THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

“To inform, involve and connect all school system stakeholders to ensure maximum student achievement and system productivity.”

Nat Harrington, Chief Public Information Officer

COMMUNICATING WITH SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

AND WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

www.palmbeachschools.org/pao/Media.asp

“…committed to providing a world class education with excellence and equity to empower each student to reach his or her highest potential …”

District Mission Statement
Dear Principal/Department Head:

We have developed the enclosed communications plan in an effort to increase public understanding and support for our students, teachers programs, and schools. It is designed to inform employees and stakeholders about our schools and to empower schools and school district staff.

Crafted using input from employees and other school district stakeholders, the plan describes and clarifies responsibilities for proactively informing communities about our schools and for responding to public and media requests for information and interviews. The communication plan is included in the attached packet.

Contents

Pages:
4-5) Guidelines For Media Contact
6-7) Procedures For Media Contact By Phone and Visits
8) Guide For Identifying What Is News
9) Elements of a School Communications Plan
10-11) Media Tips For Principals (and administrators)
12) Press Release Information Request (Omni 2018)
13) Sample News Release-Short Form
14) Sample News Release - Paragraph Form
15) Sample Press Release Shell
16) Media Relations Seminar Survey
17-23) *Marketing Your School
24) Tips For Writing a News Release

How to Use This Packet

1) Guidelines for Media Contact describes the authority of principals, department heads or their designees to speak for their schools or departments and the procedure for school district staff when media requests for information are received. Each principal, department head and staff member may be asked for information or interviews and should practice good customer relations.

2) Procedures for Media Contacts and Requests by phone calls/email and visits are easy to use step-by-step instructions for any employee to handle media requests. These should be copied and distributed throughout your school or office.

3) Guide for Identifying What is News should be used to make decisions regarding what news/press release or information to send to the news media requesting media coverage. Not all events, activities, programs, luncheons, etc. are news. Knowing what news is enables schools to develop reasonable expectations for media coverage.
THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY
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4) **Elements of a School Communications Plan** describes the steps a school may take to create and nurture relationships with the school community and local news media. The plan is based on the principles that when schools are being proactive they reduce the need to be reactive, and that the media are generally more responsive to school news when the information comes from schools.

5) **Media Tips for Principals and Department Heads** provides additional strategies and are intended to guide school secretaries other school-based employees, administrators and department heads through successful encounters with the media, whether by phone or in person.

6) The Department of Public Affairs will help disseminate school and department news. **The Press Release Information Request Form (Omni 2018)** can be used to help maximize our effectiveness in getting our messages to our communities. These forms should be filled out and emailed to your school’s Public Affairs contact well in advance (2 weeks if possible) to inform the Public Affairs contact of newsworthy events, achievements, successful programs, effective teachers/staff school groups, etc. Inform teachers, PTA members, school activities, etc. A supply should be kept in the main office. Schools and departments should prepare and send news releases first to Public Affairs for review, support, and assistance, if required, and then to the media.

7) **The Sample News Release-short form** can be used when appropriate to explain the five Ws and H of news—Who, What, Where, When, Why and How. This format should only be used for self-explanatory events, reminders and in cases where timing and details are limited.

8) **The Sample News Release-long form** should be used as a guide in constructing paragraph-style news releases on newsworthy events, achievements, etc. to the media. Use your school’s letterhead or design a simple News Release form incorporating the letterhead to be used consistently by your school.

9) **The Palm Beach Schools Media List** should be used to phone, fax or mail news releases to news organizations. Media lists change frequently because reporters and editors change. Use this as a beginning. Expand it to include any and all news organizations and newsletters in your community and update it frequently—at least twice a year. No newsletter is too small when it comes to sharing school news.

10) The Department of Public Affairs will use **The Media Relations Seminar Survey** to plan and conduct media seminars designed to help principals and their designees and other school district staff communicate effectively through the media. Indicate the type of information you need to be more comfortable and effective in interviews and relationships with the media.

