

# The “Mark of Distinction” Recognition Program for NSPRA Chapters

## Entry Form

(Please include this information with each individual entry)

Chapter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter President: \_\_\_\_\_

*President’s contact information*

District/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### 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](mailto:awards@nspra.org), subject line “Mark of Distinction.”

## Mark of Distinction Entry Specifics

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

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 \_\_\_\_\_
- 

\_\_\_\_\_ **Section II: Special Focus Areas**

\_\_\_\_\_ Category A – chapter has less than 50% NSPRA membership

\_\_\_\_\_ Category B – chapter has 50% or more NSPRA membership

\_\_\_\_\_ 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

# NATIONAL SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION MARK OF DISTINCTION RECOGNITION PROGRAM

---

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / PR SKILL BUILDING 2015 APPLICATION

### INTRODUCTION

#### WSPRA'S MISSION

The mission of WSPRA, Wisconsin's leader in school-community relations, is to expand the capacity of its members to provide effective communication management for the purpose of strengthening educational opportunities for all students.

WSPRA values collaborative relationships, a diverse membership, and innovation and creativity. WSPRA believes in a high quality education for all children, in serving the needs of its entire membership, and in a professional and ethical approach to school-community relations.

In response to this mission, WSPRA annually creates a number of activities designed to "support the professional growth and status of members and improve the communication skills of all educators." WSPRA expands the effect of these efforts by

- collaborating with other organizations
- providing support and counsel to districts
- encouraging its members to network and share their expertise and
- recognizing the PR accomplishments of its members

#### STATEMENT OF WSPRA'S MULTI-YEAR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Build partnerships
2. Expand services to members
3. Engage membership
4. Evaluate operational procedures for optimal effectiveness
5. Market / promote the value of communications and public relations

**EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS**  
**DOCUMENTATION – SECTIONS 2 AND 3**

---

**ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE**

**Theme Branding Your District From the Inside Out : Creating a Comprehensive Plan and Toolkit**

Dates	November 5-7, 2014
Location	Osthoff Resort, Elkhart Lake Wisconsin
Topic	Building Support for Public School Districts
Attendees	PR Professionals, District Superintendents & Administrators, School Board members, Technology Directors, various communications providers/resources
Speakers	Keynote: Susan Hardy-Brooks, President-Elect, National School Public Relations Association; Keynote: Suzanne Fanning, President, Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) Breakout sessions: Dennis Pauli, Dorreen Dembski, Debbie Brewster, Kate Winkler, Nathan Chow
Sponsors	CG Schmidt, CESA 6, School Messenger, J.H. Findorff & Son Inc., Voss & Associates, Peachjar, Thyse Printing & Design Service, Nathan Chow, CESA Purchasing

---

## ANNUAL SPRING WORKSHOP

### **Theme Closing the Communication Gap: Building Relationships with Key Audiences in Your District**

Date	May 7-8, 2015
Location	The Osthoff Resort, 101 Osthoff Ave., Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin 53020
Attendees	District Administrators, School Communications Professionals, Board Members
Speakers	Ken DeSieghardt, CEO/Partner, Patron Insight, Inc., Randy Guttenberg, Superintendent, Waunakee Community School District; Mark Roffers, Community Planner, MDRoffers Consulting; Eric Dufek, Senior Designer, Eppstein Uhen Architects; and Kit Dailey, Public Outreach Specialist, Eppstein Uhen Architects, Ann Schultz, Ph.D., Supt., Mosinee, and Marilyn Bugenhagen, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Leadership, Marian University
Sponsors	Foundry, CESA Purchasing, CESA 6
Collaboration	Wisconsin Association of District Administrators (WASDA)

## **WSPRA PRESENTATIONS**

### **DOCUMENTATION – SECTION 4**

#### **Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) IV – Regional Superintendent Meeting**

Date: October 14, 2014

Location: West Salem, WI

Topic: School PR, Referendum, and Crisis Communications Basics

Speakers: Kevin Hickman, Brian Hanes

Collaboration: WSPRA, CESA IV, Ashwaubenon School District

#### **WSPRA Annual Fall Conference**

Date: November 6, 2014

Location: Elkhart Lake, WI

Topic: Investing in Wisconsin Public Schools

Speakers: Kit Dailey, Woody Wiedenhoef

Collaboration: WSPRA, Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials

#### **WSPRA Annual Fall Conference**

Date: November 6, 2014

Location: Elkhart Lake, WI

Topic: Five Changes School PR Pros Can Expect in the Next Five Years

Speaker: Susan Hardy-Brooks, President-Elect, National School Public Relations Association

Collaboration: NSPRA

#### **Wisconsin Association of School Boards Convention**

Date: January 21, 2015

Location: Milwaukee, WI

Topic: Engaging the Community Around School Finance

Speakers: David Carlson, Kit Dailey, Brian Hanes, Woody Wiedenhoef

Collaboration: Wisconsin Association of School Boards, WSPRA, Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials, Ashwaubenon School District

## WSPRA PUBLICATIONS DOCUMENTATION – SECTION 5

---

### **WSPRAGRAM**

WSPRA analyzed the results of a member survey and changed the format of its newsletter from paper to e-newsletter. The *WSPRAGram* was revised to be a single-issue publication addressing hot topics in the educational world. WSPRA reinforced its value to members by providing monthly updates on hot topics in public education including sending special bulletins on time-sensitive issues such as the release of the state-issued school report cards.

