

NSPRA 2021

Mark of Distinction Award Application

*Professional Development/
PR Skill Building*

submitted by



due May 15, 2021

The "Mark of Distinction" Recognition Program for NSPRA Chapters

Entry Form

(Please include this information with each individual entry)

Chapter Name: Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA)

Chapter President: Anne Cron, APR

President's contact information

District/Organization: Birmingham Public Schools

Address: 31301 Evergreen Rd.

City/State/Zip Code: Beverly Hills MI 48025

Telephone: 248.203.3026 e-Mail: acron@birmingham.k12.mi.us

Right to Use Materials Statement

On behalf of the Chapter, I agree that NSPRA has the right to use any materials, project/program examples, etc., submitted in this entry in Association print/online publications, on the website, and as "best practice" resources for NSPRA chapters.

Signature of Chapter President:  _____

Application Process Checklist

- Each entry includes this cover form and the Entry Specifics form.
- A single PDF that includes links to related supplemental materials and examples is attached. (If entering in more than one category, a single PDF for each category entry is attached or sent individually).
- Chapter president has signed the "right to use materials" statement on the entry form.
- Entry is delivered no later than May 15 and sent to awards@nspra.org. subject line "Mark of Distinction."

Mark of Distinction Entry Specifics

Chapter: Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA)

Please complete and include the information below for each individual entry

 Section I: Membership Building

- Current number of chapter members _____
 - NSPRA-provided membership baseline number as of June 1 _____
 - Number of chapter members who belong to NSPRA as of April 30 _____
-
-

X **Section II: Special Focus Areas**

X Category A – chapter has less than 50% NSPRA membership

 Category B – chapter has 50% or more NSPRA membership

X 1. Professional Development/PR Skill Building

 2. Special PR/Communication Program, Project or Campaign

 One-time project/program (completed within a single year)

 Continuing annual project/program (repeats each year; demonstrate new/improved/revised components)

 Multi-year project/program (one-time only with defined start and end dates)

 Multi-year phased project/program (components implemented in clearly defined phases each year)

 3. Coalition-Building/Collaborative Communication Effort

2021 National School Public Relations Association Mark of Distinction Award Application

This year, the [Michigan School Public Relations Association](http://www.mspra.org) (MSPRA) is submitting two entries under Section II: Special Focus Areas: one under **Professional Development/PR Skill-Building** and one under Coalition-Building/Collaborative Communication Efforts.

Special Focus—Professional Development/Skill-Building

Overview of MSPRA Professional Development/PR Skill-Building Entry

Each year, the Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA) plans and provides a variety of programs and activities to support the professional growth and status of its members and improve the communication skills of Michigan educators including administrators, board members, teachers and support staff. This submission includes six examples of professional growth support: A) MSPRA's 2021 Virtual Annual Conference, B) MSPRA's Fall Drive-in Conference, C) MSPRA's three Summer Idea Hours, and D) Other examples of public relations training provided by MSPRA members on behalf of MSPRA.

This entry documents and shows evidence of chapter programs/activities, including:

- 1) Impact of overall year-long effort (page 3)
- 2) Statement of chapter goals and objectives for programs/activities (page 2)
- 3) Documentation of conference/workshop/meeting programs and agendas, marketing materials, tip sheets and/or presentations distributed or made available to participants (See links throughout narrative.)
- 4) Examples of specific programs/activities for awards (page 11)
- 5) Identification of target audience and participation/attendance (pages 4, 8 and 9)
- 6) Documentation/demonstration of measurable outcomes, effectiveness and success of the program/activity (See evaluation links in narrative.)
- 7) Explanation of how program/activity relates to NSPRA's Goals and Objectives (page 3)
- 8) Other relevant examples of chapter's professional development/PR skill-building efforts (page 12)



While we mix in some fun, MSPRA takes its professional development seriously.

Overview of MSPRA Professional Development /Skill-Building Efforts

The Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA) devotes much of its energy and financial resources to professional development and skill building. The results are some of the best available communication and public relations training in the state. The consistent, high quality of our effort helps our members be better communicators, aids in member retention, and drives conference attendance and participation.