11) **Marketing Your School** was developed by veteran school public information practitioners of the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA). It is a basic guide to creating and maintaining academic and other programs that parents will want to send their children to and be involved in. It will be available by mid-August.
Guidelines for Media Contact
2012-2013

Policies
2.04 Public Information
2.041 Public Records

Guidelines

The Department of Public Affairs is charged with the responsibility for releasing accurate and timely information, both internally and externally, under all applicable Florida Statutes, and to reinforce the mission, vision, philosophy and goals of the school system. School-based and central office staff should observe the following guidelines:

I. News Media Contacts

A. The Chief Public Information Officer is the official spokesperson for the school system on district policies and issues. Principals/Area Superintendents, Department Heads, and their designees have the authority to speak for their schools and departments.

B. Media and public requests for public records, other public information and interviews—print or broadcast—should be responded to in a timely fashion and should be brought to the attention of the appropriate principal, area superintendent, department head, assistant superintendent, division chief and the Department of Public Affairs. Each school and department must have a “public records custodian” who responds to that location’s public records requests.

C. Principals, area superintendents, department heads or their designees should inform the Department of Public Affairs immediately about all media contacts arising from major school or department incidents* or non-routine media inquiries to ensure that all appropriate actions are taken and communications are made.

D. Principals and department heads should designate appropriate staff members who will contact Public Affairs and talk with the media in their absence about events and incidents involving school emergencies or student safety.

II. Emergencies

School personnel should use the district Crisis Response Plan. In case of unplanned media contacts, call the Public Affairs (PX 48228, 434-8228) as soon as possible to ensure timely and accurate responses. Public Affairs will work closely with all appropriate personnel to help provide necessary information.
III. Special Events

A. Publicity – Inform Public Affairs in writing/email about special events in schools as much in advance as possible. Use Press Release Information Requests or school press releases and Ed Line and your school website to communicate with parents, local media and the community.

B. Press Releases – Schools should issue press releases to the media on all newsworthy school accomplishments and events. A copy of all press releases involving district issues should be sent to Public Affairs before they are issued. Send to your school’s Public Affairs contact the name of the person in your school or office responsible for preparing press releases if it is someone other than the principal.

C. Public Service Announcements – Request for public service announcements should be submitted to the media or Public Affairs at least four weeks in advance. Consult The Education Network for assistance on PSAs.

If you need further information about this policy or training for staff, please contact Department of Public Affairs, 434-8228.
Handling media requests 
through phone calls or emails

1. When media representatives call/email requesting information or interviews, the school secretary, office person or administrator should quickly ascertain a) the name and organization, b) what specific information is being requested, c) what the story is about and d) the reporter’s deadline. **DO NOT SAY or EMAIL “I AM NOT ALLOWED TO TALK TO THE MEDIA.” DO SAY or EMAIL “I’LL FIND THE BEST PERSON TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS AND GET BACK TO YOU.”** If you have been empowered by your supervisor to give out routine information, such as school hours, supply lists, program eligibility, etc., answer the questions.

2. Make brief detailed notes. Do not answer questions without first checking the accuracy of the information. Even if you know the answer, allow yourself a few minutes to prepare your response. Answer the question.

3. Tell the reporter that you or the appropriate person will call/email them back with the information or arrange for the on-camera interview by the deadline. If the deadline cannot be met, call/email as soon as possible to inform the reporter. Also, indicate when the information can be provided.

4. Immediately notify the appropriate chief, assistant or area superintendent and the Department of Public Affairs that the request has been received, and get the principal, department head or appropriate person involved.

5. The appropriate person should gather the requested information as quickly as possible and check it for accuracy.

6. Call/email the reporter and provide the information. Do not try to guess at answers or answer additional or speculative questions.

7. If additional questions come up, simply tell the reporter you will get the answers and that you or the appropriate person will call/email back by the deadline. The correct responses could include: “I don’t know the answer to that, but I’ll be glad to look into it and get right back you;” or, “I’m sorry I can’t speculate on that.” **Never say or email “no comment”**.

