

**The "Mark of Distinction" Recognition Program
for NSPRA Chapters**

Entry Form

(Please include this information with each individual entry)

Chapter Name: Wisconsin School Public Relations Association (WSPRA)

Chapter President: Sarah Heck

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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: _____

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 _____
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_____ **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

2017 APPLICATION

WSPRA – Wisconsin School Public Relations Association
www.wspra.org

Section II – Special Focus Areas

1. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/PR SKILL-BUILDING

The Wisconsin School Public Relations Chapter (WSPRA) hosts an annual Fall Conference in November of each year. The Fall Conference begins on a Wednesday evening with a Welcome Reception and networking opportunity. There is a full day of professional development sessions on Thursday and a half day of sessions on Friday.

Overview:

2016 Fall Conference: The Real World of School Communications. Learn Hands-on Tools to Use Now - No Matter What Hat You're Wearing!

Dates: November 9-11, 2017

Location: Blue Harbor Resort, Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Attendees: There were 145 attendees at the Fall Conference. These included School PR Professionals, District Superintendents and Administrators, School Board members, Technology Directors, and various communications providers/resources.

Theme: The Real World of School Communications. Learn Hands-on Tools to Use Now – No Matter What Hat You're Wearing!

Conference Marketing Description:

What hat are you wearing today? For those responsible for school district communications -- whether a school communications professional, superintendent, school board member, administrative assistant – you know the variety of responsibilities you must attend to on any given day. You may be shooting video one minute and fielding calls from the media the next. Unexpected incidents occur all too often that require you to don yet another hat.

The WSPRA Board of Directors is pleased to present nearly two days of strategic, practical, and inspiring sessions to help you be successful in this complex role. Many of the presenters are fellow WSPRA members and peers – willing to share their own experiences and lessons learned. Our keynote speakers are stellar in their work and recently presented at the National School Public Relations conference in July. We chose the best of the best and are bringing them to Wisconsin!

The conference focused on the wide variety of “hats” school communications professionals wear – and

how they often wear many on any given day. Attendees received training on a wide variety of skills, including crisis communications, website development, community engagement, improving photography skills, social media, and more.

Following the NSPRA National Seminar in Chicago, the WSPRA Board was inspired by several of the sessions that were offered and wanted to bring them “home” to our members. We especially wanted to offer something similar to the very popular NSPRA sessions on creating infographics and quick/easy tools to create graphics. We had two members with knowledge of these tools volunteer to present a similar session at the WSPRA Fall Conference. We used the NSPRA model of the Fab Labs for this session to allow more time for hands-on training. The session was very well received!

We were also inspired by the speakers at the NSPRA Seminar, specifically the session by Dr. Susan Enfield and Catherine Carbone Rogers of Highline Schools in Washington, as well as the session presented by Libby Roof and Dr. Helen Grant of Richland School District 2 in Columbia, South Carolina.

We reached out to both sets of speakers and invited them to present at our Fall Conference. They graciously accepted and their keynote presentations were a cornerstone of our conference.

Dr. Susan Enfield, Superintendent and Catherine Carbone Rogers, Chief Communications Officer of Highline Schools were our Opening Keynote Speakers on Thursday, November 10, 2017. Their session mirrored the one they had given at the NSPRA Seminar and was called *School Communications to Achieve Bold Goals. Keeping our promise to our students, families, and communities*. As expected, Dr. Susan Enfield and Catherine Carbone Rogers captured the attention of the audience and kicked off the conference in a spectacular manner!

The Thursday sessions that followed were presented by WSPRA members and included:

- Engage. Listen. Take Action. Building Trust through Real Community Engagement
- Election Success: How to Market and Pass an Operational Referendum (Yes, we said Operational!)
- Social Media Success in a 1-Person School Communications Office
- Redesigning your Website as a Marketing Tool When Competition for Enrollment Gets Tough
- The Importance of a Community Advisory Group for Referendum Success
- Visual Storytelling For School Districts: a Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words!
- Together We Succeed! Three Neighboring Districts Work Together to Share the Story of Public Education
- Internal Communication Starts at the Top: Leadership Communication Takes Skill!
- Creating a Customer-Focused Website: From Navigational Quagmire to Visually Appealing Tool for Telling our Stories

On Friday, November 11, 2017, Libby Roof, Chief Communications Officer and Dr. Helen Grant, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer of Richland School District 2 gave the presentation we found so valuable at the NSPRA Seminar: *It Could Happen Anywhere! Rebuilding community trust following a violent incident that rocked the community*.

The Friday sessions that followed the keynote were inspired by the NSPRA Fab Labs, offering more time for hands-on training. These were also presented by WSPRA members and included:

- Design Tools for Non-Designers: Creating Awesome Visual Content using Free & Low-Cost Tools
- Mission Possible – Social Media Strategies that Work

Marketing Materials for the Fall Conference:

Following the rebranding of our chapter (*submitted separately as A Special PR/Communication Program, Project or Campaign, WSPRA Brand Redesign Campaign*), the Board decided that future materials developed by WSPRA must model the excellence that is expected by a communications-focused organization.

The [collateral materials](#) developed for the Fall Conference did just that. All of the materials for the conference (Mailed Brochure, Name Badges, Program, and Signage) followed the same design theme.

- [Conference Brochure](#)
- [Signage for Conference](#)

The [custom-printed name badges](#) had spaces on them for attendees to put a sticker that represented the various sessions they attended. Each sticker featured a hat that represented the session. Examples included: Crisis communication following a violent incident was a firefighter helmet, Social Media was a party beanie, Internal Communications was a cowboy hat, Referendum Success was a construction hard hat, etc. This added element was a fun way to engage attendees and ensure the continuity of the theme. It also created conversation as attendees talked about which sessions they had attended and could look at their badge to see which stickers they had.

Membership Campaign Built Into Fall Conference

WSPRA has always had a separate, higher Fall Conference registration fee for non-members. This year, to continue to build membership, the non-member fee was \$99 more than the member fee. The \$99 rate is the same as the cost of membership. We charged the additional \$99 to non-members and converted them to members so they would continue to receive the benefits of chapter membership.

“Survey Says” Conference Attendees Valued the Content

The post-conference workshop survey had a 54% response rate. Overall, respondents were very pleased with the conference. Satisfaction with the sessions averaged 4.25 on a 5-point scale. When asked if they would attend a WSPRA event in the future, 100% of respondents said yes.

Sponsors:

WSPRA had 13 sponsors for the Fall Conference, including:

- Thoughtexchange
- School Messenger
- CESA Purchasing/CESA 2
- CESA 6 / 4Schools
- Eppstein Uhen Architects
- Foundry Design
- JP Cullen and Sons
- #SocialSchool4EDU
- Blackboard, Inc
- Miron Construction Co., Inc.
- Dorreen Dembski Communication Services, LLC
- SiteImprove, Inc
- Playtypus Advertising + Design, Inc

The Fall Conference successfully supported the professional growth and status of our members. It

improved their ability to change “hats” during their workday and gave them the skills needed to stay up-to-date on the ever-changing role of school communications. Finally, the Fall Conference is a networking opportunity and our members have continually stated they value the time to meet and talk with their colleagues around the state.