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NSPRA

PRincipal Communicator

Concise, practical public relations help for school leaders

PRincipal Communicator Will Be Back in August!

This issue of *PRincipal Communicator* is the last edition for the 2019-20 school year. We are focusing now on the virtual program for your professional development this summer. We will send NSPRA member messages throughout the summer as needed, and of course, don't forget to connect with your fellow members on [NSPRA Connect](#) as you plan for the upcoming school year. Thank you for all that you do for your schools, your students and your staff.

Leading Off

Improving Your Culture Through Onboarding



By **Amanda Holdsworth, Ed.D., APR**, Founder, Amanda Holdsworth Communications

Editor's Note: Despite all that is going on with the COVID-19 crisis, preparations for when schools can reopen and the onboarding of new employees is still important. This article gives some guidance for new staff and new situations.

In this month's [Leading Off](#), **Amanda Holdsworth, Ed.D, APR**, suggests making onboarding timely, and gives some guidance for new staff and new situations. She outlines how principals can onboard their employees successfully, and in turn have a positive school culture where employees feel valued, supported and appreciated. With an effective onboarding system in place, your school staff can become the school's biggest cheerleaders, empowering and engaging those around them, including students and co-workers.

[Read the full article.](#)

Marketing and Branding

Your School's Annual Report



A school's annual report is most effective when it tells the audience clearly and concisely what they want to know about the school. The annual report can be used as a prospectus to recruit students and teachers, solicit funds and community support and report the state of the school to constituents.

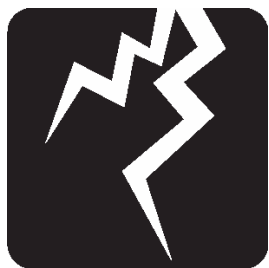
Components of an effective annual report include:

- A letter from the principal providing a summary of the school year.
- School and student accomplishments of the year.
- The school's mission and/or vision statements.
- The school's colors or colors that reflect a desired image of the school.
- A history including important events, awards, special achievements and distinctions, and distinguished alumni.
- Student demographic information.
- Teacher and staff spotlights.
- Senior class spotlight for high school/highest grade level spotlight for elementary or junior high.

Source: *How to Market Your School*

Crisis Communications

Managing Cyberattacks



With schools and businesses doing their work remotely during COVID-19, there is a greater chance for cyberattacks.

Many schools, districts and educational consortiums are using online networks to store data such as student and employee information systems and records for attendance and grades that parents can access from their personal computer.

The most common form of cyberattacks on school systems is a *distributed denial-of-service* attack, or a DDoS. These are designed to overwhelm the targeted Internet Protocol (IP) address with requests, with the goal of interrupting or suspending service.

Below are some action steps that school systems can use to manage and mitigate cyberattacks.

- Educate students and staff to keep an eye out for phishing scams, which is typically an email or website designed to install malicious software onto a computer.
- Notify your network system administrator immediately if you suspect a cyberattack. The sooner information technology staff can clean the potentially infected computer, the less the damage to the computer and other computers in the network.
- Staff should immediately report if they believe they revealed sensitive information. This will allow district personnel to be alert for any suspicious or unusual activity.
- District personnel should notify law enforcement, so an official record of the incident exists. Report online crime or fraud to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#) (IC3).
- [Report identity theft to the Federal Trade Commission](#).

Source: *The Complete Crisis Communication Management Manual for Schools — 4th Edition*

Tech Talk

Video Conferencing Guidelines for Students and Staff



Prolonged school closures due to COVID-19 have resulted in schools having lessons online. The School District of Brown Deer (Wis.) created a [student guide](#) on what to do before, during and after the video conference lesson. This advice is applicable for staff as well, when you conduct meetings. Below are pieces of key advice from the guide.

Before the video conference:

- Wear school appropriate clothing.
- Check your background or turn off your camera. Make sure whatever is behind you and visible to the camera is simple and school appropriate.
- Check the technology. Check the audio to make sure your speakers are not turned off. If using the video feature, allow the camera to be used. Test and troubleshoot any issues with the web conferencing system in advance.

- Choose a quiet area, with minimal distractions, so you can engage in the lesson.

During the video conference:

- Join the video conference a few minutes before it starts.
- Listen to expectations of the conference call. Participants may be muted when entering the forum. That means nobody will be talking except the person in charge of the meeting.
- Look at the camera, so everyone knows who is talking.

After the video conference:

- Follow-up. Whoever is leading the meeting can provide their contact information, so participants can connect with them on feedback, questions and clarifications.

Source: [NSPRA's Gold Mine](#) and [NSPRA's COVID-19 Resource Page](#)

Going Social

Advice for Principals on How to Deal With Social Media



As principal, you can do a lot of things to market your school's brand and personality through social media.

