

NSPRA 2019

**Mark of Distinction
Award Application**

*Professional Development
and Skill Building*

submitted by



Michigan School
Public Relations
Association

due May 15, 2019

Mark of Distinction Entry Specifics

Chapter: Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA)

Please complete and include the information below for each individual entry

 Section I: Membership Building

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

X **Section II: Special Focus Areas**

- X Category A – chapter has less than 50% NSPRA membership
- Category B – chapter has 50% or more NSPRA membership

X 1. Professional Development/PR Skill Building

 2. Special PR/Communication Program, Project or Campaign

- One-time project/program (completed within a single year)
- Continuing annual project/program (repeats each year; demonstrate new/improved/revised components)
- Multi-year project/program (one-time only with defined start and end dates)
- Multi-year phased project/program (components implemented in clearly defined phases each year)

 3. Coalition-Building/Collaborative Communication Effort

2019 National School Public Relations Association Mark of Distinction Award Application

This year, the [Michigan School Public Relations Association](#) (MSPRA) is submitting two entries, one under Section II: Special Focus Areas: **Professional Development/PR Skill-Building** and one under Coalition-Building/Collaborative Communication Efforts.

Section II: Special Focus Areas

Professional Development/PR Skill-Building

Each year, the Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA) plans and provides a variety of programs and activities to support the professional growth and status of its members and improve the communication skills of Michigan educators including administrators, board members, teachers and support staff. This submission includes six examples of professional growth support: A) MSPRA's Annual Conference, B) Two drive-in conferences, C) The Outstanding Superintendent Communicator Award, D) The Gerri Allen School Communicator of the Year Award, E) The Gold Medallion Award, and F) Other examples of public relations training provided by MSPRA members on behalf of MSPRA.

This entry documents and shows evidence of chapter programs/activities, including:

- 1) Impact of overall year-long effort (page 3)
- 2) Statement of chapter goals and objectives for programs/activities (page 2)
- 3) Documentation of conference/workshop/meeting programs and agendas, marketing materials, tip sheets and/or presentations distributed or made available to participants (See links throughout narrative.)
- 4) Examples of specific programs/activities for awards (page 12 and 13)
- 5) Identification of target audience and participation/attendance (pages 4, 9 and 10)
- 6) Documentation/demonstration of measurable outcomes, effectiveness and success of the program/activity (See annual conference evaluation link and drive-in conference evaluation links in narrative.)
- 7) Explanation of how program/activity relates to NSPRA's Goals and Objectives (page 3)
- 8) Other relevant examples of chapter's professional development/PR skill-building efforts (page 13 and 14)



MSPRA's Annual Conference participants take their learning seriously, paying close attention to the Crisis Roundtable discussions.

Michigan School Public Relations Association

Overview of MSPRA Professional Development & Skill-Building Activities

The Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA) devotes much of its human and financial resources to professional development and skill building. The results are some of the best available communication and public relations training. The consistent, high quality of our effort helps our members be better communicators, aids in member retention, and drives conference attendance and participation.

Our primary professional development activities are:

- Our spring Annual Conference, which offers two days of intensive skill-building sessions, networking and learning.
- Our drive-in conferences that feature timely, topical training with expert speakers to equip members with knowledge and skills.
- Our Outstanding Superintendent Communicator Award to recognize the critical communication role of the leaders of our organizations.
- Our Outstanding School Communicator Award to recognize front-line practitioners.
- Our Gold Medallion Award that recognizes member skills and encourages sharing of high-quality projects and programs.

The MSPRA Executive Board appoints a board member to manage these Professional Development initiatives: the Annual Conference, the Communication Awards, Membership service activities and APR Certification. Typically, an additional 1-3 board members are either conference co-chairs, assist with the awards, or help coordinate drive-in conferences. Again this year, we recruited several MSPRA members to serve on our Professional Development Committee, giving them statewide experience/exposure while giving our Annual Conference statewide input. It was a positive growth opportunity for all involved.

