# THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

ELEVENTH EDITION

Edward H. Moore
Don H. Bagin
Donald R. Gallagher

*Eleventh Edition*

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**PEARSON**

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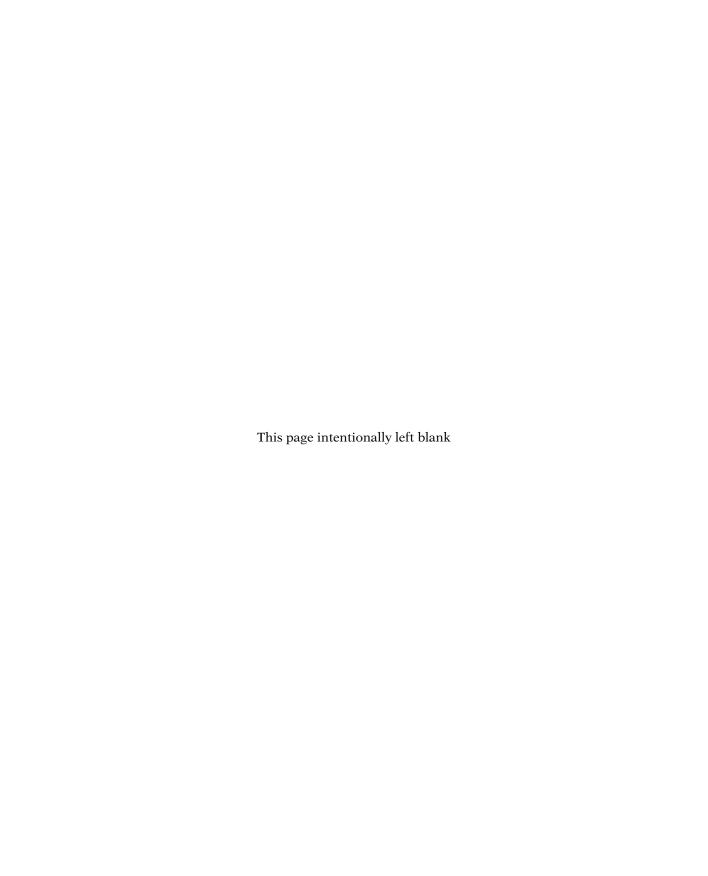**PEARSON**

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Edward H. Moore is a Professor in the College of Communication and Creative Arts at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. Moore started his career as a school public relations practitioner and went on to serve more than 25 years as a public relations counselor, journalist, and educator working with a variety of corporate and educational organizations throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Moore was managing editor of *Communication Briefings*, an international communications newsletter, and he previously served as Associate Director of the National School Public Relations Association. He has taught public relations for more than 20 years. He holds an M.A. in school information services from Glassboro, New Jersey, State College, and is accredited in public relations by the Universal Accreditation Board.

## DON BAGIN

Dr. Don Bagin founded the graduate program in public relations at Rowan University, where he was a professor of communications and went on to direct that program for more than 30 years. He served as president of the National School Public Relations Association and received the association's award given to the educator who has contributed the most to improving the relationship between schools and communities. Dr. Bagin was the founding publisher of *Communication Briefings*, a newsletter read by 250,000 people. During his long career, he wrote eight books and hundreds of articles on public relations. He earned his first two degrees from Villanova University and his doctorate from Temple University.

## DON GALLAGHER

Dr. Don Gallagher's career included more than 40 years of experience in public relations and communications with the U.S. Navy, two school districts, a community college, and as a professor. He served as a professor at Rowan University, where he coordinated graduate programs there in public relations. He was one of the owners of *Communication Briefings*, an international communications newsletter. Dr. Gallagher conducted many public opinion polls, published numerous articles, recorded national videotapes and audiotapes, and he gave numerous workshops throughout the United States. A graduate of St. Francis University in Pennsylvania, he earned a master's from Villanova University and a doctorate from Temple University.

