

SBE Final Report

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Project Approach/Methodology

The report presents the results of a communications audit of the Washington State Board of Education's (SBE) communications strategies and tactics. CFM Strategic Communications, Inc., headquartered in Portland, Oregon, conducted the audit and prepared this report.

The primary objectives of the audit were to:

- Identify and assess SBE's current communications tools;
- Identify SBE's target audiences;
- Identify information sources used by SBE's target audiences to get information about the organization;
- Identify ways to improve SBE's external communications efforts;
- Identify alternative communications tools and assess potential effectiveness for SBE's use; and,
- Recommend changes to current communications strategies and tactics.

To meet the project's objectives:

- CFM reviewed and assessed:
 - SBE's communication plan;
 - SBE's primary website: www.sbe.wa.gov;
 - Google Analytics for the SBE website;
 - SBE's news releases from the past year;
 - Examples of SBE email newsletters;
 - 25 news articles about SBE;
 - Documents created by SBE;
 - SBE Blog;
 - SBE social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.
- CFM conducted qualitative and quantitative research including:
 - 15 one-on-one telephone interviews with individuals from stakeholder groups recommended by SBE staff, including ESD and local school district superintendents, elected officials and legislative staff, the media, representatives from other education groups and members of the board; and,
 - An online survey among 306 people, including SBE board members, ESD and local school district superintendents, elected officials and legislative staff, the media, representatives from other education groups and interested citizens.
- CFM interviewed:
 - Timothy Grisham, a communications consultant from Washington State Board of Health and Julie White, director of communications for the California State Board of Education, to assess best practices.



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- CFM conducted:
 - One in-person meeting and participated in weekly conference calls with Executive Director Ben Rarick and Communications Manager Sarah Lane. During these calls and meeting, CFM extensively interviewed Mr. Rarick and Ms. Lane about their communications efforts.

CFM Vice President Tom Eiland and CFM Digital Strategist Hannah Smith conducted the audit, reviews and assessments from March 12 to May 23, 2014.

Summary of Recommendations

- Create communications objectives that are clear, concise and measurable.
- Identify key target audiences.
- Prepare a communications plan that includes a specific goal, objectives, strategies and tactics.
- Create metrics and use measurement tools to assess the effectiveness of the communications plan and specific tactics.
- Increase use of the most effective communications tools identified in the research.
- Reduce or discontinue use of communications tools that are less effective.
- Target specific audiences with relevant content.
- Reduce articles to short summaries with links to more information in email newsletters.
- Involve Board members in external communications efforts, especially the Board President.
- Identify and build relationships with media contacts most likely to write in-depth stories about SBE efforts and policies. When possible, include local angles in media pitches.
- Create more opportunities for formal and informal meetings with SBE staff, SBE Board and key stakeholders.



Research

Previous Research

SBE had conducted no known research prior to the communications audit.

Audit-Related Research

CFM conducted qualitative and quantitative research to assess SBE’s communication efforts and evaluate preferred methods of communication among key stakeholders.

Qualitative

Executive Interviews

Methodology

CFM conducted one-on-one telephone interviews with 15 key stakeholders between April 2 to 17, 2014. Stakeholder groups included ESD and local school district superintendents, elected officials and legislative staff, the media, representatives from other education groups and members of the board. Confidentiality was assured to all participants.

Key Findings

1. State Board of Education communication and engagement with key stakeholder groups has improved.
2. New staff leadership receives the credit for improvements.
3. Stakeholders use a variety of traditional and digital communication sources to get information about the Board of Education.
4. Personal interaction and engagement, ListServ emails, e-newsletters, the website and Twitter are the most effective communication tools, but effectiveness varies by group.

Recommendations

1. Identify and promote the Board’s media and public information contact(s).
2. Identify content experts to explain specific issues.
3. Make Board members, especially the President, available for informal discussions and input.
4. When citing examples and case studies to support policy change, include districts from the Westside and Eastside of the state.
5. All groups are overwhelmed with information. Create summaries or FAQs for issues, with links to additional detail.

Recommendations from specific groups included:

1. **The media:** Be proactive. Periodically call reporters to share insights and background. Include a local angle for each story, if possible. Send meeting notices at least one week in advance. Contact local media if the Board is meeting nearby.

- 2. Educators:** Increase outreach and engagement efforts to practitioners. Create opportunities for dialogue to help frame policy. Visit schools and classrooms to gain perspective.
- 3. Olympia insiders:** Increase formal and informal personal engagement. Create staff-to-staff relationships.
- 4. Legislature:** More Board involvement with committees and presentations.

Quantitative Online Survey

Methodology

An online survey was conducted among people currently receiving information via email in May 2014. Three email invitations were sent to individuals who receive State Board of Education emails, and 306 key stakeholders participated. At least one person participated from every county, except Pacific County.

Key Findings

1. The most popular sources of information were email newsletters, ListServ emails, the SBE website and the Board's meeting highlights.
2. Stakeholders are experiencing information overload. They complain they are inundated with emails. They are more likely to read emails and articles that quickly highlight topics and provide links to additional information.
3. SBE's blog and Twitter feed were used infrequently, but have strategic and tactical advantages. The blogs can be used for reputation management and positioning, but awareness of the blog is low. Twitter is an effective way to communicate with the media and Olympia insiders, but not other groups.
4. Awareness of SBE Board meetings outside of Olympia is low.

