



Troup County School System
Your Future Starts Today

Marketing/Branding NSPRA Awards Entry:

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Two Public Relations Staff Members
**Director
**Administrative Assistant

PreK -12 District: 12,000 students

Entry Title:

Branding the District

Special Note: Within the following text, items in
blue text are hyperlinks

**Please consider this entry for a Golden
Achievement Award

TROUP COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM will provide educational
opportunities that inspire learners to be independent, successful,
and happy.

www.troup.org



Troup County School System



Troup County School System

Situational Analysis

Troup County School System (TCSS; System) is an AdvancED Accredited PreK-12 public education system in Georgia.

TCSS is located in Troup County. It is just south of Atlanta and directly on the Georgia and Alabama state line. With a population of over 69,700 residents, the county boasts a high quality of life that is located just minutes from the famed West Point Lake and only a few hours from the Florida panhandle beaches.

In 1993, the first of three city school systems merged to eventually create Troup County School System. During this merger, the three systems – Hogansville, LaGrange, and West Point – closed schools and combined campuses due to major budgetary setbacks. The students, parents, and Troup County community-at-large were left with feelings of anxiety and resentment because they believed the traditions in smaller neighborhood schools would be lost in a larger, combined school system. To abate this perception, a new logo and tagline were created in 1994 to unite the new System.

Today, with nineteen new or recently renovated schools, TCSS houses approximately 12,000 students in eleven elementary schools, three middle schools, three high schools, one college and career academy, and one alternative learning center.

The mission of TCSS is to educate all students in a challenging and safe learning environment, so they will become productive citizens in a diverse and changing world.

However, over the past eight years, this mission has been tested. The System has witnessed several key setbacks, including:

- Closing four neighborhood schools.
- Waning community trust and partner in education support.
- Decreasing student enrollment of 100-120 students per school year.
- Crippling budget cuts that amounted to over \$22.5M over eight years.
- Fluctuating test scores and literacy rates viewed as subpar compared to surrounding districts.
- Declining employee morale with both veteran and younger skilled professionals exiting the System.

The System's reputation was, quite simply, in a bad place. And, from a visual imagery standpoint, the 25-year-old logo and tagline were still in use. Both the employees and community were eager for something new that made a bold statement of success for the System.

Problem Statement

The problem this program was created to address is: ***Troup County School System performs below standards and offers no quality programs to help students or teachers succeed.***

Synopsis

In light of these elements, TCSS's Leadership sought to introduce a branding campaign to the TCSS community with the sole purpose of creating a sense of pride and belonging to the school district and each school under its umbrella.

Recognizing that each of the 19 locations have a culture that permeates throughout the building, there was a need for a project at the district level to bring cohesiveness to the look and feel of the overall System; something that would connect each employee, student, business partner, and community member together.

Internally, there was a realization that TCSS has evolved; the way students learn has progressed and the classroom atmosphere has advanced to include student-centered learning, added school safety features, one-to-one technology, and critical thinking elements. These essential components, and more, have fundamentally transformed TCSS.



Synopsis Cont.

In order to meet **TCSS District Goal 3 of: Engaging all students, staff, families, businesses, and the community in the educational process**, the Executive Cabinet included Brand the District in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) as a major initiative to accomplish this goal. In addition, TCSS also incorporated three key priorities into the CSIP in which each department would contribute to:

- Creating a Culture of Success
- Increasing Literacy Level of all Students
- Incorporating a Rigorous and Relevant Learning Environment

Brand the District is the principal Communications project under the priority of Creating a Culture of Success. The creation of a Brand the District statement of work plan aided in the research, approval, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the initiative.

Research

October 2016: Enlisted [International Center for Leadership in Education \(ICLE\)](#) to provide research on the top 25 school districts in the nation's branding efforts.

November 2016: Conducted a SWOT Analysis of internal and external perceptions that included research from public and private school districts within a 100-mile radius of Troup County.

December 2016: Reviewed student, parent and community online surveys conducted by ICLE and the Georgia Department of Education.

January 2017: 1. Partnered with Troup County Chamber of Commerce to add questions to a county-wide [workforce development survey](#). 2. TCSS PR and School Improvement Depts. conducted one-hour focus groups of more than 900 internal and external stakeholders. Sample questions included:

- What do you think/feel when interacting with TCSS?
- What does TCSS currently look like?
- What do we want TCSS to look like?
- What attributes do we want our students to have once they graduate?

April 2017: Compiled responses and [created a word bank of top eight words](#) used in focus groups. Words were then developed to create four vision statements and three taglines for vetting with same stakeholder groups. The top eight words were (in order):

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Successful | 5. Trustworthy |
| 2. Independent | 6. Service-minded |
| 3. Confident | 7. Prepared |
| 4. Compassionate | 8. Happy |

May 2017: Enlisted the help of TCSS high school students to begin visually concepting marketing materials. Over 30 logos, taglines, and other design elements were submitted. During the summer, PR shared the top two student designs with a graphic artist who added a polished look for final potential logos.

October 2017: Presented vision, logo, and tagline to different focus groups before conducting a four-question online survey that was completed by 769 stakeholders. The four questions were:

- Are you a TCSS employee (or student or community member/parent)?
- Which vision do you feel best represents ALL TCSS students?
- Which logo do you feel best represents TCSS?
- Which tagline do you feel best represents TCSS?



