



## Spring Workshop Agenda: Friday May 9, 2014

### Purposeful Community Engagement

7:30 a.m. WSPRA CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

8:30 a.m. WELCOME

8:40 a.m. GENERAL SESSION

#### ***“Telling Your Story”***

Public schools have a great story to tell, but the message simply isn't being heard. In this practical, fast-paced and results-oriented session, find out how to use current research to reframe the public school message, organize the grassroots and leverage existing communication channels to tell your story more proactively and effectively. Find out how districts nationwide are combatting naysayers and winning the battle for public education.

Topics covered will include:

- Brief synopsis of current research regarding public school messaging and communications
- Mapping and organizing opinion leaders
- Deploying different messengers while maintaining unity of message
- Attending to symbolic communications
- Correcting and clarifying misinformation
- Measuring return on investment in school PR and marketing
- Shifting roles for school communications professionals

***Presenter: Nora Carr, President, National School Public Relations Association and Chief of Staff, Guilford County Schools, Greensboro, NC***

9:30 a.m. BREAK

9:45 a.m. 45-MINUTE BREAKOUTS  
- 10:30 a.m.

#### **1. *Engaging Your Community for Successful Referenda***

Participants will experience a variety of community engagement strategies used by the Hudson School District to seek feedback from community stakeholders regarding school construction referenda. Learn how to move beyond informational mailers and formal board listening sessions. Time will be spent learning how to successfully lead community conversations similar to the World Café model, develop and utilize key communicator networks, maximize social media tools, and develop on-line surveys that help inform decisions.

***Presenter: Tracy Habisch-Ahlin, Communications/Community Services Coordinator, Hudson School District***



**2. *Media Relations for School Leaders: Learn to Work with the Media like a Pro***

Although the media has always been key to school and school district leaders, having the knowledge and skills to effectively convey messages and avoid common media-related pitfalls is more important than ever. In this session, you will learn how to answer reporters' questions, interview effectively, and deal with especially difficult reporters.

***Presenter: Joe Donovan, President, Donovan Group***

**3. *Engaging Stakeholders Through Customer Service & Marketing***

Every interaction someone has with your school or district shapes his/her perceptions. In this competitive educational marketplace, it is essential that every interaction is positive. Every staff member plays an important role in providing great customer service, marketing your school/district and ultimately, shaping perceptions.

- This work session will cover topics such as:
- The need for marketing and great customer service to engage your stakeholders in today's competitive educational marketplace (including maintain or increasing enrollment)
- The relationship between customer service and marketing
- Tactics for providing great customer service
- Tactics for marketing your school/district
- The role everyone plays in marketing your school/district

***Presenters: Stacy Tapp, Chief of Communication & Community Engagement, and Jane Flis, Marketing & Communications Specialist, Racine Unified School District***

**9:45 a.m.      100-MINUTE BREAKOUTS**  
**- 11:25 a.m.**

**4. *Your Staff: Tap Into A Powerful Network Through Effective Internal Engagement***

Every day, your staff is communicating to your parents as well as their friends and neighbors. But what are they saying? How can you help employees grab hold of your mission and help you fulfill it? In this hands-on workshop learn the meaning of employee engagement, experience practical techniques to improve employee engagement, and leave with internal communication tips that you can apply in the district immediately to better position your district in the eyes of the community.

***Presenters: Bill Foster, School Perceptions, and Dorreen Dembski, Director of Communications, CESA #6***

**5. *Proven Tools for Engaging Your Community in Decisions That Matter to Them***

This session offers both a framework and practical suggestions to engage your community in important decisions using specific tools and techniques recommended by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). You'll learn how to identify which methods will best serve your District's needs and gain insights into how to move them forward. Among the practical considerations are: How involved does your community appear to want to be? How impactful is the decision you are making? What is the potential for a public outcry?



Applying several engagement techniques during the session, you'll get hands-on experience you can use when you return to your district. Finally, you'll get an in-depth introduction (it sounds like an oxymoron, but it's not!) to a dynamic engagement process used by school districts across the country known as a "future search." This process brings the whole system together to harness the wisdom and energy of diverse stakeholders to identify school district and community challenges, plan solutions, and move toward positive change. Specific examples from several Wisconsin school districts will be shared throughout the session.