The Board's goals for its annual and drive-in conferences include:

- Building skills for all levels of members, from those who are new to the profession to those who are veterans.
- Preparing members to address current hot topics in Michigan education.
- Networking to strengthen professional relationships.
- Recognizing the skills and sharing the successful strategies of MSPRA/NSPRA contest winners.
- Sharing some of the topics, trends, and speakers heard at the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) Seminar. This year, our Annual Conference "bookend" keynote speaker, Steve Knagg, was also an NSPRA presenter.



Steve Knagg, a Past NSPRA President, shared his keen wit and sage advice with us as our opening and closing keynote speaker.

And, MSPRA's Communication Awards are designed to:

- Affirm school districts' communication efforts.
- Elevate exceptional communication programs, products and practitioners.
- Encourage best practices among those providing communication services in Michigan's public schools.

Together, MSPRA's Communication Awards, Annual Conference and drive-in conferences provide unparalleled opportunities for members and interested others to learn about and advance their communication skills. All of these activities generate widespread participation from communicators, educators and staff members across the state.

The impact of this year's effort is reflected in the nearly 160 registrants (members and non-members), speakers and sponsors who attended our three conferences.

Evaluations from all these activities are mined for improvement ideas and suggestions. Every few years, these activities are reinvented to ensure their relevance, value to our members and high quality of programming. We are using social media and technology to promote our organization and events, and are finding new ways to use these tools for professional development.

Our reputation for professionalism and excellence means we are the group other state education-related associations turn to for communication advice, toolkits, presentations and workshops for their members. Our board members can be found at the conferences and meetings of many of these partner organizations, helping to equip other members of the school family with the communication skills they need.

MSPRA's professional development activities mirror the goals and objectives of NSPRA.

- MSPRA is the go-to organization for strategic communication.
- MSPRA is a leader in the use of technology to advance education through responsible communication.
- MSPRA provides valuable services and resources to our members to help them acquire and sharpen the skills they need to:
 - ✓ Plan and implement an effective public relations program.
 - ✓ Be recognized and valued as critical members of school/district leadership teams.



Members wait for the professional development opportunities that MSPRA offers. We work hard to make it some of the best school PR training available.

Our seminars, sessions and speakers are chosen to build the abilities of our members and members of the school family.

Through purposeful planning and expert implementation, our chapter works to elevate the role of the school communicator, the skill of our members (and their colleagues), and the value we each bring to our schools and communities.

The 2019 Annual MSPRA Conference



This year, MSPRA held its annual two-day conference “*Why Is Everything a Crisis? It doesn’t have to be!*” on March 14 and 15, 2019 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Lansing, Michigan. A total of [86 people](#) including presenters, members, vendors and interested others registered for the conference.

In addition to the usual fare of large- and small-group sessions, the conference also featured some special activities, displays and commemorations marking MSPRA’s 60th Anniversary as a chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA).

We promoted the annual conference with a series of electronic messages to members and others. There were conference-teaser and registration-reminders in our weekly MSPRA Minute that included a registration link. We also mailed a [postcard](#) to members.

Unique Features

These unique features were part of MSPRA’s 2019 Annual Conference:

- 1) Interim State Superintendent, Sheila Alles, opened our conference on Thursday morning, presenting a congratulatory letter on MSPRA’s 60th Anniversary, jointly signed by her and the Michigan State Board of Education President.
- 2) Our first keynote speaker was Steve Knagg, a former NSPRA President and frequent NSPRA substitute speaker. Steve started us out with “Fighting the Good Fight.”
- 3) On Friday, our final keynote presentation was also with Steve Knagg. Steve bookended the conference, closing us out with “The Art of Calling in Well.”
- 4) We had six sponsors this year: Blackboard, West, Finalsite, Peachjar, Foxbright and Edlio. Our sponsors and their displays were in the same meeting room as our large-group sessions, which gave them convenient access to our members. We updated our [sponsorship menu](#) (originally adapted from Ohio’s model) which continues to work well. The higher-level sponsors were each offered a break-out session.
- 5) Our presenters brought us national, as well as state and local communication perspectives, helping us view our work in the context of the bigger picture.
- 6) For the second year, we had an app for the conference. It was originally designed by Blackboard as part of its Platinum sponsorship last year.
- 7) In honor of MSPRA’s 60th Anniversary, each registrant received a complimentary copy of “*Engaging Data*” by Trinette Marquis-Hobbs, APR. (Trinette spoke at last year’s MSPRA conference.) They were also able to order complimentary 60th Anniversary t-shirts. We had door-prize drawings for NSPRA books and materials including 5 NSPRA Crisis Manuals. And, we highlighted these hashtags: #MSPRA2019 and #MSPRA60.