Troup County School System

Research Cont.

January 2018: Compiled findings to begin building collateral materials and preparing for an [April 2018 Brand the District roll-out](#).

Findings included 769 total respondents. Of the respondents:

- 11% community members/parents
- 12% students
- 77% employees

The vision statement that resonated most with respondents (39.3%) was: *TCSS will provide educational opportunities that inspire learners to be independent, successful, and happy.*

The tagline that resonated most with respondents (42.5%) was: *Your Future Starts Today*

The logo that resonated most with respondents (38.5%) was:



Research Snapshot

Research	Primary (P) Secondary (S)	Qualitative (L) Quantitative (T)	Formal (F) Informal (I)	Formative (F) Evaluative (E)
TCSS work with ICLE on National Survey of Top 25 Schools in Nation – Branding & Impact	S	T	F	F
TCSS partners with Troup County Chamber of Commerce – Avalanche Workforce Development Study	P	T	F	E
SWOT Analysis	P	L	I	F
Review of existing company branding material	S	L	I	F
Conduct/review community online surveys	P	T	F	E
Focus group w/450 community members to assess attitude/feeling/connection to TCSS	P	L	I	E
Focus group w/250 employees to assess attitude/feeling/connection to TCSS	P	L	I	E
Focus group w/250 employees to assess attitude/feeling/connection to TCSS	P	L	I	E
Vet findings w/community members, students, employees	P	T	I	E
Test print material messaging and visual	P	T	I	E

Goal

TCSS had significant name recognition and awareness, but the internal and external attitude and connection to the TCSS brand did not create a sense of belonging or personal ambassadorship. In this vein, the Executive Cabinet and the Public Relations Director set this goal for Brand the District:

TCSS will bridge a connection between the organization and its audiences so they will become brand ambassadors and begin to share positive comments and stories through digital media and in their sphere of influence.



Audience Identification

Keeping inline with District Goal 3: Engaging all students, staff, families, businesses, and the community in the educational process, the team realized 'all' is a daunting audience. With this in mind, two categories of publics were created - primary and secondary.

Primary Audience	Secondary Audience
TCSS Employees	Community Business Partners
TCSS Parents	Faith-Based Community Partners
TCSS Students	Realtors

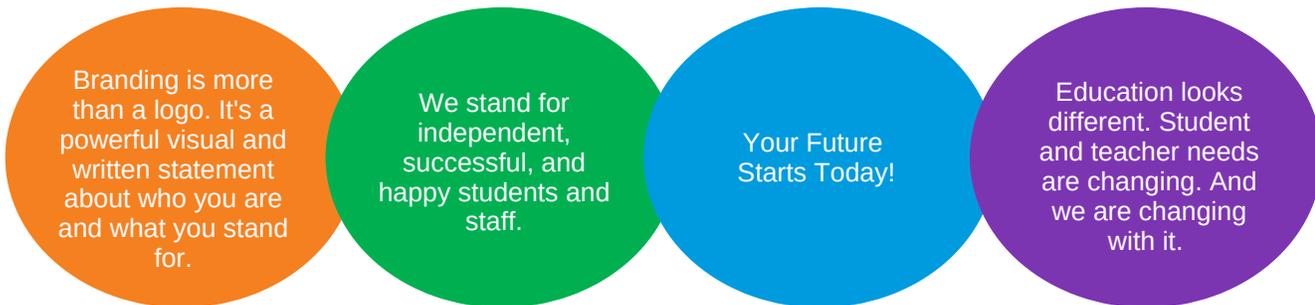
Objectives

To achieve the stated goal, the Executive Cabinet and the Public Relations Director set the following objectives in January 2017:

- TCSS will create consistent branding across 100% of district marketing materials and district building by March 2019. (Stretch goal is January 2019)
- TCSS will increase digital media engagements by 50% by January 2019. (Stretch goal is 60%)
- TCSS will increase the number of positive media placements in regional news publications by 20% by January 2019. (Stretch goal is 30%)
- TCSS will create 15 shareable video vignettes that highlight positive messages about Troup County School System students, employees, partners, and/or programs by March 2019. (Stretch goal is 20)
- 65% of TCSS employees will, by January 2019, state they 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the Stay Survey Question that asks: I am happy to work for TCSS and would recommend others to work here by March 2019. (Stretch goal is 70%)

Messaging

In an effort to streamline communication to our publics, four key messages were created using data from the focus groups, surveys, and SWOT Analysis. They are:



Budget

Due to budget constraints, the project research, planning, implementation, and evaluation was delivered over a three-year budget period. The Executive Cabinet and PR Director felt this budget approach was necessary for several reasons:

- To meet the stated objectives of the plan and see success upon evaluation.
- To allot adequate time for the two-person PR team to provide successful implementation.
- To keep branding a top system priority for identified audiences even though budget allocations were small.
- To assuage primary and secondary audience perception that thousands of dollars were spent on branding in one budget season.



