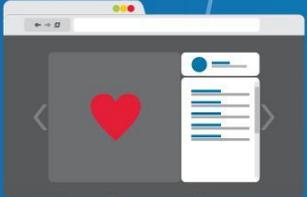


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# Your Role as an Ambassador for Your School Division

Best Practices for Marketing and Public Relations



# Why is public relations needed for public schools?

- News media scrutiny
- Increased competition – private schools, charter schools, home schooling
- Rampant cynicism; distrust for government
- Among all adults, just 24 percent give nation's public schools overall an A or B; among public school parents – 48 percent (*Source: 2016 Phi Delta Kappa Survey*)



# The Work of the School Board

- School board members rank among their community's hardest working elected officials
  - 41.6 percent spend 25 hours or more per month on board business
  - One in five spend more than 40 hours per month
- As the only local officials focused exclusively on preK-12 education, school board members represent the community's values and beliefs

*(Source: Telling Your Story: A Communications Guide for School Boards)*



# The Work of the School Board

- “If the school board does not look good, the district cannot look good. It is as simple as that. No amount of positive press or superintendent charisma can overcome bad behavior broadcast live during school board meetings.”

*(Source: Telling Your Story: A Communications Guide for School Boards)*



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# School Division Advocate 101

- Be positive
- Share good news from the division
- Remember the role of the school board member
- Keep the superintendent in the loop
- Respect the superintendent/board agreements



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# School Division Advocate 101

- Choose your words carefully – don't talk too much
- Share the facts – What is your elevator speech?
- Refrain from using jargon
- Listen to advice from superintendent/public relations staff



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# School Division Advocate 101

- Use WOW facts in all of your communications
  - Personal conversations
  - Social media posts
  - Speeches
  - During Board meetings



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# School Division Advocate 101

- Show public what good governance looks like
- Model the behavior you want students and staff to emulate
- Know your facts and be proactive in sharing them
- Tell 10 success stories for every criticism you hear
- Bring someone new with you every time you visit a school, attend a school program or division event
- Recruit new families for public schools and stay in touch

*(Source: Telling Your Story: A Communications Guide for School Boards)*



*Best Practices for Marketing and Public Relations*

# School Division Advocate 101

- Reach out to realtors, grandparents, human resource officers and others who influence where people live and where families send their children to school.
- Hit the breakfast, lunch and dinner speaking circuit in your community, and remind them that public schools are the only game in town that serve ALL children.
- Build relationships with opinion leaders in your community, and have them on speed dial and in your email distribution list.



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# School Division Advocate 101

- Add to your district's database of key communicators every time you meet someone new
- Ensure your school district is represented on key community boards, commissions, committees
- Contact your local, state and federal representatives regularly about the importance of public schools and invite them into your schools



*Best Practices for Marketing and Public Relations*

# School Division Advocate 101

- Work with your local economic development teams to make sure public schools are represented fairly when new businesses are recruited
- Don't guess. If you don't know something, don't try to answer a question. Offer to get back to that person with an answer later.



# What to Expect from your Communications Team

- Media liaison/advice for dealing with media
- Talking points
- Basic presentation
- Fact sheets
- News coverage summary
- Communication/marketing plans
- Crisis communication
- Management of website, internal/external communication, social media presence



# Ten Realities of Social Media

*Source: “Why Social Media Matters”*

- Social media is a new way to build relationships.
- Communication is no longer about you; it’s about your customers – today’s parents refuse to be shut out of the education process.
- If you don’t tell your story, someone else will (social media is our present-day equivalent of the front porch, backyard fence, playground-bench communication).



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# Ten Realities of Social Media

*Source: “Why Social Media Matters”*

- Your reputation is at stake.
- The response will most likely be positive.
- You don't have to do it all at once.
- Social media gives you the chance to stay ahead of the curve – “Like putting your ear to the train tracks to hear the rumble of the approaching train, social media gives you the opportunity to respond quickly to rumors and dissention, without the filters of traditional media where only what suits editorial or economic agendas is printed.”



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# Ten Realities of Social Media

*Source: “Why Social Media Matters”*

- It’s here to stay.
- Social media helps you build a sense of ownership among your stakeholders.
- It takes the whole village – social media is a key part of what it takes to win the investment of parents and community in your schools



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# Social Media – Why do we use it?