The Annual Conference—Day One

The annual conference [agenda](#) began with a video from the National School Public Relations' Board congratulating MSPRA on its 60th Anniversary. The accolades continued with our first guest, Sheila Alles, Interim State Superintendent for the Michigan Department of Education. During her brief remarks, Sheila presented MSPRA with a [letter](#) co-signed by Sheila and the State Board of Education President, Casandra Ulbrich, congratulating MSPRA on its 60 years of service to and collaboration with Michigan's schools.

Next, we heard from our Outstanding Superintendent Communicator of the Year Dr. Scott Menzel from Washtenaw Intermediate School District. Scott congratulated MSPRA on its 60th Anniversary and spoke about the role his school communicator plays—especially during times of crisis.

Then, Steve Knagg, of Pinetop Presentations and a past NSPRA President, presented “Fighting the Good Fight.” He told us to use clear and consistent messages. Be honest about bad news. Be open and transparent to build a base of trust. Be proactive. Be calm. Tell the truth. Don't be afraid to spear sacred cows. And remember that sometimes it's not what we know but what we can think of in time.

After a break, we heard about [“Crisis Preparedness & Leveraging Dark Websites”](#) from Blackboard staff members Britt Chiles, Chad Kreindler and Jeff Page.

At lunch, we recognized our sponsors “pinning” them with gold and silver medals as part of our sponsorship system. We continued our 60th Anniversary celebration with Past President Kristin Tank narrating a [slide presentation](#) highlighting our history.

We also held the Annual MSPRA Business Meeting. President Karen Heath presented the association's [Annual Report](#), noted the chapter's health and its professional development offerings, along with its overall successes and challenges.

After lunch, we broke up into two sets of four (each was repeated once) break-out sessions. They included:

Session I-A and II-A

[Managing Board Issues](#): John Tramontana and Greg Rokisky, Michigan Association of School Boards

Session I-B and II-B

[The Power of Sharing Good News](#): Jenean Fear, Peachjar



Interim Superintendent for the Michigan Department of Education Sheila Alles congratulated MSPRA on 60 years.

Session I-C and II-C

[How to Run a Successful Enhancement Millage](#): Ron Koehler, APR, Kent Intermediate School District and Past President of MSPRA and NSPRA

Session I-D and II-D

Surviving Reunification: Sponsored by West; Gary L. Sigrist, Jr., School Safety Expert

Session III-E and IV-E

[Google Analytics as an SEO Tool](#): Gerard Gustafson, Finalsite

Session III-F and IV-F

[Setting Up a Communication Process Work Flow](#): Dr. Amanda Holdsworth, APR, Assistant Professor, Cleary University

Session III-G and IV-G

[Student Anti-Vape Campaign](#): Rockford Public School's Dan Zang, Tom Hosford & Students

Session III-H and IV-H

[Strive for Less than Five Truancy Campaign](#): John Helmholdt, Grand Rapids Public Schools



Throughout the day participants experienced some excellent professional development, took advantage of networking opportunities and even had a little fun.

At dinner, The Awards and Recognition Committee honored the recipient of *The Gerri Allen Outstanding Communicator Award*—Diane Bauman, APR from Farmington Public Schools. And, we heard from NSPRA Vice President and MSPRA Board Member Tom Scheidel about the NSPRA Seminar.

We then adjourned our formal agenda and transitioned to our evening networking activity.