Budget Snapshot

FY2017

- In-kind - Research Consultants
- In-kind - Avalanche Consultants
- \$150 - Mission Card Design
- \$200 - Mission Poster Design
- \$350 - Logo Refresh Design
- \$400 - Style Guide Design
- \$400 - Recruitment Brochure
- \$850 - Graphic Designer

\$2,350 - Total

FY2018

- In-kind - Website Revamp
- In-kind - 2pg Article Spread
- \$600 - Billboard by WP Road
- \$700 - Name Tags
- \$1211 - LaGrange Living Ad
- \$1517 - Business Cards
- \$1800 - Billboard by Parkway
- \$1930 - Mission Poster Printing
- \$5975 - Branded Swag

\$14,333 - Total

FY2019

- \$375 - Branded TCSS Car Decals
- \$612 - Banner Display
- \$855 - Canvases for Arts & Apps
- \$1647 - Branded Bags
- \$2222 - Re-order of Swag
- \$2300 - Brd. of Ed. Bldg. Branding
- \$5523 - Branded Shirts

\$13,534 - Total

Branding the District 3-year Total = \$30,217

Implementation

Implementation of Brand the District was an entirely collaborative effort - even during the research and pitch phase of the plan. This was important because the organization was seeking to build trust with our primary and secondary audiences to build brand ambassadors. If we locked them out of the program objectives, we would have been defeating the purpose of branding from the onset of approval.

From the initial conversation and data presentation with Executive Cabinet, the PR Team considered our actions, customer service, and planning an integral part of the implementation process.

In preparation for the Brand the District announcement, we held employee meetings to advise the official date of announcement. We posted a dedicated webpage with branding information and links so primary audiences could become familiar with the new look and feel before the release date.

This program contained a large social media push, advertising, and hosting of events in-person and on Facebook, which was our identified social media platform. The timeline for launching Brand the District - April 2018 through February 2019 - was deliberately written to take place over a 10-month period to account for two budget seasons and to host events that brought continuous excitement around the new brand.

Implementation Activity Snapshot

*Host [TCSS Tailgate](#) to [Invite Partners](#) inviting partners and parents

*Host Student Art Event - [Arts & Apps](#) to Brand District Walls

*Create [Branding Webpage](#)

*[5 Reasons](#) Social Media Campaign

*Grassroots [Registration and Day 1](#) school visits - F2F

*[Graduation Rate](#) Campaign

*[Employee](#) Highlights

*Provide swag bags to all principals, board members, school media personnel for giveaways

*Billboard Advertisement

*Media Relations Blitz

*Host Employee Information Meetings

*Employee Celebration Cart

*Board of Education Presentations

*Create 'Your Future Starts Today' [Newsletter](#)



Evaluation

Using the stated objectives, the PR Team used formative and summative evaluations to gauge if program outcomes were met or exceeded. It was through these evaluations that the team made adjustments to realize outcomes or celebrated when we saw successes.

Objective 1: By implementing Branding Guidelines and making budgetary concessions over three years, the team achieved this goal by providing materials such as name tags and business cards while working with each department and school over the summer months to update forms, website pages, and other materials. In addition, the team held a [student-driven Arts & Appetizers event](#) that provided artwork and materials for the district building walls to create an education-centered environment.

***GOAL ACHIEVED: February 2019**

Objective 2: Our initial surveys showed that the majority of our audience was on [Facebook](#), so we concentrated efforts on this social platform. Formative data highlighted high engagement posts and videos that the team emulated throughout the entirety of the program. We also began driving conversation to the district's Facebook page by using two-way communication and responding to questions and feedback. In addition, we hosted training sessions for representatives from our 19 locations who in turn built a social media presence.

***STRETCH GOAL ACHIEVED:**

Jan. 2017 - 5,208 Followers - Baseline

Jan. 2018 - 6,573 Followers - 26.2% increase

Jan. 2019 - 8,480 Followers - 62.9% increase

Objective 3: When the program began, the team began streamlining press releases, training school ambassadors to share student and teacher success stories directly with media, and capturing video interviews at events to share with broadcast news stations outside of our region. We saw a dramatic rise in year-over-year positive media placements.

***STRETCH GOAL ACHIEVED:**

Story Releases 2017: 95

January 2017 - December 2017: 1063 w/ 82% Positive Story Releases 2018: 101

January 2018 - December 2018: 1024 w/ 91% Positive

Objective 4: The PR team purchased camera equipment and worked with the high school AV/Film instructor to provide a four-hour professional learning on video creation and storytelling. The team did not have this skill set, so they used in-house personnel to help train them. In addition, the team purchased simple video editing equipment to aid in the creation of compelling video.

***STRETCH GOAL ACHIEVED:**

Jan. 2017 - 1 video

Apr. 2018 - 5 videos

Mar. 2019 - 22 videos (440% increase in one year)

Objective 5: The PR team partnered with Human Resources to add one question to the employee stay survey. It was the first time the survey was administered. The information was used as a baseline to implement rewards and recognition programs for employees.

***STRETCH GOAL ACHIEVED:**

70% of employees said they were 'happy to work for TCSS and would recommend others to work here.'

Challenges

1. Superintendent Resignation - Three days into the new school year, and after eight years on-the-job, the Superintendent quickly resigned. The PR team built a #TCSSuper communication plan as part of branding. With the swift resignation, the Executive Cabinet and PR team abandoned the plan until a new Superintendent is named.

