Partnership Program
- Web Page design/development/maintenance
- Work with retirees
- Work with senior citizens

**Non-Public Relation Duties:**

- AEIS District Coordinator

- Attendance Officer
- Board Actions
- Career days at all campuses
- Community Education
- Court-appointed children-liaison officer
- Curriculum Writing
- District Recycling Program
- District Telephone System
- Election Coordinator/elections
- Grant Writing
- Human Resource duties
- Medicaid Reimbursement Program
- Mediation/conflict resolution in the work place
- Loss Control Officer
- Professional & Paraprofessional Screening & Interviews
- Student Teacher coordinator
- Teacher appraisals
- Teacher certification
- Teacher recruitment
- Title IX Coordinator
- Workers Compensation Claims
- Legal issues



- Policies
- Receiving
- Safety procedures
- Truancy

**Challenges:**

- Growing school district/shrinking department
- Increased media pressure
- Job burnout due to commutative pressure
- Bridging gap between interest of the District and the interests of the community, business leaders, media, etc.
- Lack of support for PR function at high levels
- Staying informed of state and national education trends
- Staying up-to-date on publishing technology
- Trying to show our employees we're not a publicity machine—we're about creating and maintaining relationships
- Web master/design
- Given more and more responsibilities without additional help
- Timeliness of publications—keeping up with deadlines
- Lack of journalistic training
- Ability to be available to cover all District functions

- Learning the details of public education (including committees, process and terminology)
- Not enough staff for increasing number of projects
- Time constraints/juggling time
- Serves six different communities
- Redistricting
- Bond Issues
- Need to be more “in the loop”
- Need more computer training
- Last minute projects—no time to plan
- Poor communication between departments
- Outdated technology
- Lack of access to District database and resources
- Need to be three places at once
- Covering all schools equally
- Being creative in layout and design

## And The Survey Says ...

*I am in the process of writing the thesis for my master's degree and need your help. Please fill out the following survey. (I have made it as brief as possible. Its purpose is to research the issue of school public relations practitioners and the many hats that they wear.)*

Name of School District \_\_\_\_\_

Size of school district (# of students and employees): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School PR Office (i.e. Communications Office, Public Affairs, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Your phone # (in case I need to call for clarification): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Personnel in Department (list titles): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who do you report to? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the job responsibilities of your office (be sure to include any "non-traditional" PR duties):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Challenges within your job (i.e. given additional duties without additional training) & suggestions to improve.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Please return survey within one week of receiving to Monica Faulkenbery, Communications Officer, Eanes ISD, at fax # (512) 329-3692 or via mail to 601 Camp Craft Road, Austin, TX 78746. I REALLY appreciate your input in this survey. It will help tremendously in completing my thesis!*

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

Since there are few, if any, resource guides for school public relations office, it was important to gather items that might be helpful for a person who is just getting started in a one-person school communications office. This chapter is meant to serve as that resource guide. It contains hints from school communication professionals who have worked in one-person shops and have learned from their experiences.

As indicated by the survey, time and lack of staff are critical challenges in the school PR office. How can you effectively run a quality public relations campaign for your school district, while trying to juggle the many job duties now thrust on the school public relations professional? How can you expand a department with no funding resources to hire additional staff?

When you are a one-person school public relations office, you must, as the saying goes, “work smarter, not harder.”

While I was at Parkway School District, even though we had some staff in the Public Affairs Department, we didn't have enough to monitor all the schools and departments. How could we cover all the

news in the buildings when we weren't able to get out into the buildings? How can we effectively promote a district without knowing what was going on in the schools? How can a few people be in more than one place at one time?

The answer was to develop a trained network of public information professionals in each school building. These "volunteers" (called Parkway Ambassadors) were comprised of one paid staff person, normally the principal's secretary, and one PTO volunteer. I developed a handbook that covered basic media relation processes and procedures. I then developed a training workshop (that is held annually at the beginning of each year) for this network of ambassadors and school building principals. I have established the same procedure at Eanes ISD.

Following a four-hour workshop, these building "Public Information Coordinators (PIC's) are allowed to interact with the local media on routine school event stories. If the story is potentially controversial, the PIC will contact my office and we will work together on the story.

The agenda for the workshop is as follows:

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Purpose of workshop
- III. Public Information Handbook
- IV. District Outlets and Introduction of Outside Sources

V. Print Media

- Picayune – Mr. Ed Allan (local neighborhood newspaper)
- Westbank Reporter – Kay Kennedy (local newspaper)
- Austin American Statesman – Michele Kurtz

VI. Electronic Media

- KXAN-TV – Jim McNabb (local television station)
- MAJIC 95 – Julie B. (local radio station)

VII. How to take the kind of pictures you “want to take” – Dixie McGrath (middle school journalism teacher)

VIII. EISD Communications Role and Methods

IX. Questions and Answers

The following is the handbook and presentation that is presented each September to train the Building Public Information Coordinator. It could be easily adapted to any school district.

# Public Information Coordinator Handbook



*Eanes Independent School District  
1999-2000 School Year*

---

# WELCOME

## 1999-00 Public Information Coordinators

Thank you for volunteering to serve your school as a Public Information Coordinator! Your role is an integral one to the Eanes Independent School District, and you are an important part of the Communications Office. Without your help, many of the exciting activities and accomplishments going on at your school would not get the recognition they deserve.

As a PIC (Public Information Coordinator), it is your role to share the newsworthy things going on at your school with the media, the Communications Office, and your school community. You may write news releases, photograph school events or be asked to help plan and implement activities which enhance relationships among Eanes staff, students and residents.

But don't worry, you have assistance in doing your job. The Communications Office, which handles public relations for the District on a day-to-day basis, is here to help and support you every step of the way.

This handbook has been created as a resource and a tool that you can rely on while doing your job. In addition, we will devote a portion of the "You Make a Difference" committee meetings to discuss public information topics as necessary.

Congratulations, again, on serving an important role for the District and your school. Let's have a wonderful school year, filled with great news, excitement and fun!



# Public Information Coordinators

---

## 1999-2000

---

**ABC High School**

Name of school rep  
phone number

**ABC Middle School**

Name of school rep  
phone number

**ABC Elementary**

Name of school rep  
phone number



# The key to success is connecting with your school.

As a School Public Information Coordinator, you will need to establish and maintain a good relationship with the staff members at your school -- they will have the inside scoop on news events and people within their building.

Introduce yourself at a staff meeting and make sure that the staff understands your role as a PIC. Let them know that you are interested in any upcoming events, new activities in their classrooms or special recognitions.

Other resources for school news and activities might be the principal's newsletter and the Eanes Online, which is a calendar listing of events from all Eanes schools and organizations. A copy of the Eanes Online is included in this handbook.

And don't forget your school PTO and other school/community organizations are great sources of information!

## Be a Promoter of School Activities

Another part of building good relationships is to facilitate building and community public relations activities (such as the You Make a Difference award.) Let your principal know that you are available to help with activities designed to make the staff and students feel good about their school and keep them informed of activities that affect them.

Maybe you could help coordinate (or find a parent volunteer to help coordinate) a parent/ child reading night or a student recognition activity. The possibilities are endless. Following are some other ways to promote your school that go beyond the realm of publishing.

## Other Ways to Promote Your School

Consider what you can do in your school building to make the staff feel appreciated...to make students want to brag about their school...to inspire confidence among parents who send their children to Eanes schools. These internal and community public relations efforts may do much to keep the Eanes community feeling positive about their school.

After reading the ideas listed below, please share any ideas of your own with your fellow public information coordinators.

- “I Have An Idea”...cards: Place cards and a box in high-traffic areas of your school, so visitors can offer suggestions to the school.
- Breakfasts, lunches, coffee hours: Schedule special times for parents and/or community leaders to meet with school staff.
- Staff recognition bulletin board: Post photos and short narratives highlighting teachers or support staff who win awards, having interesting hobbies, etc.
- Student recognition bulletin board: Same as above, but for students.
- Visit new families in your community to welcome them to the school district.
- Senior citizens: Ask your principal about providing senior citizens with opportunities to volunteer in the schools.
- Student productions at chamber meetings, retirement centers, regional business meetings (scenes from plays, choir performances, oratorical demonstrations).
- Special thank-you’s to school volunteers (give on of these to yourself.)
- School displays at education fairs, malls, community businesses.

# What is news? What is not news?

## What is an “angle” on news?

---

**O**ld news does not exist. If it isn't current and interesting to a large segment of the community, it isn't news.

### News Should Be Timely

When gathering information at your school, keep in mind that timeliness is vastly important in any news organization. If two scientists demonstrated the process of fission at your school last month, the media's interest level quickly goes from about one million to none. Similarly, if the 7th grade is participating in a partnership with the city planners to design their ideal metropolis, the media will want to know about it while they're building it, not after it is finished.

### Determine An Angle

Interest level also is determined by the news event itself. A school science fair can be rather commonplace. But if the students at the science fair are going to create a tornado in a box, the news event has an “angle”—an element that makes it unique or unusual.

Many stories have more than one angle. For instance, students building a rain forest in their classroom is a unique educational story, but it's also an environmental one or could have a business focus if the project is funded by a major local corporation. Try to figure out which angle tells your story best. But if one reporter turns you down, try another with a different angle. It also helps to decide if you have a news story or a feature story. News stories involve an event occurring on a specific day at a specific time. Feature stories usually cover an issue or person/persons, but are more in-depth and less time-bound.

### Know Your Audience

When you think about the kind of information that is useful to the media, it may help you to think in terms of audience. Who will want to read about your school's annual picnic under the oak tree? Unless the principal plans to sit in a dunking booth to raise money for charity, your school newsletter may be the only media source interested in this news tip. (If your principal does plan to do something crazy, or if anything else unusual will happen at the picnic, it may be a human interest story that would appeal to a wider audience.)

Schools that have an exciting educational program may capture broader audience appeal. The following are some audiences to consider when determining the appropriate placement for your story: parents, students, staff within your own school; Eanes parents, students, staff; immediate community; Austin community; educational community; regional or national audiences.

# **Mainstream Notions of What's Newsworthy**

---

## **Public Recognition**

### **Issue Recognition**

Is the problem recognized as an issue or is it relatively unknown?

*Example: Programs in schools that prevent alcohol or drug usage by students.*

### **Famous Faces**

Are faces known to the public? How many people?

*Ex.: Story that features the Superintendent, a Board member, principal, famous alum, etc.*

### **Trendiness**

Is the issue currently fashionable or has it peaked? Is it timely?

*Ex.: Violence prevention programs in the schools.*

### **Proximity**

How directly will the impact be felt?

*Ex.: School, community, citywide, state or national focus.*

## **Importance**

### **Impact**

What impact will the event/campaign (or the issue raised) have? On whom?

*Ex.: A district bond election is an issue that affects the entire Eanes community.*

### **Currency**

Is the issue/story happening now?

## **Interest**

### **Good story**

Is the event packaged with a story line that offers conflict and resolution?

*Ex.: A student who overcame a disability and excelled.*

### **Human interest**

Are there appealing characters with whom the audience can identify?

### **Memorable Emotions**

Does the story transmit feelings not just ideas?

### **Visuals**

Are there interesting visuals?

