Three outstanding ways to earn national recognition for your district and school communication efforts:

- **Gold Medallion Award**
  - Entry Deadline: March 16, 2020
  - For superior educational public relations programs

- **Publications and Digital Media Awards**
  - Entry Deadline: March 30, 2020
  - For outstanding work in all types and forms of educational communications: print, digital, video, audio, websites and more

- **Golden Achievement Award**
  - Entry Deadline: April 13, 2020
  - For exemplary public relations activities, programs and projects

New and Easy E-Submission Process
Gold Medallion Awards

The National School Public Relation Association’s Gold Medallion Award is the top national competition recognizing superior educational public relations programs.

Entries may come from public and private schools; community or vocational/technical colleges; state/national education groups; and any agency, consultant or business in partnership with any of the above education agencies. A Gold Medallion will be given for each winning entry selected by competition judges. Judges may award more than one Gold Medallion in a category. Winners will be recognized nationally and presented with their Gold Medallions at NSPRA’s 2020 National Seminar on July 12–15 in St. Louis, Mo.

Award Criteria

- A planned presentation is necessary, submitted electronically (see “Rules”), organized in the logical order of research, planning, implementation and evaluation (RPIE).
- Read the rules carefully. If you fail to follow the rules, the judges will subtract points in judging your entry.
- Your entry will be judged on concept clarity, good writing and evidence of objective project/program evaluation. Judges are experienced public relations professionals.

Award Rules

All Gold Medallion Award entries must be submitted electronically via the new online NSPRA awards system nspra.org/award-apply. Compile all application materials into a single PDF document. Multiple support materials will not be accepted. Include specific entry form information, as indicated, on the cover page of the PDF document.

Programs/projects/campaigns must have been underway or completed between March 2019 and the contest deadline of March 16, 2020. Note: For submitted Bond/Finance Campaign entries, all results need to be completed by the deadline to be eligible for an award this calendar year.

Award Entry Guidelines

The total award entry is limited to no more than 26 pages (packaged in a single PDF) and must include:

- Cover page with entry form information — Include entrant’s name and title, district/organization name, address, phone, email, title of entry, entry category, number of communication staff, size/type of district/org.
- Synopsis of the program/project/campaign that provides a clear, concise overview (maximum 350 words).
- Summary (not to exceed 6 pages) of the program/project/campaign — The summary should include links to any key support materials (document PDFs, websites, videos, social media, etc.).

Additional support material demonstrating the four-step strategic planning process (RPIE) outlined below may be included in the PDF document, but may not exceed the 26 page total. Samples or brief synopses of support materials are sufficient (e.g., no need to include complete survey results or reports). Organize the summary carefully around the four-step PR planning process and clearly describe each component.

The judges will evaluate on a point scale and are looking for strategic quality, not mass quantity, of examples/materials.

- Research — Provide a careful analysis of the need for the program/project/campaign; include stated goals and measurable objectives.
- Planning — Describe planning and development of the program, campaign or activity, including how target audiences were identified, the specific roles of key leaders and their related responsibilities, and how communication vehicles were selected/created. Outline the specific budget and resources that were determined and set.
- Implementation — Outline the specific timelines (start and end dates, key target dates, etc.); describe the strategies/activities, communication components carried out; provide examples of the quality of written and graphic materials; and demonstrate how key messaging supported goals.
- Evaluation — Explain how the assessment component was included and implemented. Clearly state measurement indicators of success and include demonstrated evidence of effectiveness of strategies/messaging. Explain how improvements/changes/ revisions/additions and next steps were identified and incorporated into future planning.

How the Submission Process Works

1) As an NSPRA member, you can use your username and password from the NSPRA website. The username is your member email. In case you can’t remember your password, you can reset it. Login at nspra.org/award-apply. Nonmembers will have the option to create their own profile.

2) Once logged in, fill out your profile. Under category, select Gold Medallion and then upload your application materials as a PDF. Once you click Save and Finalize, you’ll be able to check out and pay via credit card or PayPal.

3) Once the entry is entered into the content database, you’ll receive a confirmation code after the checkout process is completed, which you can print or screenshot, as well as an email confirmation. Winners will be notified by phone in May 2020.

Deadline: Entries must be submitted by March 16, 2020 at nspra.org/award-apply.
All entries become part of NSPRA’s resource files. All materials submitted may be reproduced, displayed, referenced or summarized in any NSPRA publication, website or resource.

Entrants may request a summary of judges’ comments by emailing awards@nspra.org no later than July 30. Summaries will be provided in late August/September.

