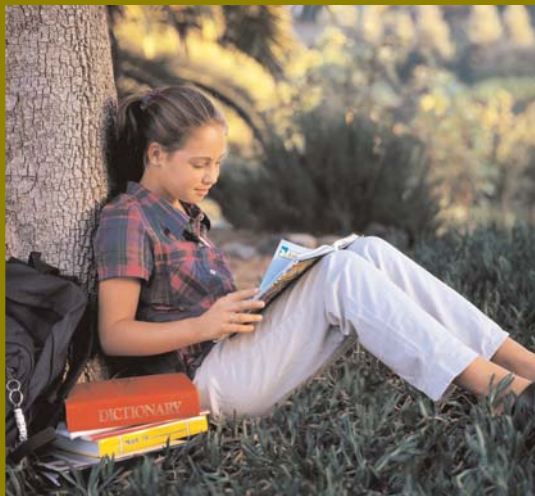
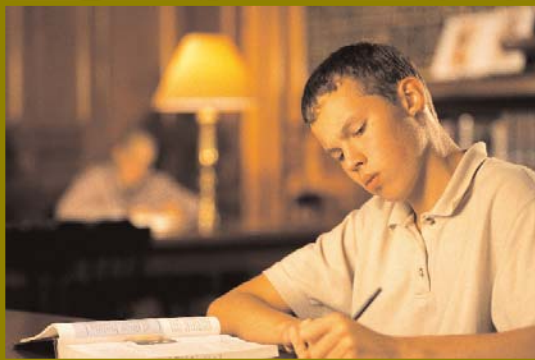




Supporting Students, Supporting Communication:

Helping Others See the Communication-Achievement Links



From the
National School Public Relations Association

NSRA



National School Public Relations Association

15948 Derwood Road
Rockville, Maryland 20855
301-519-0496
www.NSPRA.org

Executive Director: Richard D. Bagin, APR

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Supporting Students, Supporting Communication: *Helping Others See the Communication-Achievement Links*

From the National School Public Relations Association

Supporting Students, Supporting Communication: Helping Others See the Communication-Achievement Links is part of a series of materials sponsored by the National School Public Relations Association's Communication Accountability Project. The articles in this collection have been reprinted from the NSPRA member newsletter, *Network*. To join NSPRA, visit www.NSPRA.org.



NSPRA

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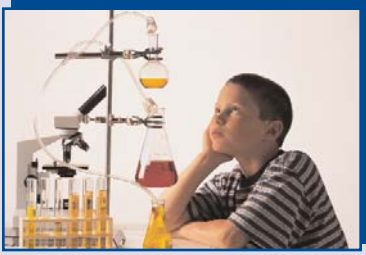
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Defending the Communication Budget



As a school leader, pick your own sign of spring: (a) the first crocus, (b) the first bomb scare, (c) the question, “How many days until spring break?” or (d) public budget hearings.

For NSPRA, the answer is clearly public budget hearings. That’s when we receive more calls on proving the value of the PR position. The good news is that we have been receiving fewer of these calls as we firmly believe that more superintendents and board members are beginning to realize and understand the impact communication makes on the success of their schools.

Our Communication Accountability Project (CAP) has begun to make a difference, and later this year CAP’s first white paper will provide research demonstrating the link between communication, parent/family involvement and higher student achievement.

Until then, we offer the following advice as examples of talking-point ammunition for the upcoming budget battles:

Frame Your Message for Clear Impact

Many adults in your community easily rally around the terms “budget” or “tax cuts.” Why not — as it means more money in their pockets and everyone knows that school districts have their own pockets of waste. They conclude that the money won’t even be missed.

It’s time to reframe the message so they realize what will be missed. Consider calling these reductions “service cuts” and go on to demonstrate just what impact they will have. Service cuts mean that certain elementary students, previously bused to school, will now become walkers. Service cuts mean that one school nurse or one resource officer will cover four schools rather than two. And service cuts mean that special tutoring programs will be dropped.

The lesson is to concretely demonstrate by example what the cuts mean to parents, students and the well-being of the community.

Don’t Be Taken for Granted

One of our NSPRA members sent me a summary of a proposal from an HR consulting firm for the costs of communicating some changes in an employee benefits program. Often, professional communicators complete these tasks as part of their regular jobs and little thought is given to the value they add to the operation of the school district.