Our primary professional development activities (which were virtual this year) include:

- Holding our spring **Annual Conference**, which offers intensive skill-building sessions, networking and learning.
- Offering our **Drive-in Conference** that features timely, topical training with expert speakers to equip members with knowledge and skills.
- Instituting our new **Idea Hours** that enable members to share tips and strategies on hot topics.
- Elevating Public Relations professionals and the profession by **nominating practitioners for national awards**.
- **Encouraging the pursuit of Accreditation in Public Relations** via [The Minute](#) e-newsletter.

[Note these professional development activities were suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19:

- Our **Outstanding Superintendent Communicator Award** to recognize the critical communication role of the leaders of our organizations.
- Our **Outstanding School Communicator Award** to recognize front-line practitioners.
- Our **Gold Medallion Award** that recognizes member skills and encourages sharing of high-quality projects and programs.]

The MSPRA Executive Board appoints a board member to manage each of these Professional Development initiatives: The Annual Conference, the Communication Awards, Marketing activities and APR Certification. Typically, an additional 1-3 board members are either conference co-chairs, assist with the awards, or help coordinate drive-in conferences and idea hours. Again, this year, we recruited several MSPRA members to serve on our Professional Development Committee, giving them statewide experience and exposure while giving our Annual Conference statewide input. It was a positive growth opportunity for all involved.



Gail Fox chaired this year's Professional Development Committee.

The Board's goals for its Annual and Drive-in Conferences and new Idea Hours include:

- Building skills for all levels of members: those who are new to the profession to those who are veterans.
- Preparing members to address current hot topics in Michigan education.
- Networking to strengthen professional relationships.
- Sharing some of the topics, trends, and speakers heard at the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) Seminar.
- Recognizing the skills and sharing the successful strategies of MSPRA/NSPRA contest winners.

Together, MSPRA’s Annual Conference, Drive-in conference and Idea Hours provide unparalleled opportunities for members and interested others to learn about and advance their communication skills. All of these activities generate widespread participation from communicators, educators and staff members across the state.

The impact of this year’s effort is reflected in the 225 registrants (members and non-members), speakers and sponsors who attended our two conferences and three Idea Hours.

Evaluations from all these activities are mined for improvement ideas and suggestions. Every few years, these activities are reinvented to ensure their relevance, value to our members and high quality of programming. We are using social media and technology to promote our organization and events, and are finding new ways to use these tools for professional development—as evidenced by our virtual offerings this year.

Our reputation for professionalism and excellence means we are the group other state education-related associations turn to for communication advice, toolkits, presentations and workshops for their members. Our board and members can be found at the conferences and meetings of many of these partner organizations, helping to equip other members of the school family with the communication skills they need.

MSPRA’s professional development activities align with the goals and objectives of NSPRA. MSPRA provides the highest quality professional development opportunities that advance continuous improvement.

- MSPRA is the go-to organization for strategic communication.
- MSPRA is a leader in the use of technology to advance education through responsible communication.
- MSPRA provides valuable services and resources to our members to help them acquire and sharpen the skills they need to:
 - ✓ Plan and implement an effective public relations program valuing inclusion and diversity.
 - ✓ Be recognized and valued as trusted advisors and members of school/district leadership teams.

Our conferences, sessions and speakers are chosen to build the abilities of our members and members of the school family.

Through purposeful planning and expert implementation, our chapter works to elevate the role of the school communicator, the skill of our members (and their colleagues), and the value we each bring to our schools and communities.

MSPRA
Michigan School Public Relations Association

A special two-day series designed to fit your budget and schedule!