Fee: $159 per entry for NSPRA members; $215 per entry for non-members. In the new online NSPRA awards system, you can pay by credit card or by PayPal when you finalize and submit your entry. Payment must accompany all entries. Purchase orders or vouchers cannot be accepted.

Deadline: Entries must be submitted on OpenWater by March 16, 2020.

Winners will be notified by phone in May 2020.

New and Easy E-Submission Process
This year, all communication awards entries will be submitted digitally through our new online submission system. Members can use their NSPRA username and password, while nonmembers can create their own profile. Submit your applications at the following website: nspra.org/award-apply. You’ll find a detailed how-to video guides and a list of rules at nspra.org/nsca.

Gold Medallion Categories*
Gold Medallion entries will be considered based on these specific categories. Be sure to pick your entry’s category on OpenWater.

- Comprehensive, Strategic, Year-Round Communication Programs
- Public Engagement/Parental Involvement
- Bond/Finance Campaign
- Crisis Communication
- Special Communication Projects/Campaigns
- Marketing Communication

*Judges may select more than one winner or no winners in a category.

Answers to Common Questions

Do I really have a chance?
Yes, your great work has a good chance of winning an award. The Gold Medallion program is the most competitive. In the Golden Achievement program, you compete against yourself to see if you meet the criteria for that award. Normally, a high percentage of Golden Achievement submissions are granted the award as long as they meet the program’s criteria. And the Publications and Digital Media program distributed more than 667 awards last year.

How many awards are given out?
Last year, 667 awards in Publication and Digital Awards, 144 Golden Achievement Awards and 10 Gold Medallions were awarded. For a full listing of last year’s winners, go to www.nspra.org/awards/national-school-communication-awards.

What are some common threads of winning submissions for the Gold Medallion and Golden Achievement programs?
First, complete the profile at the start of your submission and double check everything is correct.

Another major thread, especially in the Gold Medallion program, is the evaluation section where you prove in some statistical way that the program was a success. Just noting that people liked a campaign will not convince most judges that it is a winner. Demonstrate what happened in your school community because of the campaign or program you are entering.

The Golden Achievement program targets special projects or ongoing tactics, but it, too, must conclude with an evaluation component to prove that your submission was successful.

How can I effectively compete with larger school districts and their bigger budgets?
All award programs normally have winners from smaller school districts or individual schools. In the Publications and Digital Media program, separate categories balance out some of the “big budget” concerns.

In the Gold Medallion and Golden Achievement programs, you must prove how successful the efforts were — no matter your size.

Imagine the local pride and excitement your schools will enjoy when their good work — and yours — is put in the national spotlight. Don’t pass up this opportunity. Enter today!

Questions?
Call 301-519-0496 or contact Senior Manager Tommy Jones at tjones@nspra.org.
NSPRA's Publications and Digital Media Awards recognize outstanding education publications, e-newsletters, digital media programs, radio/TV/Video programs, social media, infographics, blogs and websites.

The contest is open to all public or private schools or districts, including special schools such as vocational-technical institutes, regional or county education service agencies; education agencies; and private businesses serving as partners with those organizations.

Prizes are awarded according to publication type and type and size of organization. Your entries are judged only against those from similar organizations.

Winning contest entrants receive a letter notifying them. The top award in each category is the Award of Excellence. Winners of this award will receive a handsome plaque. Winners of Merit and Honorable Mention Awards receive certificates suitable for framing.

Award of Excellence winners will be displayed at NSPRA’s 2020 National Seminar in St. Louis, Mo. A winner’s list will be posted on NSPRA's website.

**Categories:**

- Annual report
- Audio/podcast
- Blogs
- Branding/image package
- Calendar
- Electronic newsletter
- Excellence in writing
- Finance publication
- Handbook
- Infographic
- Internet/intranet website
- Magazine
- Marketing publication
- Marketing material
- Print newsletter/newspaper
- Social media
- Special purpose publication
- Video (produced in-house or with an outside contractor)

**Award Rules**

- Upload summary sheets for the blog, video, audio podcast and social media categories for the Publications and Digital Media Awards. The other categories do not need a summary sheet.
- Publications compete against others in same category and organizational classification.
- Submit as many entries in as many categories as you wish. Video productions and radio entries must be provided as links (YouTube, Vimeo, Google drive, etc.) One link may be submitted per entry fee paid.
- Newsletter/newspaper/electronic newsletter entries must include two different issues (two different months, quarters, etc.) to qualify as an entry. Blogs require a minimum of three different samples.
- Branding/image packages must include three or more separate printed pieces to qualify as an entry.
- Student written and/or produced newsletters or other publications and audio/visual media are not eligible.
- Enter only materials produced since March 2019. Previous entries may not be re-entered.
- Enter an item only in one category (exception: Excellence in Writing entries).
- All material submitted becomes NSPRA’s property and may be reproduced, displayed, referenced or summarized in NSPRA publications or resources.
- Any entry submission shall constitute entrant’s representation that all material is original and/or free from unauthorized use of copy, design, art and/or photographs from other sources.
- Fee per entry: $75 for members; $99 for non-members.