8. Always have prepared the basic, 3-5 positive message you want to give out and work that into your responses.

9. Prepare a School Communications Plan that includes regular press releases on school success stories that are sent to Palm Beach Post, Neighborhood News, Sun-Sentinel, Community News and others. See On-Line Media Directory  
http://www.palmbeachschoools.org/pao/PDFs/Media_Directory.pdf

10. Call Public Affairs at 434-8228 for assistance.
Handling media requests through school or office visits

1. When media representatives appear unexpectedly at a school or office, including across the street, they should be greeted pleasantly and asked what they are working on and what need from the school. If appropriate, they can be directed to the office or conference room to wait for the principal, department head or designee. Ask that no pictures/video be taken or interviewing take place until approved. (Media representatives, as with other guests, should not be allowed to tour the school unescorted without approval.)

2. Quickly ascertain what the reporter/photographer deadline is. DO NOT SAY, “I AM NOT ALLOWED TO TALK TO THE MEDIA.” DO SAY, “I’LL FIND THE BEST PERSON TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS.” If you have been empowered by your supervisor to provide routine information, such as school hours, supply lists, program eligibility, etc., provide the information or answer the questions.

3. Otherwise, tell the reporter/photographer your situation (i.e. busy with another situation) and whether you (or the principal/department head/designee) can respond accurately by the deadline. Be responsive. Your participation improves the story’s accuracy and balance. You may need to ask the reporter/photographer to leave and return later. Give a specific time, and be ready when they return.

4. As soon as possible, contact the appropriate persons in the school or district—principal, department head, assistant or area superintendent and Public Affairs.

5. As soon as possible, begin gathering the information. Reporters are always on deadline. They may release inaccurate or incomplete information if they receive one-sided or late information. The sooner you provide your response, the better the chance of “your side” of the story will be told.

6. Avoid answering on the spot, except for routine information. Always give yourself a little time to prepare, including 3-5 positive message points about that situation. Even 5 minutes helps. When the information has been gathered and checked for accuracy, the appropriate person should call the reporter to tell them the information is ready, or email it. If the reporter is on campus, give the information as completely and succinctly as possible. A short, written statement may be the best way to respond.

7. Do not guess at answers or answer speculative questions. The correct response could include: “I don’t know the answer, but I will try to get it and get back to you;” or, “I’m sorry, I can’t speculate on that;” or “I don’t have that information.” Never say “no comment.” Always have 3-5 positive message points about that situation that you want to give out, and work them into your responses.

8. Prepare a School Communications Plan that includes regular press releases on school success stories that are sent to the local media, and share the releases at every opportunity. See On-Line Media Directory [http://www.palmbeacheschools.org/pao/PDFs/Media_Directory.pdf](http://www.palmbeacheschools.org/pao/PDFs/Media_Directory.pdf)

9. Call Public Affairs at 434-8228 for assistance.
To build an effective relationship with the media and succeed in getting favorable media coverage, it is critical to know what news is and what is not news. The definition may vary somewhat among news organizations based on their audience demographics. However, certain news criteria remain fairly constant.

**News values**

**New**
The biggest increase in test scores; the first student from our school to attend Oxford; the best debating team in the nation is from our school, etc.

**Unusual**
Students teach class; teachers play roles as students.

**Interesting**
A new student computer system installed at school.

**Importance**
Deadline for scholarship applications.

**Prominence**
The movie star mother of a student will read to students.

**Proximity**
It happened in our school.

**Conflict**
Student journalists try to publish articles opposed by advisor.

**Controversy**
Staff disagrees on school graduation site.
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Elements of School Communications Plan
2012-2013

Effective communication, including marketing, is the key to successful relationships between schools, parents and the communities they serve. This outline of a basic school communications plan is intended to help schools and departments become proactive in communicating our successes, challenges and needs to parents and the public.

Customize a plan for your school’s specific needs. The Department of Public Affairs will assist and support you developing and implementing a complete plan designed to improve communications between schools, the media and the public and to increase support for education in Palm Beach County.

School Communications Plan

I. Select and train a school-based or department marketing/public affairs representative(s).
   A. Principal, Assistant Principal, department head, teacher, school improvement team member, a special volunteer or involved parent.
   B. The public affairs rep talks to the media in formal and informal interviews and acts as a liaison between the school, area office, media and the Public Affairs Department.
   C. Training materials, including sample releases, marketing plan templates and spokesperson training are available from the Department of Public Affairs.

