



On Call

Reproduction rights for materials distributed as part of On Call are granted only to subscribing districts and are restricted to distribution as part of their local public relations programs.

For content questions contact:
Marcia Latta
Communications Consultant
(503) 580-2612.

For subscription information,
contact WSSDA at
(800) 562-8927 or
(360) 493-9231.

**Nov./Dec.
2013**

Washington State
School Directors'
Association
221 College Street N.E.
Olympia, WA 98516

- **Election materials for a successful bond campaign**

Many states have election laws that prohibit public employees from election advocacy activities. For those that allow staff to make a case for a yes vote, here are some tips for effective campaign messages.

- **Media relations: Turn those foes into friends**

Developing good relationships with local reporters is essential and can pay off in good stories about your district and a partnership for sharing news your community needs. Learn how to turn any potentially difficult relationship with your news reporters into positive news coverage.

- **Showcase your students
Great content to share with
your community**

In a typical community, about 70 percent of citizens do not have kids in school. Keeping your non-parents informed about your district requires a variety of content strategies. One effective way to get attention is to share stories about and by your students.

- **Social Media: A Tool for
Community Outreach**

Many families rely on technology for information about their child's school. Your website should be your first priority for reaching parents. After that, there are many other useful technology tools that may help you communicate with parents and students.

- **Here's to You!
Where do you get your health
news?**

There are many good online sources for the latest health news. Read about three email subscription sites that offer health news and tips. Also, read why you should get your flu shot today.

- **Insights for Parents:
Resources for winter break**

Throughout late fall and winter, schools are closed for a series of holiday and in-service breaks. This time off doesn't have to break learning momentum. You can keep your kids engaged in academics even when they are not in school. Check out these websites to help you fill those long winter days when school is out.



On Call

Election materials for a successful bond campaign

Please Note: In many states it is not legal for a school district or any other tax-supported organization to advocate for voter approval of a finance measure. Laws in those states prohibit school districts from using district time, materials, or resources to work for passage of a finance measure.

In states with those election laws, citizens who care deeply about adequate funding for schools may form a political action committee, an advocacy committee that works for voter approval of the measure.

Where laws prohibit advocacy by school districts, district staff are not allowed to work in any way with the advocacy committee during work hours or using district-owned equipment or facilities and it would **not be legal** for those school districts to use the information in this article for producing materials.

Subscribers to this publication are advised to become familiar with their state laws well before the date of any potential finance election and to scrupulously adhere to those laws.

Put power into your campaign materials

How a message is written and how materials are designed can make a tremendous difference in the results they produce. To be effective, your messages must be easily understood and succinct. Your readers don't want to wade through a lot of material to find what interests them. If you force them to do that, they will probably not bother to read your materials.

Effective campaign advocacy materials

Effective advocacy materials get the main message across in *five seconds*. Successful advocacy committees develop 1) materials for specific audiences using the most appealing message for each group and 2) messages based on solid research.

For example, a brochure for employees might emphasize how the levy measure will maintain current class size or jobs; a brochure for parents might emphasize how the measure will fund programs for their children; and a brochure for senior citizens might emphasize how passing the measure will continue the community's tradition of good education. All contain the same accurate basic information, but the information emphasizes items important to each audience. You are assuring the reader that the items he or she wants most are included in the measure.

Recent surveys in many communities show the main themes of support of an operating levy are no increase in the tax rate for schools and maintaining current programs. However, since every community is different, each community should base its messages on its own research.

Advocacy committee tips: Use your research to develop effective messages

Beware of using words or information you "think" will work. Second-guessing your research is the same as assuming that your respondents really didn't know what

Reproduction rights for materials distributed as part of On Call are granted only to subscribing districts and are restricted to distribution as part of their local public relations programs.

For content questions contact:
Marcia Latta
Communications Consultant
(503) 580-2612.

For subscription information,
contact WSSDA at
(800) 562-8927 or
(360) 493-9231.

**Nov./Dec.
2013**

Washington State
School Directors'
Association
221 College Street N.E.
Olympia, WA 98516

(Over)

Think about your audience and what they most likely want to know. Non-parents may be interested in student achievement or budget accountability. Men may have a different interest than women. Parents usually want to know how the measure affects their child.

Here are some general rules for producing finance campaign materials, but be sure to check compliance with the election laws in your state before you publish.