*Ex.: Dramatic action, good photo opportunities, not just talking heads.*

### **Fresh twist**

Is the event/story different, unusual or funny; something which hasn't been done before?

*Source: Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing, Charlotte Ryan*

# Ideas for News Tips

---

Now that we know what constitutes a good story, a how to determine an angle and audience, here are some story topics that exist at your school.

- plays
- science fairs
- guest speakers
- staff/student awards
- staff presentations at professional meetings
- innovative/unusual/timely classroom activities or learning experiences
- cooperative education programs/partnerships
- student activities
- activities related to: American Education Week, Black History Month, National Nutrition Month, National Library Month, etc.
- thematic lessons

## Media Plan

In an attempt to increase District coverage in the media, the Communications Office has developed a media plan for making targeted pitches to various news outlets. These pitches are spread throughout the year and are related to dates and activities that generally garner media interest.

We need your help to make this plan effective. If your school is doing something that you feel is newsworthy, that fits with any of the dates or activities listed in the plan, please let us know. We can tip it out to the appropriate media, and hopefully, your school will receive the coverage.

A complete copy of the 1999-2000 Media Plan is included in this handbook.

# Publishing Opportunities

---

When good things are conveyed about our schools through television, newspapers, radio or the Internet, people begin to build confidence in the Eanes Independent School District.

To capture any publishing opportunities, we need information that is interesting to a large segment of the media's audience. For a television station, radio station or regional newspaper, the media's audience is comprised of most of the people in the Austin area. For a community newspaper, school/district newsletter or school display, the audience comprises mainly of the Eanes community. Another media source is the education journals published for parents and education professionals.

Professional journals, as well as some of the community newspapers and the District publications, sometimes cover staff recognition items. If a teacher at your school is retiring after 30 years, she/he may have some sage observations about the way kids have changed that would make an interesting feature story. The school which received national recognition for its successful bus safety program is a news item that would interest any media across the nation, especially some of the media which specialize in education.

Some of your best chances for publication will come through the District.

# **Eanes ISD Publications/ Communication Vehicles**

---

## **Above Board**

This publication is distributed following each meeting of the Board of Trustees.

## **Eanes OnLine**

This is a bi-monthly calendar of events that is distributed to the media and each school, as well as administrators around the District.

## **Eanes News & Views**

This is a quarter-page advertorial containing stories and timely news briefs. It appears in the Picayune and Westbank Reporter every two weeks. Copies are distributed to each school building for posting.

## **Eanes Web Site**

The District's web site is currently under construction, but most schools have working web sites. Once the District's web site is functional, it will contain current news items, calendar items, and other information about the District as a whole and individual schools.

## **The Tip Sheet/Tip of the Hat**

The Tip Sheet highlights upcoming events and story ideas for the local media. Tip of the Hat highlights student and staff recognitions. Both are faxed or mailed to reporters on an as-needed basis.

## **News Releases/Press Releases**

The Communication Office writes and distributes news releases on an "as-needed" basis.



# When to approach the media

---

You can approach the media on your own with a story idea by calling a reporter directly or by sending news releases, calendar items or public service announcements. However, if you decide to call the media with an idea, please tell your principal first, then inform the Communications Office, so we know reporters may be coming to your school. At the same time, we will let you know if we are doing a major story pitch at your school.

Please be aware that you are not at any time required to act as a spokesperson for your school or act as a direct liaison to the media. Your principal or the Communications Officer for the District will handle inquiries from reporters who are researching information for an article about your school.

If the media should show up at your school unannounced or you hear that this might happen, please contact the Communications Office immediately. Also, never talk with the media regarding a potential or apparent crisis situation. These calls should always be referred to the Communications Office. It is not our intent to control, censor, or otherwise manipulate the information during a crisis. Rather, we are striving to effectively manage the issue through formal communication channels.

## How to “pitch” a story

Often to get a story in the media, you can't solely rely on a press release. You also must “pitch” your stories by phone to editors or reporters. Phone calls humanize and personalize your stories, so if you have a newsworthy story you believe in and feel comfortable approaching the media on your own, get on the phone and tell them about it. Here are some tips to make this task easier.

### **Call at the right time.**

If possible, call at least a week before your story will break to give reporters and editors time to prepare. Call when they are least likely to be on deadline, usually during the first few hours of the work day. Even then, always ask journalists if they have time to hear about your story.

### **Be prepared: know whom you're calling and your story.**

Don't make anonymous calls to the media and try to explain your story to a receptionist. Call directly to the reporter or editor who should have your story. Then, be able to present it in 30 seconds. Tell the story the way the media might tell it to their audience. If necessary, write a script that quickly gets to the heart of the story. Emphasize the newsworthy elements--its uniqueness, the significance of the story to readers and its connection to other issues.

**Make your call near a fax machine.**

Even if you already mailed or faxed a press release to your media list, be prepared to fax additional copies after your pitch call.

**Be ready with specifics.**

Have detailed information to back up your pitch, and be prepared to give out names and phone numbers of people who can be interviewed.

**Be persistent, but don't be a pest.**

Most journalists cannot promise to do your story at the time of your call. When they say they will "look into it and do what they can," that's about all the commitment you can get.

**Offer to do more to make their job easier.**

Make the stories easy for reporters to research and report; they'll be more likely to do the story.

**Be pleasant and upbeat--not frantic, moralistic or nagging.**

Journalists like enthusiasm, but they do not like sermons with their story ideas.

## News Formats

---

Depending on the information or story tip, news may be forwarded to the media in several different formats.

**News or Press Releases:**

These brief summaries are used for information that is timely and/or merits immediate attention from a news editor. Sometimes reporters use the release as a framework for their stories, so complete and accurate information with some background information is essential. Quotes are frequently included in a news release, and must be accurate and meet with the approval of the source.

*Examples: The Board of Trustees invite all Eanes citizens to attend an open forum; a school gets a new principal; a middle school hosts a parent involvement night; an elementary school receives national recognition as a Blue Ribbon school.*

News releases MUST include the following:

- A news release is written in an inverted pyramid style, meaning that the most important information goes first. The first paragraph should include the five W's and H - Who, What, When, Why, Where and How. If you are missing the answer to even one of these questions, the story is incomplete. Remember, the date, hour and exact place of an upcoming event is vital information -- never assume "they'll know where it's going to be." Also, please indicate if the public is invited and if there is an admission charge.

- A news release should be one page whenever possible. A contact name and number should always be included, so the media outlet can call for further information.
- Correct spelling of ALL names is essential. Please double check these! Also, please include the titles of staff or faculty members and what their position is -- administrator, teacher, coordinator, etc., and if they are sponsoring an event or group -- Student Council, Drama Club, Band, etc. The spelling of student names, the school and grade they are in, should also be double checked. Accuracy is of utmost importance.
- Include any interesting details, even if you think they wouldn't be of interest to the public. Remember, you already know about the little things that make an event or student special, but the public isn't lucky enough to hear about it unless the story is in the newspaper. A tidbit of detail will often determine whether a story makes the papers or not. The newspapers receive hundreds of news releases every week -- try to give the media plenty of information, therefore offering several different angles for printing a story.

### **The Tip Sheet:**

This is a fact sheet that contains concise information about people or events that have potential for human interest stories, but it also includes some standard news items. Items listed on The Tip Sheet are sometimes also sent as news releases. It is compiled and mailed by the Communications Office to most sources on the media list.

*Examples: An all-night read-a-thon will be held at an elementary school; the high school will sponsor a Special Olympics soccer tournament; principals from Aruba visit Eanes.*

### **Public Service Announcements:**

Radio stations may broadcast information as a public service announcement (PSA), if they receive the information two to three weeks in advance of the event. A PSA should also contain the five W's and the H. For upcoming events, include the time, date and place. Most PSA's are either 15, 30 or 60 seconds in length.

*Examples: Fund-raising events; dates for kindergarten registration and screenings; school open houses; concerts.*

### **Photographs:**

Sometimes newspapers will publish a print of a school activity that has been photographed by someone other than one of their photographers. Feel free to pick up your camera and photograph school events yourself. Your PTO or school should have a fund set aside to reimburse you for film costs and developing. Also, the Communications Office is always looking for good photographs for potential publication in local and statewide publications.

*Examples: Students holding a quilt that they made as a class project; district leaders at a groundbreaking ceremony for a new elementary school, etc.*

# Using Pictures to tell the Story

---

Some editors welcome good pictures to illustrate a story. Frequently a photograph and a short outline can give readers the gist of the story in a glance. The best photographs provide a break from the serious content of most newspapers, or they show the feelings and reactions of the people involved in events. Editors at most newspapers, including the District publications, prefer 5" by 7" prints. However, any photo, if it is of good quality, will suffice.

## **Taking pictures with impact.**

Avoid the "grip and grin" photo for submission to a publication. When the principal is congratulating a student on becoming a National Merit finalist, that is a visual representation of an important accomplishment, BUT it makes a dull picture. Editors want photographs which tell a story, which show emotion and which are well composed. Creating photographs which meet these requirements takes planning and ingenuity.

When you prepare to photograph an event, remember three little words.

***LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION.***

## **Lights**

Some potentially terrific photos have been ruined because the photographer didn't consider how the lighting would make the subject look. Bright sunlight casts shadows and causes people to squint, so if you are taking people pictures outdoors, try to photograph them in the shade. If you must take pictures in the sun, try to take them in the early morning (9 to 11 a.m.) or early afternoon (1 to 3 p.m.) when the light is not too harsh and casts fewer shadows.

For indoor pictures, keep in mind that using natural light usually assures better results than shooting with a flash.

## **Camera Change**

The typical photograph is taken at eye level, approximately 8 to 10 feet from the subject, with the subject centered in the frame. This is, coincidentally, the same angle of vision through which we typically view the world.

Exciting photographs change something about our normal way of seeing the world. When you view your photograph through the camera lens, remember to change your normal viewpoint.

- **Distance:** change your distance from the subject by getting as close as you can. Anytime you get closer to a subject than feels comfortable, you create a photograph with visual impact because the subject becomes larger than life. Getting closer will also keep the content of the photograph simple and uncluttered. When you cannot get close enough to your subject, use a telephoto lens, if one is available to you.

- **Angle:** change your point of view. Stand on a chair, a table or some stairs, so you are viewing your subject from above. Crouch or kneel down on the floor, so your subject towers above you. Step to the left or the right.
- **Format:** change your camera format. All the world is not horizontal. Shift the position of your camera, so you are creating a vertical photograph. Verticals tend to be more exciting and action-filled than horizontals.

### **Action**

Get action into your pictures. Pictures in which nothing is happening are dull. Avoid posed pictures that involve people smiling or holding something and looking straight at the camera.

Even the most routine event has characteristic actions. For example, meetings are characterized by hand gestures and facial expressions. When you cover the Booster Club, try taking close-ups of animated speakers. Photos with good hand movements and expressions are far more compelling than those which show people sitting at a table looking at papers.

Get pictures of the physical preparations for the event. If you're taking an advance picture for graduation, get photos of students being measured for their caps and gowns, or workers setting up the bleachers or the orchestra rehearsing. Think action.