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# PREFACE

The formal practice of modern school public relations in the United States traces its roots to the 1930s. It was a time when new media tools of the day—such as radio networks, the electronic delivery of news and images by wire services, and rapidly expanding print media—were increasingly being used to both support and challenge the concept of public schools. Schools and educators found they had to engage in these new media to deliver information and address misinformation in efforts to build an understanding of and support for education. Today, more than 80 years later, educators again find themselves struggling to keep pace with vast changes in the world of communication.

Rapidly changing technology and the swift adoption of online communication practices have opened a new era of challenge and opportunity for school communicators. Technology is fueling the convergence of traditional media—once neatly segmented into print and broadcast with predictable news cycles—resulting in organizations now instantly delivering news and information around the clock and in multiple formats.

Technology also has fueled the development and use of new communication tools—offering schools new ways in which to directly engage in two-way communication with their communities and, importantly, also offering the ability for schools to become publishers and broadcasters of their own news and information products.

With these new communication options comes both challenge and responsibility: Increasingly, school leaders face pressure to keep pace with rapidly changing communication technology and to meet the ever-increasing expectations of their constituents, who have become accustomed to the transparency and the rapid availability of information that the age of online communication has created. School communicators also often find that the many new communication tools available to them are supplementing and not replacing many traditional communication activities, thus increasing demands on both the time and expertise needed for effective school communication. The opportunity offered to school leaders who choose to take advantage of emerging communication tools is immense: Perhaps at no time in the history of modern education has the ability ever been greater to engage with constituents and build the meaningful, trusting working relationships essential to understanding, support, and success.

This new edition seeks to provide both insight and counsel on the many new trends affecting traditional practices while ushering in new opportunities essential to the successful development of school and community relationships.

## NEW TO THIS EDITION

- A section on Communication Tools (Part 3), updated to reflect the many ways in which new technology has had an impact on both traditional and new school-communication tactics.
- A revised chapter on Working with the News Media (Chapter 11) explores the evolving roles of media relations in school communications and how media convergence and social media are influencing news coverage and publicity opportunities for school–community relations programs.
- A revised chapter on Working with Publications (Chapter 12) reflects the continuing evolutions for the development, distribution, and management of documents disseminating information key to school-communications efforts.
- A revised chapter on Using Online Tactics (Chapter 13) documents the many new two-way communication options—from traditional Web sites to information-rich smartphone apps—being deployed by schools to engage with all types of audiences.
- New information, case studies, and expert insights on vital communication issues, such as the links between strategic planning and communication and student success (Chapter 4); new issues in crisis-communication planning (Chapter 9); comprehensive campaign planning

to manage change and overall communication strategies (Chapter 14); and programs for ongoing communication in building understanding and support (Chapter 15).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# BRIEF CONTENTS

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# CONTENTS

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# The Importance of Public Relations

**After completing this chapter you should be able to . . .**

- Define the roles of public relations and communication in the educational organization.
- Demonstrate the importance of planned and measured school communication.
- Outline the roles of communication in building parental and community partnerships.
- Establish the links between communication and the public understanding and support it fosters.

In recent years the importance of school–community relations and overall school public relations has grown rapidly. Consider some trends affecting school leaders daily:

Many states and local school systems today offer a broad array of choices for parents in determining where to send students to school, creating new demands for ongoing communication on program and quality issues between schools and parents, schools and prospective parents, and schools and communities overall. It was only in the 1980s that Minnesota started a school choice program. Today, the majority of states offer some form of charter school alternatives to traditional public school systems. More than a dozen states now give parents options for choosing specific schools either within or outside of their home school systems, and home-schooling options exist in all 50 states.

Safety and security crises—such as violence issues, health concerns, environmental dangers, and staff conduct—have added new pressures on schools to communicate more effectively before, during, and after crisis situations.

As parents and taxpayers have become better informed, they tend to increase their involvement in local education issues and to openly challenge many of the decisions being made by educational leaders.

