

Chief of Public Affairs & Communications

4400 West 18th, Houston, Texas (US-TX), 77092, United States

ID: 30557

Job Description

Location: Hattie Mae White

Department: Chief of Public Affairs & Communications

Area:Northwest

Contract Months:12

Salary Range: \$215,000.00 – \$255,000.00

Academic Year: 25-26

JOB SUMMARY

The Chief of Public Affairs & Communications is responsible for setting the strategic vision and direction for HISD's communications, public affairs, board engagement, media relations, and community/family partnerships. This role leads efforts to ensure the district's transformation is effectively communicated, public trust is strengthened, and families and community partners are engaged as co-creators of student success. They serve as a cabinet-level leader and trusted advisor to the Superintendent, Board of Managers, and District leadership.

The Chief oversees a portfolio that includes external and internal communications, media relations, board engagement, community and family partnerships, crisis communications, and stakeholder engagement. The role requires exceptional judgment, a deep understanding of urban education, and the ability to build and sustain meaningful relationships across diverse stakeholders to advance HISD's mission.

MAJOR DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

List most important duties first

1. Serve as the principal communications advisor and spokesperson for the district, setting and leading the strategic direction for all communications, engagement, and public affairs functions.
2. Guide, mentor, and supervise the Deputy Chiefs of Communications, Public Affairs &

Board Engagement, and Community & Family Partnerships, promoting collaboration towards shared district goals.

3. Lead the design, implementation, and assessment of district-wide communication strategies, including media relations, emergency communications, community engagement events, and board outreach.
4. Oversee the development of communication materials and platforms, including website, Parent Square, press releases, presentations, e-blasts, and engagement collateral, always ensuring clarity, consistency, and strategic alignment.

MAJOR DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES CONTINUED

5. Direct stakeholder engagement and outreach, building strategic partnerships with families, community leaders, faith organizations, nonprofits, and business partners to support student learning and transformation initiatives.
6. Integrate systems to gather, analyze, and respond to stakeholder insights, mobilizing feedback loops with parents, staff, and community partners for district improvement.
7. Represent the district in public forums, executive briefings, board meetings, and high-level negotiations with top management and external entities.
8. Lead the crisis communications function, maintaining plans and templates for rapid, coordinated response in emergencies.
9. Foster a culture of accountability, equity, innovation, and continuous improvement across all teams and initiatives.

EDUCATION

Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in Communications, Public Affairs, Public Administration, or related field.

Master's degree in Business Administration, Public Policy/Administration, Education Leadership, or related field preferred.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Minimum 10+ years of progressively responsible leadership in communications, public affairs, media, or stakeholder engagement, preferably in a large, urban school district or similarly complex organization. Proven experience managing high-performing teams and leading change in complex systems.

SKILL AND/OR REQUIRED LICENSING/CERTIFICATION

Expert knowledge of urban education, HISD systems, and change management in complex environments.

Outstanding written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to convey complex information to diverse audiences.

Strong strategic planning, analytical, and data-driven decision-making abilities.

Commitment to equity, including demonstrated urgency to close achievement gaps and drive equitable opportunities for all students.

A successful record leading effective teams and individuals, managing organizational change, setting and achieving ambitious goals, and initiating key innovations.

Ability to lead difficult conversations, negotiate and build consensus, and influence outcomes benefiting students and families.

Integrity, high standards of accountability, and a demonstrated commitment to continuous improvement.

Advanced proficiency in Microsoft Office applications and modern communications platforms.

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

Exercises high-level independent judgment and problem-solving, frequently devising new strategic approaches to complex issues and negotiating outcomes impacting multiple departments.

Decisions have wide-ranging impact, influencing relationships, district reputation, and operational success.

WORK COMPLEXITY/INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT

Work involves timely high-level decision-making, strategic planning, and problem-solving across multiple complex domains. Position regularly makes recommendations with significant impact on district-wide outcomes, reputation, and community trust.

BUDGET AUTHORITY

Responsible for developing, managing, and monitoring the budget for the Public Affairs & Communications Division.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Decisions are made with broad discretion and autonomy, including setting and recommending strategies that shape district-wide communications, public affairs, and stakeholder engagement. The position is frequently expected to identify emerging challenges, develop innovative solutions, and implement best practices in complex, high-stakes environments. The Chief anticipates and responds to issues with significant political, reputational, and operational impact, balancing the interests of multiple stakeholders while ensuring alignment with HISD's mission.

IMPACT OF DECISIONS

Decisions have substantial impact on HISD's reputation, stakeholder trust, and the district's ability to successfully implement its strategic transformation. Errors may result in significant financial, reputational, or operational harm.

COMMUNICATION/INTERACTIONS

Negotiates, advises, and influences at the highest levels of the organization and community. Interprets district strategies and communicates them effectively to diverse audiences, including families, employees, elected officials, community leaders, media, and the general public. Resolves conflicts, builds consensus, and frames complex issues in ways that drive understanding and trust. Regularly serves as the district's spokesperson, representing HISD in public forums, executive briefings, and high-profile media settings.

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Acts as a trusted advisor to the Superintendent, Board of Managers, and senior leadership. Leads stakeholder engagement and serves as primary liaison to media, families, community leaders, and external partners.

WORKING/ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Work is normally performed in a typical interior work environment which does not subject the employee to any hazardous or unpleasant elements.

Ability to carry and/or lift less than 45 pounds.

Houston Independent School District is an equal opportunity employer.