Stay legal in everything you do (see sidebar). In many states, legality of your materials and activities might depend on your usual practice. A good rule of thumb is whether you do something all of the time or if you are only doing it for this election. Another good rule of thumb is your motive. If your motive is to inform, you may be on safe ground. If your motive is to promote the measure, that should be done by an advocacy committee, not by a public agency.

Focus on the facts that are important to your community. Everything from your PowerPoint presentation for staff and community leaders to your informational piece should focus on your community's priorities. They want to know you heard them and responded to their input.

Keep all finance materials professional, simple and inexpensive. Taxpayers do not want you to spend their money on materials that look expensive or slick. Don't confuse slick with professional. Taxpayers will expect your materials to be professional, well designed and easy to digest.

Keep written materials as short and easy to read as possible. The reader must be able to grasp the main idea in five seconds while on the way to the wastebasket. Minimize the details. Inundating people with details only serves to confuse and may make them wonder if you are telling them so much because you have something to hide. Give those few people who want to know more a place to get more details.

they were saying or thinking. It is insulting to them and disastrous to your effort.

Select an overall theme based on your research and stick with it.

Do not deliver more than three key messages to each group. Take the three points from the survey that pushed that group into the highest support and use those three points in priority order. This reaffirms to the voter that the things he or she wants most are in the measure. If the voter wants to know more, she can go to your website or contact you for more information.

Avoid a lot of verbiage. Putting a lot of detail in advocacy campaign materials is an invitation for the voter to find a reason to vote no.

Whenever possible, personalize messages. Have groups of volunteers write a personal message on each card or brochure. There may be an influential person in a neighborhood or someone who has a great deal of credibility with a certain group who will give you permission to sign his or her name to a short message urging support.

Unless your survey found them to be effective, avoid negative language or threats. In most cases, threatening the voter only makes him or her angry.

Choose your words carefully. Every word in every sentence should help get your message across.

Avoid words that have negative connotations or that make the reader stop reading. For example, repeatedly using the words "tax" or "cost" can have this effect on some people. The informational campaign will talk about taxes and costs. Unless there is no increase in the tax rate or some reason to use taxes for a selling point, an advocacy committee is well advised to focus on positive points and not mention taxes at all.

Use bullets for lists and bold face for key points. It is easier for readers to find what they are looking for at a glance when you emphasize your key points rather than burying them in long paragraphs of copy. Where appropriate, use graphs and charts to increase understanding.

Use photos of kids learning rather than photos or drawings of buildings. Your end product is the education of children, not bricks and mortar. As you choose your photos, be careful to choose pictures that show what you do but are not promotional in nature.

Make the message easy to understand. Avoid technical terms, educational jargon and complicated concepts.

Be sure to include the cost of the measure in all informational materials, but use as few figures and statistics as possible. Some states require that all informational materials contain the cost of the measure and some even designate how prominently that fact must be displayed. As with all other informational work, be sure to check your state election laws as you design your materials.

Emphasize the relationship between what you are asking for and what the people in your community have told you they want.

Always tell readers or listeners where to get more information.

Contributed by Gay Campbell, communications consultant



On Call

Media relations: Turn those foes into friends

They can be pesky, pushy and petulant. And they can often make or break the public's perception of your school. They're reporters. However, even if your media representatives sometimes make your blood boil, they can just as often be your greatest ally.

Working with reporters comes with the territory of being a school communicator. Effective school communications means utilizing the media to share your district's stories, put the kibosh on rumors and articulate the facts. School communicators – or anyone who regularly deals with the media – can have a positive relationship with reporters with the right mindset and the right attitude.

Large vs. small media markets

Before we can truly form a positive relationship with a reporter, we must first understand where they're coming from. In larger newspapers and television and radio markets, reporters are assigned beats – general areas of news on which to focus their reporting, including education. These reporters tend to have a better understanding of education in your state since that's the focus of their work. Their editors often assign them stories that dig a little deeper into an issue, such as why a district's assessment scores decreased rather than just reporting that they did.

Reporters from smaller publications and markets often either don't have a beat assigned to them or have multiple beats that cover a large region. These reporters may need a bit more education about education simply because schools aren't always their main focus. Newer reporters also tend to get their feet wet at smaller publications and markets, so reporting about schools and education may be foreign to them. In addition, smaller publications and markets tend to have a revolving door of new reporters, so they often aren't up to speed on the issues surrounding your schools.