2020 MSPRA FALL REMOTE™ DRIVE-IN CONFERENCE
November 19 and 20, 2020 - *Location: Your Office!

DAY 1: Thursday, November 19	DAY 2: Friday, November 20
<p>1:00-3:00 p.m. Addressing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion <i>Presenter: Dr. Jay Marks, Oakland Schools</i></p> <p>Build on your cultural competencies through a communication lens. Strengthen your ability to successfully communicate about diversity, equity and inclusion in today's world using proven strategies to support productive conversations, positive interactions and proactive learning.</p> <p>3:00-3:30 p.m. Break Out Session</p>	<p>9:00-10:15 a.m. Creating Better Videos <i>Presenters: Holly McCaw, Otsego Public Schools & Rick Witham, Muskegon Area ISD</i></p> <p>Get tips and ideas on how to shoot and edit videos to tell your story, learn about must-have equipment and the key elements that make a compelling video.</p> <p>10:30-11:30 a.m. How to Connect with Your Legislators <i>Presenter: Chris Glass, West Michigan Talent Triangle</i></p> <p>Join us for a post-election legislative analysis and what we can expect during lame duck, learn about grassroots initiatives, and how best to connect with your legislators in this new cycle.</p>
<p>Cost</p> <p>\$49 - MSPRA members \$59 - Non-members</p>	<p>Register</p> <p>by noon on November 19 www.mspra.org</p>
	<p>11:30-Noon Break Out Session</p>

Along with electronic communication, members received a mailed postcard promoting the 2020 MSPRA Fall Remote Drive-in Conference.

Our Virtual 2021 Annual MSPRA Conference

The Annual Conference—A two-day virtual event

As is our practice, we promoted our annual two-day conference with a series of electronic messages. There were [website posts](#), conference teasers and registration reminders in our weekly [MSPRA Minute](#) and on [Facebook](#) that included a registration link.

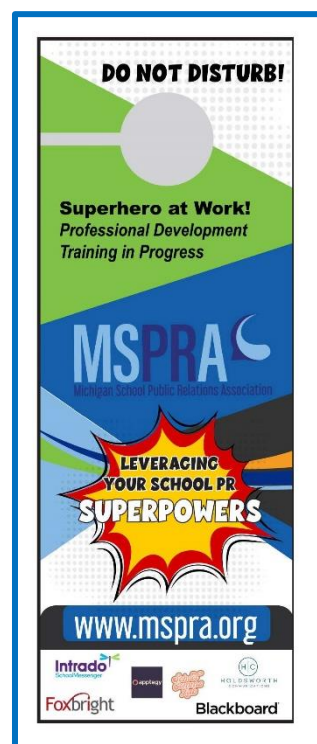
Due to COVID-19, we held our 2021 Annual Conference: “**Leveraging Your School PR Superpowers**” virtually on March 11 and 12, 2021. On those two days, members from throughout Michigan along with speakers from Ohio, Alabama, New York, Texas, Canada, Wisconsin, and Kansas, plus sponsors from as far away as California, logged in to connect with and learn from each other.

A total of 91 people including presenters, [69 registrants](#), sponsors, and interested others “attended” the virtual conference. We contracted with a Michigan vendor, Motown Digital, for our virtual platform.

Unique Features

These unique features were part of MSPRA’s 2021 Virtual Annual Conference:

- 1) It was virtual with the assistance of Motown Digital, a paid provider.
- 2) A detailed and comprehensive [Welcome Packet](#) was sent to participants as their digital registration materials.
- 3) NSPRA’s President Lesley Bruinton, APR, opened our conference on Thursday morning from her desk in Tuscaloosa, AL presenting: “The Amazing School PR Superhero,” a much-needed encouraging and positive message.
- 4) Our PD Committee constantly monitored the conference via group chat. This served as our virtual huddle throughout the two days.
- 5) We had five investment partners this year: Blackboard, Intrado/School Messenger, Foxbright, Holdsworth Communications/School Comms Lab, and apptegy. In addition to having exposure via sponsor booths, each Gold-level sponsor introduced one of our General Session speakers.
- 6) Instead of an app, we submitted our agenda to Motown Digital and it was posted as part of the virtual platform. We also sent it to attendees in the Welcome Packet
- 7) We heard from our NSPRA Midwest Regional Vice President Patrick Gallaway live via the virtual platform.
- 8) We had to be mindful of all our presenters’ time zones, making sure they were connecting to us in Eastern Standard Time.



Participants received a door hanger to use during the Virtual Annual Conference to alert their co-workers at home or the office that they were busy perfecting their communication skills.

