



Engaging the public through traditional and social media can help you raise awareness, recruit volunteers, and shape public opinion to win support for your issue. When considering a media campaign to highlight the impact of a great arts program or to aid your efforts to bring new funds to the school, be sure to coordinate with school administration. Also, be mindful and respectful of the impact on the entire school community, including educators, parents, and students. While creating your strategy and media plan, consider the following helpful tips.

## 1 IDENTIFY YOUR OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

State clear and realistic goals for your media outreach efforts and identify strategies for achieving them. Here's how:

- ✓ Develop an overall media strategy that includes a thoughtful approach to determining who your target audience is, how best to reach them, and what actions you would like them to take.
- ✓ Map out a variety of media tactics, develop a timeline, and identify point persons to carry out the efforts.
- ✓ Create a core message. Whether posting to Facebook or calling in to a radio show, make sure you have a clear, concise, and compelling message. Describe the problem and solutions, as well as actions the public can take.
- ✓ Customize your message slightly for different audiences by adapting language, information, and tone so that it resonates with your various target audiences.
- ✓ Time your efforts to optimize the impact of outreach and publicity and, ultimately, your advocacy goals. Avoid busy news days. Link your issues to breaking, current, and/or cyclical news.
- ▶ **Look for ways you can capitalize on National Arts in Education Week during the second week of September.**

## 2 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be used to inform parents, educators, and your community of upcoming school arts events and to inspire other parents to be more engaged with their children's education.

- ✓ Recruit parents to maintain a Facebook page with announcements, invitations to events, and calls to action.
- ✓ Provide updates via Twitter on the latest arts education developments in your community or on the national stage.
- ✓ Post the best images from your child's school art exhibit or performance to Instagram or Pinterest. Get parent permission first!
- ✓ Blog about pressing issues and exciting advances in arts education. Ask fellow parents to be guest bloggers.
- ✓ And don't forget to take video. YouTube has proven to be a powerful tool for citizen action in education and the arts!



- ▶ **Be mindful about privacy issues, proper etiquette, and the potential for conflict on social media. Keep it positive!**

**3 ENGAGE TRADITIONAL MEDIA OUTLETS**

Getting your story on local television or in the newspaper can help attract attention to your school's efforts. Circulating a press release or holding a press conference are effective ways to encourage the media to cover your story. Check with your school district about guidelines and messaging, and consider these ideas when developing a media plan:

- ✓ Get to know your local media outlets. Become familiar with your local newspapers and television and radio stations. Get to know the reporters who cover education and the arts, local news, and even family events. Pitch your story directly to them, if possible. Survey parents to see if they have contacts at media outlets.
- ✓ Having a well-oiled team, including a writer, a spokesperson or spokespeople, and someone to coordinate the media efforts, will help focus your message and improve your interaction with the media. This could be done by one person, although sharing tasks among parents may be more effective.
  - A media coordinator should keep media lists updated, make sure press releases go out on time, and keep the group informed and the effort on track.
  - Spokesperson(s) should be well-spoken and confident; good listeners; and well-informed about your issues, activities, and aims. They should also be able to think on their feet and, importantly, stay on message.
  - A writer should ensure consistent messages and themes across all outreach efforts. They will create the press releases, talking points, and more that will advance your campaign's goals.
- ✓ Preparation and practice are key. Develop and rehearse talking points, sound bites, and personal stories worth sharing. Know the facts and stick to them. Review your efforts continually to see where you can improve.
- ✓ Keep in mind that you may need permission slips for certain events involving students and the media.
- ▶ **Don't forget to share your work! Once you've gotten media coverage, share it via email, mail, and social media. Bring copies to upcoming events and circulate to the entire school community.**

