



Telling Your Charter Story in Good and Bad Times.

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Agenda:

Strategic Communications Planning

Communicating with the Media

Communicating in Times of Crisis

Welcome



- How well are communications working at your school?
 - Give an example of what works well and what needs improvement

Strategic Communications Plan

- Determine communication needs
- Identify key internal and external audiences and outline how you want to communicate with them
- Set Goals:
 - Increase positive news
 - Increase content from school to home
 - Redesign website
 - Increase social media following
 - Develop mobile app
 - Highlight alumni
- Establish Media Calendar
- Evaluate plan implementation

Items to Consider When Developing Strategic Communications Plan

- Do you have a great mission statement?
- Do you link your mission to all communications?
- How do you communicate the mission with various stakeholder groups?
- Do you have an e-newsletter, Facebook, Twitter or other kinds of social media accounts?
- Have you established a primary and secondary media contact?
- Does your plan contain an emergency communications component?
- How often do you revisit your communications strategy?

School-Wide Communications Planning

- Key Objectives:
 - Make communications strategic
 - Know your mission
 - Know your audience
 - Set realistic goals
 - Understanding current communications channels

Know Your Mission

- Can stakeholders at all levels of the organization recite the mission and give examples how how they “live” the mission?
- Does the board read the mission statement at every board meeting? Why is this important?
- Where can your mission be seen around the school?
- Is the mission used on all written communications?

Who is your audience?

- What audience do you struggle with the most in terms of effective communications?
- Do you have written procedures for communicating with various stakeholders?
- Why should each stakeholder group be carefully considered?
- How are communications policies / procedures monitored?

Communications Channels

- School website
- Mobile app
- Notifications and alerts
- Email
- Social media
- Blogs
- Video
- GCSA Newsletter
- Others?

Communicating with the Media



- Effective press releases
- Develop relationships with reporters
- Research who covers education, science or other relevant topics
- Create relevant media list
- Stay current on charter and education news
- Op-Eds
- Letters to the Editor

Successful Story Themes

- **Joy:** Charters make learning enjoyable by developing creative ways to teach difficult subjects and engage kids.
- **Personalization:** Charters recognize students as individuals with their own specific interests and needs.
- **Innovation:** Charters incorporate state-of-the-art technology into the classroom (e.g. virtual reality chemistry lab)
- **Achievement:** Charters help students graduate high school and prepare for success in college and in life.
- **Contribution:** Charters facilitate important community outreach that affect students' home-lives and health.
- **Inclusion:** Charters help students from a variety of backgrounds succeed.

Successful Story Themes Innovation:



Google Expedition virtual reality kits at Westside Atlanta Charter School

Successful Story Themes

Joy:



Successful Story Themes Achievement:



Pataula Charter Academy graduates legacy class

Successful Story Themes Contribution:



Communicating in Times of Crisis

- **Crisis Communications Plan –**
 - Emergency Management Plan
 - Crisis Communications Checklist
 - Crisis Team
 - Media Training: who should receive training?
 - Audience / Media List
 - Primary and secondary spokesperson
- **Who should and shouldn't comment on a crisis?**
- **The organization's crisis telephone directory.**
- **Evaluate and improve crisis communications.**
- **When in doubt contact attorney, SCSC, GCSA**
- **Town hall/press conference**

Crisis Communications Checklist

- Ensure all students are safe
- Immediately notify school leader, crisis team, board members and other key contacts
- Before going public:
 - Review situation and determine appropriate response with key staff
 - Draft potential press releases, talking points and other communications
 - Communications can include crisis status, school response and proactive steps to resolve if possible

Crisis Communications Checklist

- After going public:
 - Communicate with internal audiences
 - Notify parents (text messaging)
 - Communicate with media through press releases and other channels
 - Place information on website and social media
 - Provide periodic updates and resolution if applicable
- Evaluate and update your crisis communication plan as needed

Next Steps...

- What resources do you need to develop or improve a school-wide communications plan?
- Determine how your school can communicate more effectively

Additional Considerations

- Do your best to get ahead of the situation by notifying key stakeholders (It's best to hear the message from you rather than someone else)
- Determine if you will allow access to spokesperson or use statements
- Factsheets and timelines are also helpful
- When you've said all there is to say move on to "the next steps."

References

- <http://lacharterschoTols.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/LAPCS-Communications-Toolkit-2015.pdf>
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<http://content.campussuite.com/school-communication-planning-guide>
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
- RALLY