



Awards of Excellence 2019-2021

This year, the MSPRA Awards of Excellence Contest will include the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. The Awards of Excellence recognize outstanding school communications programs and campaigns in various categories such as publications, media, mass communication, crisis communication, photography, and more. This contest is open to all public or private schools or districts, including special schools such as vocational-technical institutes, regional or county education service agencies, education agencies and private businesses serving as partners with those organizations.

AWARD SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS JULY 16, 2021

Application Form Links are posted below in this document.

Cost

\$15 per Awards of Excellence submission for MSPRA members

\$25 per Awards of Excellence submission for Non-MSPRA members

\$15 Gold Medallion, must be MSPRA member

\$25 Communicator of Year, must be MSPRA member

\$30 MSPRA Membership for 2021-2022

\$65 Fall Meeting/Awards Luncheon

\$65 Spring Nuts & Bolts (includes lunch)

*Please submit your PO Number in the Google Form so it can be included on your Invoice.

Criteria

- **Publications Contest:** Entries including e-newsletters will be judged on excellence of graphic layout and design, writing and content (exceptions: entries for Excellence in Writing and Branding/Identity/Image Categories).
- **Electronic Media Contest:** Entries will be judged on professional quality. Programs for radio and television must be of broadcast quality to communicate effectively. Sound should be emphasized for radio, and color and motion for TV. Criteria for website judging are listed above.

Rules

- Publications compete only against others in the same category.
- Submit as many entries in as many categories as you wish. TV productions can be submitted electronically and radio entries must be submitted electronically.
- Newsletter entries must include three different issues within the contest time-period to qualify as an entry.



- Brand/Identity/Image packages must include three or more separate printed pieces to qualify as an entry.
- Student written and/or produced publications and audio/visual media are not eligible.
- Enter only materials produced since May 2019.
- Do not send oversized or three-dimensional objects (Shirts, cups, etc.) Photos of objects are sufficient.
- Do not enter single items in two different categories (exception: Excellence in Writing entries).
- All documents, publications or other items submitted become the property of MSPRA and may be reproduced or displayed in an MSPRA publication or other resource. Entries may not be returned.
- Submission of an entry shall constitute entrant's representation that all material is original and/or free from unauthorized use of copy, design, art and/or photographs from other sources.
- Fee is \$15 for each individual entry for MSPRA members and \$25 each for non-members. Do not send more than one publication for each \$15 or \$25 paid (exceptions: newsletters, print & electronic, up to three related printed pieces for marketing campaigns and series of related articles for Excellence in Writing entries); do not submit more than the \$15 or \$25 payment for entries requiring multiple pieces. Pay online or send one check, purchase order or money order payable to MSPRA to cover all entries. Please make copies of all entry forms for your records.
- Complete electronic submissions at <https://forms.gle/DE4yKt7GgmR6RhMU8>
- Do not send summary sheet for publication contest unless it is specifically requested.
- Winners will be announced at the MSPRA Awards of Excellence Luncheon in September

Award Categories:

- **Annual Report** – Published once a year to summarize activities.
- **Audio/Podcast** – Single program or series, not to exceed 30 minutes per program. For a series, select the best 30 minutes of all programs for your entry and submit electronically or ONE CD ONLY. May be message board info, promotional announcements, public service announcements; judged for professional quality, sound, content. Each entry limited to one program or series. Submit electronically or provide URL for Internet access.
- **Brand/Identity/Image Package** – A unit of items that may include logo, marketing statement, etc., that brands a district, school, agency or organization. Judged for creativity, consistency, unity, graphic design, clarity and overall image. Submissions must include 3 or more pieces to qualify as a package.
- **Calendar** – Containing general information and specific dates for school and community activities; issued to parents, students & others.
- **Coordinated School Health** – Print, online, audio/visual materials created for the purpose of marketing coordinated school health initiatives. Send one publication electronically per entry (exception: up to three related pieces may be sent for a marketing campaign).



- **NEW CATEGORY! COVID-19 Communication**- Any unit of items that supported your response to school closures from March 2020-March 2021. These may include but are not limited to announcements, webpages, media coverage, print/online materials, videos.
- **Excellence in Photography** – Photos published in print or online, to be judged on clarity, composition and overall quality. Do not send entire publications, just the relevant photo.
- **Excellence in Writing** – Articles from newsletters, newspaper op. ed. pieces, editorials or speeches, 500 to 5,000 words in length. Entries are judged for writing only; graphics are not a factor. Please do not send entire publications, just the relevant article in electronic format.
- **Finance Publication & Presentation** – Developed to communicate and create understanding about how schools are funded, taxes, school and district uses of revenue, etc.
- **Handbook** – Containing general information about the policies and regulations, issued for students, teachers or parents.
- **Marketing Material (Electronic & Print)** – Materials to communicate a school or district’s special qualities that make it appealing; materials that make a school the “school of choice” in a community; and staff recruitment materials. Send only one publication or video link per entry (exception: up to three related print pieces may be sent for marketing campaign).
- **Newsletter (Electronic and Print)** – External or internal, published periodically. Three different issues must be provided. Provide URL or pdf for print submission.
- **Social Media Campaign** – Social media campaigns differ from everyday social media. A campaign has specific goals or desired outcomes and is often measurable. Include examples of one particular social media campaign.
- **Social Media** – Communication efforts or campaigns using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or other social media outlets. Include a one-page explanation of how and why the social media is being used and the outcomes achieved. Include print copies of three relevant postings and provide URL for Internet access.
- **Special Purpose Publication** – External or internal booklets, brochures, posters, PowerPoint Presentations, and material not included in other categories.
- **Video (In-House)** – Programs designed for websites, video newscasts, PSAs, special events, mobile apps, etc.; judged for professional quality, sound, color, motion, content. Include a one-page explanation of the video’s purpose, where and when it is being used, the target audience, how it is supporting effective communication, outcomes achieved and the URL or download link for Internet access.
- **Video (Outside Contractor)** – Programs designed for websites, video newscasts, PSAs, special events, mobile apps, etc.; judged for professional quality, sound, color, motion, content. Include a one-page explanation of the video’s purpose, where and when it is being used, the target audience, how it is supporting effective communication, outcomes achieved and the URL or download link for Internet access.
- **Website** – Entries are judged on clarity, appropriateness of content and graphic design. Please include the Internet address of the website.