2. Return on Investment - The PR team was asked to provide ROI throughout the plan. The team took this as an opportunity to educate audiences on Branding the District time frame, budget considerations, and communication practices as well as show areas of struggles and outcomes that were celebrated as successes.

3. Zone Change Timing - Brand the District was scheduled for public release at a time when the system began changing school zones. The team chose to continue branding release with the conversation shifting to how all schools provide quality education.

4. Me First Mentality - As schools began building a social media presence, information was shared on school pages vs. the district. The PR team educated Executive Cabinet about social media shares. The PR team also began to write more in-depth story releases as opposed to social media shares. This helped meet outcomes.



Research Examples

Research analysis included primary and secondary research conducted by the Chamber of Commerce, Georgia Department of Education, TCSS School Improvement Team, and TCSS PR Team. This research helped shape the ongoing efforts for the Brand the District plan.





Troup County School System

Communication Plan Activities

The PR team created a plan of activities and timeline to ensure Brand the District stayed on target. A list of these activities included sending messages, creating a calendar of events related to branding, hosting photo shoots, and even ordering swag materials.

Items to be Created May 16, 2016

Item	Priority	Owner	Due Date	Status
Logo	High	Brand	5/16/16	Complete
Website	High	Brand	5/16/16	In Progress
Brochure	Medium	Brand	5/16/16	Not Started
Signage	Medium	Brand	5/16/16	Not Started
Swag	Low	Brand	5/16/16	Not Started

List of Upcoming Activities

Date	Video Opportunity	Purpose	Status	POC
September Week of Sept. 13	Graduation Rate	to remind parents to be graduate!	Not started	WES (CEI) EVES SM GAMS CMS VCS THS SAP CHHS HS
Day of release 12/14	High School Graduation Rate	WES - HS. Progress is that holding students' improvement and how their graduation rate went up. Can be manufactured by sending parents that we're going to do this to teachers (take notes on grad rate) - what it means for TCSS students can tell to parents about this achievement is possible for the graduate but don't graduate more to their parents on the same. Also make it list of video opportunities that are available at these	Not started	WES

List of Past Activities

Date	Activity	Priority	Owner	Status
11-11	Site Visit	High	Brand	Complete
11-11	Parent Meeting	Medium	Brand	In Progress
11-11	Teacher Meeting	Medium	Brand	Not Started
11-11	Student Meeting	Low	Brand	Not Started
11-11	Community Meeting	Low	Brand	Not Started

TCSS Branding Campaign Brand Articulation Document

Overview

Over 20 years ago, the first of three school systems merged to eventually create Troup County Schools (TCSS) in 1993. During this merger, the three systems - Hagarville, LaGrange - schools closed, campuses combined, and the students, parents, and Troup County all felt a sense of anxiety and uncertainty towards the new school system as a collective. A regime was created to unite the system and both are still in use today.

Three decades later, the district still faces overwhelming pressures based such as low test scores, low teacher morale, high employee turnover, and distrust between the district and the community.

Internally, there has been a realization that TCSS has evolved, the way students learn has changed, and the classroom atmosphere has advanced to include student-centered learning, behavior management, and more. These essential components, and more, have fundamentally transformed the way we teach and learn. TCSS is embarking on a strategic branding and marketing campaign to rebrand the district.

Brand the District Problem Statement

After research, the Executive Cabinet and Public Relations team noted the problem statement is accurate and resonant to TCSS. Over the years, the internal and external branding efforts have been inconsistent. Over the years, the internal and external branding efforts have been inconsistent.

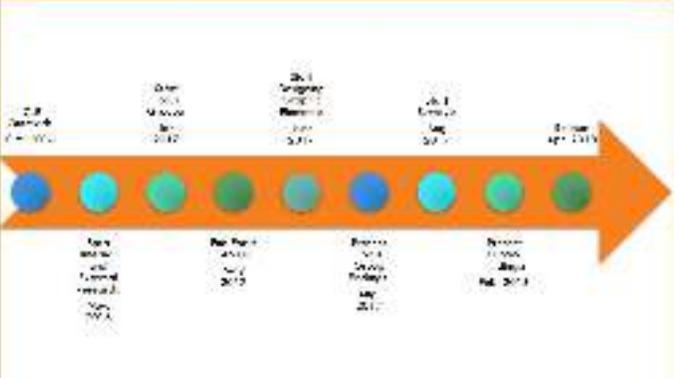
While we have a completed mission statement, district goals and beliefs, we need to align district branding and branding materials. This plan seeks to:

- Define the TCSS brand position
- Establish a vision statement
- Developing the visual articulation
- Creating a marketing timeline

