STEP BACK FROM THE LEDGE ........ AND INTO THE CONVERSATION

A Workshop for School Leaders

PRESENTED BY

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TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN’
WARM UP ACTIVITY

Media – Friend or Foe?

1. One thing you like about the media
2. One thing you despise about the media

Safe zone – no judgements!
LIFE IN THE POST-TRUTH WORLD

MAY YOU LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES – Author Unknown

• Tumultuous change in the media landscape
• Impact being observed locally, nationally, internationally
  – change is weekly and daily
• Rise of fake news
• Splintered mediums reinforce one’s world-view
• Traditional cultural structures being questioned
  ❖ Media/Reporters have become part of the story
TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN’

The result...

Leaders are being faced with new challenges and old challenges that are in new forms.
1. Understanding the media and how it is changing
2. Who are these guys?
3. Fake news and the echo chamber
4. Leveraging social media
5. Rumor mill management
6. Ripped from the headlines!
7. Legislative update and advocacy
UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA
TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN’

• Industry changes
  ➢ Layoffs and shrinking operations
  ➢ Advertising moving online

• Education and local coverage
  ➢ Not as prominent

• Outlets and platforms – new channels, new sites, new places to preach

• Social media – influence continues – changing our conversations
  ➢ Rise of fake news
57.3% in Pittsburgh metro region believe that children should learn about social media in elementary school.

~ Source: Sarah McCluan, February 8, 2017 – just ‘cause
RESEARCH SAYS…

News/Information being consumed in different ways¹

• A majority of U.S. adults – 62% – get news on social media, up from 49% in 2012

• Number of U.S. adults who use Facebook – 67%

• Number of Facebook users who get news from Facebook - 66% (about 44% of the general population)

• 59% of Twitter users get news from Twitter

RESEARCH SAYS…

News/Information being consumed in different ways

• More than 90% of adults ages 18-34 surveyed own smartphones, and half own tablets\(^2\)

• The average Millennial gets 74% of his/her news from online sources\(^3\)

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TAKE AWAY

Activity - Those Were The Days

1. Form groups.
2. Choose one person to report out.
3. Answer this question: List three ways that your school district/organization has been impacted by changes in traditional and social media in the last 6-12 months.  
   *(Example: More parents believe rumors they read online; More children imitate what they see on YouTube.)*
4. Discuss within your groups.
WHO ARE THOSE GUYS?
WHAT DETERMINES NEWsworthiness?

Importance / Impact
- If it bleeds, it leads
- Number of people affected

Timeliness
- People are talking about…..
- Connecting local stories to national interest

Uniqueness
- First, best, last, only

Human Interest
- Babies and animals

And Most Importantly…
CONTROVERSY

TRUMP IS NOT MY PRESIDENT

Demonstrators holding signs and protesting.
NEUTRAL NEWS

Does not exist
UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA?

Things have changed......
JOURNALISM 101

• Terms: 5 W’s, inverted pyramid, beat, GA reporter
• Difference between beat and GA reporter
• Know their deadlines and budgets; do they blog or tweet?
• Breaking news trumps all other coverage
• DON’T LIE!!
• Certain topics will always make the news
WHO ARE THOSE GUYS?

- Most have bachelor’s degrees
- Underpaid – salaries range from low $20K to mid $50K
- Most are general assignment, few specialists
- Little if any experience with education – they are journalists, not educators
- Some full-time, many freelance
- Most will leave education beat after a few years
- Very, very resourceful
WHO ARE THOSE GUYS?

- Almost all have personal brands
- Active on social media – personal and professional Twitter and Facebook accounts
- Responsible for many more aspects of a story
- Have instant access to multiple platforms – locally and nationally
- Search/troll social media for potential story ideas and leads
- Tougher
FRIEND OR FOE?

Depends on leadership and situation.
FAKE NEWS
The echo chamber and the post truth world.
FAKE NEWS – WHAT IS IT?

• Stories written in a journalist voice that seem believable
• The tricks are old, but the clickbait is new
• Tabloids, “yellow journalism”
• Found on social media, shared by friends and family
• Gain traction, just like legit news stories
• Repeated often
• Successful fake news is picked up by legit media outlets
FAKE NEWS – HOW TO SPOT IT

• Look at the URL – is it odd?
• Does it come from an established news source?
• Is headline believable?
• Look at the time stamp
• Does the headline make you angry?
• Who is the author?
• Who is quoted? Are there primary sources?
• What is the bias?
NEUTRAL NEWS

Does not exist
1. Find a partner.