The following is advice from NSPRA member **Kala Morrissey**, coordinator of marketing and visual information, Omaha (Nebr.) Public Schools, on how principals can best work with social media to highlight their schools and grow as leaders.

- Follow other school leaders and other schools on social media.
- Incorporate a #MotivationMonday. Share an inspirational quote to get students, staff and parents hyped about the new week.
- Facebook Messenger allows you to put an auto response on your school's Facebook page. That way, if people reach out on the school's page, they'll know the school got the message and when to expect a response.
- Set a social media policy, with clear guidelines and expectations of what's appropriate on your school's social media page and what isn't. When appropriate, move some conversations offline.

Sample message to move the conversation offline: "Thank you for your comment. We

would love to find out more details and help address your concerns. Please call the District Communication Office at [provide number] or private message us with your contact information.”

- Live-stream parts of major school events. You won't want to livestream an entire two-hour soccer game, but it might be helpful to live-stream a short award presentation.

Source: *Making/Marketing Your School the School of Choice, 2nd Edition*



The Complete Crisis Communication Management Manual, 4th Edition

NSPRA's *The Complete Crisis Communication Management Manual, 4th Edition*, includes guidance on crisis communication, using social media in an emergency, safe school assessments, and security audits. It provides updated information about school safety conditions, the Incident Command System, drills and exercises, and student reunification. It is written by Rick Kaufman, APR, along with additional advice by NSPRA members with experience in many situations.

This manual is available as a CD or a downloadable Zip file. Either option contains a PDF and MS Word version of the manual. [Order today.](#)



“If you want to be happy, set a goal that commands your thoughts, liberates your energy, and inspires your hopes.”

—Andrew Carnegie

“It is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation.”

—Herman Melville

“Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one.”

—Malcolm Forbes

"To be inspired is great, but to inspire is an honor."

—Stacey T. Hunt

Days to Celebrate



- **June 1–30:**
National Caribbean American Heritage Month
Promotes the rich culture and heritage of the Caribbean American people and their contribution to the United States of America. Learn more on the [National Archives website](#).
- **June 1–July 4:**
Fireworks Safety Month
- **June 5:**
World Environment Day
This is the United Nations day for encouraging worldwide awareness and action to protect our environment. [Learn more](#).
Join the conversation on social media, using [#WorldEnvironmentDay](#) and [#ForNature](#).
- **June 14:**
Flag Day
- **June 21:**
Father's Day
- **June 21:**
First Day of Summer
- **July 1:**
Canada Day
- **July 4:**
Independence Day
- **July 26:**
30th Anniversary of the Signing of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Good Stuff



Rise: An Original Song Tribute to the Class of 2020

Wichita (Kans.) Public Schools paid tribute to the Class of 2020 through an original song "Rise," which was co-written by high school principal Matt Creasman and social studies teacher Toby Tyner. It is performed by Creasman, Tyner and social studies teacher Jon Albers. The video pictures all of the district's high school principals holding signs of encouragement to their graduates. [Watch the video.](#)

Thank you to NSPRA member **Susan Arensman**, the district's news and media relations manager, for sharing this video.



Honoring and Celebrating Class of 2020 During COVID-19 Related School Closures

For many students, graduation from high school marks the completion of 13 years of educational and personal growth on the path to adulthood and independence. It is a time to celebrate academic, athletic and artistic accomplishments as well as bonds formed with friends and educators. The Class of 2020 has earned a celebratory send-off, just like the seniors that came before, but many senior-year traditions have been cancelled by a global pandemic and widespread, ongoing school closures.

New ways to celebrate seniors are emerging as public schools and families use creativity, technology and a big dose of compassion to tackle the 2020 graduation challenge.

Here are a few tips on honoring your school's Class of 2020.

- **Engage students.** They need to have a sense of ownership in the graduation ceremony and other end of the year celebrations. Form a committee and meet virtually so they can share some of their ideas to make the end of the year special for them.
- **Create a senior spotlight template** with school colors in Canva or any other easy-to-use design software. Send out a short Google Form on social media that has a few questions for seniors to answer (their high school, plans after graduation, what they miss the most, and any sports or activities they participated in). Ask them to complete the form and attach a photo. Copy and paste the information from the Google Form into the template.
- **Highlight seniors on your social media channels.** Gather senior photos from your yearbook advisor and create a montage of photos. As principal, create your own video with some kind words to the senior class.

Source: NSPRA's [Celebrating the Class of 2020 During a Pandemic](#) webpage

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Publisher: Richard D. Bagin, APR

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Designer: Chuck Becker

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