Gold Medallion Award:

MSPRA's Gold Medallion Award is the top competition in Mississippi recognizing superior educational public relations programs. Entries may come from public and private schools; vocational-technical schools up to 12th grade; two-year community colleges; state/national educational groups; and any public relations agency or private business serving such schools and colleges.

A Gold Medallion will be given for each winning entry selected by the competition judges. Judges may award more than one Gold Medallion in a category. Winners will be recognized and presented with their Gold Medallions at the MSPRA Awards of Excellence Banquet on September 24 at the Fairview Inn in Jackson, MS.

Guidelines

Presentation must be submitted electronically or in a binder (see details under "rules"), and organized in a logical order of Assessment, Planning, Communication and Evaluation. Total entry is limited to no more than 26 pages plus a cover page with entry form information. Entries must include a brief Synopsis of the program/project/campaign that provides a clear, concise overview (between 250 and 300 words) and a "Program/Project/Campaign Summary," not to exceed 6 pages. Fee: \$15 per member, \$25 for non-member. **Fee:** \$15 per member, \$25 for non-member.

- **Read the rules carefully.** If you fail to follow the rules, judges will subtract points in judging your entry.
 - **Your entry will be judged** on clarity of concept, good writing, and evidence of objective evaluation of your project/program. Judges are experienced public relations professionals.
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Rules

- The 2019 competition is open to any program under way or completed between May 2019 and June 2021. Compile all application materials into a single document (PDF or Microsoft Word) and submit at <https://forms.gle/5pZtPTUaoH2ERhKR6>
- Previous winning entries cannot be re-entered.
- The first two pages of the project should be entitled Project Summary and are the most critical in the entry. Organize your summary around the areas that the judges will evaluate on a point scale. These are:
 - Assessment: Evidence of need or problem must be described. Project goals must be stated and measurable.
 - Planning: Identified target audiences, involvement of others in the planning, variety of communication channels considered and utilized.
 - Execution/Communication: Timeline, implementation strategies & effective communication techniques.



- Evaluation: Evidence that your program reached stated goals, as well as needed changes, if any, to be made if repeating the project.

Communicator of the Year

MSPRA's Communicator of the Year Award is the top competition in Mississippi recognizing an outstanding professional in the field of school public relations. Applicants may come from public and private schools; vocational-technical schools up to the 12th grade; two-year community colleges; state/national education groups; and any public relations agency or private business serving such schools and colleges.

Guidelines

- **Presentation must be submitted electronically at <https://forms.gle/crgp1iFpwxMpFu4v9>**
- **Read the rules carefully.** If you fail to follow the rules, judges will subtract points in judging your entry.
- **Your entry will be judged** on the overall quality of work, recommendations and answers to essay questions. Judges are experienced public relations professionals.

Rules

- The 2019-2021 Communicator of the Year award will be given based on work done between May 2019 and June 2021.
- Your entry must be submitted electronically.
- The materials of the entry should include some or all of the following:
 - Communications projects or program he/she has managed to solve a problem or supported the goals of the organization
 - Examples of his/her work
 - Professional development/involvement in MSPRA and other professional organizations
 - Two letters of reference
 - Applicant's (or applicant's district's) worst day in public relations and how they weathered the storm
 - Why/how school districts with good PR have a distinct advantage
 - The most significant contribution the applicant has made in his/her district
 - Carefully select materials in your presentation, using materials that illustrate major components of the entry: news releases, brochures, clippings, etc. Do not include 3-dimensional objects. Photos will be sufficient.

Communicator of the Year Guidelines

To be eligible for receipt of the Communicator of the Year Award, you must:



- Be a member of a communications staff (or designate responsibilities for communications initiatives;
 - Be a member of MSPRA;
 - Be the recipient of any level award in a MSPRA annual communications contest;
 - Demonstrate outstanding work in the field of school communications;
 - Demonstrate a willingness to grow professionally; and
 - Demonstrate a dedication to school public relations issues.
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