2. Discuss how you personally have been impacted by recent fake news stories.

3. Fill in your version of the false news worksheet. Include local and national news outlets.
SOCIAL MEDIA

Generating Your Own News
Rumor Mill Management
SOCIAL MEDIA - OVERVIEW

- Public already engaged
- Everyone is a reporter – even kids
- Rumors are reality – fake news
- But is it really any different?
  - Just a new place to meet
- Opportunity to inform
- Opportunity to leverage
- Short, concise and to the point
SOCIAL MEDIA - OVERVIEW

- Place to build relationships with stakeholders
- Promote your brand
- Manage rumors
Almost all news organizations utilize Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

- Do it and tell about it
- Visuals, hashtags, links, graphics
- Keep it short and concise
- Share photos and videos of your successes
- Another way to share out messages
- Tweet directly to your legislator or other organization to get their attention
- Social media component to events
SOCIAL MEDIA - OVERVIEW

Tools

• Tweetdeck
• HouteSuite
• Canva, Fotor
• Google products
ACTIVITY – RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES

1. Divide into groups.
2. Select a scenario.
3. Discuss your approach.
4. Be prepared to report out.
5. Good luck!
GENERATE YOUR OWN NEWS

Good News

- School-Business Partnerships
- New Initiatives
- Staff Honors
- Student Achievement

Bad News

- Tax Increase
- Redistricting
BAD NEWS

Break your own bad news
Appoint spokesperson
Notify communications or designated staff
Notify board president/school board
Complete a media tip sheet:
  • Who?    • What?
  • When?   • Where?
  • Why?
Notify affected parties first
BAD NEWS

Refer media inquiries to communications staff

Clear and consistent message
  • Own blame
  • Reassure public
  • Address issues
  • Next steps

Speak in unison

Avoid additional controversy
  • If it’s not an issue don’t make it one
  • Don’t pile “hot button” issues on top of one another
Activity – Generate Your Own News

1. Brainstorm three ideas for positive news stories.
2. List a bad news story about your district that you wish your district had broken itself. What would you differently?
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND ADVOCACY

JAMIE BAXTER
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- Property Tax Reform
- Charter School Reform
- 2017-2018 Governor’s State Budget
PROPERTY TAX REFORM

• In January a push to eliminate all school property taxes and replace with increase and expansion of sales use tax and personal income tax.
  • Locks in currently local levels.
  • Does not account for rise and fall in the economy.
  • Bad policy for school districts and most residents.

• Not even introduced – proactive advocacy stopped it in its tracks. Back to the drawing board.

• Potential new property tax proposals:
  • Expanding homestead/farmstead
  • Backend referendum – any time a district wanted to increase taxes a public referendum would be needed.
CHARTER SCHOOL REFORM

• Charters intent was to offer, “alternatives in education using strategies that may save money and improve student performance.”

• Funding for charters is based on a selected per pupil expenditure

• Special Education funding is based on average expenditure on special education
  ▪ Ranges are from $14,000/child to $38,000/child

• Transportation costs – impacts districts that do not bus students.

• District pays charters, or if PDE pays then the tuition is taken from a district’s subsidies.
2017-2018 GOVERNOR’S BUDGET

Governor’s budget is a proposal – General Assembly determines allocations!

Specific Allocations Include:

- $100 million increase for Basic Education Funding (1.7%)
- $25 million increase for Special Education (2.3%)*
- $11.719 million increase for Early Intervention (4.6%)
- Level-funding for Ready to Learn Block Grants
- $65 million increase for PreK Counts (44.1%)
- $10 million increase for Head Start Supplemental
- Level-funding for Career and Technical Education and CTE Equipment Grants

*Pensions are expected to raise to $140 million this year – wiping out the K12 investment.
2017-2018 GOVERNOR’S BUDGET

Allocations (cont.):

• $29.703 million for Plan Con (was not funded last year) – these funds would continue payments to districts that currently receive reimbursements.

• $50 million reduction in pupil transportation – The Governor recommends updating and simplifying the funding formula that better reflect actual costs, including fuel prices, district geography, vehicle utilization, and transportation of special education students. He is also encourages a competitive bidding requirement for bus contracts.

• $2 million for school breakfast – this allocation allows the state to access up to $20 million in federal funding to enhance school breakfast programs.
2017-2018 GOVERNOR’S BUDGET

Budget Process:
February to March – Appropriations hearings with agency secretaries
June – Allocations determined
June 30 – Budget due to Governor
July 1 – Fiscal year starts
WHY ADVOCATE?

UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not. —The Lorax
ADVOCACY 101

Decisions being made in Harrisburg and Washington
DC impact *you*!

Who else is speaking?

Turn what is into what should be

Always remember, you are the expert!
ADVOCACY 101

Key times to advocate:

- Budget/Appropriations cycle
- When good things are happening
- When key legislation is moving
- Whenever you have a free second
- When you fill empowered!
ADVOCACY 101

Reaching out to policymakers
- Phone calls
- Emails
- Letters
- Town halls
- Media
- In-person visits
- Community meetings – Get parents involved!
ADVOCACY 101- CRAFTING A MESSAGE

What is the problem?
Why does it need fixed?
How is the problem impacting you, your students, your buildings, your communities, etc?
What can be done to fix the problem?
What will be the impact of the resolution to the problem?
What will be the impact if nothing is done?
ADVOCACY 101 - BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Building and sustaining relationships are the core of successful advocacy efforts.

You build relationships with policymakers and other audiences the same way you build relationships with friends and partners.

- Step 1 - Introduce yourself
- Step 2 – Share quality information
- Step 3 – Continue the conversation!
ADVOCACY 101 – KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING!

Follow-up work is the most important piece of advocacy.

Stay in close contact to advocacy organizations. They will keep you informed of the issues and when action is needed.

Keeping the conversation going can build your relationships with legislators.

How can we keep the conversation going?

How can we keep the community interested?
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

1. Divide into groups.
2. Select a scenario.
3. Discuss your approach.
4. Be prepared to report out.
5. Good luck!
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QUESTIONS?
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