II. Identify your school, community and neighborhood newspapers, radio stations and school communication tools, including Edline, web sites, marquee, and TEN. Make a list with contact phone numbers, web and email addresses. Analyze your audiences and use the appropriate communication tools.
   A. Consult Public Affairs for seminars, media lists and materials.
   B. Consult Internet and staff about existing and new media and marketing connections.

III. Establish a relationship with the community and neighborhood newspapers, reporters, editors and publishers.
   A. Invite media representatives to your school for an introduction and for important events.
   B. Know what is news and your marketable programs and successes, and share information on newsworthy events through marketing techniques and news releases.

IV. Create and utilize a network of parents and community members to transmit school news, marketing information (student/staff/program successes) and events to your community and Public Affairs.
   A. Send school news, events and marketing information to parents, prospective parents and community through all appropriate communication tools, including partner newsletters.
   B. Send news items to Public Affairs for press releases district and web sites.

V. Request/participate in communications-related seminars and workshops by Public Affairs.
Media Tips for Principals
2012-2013

1) Train and encourage “key communicators”* within your school community to spread the word about the school’s and the district’s accomplishments.

2) When working with the media, greet them with an open mind; expect positive results.

3) When reporters/photographers visit, have them report directly to the office or other designated area to briefly await availability of the principal or public affairs representative. Ask that no photos or video be taken or interviews conducted until approved.

4) Find out the reporter’s deadline and time frame, including how soon is it needed, what is the latest time information can be provided.

5) Tell reporter how you can help as well as your limitations: time, other media, school business, non-availability of student/parent, need parent clearances, etc.

6) Be as responsive as you can: provide public records/information, interview, photo opportunities, etc. within the deadline, and emphasize your school’s accomplishments, special programs in 3-5 positive message points about that situation. If you cannot respond by the deadline, tell the reporter as soon as possible and when you can respond.

7) Research answers before the interview begins. Ask for time to prepare. If you do not know an answer, do not guess or wing it. Say, “I don’t know (even during an interview), but I will find out.” If the question involves district policy, refer the reporter to the Department of Public Affairs.

8) Do not say, “NO COMMENT.” Alternatives could include: “I’m sorry. All Student information is confidential.” “I’m not at liberty to discuss that at this time but will be happy to talk more when the investigation is completed.” “It wouldn’t be appropriate to comment now since we don’t have all the answers right now. I’ll be glad to discuss it when we know more.”

9) Keep answers short and clear. Give 7 to 20 second answers and then stop talking. The reporter will follow up if he/she wants more. Always be honest. A lie will always come back to hurt you. Credibility is fragile.

10) Always assume you are on-the-record. Know, and ask to be told, when the camera is “recording” and when it is turned off. Don’t ask or agree to talk off the record. (Consult Public Affairs.)

11) For challenging or hostile interviews or during crises, stay calm, listen carefully and answer while leading back to your positive message points. Ask for assistance from Public Affairs. Training is available.

12) Tell affected teachers, students and/or parents briefly what the story is about. If necessary, tell students and others not to look at, wave or acknowledge the camera unless requested.
13) Always have 3-5 positive message points about that situation prepared, and try to pitch another positive story idea if you can before the news crew leaves. Have a School Communication Plan prepared so you know the reporter and the news organization. Develop a relationship with the media and community.

(Message points are the ideas, characteristics, accomplishments, special traits you want your school to be known for [i.e. “Our school has improved attendance and academic achievement 3 years in a row.”])
Students, parents, teachers, staff, community groups, business partners and the media want to know about important and interesting events, activities and accomplishments in our schools and district administration.

Please provide the following information and a draft news release (see attached sample news releases) and/or work with your school’s Public Affairs contact as soon as possible, minimally, one week in advance, so your stakeholders are informed and involved through the appropriate media and marketing communication tools.

