

Honoring Superintendents and their Public Relations/ Communications Professionals



**Your School District Could WIN a
\$10,000 Scholarship Fund Award!**

A partnership between AASA, NSPRA and Blackboard Connect Inc. (formerly The NTI Group, Inc.)

Connect-ED[®]



NSPRA
National School Public Relations Association

2009 Connect-ED Leadership Through Communication Award



SPONSORED IN PARTNERSHIP BY:

- Connect-ED — a service of Blackboard Connect Inc.
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA)

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IS A PROVEN INDICATOR OF A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL SYSTEM.

The *2009 Connect-ED Leadership Through Communication Award* honors those who, recognizing that communication is a critical component of leadership, demonstrate an ongoing commitment to incorporating communication into their strategic thinking and daily operations.

The award recognizes the leadership of outstanding superintendents and public relations/communications professionals who, along with their teams, improve communication within their school systems and communities. One winning school district will be selected.

Blackboard Connect Inc. will donate \$10,000 to the scholarship fund of the winning school district, to be awarded to a student or students majoring in Communications.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- K-12 public school district superintendents and their public relations/communications professionals are eligible to apply for the award. Applicants must currently be employed by a K-12 public school system.
- NO PURCHASE IS NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR OR WIN ANY AWARD. PURCHASING ANY PRODUCT OR SERVICE DOES NOT INCREASE THE ODDS OF WINNING.
- Void in the territory of Puerto Rico, and the Canadian Province of Quebec.
- The award is designed to recognize the team of superintendent and public relations/communications professional.

Please note: Award recipients are expected to attend the AASA Annual Conference in San Francisco, Calif., February 19 – 21, 2009 and participate in the special awards ceremony, attend a special reception sponsored by Blackboard Connect Inc. and present a session at the conference based on their communication accomplishments. They are also expected to present a session at the NSPRA National Seminar in San Francisco, Calif., June 28 – July 1, 2009. The award includes airfare and two nights lodging for the superintendent and public relations/communications professional to both the AASA Conference and the NSPRA Seminar. Airfare is round trip coach in North America. Air travel and lodging are to be arranged by NSPRA and/or AASA. Applicants are responsible for paying all taxes associated with the travel and lodging.

DATES TO REMEMBER

August 8, 2008	Applications to be postmarked to NSPRA office
August 25–September 12, 2008	1 st round – Judging panel(s) review application executive summaries. Each panel (determined by number of applications received) narrows to top 10 applications. 2nd round – Judging panel reviews top 20 applications (10 from each initial panel) and narrows pool to 10 semi-finalists.
September 17–24, 2008	One day meeting of three-judge panel at NSPRA headquarters to review finalists' documentation materials.
October 13 –31, 2008	Site visits by judges to finalist districts
November 4, 2008	Winner selected and notified
November/December 2008	Announcement of winner in AASA and NSPRA publications
February 19 –21, 2009	Award presented at AASA conference Presentation by winner Recognition at a Connect-ED reception during the AASA conference
June 30, 2009	Recognition and presentation by winner at NSPRA Seminar in San Francisco

AWARDS CRITERIA

Judges will consider the following criteria as part of the judging process:

- The school system has a strategic plan integrating a communications component into decision-making processes and includes a budget line for communications.
- The school system supports a culture empowering all employees as ambassadors for the school system and provides them with communications training to support them in this role.
- School system administrators at all levels are held accountable for effective communication.
- The school system has a comprehensive crisis communications management plan that is reviewed annually and updated regularly.
- The public relations/communications professional is a member of/works closely with the superintendent's cabinet and provides strategic counsel on communication and public relations.
- The school system uses a variety of communication vehicles and strategies (such as, but not limited to): print and electronic publications; local media; web sites; personal voice messaging; public engagement activities; face-to-face communication) to reach all stakeholders.
- The superintendent and public relations/communications professional model good communication techniques for staff.
- The school system's communication infrastructure can be used collaboratively to benefit the entire community.
- The school system can demonstrate measurable results attributable to the overall communication program (such as increased parent involvement; increased voter turnout; improved student attendance; improved staff job satisfaction, etc.)

PROCEDURES

- Only one application may be submitted per school system. Any school system may apply, or an application may be submitted by others on behalf of the district. If submitted by others, the application packet must be signed by the superintendent prior to submission. **The deadline for postmark of applications is August 8, 2008.**
- An independent selection panel invited by NSPRA and AASA will judge the entries and determine the award recipients. Entries will be screened to up to three finalists who will receive site visits from a judging team. The winning district will be notified by November 4, 2008 and an announcement will be made in NSPRA and AASA publications in November/December 2008.
- The award will be presented at the 2009 AASA Conference in San Francisco, CA, February 19 – 21, 2009.