## **Writing Killer Cutlines**

---

Good cutlines support the story which is being told in the photograph. They share a few common characteristics:

- Cutlines must be able to stand alone. The reader should not be forced to read the story in order to make sense of the picture and cutline, especially since many readers will skip the story entirely and just read the cutline after looking at the photo.
- Cutlines always tell who is in the picture and where it was taken. Each person in a photo must be identified by first and last name (and title, if appropriate), except in candid photos of more than five people, e.g. a crowd shot at an Open House. Also, always include your school's name and the Eanes Independent School District.
- Good cutlines include details which were not worked into the story. Keep track of any interesting or humorous "bits" that can give your cutline pizzazz. Never repeat word-for-word information in the story.
- All cutlines should be written in the present tense. This gives the reader a "you are there" feeling which adds to the emotional impact of the photograph.

## **Running a Powerful One-Person PR Program**

Even with an expanded staff, albeit a volunteer staff, you are the one who needs to plan and lead the “department.” Sometimes it is hard to know where to begin when you are the PR department in your district. Take heart, it is possible to do the job well and effectively if you keep it in perspective.

Remember that you aren’t the only one to experience the one-person shop. Learn from those who have “been there.” **Jim Dunn, APR,** **director of Communications for Liberty (Missouri) Public Schools,** and fellow one-person PR office holder, compiled the following helpful hints for the one-person PR program.

1. **Read your district policy manual and know what it says about PR policy.** Call your state school board association for sample current PR policy statements. Update your policy manual, it’s good security.
2. **Create a TEAM.** Make sure the superintendent and principals are on it. Get teachers and support staffs involved. Meet with your team before school starts (always eat at this meeting) and set at least three goals for the year. Make them manageable and measurable goals so you can prove your success.
3. **Do one new thing well each year - flag raising, retirement tea, honoring excellence - and document how you did it.**

Next year do it again, even better; but also add another “one new thing.” In fax years, A LOT will be going on and those in charge will think you are an absolute necessity.

4. **Your job is people.** Help everybody you can as much as you can. Praise people all the time (they already have enough people griping at them.) Get to know the opinion leaders in each school. Be the person who is always positive in your district. Never forget that helping kids is what you are all about.
5. **Publications are a dark hole.** The true work of PR is much more than putting out copy. Don't do a publication unless you see a good reason. When you do, always focus on kids. Stay out of politics. Don't write much copy. People want pictures of kids and headlines. A terrific recruitment packet is your best investment. Give it a long shelf life, and make it cover a lot of bases.
6. **Have a vision!** If you don't have a fire in your heart for the great work of educating children, give it up. You must see the great, overall magnificence of what could be. When things get bad (and they will every now and then) your vision can help everyone. Be the person who gives energy to a project.
7. **Learn to love elections.** During elections you have no life; but if you work hard, you will earn the love and respect of everyone. All elections end; you must learn to see them as an opportunity to

prove your worth. Outwork everybody with a smile. It is the greatest investment in yourself, your school district and your vision can make. Seeing a school you helped build feels good.

8. **Work smart!** Spend more time thinking than doing. There are a thousand great things going on in a district. Learn how to tell that story. Make everything you do cover more than one base. Never lie to anyone, and help your boss be a success. S/he will notice.
9. **Internal relations are most important.** Learn to be a bridge between people in your district. The most important messages in your school come from the employees. Internal communication is #1.
10. **Get involved with other professions.** Go back to school and learn about marketing (it's interesting). Get on the information highway. Volunteer to help in your state organizations. Enjoy your life and your life's work – there is too much gloom and doom in education. This is a fabulous time to do PR work!

I would add one more to this terrific list – be an active member of NSPRA and your state NSPRA chapter. The support and advice you'll get from your NSPRA colleagues will ensure that you never feel alone in your job!



*Texas School Public Relations Association Conference  
Austin, Texas -- February 17-19, 1999*

## **School Public Relations**

### ***... Making Your First Year a Success***

Presented by Donald Williams, Community Resource Coordinator  
Bastrop Independent School District  
105 Loop 150 West, Suite J; Bastrop, TX 78602  
Phone: 512/321-2292; FAX 512/321-1371  
Email: [dwilliams@bastrop.isd.tenet.edu](mailto:dwilliams@bastrop.isd.tenet.edu)

#### **Evaluate the School District**

Find out the district's strengths and weaknesses

#### **Join TSPRA (Texas School Public Relations Association)**

- Make friends
- Obtain valuable advice from fellow TSPRA members
- Collect materials

#### **Open Communication Lines**

- Create External and Internal Communication Publications
- The School Report, Board Briefs, Inside BISD

#### **District Packet**

- Concise Information to answer those FAQs
- School campus's address
- Phone number
- Population
- Biosketches of school board members and administrators
- Volunteer programs
- School year calendar
- TAAS information

#### **Local media**

- Make contact with your local media (newspapers, television & radio stations)
- Valuable in reporting the most impartial report in times of crisis
- Keep the community informed of school district and campus current events

### Public Relations is everyone's job

As a one-person PR office, you can broaden your effectiveness by teaching others that public relations is everyone's job. An administrator may possess the usual skills, such as organizational ability, decision-making, etc., but effectiveness may be lost if public relations ability is missing.

I produced a weekly memo (Monica's Monday Memo) that was distributed to each principal and Central Office administrator. This memo contained information regarding events that would take place during that week and other communiqué that needed to be distributed to them, plus a "PR Tip" for the week. Feedback was extremely positive.

Spending a little time training others what your job entails and the importance of public relations when you first begin your job will save a lot of time later. It is your job to explain that, even though an organization may have a full-time public relations practitioner, public relations is everyone's job. What an employee does both on- and off-campus, will have an impact on the overall image of the school district. The most important PR tool of an organization is its employees. It takes ten positive comments to overcome each negative one. As Lyndon B. Johnson once stated, "there are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few we can solve by ourselves." Include weekly tips

and get on the district's staff development schedule. Be proactive. It will pay large dividends in the months and years to come.

## PR Tips for Principals

### **Establish Communications and Working Relations with Staff**

- The principal must “sell” professionalism at all levels – teachers, secretaries, etc.
- Have informal rap sessions with groups during conference periods.
- Arrange “happenings” for staff: covered-dish dinner, theater, picnics, etc.
- Get to know each staff member as a person.
- Do not have meaningless meetings.
- Take every opportunity to show, by words and actions, that you are supportive of their position.

### Create an Atmosphere of Trust

- Let staff evaluate administrators, counselors, department heads/grade level chairpersons.
- Be open in sharing information about the district and schools.
- Have meaningful meetings with discussion topics relative to audience.
- Have rap sessions with employees.

### Give Positive Reinforcement

- Give red pens/pencils with message, i.e., “this pen belongs to a SUPER teacher from (name of your school)” given at the beginning of school.
- Distribute personalized calendars.

### Show Sincere Appreciation to Staff

- Give birthday cards to individuals
- Stay “tuned-in” to staff’s time
- Regular visitation of teachers/their projects by board members
- Have teacher presentations at board meetings
- Send cards or call to inquire about employees/family illness
- Give retirement parties—well-planned, i.e., “This is Your Life,” “Roast,” etc.
- Have monthly “happenings”
- Feature teachers’ program in daily bulletins

### Establish Communications and Rapport with the Community

- Use every opportunity to explain and inform parents about the school and its programs
- Hold open house each year and give each teacher an opportunity to explain his/her class program

- Identify community leaders and workers as early as possible
- Have a VIP luncheon and give certificates to community leaders

*(Source: NSPRA Resource Files)*

Continued inservice is part of a good public relations program.

Administrators receive (at least) annual staff development in public relations practices and procedures.

# Monday's Message...

By Monica Faulkenbery, Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, TX

*"There are no  
problems we cannot  
solve together, and  
very few we can  
solve by ourselves."  
--Lyndon B. Johnson*

**Definition of Public Relations:** The management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends.

**What is School Community (Public) Relations?** School community relations is effective communication between the school district, the individual schools and the public. Good school public relations seeks to gain the public's favorable attention by building goodwill and understanding about the work, mission and activities of the school district.

Public relations today is a much more planned, persuasive social/managerial science. The PR practitioner must be the interpreter of the organization--its philosophy policy and programs. Public relations performs what organizational theorists call a boundary role; they function at the edge of an organization as a liaison between the organization and its external and internal publics. In other words, PR managers have one foot inside the organization and one outside. As boundary managers, PR people support their colleagues by helping them communicate across organizational lines both within and outside the organization. Public relations deals with perceptions, attitudes and public opinion. Public relations must think strategically, demonstrating their knowledge of the organization's mission, objectives and strategies.

Overall, a successful community relations program involves media relations/publicity, legislative affairs, issues management, publications/graphics/printing, marketing, advertising, special events, volunteerism, business partnerships, and PR counseling. It sometimes includes grant development and acquisitions, the community school program and services, and other areas depending on the resources and organization of a school district.

Even though an organization may have a full-time public relations practitioner, public relations is everyone's job. What an employee does both on- and off-campus will have an impact on the overall image of the school district. The most important PR tool of an organization is its employees. Eighty-five percent of an institutions image comes from the employees. It takes ten positive comments to overcome each negative one. As Lyndon B. Johnson once stated, "there are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few we can solve by ourselves."

# Media Tips & Trials... *By Monica Faulkenbery Northside ISD, San Antonio, TX*

## Tips on working with the media:

First of all, I want to emphasize that we must not depend on the media to get our message out to the public. With a shrinking hole for news and more competition for space (both print and electronic media are seeing less space for news with advertising taking over what previously was reserved for news and features), we must be more creative when planning our Community Relations programs.

## When the Reporter Calls:

Most reporters will call the Communications (Community Relations) Office for clearance and/or assistance to arrange a school visit or interview. If a reporter contacts you directly, you can ask the Communications Office to return the call, or you can refer the reporter to the Communications Office. If you feel comfortable handling the call yourself, just remember that the Communications Office is available to consult with you and assist you in coordinating an appropriate response. Notify the Communications Office of the phone call or visit as soon as possible.

**Don't feel pressured** into doing an interview cold without first discussing the subject matter the reporter wants to cover and allowing yourself time to prepare. Reporters are always on a deadline! Often they don't understand why interviews can't be granted instantly when they need to file a story in the next hour. However, most are reasonable and will work with you to get the story. Sometimes a reporter's brash behavior is annoying, but it is seldom personal.

**Anticipate questions** that could arise about the subject under discussion, especially questions you don't want to answer, and develop an appropriate response. The Communications Office can help you with this.

**Control the interview.** Of course, you should always respond honestly and forthrightly to the questions you are asked. Remember these tips:

✓ Do not allow yourself to be goaded into an-

swering loaded questions. (Have you suspended many students lately?) If asked, never repeat the question. Rather say, "I follow the District's Code of Conduct when disciplining students who break the rules."

- ✓ Use a transitional phrase that allows you to get back to the point you wanted to make. "However, at this stage of the process," or "It is important that the community understand..."
- ✓ If you are interrupted, go back to your original point by using a transition such as, "I'd like to go back to your previous question," or "Let me finish addressing your first question."

