

NATIONAL SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION MARK OF DISTINCTION RECOGNITION PROGRAM

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / PR SKILL BUILDING 2014 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	<i>Building Community Support for Schools: Our Future Depends on it!</i>
Dates	Thursday and Friday, November 7-8, 2013
Location	Heidel House Resort, Green Lake, WI
Topic	Building Support for Public School Districts
Attendees	PR Professionals, District Superintendents & Administrators, School Board members, Technology Directors, various communications providers/resources
Speakers	Keynote: Ken DeSieghardt; Jaime Spooner; Amy Kant Breakout sessions: Dennis Pauli, Jeff Ferrazo, Melissa Badger, Steve McNeal, Michael Blecha, Dorreen Dembski, Debbie Brewster, Kate Winkler, Sarah Heck
Sponsors	Miron Construction, CG Schmidt, CESA 6, J.P. Cullen & Sons, Inc., School Messenger, Donovan Group LLC., J.H. Findorff & Son Inc., Constant Contact, CESA 2/Voss & Associates, Peachjar

ANNUAL SPRING WORKSHOP

Theme/Topic	<i>Purposeful Community Engagement</i>
Date	Friday, May 9, 2014
Location	Radisson Paper Valley Hotel, Appleton, WI
Attendees	District Administrators, School Communications Professionals, Board Members
Speakers	Nora Carr, Tracy Habisch-Ahlin, Joe Donovan, Stacy Tapp, Jane Flis, Bill Foster, Dorreen Dembski, Sarah Heck, Drew Howick, David Voss, Melissa Badger, Perry Hibner, Christin Mlsna, Joe Sanfelippo, Christina Brey
Sponsors	J.P. Cullen & Sons, Inc., Miron Construction, CG Schmidt, Robert W. Baird & Co.
Collaboration	Wisconsin Association of District Administrators (WASDA)

WSPRA PRESENTATIONS
DOCUMENTATION – SECTION 4

WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS CONVENTION

Date	January 23, 2014
Location	Milwaukee, WI
Topic	<i>Building Community Support for Schools: Why it Starts at the Top</i>
Speakers	Kit Dailey, Jon Bales, Dorreen Dembski
Collaboration	WSPRA, Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators, CESA 6

Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) 11 – Regional Superintendent Meeting

Date	October 11, 2013
Location	Turtle Lake, WI
Topic	Understanding School Communication and Why it Matters Today More Than Ever
Speakers	Kit Dailey, Tracy Habisch-Ahlin
Collaboration	WSPRA, CESA 11, Hudson 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.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Article</u>	<u>Author</u>
September 2013	<i>Social Media from a Board Member's Perspective</i>	Terry Falk
January 2014	<i>Effectively Engaging Principals in School PR</i>	Stacy Tapp

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

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 will serve 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
 - Dennis Pauli, Edgerton School District
- Friend of WSPRA Award
 - Jon Bales, Executive Director of Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA)
- Honorary Lifetime Membership
 - Richard Zimman, Retired Superintendent from Ripon School District
- Special WSPRA Service Award
 - Dorreen Dembski (long time WSPRA Board Member)
- Past President's Award (given by Kit Dailey)
 - 2013/2014 WSPRA Board of Directors
- Complete Spectrum Awards (6 Awards of Excellence, 18 Awards of Merit)
- Spectrum Lighthouse Award
 - Debbie Brewster, Deforest School District Website Project

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.

In 2012, we decided to waive the fee for entries to better honor and recognize projects and to encourage participation. We continued this approach in 2013 and entries increased to 48 compared to 24 in 2011.

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

Statewide Communication Practices Survey

100% Participation!

In response to repeated requests for state-wide data on critical school communications topics, WSPRA reached out to Wisconsin District Administrators Association (WASDA) and Cooperative Educational Services Agency 6 (CESA 6), to join forces in an unprecedented effort to survey school districts across Wisconsin to gather this information in the summer of 2013. School Perceptions LLC, a Wisconsin-based educational research firm, was hired to conduct a communications practices survey for the specific purpose of discovering how districts are funding and implementing communications efforts as well as understanding their greatest communications challenges. We were thrilled that every single school district responded to our outreach and **100% survey participation** was achieved!

A complete report of the survey findings is available on the WSPRA website, as is an Executive Summary. Highlights from the data report that **87%** of WI school districts do not employ a person whose primary responsibility is communications. When then asked to indicate who does provide this support, **90%** of survey participants responded it is the responsibility of the District Administrator/Superintendent.

Participants were also asked to rank their most important communications/public relations topics for the coming school year (2013/2014) and the top three priorities identified include:

1. Community engagement
2. Budget planning/communication
3. State assessments/school report card data

The assessment of this data and the positive collaboration experience on this survey led to the first-ever joint WSPRA/WASDA spring workshop in May 2014 dedicated to community engagement strategies and techniques. More than 200 district administrators joined an additional 50 WSPRA members for a deep dive into this dynamic topic to great success.