The consulting firm planned to complete three letters to employees, two short newsletters for employees, one multi-page brochure (writing and formatting), a handout for presentations, one PowerPoint presentation and items for the web site about the changes.

For these tasks, the cost listed was \$34,900. That’s right — nearly \$35,000 and the school district was also being asked to draft copy for some of the letters.

Too often, school communication professionals are taken for granted. It can be an eye-opening exercise to prove to superintendents, business managers and board members what outside costs would be for many of the ongoing services you provide for your schools — especially during the budget deliberation season.

Kill “Others Will Do the Job” Response

Scenario goes like this: Board cuts communication position and says others will pick up responsibilities. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum is given tasks but does not have skill or time to be an effective communicator. Curriculum job comes first and then, not knowing how to write succinctly or deal with media, nothing gets done except a newsletter containing old “puff news.” Board members are angered by bad press coverage and concerned parent groups and staff say the district must be hiding things as no one is communicating. Next budget cycle contains a “new” communication position because it is sorely needed. Duh!

The bottom line is that the ineffectiveness of people who don’t know what they’re doing will cost you more in time and money than you will save with the elimination of the communication position.

— Rich Bagin, APR
NSPRA Executive Director



Financial Support Depends on Ongoing Communication



This month's cover story offers ideas on how to win at the tough job of getting financial support for schools. Few governmental services face the kinds of up-or-down public votes that schools often do. And getting the public to understand and support the important role that our schools must fulfill has been getting tougher.

Of course, school-budget discussions always focus on the two possessions considered most important to people: their kids and their money. And that's why the issue is so important to so many.

Ongoing PR

So what's behind the misfires when schools fail at financial communication? Too often the blame belongs to a lack of communication and a failure by school leaders to invest in ongoing public relations. Consider all the time schools spend developing their budgets, and think about what can happen when too little time is devoted to helping the community understand.

So what works in schools that succeed in their financial communications? Trust and credibility always seems to be at the top of the list. And both trust and credibility are byproducts of solid, ongoing communication.

Successful programs also are supported by objective-driven efforts that use plain English to relay crucial messages.

They talk numbers not in millions and billions but in terms that everyone can relate to — costs per child, costs per household, cost per average taxpayer and so on.

They focus on kids and their schools, not central plans and district-wide implications.

Engage Audiences

They engage key communicators, including parents, staff, students, government officials, business leaders, seniors and more. They involve and support all employees — administrators, support staff, and teachers — in helping to communicate and build.

They rely on outside sources to establish credibility. Comments are explicit with succinct quotes to explain key decisions. Concise Q&A lists anticipate objections and address key issues. And, they help the

media build the right content for financial issues by offering down-to-earth comparative details and explanations.

But most importantly: They appreciate the crucial role research plays in planning successful financial communications. Carefully analyzing the right numbers leads to success. This involves taking polls, soliciting input at meetings, online and face-to-face. Studying past behaviors and evaluating how changes in the community alter current behaviors — works time and time again.

Financial- and budget-communication challenges face school districts of all sizes and types. Local finance policies and traditions affect how schools are funded but all leave school leaders with the need to communicate what's being done. No matter how school funding is governed, support for school financial issues is a grassroots endeavor that needs attention day after day.

This is why ongoing investments in strong public relations programs and open communication policies can be expected to pay huge dividends — that benefit students, schools and their communities.

— Edward H. Moore, APR
NSPRA Associate Director





Research Continues to Show the Benefits of Communication Between Schools and Parents



The authors of the compelling and controversial best-seller *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* (Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, HarperCollins Publishers, 2005) sort through U.S. Department of Education data to offer even more support to the mantra that involved parents help kids achieve in school.

In a chapter entitled “*What Makes A Perfect Parent?*” Levitt and Dubner debunk some common myths about what makes kids achieve and underscore the importance of parental involvement with schools.

School involvement signals a strong relationship with the school, the authors point out. Their conclusion is kind of a no-brainer when you think about it, but one that makes the lack of support for communication supporting parental involvement in so many schools all the more puzzling.

And while Levitt and Dubner confess that their observations may be somewhat generalized, they make it very clear that parents do matter.