A little extra TLC

While it may initially take a little extra TLC, taking the time to educate reporters on your schools can pay dividends. Not only will they be more likely to get your story right, but they may also see you as a helping hand who they, in turn, want to help in the future – an ally.

Remember, reporters are doing a job – they're the watchdogs of our communities. While we'd like to think great relationships with reporters can yield only positive stories about our schools, the truth is that sometimes bad things happen, such as when a teacher is accused of sexual misconduct. The reporter isn't covering the story to be mean – they're doing their job. Their editors may also be pushing them into a certain direction with a story. Remember the old saying, "if it bleeds, it leads"?

Also keep in mind the vested interest reporters may have in your schools – they may be parents of students in your district. This can be good – they report on everything that goes on in your district. It can also be not-so-good – they report on *everything* in your district.

(Over)

Reproduction rights for materials distributed as part of On Call are granted only to subscribing districts and are restricted to distribution as part of their local public relations programs.

For content questions contact:
Marcia Latta
Communications Consultant
(503) 580-2612.

For subscription information,
contact WSSDA at
(800) 562-8927 or
(360) 493-9231.

**Nov./Dec.
2013**

Washington State
School Directors'
Association
221 College Street N.E.
Olympia, WA 98516

There's an old adage that says if you put a penny in a jar for every positive thing that happens, you can afford to take out 25 cents when something doesn't go as planned. This can hold true with the media as well. Keep a positive relationship with them when things are good, and they'll likely be a lot more sensitive to your district when negative news rules the day.

Working with – not against – reporters

So what makes a story worth reporting to the public? Conflict and controversy, unfortunately, tend to rule the headlines, as well as the impact a news item may have on the general public or a particular population, and the uniqueness of the news. Timeliness of news is also a key factor in whether the media will take interest.

This is where school communicators can really make a difference. In a world where news is reported within seconds thanks to the Internet, cell phones and social media, timeliness is everything. That means your timeliness in sending out news releases and responsiveness to media calls is more important than ever.

If you have an event coming up, send out your news release in advance – more than a day – to gain some interest from the media in attending and reporting on your event. If a crisis situation hits, send updated news releases with new details several times a day. Respond to phone calls and emails immediately. While you may not always have immediate answers, you can at least find out what the reporter wants to know and what the deadline is, and then get back to them with the right answers. Being respectful of a reporter's deadline will add pennies to your jar.

While print, television and radio reporters may all want similar details about a news story or feature (who, what, where, when, why), they all have different needs for how they report those facts, and school communicators earn points by helping to address those needs.

Print reporters, for example, have to paint a picture of an event using words and possibly a photo, since they don't have the luxury of using sound or live images to give that description to readers. As such, expect their questions to be more detail-oriented. They also often have more space to expand on a topic, so providing these reporters with background information or history can be useful.

Television and radio reporters, on the other hand, are limited by time. They must, however, report the same news as print reporters, so the use of sound (radio and television) and video (television) helps create a similar image in a fraction of the time. Be prepared to provide short, concise information. Make sure students who could end up being filmed have releases signed by parents.

Take control of the reins

Being cognizant of the different needs of different reporters can not only make the reporter's job a little easier, but can also help to ensure the story you want the public to hear is the one that makes the headlines. Take control of an interview and guide the reporter toward the most important and relevant information. Keep the story you want heard about your district as your focus.

Another effective way to establish a good relationship with the media, as well as how to get your stories heard, is to create a "media" day in your district at the start of each school year. Invite all of your local education reporters to your district for lunch, and introduce them to the various administrators in your district with whom they may need to talk at some point throughout the year. At this time, you can also establish the best ways to reach one another

and find out reporters' daily deadlines. Make sure to also give the media a heads up during this meeting about any impending educational issues that will take center stage throughout the year, whether it's new legislation, initiatives, programs or even interesting new classes in your district. This shows the media you want to work with them to get out the news their readers want to know about, and starts the year off on a positive note.

Similarly, when new reporters come on board with your local newspapers, radio or TV stations, invite them in to meet with you and give them some background on your district and any upcoming stories they may have some interest in. Again, doing this shows reporters you're cooperative and willing to help and, in turn, they'll usually reciprocate.

So the next time a reporter comes calling, don't groan. Take advantage of the opportunity to steer the story in the right direction that benefits your district and try to add a few pennies to the jar so you can afford to take some out down the road.