2009 Connect-ED Leadership Through Communication Award | Application Form

Name of School System: _____

Superintendent: _____

Public Relations/Communications Professional: _____

Address: _____

Phone numbers: _____

E-mails: _____

District web site address: _____

DISTRICT PROFILE

Urban Suburban Rural Exurban

Geographic size (square miles): _____

K-12 Unified K-8 Elementary Union High School Other

Student Enrollment: _____

Number of Schools: _____

Number of Employees: _____

Number of Municipalities within District Boundaries: _____

NOMINATED BY (IF DIFFERENT THAN APPLICANT):

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Signature of Superintendent: _____

Blackboard Connect Inc. will donate \$10,000 to the scholarship fund of the winning school district, to be awarded to a student or students majoring in communications. Please see specific entry requirements.

Enter now for a chance to win a \$10,000 cash contribution to your district's scholarship fund.

HOW TO ENTER

Communication activities related to this award shall have been implemented between July 1, 2005 and July 31, 2008.

The entry shall be presented in a three-ring, 8 1/2" x 11" binder, no more than 3" thick and shall include the following:

- A completed application form.
- An introductory letter (maximum of one page, single-sided) explaining why the school system deserves to be considered for the award, based on how the communication effort resulted in a positive outcome.
- A two-page executive summary that explains how the communication program supported the school system's efforts to respond to a specific issue (such as, but not limited to: a crisis situation; special initiative such as a finance election; public engagement effort; community project; etc.).

THE SUMMARY SHOULD ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- **Assessment** — describe the need or problem and measurable communication goals.
- **Planning** — identify target audiences, the involvement of others, obstacles overcome and how communication strategies/vehicles were determined.
- **Communication** — describe how the plan was implemented, who was involved, the timelines, and how communication strategies/vehicles were effectively used.
- **Evaluation** — cite evidence of how the communication effort met the needs and goals identified and what changes, if any, have been made to improve future communication efforts.
- Documentation of up to three examples of how the communication plan was implemented and that best illustrate the major components of the effort. Please do not include three-dimensional objects such as T-shirts, pens, magnets, etc. Photos are sufficient.
- Specific examples (limited to one page, single-sided) of how the superintendent and public relations/communications professional worked together to ensure an effective communications effort.
- A brief vita (one page single-sided for each) outlining career highlights and professional achievements for the superintendent and public relations/communications professional.

Note: All entries become part of the NSPRA resource files and will not be returned. One-of-a-kind materials should be duplicated for inclusion in the application binder. The entry must follow the guidelines described above to be considered by the judges.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: POSTMARK BY AUGUST 8, 2008.

PLEASE SEND APPLICATION MATERIALS TO:

National School Public Relations Association
2009 Connect-ED Leadership Through Communication Award
15948 Derwood Road, Rockville, MD 20855

COMMUNICATION LEADS TO COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Effective communication is the lifeblood of any organization. Strategic communication programs help school district leaders achieve their education goals and build ongoing support for programs, initiatives and staff. School-home connections enable students to achieve at higher rates by engaging parents in the learning process. Increased public involvement leads to better understanding and support, two critical components for today's successful school districts.

In our century, technology connects us across time, distance, and cultures. What we do now to improve communications may have inestimable value for the future. The *2009 Connect-ED Leadership Through Communication Award* honors those educators who have demonstrated exemplary leadership in communications for the benefit of the wider community.

TO BE PRESENTED AT:

AASA National Conference of Education
San Francisco, Calif. | February 19 – 21, 2009

QUESTIONS?

Visit www.nspra.org or call (301) 519-0496.

Connect-ED[®]

www.blackboardconnect.com/award



www.aasa.org



www.nspra.org

Earn Recognition for Your Communication Efforts and Join the Ranks of Past Connect-ED Leadership Through Communication Award Recipients.

2006 RECIPIENTS

Dr. Frank Till, superintendent and **Merrie Meyers-Kershaw**, APR director of public relations, **Broward County (Florida) Public Schools**

Dr. Rodney LaFon, superintendent, and **Rochelle Cancienne**, director of public information, **St. Charles Parish (Louisiana) Public Schools**

Gail Sloan, superintendent and **Linda Roan**, director of public information/communications, **St. Tammany Parish (Louisiana) Public Schools**

2007 RECIPIENTS

Dr. Virginia McElyea, superintendent, and **Sandi Hicks**, director of public relations, **Deer Valley Unified School District, Phoenix, Ariz.**

A K-12 suburban district of over 35,700 students, the team was recognized for helping the district rebound from an era of greatly diminished public confidence by focusing on quality communication, consistent messaging and a “return to basics” communication plan.

2008 CO-RECIPIENTS

Dr. Rudolph F. Crew, superintendent, and **Cathleen Healy**, marketing officer

Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Miami, Fla. A K-12, urban school district of over 353,000 students, the team was recognized for their strategic communication plan, which integrates a mass notification component into decision-making processes and for creating a marketing team dedicated to marketing public education as an obligation of the school district.

Dr. Kathleen Cooke, superintendent, and **Denise Dorn Lindberg**, APR

Hamilton School District, Sussex, Wis. A K-12, suburban school district of 4,300 students, the team was recognized for creating genuine synergy between the superintendent, public relations professional and the leadership team, articulating the connection between communication and student achievement, and engaging the entire community through innovative practices.