For these reasons and more, many superintendents and other administrators wish they had learned more about how to communicate effectively and about how to practice public relations when taking their administrative courses.

## WHY SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS?

School public relations is important because more and more of the school administrator's time is spent dealing with people. In most communities, taxpayers are letting it be known that they care about the quality of education and about its cost and want to be informed about it. An interest in better communications skills has also been sparked by strong teacher associations and unions that provide public relations help for members. As teacher representatives demand more explanations and as the nuances of negotiation become more subtle, top administrators must learn to be comfortable communicating in diverse situations with myriad publics.

An administrator may provide excellent leadership for the school's curriculum and may be a financial wizard, but if an administrator cannot effectively communicate with the school board, parents, taxpayers, staff, and the news media—on a regular basis—his or her days in the district will be few.

News coverage frequently declares one of the following reasons for a superintendent's dismissal: "He couldn't communicate with the board," "Her comments alienated parents," or "He just didn't have a good feel for this community." Knowing the public and being able to keep abreast of the community's thinking are major requirements for today's successful administrator. Suggestions on how to accomplish these tasks are offered in Chapter 3.

Rich Bagin, executive director of the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA), cites the following as the commonly found reasons that school and community relations fail:

**1.** Too often educators equate communication with the dissemination of information. They fail to understand that communication is a two-way process that engages parents, taxpayers and communities in meaningful relationships.

**2.** School communication and engagement often are reactive to events and situations rather than planned efforts targeted at meeting specific objectives.

**3.** Leaders and front-line employees do not understand their specific communication roles, have little or no accountability for how they communicate,

and receive little support to help them fulfill their communication roles.

**4.** Educators often have little communication training or experience and are not comfortable when issues have the potential to place their actions and decisions in the public or media spotlights.[1]

If school officials aren't convinced that they have a responsibility to communicate because communication helps people learn or because it builds confidence in the schools, they might want to consider another reason: to keep their jobs. More and more school systems now offer parents some opportunity to choose the school or programs their children will attend. This means that images and perceptions count more than ever for schools. Fair or not, accurate or not, schools that are perceived as being "good" will attract more students than schools that people do not seem to like. The point is that people working in schools that don't attract students will not have jobs. That sounds dramatic, but it probably will be the result because choice options continue to expand.

Why do people choose one school over another? What makes School A seem better than School B? Many people have different theories. Some feel that it is the overall image of the school projected by the school district newsletter and media coverage. Others feel that it is based on the test scores of graduates. Still others think that an aura, evolved over the years, continues, even though in reality the quality of that school has changed.

The reasons why people make school choices become important when considering the growing interest and action on school-choice options. Data compiled by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics show that between 1993 and 2007, the percentage of students in grades 1–12 attending a "chosen" public school (that is, a school other than the one to which they were assigned) increased from 11 to 16 percent. In the same period, the percentage attending their "assigned" public schools decreased from 80 to 73 percent.[2]

With the competition for public funds on the local, state, and national levels, it's imperative that educational leaders be effective spokespersons for

education. With only so many dollars available, the question facing legislators is whether those dollars should go for roads, bridges, health care, welfare, or education. Impressions are made daily by administrators—impressions that influence legislators' decisions about public education. While state and national associations can provide lobbying leadership, much also must be accomplished on a local level by school officials as they communicate in the community. Whether it's speaking in a classroom to explain how public education works (a neglected curriculum item in most schools) or having breakfast with a local legislator, the school administrator constantly affects the public perception of education. Because administrators lead a fishbowl existence in the community, it's important that they understand and support ways of building confidence in public education. Many of these ideas and techniques are, of course, applicable to those responsible for leadership in nonpublic schools.