Contributed by Casey White-Zollman, Director of Communications, InterMountain Education Service District, Pendleton, Ore.



On Call

Showcase your students

Great content to share with your community

If your community is typical, about 70 percent of your citizens do not have any kids in school. Numerous community surveys have shown that voters without children in school feel less connected than those with kids in school. That makes sense. And it makes it harder to reach out to them when it comes time to pass a funding measure or build support for programs.

Survey data also shows that school employees and the news media are important sources of information for those less-connected voters. In Salem-Keizer we focus on both employees and the news media. But more and more, we are depending on our best-looking, most believable and most inspirational spokespeople to represent us – our students.

Most of the time students have no idea that they are representing the district because they are talking about themselves or their work. But we have gotten positive feedback from many community members every time we have featured students. Our product speaks for us when it speaks for itself.

We put student voices and faces in front of our community in a number of ways:

Spotlights on Success

We honor individuals and groups of students who have won awards or competitions by putting them in the spotlight at monthly school board meetings.

Communications department staff write a script detailing the award or competition and listing the students and their school principal and coach or other relevant school staff. A senior administrator reads the citation as a regular feature of the board meeting while the honorees are greeted by the superintendent and board chair. A certificate is presented as photos are snapped by district staff. The photos and script are posted on the district website until a new student spotlight is posted the following month. Staff accomplishments are also highlighted, especially early in the school year when student contests and competitions are not yet plentiful.

SAMPLE SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS--Schirle Students Do the Math

On Saturday, April 6, McKay High School hosted the "24 Challenge Math Tournament" for fourth and fifth grade students.

The first place winners in fourth and fifth grades were both Schirle Elementary students. Gavin Warner took top honors for fourth grade and Ethan Fleming triumphed with the win for fifth graders.

This year 175 students from 14 Salem-Keizer elementary schools participated in the annual event in which students find combinations of numbers that add, subtract, multiply, or divide to make the number 24.

Reproduction rights for materials distributed as part of On Call are granted only to subscribing districts and are restricted to distribution as part of their local public relations programs.

For content questions contact:
Marcia Latta
Communications Consultant
(503) 580-2612.

For subscription information,
contact WSSDA at
(800) 562-8927 or
(360) 493-9231.

**Nov./Dec.
2013**

Washington State
School Directors'
Association
221 College Street N.E.
Olympia, WA 98516

(Over)

Showcase your
students

Teresa Grindy, McKay High School math teacher, organizes the event each year with the help of adult volunteers, including McKay math staff and dozens of student helpers from McKay.

Congratulations Gavin and Ethan!

Nov./Dec. 2013
Page 2

Web Highlights

For student recognition that may not rise to the level of a board spotlight, we encourage schools and students to send in their success stories for the district webpage. We may run the story as a lead feature on the Web, where it will remain the leading story until some other story pushes it down in the queue.

E-Updates

We feature student successes on our email list. This periodic update on district events goes out to hundreds of community members who have signed up for the service.

Social Media

It only takes a few minutes to tweet via Twitter or post an item to Facebook. We feel that repeated highlights will have a positive effect on our public image for a minimal investment on our part. We use Hootsuite to track the views of our own social media posts and listen in on what others are saying about us on their social media feeds. We get a lot of likes when students are featured.

Earned Media

Sometimes a student activity or student work sample is just what a hungry reporter is looking for on a slow news day. We develop relationships with TV and print reporters who will admit when they have run out of story ideas. When we get such a call, we spread the word among district administrators to scour their schools for “something cool” students are doing. Often, the unique part of the story is a new approach taken by a teacher. But when the story comes out, the students steal the show.

We try to be proactive, but it is not always easy to establish and maintain the flow of good news from schools to the media. School staff are busy doing the work, not reporting on it. To help them, we published a sheet called “Share Positive News.” It has tips to help schools share their news and highlights with us. One of the best tips is for each principal to become a news reporter or designate one at their school. Their “reporter” could be a staff member, student or volunteer. They just need to be someone with a nose for news and the willingness to call or email the district office and the news media when good things are happening.

Sometimes the news media will come up with their own ideas for regular kid features. Check out *SJ Kids* on www.statesmanjournal.com. It gives students a chance to get their writing featured in the local newspaper and on its website. The whole community can see that kids are smart, funny and motivated to write about their lives. Ask your local media to consider any regular feature of student writing or artwork. It won't cost you a penny and it will help your local media draw in readers/viewers.