MSPRA Annual Conference Evening Networking Even



Part of the festivities included wearing a 60th Anniversary t-shirt as part of the observance. All those who wanted one received a shirt and many wore it proudly after dinner. Even our sponsors donned t-shirts and joined us for the photo and celebration that followed.

The after-dinner activity was dedicated to celebrating the MSPRA’s 60th Anniversary as an NSPRA chapter and to building relationships in a relaxed atmosphere. Our goals for the event emphasized fun and encouraged making connections. The more our members—who come from across the state—connect with each other, the broader their professional networks grow. And, professional networks are key to successful careers.

For this evening, we booked a dueling pianos act. Like the high-quality entertainment offerings at NSPRA, the duo encouraged us to relax, sing along, and get up out of our seats as we marked 60 years of MSPRA’s service to school communicators.

The Annual Conference—Day Two

We began our Friday morning with Ron Koehler, APR, of Kent ISD, sharing the latest about the [School Finance Research Collaborative](#), a statewide initiative focused on equitable funding for Michigan’s students and schools.

Then we featured six, facilitated Crisis Connection Round Tables: [Guns/Weapons](#), [Death of a Student](#), [Leadership Misconduct](#), [Staff Misconduct](#), [Facilities/Environmental](#), [Student Accident](#). Each table topic included a prepared tip sheet that followed the RPIE format.

Kate Snyder, APR, Principal Strategist and Owner of Piper & Gold, a local PR firm, was our second large-group speaker of the morning. Kate shared her tips on [“Strategic Social Media Management.”](#)



Kate Snyder, APR, of Piper & Gold, was one of our keynote speakers on Friday morning.

Our final keynote presentation was also with Steve Knagg. Steve bookended the conference, closing us out with his much-needed perspective on “The Art of Calling in Well.”

After closing remarks, the conference proper adjourned. While many left to go home, 34 attendees remained for a bonus session in which they tuned in to the live NSPRA PR Power Hour on “Taking Your Administrators to Communication Bootcamp.” MSPRA received two PR Power Hour incentives for the last awards cycle and chose to “spend” one of them to offer this bonus session—and lunch—after the Annual Conference.

The Annual Conference—Attendee Reactions

Nearly half of the more than 86 registrants (39) evaluated their conference experience. Based on their survey responses and comments, it was a success. The overall ranking for the conference was either very (71.8%) or somewhat (28.2%) useful.

The [conference evaluations](#) included these comments about the best part of the conference:

- *Networking with other folks like me with the same challenges*
- *Learning with colleagues. Reminders about professional strategies. Most importantly, learning to balance our work and our life - a healthy heart and mind matter most.*
- *All of the speakers were relevant to the issues we are facing.*
- *Things that I could make use of immediately — i.e. Amanda Holdsworth*
- *Connecting with colleagues*
- *The networking.*
- *The personal networking*
- *The breakout sessions and networking.*
- *The topics were on-point, timely and relevant. The birthday celebration was fun!*
- *Everything - but making contacts has the greatest benefit*
- *Steve Knagg's humor and the rapid-fire crisis discussions*
- *The time networking with MSPRA members and Steve Knagg!*
- *Celebrating 60 Years!*
- *The variety of topics that were covered.*
- *I thought the speakers I saw were very informative*
- *The execution. It seemed flawless. Every detail was covered.*

We also gleaned some suggestions to improve our next professional development offering from these comments:

- *Try to get more people to attend. It is a great networking opportunity.*
- *More break-out sessions.*
- *I would like to see another crisis connections round built into the schedule.*
- *Build in even more collaboration time for attendees (like the roundtables)*
- *Longer breaks or more breaks if longer isn't possible*
- *Fewer large-group speakers*

MSPRA's 2018 Drive-in Conferences

June Drive-in Conference:

During our June 25, 2018 Drive-in Conference at the Michigan Educational Leadership Group Building in Lansing, Michigan, [35 attendees](#) learned from MSPPPRA Board member and award-winning presenter Michelle Ready, Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD) about [“Building an Identity.”](#)

Michelle shared best practices in branding, explained how her team redesigned the OAISD's brand, the steps taken to maintain that identity (and brand guidelines), as well as initiatives that are underway to strengthen the brand.