*** Use reverse or additional paper if needed.

1) **Today’s Date:**

2) **School/Department:**

3) **Activity:** (Describe the newsworthy event, activity or accomplishment, use the reverse or additional paper if needed) Include:
   a) why it is interesting, important and/or unusual
   b) how students have been or will be helped
   c) what visuals will be available for photographs/video

4) **Address/Event Location:**

5) **Name and phone number of event contact person(s):**

6) **Date of Activity:**

7) **What media coverage, if any, is requested?**

8) **Press release needed? Y/N**

9) **Communication tools to be used:** Edline, marquee, web, press release, take homes, email.

10) **Names and titles of individuals to be involved:**

11) **Background:** How did the event or accomplishment come about?

   Attach separate sheet if needed.
Palm Sun High School

News Release  
Sample

Immediate Release  
August 31, 2012

Contact: Jane Doe, Principal  
(561) XXX-XXXX

New Super Computer on Loan at Palm Sun High School Helps Students Learn Geography

Who:  Students at Palm Sun High School

What:  Demonstrating Virtual reality geography lesson

Why:  To demonstrate how computers are making academic lessons challenging and interesting.

When:  Friday, August 31, 2012, 10:00 A.M.

Where:  Palm Sun High School, Social Studies Lab, 111 Palm Sun Blvd.

How:  Media and others will be allowed to experience the sights and sounds of several interesting places around the world.

• This is a good visual story for lead-in or tag-out of weathercasts, or for kicker at the end of the news shows. Interviews and video available.

For more information, call (contact person at the school), XXX-XXXX
Palm Sun High School

News Release

Sample

For Immediate Release
August 31, 2012

Contact: Jane Doe, Principal
(561) XXX-XXXX

Super Computer Helps Students Master Geography Business

Partner Provides Software for Virtual Reality Voyages

West Palm Beach – A group of Palm Sun High School students went skiing in the Alps this afternoon after traveling from Senegal, West of Africa, this morning. Their trip was made possible by a super-computer linked to a network of global positioning satellites—all provided by the school’s business partner ABC Corp.

“It was amazing seeing the sights, hearing the sounds and experiencing being both in the desert and in the mountains,” said Joel Lee, a senior at Palm Sun High School. “Most of us will have no problem passing any geography test after this, because the computer’s virtual reality experience made the lesson interesting.

The super-computer, Big Green, is on loan to the school this semester and may be available on a long-term basis to other Palm Beach Schools next year.

“We wanted to do something special for our school partner,” said David Jackson, CEO of ABC Corp. “And what better way than to help our young people to learn in a way that helps them compete with their counterparts in other highly developed countries.”

The students plan to visit Panama, Australia and the Grand Canyon on Friday—all before lunch.

Members of the media are invited along for the trip. For more information, contact Jane Doe, principal at XXX-XXXX.

###
MEDIA INFORMATION LIST
(INSERT HERE)

Media Relations Seminar Survey
2012-2013

The Department of Public Affairs is committed to supporting schools and district offices as they implement school and district communications plans. Please provide the following information to enable staff to plan seminars that will meet your needs. (Use reverse or additional paper if needed.)

Name ___________________________ School/Office ___________________________

Has your school or office been covered by the media? Y/N How many times? ____________, or how frequently (annually, etc.)__________

When was the last time a story was done at your school or involving your office? (Month/year)

Was the coverage positive ____or____negative; initiated by you____ or was it the result of media interest ____?

Do you anticipate a major positive or negative event, announcement or activity that is likely to attract media attention? If so, please describe it. (Use reverse or separate sheet if needed.)

How would you rate your proficiency in working with the media/granting interviews?

Have you ever had media training? Y/N; Would you like training? Y/N

How do you believe you could improve working with the media?

What media relation skills would you like to learn or improve?

How much time would you like to spend in a media relations seminar?

When would you be available for such a seminar? Weekday/ Weekend/Evening. How many sessions do you want/need? 1/Yr. 2/Yr. 3/Yr. 4/Yr.
WHY DO OUR SCHOOLS NEED A MARKETING PLAN?

Public schools have historically not viewed marketing their “product” as an essential, or even appropriate, function. Yet planned or not, each school does present an image through its most important marketing agents – its staff and students.