For too many years school officials were reluctant to commit staff and funds to public relations. They felt that "public relations" carried a stigma—that it was perceived as "spin" for covering up or obscuring problems. Whether a school chooses to call it public relations, public information, community relations, or communications is relatively unimportant. The commitment to better planned, regular, two-way communications with all the audiences served by the schools is, however, important. One of the reasons more of a commitment has not been made may lie in the fact that so few school officials have been prepared to handle public relations responsibilities. In addition, education has in many cases continued its administrative organization with few changes in title or responsibilities over the years. Yet, a role-playing technique that asked thousands of taxpayers nationally what they would have done if given the chance to start the first school found that the need to communicate between the school and home was always one of the top two priorities.[3] Many of the commitments now considered almost sacrosanct were not listed as being among the top five necessities to ensure a successful school.

The importance of communication in the overall school operation is being recognized by an increasing number of states, as more are requiring that candidates for administrative certification complete a course in the field of community relations. National organizations, such as the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), have recognized the growing importance of school–community relations by devoting resources and conference sessions to the topic. Other regional and state education associations are committing more and more sessions to the topic on a regular basis.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

The following suggestions to improve public confidence in educational leaders and in the schools have been adapted from observations made by John Wherry, then executive director of NSPRA, and Don Bagin, who was president of that organization.[4]

### DO AN EFFECTIVE JOB, AND LET PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT THE SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

To increase the chances of doing an effective job in the public relations area, the initial step is to be sure that the schools themselves are doing an effective job. No public relations program can make a bad school look good for very long. On the other hand, an early step in building confidence in our schools is to let everyone know what the schools are doing well, what the problems are, and what's being done to solve the problems.

The public schools have made major contributions to the United States; although the schools are far from perfect, more should be done to promote their accomplishments. Pollster George Gallup long suggested that one of the biggest challenges facing educators was the need to let people know about the fine things being done in the schools.[5]

In addition to announcing successes, school officials must be ready to admit problems. The more educated, better informed, and more engaged populace that pays for the schools will not be fooled for very long by school officials who attempt to cover up problems. Constituents don't expect leaders to be perfect; they do expect them to recognize challenges and explain what's being done to meet them. A leader who admits that mistakes can occasionally be made encourages staff members to assume risks to

try programs that will improve the schools. The key is to establish a spirit of honesty and sincerity so the staff and community believe the information being shared.

The quest for excellence must be communicated to all staff members and the public. Only when people realize that school leaders are serious about this commitment will they have more confidence in the people running the schools. As more people consider the possibility of tax credits and vouchers, the private and parochial school choices loom as greater competition for public schools. School leaders must find ways to identify and overcome problems such as ineffective teachers and administrators.

If a commitment to excellence is not made, public schools will most likely find their image suffering even more with the emergence of school choice options. Parents who value education will avoid sending their children to a school where, for example, "fifth grade is the bad year because all three teachers should have been dismissed," especially if those parents have a child entering fifth grade.

Related to the question of quality is that of quantity. Just how much can the schools be expected to do? Should the public schools be expected to offer vocational training? Should they teach students how to brush their teeth and drive cars? One of the most serious challenges facing educational leaders is to gain a community consensus on what the expectations are for the schools. Only then can school leaders be evaluated on how well the schools are doing.

### THE PUBLIC'S CONCERN ABOUT DISCIPLINE MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

Year after year, the public's concern about public school discipline is rated at or near the top of the list by the Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup survey of public attitudes toward public schools.[6] Whether the problem is real or perceived, it exists in the minds of the people who will help determine how much support public education receives.

Discipline means different things to different people, but some agreement on a definition exists. A series of regional meetings with parents, students, and educators sponsored by the Missouri Department of Education identified the following

as the biggest discipline problems: disruptive classroom behavior, student disrespect for authority, student apathy toward learning, and absenteeism and class cutting.

The importance of the discipline factor in school selection was underlined in a study done in Gloucester County, New Jersey, a county used by the Gallup organization as representative of the country. The telephone study asked 100 parents who had always sent their children to public schools a series of questions about schools. Parents were asked whether they would continue to send their children to public schools if tax relief were provided, such as a voucher or tax credit. Only 41 percent said they would continue to send their children to public schools. When asked why, the number one reason given was "discipline."

