

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

Entry Form

(Please include this information with each individual entry)

Chapter Name: Kansas School Public Relations Association (KanSPRA)

Chapter President: Kimberly Koop

President's contact information

District/Organization: El Dorado Public Schools USD 490

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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: KAN SPRA - KANSAS SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

Please complete and include the information below for each individual entry

X

Section I: Membership Building

- Current number of chapter members 93
 - NSPRA-provided membership baseline number as of June 1 37
 - Number of chapter members who belong to NSPRA as of April 30 47
-

X

Section II: Special Focus Areas

Category A – chapter has less than 50% NSPRA membership

X 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



KanSPRA: Mark of Distinction Entry Special Focus Area - Professional Development/Skill-Building Friday, May 15, 2021

KanSPRA's Mission: To create an atmosphere of public trust and understanding by leading, counseling, and influencing attitudes and behavior in support of Kansas public education.

Kansas public schools were closed via Executive Order by the Governor of Kansas in March 2020. The State Department of Education worked to provide guidance to complete the academic year with all educational services delivered remotely to help stop the spread of transmission of COVID-19. In July 2020, schools were provided with guidance to safely re-open with a number of new safety and public health protocols closely implemented and enforced. For many districts, this resulted in excluding external visitors and guests to building sites and/or travel restrictions for staff members for out-of-district business. Like many NSPRA chapters, KanSPRA was unable to effectively plan and host an annual in-person membership conference, typically held in late October/early November.

In order to maintain connectivity with members, and facilitate information-sharing specific to the re-opening planning challenges that faced school districts throughout the state, the chapter began hosting monthly Zoom sessions in July. These sessions gained immediate popularity, and consistently were attended by 30+ members. Once the school year began, the Zooms became more structured in approach and schedule, typically offered the 2nd Friday of each month from Noon to 1:30 p.m. Additionally, long-time vendors and partners of KanSPRA were engaged to sponsor the monthly Zooms in exchange for a dedicated time slot to connect with the districts that they were not able to visit in-person due to COVID-19 conditions.

Each Zoom session, branded and promoted as "KanSPRA Connect," began with a welcome and introduction from that month's sponsor, a primary discussion topic or guest speaker, facilitated regional break-out sessions, and whole group report-out of the local issues and solutions discussed in the break-outs. The regional break-out sessions were specifically designated by membership regions (North East, North Central, South East, South Central, and West) and served as an efficient way for districts to meet on a monthly basis during the 2020-21 school year to discuss common challenges and local solutions, such as increased collaboration and partnerships with health departments and relevant state agencies.

The months of July and August were focused on updates related to the Kansas State Department of Education's Navigating Change document and how school systems were implementing safety protocols and/or enrolling students as in-person or remote learners to provide adequate social distancing. Once the school year officially began, programming adjusted based on member feedback and as sponsors were secured to maintain partnerships and connections with the KanSPRA chapter.

September 2020: ThoughtExchange - sponsor facilitated group feedback session to identify shared challenges and concerns and professional development requests for support

October 2020: Kansas Commissioner of Education - shared information updates with attendees and commended the importance of communication and role of School PR professionals during a historic year in education

November 2020: local graphics design company sponsored and led session on design principles for education

December 2020: Patron Insight - sponsor introduced group to new stakeholder engagement services for schools; Nicole Kirby, APR, NSPRA President-Elect, updated attendees on planning aspects for the 2021 Seminar and benefits of NSPRA membership

January 2021: ParentSquare - sponsor introduced social media platform and e-services for parent/staff communications; Deputy Commissioner of Education updated attendees on COVID-19 impacts and phased Kansas vaccination schedule for educators

February 2021: Gabbart Communications - sponsor shared communication strategies, including web design and learning management system; Deputy Commissioner of Education updated attendees on vaccines; Kansas Association of School Boards provided a legislative update

March 2021: Remind, Inc. - sponsor provided overview of communication services and analytics tools for school districts; Jason Wheeler (Tx.) delivered keynote style address on the Changing Face of School Marketing

April 2021: Blackboard - sponsor introduced web-based communication services available to school administrators to engage families and staff; district case studies with hearing protests of COVID-19 protocols - how to communicate transparently and rebuild community trust; seek consensus from attendees on new KanSPRA Board appointed positions specific to Professional Development and Special Events

May 2021: Smore - sponsor facilitated session introducing e-newsletter and communication tools; Barbara Hunter, APR, NSPRA Executive Director; end-of-year celebrations from school districts, and NSPRA Seminar preview.