Paid Media

Taxpayers may get their noses bent out of shape if they see the district spending money on feel-good advertising. However, there is little cause for objection when ads include key district calendar information, immunization reminders or other useful information. Just be sure to include photos of students doing something interesting and related to learning. People see kids playing in their neighborhood all the time. It is great for them to see the kids learning.

(Over)

Donated Media

Perhaps the best kind of advertising is the kind that you don't pay for. Find a generous sponsor to fund your campaign and give them credit. We have had tabloids dedicated to student photos and essays, various contests and even electronic billboards sponsored by companies and featuring our students. The businesses get good exposure, and we get a rare opportunity to do some very flashy advertising without a backlash from those who would accuse us of wasting tax money.

Video Contests

Last year we held a video contest for high school students. (*Student video contest entices students to share good news about schools*, May 2013) We gave them our district vision statement for guidance: "All students graduate, prepared for a successful life." They were given a few guidelines and a deadline to submit their videos to the district office. A local credit union supplied iPads for prizes and helped us judge the entries. The quality and quantity of entries was amazing. View them at vimeo.com/channels/skps/62804747. While there, you will also note that we use students as interviewers when discussing district topics on video. They add a certain flare that is reflected in the web analytics. Simply put, people love videos featuring students.

Essay Contests

Consider an essay contest. The topic and guidelines may be chosen by the school board, the local newspaper or community business partners. Donated prizes and advertising will help build a buzz. Choose a topic that helps promote your mission or vision rather than something more generic. Even serious topics are interesting through the minds and words of students. So don't be afraid to choose something such as, "tell us how your school is helping you prepare for your future." Even young kids have dreams and can connect school to their future.

There are many other ways in which student faces, voices and work samples may be highlighted. The main point is to remember that you have lots of students and every one of them is more interesting, attractive and believable than the average adult. There is just something about all of that youthful energy that makes your PR efforts a hit.

Contributed by Jay Remy, communications director, Salem-Keizer Public Schools



On Call

Social Media: A Tool for Community Outreach

School districts today are at a crossroads when it comes to community engagement. When today's parents and students need something, their first instinct is to go to the Web for answers. If the schools are not there to meet them, it's a missed opportunity.

More and more schools are recognizing that technology is becoming a daily part of students' interaction with the world. Los Angeles Unified School District, along with many other school districts across the country, recently rolled out a pilot program giving iPads to all of the students, enabled with textbooks and limited Internet access (www.citeworld.com/tablets/22178/ipad-los-angeles-unified-school-district).

Mark Hovatter, the chief facilities executive for the LAUSD, points out that "the most important thing is to try to prepare the kids for the technology they are going to face when they are going to graduate. Even in construction, you can't do those jobs now without having some familiarity with computers. Whatever jobs kids want to have, technology is likely involved. You're just not going to be able to do well in society if you don't have some experience."

While LA Unified ran up against some problems in rolling out the new technology and experienced a significant amount of bad press over students getting past the school's parental control firewall (www.cio.com/article/740746/What_s_Behind_the_iPad_Hack_at_Los_Angeles_High_Schools), it hasn't hampered the district's intention to eventually provide iPads to all students districtwide. LA Unified recognized early on that with iPads in the home, more parents would have access to new technology as well, leading to higher technology literacy for the community. Many school districts have similar projects in the works. With more students and parents using the internet, schools need to assess better ways to meet the community on their own turf.

Where Do Today's Families Get Their Information?

As more students and parents come online, more attention needs to be focused on the school's website as the information hub of the school. As Meg Carnes and Kitty Porterfield mention in their book *Why Social Media Matters, School Communication in the Digital Age* (2012), parents are constantly seeking ways to connect with their child's school. "Over and over, parents tell us, they need to know: Where they need to be and when (to pick up their children from play practice, for instance); how many cupcakes to bring; where and how they can meet their child's teachers; and how to get timely information on their child's progress."

As the child grows up, more and more connections with the school become their interest and responsibility – what the homework assignment is, when the SAT enrollment deadlines are, what time they need to meet for band practice. If the school and superintendent's office are behind the times updating their website and using social media, the student isn't going to have access to that information.

Reproduction rights for materials distributed as part of On Call are granted only to subscribing districts and are restricted to distribution as part of their local public relations programs.