So again we hear the message: healthy relationships and strong involvement — two critical outputs of successful communication — again make the list of

what is observed when we look at those doing well in our schools.

Unfortunately, too many school leaders still seek to judge their communication investments solely on the kinds of products they produce — news releases, publicity, publications and so on.

While all of these items are important components of any comprehensive school-communication program, the real bottom-line value of communication is in the numbers: rising scores, improving attendance, falling dropout rates. These are indicators how school communication can work — when it is suitably planned, staunchly supported and properly funded.

— Edward H. Moore, APR
NSPRA Associate Director





The Research Is Clear: Teacher-Parent Communication Increases Student Achievement



For the longest time, parent involvement meant attending Parent Group meetings, fund raising, and assisting as volunteers throughout the school, as well as being a “classroom Mom.”

These traditional approaches are still important today and schools appreciate the assistance they receive from parents who are involved in this way.

But the type of involvement that many schools are seeing now is the type that is focused on improving the academic progress and well-being of the parents’ own children.

Communication Is More Important than Ever

Involvement and engagement for many of today’s parents rests with understanding what their children are learning and how they can connect with their teachers and the school to keep their children progressing to the best of their abilities. And that doesn’t necessarily involve physically coming to the school.

Rich Bagin, APR, NSPRA’s executive director and author of the new publication, *Making Parent Communication Effective and Easy*, says that increasing and improving communication between teachers and parents is the number one way to increase parent involvement and student achievement.

“Parents want to know how they can help their children learn more. They want to know what the expectations are for their children, how their kids are progressing, and they also seek guidance on helping their children achieve those expectations. Attending Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings is still important, but helping their children become successful is a parent’s highest priority,” said Bagin.

NSPRA’s newest book cites research proving the impact effective communication has on student achievement. For example, a doctoral dissertation by Steven Constantino tracked the metrics over four years at a high school as it dealt with increased communication with parents and found:

- Parent satisfaction rose from 34% to 59%.
- Teacher satisfaction rose from 39% to 76%.

- The average SAT score rose 61 points, with an 18% reduction in disparity between minority and non-minority scores.
- The dropout rate fell from 11% to 3%.

Additional research indicates that family participation in education is twice as predictive of students’ academic success as family socioeconomic status. Some of the more intensive programs had effects that were ten times greater than others.

Common Barriers to Parent Involvement

The two most common barriers to parent involvement for teachers are the lack of time and knowledge of what to do. The June 2005 National MetLife Survey of the American Teacher found that new teachers — those with one to five years of experience — feel their biggest challenge is parent engagement.

Some 31% of the new teachers cited said that involving parents and communicating with them is their top challenge. They also noted that new teachers felt the least prepared to engage families in supporting their children’s education.

Parents also cite similar reasons for not being involved. A study of more than 25,000 parent leaders by the National PTA found that 89% said that the major barrier to parent involvement was a lack of time. The next highest response was that parents did not understand how to become involved, which is often due to a lack of communication.



Overcome the Barriers

The easiest way to help teachers overcome these barriers is to provide communication training. The two areas where training can be most helpful are for Open House/Back-to-School Night presentations and Parent-Teacher Conferences, as these are when first impressions are often made about the school and the teacher, and set the tone for the rest of the year.

“Nothing beats the first impression moment of the Back-to-School Night program,” says Bagin. “The way you meet and greet parents, the look of your rooms and school, your professional demeanor, and your enthusiasm for your students and subject all tell parents a story about you.”

Training can be conducted by the principal, veteran teachers or by the district’s school public relations professional during professional development workshops.