While the KanSPRA Connect series were developed and programmed in response to COVID-19 conditions limiting in-person connectivity, the popularity of the monthly on-line sessions will likely result in a carryover to the 21-22 school year. The chapter's annual Fall Conference will still serve as the signature professional development, networking, and social event, however, the monthly Connects have proven to be an effective way to retain and recruit new members, provide a sustained connection to NSPRA's national resources and services, and share information relevant to member school districts, while helping to strengthen the collective School PR practice across the State of Kansas.

NSPRA Goals and Beliefs Focus Areas:

- Connect members with NSPRA representatives, services, and resources
- Solicit members for feedback to determine future offerings and networking opportunities
- Maintain visibility between KanSPRA Board and district members
- Provide opportunities for local, state, and national to share knowledge of school public relations
- Share new and emerging communication technology with members to expand outreach and engage all stakeholders in the school community

Chapter Outcomes:

- Ended previous fiscal year with 81 chapter members, gained net of +12 without any in-person recruitment opportunities or support activities
- Connected Zoom attendees with NSPRA President-Elect, Nicole Kirby, APR, to better understand the benefits of national membership and attendance at NSPRA Seminar; and NSPRA Executive Director, Barbara Hunter, APR
- Increase NSPRA membership from 37 (39%) to 47 total (50.5%), of 93 total members ending 20-21 SY

- Collect \$6,500 in Zoom sponsorship revenues to be used towards NSPRA Seminar Scholarships (2 total) and 2021 Fall Conference program - while maintaining key relationships with vendor support network
- Provide sustained opportunities for networking, information-sharing, counsel and support during an emotionally challenging school year for all
- Record and archive sessions for on-demand web site access

Examples of promotional graphics used in email reminders and social media posts:

KANSPRA CONNECT!

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11: 12:00 – 1:30 P.M.
DECEMBER SESSION SPONSOR



The December KanSPRA Connect session will begin with a greeting from this month's sponsor, Patron Insight; and also a visit with Nicole Kirby, APR, Director of Communications for the Park Hill School District (Kansas City, MO.) and President-Elect of NSPRA. We will conclude with regional break-outs.

PATRON INSIGHT



Next Month: Friday, January 8

#TGIFZOOM

KANSPRA CONNECT!

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12: 12:00 – 1:30 P.M.
FEBRUARY SESSION SPONSOR



This month's sponsor is Gabbart Communications. We will also hear a statewide vaccine update from Dr. Brad Neuenswander (KSDE) and Legislative Update from Rachel Thomas (KASB), in addition to regional break-out sessions.

Next Month: Friday, March 5

#TGIFZOOM

KANSPRA CONNECT!



FRIDAY, JANUARY 8: 12:00 - 1:30 P.M.
JANUARY SESSION SPONSOR



Happy New Year! The January KanSPRA Connect session will begin with a brief informational presentation from this month's sponsor: Parent Square. We will also check-in on everyone's healthy return to school planning and conclude with regional break-outs.

Next Month: Friday, February 12 #TGIFZOOM

KANSPRA CONNECT!

FRIDAY, MARCH 5: 12:00 - 1:30 P.M.
FEBRUARY SESSION SPONSOR



JASONAWHEELER.COM

This month's sponsor is Remind, helping to support this month's featured presenter Jason Wheeler on the "Changing Landscape of School Marketing." Jason is a dynamic School PR speaker and routinely presents at NSPRA and other statewide conferences.

#TGIFZOOM

JOIN US FOR

KANSPRA CONNECT!



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13: 12:00 - 1:30 P.M.
NOVEMBER SESSION SPONSOR

**FRIESEN
DESIGN**

The November KanSPRA Connect session will begin with a district highlight from Maize (Lori Buselt) and their experience working with this month's sponsor, Friesen Design. We will also conduct our annual member meeting, announce KanSPRA awards, and facilitate regional break-out sessions.

Next Month: Friday, December 11

#TGIFZOOM

