

**Wyoming State Board of Education
Communications Planning
Audit Work Session
June 11, 2015**



I. Introduction

The State Board of Education has engaged Pascal Public Relations to collaborate with members to develop a strategic communications plan. The plan will be designed to engage stakeholders on key themes and topics of the greatest importance, so that the board may more effectively fulfill its mission and responsibilities.

II. Estimated Project Timeline

JUNE

- Communications audit: a multi-hour discovery session designed to define plan goals, discuss current messaging and positioning, identify issues, clarify topics of importance, and pinpoint strengths, weaknesses and opportunities
 - Work session Thursday, June 11 with communication's committee
 - Email audit to members not present at live session
 - Phone conference with board chair
- Assess audit findings, develop synopsis
- Share initial audit outcomes with board and coordinator to ensure alignment
- Follow up inquiry with board, as needed
- Meet with Wyoming Department of Education leadership and communications team to ask questions, gather existing research and other key information
- Assess need for further research – informal and/or formal

JULY

- Make recommendation to board for additional research, if needed
- Execute additional research, if needed
- Develop plan

AUGUST

- Plan development, continued
- Present draft plan outline to board for input
- Finalize and present plan, end of month

ONGOING

- Provide regular status reports to board members and coordinator

III. **Communications Audit Goals:**

- Gather essential information
- Determine priorities
- Ensure board alignment for plan direction

Communications Plan Goals:

- Support the board's mission, vision and goals
- Elevate matters of great importance
- Engage stakeholders in a substantive two-way dialogue
- Build long-term, meaningful relationships
- Create an organized, strategic roadmap designed to help the board communicate the right things at the right time, in the most strategic, consistent and compelling manner

IV. **The Landscape**

September/October, 2014 Gallup Poll on Education

For 46 years, Gallup has been reporting about the state of education in America. According to Gallup's 2014 poll^{1, 2}:

- Americans are skeptical about public education initiatives that they believe were created or promoted by federal policy makers
- The majority of Americans said they didn't support the Common Core State Standards
- Support for President Obama's education agenda is waning
- Americans said they like their local schools, want local school boards to have more influence than the federal government in deciding what schools should teach, and don't believe standardized tests help teachers figure out what to teach
- Only 44% of Americans believe that getting a college education is "very important" – down from 75% just four years ago
- 60% of Americans said entrance requirements into teacher preparation programs should be more rigorous
- Americans trust and confidence in teachers has declined, only 64% say they trust teachers, down from 72% in 2013
- 94% said that documenting ineffectiveness that could lead to a teacher's dismissal was very important or somewhat important
- A majority of Americans, 58%, said the curriculum used in their community's schools needs to change

Yet, overall, Americans don't generally believe students are ready for the future

- Only 3% believe high school drop outs are ready for the working world
- 13% believe high school graduates are ready for the working world
- 37% believe college graduates are ready for the working world
- 31% believe high school graduates are ready for college

There's a disconnect.

1. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2014/09/16/poll-most-americans-no-longer-think-a-college-education-is-very-important/>
2. http://pdkintl.org/noindex/PDKGallupPoll_Oct2014.pdf

COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

- I. Strategic Overview Discussion**
- II. Key Responsibilities**
- III. SWOT Analysis**
- IV. Audience**
- V. Stakeholder Sentiment**
- VI. Current Communications**
- VII. Consider Timing**
- VIII. Materials Needs**
- IX. Measures of Success**

I. Strategic Overview Discussion

VISION

Wyoming education partners support a student-centered learning system in which all Wyoming students graduate prepared and empowered to create and own their futures.

MISSION

Lead collaborative partnerships, in which student, teacher and administrative judgment are valued, to craft policies and create future-focused systems oriented around the individual student by:

- Communicating the urgent need for transformational change
- Incentivizing innovative education (supporting innovative early childhood education)
- Developing a system of district support
- Utilizing flexible measurements to gauge and celebrate successful change

FOCUS

Partnership, Support, National Leader Among States

- Students: Achievement, College/Career Readiness, Growth and Equity
- Systems: Efficiency, Resourcing, Credibility and Innovation
- Support: Educator Quality, Civil Citizenship, High Quality and Early Childhood

GOALS (CURRENT)

- Develop effective and efficient internal policy processes.
- Develop and implement a plan to systematically engage the Wyoming Department of Education, School Districts, and the Joint Education Committee, among others.
- Support continued improvement in school districts (including in student achievement and growth), educator evaluations, school improvement plans, and accreditation, among other areas.

DUTIES (CURRENT)

- Set education policy to realize the Wyoming State Board of Education's vision.
- Foster relationships between the Wyoming State Board of Education, Wyoming Department of Education, the State Legislator, and school districts.
- Support continuous improvement.
- Advocate on behalf of students, educators, and citizens.

II. **Key Responsibilities**

- What are the State Board of Education's key responsibilities? Enhance this list, as needed, and share a detailed description of each.
 - Accreditation
 - Assessment
 - Accountability
 - Standards
 - Other – BOCES, Charter Schools, Alternative Schedules/Calendars

- What will take priority in the next year, three years, five years and ten years? Discuss reasons and timing for each.

III. SWOT Analysis

Discuss board's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

- What are your central strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your greatest concerns?
- What has the potential to threaten a positive outcome on your most important work?
- What has the potential to stop you from reaching your goals?

IV. Audience

- Who are your stakeholders and partners? Why?
- Discuss the primary value the State Board of Education brings to each stakeholder group? i.e. why do they or should they care about your mission, vision, goals and day-to-day work?

Stakeholder	Value

V. Understanding Stakeholder Sentiment

- How do you currently go about including stakeholders in decision-making?
- What research methods do you employ to ensure you understand stakeholder sentiment?
- How do stakeholders and partners feel about key, controversial topics? How do you know this?
- What do you feel you need more information about to make key decisions?

	Assessment	Accountability	Standards	Accreditation
Students				
Student's Families				
District & School Leadership				
Teachers & other Staff				
Community Leaders & Organizations				
Business Leaders & Organizations				
Citizens/Tax-payers				
Department of Education				
Governor Mead				
Superintendent's Office				
Legislators				
Educational Organizations (WEA, WSBA, WASA, etc.)				
Post-secondary Institutions/Leadership				

VI. Current Communications

- What do you believe stakeholders know about the State Board of Education’s work?
- What communications are you doing right now? What have you done in the past?
- What has been done really well? Why?
- What methods and vehicles do you actively use? Which are most important? Which are you concerned about?
- What tools and support do you need to be more effective communicators?
- Who has served as a spokesperson for the board? In what capacity?
- How do you currently manage incoming inquiries and opportunities?
- How do you develop, pursue and manage proactive opportunities?
- What are the essential messages we need to convey to each stakeholder group?

	Methods of Communication	Frequency of Communication	Level of Knowledge & Engagement	Key Messages
Students				
Student’s Families				
District & School Leadership				
Teachers & other Staff				
Community Leaders & Organizations				
Business Leaders & Organizations				
Citizens/Tax-payers				
Department of Education				
Governor Mead				
Superintendent’s Office				
Legislators				
Educational Organizations (WEA, WSBA, WASA, etc.)				
Post-secondary Institutions/Leadership				
Media				

VII. Consider Timing

- Timing plays an important role in your communications plan. Please list key events that may and/or should affect what, when and how we communicate about central topics.
- Examples include annual educational organization meetings, statutory requirements and associated timelines, the start of the legislative session, etc.

IX. Metrics for Success

What would success look like? Discuss and list tangible goals. Consider:

- Voice
- Leadership
- Partnership
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Goals & Responsibilities