Some helpful advice to prepare for Back-to-School Nights includes:

- **Give an enthusiastic welcome.** Principals and teachers can do this in ten seconds or less — it sets the tone for the entire evening. Let parents know that you truly care about and enjoy your students. If you are not generally an energetic presenter, try to be a bit more lively for this presentation.
- **Give parents something to brag about.** Provide some samples of every student’s work so that parents can see the good work their child has done so far.
- **Plan and time your presentation.** Approach your presentation just like you would when planning a lesson for your students. What do you want parents to know when they leave your room? Also, make sure that you can cover all the important points in the time allotted for your presentation.
- **Practice your presentation.** Running out of time and only giving parents half of what they need to know makes them question your ability to plan regular lessons and your overall time management skills. Practicing beforehand gives you a chance to make adjustments if needed.
- **Give your parents a handout that covers just about everything you said.** This can provide more detail than your presentation, and also gives parents something to take home and refer to later.
- **Tell them what to do if they sense their child is slipping or struggling academically.** Let parents know the best ways for students to ask for extra help from you, and invite them to contact you with any future concerns about their child’s classroom progress.
- **Be sure to emphasize the fact that it takes all three partners — the teacher, students and parents — to make the year a success.** Demonstrate your commitment to helping your students learn, but make sure that you let parents know that you expect the same commitment from them and their child. Let parents know how to be involved.

The Bottom Line

“As educators, we have to do all we can to make each student as successful as they can be. We can no longer give ‘lip service’ to communication. We need to connect with as many parents as we can. And the results will pay for themselves,” says Bagin.

— Andy Grunig, APR

NSPRA Member

Source: *Making Parent Communication Effective and Easy* published by NSPRA.



Director of Public Accountability



What's in a name — especially when it comes to the title of the school communication professional? If you run through the NSPRA Directory, you will see a vast hodge-podge of titles including administrative assistants, directors of communication, executive directors of public engagement, assistant superintendents and public information officers.

With the increasing movement for accountability on all school fronts, it may be time to consider a new title for what we do for our schools, and that is the **Director of Public Accountability**.

This title says it all. It automatically thrusts the PR and communication function into the very mainstream and function of today's schools. It also helps to explain what you do for a living when asked at a cocktail party or social gathering. How many of you have been asked, "Why in the world does a school district need a PR person?" But when you note that you deal in public accountability issues for your schools and that you engage others to help provide accountability solutions, people begin understanding why your job is not only needed, but also critical in this age of accountability.

A Director of Public Accountability becomes the "go-to" resource for taxpayers, staff and the media to learn more about their school district's performance in instruction and management. A Director of Public Accountability engages staff and community leaders to understand the complexities of today's schools and involves them in making their schools better and more accountable on all fronts. A Director of Public Accountability builds a sense that, "We are all in this together," instead of, "We are all in this alone." The position becomes the hub for community leaders, parents, and staff to receive factual answers, guidance, and interpretation on most accountability issues.

Accountability is the common thread of how superintendents, teachers, principals, business managers and board members are perceived and judged these days. By being at center stage, we too will need to perform at the highest levels. Many of you who have been doing this for years know exactly what I'm talking about.

It's not easy, but our districts need us now more than ever in this age of accountability. So step up, tweak your communication program so that it leans more to accountability, and begin reaping the acceptance and acknowledgment that your position — whatever you call it — is a critical component for today's schools.

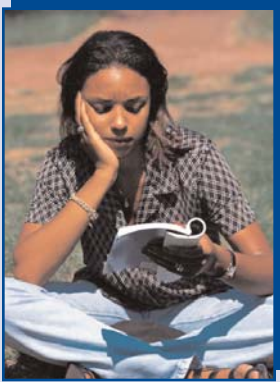
And I'll bet you that virtually no board members or other leaders will consider cutting the Director of Public Accountability position during your next budget season.

— Rich Bagin, APR
NSPRA Executive Director





Getting Aggressive on PR Budget Cuts



Next to the die-hard hope of Chicago Cubs fans, the sight of an emerging crocus and daffodil, and a slew of false bomb scares, another sure sign of spring is the cutting of school budgets.

And once again, NSPRA members are being asked to suit up in their superhero costumes to build understanding, gain support and help school leaders pass school budgets that will keep their schools and communities moving in a positive direction. Most NSPRA members rise to the occasion, but in some instances, some unenlightened boards and other leaders decide that the communication function itself, along with the communication pro, should be eliminated.

Good News

The good news is that we have seen a slight downturn in the number of positions being eliminated, as more superintendents and boards are beginning to “get it.” They realize that you can’t build support for education without the results driven by a school PR professional. These leaders also believe in the communication maxim that people won’t support something that they don’t understand. Explaining a school budget should not be left in the hands of amateurs and non-professionals — communicators, that is!