The Annual Conference—Setting the Stage/Highlighting the Theme

As the sample promotion below shows, this year’s conference focused on the heroic efforts of school PR professionals. Building on the “**Leveraging Your School PR Superpowers**” conference theme, the MSPRA Professional Development Committee (aka Mission Possible Team) planned a two-day event packed with super-powerful PR energy. To reinforce the theme, we encouraged participants to decorate a mask template included in the Welcome Packet, take a selfie, and post it on social media. A winner, with the most creative mask, was selected for each conference day (page 7).

Here’s a sample how we promoted the conference:

Don your crusader’s cape, grab your magic lasso, slip on your power ring and join us for “**Leveraging Your School PR Superpowers**” – MSPRA’s virtual Annual Conference on March 11 and 12 both days from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. **Registration open through March 9, 2021.** This two-day event will be packed with super-powerful PR energy. For starters, Lesley Bruinton, APR, 2020-21 National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) President and Director of Public Relations for the Tuscaloosa City Schools will deliver the keynote address: “**The Amazing School PR Superhero.**”

The conference will also feature super-relevant general sessions on Recruiting/Retaining Teachers and Staff, COVID-19 Lessons Learned, Crisis Communication, and Personal Wellness. In addition, our super-interesting breakout sessions will include:

- Helping you successfully communicate through the rest of the school year
- Getting students back to school
- Onboarding your new superintendent
- Creating graphics for non-graphic designers
- Taking next steps: I got a job in school PR, now what?

Plus, super-focused collegial networking will counteract isolation—our Kryptonite—while forging a super team of school PR professionals rededicated to doing battle with our archnemesis: “*Mis- Communication.*”

The Annual Conference—Sequence of Events

This year’s annual conference [agenda](#) unfolded as planned.

On Thursday, March 11, we began by introducing NSPRA’s Mideast Region Vice President, Patrick Gallaway, who gave a theme-related, real-time welcome to our participants. Then, Lesley Bruinton, APR, 2020-21 National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) President and Director of Public Relations for the Tuscaloosa City Schools delivered the keynote address: “**The Amazing School PR Superhero.**” Lesley shared the six traits of a school PR superhero that allow us to function at our very best and be re-energized in the vital work we do.



NSPRA’s 2020-21 President, Lesley Bruinton, APR, was a keynote speaker.

We followed that with a COVID-19 Round Robin session, breaking into four different discussion groups [each with their own discussion questions](#), a facilitator and a note taker to document the responses. Facilitators and note takers rotated rooms, allowing each group to address each set of questions. This was one of the opportunities for participants to share ideas and interact.

After the Round Robin on Thursday, we broke for lunch followed by opportunities for participants to network informally with others in breakout rooms and with sponsors in their booths.

Following lunch, we held the Annual MSPRA Business Meeting. President Anne Cron, APR, presented the association's [Annual Report](#) noting the chapter's health and its professional development offerings, along with its overall successes and challenges.

After that, we held two rounds of breakout sessions that included: Communicating About COVID-19: [Top Ten Things to Know and Do Next](#) (also presented at the 2021 NJSPRA Conference); [Onboarding Your New Superintendent](#); Attendance, Absenteeism and Truancy in Virtual 2020-21...Where in the Rona Are We?; Graphic [Design for Non-Designers](#); [You've Got This! How to Build a Successful Communication Program](#) (also presented at 2020 NSPRA Seminar); and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leadership Lessons While White.

Then we adjourned for the day.

On Friday morning, March 12, we held two large-group sessions: Using Strategic Marketing to Recruit Millennial Staff and the [Baraboo Story of Communications, Response and Healing](#).

At noon on Friday, we broke for lunch and, as we had done the day before, included opportunities for participants to network informally with others in breakout rooms and with sponsors in their booths.

On Friday afternoon, we held two more large-group sessions: Hearing Our Voices! Students Share their Communication Needs and [Wellness in School PR: Why, How and Now](#).

Then, our Professional Development Chair, Gail Fox, delivered final remarks and closed out the conference.

