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### Count on Yourself

The school year is underway and this is an important time to review your procedures and ensure that you can count on yourself! Unfortunately, tight budgets are taking their toll on communication and public relation positions in school districts across the state. While being concerned about your job security is natural, there are more productive ways to protect your position. In a school district stacked with data and records, how can you demonstrate that your work counts?

Count on yourself. Literally. Throughout the school year, find a way to keep tabs on the important work you do communicating with your community. There are many days in a PR office where you find yourself saying, "What exactly did I do today?" If you were constantly on the phone or responding to e-mails, the whole day can slip away with nothing concrete to show for it.... Unless you find a way to quantify this subjective work into a record you can count on.

It's often as simple as a phone log or a weekly review of your e-mail and calendar. Set an appointment with yourself every week, just ten minutes, to review your work and progress and tally what you have accomplished. Pay particular attention to anything you do that prevents a bubbling issue from exploding into an incident. Again, this is a subjective area, because it is hard to say what issues might explode, but if you can't remember the number of minor issues you handled, will anyone else?

With this information at your fingertips, you are always prepared to demonstrate to the board or administration exactly what you have accomplished and why they still need to count on you!

### Scholarship Thank You

As you know, PenSPRA awards several scholarships every year to PA students who are majoring in communications. I thought I would share this nice thank-you note with all of you, as it is our combined efforts that make the scholarships possible.

"I just wanted to say how honored and thankful I am for being chosen as the recipient for your Communications Scholarship. It really has made a difference because I was able to pay for my first semester of college in full...

Being selected for this scholarship means more to me than just the money because it gives me hope that I am heading in the right direction in life. It means that my writing has caught the attention of others and not just myself. So I thank you again because I have not been more motivated to do everything I can in order to succeed in college and live my dream of being a news anchor." - Michelle Wolf

### What is Your Community Thinking About the Common Core?

In the last issue of e-Comm, we shared polling data on the Common Core. Despite the wide adoption of the common core standards, nearly two-thirds of those polled, or 62 percent, said they had never heard of the common core standards. Of the 38 percent who said they had heard of them, many thought – incorrectly – that the federal government was forcing states to adopt them and that the common core

covered every academic subject. Only 41 percent of those surveyed said they thought the common core would make American schools more competitive globally – a key goal of the initiative.

Do you know what your community thinks about the common core? If not, it may be a good time to perform a quick poll and gather their feedback. There are many easy survey resources like survey monkey or quia to help you. Without surveying your community, it is quite difficult to measure their knowledge, concern and/or interest in the implementation of the Common Core. You can be sure you are communicating the necessary information about Common Core if you do a quick poll first. As your district moves forward with curriculum changes and assessment changes related to the Common Core, it is important to know the community understands why you are changing and what it means to them.

#### Q and A's on SPP

The School Performance Profile launches on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Districts are not being provided with a preview period before the website launches. PSEA posted some Q and A's which may help you with some of the question you have, and below that is another article on the topic.

<http://www.psea.org/general.aspx?id=10158>

[http://articles.mcall.com/2013-08-20/news/mc-pa-nclb-testing-waiver-20130820\\_1\\_grading-system-waiver-david-broderic](http://articles.mcall.com/2013-08-20/news/mc-pa-nclb-testing-waiver-20130820_1_grading-system-waiver-david-broderic)

#### Member Requests

Dave Sherman of Colonial School District is looking for crisis communication plans anyone wishes to share. You can reach Dave at

Also, does your district have a Facebook page, and fso do you have a guidelines for the page that you would like to share? By guidelines we mean a policy you expect users of your district's FB page to follow. Please send those to Karen at

#### News From Around the State and Nation

PenSPRA President Vicki Flotta and Board Member Cissy Bowman are the co-presenters for PASBO's webinar "Ups and Downs of Social Media." Registration details at this link

<http://www.pasbo.org/workshopresults.asp?WkshpID=256>

A Proposed Bill Would Require Recording of Executive Sessions for School Boards and Other Government Agencies

[http://www.observer-reporter.com/article/20130913/NEWS01/130919724#.UjZJdJt6\\_Y](http://www.observer-reporter.com/article/20130913/NEWS01/130919724#.UjZJdJt6_Y)

A Preview of Diane Ravitch's New Book. It is a MUST READ. Synopsis planned for next e-Comm Alert!

[http://www.salon.com/2013/09/15/diane\\_ravitch\\_school\\_privatization\\_is\\_a\\_hoax\\_reformers\\_aim\\_to\\_destroy\\_public\\_schools/](http://www.salon.com/2013/09/15/diane_ravitch_school_privatization_is_a_hoax_reformers_aim_to_destroy_public_schools/)

#### Common Core Moving Forward in PA

[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=7234&PageID=1005857&mode=2&contentid=http://pubcontent.state.pa.us/publishedcontent/publish/cop\\_hhs/pde/single\\_web/no\\_workflow\\_required/news\\_and\\_media/articles/state\\_board\\_of\\_education\\_approves\\_new\\_academic\\_standards\\_and\\_revised\\_high\\_school\\_graduation\\_requirements.html#](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=7234&PageID=1005857&mode=2&contentid=http://pubcontent.state.pa.us/publishedcontent/publish/cop_hhs/pde/single_web/no_workflow_required/news_and_media/articles/state_board_of_education_approves_new_academic_standards_and_revised_high_school_graduation_requirements.html#)

An Additional Article on Common Core

[http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2013/09/state\\_board\\_of\\_education\\_appro.html#incart\\_river\\_default](http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2013/09/state_board_of_education_appro.html#incart_river_default)

The Grim New Normal in Philly Schools

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/09/10/the-grim-new-normal-in-philadelphia-schools/>

Additional Article on SPP

<http://www.goerie.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20130909/NEWS02/309099955/-1/NEWSITEMAP>

An Information Session on the Proposed Property Tax Reform Legislation Draws a Large Crowd

[http://www.theintell.com/news/local/huge-crowd-turns-out-for-property-tax-forum/article\\_5dd1f7b4-6bbb-54e9-82ed-dd525bf79841.html](http://www.theintell.com/news/local/huge-crowd-turns-out-for-property-tax-forum/article_5dd1f7b4-6bbb-54e9-82ed-dd525bf79841.html)