Task	Responsible	Status	Notes
Employee Spotlight Profiles			
Spotlight profiles for approval	Volunteer Teacher	In Progress	Need names from Principals
Submit profiles to teachers	Volunteer Teacher	Complete	Review on branding doc
Take photos of employees	Emily Young	Complete	
Take notes of employees	Dan Myers	Complete	
Create quote with photos	Volunteer Teacher	Complete	
Signage			
Work with sign designer on 1/2 examples	Volunteer Teacher	Complete	
Submit signage to sign designer	Volunteer Teacher	Complete	Caption: Task Field, Senior Camp, Chamber, etc.
Share sign with staff members	Volunteer Teacher	Complete	
Final approval @ sign on 1/16	Volunteer Teacher	Complete	1/16 Feedback, Signage is in production. Signage is in production and will be delivered to schools.
TCSS Branding Survey - See below	Volunteer Teacher	Complete	
ASC Art Gallery			
Talk to Mr. Finkbeiner	Volunteer Teacher	Complete	
Research materials we are looking for	Dan Myers, Emily Young	Complete	
Talk to art teachers @ school	Volunteer Teacher/Dan Myers	Complete	
Working on items needed for gallery	Volunteer Teacher/Dan Myers	Complete	
Market Research			
Collecting market research	Dan Myers	Complete	
Collecting market research	Dan Myers	Complete	
Collecting market research	Dan Myers	Complete	
Collecting market research	Young	Complete	
Collecting market research	Young	Complete	

Communication Plan Timeline

Activity	Start Date	End Date	Status
Logo Design	5/16/16	5/16/16	Complete
Website Development	5/16/16	6/15/16	In Progress
Brochure Design	5/16/16	6/15/16	Not Started
Signage Design	5/16/16	6/15/16	Not Started
Swag Design	5/16/16	6/15/16	Not Started





Troup County School System

Implementation Marketing

For implementation, a press release was written, employee meetings and emails built anticipation, articles were written in local newspapers, billboard advertisements were placed around the county, and signs with the new logo and tagline were ordered for each school. School ambassadors took photos, shared on social media, and a video was created to welcome the new brand.





Troup County School System

Old Logo vs. New Logo

The new logo and tagline was conceived by students.

The old logo was almost 25 years old. Feedback session attendees stated the seal with the crest was 'dated' and 'made TCSS appear unapproachable'.

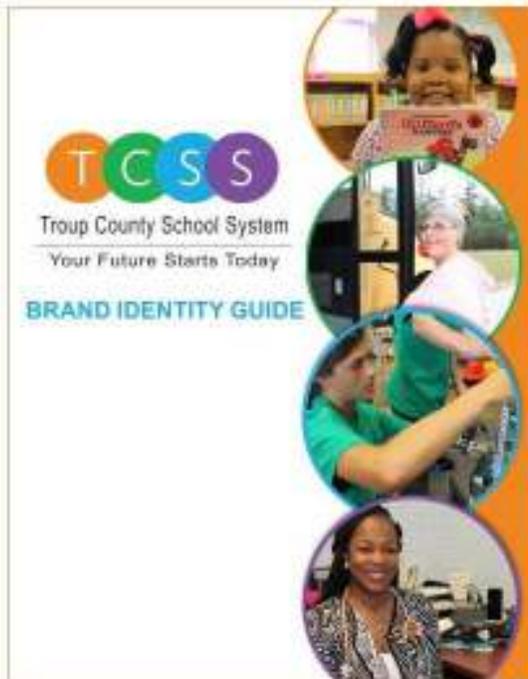
The feedback about the new logo stated it is 'fresh, diverse, full of life' and 'makes TCSS look like they are thinking ahead and moving forward'.



Troup County School System
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Branding Guidelines

The team shared the [Brand Identity Guide](#) link and collateral materials such as letterhead and business cards. There were also items like umbrellas, Tshirts, pop sockets, and flash drives that were placed into logo'd swag bags for school personnel to give away to employees, students, and community members to help spread the conversation about the TCSS brand.





Troup County School System

Old Collateral vs. New Collateral

A new mission poster was one of the first pieces created to place in all buildings and classrooms across the system. The new poster highlights the vision and new photography created for branded items and videos. All items feature TCSS schools and people.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Troup County School System is to educate all students in a challenging and safe learning environment, so they will become productive citizens in a diverse and changing world.

DISTRICT GOALS

- Ensure all students achieve at their highest level of academic performance.
- Provide a safe, secure, and wholesome learning environment.
- Engage all students, staff, families, businesses, and the community in the educational process.
- Maximize efficiency and productivity in pursuit of the system's mission.

BELIEFS

We believe that:

- Students are the primary focus of all activities.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique talents, interests, abilities, and intellectual needs.
- Students have a shared responsibility for their own learning.
- Clear and high expectations are critical to success.
- All students can learn when provided with a rigorous, challenging, and relevant educational environment, socially and emotionally.
- All students must be prepared to become effective in a knowledge-based, technologically rich, and vibrant 21st-century world.
- Effective and engaging instruction provides the knowledge and skills to meet global challenges and opportunities.
- Teachers, when not striving to ensure success for every student.
- Students, staff, parents, and the community share the responsibility for the success of the TCSS mission.
- Students benefit from meaningful, relevant, and contextualized learning experiences.
- Effective communication between home and school is essential.
- The TCSS should be guided by long-range plans designed to meet the vision, mission, and goals of the district.





OUR VISION

TROUP COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM will provide educational opportunities that inspire learners to be independent, successful, and happy.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the TROUP COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM is to educate all students in a challenging and safe learning environment, so they will become productive citizens in a diverse and changing world.

OUR GOALS

1. Ensure all students achieve at their highest level of academic performance.
2. Provide a safe, secure, and wholesome learning environment.
3. Engage all students, staff, families, businesses, and the community in the educational process.
4. Maximize efficiency and productivity in pursuit of the system's mission.