Rebut PR Budget Cuts

But for those NSPRA colleagues who may be finding themselves as a Discussion Item on the Board’s Budget-cutting Agenda, a few key message points follow. Here’s hoping that you don’t have to use them.

- **While acknowledging that communication is important, leaders say that it will now be handled by other administrators.** We can testify that such a statement belongs in a public opinion crock pot. It normally falls into the category of “lip-service rationalization.” It just doesn’t happen because these other administrators are more than likely drowning in their own work. And that’s work that they understand and know how to do. Now they have to learn new skills and implement tactics in a deadline-oriented profession. It takes them longer to accomplish

little, and their real work begins falling behind. Their choice is to do their “real job” first and communication “when they have time to do it.” Meanwhile, budget-cutting advocates are dancing in the Board’s parking lot because they realize that the fate of this year’s budget is now more in their control.

- **Leaders say that numbers do not add up and communication has to go.** School communicators and their advocates need to challenge this assumption. First, look at what your program costs the school district. It is probably less than .001% of your district’s entire operating budget. NSPRA surveys confirm that number. If we ran schools more like a business, we would be spending 20 to 25% of the operating budget on communication. Most likely that will never happen, but it demonstrates how silly cutting .001% really is.

Another tactic is to take the total cost of your program and divide it by the number of taxpayers/patrons or tax-paying households in your community. Let’s say it comes to \$10-\$25 per household, where the annual school tax bill is \$1,500 per household. Consequently, the investment in communication, let’s say \$10, is an accountability feature to tell these taxpayers how the remainder of their \$1,490 is being spent.

Return on Investment

And finally in this “numbers” scenario, you may be able to prove that the return on investment (ROI) should serve as an example for other school programs. If your district is losing enrollment to charter schools, private schools, or state-wide open enrollment programs, you may be able to demonstrate that your communication/marketing efforts captured or retained 100 more students this year. Use that figure (100) and multiply it by the per-pupil state-aid allocation (say, \$4,000) and you can testify that a large part of the \$400,000 allocation was earned by the stellar work of your communication office.

Seek NSPRA Help

If you find yourself as an agenda item in the budget-cutting process, think about these approaches and contact NSPRA and our website for additional methods to prove the value of school PR. As an NSPRA member, you should never be in this situation alone. NSPRA and its members are here for you to help you speak out on the critical importance of communication in public education.

— Rich Bagin, APR
NSPRA Executive Director



Examples Proving the Value of Communication

NSPRA continues to publish examples of how communication leads to student and school success. Periodically brief snapshots run in *Network*, the association's newsletter. They are called "CAP Capsules" of NSPRA's Communication Accountability Project.

Here are just a few:

School Year Calendar Changes



Increasing demands of high-stakes testing, added state and federal mandates, and reduced revenues have created a necessity for schools to analyze how to best use time to maximize academic performance.

The Floyd County (Ga.) Schools determined that adding extra days of instruction during the school year was the best way to meet the challenge of making sure every student succeeds on standardized tests.

The school year would have to start earlier and end later to allow for three breaks in the school calendar for remedial instruction. A fall, winter and spring remedial intersession period would be added to give students who were behind in academic expectations an opportunity to acquire the skills to be successful.

The solution to the problem of getting added instruction time for students was simple enough, but changing a long-standing tradition like the school calendar was a much more difficult task.

A study committee of community leaders and staff was formed to research the question of changing the school calendar. Over a six-month period, the committee looked at the positive and negative effects of changing the calendar.

The committee and the district met with leaders of community organizations that would be affected by the calendar change.

A video was produced to show the success of a modified calendar in a neighboring district. The committee met with staff members at each school, parent councils and community groups to share information and gather input.

Four community forums were held to share information and gather feedback. Information was also shared through the district's web site and through other promotional materials.

The feedback from the community forums produced changes in the proposed calendar. As a result, the district implemented the new calendar format after thorough community involvement. By listening to the community, the district was able to make the necessary changes to the school calendar and had many parents and community members embracing the new calendar format.

The PR effort paved the way for increased instructional time. Increased student learning is sure to follow!

—Tim Hensley, APR
NSPRA Member

District Applauded for Openness



The following article was published last year in the newspaper *Our Town*, based in Pearl River, N.Y. Member Sandy Cokeley-Pedersen, APR, is the director of quality and community relations for the Pearl River School District.