The Annual Conference—Attendee Reactions

All 69 registrants were given an opportunity to evaluate the event. About half of those who attended (36) our annual virtual conference responded to our [evaluation survey](#); giving the conference high marks. Of those who responded, 75% said the virtual conference experience exceeded their expectations. Plus, they said, overall, the conference was either extremely (61.1%) or very (30.6%) useful. Based on these responses and the comments below, the Professional Development Committee considered it a success.

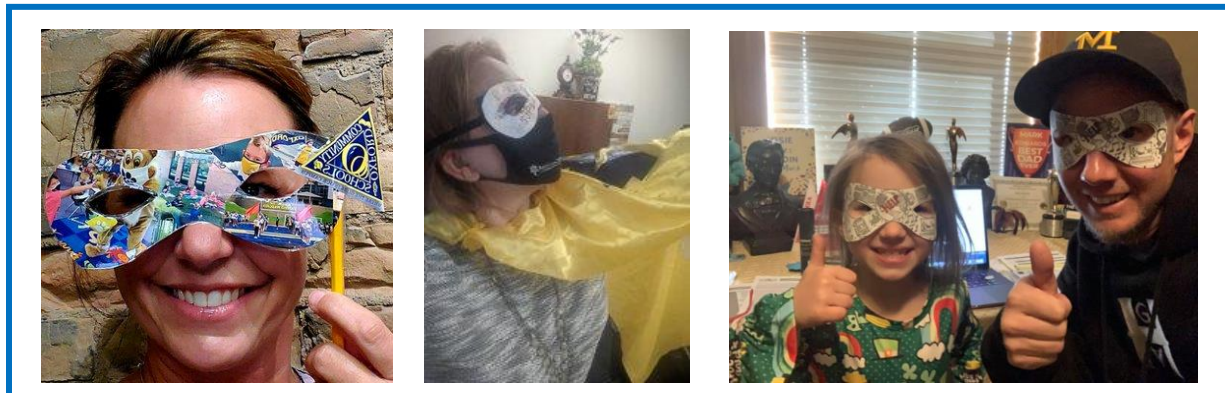
When asked to note the best part of the conference, respondents said:

- *Great variety of topics.*
- *The wellness presentation was very helpful and relevant.*
- *Interaction capabilities of the breakout sessions.*
- *Jason Wheeler's presentation was fantastic.*

- *Friday's sessions were all quite impactful for the most part!*
- *The Baraboo crisis story and how to build a successful communication program.*
- *I loved the Motown Digital platform. It was user friendly and it felt like we were all together.*
- *The sessions were great and applied to both school AND ISD communicators.*
- *Meeting peers.*
- *Wellness in School PR.*
- *Being virtual was very convenient.*
- *The topics! It was nice to focus on something other than COVID! I particularly loved the student panel.*
- *The breakout sessions were amazing!*
- *The topics offered at the conference were very timely and relevant to current issues.*
- *Getting an in-depth look at creative ways other districts are communicating!*
- *Overall, the conference was really great! The PD Committee did a wonderful job finding a great conference platform that allowed us to engage and connect with each other.*
- *Collaborating and connecting with colleagues.*
- *High quality - top notch for virtual!*
- *The camaraderie of colleagues paired with shared learning.*

We also garnered suggestions to improve our next professional development offering based on the answers to this question: “If you could change one thing about the 2021 Virtual Annual Conference, what would you change?”

At the conclusion of the 2021 Virtual Annual Conference, we could definitely say it was a learning experience for all concerned—the conference attendees, as well as the Professional Development Committee and Board.



Our members are serious about their learning but they also like to have fun and win prizes. We asked our participants to decorate their super hero masks and enter the contest! Congratulations to (from left) Dani Stublensky and Amy Murphy! They both posted their masked selfies to Twitter and won! Plus, the winner of the giveaway drawing, for a complimentary registration to an MSPRA professional development opportunity, was Mark Edwards II (far right). Participants who posted their name or a comment in the chat during the last session of the conference on Friday were entered into the drawing.

