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

**Gold Medallion Award**
Entry Deadline: March 11, 2019
For superior educational public relations programs

**Publications and Digital Media Awards**
Entry Deadline: March 25, 2019
For outstanding work in all types and forms of educational communications: print, digital, video, audio, websites and more

**Golden Achievement Award**
Entry Deadline: April 8, 2019
For exemplary public relations activities, programs and projects
Gold Medallion Awards

The National School Public Relations 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 during the NSPRA 2019 National Seminar on July 14–17 in Washington, D.C.

Award Criteria

- A planned presentation is necessary, submitted electronically (see “Rules”), organized in the four strategic planning phases of research, analysis/planning, communication/implementation and evaluation (RACE).
- 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 to awards@nspra.org. Compile all application materials into a single PDF document. Multiple support materials will not be accepted. Submit the completed entry form with payment check or money order separately by mail unless you are paying by credit card (see “Payment Guidelines”). Programs/projects/campaigns must have been underway or completed between March 2018 and the March 11, 2019 contest deadline. Note: For submitted Bond/Finance Campaign entries, all election results need to be final by the deadline to be eligible for an award this calendar year.

Award Entry Guidelines

The total award entry, including entry form and all application materials, is limited to no more than 26 pages 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 RACE/RPIE strategic planning process steps outlined below may be included, 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. Please do not include large jpg photo files that make the entry difficult to transmit.

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.
- Analysis/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.
- Communication/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.

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.
Gold Medallion Categories:

Gold Medallion entries will be considered based on these specific categories. Be sure to designate your entry's category in your summary.

- 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.

FAQs and How to Brag

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. The Publications and Digital Media program distributed more than 600 awards last year.

How many awards are given out?

Last year, 648 awards were given in the Publications and Digital Media Awards contest, eight Gold Medallions were awarded, and 114 Golden Achievement Awards were granted. 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, just complete the entire entry form. Many applicants neglect to complete the form and then are eliminated from the competition.

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!
Publications and Digital Media Awards

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.

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 receive a handsome plaque. Winners of Merit and Honorable Mention Awards receive certificates. Award of Excellence winners will be displayed at NSPRA’s 2019 National Seminar in Washington, D.C. A winners list will be posted on NSPRA’s website.

Categories:
Details on each category type are available at: http://bit.ly/nspraawards

- 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 Criteria
Publications entries (including e-newsletters) will be judged on graphic layout and design, writing and content (exception: Excellence in Writing entries).

Digital media entries will be judged for professional quality. Programs for radio and television must be broadcast quality. Sound should be emphasized for radio, and color and motion for television.

Award Rules
- DO NOT send summary sheets for Publications and Digital Media Awards.
- Publications compete against others in the same category and organizational classification.
- Submit as many entries in as many categories as you wish.
- Video productions must be provided as links (YouTube, Vimeo, Google drive, etc.) or on flash drives, and radio entries as a link. One flash drive/link may be submitted per entry fee paid.
- Newsletter/newspaper/electronic newsletter entries must include two different issues (e.g., two different months or quarters) 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 or produced newsletters or other publications and audio/visual media are not eligible.
- Enter only materials produced since March 2018. 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. Entries cannot be returned.
- Any entry submission constitutes entrant’s representation that all material is original and free from unauthorized use of copy, design, art or photographs from other sources.
- Fee per entry: $72 for members; $95 for non-members. Payment must accompany all entries. Please send ONLY one check or money order payable to NSPRA with your entry or entries; purchase orders or vouchers cannot be accepted. Complete awards entry form to pay by credit card. Due to the large number of contest participants, NSPRA cannot provide a receipt for entry payment. Please copy all entry forms for your records and use your canceled check or credit card statement as your receipt.
- Deadline: Entries must be postmarked by March 25, 2019.
- Entry forms are available online at http://bit.ly/nspraawards. Submit a separate awards entry form for each award entry. Mail all Publications and Digital Media entries with entry forms to NSPRA, 2019 Awards Program, 15948 Derwood Rd., Rockville, MD 20855.
- Questions? Call 301-519-0496 or contact Tommy Jones at tjones@nspraa.org.
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 RACE/RPIE strategic planning process steps. 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.

- **Analysis/Planning** — Evidence of thoughtful planning to address need for the program, campaign or activity.

- **Communication/Implementation** — Evidence that 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 2018 and **entry deadline of April 8, 2019**.

- Fee per entry: $72 for members and $95 for non-members per entry. Send one check or money order payable to NSPRA or fill out the credit card information on your entry form. Purchase orders or vouchers cannot be accepted.


- Mail entries with entry forms, postmarked by **April 8, 2019**, to NSPRA, 2018 Awards Program, 15948 Derwood Road, Rockville, MD 20855.

- 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.

- Do not submit more than five pages of supplemental material for your entry, and do not include video tapes or flash drives.

**Some school districts are hesitant to enter national awards programs because everyone can’t be a top winner for each category. The Golden Achievement Award is designed as a major recognition program for great activities, regardless of number of entries.**
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Where Are the Entry Forms?

Entry forms for all award programs are available online at [http://bit.ly/nspraawards](http://bit.ly/nspraawards). Submit a separate awards entry form for each award entry. You may submit more than one entry in each award program. Mail all Publications and Digital Media Award and Golden Achievement Award entries with entry forms, and Gold Medallion Award entry forms only to NSPRA, 2019 Awards Program, 15948 Derwood Road, Rockville, MD 20855.

Gold Medallion Award entry PDFs must be sent electronically (separate from check or money order payment) to awards@nspra.org with subject tag “2019 Gold Medallion Award.”

Questions? Call 301-519-0496 or contact Tommy Jones at tjones@nspra.org.

Judging Award Entries

- 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 award 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 judges’ comments by emailing awards@nspra.org no later than July 30. Summaries will be provided in late August/September.