## When dealing with the media:

1. Inform your secretary or whoever answers the main phone line that if the media calls, to transfer the call to the Communications Office. Let us filter out the purpose for the call.
2. If you answer the phone and the person is from the media, NEVER give an answer on a cold call. Ask what their deadline is, what questions they have, and tell them you will call them back. Then call us and let's talk about the answers, any implications, etc.

## Media Do's and Don'ts

1. Do return calls promptly or ask the Communications Office to return the call for you.
2. Do ask the reporter to identify the topic he/she wants to discuss. Respond directly in clear, simple terms.
3. Do say, "I don't know," when you don't and offer to have someone else call with that information.
4. Do explain why you may not be able to answer a particular question.
5. Do be forthcoming – half-truths don't



- work. (A new phrase has surfaced summing this sentence up – don't be Clintonian.)
6. Do look directly at the reporter.
  7. Don't hedge the question or use jargon to intentionally mislead.
  8. Don't say, "no comment!"
  9. Don't try to make up an answer or guess about data.
  10. Don't ignore a reporter's inquiry.
  11. Don't feel pressured to answer a reporter's question cold, without giving yourself time to prepare.
  12. Don't ramble to fill in the quiet periods. This is a basic strategy of journalists. Focus on the subject matter only.
  13. Don't stand in the way of media or public access to information.

### **Think Before You Speak**

Before the reporter turns on the camera or the tape recorder, you need to think about what you want to say and prepare an answer that gets your point across.

1. Think about the words you use. Choose simple words that anyone can understand.
2. Write down your response to get your idea straight in your mind. Practice saying the response aloud. How does it sound to you? Is your main point clear?
3. Time the response. If you are doing a television or radio interview, keep your response to 20 seconds or less. Reporters and editors are less likely to edit your response if it is short and to the point.

### **The Problem With "No Comment"**

Never say, "No Comment." This phrase implies that you have something to hide, whether you do or not. We realize that not all questions can be answered; however, there are some more gracious alternatives.

1. "I can't discuss proposed or pending litigation."
2. "Board policy limits the type of information that may be released about district employees."
3. "The Family Rights and Privacy Act does not allow the release of individual student information."
4. "I cannot respond to speculation or third-hand information."

### **Additional Information**

- ✓ Reporters don't write the headlines. Don't blame them for the headlines.
- ✓ It is a good idea to call a reporter and visit after a story appears. But if you didn't like the story, don't be critical; do be specific – and move on.

# Monday's Message...

*By Monica Faulkenbery, Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, TX*

*Community  
Relations:  
Guidepoints to  
Improving and  
Keeping Them  
Strong*

**T**he impact of community relations on the support bases of public education depends immensely on personal and group interrelationships and the networking of communications and involvement activities in the pursuit of the best learning opportunities for children and for the community.

There are five winning guidepoints that facilitate the building, rebuilding, and continual maintenance of a strong community relations program. They are (a) climate building, (b) confidence building, (c) team building, (d) image building, and (e) commitment building.

Community relations depends on people and their interrelationships in a school district. Schools belong to the people. It is imperative that school districts create awareness and understanding of their goals and programs. It is likewise imperative that districts provide opportunities for all members of the educational community. It is imperative because school districts depend on the entire community for their very existence. Consequently, the symbiotic relationship of schools and communities must be acknowledged and celebrated.

Once the community envisions its future linked with schools, then the district's focus should be establishing belief in, and satisfaction with, the services being rendered. With satisfaction, however, still comes the need to seek continuing support for the school district's mission. Ultimately, that mission is to build a responsible learning community in which all people will learn.

Building, rebuilding and maintenance are ongoing endeavors in working to enhance community relations. Although each community may have special interests and concerns at a particular time, a community is ever changing. People are moving in and out and new voices, new leaders are emerging. Periodically, it is necessary to review the guidepoints and the primary focuses of community relations: interactions, attitudes, mutual respect, confidence, and commitment.

*Next week: Climate Building*

# Monday's Message...

*By Monica Faulkenbery, Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, TX*

## *Guidepoints to Building a Positive Climate*

Prerequisites to climate building include:

1. Strong-attention to staff relations. The District's philosophy, policies, and practices should encourage the capabilities and participation of all, particularly staff members. Emphasis should be on the self-worth of all persons. School districts are not bricks and mortar. School districts are people.
2. Developing positive attitudes and actions of Board members, the administration, and indeed all staff.

Ultimately, community relations cannot be left to one person or department. Under the leadership of and with the total involvement of the superintendent and board members, all staff members should be encouraged to participate.

The climate-building guidepoint focuses on (a) a school district's "personality" and efforts of the school district to be open and inclusive of all; (b) a school district's "drive" to encourage communication with and input from constituents or stakeholders; and (c) a school district's efforts to become an integral part of the community, to foster positive thinking regarding the school district and its personnel.

School districts today have more personality than in previous years. A school district should encourage communications with and input from constituents. In addition, a school district should provide an educational climate in which learning takes place through cooperation, interaction and experience. This promotes a more democratic climate, as well as a greater willingness for people to make a commitment of involvement with the district.

An excellent school climate also depends on a school district's drive for a two-way flow of communication through active participation of all stakeholders. A school district needs to see the big picture of its community, to know not only who its stakeholders are but what they do, what they think, and how they may be involved. A district's census should be an ongoing endeavor. The census information helps not only in planning for future students; it gives age groups for targeting communications and developing involvement activities. Often, census data indicates a growing senior citizen popula-

tion. Hence the formation of a "55 Plus Club" might be considered. For this group of older adults, some school districts put together and publish a quarterly newsletter that coordinates and publicizes the events and services offered by community agencies and organizations and encourages older adults to attend school district events, such as high school sports and drama productions. One local school district holds a yearly senior citizen prom sponsored by the high school student council members. Older adults are encouraged to volunteer in the schools. In addition, census information tells where stakeholders work (providing sources for partnerships, etc) and the kinds of work they do (sources for committee volunteers and classroom speakers). The stakeholders are also asked their general attitude toward the school district (very positive, positive, neutral, negative, very negative.)

There are a number of activities that could happen (however not overnight) to improve and build the climate within a school building and district. They include:

1. A yearly breakfast with Realtors, who are encouraged to ask questions and give input. A brief video highlighting recent accomplishments of the District, informational packets and a tour of school facilities could be included.
2. The superintendent's quarterly meeting with teachers and support staff. Also, regular meetings with the presidents of all district parent organizations.
3. Regular meetings with the superintendent and high school principal with student representatives of high school activity groups.
4. Standing and ad hoc district committee meetings with staff and community representatives on such topics as curriculum, insurance and technology.
5. Monthly Board coffees that are hosted by Board members. These rotate with one in each building during the school year and are attended by staff and parents.
6. Phone surveys during the school year, conducted by the Key Communicators, a group of volunteers trained to do surveys and research.
7. Encourage staff to participate in community volunteer activities (including Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, professional organizations, etc.)

A Board and district staff must be sensitive to their perceptions and needs of everyone and believe in the pursuit of excellence in education before a positive and productive school climate will emerge.

*Next week: Confidence Building*

# Monday's Message...

*By Monica Faulkenbery, Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, TX*

## *Guidepoints to Confidence Building*

**C**onfidence building is an important guidepoint in community relations. Being friendly and smiling projects satisfaction with others. People like to see a warm smile when they have accomplished something.

Every organization, therefore, should offer programs that (a) provide growth and development, (b) promote positive contribution and friendships within the community, and (c) recognize achievements and contributions.

To do this, a district should put forth efforts to be inclusive rather than exclusive, to share decision making, to enhance team building, and to promote image building of people, programs and services -- all in an open climate that is centered on student and staff success.

A school district should give its employees and students opportunities for growth and development, not only in academic areas (teaching strategies, innovations, and technology) but also in personal growth and development. School people have to believe in themselves and in what they are doing in order for community members to believe in them and in the school district's programs.

A school district should promote positive contributions, which starts with listening to people and following through on ideas presented. Although this could include complaints or concerns, primarily it concerns innovations, programs that people think should be considered for piloting.

Staff members also need the assurance that no idea is a bad idea when it comes to an innovative proposal. No matter what the idea is, staff members should be encouraged to come forward without fear of failure or ridicule. Although lack of funds or timing can sometimes delay potential projects, all ideas should be considered and feedback sent to the staff member to let them know how their innovative proposal can be meshed into the long-range plan for the district. Success breeds success. Other people see other people launching new ideas, so they feel more confident that they also can be successful.

Developing friendships with persons and agencies in the community is another way to build confidence. District staff members are encouraged to be part of the community themselves and to involve students in such community projects as collection drives for the needy, work with agencies that help the disabled, and visits to nursing homes. Staff members are frequently active members of youth organizations and church groups. Administrators participate in local service organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Kiwanis. Because

of the high participation of staff, these groups have provided many donations to student and partnership projects.

Finally, a school district should have ongoing recognition projects and programs. Within our district, the Journey to Excellence program and the monthly Board meeting recognitions are two such recognition programs.

Confidence building is a thing of many facets. In the school district, we must garner the concept of "family." As with any family situation, we will have disagreements and struggles, but we must join together with the common goal of educating the children. We realize that all people need to love and be loved, that all people have intrinsic value, and that the welfare of all people is interdependent. Once people believe in themselves, they want the best for others as well.

*Next week: Team Building*

# Monday's Message...

*By Monica Faulkenbery, Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, TX*

## *Guidepoints to Team Building*

*We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results.*

-- Herman Melville

"Together everyone achieves more," a phrase often seen on motivational posters provides a strong basis for the importance of team building and why team building should be considered a guidepoint in improving and keeping community relations strong.

The strategic planning for, and implementation of any major undertaking, such as a tax levy or bond issue proposal, needs a strong coalition of supporters and collaborators. The assistance of all people in the school district is required for the shared visions and values of education to be effective. Ownership is a vital ingredient in any endeavor and the good relationships of team members are the keys that unlock support.

In addition, a school district should work cooperatively with other districts and with state and national educational and professional organizations, to enhance the image of education and to work collectively on behalf of students.

Being a member of "the team" also gives people the opportunity to know more about the school district and its operations, to think about what is happening and to make recommendations regarding changes.

It is also important that team building extend to working with the media. Assisting reporters with information so that they can meet their deadlines is a good investment. Good relationships with reporters enhance credibility and support.

Much like the African proverb, "it takes a whole village to raise a child," it takes the whole community -- employees and patrons -- to make a school district succeed.

*Next week: Image Building*

# Monday's Message...

*By Monica Faulkenbery, Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, TX*

## *Guidepoints to Image Building*

**I**mage building is another guidepoint to use in improving and/or maintaining community relations. Corporate research has indicated that buying decisions are not based primarily on advertising but on the recommendations of others and the image of the company. A school district is big business and is the biggest business in many communities.

As a business, a school district should take a clue from this research and become market-driven (a) by positioning the school district as one that is or wants to be on the "cutting edge," (b) by using techniques that will help the school district become better known, and (c) by encouraging satisfaction with the efforts of the school district.

Image-building advertising is intended primarily to strengthen a company's identity in the eyes of the public and/or the financial community. Conglomerates whose divisions market unrelated products seek through such advertising to project a unified, readily recognized image. Others use it to correct an unfavorable public impression. Increasingly, corporations use institutional advertising to show their concern for the environment, and by doing so seek to demonstrate what good corporate citizens they are.

