



Council of the Great City Schools
1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 1100N
Washington, D.C. 20004

20th ANNUAL VIRTUAL PUBLIC RELATIONS EXECUTIVES MEETING

July 19-21, 2021
(Eastern Standard Time)

Draft Agenda

(All Sessions will be Recorded)

Monday, July 19

11:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
E.S.T.

Welcome

Tonya Harris, Director of Communications
Council of the Great City Schools

PR Survey Highlights

Joanne Coley, Communications Manager
Council of the Great City Schools

Day 1- Marketing & Branding

12:00 – 12:45 p.m.
E.S.T.

Influences, Ambassadors, and Nurturing Fans

Presenter:

David Meerman Scott, Author and Marketing Expert

The pandemic has served to isolate people from one another and make communications more difficult. At the same time, the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of superficial online communications at a time when people are hungry for true human connection.

In today's Covid-19 world, we all have an opportunity to use online media, especially video, to reach people directly. We can also work with those who influence our audience to create powerful connections that build fans.

We can learn from tapping into the mindsets of communities unlike our own, including business, medicine, the nonprofit world and more. David's talk will be based on his *Wall Street Journal* best-selling book "*Fanocracy: Turning Fans into Customers and Customers into Fans*," which he wrote with his daughter Reiko.

David will share success stories using bold images and video to energize us and will include Reiko's captivating and relatable stories of the personal fandoms of Harry Potter, Comicon and Boston sports teams that have been instrumental in alleviating the stress of the patients she treats as an emergency room doctor at the Boston Medical Center. Reiko, a Millennial, is a K-pop expert and speaks across the country on the importance of influencers in that world.

Together, she and David will challenge us to set old ideas and fear aside and use new tools to achieve measurable, no-cost results.

Sponsored by Blackboard & Hazel Health

1:00 -1:45 p.m.
E.S.T.

Marketing, Messaging & Sometimes Mayhem - A Retrospective on How it All Shook Out

Presenter:

Reyne Telles, Former Executive Director of Communication and Engagement for Austin Independent School District/Current Vice President of Cooksey Strategic Communications

Texas' Austin Independent School District (81,000 students, 120 schools, 12,000 employees) was among the first large urban school district to utilize hundreds of thousands of general fund dollars to create a marketing campaign aimed at retaining and recruiting students. This presentation will examine how science was used in the empirical approach, while providing an unvarnished opinion of what led to the pitfalls and successes. When you spend \$10,000 a month on an interstate billboard, how do you land on an effective message? The costs, the politics, the results and the one piece of information that was learned which surprised the district's leadership and the Communications Department will all be examined.

2:00 – 2:45 p.m.
E.S.T.

Changing the Paradigm: Learning How to Compete and Out Market Charter Schools

Presenters:

Sonali Murarka, Executive Director, Enrollment and Charter Schools, Oakland Unified School District
Nick LeRoy, Chief Enrollment Officer, Schoolmint

Oakland Unified School District's (OUSD) relationships with charter schools is changing. In 2021, both systems will operate separately which is forcing OUSD to directly compete against entrenched charter school competitors. This presentation will provide a guide for public schools who are seeking to increase their enrollment position against charter schools. There are many easily actionable and low budget efforts that traditional public schools can make which will increase their competitive position. The presentation will cover a number of changes that urban public schools need to make if they are going to beat charter schools.

3:00 -3:45 p.m.
E.S.T.

Put a Bird On It- Branding in Oklahoma City

Presenters:

Courtney Morton, Director of Communications, Oklahoma City Public Schools

Matt Farley, Account Executive, ICG

Oklahoma City Public Schools (OKCPS) went through a rebrand process in 2019. Their former logo was created in the 90s and didn't accurately represent the OKCPS of the 21st century. They enlisted the help of a marketing agency, ICG, to support these efforts. This presentation would include the full process to reach their new brand AND where they are now with implementation.

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.
E.S.T.

Break Out Groups

This is an opportunity for conferees to talk with one another in a relaxed and informal atmosphere.

1. **Room 1-** Discussions Between New/Junior Public Relations Executives and Veteran/Senior PRE's
2. **Room 2-** What Works! Sharing Best Practices

Tuesday, July 20

Day 2- Strategic Media Relations & Crisis Communications

11:45 a.m.
E.S.T.

Welcome

Ray Hart, Executive Director
Council of the Great City Schools

12:00 – 12:45 p.m.
E.S.T.

Panel on Reaching a National Audience- How Can Local Districts Get National Placement?

In this session hear from national education reporters on what education stories they are focusing on for the 2021-2022 school year and how you can get more national coverage for your district.

Moderator: Caroline Hendrie, Executive Director
Education Writers Association

Panelists:

Moriah Balingit, Education Reporter, *The Washington Post*

Kalyn Belsha, National Reporter, *Chalkbeat*

Lauren Camera, Senior Writer, *U.S. News & World Report*

Catherine Gewertz, Senior Contributing Writer, *Education Week*

Erica Green, Education Reporter, *The New York Times*

Erin Richards, National Education Reporter, *USA Today*

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
E.S.T.

Two Urban School Districts Discuss How They Handle the Media

Change Champions: The Power of Media Partners in Shelby County Schools

Presenter:

Jerica Phillips, Chief of Communications, Shelby County Schools

Shelby County Schools hosts regular Media Luncheons with journalists, PR directors, and media outlets as part of our strategic efforts to improve buy-in from the media as we solicit them to serve as change champions and storytellers in our community. These luncheons are part of our SMART goals to keep journalists engaged and aware of high-impact initiatives, processes, and protocols at the district. We are measuring our media tonality and community confidence in our communication strategies as part of these goals. We've had excellent engagement including support from our bilingual media outlet and would love to share best practices with our peers.