MSPRA Offered Three, No-Fee Virtual Idea Hours

Given the many pandemic-related challenges our members faced in 2020, instead of offering the usual spring Drive-in Conference, the Professional Development Committee opted to offer our first-ever, no-fee Idea Hours. The resulting three sessions not only featured timely ideas, but provided a platform on which we could gather to discuss the current state and scope of our responsibilities, spurring conversations to help members do their jobs during a very uncertain time.

In May 2020, we held “Celebrating End-of-the-Year-Traditions in a Non-traditional Time” with [41 participants](#).

MSPRA President Karen Heath moderated this initial, no-cost, virtual, interactive meet up with multiple segments, featuring PR colleagues who offered ideas on these topics followed by guided discussion on:

- Graduation/Honoring seniors
- Marking student transitions (Kindergarten, 5th grade, 8th grade)
- Student Awards
- Honoring staff (annual service awards, staff appreciation)
- Retirements

An unsolicited email comment said: I loved it! Got so many take-aways I don't know where to start! Plus, the [evaluations](#) showed, the event was such a success—100% of respondents said they were likely to participate in another such offering—that two more were planned.

In June 2020, we held “Heading Back to School: What are the Key Questions to Ask” with [38 participants](#).

MSPRA President Karen Heath moderated this no-fee, virtual, interactive panel featuring PR colleagues who each addressed the following questions:

- What is your district's plan/preparation for re-entry?
- What processes are you using to develop your re-entry plan?
- What is your role in the process as a school communicator?
- What communication issues do you anticipate?
- Have you been using other districts' plans for comparisons/benchmarks? If so, which ones?

Members were encouraged to discuss their questions, too.

[Evaluations](#) for this second, no-fee, virtual Idea Hour were positive with majority of the respondents saying it was very useful.

In October 2020, we held a different kind of no-fee Idea Hour and called it a Wellness Wednesday: “Growing Yourself — Mindfulness and Growing in your Profession” with [26 participants](#). The two-part session first provided information about MSPRA, featuring members who have had success in part due to their involvement with MSPRA. In the second half, Counselor and Restorative Practices Coach Gregorio Cognito led a mindfulness session, offering our members a chance to breathe and focus on themselves. While fewer members attended this session, the [evaluations](#) remained positive.

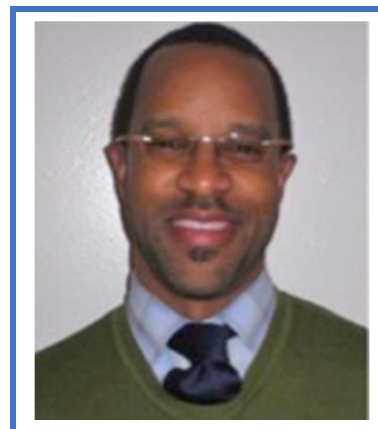


New Idea Hours hit the mark.

MSPRA's November 2020 Virtual Drive-in Conference

On November 19 and 20, 2020, we held a virtual Drive-in Conference over two half days. A total of [29 registrants](#) participated.

On Thursday from 1 p.m.- 3 p.m. we learned more about **“Addressing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.”** Returning presenter Dr. Jay Marks, Oakland Schools Diversity and Equity Consultant, helped us build on our cultural competencies through a communication lens. He demonstrated how to strengthen our ability to successfully communicate about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in today’s world using proven strategies to support productive conversations, positive interactions and proactive learning.



Dr. Jay Marks, Oakland Schools Diversity and Equity Consultant, was invited back to speak with MSPRA for a second time.

This was a follow-up to our June 18, 2019 Drive-in Conference with Dr. Marks in which we covered [“Diversity, Equity & Cultural Sensitivity for School Communicators.”](#)

Recognizing that even the most skilled communicator can use help navigating such sensitive topics, our Professional Development Committee sought out Dr. Marks (an internationally-known expert in our own backyard) and asked him to, once again, share his expertise with our members. It was followed by a half-hour breakout session to encourage discussion among participants.