In school districts, staff members are encouraged to speak at national and state meetings. Students compete in state and national tournaments or contests. Many districts seek to obtain "Schools of Excellence" or "Blue Ribbon" status from the United States Department of Education. Video presentations, display boards, and participation in local parades are other ways of creating an image of educational vitality. The use of cable programming is another effective image-building technique that many districts use.

Image building is looking for a vote of confidence, looking for people to say, "We're proud of our school district--it's the heart of our community."



***PRLessons 101***

---

**Developing Relationships  
with your  
Staff and Community**

*By Pascual Gonzalez & Monica Faulkenbery  
Northside ISD Communications Department*

This is a presentation that can be presented to principals and administrators at any time of the year.

## PRLessons 101

“There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few we can solve by ourselves.”

--LBJ

## ***PR Lessons 101***

---

- First of all, terms:
- Public relations is to community relations is to Communications etc...
- (PR has negative connotation; community relations doesn't for some reason)
- I'll be using them interchangeably

## PRLessons 101

“PR” is  
everyone’s  
job!



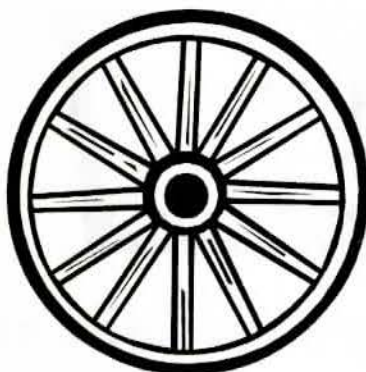
Everyone has multiple hats to wear on any given day. Communications is one we put on as soon as we get up of a morning.

## PR Lessons 101

- PR means different things to different people.
- It is not JUST publicity
- It isn't something you use to cover up problems either.

***PR*Lessons 101**

---

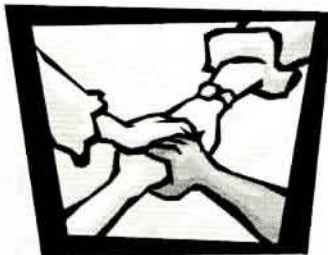


**The “PR” Wheel**

PR = Personal Relationships

## ***PRLessons 101***

---

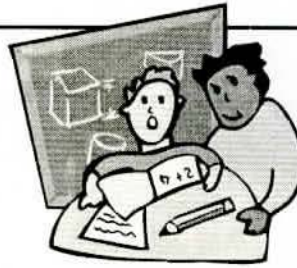


### **The Internal Public-- Who are they?**

In talking about the publics that a school serves, we are essentially talking about two publics -- the internal public and the external public. Are they different, and do we use different strategies to reach them? Yes, we do.

The Internal Public - Who are they?

## **PRLessons 101**



• **Students**

• **Staff-professional & support  
(School-based & district)**

• They are the students and staff of a school/district; the students who are in the buildings and the employees of the school district--professional and support staff, both in the school buildings and in the district offices.



## ***PRLessons 101***

---



### **Why Concern Yourself with them?**

- **Lifeblood of the school.**
- **No good external public relations program can survive without one.**

- A good internal two-way communication program is essential for the well-being of the school.
- When people are aware of what is going on and are involved, they develop an allegiance and a loyalty to the organization, support the efforts under way and are more productive.

## ***PRLessons 101***

---



It takes ten  
positive  
comments to  
overcome  
each negative one.

## PRLessons 101



Students are the  
prime source of  
information for their  
parents.

- If students feel good about their classes, do well, and understand what is going on, they will speak well of the school and respond positively to questions.
- On the other hand, if students are uninformed and do not know what is going on, their frustrations are vented at home and in the community.
- They raise obvious questions about the school and speak negatively about what is going on. It is then difficult for the family and friends to believe statements issued by the school that are in direct contrast to what they “know” is going on. Students’ opinions influence not only their parents, but their relatives, friends and adults in the community they contact.

## *PRLessons 101*

What Do  
Students Want to  
Know

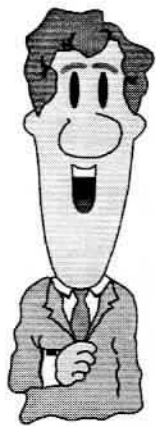


Students want to know about the areas that directly affect them. What would be some examples of things students might be interested in...

- what the course requirements are
- the length of the school day, school year
- what the extracurricular program is like
- who the teachers are
- whether they can choose their own courses, their own teachers, their own schedule
- whether there is a discipline (and dress) code in the building, and how it is enforced
- whether there is a guidance counselor
- who the administrators are, what they are like
- whether there are opportunities for student government

## ***PRLessons 101***

---



### **How Do We Communicate with Students?**

Generally we do not communicate very well with students. All too often the students are not recognized as the key communication link they are with their parents and the community. If something happens at the school, students are usually among the last to find out what has occurred. They learn what they can by picking up information here and there. We do not take the time to establish mechanisms for sharing information with students. There is a need to establish lines of communication and make contact with the students, involving them in accordance with their age/grade.

## ***PR*Lessons 101**

---

• **Welcome the students to school.**

• **Make sure your school is an inviting place.**



• It takes little effort to send a letter to the students in your building welcoming them back to school. A letter coming at the end of July is usually well received. The letter could tell the parents and students what has been going on during the course of the summer and the preparations that have been made for the opening of school. It could list dates and times for the first few days of school, school meetings that you'd like the parents to know about, the names and phone numbers of key staff members, etc. Informing parents that you would be pleased to talk with them sets a very positive tone for the year. (200 pieces/bulk mail. Can't personalize but can put aka room # on label with note inside that says room number is listed in upper right hand corner of label.)

## ***PR*Lessons 101**

---



• **Be visible.**

• **Know your kids.**

- Greet the students when they get off the busses in the morning, or when they walk into the building. Let them see you, talk to them, learn their names. Just a few new names each day will soon result in knowing many of the students. It will surely impress them when they realize that you know who they are.

- **STORY:** There is a high school principal in Missouri who takes 50 of the picture Rolodex cards of the entering class home with him each week in the summertime in order to familiarize himself with the faces and names of the incoming students. He gets the cards from the sending school. By the end of the summer he has memorized the faces and names of the entering class. Needless to say, when he calls the students by name on the first day of school, the students just do not understand how he does it. He gains their respect immediately.

- Be visible during passing time between classes; be in the school cafeteria; be out in the hall at the end of the day. Talk to the students and let them know that you are there for them and that you are approachable.

## ***PRLessons 101***

---

• **Drop in on classes.**

• **Have lunch with the students.**



• Make it a point to drop in on the classes. One very effective way to do this is to drop in on all the classes during the first period of the first day back in school. Say something like, "Hello, welcome back. I want you to know that I am your (principal) and I am here if you want to talk with me. I will be back to visit your class, but right now I am going to welcome the other boys and girls back to school. Have a great school year." and move on to the next class. By not slowing down and not engaging in conversation, you should cover a fairly large school within the first hour of school, before the students change periods.

• Make it a point to have lunch with a small group of students in your office once a week. Consider asking students to sign up if they would like to eat with you. Then select a small group of some ten to 12 students and invite them. Keep the agenda open so that students can discuss a topic(s) that is troubling them. If you have the funds, buy their lunch. If not, ask them to brown bag it. When the lunch is going on, do not let telephone calls or visitors interrupt the meeting. Keep it informal and be responsive to their questions.

• Note: Many parents have reported how surprised they were to see their children fussing with the selection of school clothes one morning. And when asked why they were getting dressed up, the students exhibited tremendous pride in saying, "I am having lunch with the principal today." You can easily have lunch with 450 to 500 students in your building during the course of the school year.



## PRLessons 101

• **Open door policy.**

• **Use intercom/PA system.**

• **Student bulletin boards.**



• **Maintain an Open Door Policy to Your Office.** Keep an open door policy when you are in the office. Let students and staff see you working or talking with someone. If someone lingers and looks as if they want to talk to you, encourage them to come in and talk with you. Be pleasant and do not be annoyed that they are seeking you out. Consider it a compliment that the student or staff member wants to see you. Close the door only when the matter being discussed is confidential or serious in nature.

• **Use the Intercom/Public Address System.** Make a decision as to how and when you are going to use the intercom/PA. Do not get on it several times a day and say nothing. All too often the staff and students are tired of hearing the "same old thing" every morning. They tune it out and don't even listen when it comes on. Consideration needs to be given as to what the best time is to make announcements and who will make them. Most schools have students make the announcement in the morning, before classes begin, and they do not make them again that day.

• **Student Bulletin Boards.** Schools have placed bulletin boards in areas that are readily accessible to students. Notices are put up that follow up on the morning announcements and serve as reminders. Future announcements are also identified. Items that come up during the day are also posted. Students soon learn to look at the bulletin boards on a routine basis.

## PRLessons 101

- Meet with the Student Government Association.
- Student Advisory Committees.
- Join in on the activities of a class.

• Meet with the Student Government Association. Be available to attend meetings of the student government association in your building. Although they have a sponsor, they may want to discuss a matter with you directly; or you may information for them or want to solicit input. Know when they are meeting and make it a practice to be available.

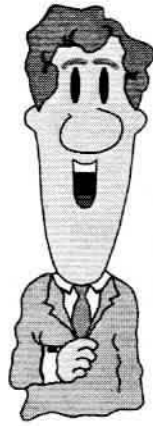
• Student Advisory Committees. You may be considering making a change and decide that you would like student input. This can be obtained by including a student representative on the committee or by forming a student advisory committee. Be sure that the committee is representative of the student body. Give the committee a specific charge, timeline and support needed for them to reach consensus on the matter.

• Join in... When walking around the building, drop in on classrooms. Join an academic activity or one of the labs. Make a small project that will not take too long to complete. Students in the class will be very impressed that the principal can actually do something; they will tell everyone who will listen. Visit the PE classes, and if you feel comfortable, pick up a ball and shoot.

• Story: A junior high school principal walking thru the hall when a basketball came rolling into the hall from the gym. She picked it up and walked into the gym - students shouting "shoot it, shoot it." Did once...went in. "Shoot it.." Did again, went in. "Shoot it"..."You have seen me shoot twice now, you know that I can." She was afraid that she would miss-quit while she was ahead. The next issue of the school newspaper carried the headline "Principal Makes it 2 for 2." **The goodwill & respect that the principal earned was not anticipated when she walked down the hall.** Take advantage of every opportunity to interact w/kids.

## ***PRLessons 101***

---



### **How Do We Communicate with Staff?**

•Staff members are often among the last to be told what is going on in the district. Some administrators do not feel that it is necessary to inform or involve staff. But employees need to be involved...need to know what is going on for many of the same reasons as students--they are key communication links to the parents and community, and they have a vested interest in their building and district.

## PRLessons 101

When they help  
write it,  
they underwrite it.