For content questions contact:
Marcia Latta
Communications Consultant
(503) 580-2612.

For subscription information,
contact WSSDA at
(800) 562-8927 or
(360) 493-9231.

Nov./Dec.
2013

Washington State
School Directors'
Association
221 College Street N.E.
Olympia, WA 98516

(Over)

Tools for the School District

While the website needs to be the hub of all of your communications, a place where all of the information can be found easily, other social media applications are useful for getting information out to the community:

Facebook—While fewer students are using Facebook than in recent years (www.digitaltrends.com/social-media/teens-think-facebook-is-so-yesterday/), they haven't given it up completely, and this is still a great way to connect with parents. Many people have their mobile phones set up to receive Facebook feeds, meaning that news has the potential to reach a wide audience quickly. The problem you may run into is making sure all the followers of the school or district's page are actually receiving the updates that are posted. One of Facebook's little secrets is that once someone "likes" a page, they have to *engage* with the page within three days. They need to post on your wall, like a post, or respond to a poll or a question you've posted or your page will fall out of your fan's newsfeed. That type of engagement is unlikely with a school page. In other words, unless you have a lot of regular engagement on your page, it's very likely that your posts are not reaching your fans.

Twitter—For parents and students who use Twitter, it can be invaluable for getting fast, current information. Snow reports and school closings are perfect for Twitter, as well as bomb threats, bus delays and any other type of information that parents are going to need fast and up to date. The short, 140-character form means that you can craft a clear and concise message with little effort.

Tools for the Classroom

Facebook—Many teachers find that creating a Facebook page can be quite useful for their class. Having a page that is separate from their personal page allows them to engage with students on their level, without giving up personal privacy.

Tumblr and/or Instagram—For art teachers and classrooms with a lot of visual or physical activity, such as elementary school classrooms, photos are a great way to communicate with parents what's going on in school. As long as the school's policies on student privacy are taken into consideration beforehand, this can be a great way of showing off your students' artwork and team problem-solving skills. If any of your parent volunteers are photographers, don't hesitate to recruit them in getting great shots to share with the rest of the classroom community.

Pinterest—For teachers with highly involved parents, Pinterest is a great place for collecting and sharing ideas for things parents can do with their kids at home, and/or getting feedback on ideas for projects for the classroom.

Remind101—This great little app provides an easy way to send text messages to your parents such as *Science Center field trip tomorrow. Dress for the weather.* Teachers simply create an account and invite parents and students to join the group by sending a text message. It's a convenient way to reach a lot of people at the same time, and has the added benefit of privacy – teachers never see the phone numbers of the students, and the students never see the teacher's number. www.remind101.com/learn-more

Again, it's important that all of the information you are sharing via social media is readily available on your website. When parents are looking for information, they are most likely to come to the school's website first. But when you are looking to get information to parents and students, it's best to go where they are – and that's where the other social media applications come in handy.

Here's to You!

Tips for your good health provided by your district

Nov./Dec. 2013

Where do you get your health news?

Sign up for online newsletters to stay up-to-date on the latest health news

There are many online sources of important health news and recent study findings that may give you some helpful tips. But keeping up with this flood of information can be challenging.

Sign up for an online health newsletter or two to stay current on the most up-to-date health news.

Check out these sources that you can trust for reliable information:

New York Times Health News

Health, fitness and nutrition topics distributed every Tuesday.