On Friday from 9 a.m.-10:15 a.m. we were schooled in [“Creating Better Videos.”](#) Presenters Holly McCaw, Otsego Public Schools and Rick Witham, Muskegon Area Intermediate School District gave us great tips and ideas on how to shoot and edit videos to tell our story, information on must-have equipment and the key elements that make a compelling video. This session was originally scheduled for the second day of our 2020 Annual Conference but was canceled because the conference was shortened to one day, as our schools began their COVID-19 shutdown. It was worth the wait. Our two presenters knocked it out of the park, offering great tips and strategies that were well received.

Then from 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. participants learned **“How to Connect with Your Legislators.”** Our speaker, Chris Glass of the West Michigan Talent Triangle gave us a post-election legislative analysis and insights into what to expect during lame duck, shared some grassroots initiatives, and told us how best to connect with our legislators in this new cycle.

These two offerings were followed by a half-hour breakout session that gave participants an opportunity to ask questions and discuss what they had learned.

[Evaluations](#) were positive. Of the 20 participants who responded, majority rated the overall virtual workshop as very useful.

Some responses to “What was the best thing about the Drive-in Conference?” included:

- *Dr. Marks presentation. I got so much good information as well as action steps that I need to take. The two hours flew by! I could have spent another two hours on that.*

- *The relationships with our peers. Everyone is always so supportive and I never feel alone.*
- *All of the presenters held our interest, were engaging and informative.*
- *Being in the remote breakouts and just being WITH others who get it.*
- *All the sessions were customized to meet my needs.*
- *Loved the video session! Great energy of all speakers in all sessions.*
- *It was great to connect with colleagues again, after an abrupt ending to the spring conference.*
- *I was very impressed with Holly and Rick's video presentation. It was worth the wait from the annual conference.*
- *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion seminar was fantastic. I gained insight, knowledge, and how to communicate these issues better.*
- *All resources and conversation from these types of events are always helpful and always expand my thinking. I feel small groups/breakout sessions make real connections and provide valuable opportunities to share examples of success or challenges and are truly a great way to wrap up a topic... regardless of whether or not you have something to share.*

We also garnered some suggestions to improve our next professional development offering, based on the answers to this question: “If you could change one thing about the Drive-in Conference, what would you change?”

- *That we couldn't do it in person :(.*
- *The DEI segment could have been a whole day. We were covering a lot but had to leave a lot on the table due to time.*
- *More time in remote breakouts. Now that we know it is possible to build community in Zoom let's do more!*
- *Breaks at the halfway point (even if only for 15 minutes).*
- *Change nothing. Loved the virtual format because my drive time often prohibits my in-person participation. Loved the two-day half-day format because it didn't monopolize my day and I could still attend to my job. Loved the small-group interaction... even when I don't feel like I have anything to contribute, I learn that I actually often do have insight, experiences, or resources that are helpful to others.*

MSPRA Awards and Recognitions

MSPRA's Outstanding Superintendent Communicator Award

MSPRA's Outstanding Superintendent Communicator Award, recognizing a superintendent for leadership in school district communication, was suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19. The application window for 2021 is open until May 18.

MSPRA's Gerri Allen Outstanding School Communicator Award

Named for long-time school public relations professional and current MSPRA Executive Director, the Gerri Allen Outstanding School Communicator Award, honoring a practicing school public relations professional, was suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19. The application window for 2021 is open until May 18.

MSPRA's Gold Medallion Awards

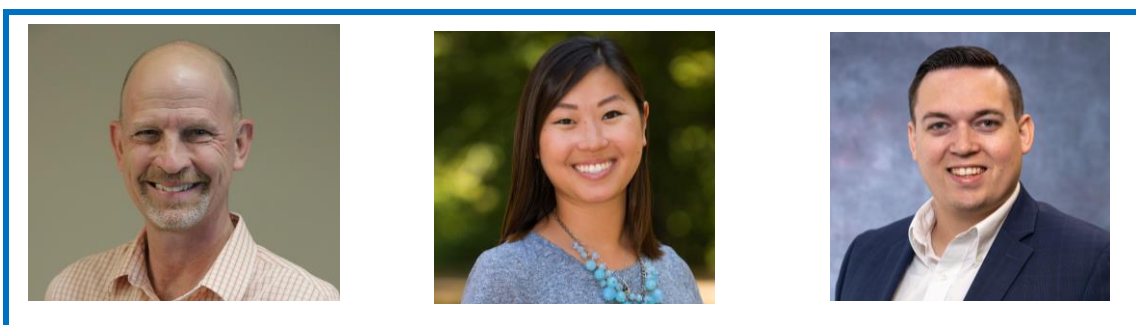
MSPRA's Gold Medallion Award, recognizing outstanding programs or projects that advance education through responsible communication, was suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19. The application window for 2021 is open until May 18.