Recommendations

- 1. Use email newsletters as the primary communication tool.**
- 2. Improve email newsletter format.** Provide short summaries for each article with hyperlinks for the full article. Identify topics and issues in email and newsletter subject lines. Send shorter, more frequent email newsletters, targeting content to specific audiences.
- 3. Create website FAQs that summarize policies under consideration.** According to the research, respondents would like SBE to provide pertinent information on the SBE website using an FAQ or similar format for policies under consideration or newly adopted. While SBE already has FAQ sections for many policies, most respondents were not aware of this feature. SBE should better publicize its FAQ sections.

- 4. Announce board meetings and agendas at least one week in advance.** Stakeholders have busy schedules. Advance notice will allow more of them to attend meetings. Some respondents were frustrated by agendas that changed last-minute. SBE should try to avoid this whenever possible.
- 5. Create opportunities for informal meetings, especially with agency and legislative staff and other education groups.**
- 6. Encourage Board members, especially the President, to take on more communication responsibilities with education leaders.**

Peer Analysis

Methodology

At the request of SBE staff, CFM interviewed two communications staff members from two other agencies to assess best practices. These included Timothy Grisham from the Washington State Board of Health and Julie White, the Director of Communications for the California State Board of Education. The transcripts for these interviews are included in the Appendix of this report.

Findings

Timothy Grisham, Washington State Board of Health, says his agency is decreasing use of Facebook because of declining amounts of engagement through this social media platform. According to Mr. Grisham: "Facebook isn't very useful anymore. They changed the algorithm so the reach is very small. You have to have one so people can contact you, but for external communication, it's less useful. This is a recent change as of early last winter." CFM has had similar problems with other clients.

Julie White, director of communications for the California State Board of Education, said her organization is in transition and she is new to her position. The organization is focusing on its website and building relationships with the media.

Recommendation

1. SBE should consider building a relationship with Ms. White and Mr. Grisham to share best practices.

Communications Plan Review

Methodology

CFM reviewed the SBE communications plan for context and background.

Findings

CFM found the communication plan is extensive and highly detailed, including six sections and four issues-specific plans. The plan states its purpose is to help SBE communicate more effectively and proactively with the board, media, legislature, stakeholder groups and citizens. Issues-specific sections of the plan have more specific audiences. Each section includes several action items and materials. SBE is producing a large amount of content for an agency its size. The plan does not have the structure of a traditional communications plan, which includes a goal, strategies, objectives and tactics.

CFM observed the following issues with the plan:

1. The current objectives are static and do not include a measurement piece. Not all of the objectives are really objectives.
2. Since objectives are not measurable, the action items and materials are not designed to achieve the objectives.
3. None of the four smaller sub-plans have a measurement piece.
4. Digital communications is currently listed as its own section with a separate objective.
5. The plan does not have a clear direction.
6. Target audiences are too broad.

Recommendations

1. **Develop a concise goal for the communications plan.** SBE needs to develop a singular goal that encompasses what the organization is trying to achieve. CFM suggests reducing the five-part vision statement to simple statement such as “SBE will be recognized as the leader in career and college readiness reform in Washington.”
2. **Improve and clarify objectives.** Objectives must be measurable and should include a specific benchmark of improvement.
3. **Add strategies to each section.** Strategies are the approaches that will be taken to achieve the goal. These should generally describe how the tactics will be designed to achieve the objectives and reach target audiences.

4. **Identify specific target audiences in the plan.** The public is too general of an audience for SBE to target. SBE should avoid using the public as a stand-in for its specific target audiences. CFM worked with SBE to establish its five key audiences, which include ESDs/Superintendents, the Washington Legislature, the media, Board Members and other Washington educational agencies. SBE should revise its communications plan to focus on targeting these audiences.
5. **Remove vision statements for each section.** Vision statements should be part of the objectives, not a separate statement.
6. **Combine “action items” and materials into one section called tactics.** Rather than action items and materials, SBE should use the term “tactics.” Materials and action items should not be separate.
7. **Design tactics to achieve objectives.** Every tactic listed in the plan should be directly related to achieving the objective as part of a strategy. Clear, measurable objectives will help measure what tactics are and are not working.
8. **Reduce the number of action items and materials.** SBE has too many action items. The organization needs to refine this to the materials that will best move the needle toward achieving the objectives. These two sections should not be separate. Action items and materials are both types of tactics.
9. **Use digital communications as tactics not strategies.** Digital communications tools should not be separate from traditional tools.

Online Communications Audit

SBE Website and Google Analytics

Methodology

CFM reviewed the SBE website and Google analytics.

Findings

The SBE website is one of the more popular sources of information for SBE's target audiences. It functions well as the centerpiece of SBE's communications. It is intuitive, information is easy to find and visually appealing. Ms. Lane has made several improvements to the website.