- Recognize that they view situations from their particular vantage points and very often can offer suggestions that have not been considered. When employees are informed and have an opportunity to give input, they support the end result.
- To put it another way: when they help write it, they underwrite it!
- Employees generally have a vested interest in the school district, and do not like to be the last to be informed about what is about to take place. They want to be knowledgeable and involved to the highest degree possible.
- The major effort to move to school-based management represents a clear illustration of the interest of the professional staff in becoming more involved in matters that relate to their job responsibilities. They want to be informed and involved in making decisions that affect them.

## ***PRLessons 101***

---

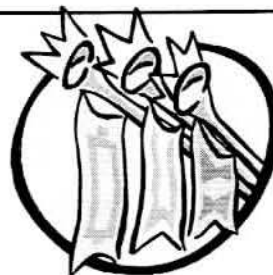
Topeka Public Schools	Regulation #: 2525-B
Subject:	Issue date: 7/29/80
Building-Level Communication	Revisions: 2/9/83; 3/22/85; 10/24/86
	Preparing Office: Commun. Dept.

*Source: Topeka Public Schools*

•Topeka Public Schools has a regulation whose subject is “Building Level Communications.” This regulation’s purpose is “to define the basic communications program of each school.” Among other areas that it covers, item III D “Communications with Staff,” states “Each principal will communicate regularly with staff via bulletins, conference and staff meetings.”

## PRLessons 101

**Welcome them  
back each year!**



- Staff members feel good when they receive a letter from the building principal and/or the superintendent of schools welcoming them back to the new school year. Just make sure you don't use the same letter year after year.
- Many districts invite all their employees to a district-wide meeting that is preceded by a continental breakfast or followed by a lunch. Normally a half-day period, and then the employees go back to their buildings in the afternoon.
- In some cases where no back-to-school meeting is held, and where there is a desire to deliver the same welcoming message of the superintendent of schools or Board president, closed circuit television or a videotaped message are often used.
- Many individual schools hold their own breakfast for their staff and invite the superintendent of schools, board members and community leaders to attend their breakfast. Staff members feel that there is good support for the school when key administrators come and spend time with them. Recognizing that this could well place a strain on the invitees, it is necessary to set the date, and issue the invitations well in advance.

## PRLessons 101



- Just as visibility improves relations with students, it also improves relations with teachers and staff. Make it a point to get out of the office and visit the classrooms/schools as often as you can, and certainly do so early in the school year.
- Building principals need to walk into the classrooms and show the teachers that they care. Visit with the staff over lunch; chat informally in a relaxed manner.
- Staff needs to get to know you as an individual rather than an administrator. The human side of the school enterprise is very important to its success.
- Be out in the halls at passing time. Stop and say hello to staff members on a casual basis. Get to know them and let them get to know you.
- If you need to discuss a matter of importance, do not do it when there is not sufficient, uninterrupted time to spend on the matter.
- Keep your office door open and let staff see that you are there. Let them come in and say hello or ask you a quick question. Be in the outer office when staff are coming in to work. Greet them as if you are glad to see them; they deserve this. Consider having coffee available. The staff will gladly pay for the coffee if you cannot cover the cost.

## ***PRLessons 101***

---

### Communication Tools

- Weekly Newsletters
- Staff Mailboxes
- Bulletin Boards
- Electronic Memos



#### **Weekly Newsletters**

•In order to share information with your staff, consider issuing a weekly newsletter to them. One principal issued a newsletter called Friday Flash in order to share dates and information that the principal felt that the staff should know. The faculty looked for the newsletter every week because they knew it had information that was meaningful to them. Using this means of communication eliminated the need for many faculty meetings. Additionally, the staff had a written record of notices and deadlines.

#### **Staff Mailboxes and Bulletin Boards**

•In all too many of the older schools, the faculty mailboxes and the staff bulletin boards are the first things that a visitor to the school office sees. The mailboxes and bulletin boards are for staff use. Monitor the notices on the bulletin board and have outdated items routinely removed. Identify areas on the bulletin board where you will put personnel items, district policies and regulations, etc. Encourage staff to use the bulletin board. Staff will then find the contents to be meaningful, be able to recognize the new items, and not be bogged down by having to wade through the old, outdated ones.



## ***PR*Lessons 101**

---



# Recognize Accomplishments

- Do not take people for granted. Give full credit to staff members for their personal accomplishments and those of their students. Send them a congratulatory note, with a copy to the superintendent and their personnel file. Recognize them in their own buildings, before their peer groups, and at board meetings. If the accomplishment is outstanding, or the program is exceptional, consider asking the superintendent if you could have the teacher present it at the next board meeting.
- When board meetings start out with program-related accomplishments, you usually end up with a positive meeting. The tone is set for the evening. Bring the winning teams, such as debate, athletics, math, and their coaches to the board meeting. Introduce them to the board and the public. Everyone feels good, and sometimes the media will pick up the story.
- Send a “glad note” to students and staff. Just a few words on a card will go a long way towards telling them that you know what they have accomplished and that you are pleased.

## PRLessons 101

# Impact Statements & Principal's Advisory Council



### **Impact Statement.**

•Consider using an “impact statement”. This is a form on which staff members can give their comments and recommendations for additions, deletions, or changes pertaining to a particular item being addressed. Soliciting input and encouraging staff members to comment on a proposed change, or board policy, before it is final form, gives the administration an opportunity to consider staff concerns and suggestions. It is anticipated that viable suggestions will be incorporated as the final document is being drafted.

### **Principal's Advisory Council**

•Principals need feedback from their staff. This is often difficult to obtain. Forming a Principal's Advisory Council is one way to systematically obtain feedback from staff. The representatives should be elected by the faculty themselves. The council can consist of one member from each grade level, each department, or from the school, depending on the size and configuration of the school. This group is then asked to bring questions, comments, concerns and suggestions to the meetings of the PAC. The meetings are generally non-threatening and do air some of the grievances troubling the staff.

## ***PRLessons 101***

---



### **Have lunch with the Staff**

- Join the staff for lunch in the faculty lunchroom, or invite them in to join you for lunch in your office. Engage in informal talk, not necessarily school related. Give yourself the opportunity to get to know your staff on an informal basis, and let them get to know you on the same basis.

## PRLessons 101



## New Staff Orientation

- Recognize that it is important for new staff members to feel that they are part of the staff. Invite them to come and visit during the course of the summer, even before they are formally on the payroll. This gives them an opportunity to get to know you and the building. Have coffee ready - take them to lunch if it is appropriate.
- Encourage the district to schedule an orientation day for all new staff members before the regular staff return. In some districts, they pay. In others, new staff are required to put in this additional day. Schedule the orientation even if you cannot pay them; invite them to come on their own. They generally will.
- Plan the visit so it is meaningful and productive. Starting with a continental breakfast sets a good tone. Everyone feels relaxed with food in their hands. Invite some of the board members, district personnel, building principals. Decide the topic that each of the speakers will cover in advance; make certain that you limit the time they speak. Make certain that you include an overview of the community including its history, goals and objectives of the district, information on personnel procedures, etc. give the new employees an opportunity to ask questions.
- Arrange for a narrated bus drive through the community so that new staff members can get a feel for the community, its tradition, housing, commercial areas, and culture. Have lunch ready when they return from the bus trip. Following lunch, invite them to go to their individual buildings with their principals so that they can look around and become familiar with the facility, rooms, materials and supplies. Assign a "buddy" to them when the staff returns so that the new teacher will have a friend in the building.

## PRLessons 101

### Remember the “other” staff



- Substitute Teachers
- Student Teachers
- Bus Drivers
- Cafeteria Workers
- Crossing Guards
- Campus Security



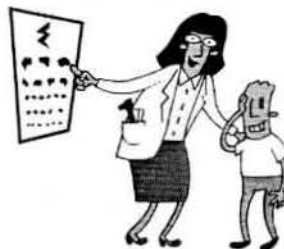
- Do not overlook the need to maintain lines of communication between the “other” staff - both the non-teaching staff and the substitutes and student teachers in your building.
- Substitutes come and go and are free to select the school(s) they will/will not work in. Your building will function much better if you have a group of substitutes that are willing to work there.
- Invite last year’s substitutes and individuals who indicated that they were interested in subbing, for coffee before school starts. Share your school’s philosophy with them - tell them what you are trying to accomplish, your goals and your strengths and weaknesses. Take them on a tour of the building so that they can get a feel for it.
- Prepare a substitute handbook for them that include policies and regulations that you feel they may need to know, facts about enrollment, the schedule of classes, duty assignments, the instructional program, a map of the building, and the procedures to follow when reporting to the building. Also include a summary of the crisis plan and procedures to follow.
- Inform them that there will be a substitute folder for them when they get to school, which will contain lesson plans, the seating chart, identification of the books and materials that the teacher is using, location of the roll book, and the names of dependable student leaders in each class.
- Assign someone to show them to their room and remain there until the sub has located the information they need to teach that day and are set for the day. During the course of the day, drop in to see how the substitute is doing and ask if any help is needed. Do not ignore them! Many subs don’t return to a building because they feel that nobody cares how and what they do. Remember that they are usually members of the community and gain impressions of the building that they take back with them.

## PRLessons 101

### Remember the “other” staff



- Substitute Teachers
- Student Teachers
- Bus Drivers
- Cafeteria Workers
- Crossing Guards
- Campus Security



- Student teachers, coming into your building as they do for a short period of time, gain impressions that last. They are quick to pick up staff attitudes, whether good or bad. Make certain that you place them with teachers that model good teaching behaviors.
- When the student teachers come to your building, take the time to orient them to the school, its policies, and procedures. They need to know what is expected of them, and where they can get the support they need as they go through their experiences.
- Invite them to staff meetings, PTA meetings, and other school functions. Make them members of your staff.
- Urge them to notify their hometown newspaper that they are at the school. It is good for the student teacher and it is good for the school. Positive press never hurts anyone.

## PRLessons 101

### Remember the “other” staff



- Substitute Teachers
- Student Teachers
- Bus Drivers
- Cafeteria Workers
- Crossing Guards
- Campus Security



•Who are some of the “other” staff that might get lost....

- Crossing guards
- Bus drivers
- Cafeteria workers
- Custodians
- Campus Security Officers
- Teacher Aides
- Student workers

## PRLessons 101



It only takes a minute  
to recognize or praise  
someone, but it lasts  
a life time!

•The END!





# Creating Creative Newsletters

Monica Faulkenbery  
NISD Communications Dept.

# Creating Creative Newsletters

## *The Issue*

In former surveys, parents were asked how they received information about St. Charles (Missouri) schools. Overwhelmingly they stated the principal's newsletter as the primary source of information/communication from the school and the District. If you do not currently produce a regular parent newsletter, you might want to consider doing one. If you already do, you may want to evaluate your newsletter to make sure that it is accomplishing what you want it to do.

The attached information is meant to help you to improve existing newsletters and create more creative newsletters.