She helped participants answer the questions: What comes to mind when your students, parents, teachers and community think about your school district? Is it positive? Does your district have a brand identity? Or, is your district experiencing an identity crisis?

During the afternoon Action Lab, attendees worked with other school PR professionals to produce branding goals and objectives as part of their overall communication plan, brainstorm strategies to measure the success of branding efforts, and develop long-term communication goals aimed at strengthening current branding practices.

To promote this conference we sent a [postcard](#) to members, posted it on the [MSPRA website](#), shared it on the group Facebook page and sent it out as an [MSPRA Minute](#) (our weekly electronic member communication).

[Evaluations](#) were positive. Nearly 94% of those who completed the evaluation rated the overall workshop as either very or somewhat useful.

Some of the written comments to the question “What was the best thing about the Building an Identity Workshop/Action Lab?” included:

- *The support and knowledge Michelle offered to us. She is fantastic!*
- *Excellent! Lots of actionable steps we can take right away back at work.*
- *Michelle's presentation! I loved seeing her process from start to finish. It really helped frame my mindset about how to approach the work.*
- *Working with a small group in the afternoon was very helpful, both for getting feedback and giving.*
- *I benefited from hearing about the entire process from start to finish and the depth of information that needed to be addressed in order to accomplish the task.*

We also garnered some suggestions to improve our next professional development offering, based on the answers to this question: “If you could change one thing about the Building an Identity Workshop/Action Lab, what would you change?”

- *More of a walk-through of what makes a good goal statement, etc.*



Andrew Munson and Kalli Zielbauer compare notes at the Building an Identity Action Lab.

- *Group like roles together for the action lab. We had great conversation but were all at very different points.*
- *More time in the morning session, it seemed to be rushed at the end. We had a lot of good conversation; I felt we could have come back to that after lunch.*

October Drive-in Conference:

Our second Drive-in Conference “Bad Things Happen to Good PR People: Be Prepared” was on October 24, 2018 also at the Michigan Educational Leadership Group Building in Lansing, Michigan. To promote this conference we sent a [postcard](#) to members, posted it on the [MSPRA website](#), shared it on the group Facebook page and sent it out as an [MSPRA Minute](#).



District Communicator Shira Good, APR and School Security Officer Cory Donberger, gave us plenty to consider.

During the morning session entitled: “Hacked: Overcoming a Cyber Security Breach” [36 participants](#) learned to ask questions like:

Does your school have cyber security insurance?
Who would you invite to the first meeting called to discuss a hack into your system?

What is your exposure risk when it comes to a data breach and how do you communicate this to your families?

Director of Communications and Service Standards
Shira Good, APR and School Security Officer Cory

Donberger, both of Bloomfield Hills Public Schools, gave us plenty to think about as they walked us step-by-step through the uncertainty and complexity of a digital crisis.

Their advice included:

- Purchasing robust insurance coverage to provide the benefit of highly-skilled forensic experts, convening your whole team right away, and treating the crisis with the urgency it deserves--even if it feels slow moving at first!
- Creating non-disclosure agreements with those involved to ensure confidentiality, understanding what data your school collects, and what application programming interfaces (APIs) may be in place. (API is when two systems talk to each other.)
- Reminding your staff to alert the technology department if they notice any glitch or odd occurrence in the computer system during their everyday use. The sooner a hack is discovered, the better!

Over lunch, we had a discussion on getting the APR credential. Ten attendees indicated they would like to get more information on the APR.