In the new online NSPRA awards system, you can pay by credit card or by PayPal when you finalize and submit your entry. Payment must accompany all entries. Purchase orders or vouchers cannot be accepted.

Submit your application at [nspra.org/award-apply](http://nspra.org/award-apply) by March 30, 2020.

Entrants will be notified of the outcome via a letter by June 30, 2020.

Learn more at nspra.org/nsca. Submit a separate submission for each entry. Questions? Call 301-519-0496 or contact Senior Manager Tommy Jones at tjones@nspra.org.
Golden Achievement Awards

NSPRA’s Golden Achievement Award recognizes exemplary work in your school public relations efforts, regardless of your district’s size or budget. All public and private schools and organizations are eligible for Golden Achievement Awards. Each winner will receive a certificate suitable for framing, a letter of commendation for the district or agency, and recognition on NSPRA’s website.

The Golden Achievement Award is designed as a major recognition program for great activities, regardless of the number of entries we receive. Each entry will be judged against contest criteria — not against other entries.

Award Criteria

Each entry must be summarized on one page and be based on the four-step planning process (RPIE). There must be clear evidence of each step:

- **Research** — Evidence of careful analysis of need for program, campaign or activity, and stated program or activity goals.
- **Planning** — Evidence of thoughtful planning to address need for the program, campaign or activity.
- **Implementation** — Evidence activities, including communication, were carried out as planned.
- **Evaluation** — Evidence that an evaluation component was included in plan development and carried out. Evaluation must include ways to measure success and evidence of objective evaluation in communication techniques used.

Award Rules

- Entries must have been underway or completed between April 2019 and entry deadline of April 13, 2020.
- **Fee per entry:** $75 for members and $99 for non-members. In the new online NSPRA awards system, you can pay by credit card or by PayPal when you finalize and submit your entry. Payment must accompany all entries. *Purchase orders or vouchers cannot be accepted.*
- Submit your application on the OpenWater System at nspra.org/award-apply. Submit a separate application for each entry.
- Each entry will be judged against contest criteria – not against other entries. Judges will select as many winners as meet contest criteria.
- Previous winning entries may not be entered.
- Winners will be notified by mail.
- Please do not submit more than 5 pages of supplemental material for your entry.

Questions?

Call 301-519-0496 or contact Tommy Jones at tjones@nspra.org.
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For superior educational public relations programs

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**Golden Achievement Award**
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New in 2020: NSPRA Online Submission System

This year, all entries will be submitted digitally through our new online submission system. Submit your applications at the following website: nspra.org/award-apply.

You’ll find how-to video guides and a detailed list of the rules for submitting entries at nspra.org/nsca, but here are a few tips to help make this transition seamless:

1) As a member, you can use your username and password from the NSPRA website to login to the submission website. The username is your member email. In case you can’t remember your password, you can reset it at nspra.org/user/password.

Nonmembers will have the option to create their own profile in the new online NSPRA awards system.

2) Upload submissions as PDFs.

3) You can save your entries down at the bottom even if they’re in an incomplete state so you can return to them later. Once they’re finished, adding them to your cart puts them on your list of entries but doesn’t submit them. You can still make changes to that entry or add additional entries at that point. Once you click Save and Finalize, and then checkout to submit your payment, your entries are finalized, so be sure that everything you want is included in the cart.

**How All Award Entries are Judged**

- NSPRA uses independent outside judges to evaluate entries in the Gold Medallion Awards, Publications and Digital Media Awards and Golden Achievement Awards.
- Judges have no pre-set limit on the number or types of awards that may be given in each category. They may also opt to issue no awards in a category if no entries are deemed worthy of recognition.
- Individual judging assessments for Publications and Digital Media Awards and Golden Achievement Awards are confidential and will not be released.
- Gold Medallion entrants may request a summary of the judges’ comments by emailing awards@nspra.org no later than July 30, which will be provided in late August/September.