That has changed dramatically. Public schools now compete with a host of competitors for students, volunteer, partners and resources. A marketing plan is simply a coordinated system for sending the messages we want about our school and utilizing those agents and the appropriate communication tools to share the best that there is about our school.

At dismissal time each day, every school sends out hundreds of publicity agents in the persons of our students. If staff members recognize the potential of these agents for disseminating information, they soon realize that they can affect the messages students are carrying out of the building, and can design curriculum-related activities that utilize these skills.

More than anything, a marketing plan is a systematic way of establishing or changing the self-images of staff members to view themselves as agents who carry messages about the school. They transmit these messages in their actions at school with students and adults, and their actions in the school community.

Once you have decided that you do indeed want to share the best of your school with external audiences, this manual will guide you in developing your schools unique marketing plan. This is a program designed to assist the principal and the school staff in communicating school successes to a diverse public and to help build community involvement, community support and community pride in our schools.

This marketing plan has been tested. Results are conclusive – it works! We encourage you to take the lead and plan now for the implementation of “Promoting Your School.”

We believe that you will find the process of developing a marketing plan to be a positive experience in itself. You will learn more about your school, staff and community; the process will be a team building activity for your staff. We wish you success as you join your colleagues across the county in marketing our fine public schools.
MARKETING STRATEGIES

There are three types of external marketing channels. They use different tools and vary in the amount of control you have over the messages and in the cost of sending those messages.

A. ADVERTISING

Advertising is the purchased message. You tell your markets why they should “buy” your product. You have a high amount of control over the messages, but the cost also may be high.

Advertising vehicles include:

- Radio
- Billboards
- Television
- Posters
- Websites
- Newspapers
- Buttons
- Magazines
- Bumper Stickers
- Edline
- Brochures
- Direct Mail
- Fliers
- Marquees

B. PROMOTION

Promotion is the traded message. You sell your school by using products furnished by a sponsor who also is benefiting from the promotion. (Example: A neighborhood pizza place underwrites the cost of paper place mats that carry a message about the school. The restaurant uses the place mats and the school’s students are eager to take their families there to see the place mats.)

In promotion, your control of the message is still high, but the cost is low because it is absorbed by the sponsor. It is important, however, that the sponsors can see what the benefit to them is, whether it is increasing their sales (listeners, audience, etc.), securing a tax deduction, or creating a positive image for themselves in the community.

C. PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public Relations is the school/district (corporate) message: a planned effort to influence your market through socially-acceptable, responsible performance. Public Relations is the reputation your school builds through its ongoing programs.

Your school can enhance its reputation by sponsoring clubs and events, providing a speaker’s bureau, and donating community services and facilities. The cost of Public Relations is low, but the control of the message sent is also low.
WHO WILL CREATE THE MARKETING PLAN?

Some of the success of your marketing plan will depend on staff commitment to its implementation, and that is best assured by giving staff members a sense of ownership.

We recommend that you inform a planning team of no more than seven individuals who will work through this manual cooperatively. It is recommended that this team include an administrator or designee; a teacher; a non-instructional employee; a member from the School Advisory Council and/or PTA (could be a dual role) and a Business Partnership representative (Civic Club, Chamber, Industry Council). This group may be a committee or task force appointed especially for this task, or a currently existing group in your school, such as your School Advisory Council, may perform the task. You will have to determine which approach is best, based on the leadership model utilized in your school. Remember to include non-certified personnel in your team. You must know what you are marketing about your school, to whom and why and select persons based on these objectives.

List the planning group members below:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Site Contact
STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

Your school’s strengths and needs are both important in your marketing plan. Strengths are the blocks upon which you can build. They will help you to sell your school.

Needs must be identified so that you can minimize their power to generate negative publicity and so that you can use them as a source of goals for school improvement.

EXEMPLARY CHARACTERISTICS

Example: Many of our teachers are certified in elementary education and special education.

1. 6.
2. 7.
3. 8.
4. 9.
5. 10.