---

### **WISCONSIN SCHOOL NEWS**

WSPRA submits articles to the Wisconsin Association of School Boards publication for a column entitled *Communication for Leadership*. The articles are designed to address issues that are critical to the PR in education today.

Issue: October 2014

Article: Starting the Conversation: Steps and Strategies to Connect with Your State Representatives

Author: Terry Falk, Milwaukee Public Schools Board Member; WASB liaison to WSPRA Board

Issue: December 2014

Article: Engaging Your Community to Build Student Opportunities

Author: Tracy Habisch-Ahlin, Community Services Coordinator, Hudson School District; WSPRA Board Member

Issue: Submitted May 2015, to be published June 2015

Article: An era of open communication has arrived: Is your district's communication in the mix?

Author: Dorreen Dembski, CESA 6 Director of Communication; WSPRA Board Member

### **WSPRA Website Update/Refresh**

WSPRA recreated its Web site in 2007 and again in 2013 to provide members with a fresh website and a more robust members-only section full of resources to build member communication skills. The format of the web site now includes Twitter, Facebook, blog materials, and chat room. This has kept material fresh and relevant. [www.wspra.org](http://www.wspra.org)

## **WSPRA'S SOCIAL MEDIA DOCUMENTATION – SECTION 6**

---

### **WSPRA SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE – Updated May 2014**

Originally developed and offered for sale by WSPRA in 2010, this guide was submitted as part of WSPRA's Mark of Distinction application in 2011. The WSPRA Board of Directors recognized the need for a comprehensive update and hired Amy Kant, Director of Web Communications and Social Media for Milwaukee Public Schools, to complete this update in early 2014. It is currently available by download only on our website (no longer printing hard copies for sale) at a cost of \$29.95.

---

### **WSPRA ON TWITTER**

WSPRA established a Twitter account (1) to keep members and other WSPRA followers up to date and (2) to model social media skills.

<http://twitter.com/wspra>

---

### **WSPRA ON FACEBOOK**

WSPRA established a Facebook account to model social media skills for its members.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Wisconsin-School-Public-Relations-Association-WSPRA/154668374739?v=wall>

---

### **WSPRA SOCIAL MEDIA LIAISON**

WSPRA added a Social Media Liaison position to the board to maintain WSPRA's social media efforts in 2012. Kevin Hickman from J.P. Cullen & Sons accepted the responsibility and continues to provide current and relevant information to WSPRA friends and followers. Hickman volunteered to step into the suddenly vacant President-Elect role in 2013/2014 and began serving as WSPRA President starting July 1, 2014.

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

### DOCUMENTATION – SECTION 7

---

#### MEMBER RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

WSPRA uses a number of member recognition programs:

- George Tipler Founders' Scholarship Award
    - Nathan Chow, Owner, Foundry
  - Friend of WSPRA Award
    - Amy Kant, Webmaster, Milwaukee Public Schools
  - Honorary Lifetime Membership
    - Joe Quick, Retired Legislative Services Coordinator, WASB
  - Complete Spectrum Awards (18 Awards of Excellence, 16 Awards of Merit)
  - Spectrum Lighthouse Award
    - Baraboo School District
- 

#### SPECTRUM AWARDS PROGRAM

Each year WSPRA offers to its members an opportunity to submit examples of their communication efforts for judging and recognition at the annual fall conference.

The objectives of the WSPRA Spectrum Award program are:

- to recognize quality public relations efforts produced by professional public relations practitioners or educational personnel
- to provide constructive feedback from PR professionals
- to reinforce the value of the practice of good public relations in the education arena through award recognition

Judging is completed using a four-point scale in the following areas:

- Goals and objectives
- Research and planning
- Execution
- Evaluation and results

There are two award levels:

- Award of Excellence
- Award of Merit

Spectrum Lighthouse Award

- Entries receiving all 4's will be eligible for the Spectrum Lighthouse Award (Best of Show).
- A separate panel of judges will be used to select the recipient of the Lighthouse Award.

---

## **RECOGNITION - SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR**

During the WI Association of School District Administrator (WASDA) luncheon, the Flag of Learning and Liberty is presented annually to WASDA's Superintendent of the Year. An explanation of the significance of the flag was provided to the recipient.