www.nytimes.com/marketing/healthupdate/

National Institutes of Health

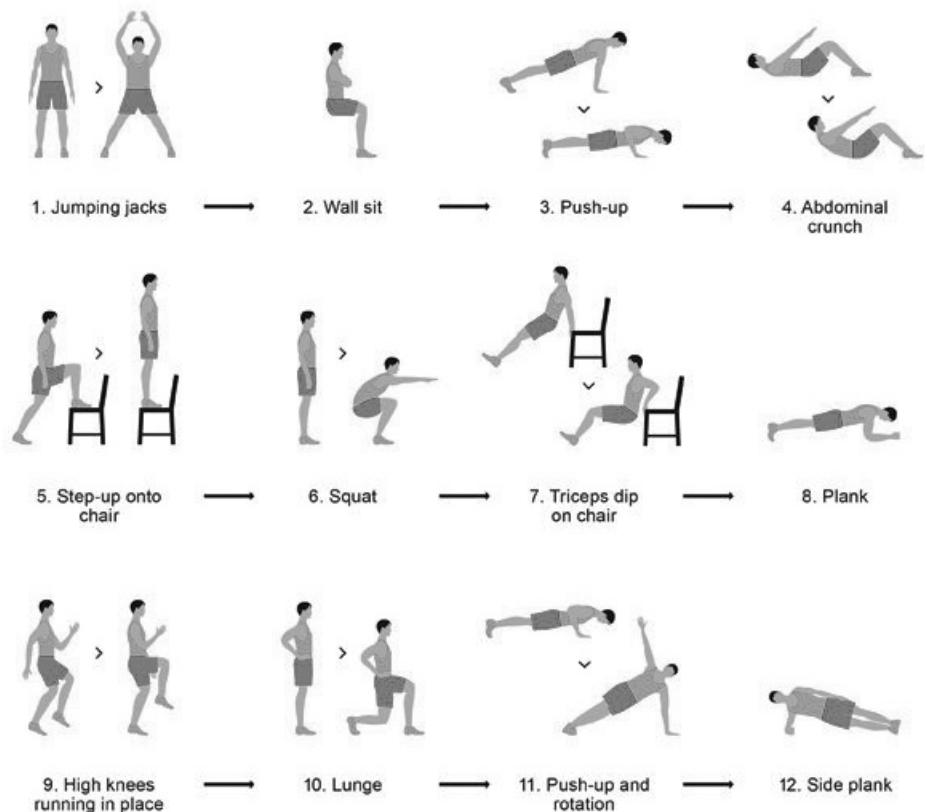
A monthly newsletter from the National Institutes of Health, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/subscribe>

Harvard HEALTHbeat

HEALTHbeat has tips for healthy living, advice from experts at Harvard Medical School and answers to readers' questions by a Harvard physician. When you sign up, you can choose additional newsletters that focus on specialized health topics.

www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/Subscribe.htm



The Scientific 7-Minute Workout

Published in the New York Times Well Blog on May 9, 2013.

<http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/05/09/the-scientific-7-minute-workout/#postComment>

An example of recent news to use, this series of exercises, published in the New York Times, was found to provide a complete workout in a seven-minute circuit if performed at maximum intensity. Perform each in rapid succession for 30 seconds each. The intensity level should be eight on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being uncomfortably intense.

Here's to You! is published quarterly for school district staff members in the interest of your good health. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Here's to You! is written and published by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

Don't forget your flu shot!

Health news you can use

- **Cold feet can keep you up at night**

A good night's sleep is a key to better health. Chronic sleep deprivation can boost the risk of stroke and other health risks. One easy way to sleep: socks. Warm feet will help you fall asleep faster and sleep better.

www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20462696_7,00.html

- **Reduce your risk for breast cancer with a daily walk**

Studies have shown that exercise helps prevent cancer, but it doesn't have to be vigorous, athletic activity. A daily walk has been found to be effective in staving off breast cancer, especially in postmenopausal women.

<http://news.health.com/2013/10/04/daily-walk-may-cut-your-breast-cancer-risk/>

- **Less is more: Four workouts a week may be better than six**

A study published in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* found that four workouts a week – two strength and two cardio sessions – provided the greatest resting benefit and didn't result in missed workouts due to fatigue or boredom.

<http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/02/13/why-four-workouts-a-week-may-be-better-than-six/>



Only 46% of the population gets flu shots.

Flu Misconception #1: The seasonal flu is annoying but harmless



200,000 people are hospitalized each year as a result of the flu.



The flu kills as many as 49,000 people annually.



More people die from the flu than breast cancer and AIDS combined.

Source: <http://www.amillionmore.com/debunking-the-flu-infographic/>

Less than half of Americans get a flu shot each year. The other half face unnecessary exposure to a virus that is more dangerous than many people realize. Approximately 200,000 people are hospitalized each year with flu-related illness, and about 49,000 people die each year from the flu.

Although flu vaccines are strongly recommended for children starting as young as six months old, and the elderly, they are important for almost everyone – for safety and to minimize risk of spreading flu germs to others.

Each flu season, preparing to combat the flu virus requires some educated guessing by the health experts. According to the Center for Disease Control, the flu epidemics have a number of variables to plan for: timing, severity, length of season and specific strains. www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2013-2014.htm

Flu vaccines are recommended each year because the effectiveness declines over time and each vaccine addresses new strains that will likely arrive for the coming flu season.