## Introduction

Newsletters are the most common form of periodical publication. Because of readily available and inexpensive desktop publishing technology, newsletters are relatively easy, fast and inexpensive to produce. As a result, most organizations rely on newsletters to communicate news in a timely and targeted fashion. According to Paul Swift, managing editor of the Newsletter on Newsletters:

---

*"Newsletters are a medium that is here to stay...and grow...There is more value being put on targeting communication with the corporate world and between associations and their members, as opposed to mass media. They (newsletters) are good for getting a specific message to a targeted audience in a specific context.*

*Narrowcasting -- what newsletters are, as opposed to broadcasting -- is growing coincidentally with the desktop revolution."*

---

## History

Communicating to influence viewpoints or actions can be traced from the earliest civilizations. Archaeologists found a farm bulletin in Iraq that told farmers of 1800 BC how to sow their crops, how to irrigate, how to deal with field mice, and how to harvest their crops, an effort not unlike today's distribution of farm bulletins by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Using publicity to raise funds, promote causes, boost commercial ventures, sell land, and build box-office personalities in the United States is older than the nation is. The first systematic effort on this continent to raise funds was sponsored by Harvard College in 1641, when that infant institution sent a trio of preachers to England on a "begging mission." Once in England, they notified Harvard that they needed a fundraising newsletter or brochure. In response

to this request came New England's First Fruits, largely written in Massachusetts but printed in London in 1643, the first of countless public relations pamphlets and brochures.

## School-based Publications

A principal once wrote in a letter to parents,

*"Our school's cross-graded, multi-ethnic, individualized learning program is designed to enhance the concept of an open-learning program with emphasis on a continuum..."*

At least one parent was motivated to respond,

*"I haven't the faintest idea what you are talking about." Do you?*

Effective communication in school publications play an important role in public relations. However, the best way to lose effectiveness is to use all the educational jargon you know. If there is one rule about writing and publications that school leaders should remember, it is:

**Keep the jargon and acronyms out of your writing!**

## What can publications do for you?

Written words have definite advantages in any communication program. Publications can:

- **Deliver information to a large number of people.** If you want to send the entire community a specific message, that's best done in writing, rather than by phone. Alerting the student and parent community to a forthcoming school calendar is an example of something you should

write.

- **Get the word out quickly.** If your school campus develops an outbreak of head lice, a letter home that afternoon will best tell parents of the situation and actions they should take.

- **State information for the record and for reference.** When you want to communicate your school's discipline policy, use a handbook or article in the school newsletter.

- **Save time for the communicator.** Writing and mailing a letter to inform is less time-consuming than holding community meetings.

## Five Keys to Effective Writing

Here are some proven tips you can consistently use to improve your writing.

- **Keep it simple.** Use short sentences and short paragraphs.

- **Write for the reading level of your audience.** If you were writing to a classroom of second graders, you should use a different vocabulary than you should if you were writing for college graduates. You should have an idea of the reading level of your parents, business leaders, and other key audiences.

A good rule of thumb is to write as though you are writing for middle school students (eighth grade level.) Most parents will enjoy the ease of reading your materials. But even more important, they will read them!

- **Use the active, not the passive voice.** A reader can move more quickly through active writing and it is easier to understand.

- **Don't use two words when one will do.** This is especially important with adjectives and adverbs. It adds little to write about a "meaningful and worthwhile lesson." If it is worthwhile, it is meaningful and vice versa.

- **Always edit your materials.** Any writer should be able to eliminate unnecessary words and phrases during the editing process. If a word adds nothing important to your writing, don't use it.

A useful tip in writing is to let a trusted colleague -- who knows the audience -- read the material and suggest changes. It is tough to critique your own work. Sometimes we simply read what we meant, not what is actually on the page. A secretary or assistant principal can read between the lines and help you head off mistakes.

## Your Newsletter

Your newsletter to the parents is an essential publication because of the key nature of this audience. Parents have a deep interest in what is happening at your school and in knowing key dates. With today's busy schedules, many parents will get essential information through a newsletter, but they often won't have time to attend meetings.

Newsletter content will vary depending on the level of the school. Regardless of level, however, it is always good to communicate any changes in direction, such as a revised attendance policy, or dates of school events, dates that students must sign up for college admission testing, student successes, and ways that parents can become involved in your school.

The best way to determine what material to include is to ask a group of parents -- perhaps the PTA executive board or your Booster Club. Getting this input will help you focus on important material and not waste your time and resources reporting information that parents don't care about and won't read.

## Designing Your Newsletter

The design of your publication should strive for clarity and simplicity. Busy people won't spend a great deal of time wading through your material if it's not organized and clear. One design idea to use is the 30-3-30 theory. Layout your publication for the page flipper (the 30-second reader), the scanner (the three-minute reader), and the in-depth reader who reads your entire 30-minute publication. And keep in mind, most readers fall in the first two categories.

Educators often put too much copy and too many photos on one page. A general rule for special topic publications is to keep at least 20-30 percent of each two-page spread open for "breathing room."

### Some tips on graphics include:

- Body copy should be 9, 10, 11 or 12 point in a serif type face. Spacing (called leading) between lines and columns of copy needs to be adequate to avoid the crowded look.
- Copy lines should be no longer than two alphabets or 52 characters. Many readers prefer a copy column about three inches in width or shorter.
- Photographs can add punch to your publication. But make sure they are worth printing and help tell the action story of your program. Words of caution: Bad photographs are worse than no photographs at all.
- Use copy-breaking devices to disarm a wave of gray in your publication. Box copy with rules, use subheadlines, shades of a color, and use bold breakouts when applicable.
- Don't use many type families in the same publication unless you want to start a printing business for a circus.

- Use sans-serif types for headlines.

- As a general rule, never use less than eight-point or more than 36 point type in any 8 1/2 by 11 inch publication.

*(Source: tips from the National School Public Relations Association.)*

### Specialty and Non-Traditional Publications

Be sure to be aware of what is happening around you – locally and nationally. Specialty publications and brochures are essential to help communicate single topic subjects to a concerned constituency. During the “outcomes-based education” scare, our school district devoted an entire eight-page tabloid to the subject. When we changed from the junior high configuration (7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade) to a middle school format of sixth through eighth grade, we produced an eight-page tabloid that diffused the situation before it gathered any steam.

When a couple of students were abducted from bus stops in neighboring school districts, our parents became concerned and asked the school district to provide safety tips. We produced a series of safety fliers, including one that taught the students the discipline code and the difference between right and wrong. We also established a safety hotline that students (and parents) could use 24-hours a day to report any safety concerns. We produced a variety of items including bookmarks, book covers, and stickers with the safety hotline number.

Use your imagination – look around and see what is being used and begin using “non-traditional” vehicles to communicate your message. The fax cover sheet is a perfect example of something that goes out from your district many times. Create a cover sheet that can

be changed daily, weekly, or monthly to help get your message to a variety of publics.

What new ways can technology be used to enhance communication? A daily or weekly message from the superintendent on voice mail? A daily or weekly message from the superintendent on your Intranet Web Page? The possibilities are endless – have fun with it, but remember, don't try to do it all. Pick one or two ideas and do those well.

# KEEPING YOUR SCHOOL SAFE

*A Summary for Parkway Elementary School Students*

Parkway School District • 455 N. Woods Mill Rd. • Chesterfield, MO 63017 • (314) 415-8100

**P**arkway School District wants each child to be able to learn in a safe and secure environment. The Board of Education has approved a discipline policy to support this atmosphere, and it is the responsibility of each student to know the rules of good conduct.

In Parkway, we judge misconduct (or band behavior) by "standards." Just like your parents have rules at home, your school also has rules that are for your benefit and well-being. Our rules are called "standards." A standard is the line that divides right and wrong. If you don't follow the rules, you have crossed that line, and will be subject to disciplinary actions.

Our discipline standards are written in a way that encourages good conduct, an effort to learn, and good citizenship. Causing disruptions, damaging property and stealing are all violations of our standards.

We want to work with you to help you be the very best that you can be, but we know that problems will arise. We also know that there are varying (different) levels of problems. A student disrupting class with an inappropriate (not right) outburst would be in violation of Standard 1 (disrupting school), but the consequence (punishment) would be, perhaps, a conference between the student and the teacher. A student who causes a fight and upsets school for a period of time would also be in violation of Standard 1, but it might be called a Type I violation, which carries a much stronger punishment and for a longer period of time.

**IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!** You have a responsibility to contribute to a safe, productive learning environment.

**REPORT POTENTIAL PROBLEMS!** It is up to you to report any potential problem that could cause a disruption to school. There are some cases where it **IS** "okay to tell."

**GET HELP BEFORE PROBLEMS GET WORSE!** It is up to YOU to help diffuse (make better) a problem before it gets worse. Problems will occur. They do not need to escalate (grow and get worse). It's "okay" to get an adult or mediator involved early.

**CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT.** Stressing character development is important in the education of children, and goes hand-in-hand with good behavior. The following are the values stressed by the Parkway Character Development policy.

Personal values: accountability, honesty, integrity, responsibility and respect for self.

Social values: abstinence (alcohol, drugs and sex), caring about others, commitment to family, positive work ethic, and respect for others.

Civic values: equality, freedom, justice, respect for authority and respect for property.

(Source: Character Development Policy; IHAK, IHAK.G)

**NO TOLERANCE FOR DISRUPTIONS.** We will show no tolerance for students who intentionally (on purpose) disrupt school or continue in a disruption should one begin spontaneously. This includes fighting, displaying of symbols that are known to incite (cause) problems, assaulting, or other disruptive behaviors. Displaying gang signs or "wearing of colors" can cause trouble and is a violation of this standard.



**NO TOLERANCE FOR DRUGS (WHICH INCLUDES ALCOHOL).** We will show no tolerance for students who are in possession of or use drugs or alcohol on school property or at school-sponsored activities. The sale of drugs, or participation in planning or carrying out a drug transaction, will result in EXPULSION from school (not allowed to return). Possession or use of alcohol, no matter what amount, will result in a lengthy out-of-school placement.

**DO NOT BRING BEEPERS OR CELLULAR PHONES.** Beepers or phones are not to be brought to school. These will be confiscated and returned only to a parent in person.

---



---

***Remember!***  
***It's 'okay' to tell an  
adult if you think there  
is danger***

---



---

**NO TOLERANCE FOR WEAPONS** (or objects used as weapons). We will show no tolerance for students who bring a firearm to school. The possession of a firearm will result in EXPULSION. Possession of a weapon, or the use of any object as a weapon, is a serious violation of our expectations. Carrying and/or using a toy or look alike weapon IS a violation of our rules. Mace or other similar sprays, even on a key chain for "protection" is considered a weapon.

### **SAFETY FIRST**

If you know about a problem...  
talk to an adult.  
If you see something dangerous...  
stay away and report it immediately.  
It's okay to tell...  
if you are keeping someone safe.

---



---

<u><b>Wrong</b></u>	<u><b>Standard</b></u>	<u><b>Right</b></u>
Disrupting School	1	Following rules; being responsible
Damaging Property	2	Using property as expected
Stealing	3	Leaving others' property alone
Fighting	4	Getting help to solve problems
Bringing a weapon to school	5	Never bringing a weapon to school - real or fake
Using drugs (& alcohol is a drug)	6	Staying healthy and taking care of yourself
Scaring others	7	Acting responsibly
Touching someone in a private area of their body	8	Showing respect for others
Talking back to teachers or other staff	9	Following requests
Not working	10	Applying yourself

---



---

# The School District of the City of St. Charles, Missouri

# Good News FAX

1025 Country Club Road  
St. Charles, MO 63303-3346  
(314) 946-6169/724-5840  
FAX (314) 946-4832

### New Principals Named

Two new school building principals have been named by the District.