Resilient, Through it All

Presenter:

Rebecca Suarez, Chief Communications Officer,
Houston Independent School District

In a year like no other, the Houston Independent School District (HISD) weathered many storms, even a winter storm, and is currently navigating through the uncharted waters of COVID-19. But if there's one lesson learned is that students, teachers, staff, parents, and the community are resilient, through it all. From broadcasting lessons on TV to launching the first-ever virtual State

of the Schools, HISD continued to connect and engage with stakeholders in the face of a crisis. Crisis communications, through multiple and innovative avenues, became essential in ensuring that the school district continued to thrive through unprecedented times.

Equity and Engagement Practices

2:15 – 3:00 p.m.
E.S.T.

The 2021 Bond for Tulsa Public Schools: Lessons from a Pandemic Bond Campaign

Presenters:

Emma Garrett-Nelson, Director of Communications, Tulsa Public Schools

Lauren Partain-Barber, Senior Manager of Communications
Tulsa Public Schools

In April 2021, Tulsa Public Schools launched its voter education and activation campaign for a \$414 million school bond issue. With less than three months to engage Tulsans and safety concerns preventing in-person community outreach, the communications team launched an aggressive virtual and digital messaging campaign and media engagement strategy. To date, the team is seeing promising results with weekly averages of six media mentions, 2600 unique users of the bond website, and 9,000 engagements with boosted social media ads. Tulsans approved the bond on June 8 - this presentation will cover the team's tactics and strategies and reflect on lessons learned from the campaign.

3:15- 4:00 p.m.
E.S.T.

It's Not Magic: Finding Lost Students, Strengthening Relationships and Connection, Building Community

Presenters:

Jennifer Kretschman, Director MTSS, Sacramento City Unified School District

Nate McGill, Principal Ethel I Baker, Sacramento City Unified School District

Tara Gallegos Chief Communications Officer, Sacramento City Unified School District

Last spring when schools abruptly closed due to COVID-19, Sacramento City Unified School District reported more than 1,600 students were unreachable -- meaning zero contact with teachers since closures on March 13. Families experiencing homelessness, English learners, foster youth, African American, Pacific Islander and Asian-Laotian students made up a large portion of the students who were unreachable. The district did whatever it took to find our students while at the same time fostering relationships, gaining trust and building a community in neighborhoods and schools that struggled even pre-pandemic.

The presenters will explain how they found and engaged nearly all of its students and how they have maintained that connection and engagement including implementation of Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS), a focus on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and utilizing PULSE surveys. Revamping our attendance practices to a restorative approach and becoming hands on, boots on the ground with our families with programs like Parent Teacher Home Visits and Mental Health Hubs on campus.

4:15- 5:00 p.m.
E.S.T.

Simple. Terrifying. Impossible? The Power of Scaling Conversations

Presenters:

Council District Partners

Andy Krenz, Director of Education, ThoughtExchange

Simply put, people will accept a worse outcome with a better process. Why? Because the need to belong and feel heard is greater than the need to be right.

But asking for input takes guts and sometimes it hurts. Yep - what's more terrifying, hearing what everyone thinks or hearing only from a select few who claim to represent everyone?

Doing what used to be impossible, innovative leaders now leverage technology to reach across socio-political, language and remote connectivity barriers.

In this session, you'll hear from three such leaders as they discuss the logistics, fears, and possibilities that come from scaling conversations on critical issues in their districts.

Wednesday, July 21

Day 3- Social Media, Customer Service & Measuring Metrics

11:00 – 11:45 p.m.

Managing Social Media

Presenters: Fort Worth Unified School District

12:00 – 12:45 p.m.
E.S.T.

Skeptic to Advocate: How One District Uses Technology to Improve Customer Service

Presenters: Pinellas County Schools & K12 Insight

As districts prepare to welcome back families and manage the onslaught of inquiries that come with the start of a new school year, technology has an increasingly critical role to play—especially when it comes to using hard metrics to ensure high-quality interactions. Just ask Pinellas County

Schools where, after some initial skepticism about the role of technology in improving school customer service, district leaders say they don't know how they ever survived without. Learn how this district leverages technology to increase engagement, improve internal collaboration, ensure high-quality interactions, and improve the overall customer experience—all with one solution. Plus, get practical strategies for improving communications and customer service in your school district ahead of and beyond back to school.

1:00 – 1:45 p.m.
E.S.T.

Presentation TBA

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
E.S.T.

Content Performance Bootcamp: Metrics that Matter to School Communications & PR Professionals

Presenter: Stefan Byrd-Krueger, Chief Analytics Officer,
Parsons TKO

Your school district has prioritized capturing critical data about how your supporters use your digital platforms...but how are you using all that data you collect? Are you tracking metrics that matter to your communications and PR strategy? Have you gained actionable insights to improve your outreach?

If you manage your school district's website analytics, it's easy to be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of data available. It can be difficult to discern which metrics are most important for decision making, and reports may be overlooked by staff, whose limited capacity and long to-do lists drive analytics action plans far into the future.

This 2-hour bootcamp is focused on developing analytics reports that move the needle on your organizational goals. This presentation will guide you through how to lay the foundation for compelling reports and dashboards and to help you uncover relevant insights about your audiences and content.

4:00 p.m.

Adjourn