OUR BELIEFS

- Students are the primary focus of all activities.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique talents, interests, and intellectual needs.
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- Effective communication between home and school is essential.
- The TCSS should be guided by long-range plans designed to meet the vision, mission, and goals of the district.






Points of Pride

District Priorities

- Literacy
- Culture of Excellence
- Rigorous and Relevant Learning

2014-2015 Budget

2014-2015 Budget	\$14,474,140
2013-2014 Budget	\$14,200,000
2012-2013 Budget	\$13,900,000

2014-2015 Enrollment

Elementary	1,100
Middle	1,100
High	1,100
Total	3,300

2014-2015 Revenue

State	\$10,000,000
Local	\$4,474,140
Total	\$14,474,140

2014-2015 Expenditures

Salaries	\$8,000,000
Benefits	\$2,000,000
Materials	\$1,000,000
Utilities	\$1,000,000
Transportation	\$1,000,000
Other	\$2,474,140
Total	\$14,474,140




TROUP COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM



Enriching Faces

30,000 TSS Educators in One! - Five Power Equal!

2014-2015 Budget

2014-2015 Enrollment

2014-2015 Revenue

2014-2015 Expenditures



Troup County School System

Video Creation

Including the use of video media for engagement was a top priority for the team. It was a line-item in the communication plan. Videos were created to share information, create conversation, and make engagement with the public fun. All videos were created in-house with no additional budgeting. They included key messages, tagline, and new branding.





Graduation Rate

The Troup County School System graduation rate was the highest ever when the announcement was made in Sept. 2018. It was 6.1% higher than the prior year. In addition, the sub group graduation rate was greater. The team used this opportunity to connect with audiences and also congratulate the successes of the TCSS students and staff.



THE LiCRANCE Daily News

CLOSER LOOK: 2018 GRADUATION RATES

School	2017	2018
TCSS HIGH SCHOOLS (TOTAL)	78.0%	84.1%
CHICKAWAUGH HIGH SCHOOL	82.0%	84.1%
WINDFORD HIGH SCHOOL	78.0%	84.1%
TRUMP HIGH SCHOOL	78.0%	84.1%
WINDY HILLS HIGH SCHOOL	78.0%	84.1%

GRAD RATES ON THE RISE
TCSS graduation rate up to 84.1 percent

BY DANIEL DUNN

The Troup County School System has a proud record of the nation's highest and the state's top graduation rates.

The Georgia Department of Education released its 2018 graduation rate. Troup, with its consistent upward momentum, was the state's 17th overall graduate rate, an increase from last year's rate of 78 percent. The statewide average was 81.8 percent.

Troup High School had the highest graduation rate of the county at 87.4 percent, an increase of 1.4 percentage points from last year.

Chickawauk High School's graduation rate increased to 84.1 percent, up from 82.0 percent last year.

Windford High School's graduation rate increased to 84.1 percent, up from 78.0 percent last year.

Trump High School's graduation rate increased to 84.1 percent, up from 78.0 percent last year.

Windy Hills High School's graduation rate increased to 84.1 percent, up from 78.0 percent last year.

— 84.1%

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Troup County School System - Graduation Rate Edition

Culture, Communication, Collaboration Helped Move the Graduation Rate Needle

TCSS Graduation Rate Video - 2018

This year, TCSS is proud to celebrate the 2018 graduation rate - 84.1%. In May, 712 students walked across the stage to accept their diplomas. Principals attribute increases in rates to a shift in school culture, collaboration across divisions and schools, and increased communication between the school community, parents, students, and business partners.

[Read more about here.](#)



Employee Spotlights

Employees are an integral part to the way TCSS does business. After reviewing survey feedback, the PR team began incorporating employee highlights and spotlights in all aspects of communication planning. One employee was featured each month on the system's digital platforms and in traditional media outlets.





Media Update and Coverage Spreadsheet

Tracking monthly media sentiment was a formative evaluation platform the team implemented to track district priorities, placements, and share of voice in traditional media publications.

Date	Publication	Headline	Synopsis	Focus	Tone
9/1/2018	Hogansville Herald	Great Achievement	HGVES kindergarten students learn site words	LRRS	Positive
9/1/2018	Hogansville Herald	Are you filling your bucket with Kindness?	HGVES students are using the book Have you Filled a Buck Today?	LRRS	Positive
9/1/2018	Hogansville Herald	The Crayon Box That Talked	3rd grade students at CES worked on a team building activity	RRS	Positive
9/1/2018	Hogansville Herald	We All Scream	CES hosted ice cream social for CES families	Success	Positive
9/1/2018	LaGrange News	School Lessons	Students create space stations in Discovery Class	RRS	Positive
9/1/2018	LaGrange News	Yearbook Brings Back Memories	Former students reminiscing about her time at THS	Success	Positive
9/1/2018	LaGrange News	LCES hosted Back to School Bash	LCES hosted bash for students & families	Success	Positive
9/1/2018	LaGrange News	School Lessons	HGVES PreK students are learning Numbers and Shapes	Success	Positive
9/1/2018	LaGrange News	School Lessons	Family Liaison Baswell fills students buckets with kindness	Success	Positive
9/1/2018	The Times-News	Broadcast Team	WPES announces broadcast team	Success	Positive
9/3/2018	Troup County News	Fun At School	WRBL Meteorologist speaks to GNMS students	RRS	Positive
9/3/2018	Troup County News	Fun At School	HGVES study space stations in Discovery Class	RRS	Positive
9/3/2018	Troup County News	Fun At School	PreK students are working hard learning numbers & shapes	RRS	Positive