Even though MSPRA's Awards and Recognition Program was suspended for 2020, several of our members served as judges for other chapters' communication contests including California, Indiana and Wisconsin.

NSPRA Awards and Recognitions

In the spirit of raising up the practitioner and practice, the MSPRA Board initiated entries for the following recognitions:

- MSPRA Board Member Tom Scheidel was recognized as an NSPRA Learning and Liberty Legacy Leader.
- MSPRA successfully nominated two of its members for NSPRA's 35 under 35 Class of 2020-21: Ashley Kryscynski (MSPRA Board Secretary) and Andrew Munson (MSPRA Awards and Recognition Chair).



NSPRA recognized (from left) Tom Scheidel, Ashley Kryscynski and Andrew Munson.

Other Examples of Increasing PR Visibility and Providing PR Training

Between May 1, 2020 and April 30, 2021 MSPRA members presented at other conferences and worked with school districts and school leaders on the importance of good public relations and planned communication. Examples include:

- On June 2, 2020, Holly McCaw, current MSPRA President-elect, presented [“Communicating the Plan”](#) at a Michigan ASCD professional development webinar. She reinforced that communication is key in everything we do and in every relationship we have, introduced them to the RPIE planning process and the 7 Cs of Communication.
- Tom Gould, Director of Public Relations, Howell Public Schools and Karen Heath, Supervisor of Communications, Berrien Regional Education Service Agency presented [“You’ve Got This! How to Build a Successful Communication Program”](#) at the NSPRA Seminar in July 2020 (and the 2021 MSPRA Virtual Annual Conference). They also produced a 750-word article entitled [“Tips to Build a Successful \(and Respected\) School Communication Program”](#) for the NSPRA Gold Standard Column.
- On September 30, 2020, Past MSPRA President Karen Heath provided COVID communication follow up for the Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators (MASA) Upper Peninsula Horizons’ Cohort of emerging leaders. One of the tools she shared was a [Satisfaction Survey](#) related to health, safety and instruction. Her original presentation in December of 2019, “Making Sense of School Communication,” gave participants a variety of tools aimed at building system-wide communication processes, a primer on the RPIE process, instruction on how to write a communication plan, resources to help identify and match media platforms with target audiences and crisis communication tips.
- At the February 2021 NJSPRA Conference, Michelle Karpinski, Community Relations Manager, Portage Public Schools and Ashley Kryscynski, Communications and Public Relations Specialist, Washtenaw Intermediate School District presented [“Communicating About COVID-19: Top Ten Things to Know and Do Next.”](#) (They shared the same presentation at MSPRA’s Virtual Annual Conference in March 2021.)
- MSPRA also shared its [Perennial Calendar](#) and Deadlines with NSPRA as a resource for other chapters. For each month of the year it outlines items due for the chapter and from the chapter to NSPRA as well who among the officers is responsible for the item.
- This year, we continued our email listserv, the [MSPRA Minute](#) (our weekly electronic member communication), and [closed Facebook group](#).

These are some of the excellent examples of MSPRA’s professional development efforts that occur throughout the year, in addition to our conference offerings.

-end-

[Note: If any of the links in this document are broken, or if you have difficulty accessing them, please contact Gerri Allen at gallen48@juno.com. MSPRA-maintained links will remain live until at least 07/31/2021. Thank you.]

Thank you for the opportunity

to submit this

NSPRA 2021

Mark of Distinction

Award Application

~~~~~

*Professional Development/*

*PR Skill Building*



due May 15, 2021

---