

PRincipal Communicator - October 2020

nspra.org/sites/default/files/newsletter/principal_communicator/principal-communicator-2020-10.html

[View PRincipal Communicator in your browser.](#)



Leading Off

The Podcasting Principal: Your School's Stories in Sound

*By **Shane Haggerty, APR**, owner and special projects consultant, *Purposeland, Columbus, Ohio**

As the school principal, there are undoubtedly many tasks on your to-do list. In today's environment, that is even more true. Still, one of the essential functions is communicating with your stakeholders. With so much happening and the need to get important facts and information out there, telling your school's stories still matters. The stories of your students, your programs, your successes and your teachers all matter!



Consider telling these stories through sound. Podcasting has proven to be a reliable way to reach on-the-go audiences, which indeed accounts for one of your central constituencies: parents.

But, the prospect of podcasting can be daunting. Where do you start, and how do you do it?

In this article, Shane Haggerty, APR, provides five simple items to focus on to help you start your own podcast and tell your school's story.

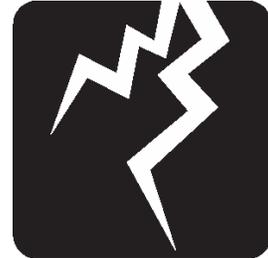
[Read more.](#)

Crisis Communications

COVID-19 Dashboards

Call To Action: Add Your School To the National COVID-19 School Response Dashboard

A collective of national education organizations, researchers and technology experts recently unveiled the National COVID-19 School Response Dashboard. This is the first nationwide database that systematically maps schools' responses to the pandemic across the United States.



The dashboard, created by Qualtrics, currently provides information at the state level such as: school type (public, independent, etc.); average student infection rate (based on a reported two-week period); average staff infection rate (based on a reported two-week period); whether the school is currently in-person, hybrid or fully virtual. The dashboard will be continuously updated as both districts and schools join this effort and as existing districts and schools provide new information on details such as case count and learning model.

This is an ongoing project. As principal, your school can participate in the baseline and bi-weekly survey. [Begin with the baseline survey here.](#)

The organizing partners for this project are AASA, The School Superintendents Association; the National Association of Secondary School Principals; the National Association of Elementary School Principals; Brown University Professor of Economics Emily Oster; and Qualtrics, the experience management company. NSPRA is a distributing partner for this initiative.

Staff Communications

Internal and External Communications Protocols

With the influx of communications that need to be sent from your school, internal mass communication protocol helps reduce the volume of emails and encourages more strategic thinking about internal messaging.



Lenawee ISD in Michigan developed an [internal guidance document](#) for their district that outlines protocols for all avenues of internal communications. These suggestions can be implemented at the school level as well.

Tips include the following: (1) Check voicemail and email at least twice daily; (2) for sensitive information, a phone call or face-to-face meeting may be required if information needs more direct feedback and conversation; (3) read the email that is sent to all staff and (4) for group collaboration, use sensible discretion and inclusion when using Reply All or contributing to group projects or files. [View the document.](#)

Thank you to **Andrew Munson**, the district's community relations coordinator, for sharing this document on [NSPRA Connect](#).

Munson also credits NSPRA member Kristin Tank, public information officer of Muskegon (Mich.) Area Intermediate School District, for sharing a similar document that helped him create this resource.

Unite Your School Through Social Media Hashtags

Social media hashtags help organize and connect sharing. Hashtags make it easier for people to find others who are posting about a common topic.

Hashtags associated with your school can be a critical piece in successful marketing campaigns. Make your school's hashtag unique, positive, short and memorable. Check if your constituents have already created and are using a hashtag for your school. If it's positive, use that hashtag.



To create a searchable hashtag, place the pound symbol (#) before a relevant keyword or phrase (with no spaces). Include a hashtag in a post to categorize the message, making it easier to be found in a search.

Twitter and Instagram are the best channels to use the hashtags. Using one hashtag — or a combination of them can expose your school's brand to large, targeted audiences.

Most important to branding your school hashtag(s) is promotion. Some ways to promote the hashtag(s) include:

- Showcase the hashtag(s) on school spirit wear.
- Create a graphic for your social media channels and website and highlight your school hashtag(s). Also, use the hashtag(s) in your social media posts.
- Add the hashtag(s) to the email signature for all staff

Source: *Making / Marketing Your School the School of Choice*

Online Netiquette — Video Conferencing Guidelines for Your Staff

Due to the nature of online classes, distractions and interruptions inevitably occur, such as from adults in the background at home. Below are some tips that your staff can use in their classrooms and during staff meetings from [Kingsburg \(Calif.\) Elementary School District](#).



- Be mindful of your tone and expressions during the video conferencing session. This is not an anonymous session. Your voice and video are viewed by all who are participating.
- Adhere to the same standards of behavior during the video conferencing session that you would follow in real life and in your classroom. If at any time you view or experience something inappropriate or of concern, stop the videoconference and report the incident or concern to your site administrator. Contact the student's parent, if needed.
- Remain professional in your communication with your students, families, teacher teams, and staff. Be aware of both your student's and your own environment. This includes family members who may accidentally be seen in the background of your video. Let family members know, in advance, that you will be videoconferencing with your students or colleagues.
- Use the Waiting Room feature, which allows hosts of the meetings to see participants in a virtual staging area so they can be vetted and so they can't join the meeting until the host gives the green light. Approve participants one at a time or in very small groups to reduce the chances of an unwanted or uninvited participant.
- When a new student is added to the session, look closely at their video feed to ensure their background is appropriate. If possible, have students orient themselves so there is a fixed background, such as a wall rather than an open room, hallway, or doorway.

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

NSPRA's PR Power Hour Lineup for 2020–21

Fast, focused and always on Fridays, **NSPRA's PR Power Hour** professional development series, sponsored by [TeacherLists](#), provides insights and best practices from top experts in school communications. NSPRA builds its lineup of live, virtual programming after scanning the education landscape for big challenges, innovative ideas, hot trends and new tools affecting the work of school communicators.



These information-packed webinars offer an economical and convenient way to continue your professional development. **New in 2020**, NSPRA will broadcast PR Power Hours via Zoom Webinar while still covering big challenges, innovative ideas, hot trends and useful tools affecting the work of school communicators.

NSPRA members save \$30 on the registration fee for every live PR Power Hour! **Register for five or more** Power Hours and receive access to the audio file of each program you purchase for no additional fee.

[Learn more about the full lineup](#) and register online or [fill out the paper form](#).

PRincipal Communicator — Concise, practical public relations help for your school. Published monthly, August through May, by the National School Public Relations Association.

{domain.address}

Telephone: 301-519-0496; FAX: 301-519-0494
www.nspira.org; e-mail: nspira@nspira.org.

Publisher: Richard D. Bagin, APR
Managing Editor: Rebecca Shaw
Designer: Chuck Becker

Connect With Us



To opt out of future member messages from NSPRA, [click here](#).
© 2020 National School Public Relations Association - all rights reserved.