To address the perception of discipline and its related safety and security issues, a program that involves parents, students, and staff should be developed to build a clear code. Many examples of strong discipline policies are being supported and even cheered by parents and communities. Programs that encourage more people to visit schools during the learning day can be a giant step in reducing misperceptions about discipline.

### SCHOOL LEADERS MUST PERSONALIZE THE SCHOOLS MORE TO ENHANCE THE COMFORT OF THOSE BEING SERVED

People make decisions on key purchases based on their personal experiences with the product, whether it be the choice of an automobile, a hotel, or a bank. How people feel about their schools is usually dictated in the same way. It's not so much the newspaper article or the newsletter story as it is the way a secretary responds to a question, or a teacher returns a phone call, or a guidance counselor or principal helps a student who is confused about an important decision.

Teachers who phone students' parents with positive news, principals who invite small groups of parents for lunch, and secretaries and custodians who greet all visitors as if they were board members do much to make people feel good about their schools. Because so few school employees have taken a course on how to deal with the public, an

in-service program to share ideas would help. Such a program is ideal in that it meets the challenge of appealing to all employees, inasmuch as everyone must communicate in some way with members of the community.

All employees must recognize their role in public relations. Studies show that people who acquire their information about the schools from board members and employees tend to support the schools more than people who get their information from other sources. One of the problems is that each entity (board members, administrators, and teachers) feels that the job of building public confidence in the schools belongs to another group. Teachers claim it's the board's job, the board says administrators should be doing it, and the administrators point to teachers as the people having the closest contact with parents. If all groups don't recognize the need to contribute in the public relations arena, the kind of confidence desired will never occur.

### STAFF MORALE MUST BE IMPROVED

Today, a major concern of board members and administrators often is staff morale. In previous years, a major public relations concern was media relations, newsletter preparation, and community advisory committees. Now board members and administrators realize that staff morale affects external relations and has to be addressed.

One way to determine the level of morale is to ask this question: If you had an idea for improving the school where you work and it would cost nothing to implement, would you suggest it? Only between 20 and 40 percent of the 10,000 teachers and administrators surveyed in schools throughout the country said they would.[7]

Teachers and principals report that they don't suggest ideas anymore. When asked why, they note that the ideas are listened to but nothing new happens. With the current emphasis on computers and information dissemination, it must not be forgotten that the most precious part of a school is its staff. People need to be asked their opinions, and they need to be told when they do a good job. (Chapter 7 offers specific strategies that will help accomplish these goals.) Community residents who hear various versions of an incident that occurred at a school tend to believe employees' versions more than other sources. It's vital, therefore, that employees be kept informed about school news, including impending decisions.

### ALL SCHOOL OFFICIALS MUST USE AND INSIST THAT OTHERS USE COMFORTABLE WORDS

Public confidence in school leaders cannot be built with words that people don't understand. The educator who addresses the PTA or sends a memo to thousands of parents does little to enhance the school's image with jargon and multisyllabic words that the audience won't understand. Other chapters present specific ways to avoid the problem. Suffice it to say here that the utilization of maximal learning stations won't necessarily optimize the SAT scores of the multiethnic, multitrack, pubescent adolescents permeating the district.

### EDUCATORS MUST STOP FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES AND START BUILDING COALITIONS

The former, almost guaranteed, support of parents is no longer sufficient to gain what educators think they and education deserve. Because the percentage of parents who have children in grades K–12 in the public schools is not a majority, the traditional support base has been eroded. Therefore, educators must work together to gain public and legislative confidence and support.

