

## **2013 NSPRA Mark of Distinction Chapter Recognition Awards**

### **MOSPRA – Missouri School Public Relations Association**

*Special Focus Area: Coalition-Building/Collaborative Communication Effort*  
Partnership and Membership Development

#### **Coalition-Building/Collaborative Communication Efforts**

The Missouri School Public Relations Association has worked with numerous statewide education organizations including the Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA), Missouri School Boards Association (MSBA) and Missouri Association of School Business Officers (MOASBO) to enhance the role of school communications and public relations through partnership-based conferences and professional development presentations. MOSPRA also has made an effort to build membership in our organization in the form of non-PR school personnel. Finally, MOSPRA annually recognizes an Administrator of the Year through our awards program with the purpose of focusing attention and honoring a school administrator for demonstrating the importance of communications within his/her district.

#### **Explanation and Overview**

For many years MOSPRA has partnered with other statewide education organizations to expand the reach of the association's communication efforts while demonstrating the value of the school public relations professional in school districts. Working in collaboration with MASA, the two associations host an annual spring conference offering professional development to public relations professionals across the state, as well as superintendents and other cabinet-level administrators. Additionally, MOSPRA members work with MSBA and MOASBO to make presentations at their conferences on topics that demonstrate the value of a strong district communications program and the need for a public relations position.

In terms of non-PR membership in our organization, MOSPRA has developed a targeted membership marketing effort aimed at superintendents. Individual members also offer outreach to districts without a PR professional to provide a link to the organization.

The MOSPRA Administrator of the Year Award is given during a joint session of school administrators and PR professionals at the annual MASA/MOSPRA Conference. The intent is two-fold – recognize an administrator for great work in communications and elevate the importance of communications within a school district.

#### **Statement of Chapter/Coalition Collaboration Partner Goals & Objectives**

The overall goal is to improve communications in school districts throughout the state of Missouri by providing informative, instructive professional development sessions at statewide conferences, while also enhancing the image of the school public relations professional. The desire is to inspire an increased presence of public relations positions in schools throughout the state, as well as clearly show that MOSPRA and its participant members are experts in their field. By being a valued resource for those districts that

don't have an "in-house" public relations professional, MOSPRA also hopes to increase membership among superintendents, administrators and other non-PR school personnel.

Included in our work samples is the current year membership roster. Highlighted on that document are the superintendents or other administration-level members. Dr. C.J. Huff, superintendent in Joplin, wrote a personal letter to his colleagues this past fall encouraging them to join the organization after his experience in working with them after the tornado that devastated his town. He saw the value of belonging to MOSPRA as members volunteered their time and expertise to help Joplin through that traumatic event.

### **Timeline and Calendar**

August – MOSPRA Membership Drive

\*Includes special marketing to Superintendents

Late September/Early October – MSBA Conference

Late-March (ongoing): MASA/MOSPRA Spring Conference

\*Includes MOSPRA Administrator of the Year presentation

Late April – MOASBO Conference

On-Going – Outreach to non-member districts

On-Going – Presentations at other statewide education organization conferences

### **Description of Chapter's Role**

For the MASA/MOSPRA Spring Conference, the chapter is a co-host of a three-day conference that offers learning sessions on school communications as well as sessions focusing on current education topics for administrators. A concerted effort is made to attract superintendents and other administrators to the public relations sessions, educating that audience on important communication topics as well as the value of the school public relations professional.

For MSBA and MOASBO chapter members are session presenters at association-specific conferences, offering our expertise on communications to other important decision-makers in school districts throughout the state.

### **Communication Plan Related to Coalition/Collaborative Partner**

One of MOSPRA's primary missions is to encourage and help grow new communications positions in school districts across the state. In 2002, the Executive Director of the Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA), Roger Kurtz, and MOSPRA Board Member David Luther met to discuss holding a joint conference in the Spring. Mr. Kurtz, the former School-Community Relations Director for the Jefferson City Public Schools, and Mr. Luther, the current holder of that position, felt that members of both associations would benefit from the break-out sessions of their respective groups. In reality, a much greater connection has formed over the years. Both associations have gained insights into each other's worlds, but MOSPRA has also earned a position of respect among the more than 800 member MASA group. Now, 11 years later, MOSPRA members are called upon frequently to share their professional views on school issues, and we have more effectively met our mission of growing additional communications positions statewide. Superintendents see other districts with

communications professionals and know that their districts would be better served with a person in that position. Ultimately, not only are both associations served, but most importantly, by working together, the voices of the children of our state are heard more clearly by those whose support they need.

### **Target Audiences and Desired Outcomes**

Target audiences include school public relations professionals, superintendents, administrators and school board members. The desired outcome is to improve communications efforts in Missouri school districts, promote the need for public relations professionals to perform the communications functions in a school district, as well as enhance the image of MOSPRA as the experts in school public relations and communications that provide excellent training and resources to members. A concerted effort to grow our membership within the superintendent and administrator ranks has been a primary focus.

### **Explanation of How Collaboration Relates to NSPRA's Goals & Objectives**

This collaborative effort speaks directly to the goals and objectives set forth by NSPRA, particularly around providing skills needed to plan and implement an effective public relations program and being a recognized leader and authority on school public relations. The primary goal of MOSPRA's partnership with other statewide education organizations is to achieve those two ends.

### **Other Relevant Examples of the Coalition/Collaboration Effort**

Over the past year, one MOSPRA member has conducted quarterly meetings for school district PR people and superintendents in an outlying area. These districts are unable to easily attend our monthly regional meetings that are held in the four MOSPRA regions. These quarterly meetings provide the superintendents and PR professionals with the opportunity to discuss current issues, share resources, and receive updates on MOSPRA news and information. Some who attend the meeting are MOSPRA members; others are not. However, through these meetings, MOSPRA has grown in value for these districts. The attendees feel connected to MOSPRA and reach out to others between meetings for advice and assistance. These meetings could potentially be a model for other areas of the state that are too far from the major metro areas as a way to provide communications professional development and resources.