CDC-recommended health habits for flu prevention

The Center for Disease Control publishes tips to help reduce the spread of the flu. The first recommendation is to get vaccinated. Additional tips include:

1. Avoid close contact.
2. Stay home when you are sick.
3. Cover your mouth and nose.
4. Clean your hands.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm

Tips for parents:

Get your child vaccinated. If your child is sick, watch for flu symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue and sometimes vomiting.

Serious symptoms that require medical attention include fast or troubled breathing, blue or gray skin, not drinking enough, severe vomiting, not waking.

See the CDC guide for parents: www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm.

I N S I G H T S

FOR FAMILIES



Resources for winter break



**Nov./Dec.
2013**

INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

Throughout late fall and winter, schools are closed for a series of holiday and in-service breaks. Some students are out of school for as much as a week at Thanksgiving, two weeks or more for winter break, and several days in between for grading days, snow days and holidays starting with Veterans Day and ending with President's Day.

This time off doesn't have to break learning momentum. Think of it as a chance for supplemental learning. You can keep your kids engaged in academics even when they are not in school.

There are many resources on the Internet that can help you fill those long winter days when school is out. Start with a search for winter break activities.

Here are some options to get you started:

FamilyEducation.com

Subscribe to the email newsletter at family education.com The free subscription gets you immediate access to a printable download of winter activities for kids that includes instructions for a winter scavenger hunt, coloring pages and crafts for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

<http://printables.familyeducation.com/winter/childrens-art-activities/64866.html>

Yahoo Voices: voices.yahoo.com

Yahoo voices lists several posts for winter break activities.

Top 10 Educational Winter Break Activities for Elementary and Middle Schools (*<http://voices.yahoo.com/top-10-educational-winter-break-activities-elementary-6966556.html?cat=4>*) has links to related content that includes:

- Fun and Educational Winter Break Activities that Keep Your Kids Learning
- Winter Break Activities to Keep Your Child's Science Skills Sharp and Ready for Learning
- Winter Break + Math Activities = Keeping Math Skills Sharp

No Time for Flash Cards

For a list of simple activities you can do in or around your own house, check out 31 things for kids to do during winter break.

www.notimeforflashcards.com/2012/12/31-things-for-kids-to-do-during-winter-break.html

Check events in your area

Don't forget to search for activities and events in your area. Some communities have library programs, camp activities and other organized events especially for children during school breaks.

Don't forget safety

School breaks, especially the prolonged break at winter, require some thought to keeping children safe. Cold weather, unattended time at home while parents work and the chaos of a crowded mall during holiday shopping all pose safety risks for children.

Parenting.com

Must-know winter health & safety tips

www.cnn.com/2010/HEALTH/12/07/winter.health.safety.parenting/index.html

Check out this refresher for a variety of winter concerns.

- Staying safe in cold weather
- Age-appropriate winter sports
- Managing cold and flu symptoms
- Keeping skin healthy during cold weather
- Dressing for weather

Safelyeverafter.com

Internet Safe-Smarts Tip Sheet for Kids

www.safelyeverafter.com/internet_tips_kids.html

During school breaks, students may spend more time online. This site has tips for parents and students. These tips are in the form of a contract for the student Internet user, and include agreements, such as:

- Not giving out personal information.
- Never agreeing to meet any contacts who are online only in person
- Never sending a picture to anyone without telling parents first.
- Never sharing passwords with anyone but parents.

FamilyEducation.com

Expert Advice: Strangers and Safety during the Holidays

<http://life.familyeducation.com/safety/stranger-safety/59187.html>

During the busy holiday season, children can become separated from parents while shopping or may be at risk for greater “stranger danger” in public places. These tips, also from SafelyEverAfter.com, were posted by family education.com.

- Make sure your child stays close enough for you to see him or her.
- Dress your young child in bright clothing to be able to spot them easily.
- If they become separated, teach them to find a “safe stranger” for help, a mom with kids or a cashier. Older kids should know a place to meet.
- Be sure that your child knows never to leave the building to go looking for you.
- Don't leave children along in public places such as arcades, movie theatres, play areas, etc.
- Bring your children into the restroom with you. For older children of the opposite gender, wait outside and call in that you are right there if they need you.
- Be sure your child knows your cell phone number.