This working together has many implications; some will require that association leaders rethink their positions. A National School Boards Association president once asked that board members extend an olive branch to teachers. Many board members applauded; others disagreed. One teachers' association public relations director privately asked a friend of the board group, "What kind of trick is the olive branch?" It was no trick, but the question conveyed the lack of trust in the board–teacher relationship. As the public image of education is subject to closer scrutiny, more and more teachers, administrators, and board members are becoming aware of the need to work together. Teachers must work with other teachers, administrators, board members, parent support groups, and the business community to build the kind of coalition that will be listened to by legislators.

## WORKING WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS ESSENTIAL TO ATTRACT NEEDED SUPPORT

As the number of parents with children in school decreases, school officials must seek other support bases. One excellent source is the business community, which is more interested in the schools' success than a "Business–Education Day" might indicate. For too many years educators have hesitated to work closely with the business community, perhaps fearing that businesspeople would encroach on educators' decision making. Yet, educators have much in common with business leaders: Both have suffered a loss of public confidence, both desire good relationships with the community, both want graduates with solid skills, and both have children and grandchildren attending the public schools.

NSPRA has adopted a set of beliefs for building trust and success in schools and school systems. Among these beliefs are that school public relations:

- Strives to build consensus and reach common ground.
- Develops two-way, meaningful trusting relationships with all audiences.
- Enables education to function at its best by bringing schools and communities together.[8]

## EVERY EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO INVOLVE NONPARENTS IN SCHOOLS

As fewer people have children in the schools, it becomes necessary to rethink the goals and responsibilities of schools. If schools wish to be blessed with support from the community, their leaders will have to focus on services and offerings that appeal to other than those who are directly benefiting from the K–12 programs. Two ways to enlist the support of nonparents are through community education and volunteer programs. These programs prompt people to visit and to get involved with their schools. These approaches allow us to start thinking about public education as a K–70 program instead of a K–12 program.

Citizens who have been in their schools for whatever reason consistently have more positive attitudes about those schools. Therefore, any program that fosters school visits or school use is a plus in terms of building confidence in school leaders.

## THE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM MUST BE A TWO-WAY PROCESS

Acquiring feedback allows school officials to know how the community or staff will react to a decision. It is appreciably easier to lead a school district when the thoughts, aspirations, and commitments of the leaders are known. Communication for many years was equated with school officials telling others about the schools. In recent years, enlightened school leaders stressed the listening end of the communication process.

When people are asked their opinion, they feel better about the person who asks for it, especially if it's made clear that the opinion will be considered. Whether it's using the key communicators, conducting surveys, or some other method recommended in Chapter 3, the need for feedback is vital.

## NEED FOR A COMMUNICATION PLAN

A plan must be developed for community relations or little will happen. Board members and administrators can commiserate for a long time about the need for a public relations program, but it won't happen unless someone develops a plan and makes a commitment. The superintendent, or someone delegated by the superintendent, must be given the time and resources to develop a sound communications program. Some school districts, in an effort to emphasize the importance of the topic, have committed a year to in-service programs for all staff members to improve communication within the district. If building confidence is important, then that importance must be demonstrated with commitment. If the commitment is not made, chances are that little will happen, and different education factions will be able to look back and say, "We should have made the commitment."

For quite a while most experts and textbooks in school–community relations have suggested that the prime reason for communicating more effectively with the staff and community is to build confidence

in the school. There's nothing wrong with that. This confidence is very productive.

Yet some people tend to forget a vital catalyst for the communications undertaking: to help people learn better. This must be remembered. When schools embark on an effective communications program, support comes more easily when the people paying the bill recognize that communications is a key component of better learning.

This means that the public relations effort should entail dealing with people more than dealing with things. This will indeed build confidence and gain support of parents and others. More important, through involving people in the schools and in their children's learning, it will create a better learning atmosphere and encourage students to learn.