**Presenters: Sarah Heck, Communications Specialist, Sun Prairie Area School District, and Drew Howick, National Practice Director for Leadership and Organizational Development, Patina Solutions**

**10:30 a.m. BREAK**  
**- 10:40 a.m.**

**10:40 a.m. REPEAT OF 45-MINUTE BREAKOUTS**  
**- 11:25 a.m.**

- 1. *Engaging Your Community for Successful Referenda***
- 2. *Media Relations for School Leaders: Learn to Work with the Media like a Pro***
- 3. *Engaging Stakeholders Through Customer Service & Marketing***

**11:25 a.m. LUNCH**  
**-12:30 p.m.**

***Experience the "unConference"!***

An unConference is a flexible, participant-driven session that favors discussion, debate and interaction between all the participants here today with YOU serving as the session leaders. Centered on community engagement, we will put our heads together during lunch to identify the key topics for our final session of the day. This is about you setting the agenda so bring YOUR community engagement ideas and questions to the table!

**12:40 p.m. 45-MINUTE BREAKOUTS**  
**-1:25 p.m.**

- 1. *Engaging Communities with Language That Connects***  
When you talk, are you communicating, or just telling people what's on your mind? As an educational leader, you can't just "spray and pray" or "data dump" through 40 slides. We have to translate our language and connect with community members who don't have our pedigree. This session will teach you how to "FLIP" (Financial Language Interpreted for the Public) and "PAM" (Prepare a Message) so you not only communicate, but motivate and inspire audiences in your community to support public education. Issues like Common Core State Standards, grading schools, budget and legal procedures and "college and career ready" are difficult subjects for parents and business people to decipher. Making the connection and engaging communities requires a targeted message that's crystal clear and action steps that people are willing to take. Whether you



deliver the message through social media, public speaking, phone notification, the media or a letter home, this session will give you the tools to cut through the clutter and connect with the audience wherever they are.

**PRESENTERS:** *David R. Voss, President, Voss & Associates, and Melissa Badger, Communications Director, School District of Beloit*

**2. *Your Community Wants to Hear from You! Ramping up Communication Can Mean Referendum Success (A case study on the 68% win in Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District)***

When nearly 70% of taxpayers don't have children in local schools and don't feel engaged within a district, what convinces them to support the largest referendum in the State? The Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District demonstrated its mission to succeed by continuing to reach their long-term goals. The District needed to break through the referendum confusion by creating meaningful messages that reached parents, staff, students and community members on why the upcoming referendum was the right solution at the right time; especially after two previous attempts on the ballot failed by large margins. The District had two referendum questions on the November 2012 ballot totaling nearly \$60 million. The capital question ended up passing with 68% of the vote, while the operational question passed with nearly 64%. It was the largest referendum in the State in 2012. How did both questions pass by such large margins? It took a lot of hard work and planning. Perry Hibner, the Communications Director for the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District, and Christin Mlsna, the Communications Specialist with Findorff, will share a case study and tips about the plan and process used not just to pass this referendum, but to also position itself to be successful in the future.

**Presenters:** *Perry Hibner, Communications Director, Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District, and Christin Mlsna, Communications Specialist, JH Findorff & Son Inc.*

**3. *"Like" it or Not: Your District Needs a Social Media Presence***

Recognizing that social media is an effective community engagement tool is the first step into the world of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vine and yes, maybe even Pinterest. But don't panic – Joe Sanfelippo, Superintendent of Fall Creek Schools and Christina Brey, Communications Director for WEAC, will guide you safely through the first few steps into this world with specific tips, tactics, and strategies you can use right away.

**Presenters:** *Joe Sanfelippo, Superintendent, Fall Creek, and Christina Brey, Communications Director, WEAC*

**12:40 p.m. 100-MINUTE BREAKOUTS- REPEAT OF MORNING SESSIONS**

**- 2:20 p.m.**

**4. *Your Staff: Tap Into A Powerful Network Through Effective Internal Engagement***

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**1:25 p.m. BREAK**  
**- 1:35 p.m.**

**1:35 p.m. REPEAT 45-MINUTE BREAKOUTS**  
**-2:20 p.m.**

- 1. *Engaging Communities with Language That Connects***
- 2. *Your Community Wants to Hear from You! Ramping up Communication Can Mean Referendum Success***
- 3. *"Like" it or Not: Your District Needs a Social Media Presence***

**2:30 p.m. UNCONFERENCE SESSIONS**

Rounding out the day of hands-on, interactive strategies, continue the conversation on community engagement by participating in one or more of the topics brainstormed during lunch. Specific rooms and topics will be assigned at the end of lunch. Join in!

**3:00 p.m. CONFERENCE ADJOURNS**