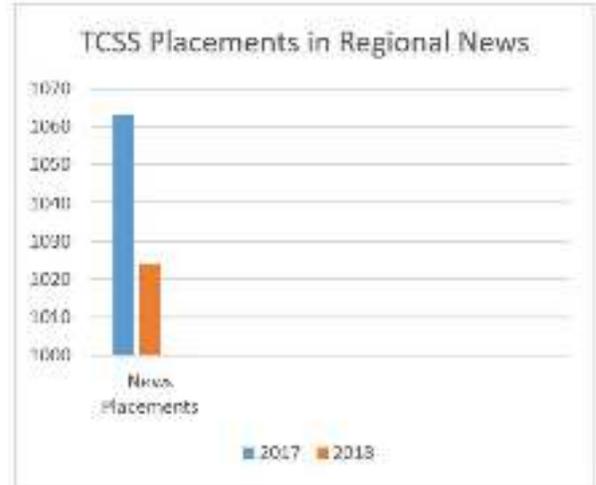
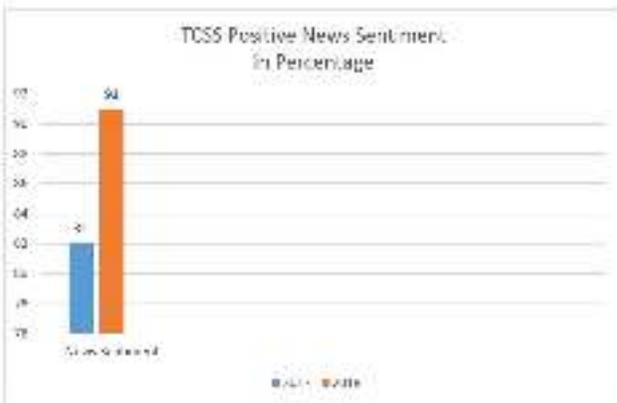
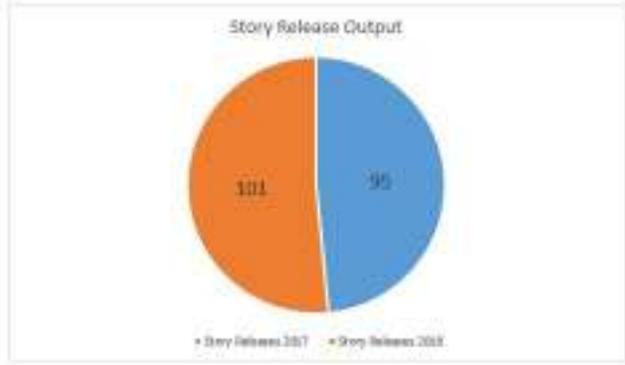
9/28/2018	Google Alert	Markets Insider SAE International	Jet Top sponsored competition for 8th graders from TCSS	LRRS	Positive	
9/28/2018	Hogansville Herald	Responsibility	5th grade class at HGVES focus on Responsibility by setting goals	LRRS	Positive	
9/28/2018	LaGrange News	Chromebook Initiative	Placing digital technology in the hands of 6,000 students	LRRS	Positive	
9/29/2018	LaGrange News	Discussing next steps	qualifications for new superintendent	Success	Positive	
9/29/2018	LaGrange News	Editorial	Learning from the blood path safety first	Success	Positive	
Total Stories			142			
				Priority		Success Literacy, Rigor/Highness, Success Rigor/Highness, Success
				Tone		
				Tone Percentage		



Troup County School System

Media Update Emails and Evaluation

The team shared monthly updates with school ambassadors, principals, Executive Cabinet, and Board members. This sharing of information caused a friendly competition between schools to share more positive news each month. Stories were also shared across platforms from websites to social media and into traditional media.



November Media Update

Volanda Stephen

Dear Board Members, Principals, School Ambassadors, Executive Cabinet, Board Members, and Staff: It is my pleasure to share with you the results of our November media update. The purpose of this update is to provide you with a summary of the media coverage we received for the month of November. The following table provides a breakdown of the media coverage we received for the month of November.

Category	Count	Percentage
Positive	87 Positive	95%
Neutral	4 Neutral	4%
Negative	1 Negative	1%
Total	92 Articles	

January and February Media Update

Volanda Stephen

Dear Board Members, Principals, School Ambassadors, Executive Cabinet, Board Members, and Staff: It is my pleasure to share with you the results of our January and February media update. The purpose of this update is to provide you with a summary of the media coverage we received for the months of January and February. The following table provides a breakdown of the media coverage we received for the months of January and February.

Category	Count	Percentage
Positive	46 Positive	92.0%
Neutral	4 Neutral	8%
Negative	2 Negative	4%
Total	52 Articles	

January Media Update - Increase in Media Placements!