In the afternoon session: “Handling Social Media Before it Becomes a Digital Crisis,” Greg Rokisky, Michigan Association of School Boards Marketing Manager, shared insights about our role as digital strategists. Greg talked about:

- The 3 Rs of crisis communication:
 - Readiness (includes preventative activities to reduce risk and crisis management planning),

- Response (noting the initial response must be speedy, effective, and accurate as it will be referenced the most by media and others), and
- Recovery (improvement and returning back to normalcy).
- “Know thy audience” and integrate social media strategy into overall strategic communications plan.
- Be proactive with crisis communication!
 - Charge your trust bank!
 - Build relationships with the media.
 - Become a credible go-to social media entity that is consistent, timely and accurate.
- Ask yourself do your social media posts support your district’s strategic plan? Do you have a prepared response that can be modified quickly and sent out when needed?
- Stay on top of social media. Use the three-strike rule and take the conversation offline after three negative interactions.

Recommended resources were [NSPRA's The Complete Crisis Communication Management Manual for Schools](#) and [The Social Media Imperative: School Leadership and Strategies for Success](#).

[Evaluations](#) were very positive. Of those who completed the evaluation, 100% rated the morning session as very (88.5%) or somewhat useful. Some 92% of respondents rated the afternoon session as very or somewhat useful.

Participants said some of the best things about the Drive-in Conference were:

- *I really enjoyed Shira & Cory’s presentation. Not only was it informative, but as someone who is new to this role, I aspire to be as knowledgeable in this field as she is. Very impressed!*
- *The honesty and ready-to-use resources.*
- *Great actionable advice and examples.*
- *Opened my eyes and made me aware of the value of being prepared.*
- *Learning that our district may not be as prepared as it should for such a crisis.*
- *The Bloomfield Hills presentation was fantastic. It told you not only how they responded but what you could preemptively do to prepare your district. Amazing real-world examples.*
- *Shira's presentation was extremely helpful and provided great resources for us to bring back to our districts.*
- *The sharing of experiences from Shira and the information from the afternoon speaker. Both did an outstanding job!*
- *Take-aways to check in on at work like insurance, team contacts, etc.*
- *The people! Oh, and the topics. I learned a lot!*

We also gleaned some suggestions to improve our next professional development offering.

- *It would have been nice to have a similar specific case about Social Media crisis PR instead of general info - good to hear, but hard to apply in general.*
- *Examples of good and bad social media posts, and situations.*
- *Maybe more concrete information on the APR.*

MSPRA's Outstanding Superintendent Communicator Award



Dr. Scott Menzel received his surprise award in August 2018. He was nominated by Communication Specialist Emma Jackson.

MSPRA's Outstanding Superintendent Communicator Award recognizes a superintendent for leadership in school district communication.

Our recipient for 2018 was Dr. Scott Menzel, Superintendent of Washtenaw Intermediate School District in Ann Arbor, Michigan. His surprise award was presented during a WISD School Board meeting in August 2018.

MSPRA specifically recognized Scott for being “an exceptional electronic and public communicator” who is often requested as a speaker for a variety of education-related topics, particularly regarding equity in education. He is also known as a proponent of progressive and inclusive communication styles, and utilizes a variety of communication platforms to ensure staff and stakeholders have consistent access to the WISD, even beyond standard work hours.

He was also recognized at MSPRA's 2019 Annual Conference where he congratulated MSPRA on its 60th Anniversary and highlighted ways in which his district's Communication Specialist plays a key role in the district's communication program, especially during a crisis.

MSPRA's Gerri Allen Outstanding School Communicator Award

This MSPRA award honors a practicing school public relations professional for his or her daily work and contributions to the field.

Named for long-time school public relations professional and current MSPRA Executive Director, the Gerri Allen Outstanding School Communicator Award is designed to allow MSPRA members and non-members to nominate deserving MSPRA members.

Diane Bauman, APR, was recognized as this year's recipient in a surprise presentation at a Farmington Public School District Board meeting in October 2018. In addition, Diane was recognized at the Annual Conference in March.

In nominating Bauman for the honor, Superintendent George C. Heitsch, wrote: “...When I became the Farmington superintendent in 2014, I quickly recognized the valuable leadership and expertise Diane provides for all public relations, communications and community issues impacting our District....She is a key member of my Cabinet, and we have come to count on her to ensure that our plans and decisions are communicated to stakeholders clearly, thoroughly, and in a timely fashion.”