NSPRA recommends that school communication activities be planned and guided by a written communication plan. The organization recommends the following:

- The public relations/communication efforts are planned on a systematic (often annual) basis to support the achievement of the organization's goals and objectives.
- The plan has the approval of the superintendent/chief executive officer.
- The plan focuses on meeting the goals of the organization and ultimately improving education, and to the extent possible, enhancing student achievement.
- The plan identifies the needs of target publics and uses research data to identify key messages and strategies for delivering those messages.
- Communication plans for specific program changes or initiatives are developed in conjunction with the staff responsible for them.
- Communication plans identify the various publics who will be affected and the strategies for reaching them.
- To the extent possible, communication plans include measurable goals for behavior change or accomplishment, deadlines, responsibilities, resources, and strategies.
- Plans are reviewed regularly to ensure that communication efforts remain relevant and are

on schedule, and are adjusted whenever necessary to reach planned goals or to deal with emerging needs and opportunities.[9]

The two main purposes of such a program are to foster student achievement (through establishment of a positive school climate and parent and citizen involvement) and to build citizen knowledge and understanding leading to financial support.

To gain support for schools, more educators also are adopting marketing communication techniques for their schools and programs. A number of techniques and ideas, all aimed at building public confidence, have been developed in recent years. One of the most attention getting has been using the marketing concept to sell the school's story to the public. William Banach and the Macomb Intermediate School District in Michigan used marketing techniques traditionally employed by companies to sell soap, cars, and other products. In essence, such programs often identify the audiences to be reached and define how the public schools can best meet the needs of those audiences with the schools' services. The Macomb program, for example, offered bumper stickers, refrigerator magnets, pencils, and other attention grabbers to keep the school story in front of large numbers of people. Some educators believe that this approach will reap results in the increasingly competitive environment in which schools now operate; others have been slower to accept such promotional techniques.

Whatever the feeling about marketing communication and promotion, most educators are becoming increasingly cognizant of the need to employ more community relations techniques than they are now using. This book, therefore, is organized to help the reader understand school–community relations and to employ successful communication techniques. The first part outlines the essentials of a school–community relations program. The second part explains the communication process and ways to communicate with the public as well as how to build sound and constructive relationships during special events. The third part features the various tools used to communicate to various audiences. The fourth and final part presents an assessment and evaluation of the results of a community relations program.

## Questions

1. Explain how current national issues in education can work to erode public confidence in a local school district—and how school communication efforts might be used to preserve or boost confidence in local schools.
2. Why is it important to have a formal communication plan for a school district overall?
3. What key reasons are often found when school communication fails, and how can schools and educators best prepare to avoid such failures?
4. When might marketing communication techniques be appropriate for use in school communication efforts? When might marketing communications be inappropriate for use in school communication efforts?

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## Endnotes

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2. National Center for Education Statistics, "Fast Facts: Public School Choice Programs." Retrieved September 8, 2014, at http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=6
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# 2

# Public Character of the School

**After completing this chapter you should be able to . . .**

- Identify the characteristics of schools and educational organizations and how those features affect communication practice in schools.
- Distinguish the features of attitudes, opinions, and public opinion.
- Define what is meant by school–community relations.
- Outline traditional public relations models.

The development of sound and constructive relationships between the school and the community is a necessary and natural function of a publicly supported institution in a democratic society. This position arises from a consideration of the public character of the school and the legal framework within which it operates. It is also supported by the role of public opinion in the shaping of educational policies and practices. Even though the American way of life is characterized by constant change, these considerations nevertheless form the basis of the decision-making process in the management of public schools, and they exercise an influence on the nature and direction of change.

The position thus established is reflected in the working definition of school and community relations that is presented in this chapter. The definition reiterates the belief that sound and constructive relationships must be developed and maintained with the community by those who are responsible for public education if the school is to meet its obligations to the cause, continuance, and preservation of democracy.

## PUBLIC CHARACTER OF THE SCHOOL

Despite the involvement of the federal government in local and state educational affairs, it is evident in the legal structure of state school systems and in the laws regulating their operation that the power to manage schools actually resides in the people. At the state level, the people have the right to support or oppose legislation affecting the education of children, to work for the modification and repeal of existing