What a Difference a District Makes

It was a pleasure to sit with the Pearl River School District's Director of Operations, Quinton Van Wynen, this week and actually get answers to questions about school operations and finances. Without filling out a formal FOIL, or written request for information, Van Wynen answered question after question about the district's failed \$24.7 million bond and even volunteered facts and figures about a new \$17.5 million proposal that may go before residents for a second vote this Spring (2004).

Although it was only defeated by nine votes, the Pearl River Board of Education will review the bond this week, possibly making cuts for non-discretionary items like a new staircase for the high school and lights for its ballfields. Instead of ramming the bond down voters' throats and then shrugging in their shoulders in mock disbelief when it was shot down, Pearl River school administrators are going over their proposal, leaving in what is really needed and taking taxpayers' considerations into account.

Kudos to Van Wynen and the rest of the Pearl River Board for making taxpayers part of the district's important financial decisions — and for making information readily available to the public.

Cultivating the input and trust of residents, coupled with sound fiscal sense, will undoubtedly result in the bond's passage on its second try.

This is a far cry from the bond psychology currently employed by a neighboring district, which saw a \$30 million bond defeated by 52 votes last November.

Getting public information, such as salaries, from that district was hard enough. Getting straightforward answers to simple questions has so far been next to impossible for reporters and residents alike.

When information is not readily available, doubts tend to arise. As some parents stated in an article by this newspaper, when one has to submit a question as simple as how much a new full-day kindergarten will cost in writing, it doesn't exactly foster trust in those spending taxpayer money.

Van Wynen stated clearly that it would save money in the long run if \$1.5 million in emergency repairs were bonded out over time and not added to the district's annual budget, causing an increase of nearly 12 percent over last year's spending plan.

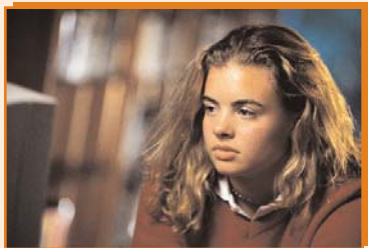
Involvement fosters understanding which, in turn, fosters trust. We bet the Pearl River bond passes this spring, whether it's reduced or not. Perhaps other school officials should take a lesson from Van Wynen and Co. in Pearl River. You don't win a national award like the Malcolm Baldrige efficiency honor by hiding information, financial or otherwise. The way to gain public trust is through public disclosure. Put it out there, and they will vote. And they'll probably vote "yes."

(Editor's Note: Sixty-two percent voted for the bond.)

— Tim Hensley, APR
NSPRA Member



Beefing Up the Bottom Line — Case Studies from the Grassroots



The Mounds View School District in Minnesota experienced a decline in enrollment over the past six years due to an aging population, competition from neighboring school districts, and residents choosing other school options.

This situation left the district with diminishing revenue, fixed expenses that do not decline proportionally with enrollment, and a projected funding shortfall in the millions over the next three years.

In response, the district set a goal to reverse the decline in enrollment by implementing a numbers-driven student retention and recruitment campaign over a three-month period from November 2003 to January 2004 that culminated in “Discover Mounds View Public Schools Week.” During the week, each school invited non-resident and resident families with students in targeted transitional grades to Enrollment Information Nights to encourage them to learn more about the school and district and to ultimately choose to enroll or apply for non-resident enrollment.

As a result of the campaign, which won an NSPRA Gold Medallion Award, the district is retaining more of its resident students. One high school alone is expecting 100 more students than previously projected. The number of non-residents also increased by 30 percent, which yielded more than \$300,000 in additional funding. This money allowed the district to add two kindergarten sections at two elementary schools and to keep its promise of lower class sizes at all levels.

— Andy Grunig, APR
NSPRA Member

Tempe Elementary School

When you ask yourself how your PR function contributes to your school district’s bottom line, what do you think of? Student achievement? Making or saving money? Winning financial support for budget/bond issues?

All these factors come into play, and that’s just part of the scope of the research now underway to bolster the value of communication in every school district in North America.

Can a comprehensive PR program make money for your schools? You betcha!