Diane Bauman, APR, (left) received her award from MSPRA President-elect Anne Cron, APR.

MSPRA's Gold Medallion Award



Ron Koehler, APR, received his award from Awards and Recognition Chair, Judy Evola, APR.

Kent Intermediate School District's enhancement millage election campaign entitled: "Strong Schools, Strong Communities" received the 2018 Michigan School Public Relations Association's (MSPRA) Gold Medallion Award. Past NSPRA and MSPRA President Ron Koehler, APR, accepted the award at the MSPRA 2019 Annual Conference on behalf of the Kent Communication Team.

MSPRA's Gold Medallion Award recognizes outstanding programs or projects that advance education through responsible communication. According to the judges, the entry was "a clear winner."

MSPRA's panel of experts judged the entry on the clarity of concept, good writing, and evidence of using the four-step Public Relations process known as RPIE. These four steps include:

- Research - Evidence of the need or problem; with stated, measurable project goals.
- Planning - Identified target audiences, involvement of others in the planning, and variety of communication channels considered and used.
- Implementation - Timelines for the project, variety of communication techniques used, and quality of written and graphic materials.
- Evaluation - Evidence of a planned, objective evaluation that documents accomplishing the stated goals, communication techniques used and changes, if any, that will be made when repeating projects.

Based on that review, the Gold Medallion judges concluded: "The results of the [Kent ISD] election speak for themselves."

Other Examples of Increasing PR Visibility and Providing PR Training

Between May 1, 2018 and April 30, 2019, MSPRA members presented at other conferences and worked with school districts on the importance of good public relations and planned communication. Examples include:

1. On June 20, 2018, MSPRA Executive Director Gerri Allen, presented a customer service workshop entitled, ["You Hold the Secret to Excellent PR"](#) to staff at Farmington Public Schools in Farmington, Michigan.
2. On August 22, 2018, MSPRA Board member Michelle Ready presented to regional adult educators on ["Marketing and Using Social Media to Promote Adult Education Programs"](#) at the Holland Midtown Center in Holland, Michigan.
3. On September 17, 2018, former MSPRA President Anita Banach presented ["Effective Communications for School Leaders"](#) to the Michigan Pupil Accounting and Attendance Association (MPAAA) in Bay City, Michigan.

4. On September 24, 2018, MSPRA member John Helmholdt presented “Effective Communications for School Leaders” to the Michigan Pupil Accounting and Attendance Association (MPAAA) on Michigan’s Mackinac Island.
5. On April 15, 2019, MSPRA Past President Kristin Tank presented NSPRA’s “Unlocking Sensational Service” as a break-out session at the Educational Administrative Assistants/Support Staff Conference held at the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD), Muskegon, Michigan.
6. On April 24, 2019, MSPRA Past President Kristin Tank presented “Effective Communications” as a break-out session at the Educational Administrative Assistants/Support Staff Conference held at the MAISD, Muskegon, Michigan.

Other Professional Development Activities

This year, we continued our email listserv, the [MSPRA Minute](#) (our weekly electronic member communication), and [closed Facebook group](#).

A few board members also provided free crisis consultation (at the request of a sister organization) to a non-member superintendent and her team, related to a simmering situation. We supplied them with an [outline of RPIE-based steps](#) to take and encouraged the superintendent and her team to break their own bad news. The superintendent called later to thank us and to report that the district is doing well. Having followed all of our guidance, they are doing some good communication around the issue. And, together with help from the district’s legal counsel, they feel they are now on the right path.

These are a few of the excellent examples of MSPRA’s professional development efforts that occur throughout the year, in addition to our conference offerings.

-end-

[Note: If any of the links in this document are broken, or if you have difficulty accessing them, please contact Gerri Allen at gallen48@juno.com. MSPRA-maintained links will remain live until at least 07/31/19. Thank you.]

*Thank you for the consideration and
opportunity to submit this*

NSPRA 2019

Mark of Distinction

Award Application

*Professional Development
and Skill Building*

submitted by



Michigan School
Public Relations
Association

due May 15, 2019