- Social media – Why are we using it?
  - Significant growth in use of social media
  - Easy and efficient
  - Mobile – can provide real-time updates from anywhere
  - Encourages two-way communication and engagement
  - Analytics helpful in identifying audience



# School Boards & Social Networking: Dos & Don'ts

- Don't use social media to leak closed session materials and/or info protected by law.
- Keep tone conversational & informal, BUT use proper grammar and show same sensitivity about word choice that you would in other avenues.
- Social media is a commitment. If you don't want to keep sites updated, it's better not to start them in first place.

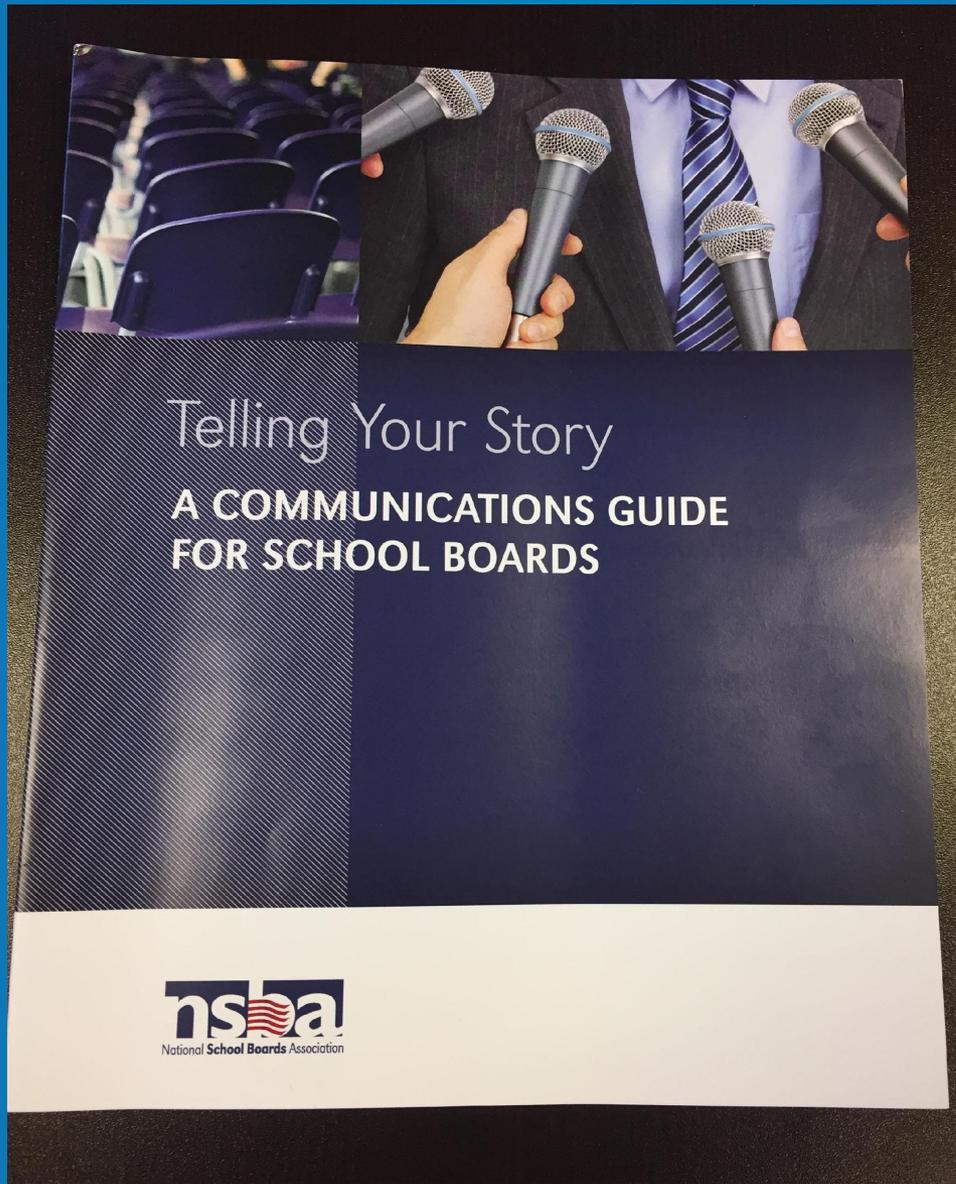


# School Boards & Social Networking: Dos & Don'ts

- Keep your communications professional; don't be snarky.
- Connect your site to the official district website, social media outlets, etc.
- Be transparent – don't hide behind anonymity afforded by social media.
- Take the high road.



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