Volanda Stephen

Dear Board Members, Principals, School Ambassadors, Executive Cabinet, Board Members, and Staff: It is my pleasure to share with you the results of our January media update. The purpose of this update is to provide you with a summary of the media coverage we received for the month of January. The following table provides a breakdown of the media coverage we received for the month of January.

Category	Count	Percentage
Positive	80 Positive	91%
Neutral	1 Neutral	1%
Negative	2 Negative	2%
Total	83 Articles	

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 Troup County School System Website



Customer Service

Providing top-notch customer service helps TCSS build trust. We implemented new communication tools like a newsletter and Facebook Chats to create two-way conversation. We began to see an uptick in positive comments.



Troup County School System
Published by Rorking · September 27, 2018

Update: Thanks for the questions. We hope you will support this initiative and tell others. If there are more questions, please drop them below. We will be checking this post periodically throughout the day.

Good Morning - We are ready to kick off our Chromebook FB Chat. For the next hour, Josh Moneyperny, IT Director, will be answering your questions. If you have any, feel free to drop them below... See More

Get More Likes, Comments and Shares
Boost this post for \$19 to reach up to 7,600 people

3,821 People Reached 879 Engagements

20 18 Comments · 12 Shares

Like Comment Share

Let's get it started!

What a GREAT Day for Troup County's staff! I will answer the questions and will be back during the school year. BUT THE BEST PART IS... WE GOT THEM!

Chromebooks Are Out!

15,300+ Views
11:25 AM

Like Comment Share

Okay parents and guardians - for the next four, the FB page is now being manned by Shanitra Ransom, Coordinator of Student Assignment and Sherika McCutcheon, Student Records Coordinator. Feel free to drop your questions about REGISTRATION below!

Get More Likes, Comments and Shares
This post is performing better than 75% of other posts on your Page. Boost it to get more great results.

4,173 People Reached 1,187 Engagements

Tobitha Blakley, Kaylon Stafford and 20 others · 25 Comments

Like Comment Share

Dale Jackson recommends Troup County School System · October 1 at 9:55 AM

I believe in Troup County! I believe that Troup County has the potential to be the very best school system in this state and region! I believe there are amazing things happening in every aspect of education here in Troup County! I believe our students and community deserve the very best education in this state! I believe we are building the foundation today that will become the very best educational system in the state! I believe the only thing that can hold us back is our own self! I believe that Troup County will rise above and establish itself as the example statewide on how to prepare the future student for life after school! I believe in Troup!

Like Comment Share

Your Future Starts Today

Troup County School System - Employee Recognition Edition

TCSS Appreciates Our Bus Drivers - DTR

Victoria Martin, TCSS Bus Driver

TCSS is proud to honor our bus drivers. Recently, we recognized National School Bus Safety Week. Local Cedar Elementary School 5th grader, Gabby Martin won first place in the state-wide school bus safety poster contest. Here, Victoria Martin shares why she loves driving for TCSS.



Outcomes and Next Steps

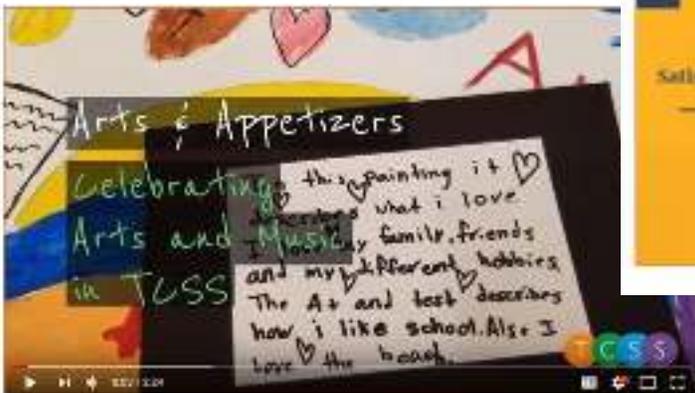
Showing outcomes for the PR team's efforts was imperative to the success of the program. It was funded year-over-year due to the successes that were realized. Some of those efforts included a high employee satisfaction survey rating and an AdvancED Powerful Practice in stakeholder input through the Brand the District process. This program was in support of other district priorities and is continually evolving based on audience feedback and input. Next steps will focus on a Human Resources recruiting and retention program.



Powerful Practice #1
 The Troup County school system has developed consistent and deliberate strategies that provide meaningful roles for stakeholders' input into numerous major decisions (e.g., budgeting process, system's mission and vision statement, facility planning and system branding).

Primary Standard: 1.8

Recently, system personnel decided it was time for a new logo. The previous logo had used for many years and did not portray a forward-thinking image. Rather than hire an outside advertising company to develop a new logo, the opportunity was given to the students. Several options were considered, and a focus group provided additional input before the new logo was selected.



Question	Satisfied (Strongly agree & Agree)	Disatisfied (Disagree & Strongly Disagree)	Comments
Q6: I am happy to work for TCSS and would recommend someone else to work here as well.	70%	10%	Avg. score 3.82
Q6: I feel valued at work and I feel that my job is important.	71%	17%	Avg. score 3.8
Q3: I believe that I am able to reach my full potential by working for TCSS and am satisfied with the opportunities for promotion.	56%	21%	Avg. score 3.47