Dennis Powell, a high school principal at Houston R-1, will become principal at Jefferson Middle School following the retirement of Dr. Donna Towers.

Shirley Lohmar, a third grade teacher at Monroe Elementary School, will become principal at Blackhurst Elementary School following the retirement of Donna Nack.

### Issue Placed on Ballot

The Board of Education approved the recommendation to place a 38-cent referendum on the Aug. 4 ballot asking the voters to maintain the District's quality of education. This would reflect a 26-cent increase to what taxpayers are currently paying. For more information, contact the Community Relations Office.

To:	From:
Company:	Department:
Department:	Phone #:
Phone #:	# Pages:
Fax #:	Date:

**CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:** The material in this facsimile transmission is either private, confidential, legally privileged or constitutes work product, and is intended only for the use of the individual(s) named above. If you are not the intended recipient, be advised that unauthorized use, disclosure, copying, distribution, or the taking of any action in reliance on this information is strictly prohibited. If you have received this transmission in error, please notify us immediately.

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter V

### Results and Discussion

At the most recent national convention for the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA), over 750 school communicators, including many superintendents and board members, met for four days to learn and discuss various communication topics facing our school districts today. Topics included the areas of strategic planning, marketing like a business, accountability, public engagement and quality management. These topics show a shift from past conventions where designing creative publications, writing crisis plans, and working with the media were the normal offerings. Can it be that school boards and superintendents are beginning to see the need for a more diverse and higher level thinking in the Communications Office? Could it be that the entire world saw the importance of the Communications Office when Rick Kaufman, director of Communications for the Jefferson County School District, took a lead role during the Columbine High School tragedy?

We sincerely hope that an incident of the magnitude of Columbine is a once in a lifetime occurrence, but we know that it could happen anywhere, anytime. Whether we are in a one-person office or a

multiple-person office, we must be prepared, have the tools necessary and access to the resources needed.

I recently left the Eanes Independent School District (EISD) in Austin to work in a multiple-person Communications Office at Northside ISD in San Antonio. Some of the reasons for my leaving have been cited earlier in this thesis as challenges facing the one-person office – the lack of support and understanding of the role of the school public relations professional. However, before leaving, I sat down with Dr. Jeffrey Weaver, the superintendent of EISD, and had a lengthy discussion about issues addressed within this document.

Dr. Weaver and I had earlier discussions about the appropriate duties of a school communications office. He had worked closely with the Communications Office in Topeka, Kansas, his previous district, and knew the potential of a quality program. I stated in Chapter I that I had expected my duties and role within the district to be redefined upon Dr. Weaver's arrival. However, I discovered that since he was new to the school district, he was hesitant to make any major staff restructuring changes within the Communications Office. Once I announced that I was leaving the District, he decided to use my pending departure as the catalyst to make the changes that both he and I saw needed to be made. These changes were imperative to

creating a quality and effective school public relations/communications program.

Upon my leaving the district, the position was placed directly under the Superintendent of Schools, instead of reporting to the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Communications as it had in the past. In addition, all human resource related duties that I had previously been responsible for were dispersed to secretaries within that department. The position was placed on the Superintendent's Cabinet and given managerial and administrative status.

The most important thing that a one-person Communications Office can do is to convince his or her superintendent that the PR position within the district must be a member of the Superintendent's Cabinet. As stated earlier, the definition of public relations is: "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends." You can not do your job if you are on the outside looking in.

One way to add credibility to both you and your office is to pursue accreditation status. Through the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) or NSPRA, you can take a test to be accredited in public relations. Much like an accountant that takes a test to become a

CPA, you can take a written and oral exam to become an APR. To qualify to take the exam, you must have devoted a substantial portion of time, while employed on a full-time basis, for a period of not less than five years, to the paid professional practice of public relations.

The next most important thing a one-person Communications Office can do to have a successful program is to take on just one new project a year. Public relations professionals often think we have to do it all.

As a "counselor" for the National School Public Relations Association, the question I hear most often is "how do I do it all? I can't get it all done! How do I prioritize?" We must get over this mentality of being "all to all people." Even the nouveau cliché, "work smarter, not harder" is not totally accurate. Let's "work less and produce more!" Let's take out the old "RACE" formula and run it around the block. Do some research to see what your constituents want, how they get their information, and focus on those avenues.

Check with your Management Information Systems (MIS) staff. Do the majority of your employees have access to a computer at work? How much time does staff spend on their computers? If it is a large amount of time, maybe your staff newsletter and board report would be better served if you placed it on the Intranet or e-mailed it to employees.

At Northside ISD, our *Board Notes* (the report of each school board meeting) is e-mailed to staff with each department secretary printing it out and posting it in areas for the auxiliary staff who may not have access to a computer daily. This year, our staff newsletter will follow suit. We have found that teachers receive so many pieces of paper in any given week, including all the homework assignments that they have to grade, that one more piece of printed material in their inbox will often get ignored. However, they rely heavily on gathering information from the computer, so they don't mind receiving an e-mail newsletter. They can read it, archive it, or print it out – whichever is convenient for them.

Also in the “work less and produce more” category, the next important thing that one-person school communications officer can do is to establish a good working relationship with their local media. Do this early on in your career with the district. You can use this as a reason for meeting them. One of the first things I do upon taking a job is to call on the local media and ask to meet with them – on their turf (at their office). I explain to them that I am new and I want to learn what I can do to help make their job easier. By doing this, your job will become easier.

After you meet with the local media, you must then turn your limited time and energy into training your workforce. Yes, you are a

one-person office, but as stated earlier in chapter four, you can enhance and enlarge your “staff” by recruiting your volunteers to be ambassadors. Train your parent volunteers and administrators to be your “public information coordinators” – your eyes, ears and helpers for broadcasting the good things that are happening within the school buildings.

At the same time that you are training your volunteers and administrators about media relations, also use this time to educate them to the importance of school public relations and the role that the school PR professional can play. Do some “PR” for the PR office.

Once you have done your research and trained your “staff,” you can then settle down to do our “real” job of consensus and relationship building. Since we can’t do it all – especially in a one-person office, we must decide on what is the most important and focus on those projects that center on it. In my opinion, it all goes back to the definition of public relations. PRSA adopted a definition of public relations; however, it continues to change and evolve still today. Public Relations is defined in the textbook *Effective Public Relations*,” by Cutlip, Center and Broom as ***the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure***



*depends.* (However, PRSA continues to explain this definition in an expanded form with many bullet points under it.)

If we go by the concise definition, does the “mutually beneficial relationships” that we are to maintain mean that we are to be consensus builders? Are we influencers of public opinion? Yes, I believe so.

We know from our studies of public relations’ history (and as I stated in chapter one) that one of the first formal or organized public relations campaigns dates back to the Revolutionary War and the work of Samuel Adams and the “Sons of Liberty.” Adams worked tirelessly to arouse and then organize public opinion, proceeding always on the assumption that the majority of mankind are more led by their senses than by their reason. Early on, he discerned that public opinion results from the march of events and the way these events are seen by those active in public affairs. Adams would create events to meet a need if none was at hand to serve his purpose.

Far more than most realize, today’s patterns of public relations practice were shaped by innovations in mobilizing public opinion developed by Adams and his fellow revolutionaries.

These men were fighting for their lives – for their freedom and a new form of government. The need to build a consensus among the people was apparent. However, they could not help to build that

consensus without advocating their position – freedom...a new form of government against tyranny and oppression.

In today's society, whether we are trying to pass a school tax bond issue or promote an image of a person, product or organization, aren't we striving to advocate the cause (positive or negative) to build a consensus toward our point of view?

In the recently released eighth edition of the Cutlip, Center and Broom textbook, "*Effective Public Relations*," the authors state four major general objectives of public relations for public schools. They are (1) increasing awareness of education and heading off misinformation and rumor; (2) building the public support necessary to obtain adequate funds; (3) gaining public acceptance and cooperation in making educational changes; and (4) building amicable working relationships with news executives and reporters.

Every one of these points require consensus building and establishing good public opinion for your school district.

Public relations for education is expanding in scope, concept, and utilization. It has taken on increased importance as officials try to persuade taxpayers to raise school levies to cope with inflation, or to pass bond issues for new buildings because of shifting enrollment patterns. In fact, most school public relations practitioners at the recent NSPRA conference regarded the financing of public education as

the issue that will present the greatest communications problem during the next several years. As with Samuel Adams, if we are to “win the war” – whether it is for freedom or for changing the climate toward increasing taxes for education – we must focus on changing public opinion and provide for effective consensus and relationship building.

This can only be done if the school communications office is involved and takes a key role on the leadership team. We must be viewed as a vital management function within the organization for which we work, “establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between our organization and the clients we serve.” We do this through careful research and planning. We do this through publicity, advertising, press agency, public affairs, issues management and lobbying, among others. People in the field of public relations will continue to be seen as “charlatans” by the public and the media until both practitioner and the public are educated that PR is a scientifically managed part of an organization’s problem-solving and change process. The old “flying by the seat of the pants” approach to solving public relations problems is over. PR practitioners, even though we are change agents for our employers, have more work to do in changing the profession’s image among both its own members and the public at large.

Through organizations such as PRSA and NSPRA and their accreditation processes, some day we may build a consensus concerning the value of the field in which we make our living. Until then, let's do what we can to promote effective school public relations. As Lyndon Baines Johnson said, "*there are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few we can solve by ourselves.*"

## Works Cited

- Bagin, Rich. Interview. National School Public Relations Association. Rockville, Maryland. 18 Feb. 1998.
- Cutlip, Scott M., Allen H. Center and Glen M. Broom. Effective Public Relations. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994.
- DeBruyn, Tracey H. and Robert AL. DeBruyn. School Promotion, Publicity, & Public Relations...Nothing But Benefits. Manhatten, Kansas: Leadership Lane, 1993.
- Dunn, Jim. Running a Powerful One-Person PR Program. NSPRA Tip Sheet of the Week. 14 Dec. 1998.
- Hussar, William J. Projections of Education Statistics to 2000. National Center for Education Statistics. Pittsburgh, Penn.: United States Government Information, 1997.
- Lober, Irene. PRomoting Your School, A Public Relations Handbook. Lancaster, Penn.: Technomic, 1993.
- Martin, Dorian. Interview. National School Public Relations Association. Austin, Texas 23 April 1999.
- Pyle, Jack. Building Community Support for Schools. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall, 1994.
- The National Library of Education. 15 March 1998. <http://www.ed.gov/NLE/>
- The National School Public Relations Association web site, <http://www.nspra.org>. Resources for Members. 2 Feb. 2000.
- The National School Public Relations. School Public Relations: Building Confidence in Education. Rockville, Maryland: NSPRA, 1999.
- School Public Relations Association. Trends in School Public Relations. New York: Volume 1, 1945-46.
- Survey of School Public Relations Professionals. Missouri and Texas. 1 Dec. 1998.
- Todd, Annell Interview. Texas School Public Relations Association. Austin, Texas. 14 May 1999.

Walling, Donovan R. Complete Book of School Public Relations: An Administrator's Manual and Guide. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1982.

Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982.