FUTURE NEEDS

Example: Plan for security of the building for students and staff

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
IDENTIFYING YOUR SCHOOL’S MARKET

Whom do you want to reach with your marketing plan? There are many groups that have the potential for being a positive force in the operation of your school, and they are the people whom you wish to address. Some market groups are large; some are small and specific. Here are some examples of audiences whom you may wish to reach:

- The parents and guardians of your school’s students
- Parents of future/prospective students living in your school’s attendance area
- Citizens in your community – active volunteer organizations
- Leaders in your community (business owners and managers; county/city political leaders; members of community advisory councils; leaders of civic organizations; church leaders)
- Leaders in educational organization, innovation, and decision-making (state legislators; State Department of Education employees; school board members; education associations; professors in education departments of area colleges)

Thinking of both current market groups and new potential markets, list additional markets that could be targeted:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

From the above lists, select at least three specific markets that you most wish to reach:

Market #1:

Market #2:

Market #3:

Fill in these markets’ names next to their numbers on the following two pages.

As your work with the markets throughout this plan, remember that you are speaking not to an amorphous group “somewhere out there,” but to specific identifiable people. We recommend that you set up“membership” lists for all markets that you have identified above. These lists should be done in accordance with your school’s record-keeping system, whether it is computerized, index cards, or another system. You will find these lists useful for mailing, phone calls, and planning activities.
CREATING MESSAGES FOR YOUR MARKETS

Now that you have identified and described your markets, you are prepared to select the messages you wish to send to each group. These messages may be different for each market. When possible, create a benefit message (letting the audience know what the school can do for them.)

List several messages for each of your markets:

Example:

You have a valuable contribution to make to our school.
What you do in your work affects us.

MARKET #1:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

MARKET #2:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

MARKET #3:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.
DEVELOPING YOUR RESOURCES

You will need to develop and utilize both financial and human resources in carrying out your marketing plan, but an effective marketing plan DOES NOT REQUIRE A LARGE BUDGET!

Suggested resources include:

- School Improvement Monies
- Contributions from Partners in Education
- Grants (Government, Special Programs, etc.)
- Education Foundation Mini Grants
- Donations (From appropriate sources/partners only)
- Funding Sources for Project/Advertising
TEN TIPS FOR WRITING A NEWS RELEASE

1. **Do not . . . unless you have something newsworthy to report.** If what you send consistently is inappropriate, you will develop a reputation and your material will be thrown away as soon as the return address on the envelope is spotted.

2. **Do . . . whenever you have something newsworthy to report.** Not all of your releases will be used, but none of your information will be published if it is not shared.

3. **Write in a crisp, active, brief and concise format.** Do not try to impress people with your vocabulary. Stay away from “education-ese” and abbreviations. Use short sentences and paragraphs. If one adjective communicates what needs to be said, do not use two.

4. **Understand the style of news releases.** They should be double-spaced and on one side of the paper. Review “The Worlds Shortest Course for Educational Journalism” for key style points, or your can probably find a copy of the Associated Press Stylebook online or at your local library.

5. **Remember the inverted pyramid format.** This means report the most important information first. If editors like your release, but cannot use all of it, they will cut from the bottom.

6. **Answer the “5 W’s and the H” early in your release the who/what, where, when, why and how.** Those are the key elements all reporters learn in News writing 101, and what they will look for in your release. You should provide that information early in your release in the first or second paragraph.

7. **Always have a contact name and phone number on your news release.** Your article may be great, but if there is one question in the reporter’s mind and no way to get an answer, the release is likely not to be used.

8. **Treat all news media equally.** Do not mail a release to one newspaper on Monday and to the other on Thursday. Or, do not personally deliver the release to the television station and mail it to the radio station. The news media are competitive.

9. **Seek advice from people experienced in news writing.** This might be an experienced journalism student, the newspaper adviser, a school system Public Relations professional or even a local reporter or editor.

10. **Be Patient.** Understand that the reporters and editors receive an avalanche of news releases and pitches to cover stories every day. If your first submission is not published, that does not mean you did a bad job. Keep trying. Do not be demanding in asking why your release was not printed on the front page. Instead, inquire whether it met the needs of the reporter and how your can improve.