

Director of Strategic Communication

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD

525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ 07040

JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE

DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's Degree, preferably in communications or marketing.
- At least five years of related professional experience.
- Successful experience with grant writing and involvement in running and/or supporting foundation activities is strongly preferred.
- Excellent computer and Web 2.0 skills.
- Ability to effectively communicate with internal and external constituents.
- Excellent written and interpersonal communication skills required.
- Such alternatives to the above qualifications as the Board may find appropriate and acceptable.

REPORTS TO

Superintendent of Schools

JOB GOAL(S)

Communications: Working directly under the Superintendent of Schools, this individual will serve as the spokesperson for the district and will establish and maintain excellent working relationships with members of the school community and related external agencies and departments. Independently manage all facets of strategic communication, media, and government relations programs, using all available mediums, with emphasis on the use of the internet. Work under deadlines, in crisis situations, and at times, with topics and situations that require extreme sensitivity. Responsible for the seamless and accurate collections, synthesis and reporting of information to all stakeholders. Operate within budget and create salient pieces that are well received and understood by all constituencies. Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively and accurately, both orally and in writing.

Grant, Development & Foundation Activities: Identify, analyze and seek available public and private funding opportunities to benefit the educational goals of the district. Provide assistance in the application of said grants by district employees. Initiate, contribute to and/or support Achieve activities.

Web 2.0:

Utilize the internet, social media, and other electronic communication programs to enhance communication between the schools and the community.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Communication

-

- 1.** The Director of Strategic Communications holds primary responsibility for the development and implementation of a strategic plan for district communications, including generating and coordinating strategic messaging objectives at all levels of the school system reflecting the mission, vision, goals, strategy and progress of SOMSD.
- 2.** Prepare school district publications, including newsletters, annual school calendar, BOE student and staff recognitions, and information brochures and annual report. Write, photograph, film and coordinate the reporting of school news to local and outside media using both traditional and multi-media, and maintain file of school news and information. Write, design and prepare district publications, including the district calendar, handbooks, brochures, newsletters, communications, and e-blasts.
- 3.** Media relations
 - a. Encourage outside media to cover school events.
 - b. Field media inquiries.
 - c. Establish and maintain positive, professional relationships with members of the media.
 - d. Issue timely news releases on student, staff and district activities.
 - e. Provide school news to local news media.
 - f. Work with staff to publicize performances, exhibitions and special programs.
 - g. Alert Superintendent and Board to notable publicity.
- 4.** Chair Communications Task Force and create budget information materials. Stay abreast of legislation affecting school districts and coordinate activities with Board and PTA/HSA presidents council. Work with PTAs/HSAs to organize and disseminate information. Maintain communications network with parents and key communicators within the schools and the community, including Senior Citizen coordinator, educational foundation, Township Hall, library, etc. Provide publicity assistance upon request and when available to affiliated organizations with Superintendent's approval.
- 5.** Attend Board meetings and advise regarding presentations and publicity. Prepare Board of Education proclamations and recognitions, publicize agendas and report on actions taken by the Board. Draft articles and speeches for the Superintendent or the Board, as requested. Support special events such as retirement awards and staff recognition and activities.

6. Provide counsel and assist Superintendent in interpreting public opinion about district. Work with Superintendent to develop programs to promote strong public relations. Communicate proactively the rationale behind decisions. Address issues that impact the district. In a crisis, work with Superintendent to craft response/message.
7. Serve as liaison to the news media, community organizations, key communicators, realtors and prospective residents and student organizations; prepare district information packets upon request. Maintain open lines of communication with the community and the staff organization, and provide prompt responses to requests for public information about the district, its policies and its programs.
8. Organize the CHS "Today's Schools" programs, hosted by the Superintendent, that highlight district accomplishments through student and staff interviews.
9. Fulfill other responsibilities as designated by the Superintendent.

Web

1. Provide content to be published on the district's web site.
2. Collaborate with the technology department on the design of the web site as necessary.
3. Serve on Technology Committee.
4. Produce regular e-newsletter and e-blasts as necessary.

Grants Development & Foundation Activities

1. Work with faculty and administrators to identify, via print and online sources and personal contacts, potential sources of grant support from foundations, businesses and government sources.
2. Procure appropriate materials and information, including applications and RFPs, necessary to fulfill grant requirements. Seek faculty support for relevant proposals.
3. Inform, interpret and recommend specific applications in agreement with Superintendent. Assume responsibility, with appropriate staff, for writing and/or coordination of appropriate project proposals being prepared for submission.
4. Disseminate information about grant proposals and results.
5. Initiate, contribute to and/or support local Education Foundation activities.

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS OF THE POSITION

Provide a high level of support to the Superintendent by handling information being sent to and received from the public; act as his/her spokesperson and develop working relationships with the South Orange-Maplewood community as a whole. Identify, analyze and pursue funding opportunities through both public and private funding sources (i.e. grants, foundations) and prepare all information required for submission and receipt of potential funds. The Director of Strategic Communication shall not be responsible for the supervision, observation or evaluation of certified staff members.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

12 Months
Salary and benefits to be determined by the BOE

It is not the intent of this description to cover every one of the duties and responsibilities of this position. It lists most of the significant areas and is intended to convey a general understanding of the assignment. However, evaluation of performance will be based on the duties and responsibilities listed in the job description.

Initial Approval: September 28, 1998

Revised: December 20, 2004; October 17, 2011