## ORGANIZATION / AGENCY LIAISONS

### DOCUMENTATION – SECTION 8

---

#### WSPRA BOARD LIAISON PROGRAM

To promote and maintain positive working relationships with active educational organizations, WSPRA has added liaison positions to the board. The board has found that these liaisons bring a new perspective and valuable experience to the table. The following organizations are represented:

- Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA)
- Association of Wisconsin School Administrators (AWSA)
- Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB)
- Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC)
- Cooperative Educational Service Agency #6

---

#### WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

##### [“Communication for Leadership” Column in Wisconsin School News](#)

Since 2002, WSPRA has cooperated with the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to provide articles that are published in the WASB monthly magazine, *WI School News*. These articles reach every district, superintendent, and school board in the state and are designed to raise awareness and provide information in critical school district communication issues. Initially the articles were called *Practical PR*. In 2008-09, the name of the column was changed to “Communication for Leadership.” [\[See Section 5 for articles.\]](#)

##### [WASB Convention Presentations](#)

WSPRA presents a session annually at WASB’s Convention. The topic of the presentation is jointly decided upon to meet a specific communication issue. [\[See Section 4 for presentations.\]](#)

##### [WASB Convention Booth](#)

WASB provides a complementary booth for WSPRA in the exhibit hall of the annual WASB convention. WSPRA and NSPRA memberships are promoted, communication materials are advertised, and WSPRA events are marketed.

---

### **WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL COLLABORATION**

WSPRA and WEAC have enjoyed a long and positive relationship. For many years, a representative has served on the WSPRA Board WEAC. In 2009-10, WSPRA selected WEAC as the 2009 “Friend of WSPRA” and a WEAC representative served as the 2009-11 Board President. As a Friend of WSPRA, WEAC also has also received a complimentary WSPRA membership.

---

### **WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS**

WSPRA and WASDA have enjoyed a long a positive relationship. Several of WSPRA’s past presidents have been superintendents and active members of their organization.

WASDA continued to receive a complimentary WSPRA membership as a “Friend of WSPRA.”

---

### **WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT BUSINESS OFFICIALS**

This is the fourth year that WSPRA worked closely with school business officials.

In 2011-12 WASBO asked WSPRA to join them in bring a program called **EdVentures** to Wisconsin. This program is designed to develop a map of financial and educational details specific to Wisconsin that districts could use to initiate communication and community engagement opportunities with their communities. WSPRA remains active in this program, and recently supported WASBO with the updated of marketing materials and messaging for the program.

---

### **COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY #6**

WSPRA and CESA #6 developed a deep and positive working relationship as former WSPRA president became the CESA #6 Director of Communication. Dorreen has been an active member of the WSPRA board and has participated in conference and workshop planning, WSPRA presentations, survey developer, and planning session facilitator.

---

### **WSPRA AGENCY SPONSORSHIPS**

In 2010-11 WSPRA assigned a committee to develop a mechanism to secure sponsorships for a variety of WSPRA events. As a result, WSPRA created a number of positive relationships with companies and organizations involved in education that have provided various levels of support for WSPRA offerings. The agency sponsorships has continued and provides valuable interactions with various companies and service providers in addition to monetary support for WSPRAS endeavors.

---

## ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS (AWSA)

WSPRA and AWSA created a partnership in July 2013 when WSPRA hired AWSA for association management support. With the initial transition year now behind us, WSPRA and AWSA leadership teams are meeting to discuss how to more deeply collaborate in the coming years to meet the communications needs of AWSA members and to increase WSPRA membership by building level administrators. AWSA now serves as a WSPRA Board Liaison as well.

---

## WISCONSIN SCHOOL SAFETY SUMMIT:

### *A Safe Schools Initiative*

WSPRA was heavily involved in the planning (starting in January 2013) and facilitation of the first Wisconsin School Safety Summit which was held July 16-18, 2013 in Racine, WI. Recommendations for action as a result of this year-long project, known as “Keeping Wisconsin Schools Safe: A Safe Schools Initiative” were released by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in early May, 2013. WSPRA leaders were deeply involved with the development of a “Student Voices” video for the Summit, crafting the final documents, and identifying strategies to communicate the results and recommendations across the state with a unified voice.

This collaborative effort with eight other powerful Wisconsin school associations/organizations will continue and strengthen the state education community’s proactive work for safer schools and more positive school climates. **As part of our contribution to this important cause, WSPRA has decided to provide all WI school districts with access to our Crisis Communication Tool Kit as a free resource now available for download on our website.**

WSPRA was proud to serve on this important project with the following groups and will continue to support the planning team’s work to advance recommendations:

- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
- Wisconsin Association of School Boards
- Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators
- Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services
- Wisconsin Education Association Council
- Wisconsin School Safety Coordinators Association
- Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials
- Association of Wisconsin School Administrators

For more information on the Safe Schools Initiative, please visit

[http://sspwi.dpi.wi.gov/sspwi\\_safeschool](http://sspwi.dpi.wi.gov/sspwi_safeschool)