How about \$4,191,236? That’s just what happened in the Tempe Elementary School District in Arizona. In 1994, the system had 319 “out-of-district” students, attend their schools. Recent numbers indicate a total of 1,267 “out-of-district” students. And since each student brings in \$3,308 from state funding, the district’s bottom line was increased by the above \$4.1 million figure. And those funds help keep programs and staff intact.

Then Superintendent John Baracy and NSPRA veteran Gary Aungst put together a research-driven marketing and outreach program that turned around a declining enrollment situation into an increasing student base for their system.

— Bob Noyed, APR
NSPRA President

Elk River Area School District

The Elk River Area School District is a rapidly growing district 30 miles northwest of Minneapolis, Minnesota. During a 12-month period, the district has conducted three referendum elections for operating funds and new schools. It is a “commuter district” with a large number of residents who work in the Twin Cities, which makes it more challenging to engage them in district issues.

In November 2003, an election was held with three ballot questions: two operating levy questions and a bond referendum. The total voter turnout was about 35 percent, with only about 40 percent of district parents participating in the election.



The two operating levies were approved by the voters, but the bond referendum was defeated. After the defeat, the district embarked on a communication effort focused on better engaging parents on issues related to the bond referendum.

Through information meetings at all schools, direct mail materials, newspaper coverage, information on the district's web site, information in school newsletters, e-news information and e-mails from the district, and by asking teachers and other school staff to share information with parents on the issues, the district was successful in its efforts.

A large group of parents pushed the board to hold a bond referendum election in March 2004. Along with a district information campaign, a large and active parent network became engaged in the campaign. The result? More than 60 percent of parents voted in the election and the bond was approved by more than a two-to-one margin.

Just another example of how communication adds to the bottom line of today's schools.

— Rich Bagin, APR
NSPRA Executive Director



What Is NSPRA?



Since 1935, the National School Public Relations Association has been providing school communication training and services to school leaders throughout the United States, Canada and the U.S. Dependent Schools worldwide. NSPRA's mission is to advance education through responsible communication. We accomplish that mission through a variety of diverse services that we provide to our members and to other school leaders who contract with or purchase products from us.

With 70 years of experience, we have a reputation in the field for practical approaches to solving school district and agency communication problems. We have useful communication products, offer workshops and seminars, maintain resource and research files, have contacts and resources within the corporate communication industry and have 34 chapters throughout the country that provide local networking opportunities for members.

In keeping with our mission, NSPRA provides workshop assistance to school districts, state departments of education, regional service agencies, and state and national associations. For many of these groups, we have completed research-based communication audits to analyze the communication flow, targeting, content and effectiveness of their communication messages.

The NSPRA National Seminar, the most comprehensive school communication workshop anywhere, is held each July. This four-day session offers more than 70 topics on a wide array of school communication issues.

NSPRA's monthly membership newsletter *Network* is seen as a communication resource for school leaders, not just our members. Each edition tackles a major problem and explains how communication can play a vital role in solving it.

Principal Communicator is our building-level PR newsletter which provides practical help to school principals and other building-level leaders. The calendar and variety of communication topics are helping many to effectively improve communication at the community level.

Our four electronic newsletters, *NSPRA This Week*, *The NSPRA Counselor*, *NSPRA Alert* and *Opportunities*, provide summaries of breaking national education news, in-depth studies of issues and trends and updates on seminars, products and services available to educators. *Communication Matters for Leading Superintendents* is an electronic newsletter targeting issues and topics related to communication for school system leaders.

The Flag of Learning and Liberty is a national education symbol, developed by NSPRA in its 50th Anniversary Year. On July 4, 1985, the Flag of Learning and Liberty flew over the state houses of all 50 states to launch the rededication of America's commitment to education and a democratic, free society.

NSPRA is a member of the Educational Leaders Consortium and works with all major national organizations to help improve educational opportunities for the nation's young people. In addition, NSPRA is a sponsoring agency of the Educational Research Service (ERS). The association also sponsors four national awards programs to bring recognition for excellence in communication to individuals, districts and agencies.

More information about NSPRA is available at www.NSPRA.org.







National School Public Relations Association

15948 Derwood Road
Rockville, Maryland 20855
301-519-0496
www.NSPRA.org

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