Using Google analytics, CFM observed there was not a spike surrounding the April 10 email newsletter. Typically, an email newsletter will demonstrate a strong spike in traffic. The email newsletter's current format is not encouraging increased traffic to the website.

Each visitor spends an average of 2:34 minutes on the site, which is high considering more than half of visitors "bounce" or leave after visiting the homepage. This high average time means the remaining visitors who do not leave the site spend quite a bit of time on the site, with an average of 2:12 minutes spent on each page. The SBE website maintains visitors' attention.

After the homepage, two of the most frequently visited pages are Graduation Requirements and Meeting Materials. Both pages are displayed on the homepage rotating visually, suggesting the visual is an effective tool for encouraging website visitors to visit specific pages.

Recommendations

- 1. Add specific sections for key audiences.** SBE already has a news section on the website for the media, but the organization should create two custom sections: One for ESD and local school district superintendents, and the other for elected officials and legislative staff. Create easy-to-find links to these sections from the website homepage. In each section, include links to the most relevant information for each group, including videos. Include an announcement section for upcoming events.
- 2. Integrate the blog into the website.** Currently the SBE blog is hosted on a separate platform. When SBE updates its website, the new website should have a blog that is integrated into the full website. Integrating the blog will allow SBE to add short teasers to its homepage and encourage traffic to the blog.
- 3. Use the newsletter to encourage traffic to the SBE website.** The SBE newsletter is not currently driving traffic to the website. SBE should look for ways to utilize its newsletter to drive traffic to its website, such as adding links and teasers.

- 4. Better publicize the FAQ sections.** Survey respondents requested SBE add FAQs to its website, even though the organization already has several FAQs. SBE should look for ways to better publicize the FAQs, including linking in the email newsletter.

Email Newsletters

Methodology

CFM reviewed copies of the email newsletters from 2013 and 2014, including analytics for the email newsletter sent April 10, 2014. CFM and SBE officials reviewed options for email newsletter services

Findings

SBE sends two types of email newsletters, via ListServ and Constant Contact. ListServ emails are more frequent and have a lower cost than Constant Contact emails. However, ListServ emails do not offer design or tracking features. The state may stop providing the ListServ service to SBE in the future.

The Constant Contact email list includes approximately 4,600 subscribers. Constant Contact e-newsletters are visually appealing, including color and photos. SBE email newsletters are the equivalent of three to four printed pages. SBE sends these newsletters infrequently due to the high cost. The service provides some metrics tracking open and click-through rates. A total of 15 percent of the emails used for the April newsletter bounced.

According to the research, email newsletters and ListServ emails were the two most popular and informative ways SBE's target audiences received information about the organization. More than half of respondents said they would like SBE to summarize articles with hyperlinks. More than a fourth of respondents said they would like SBE to identify topics in the email subject line.

Recommendations

- 1. Use MailChimp instead of Constant Contact and the ListServ.** Constant Contact's high cost is limiting how often the organization can send email newsletters. MailChimp is less expensive than Constant Contact and includes many superior features.

The main advantages of MailChimp include:

- Unlimited email blasts, allowing email blasts to be shorter and more frequent.
- Manages multiple email lists,
- List tools to customize content for specific audiences and receive analytics about each audience.
- Automatically removes bounced emails, reducing the high bounce rate.
- Users select what topics they are interested in.

- User-friendly email design software
 - Compatible with mobile and tablet devices.
 - Click map will show which links garnered the most clicks.
2. **Send shorter, topic-specific newsletters with relevant subject lines and email teasers.**
 3. **For articles, use interesting headlines and short summaries with links.** Readers can quickly scan headlines and choose which article is relevant to them.
 4. **Create an email newsletter specifically for superintendents and ESDs.** A targeted newsletter with tailored content will better meet the needs and preferences of this key group.

SBE Blog

Methodology

CFM included questions about the blogs in the research. CFM reviewed examples of blog posts.

Findings

Awareness and readership of the SBE blog is low. It is promoted poorly. Those who have read the blog find posts interesting. The blog is mentioned and hyperlinked generally in the email newsletter, but specific posts are not. The blog is linked on the main menu of SBE website, but it is hosted on a separate platform and not integrated into the website.

Recommendations

1. **Continue to use the blog for thought leadership.**
2. **Promote blogs by providing links to specific blog posts in the email newsletters to increase awareness and engagement.**
3. **Post links to relevant blog posts on the audience-specific sections of the SBE website.**
4. **Allow advocates to write blog posts for SBE to increase engagement with target audiences.** When SBE introduces a new policy change, ask a supporter at the local level to write a blog post. The guest blogger can talk about the challenges associated with the policy change, as well as the reasons for the change. Target audiences will appreciate hearing about an issue from their peer's perspective.
5. **Use survey and other feedback tools to identify key topics that will make the blog more engaging and relevant.**

Social Media

Methodology

CFM reviewed SBE's social media presence, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, analyzing analytics and engagement statistics. Stakeholder research included questions about SBE social media. CFM reviewed five specific videos from its YouTube channel per SBE's request to provide specific feedback.

Findings

SBE has 785 likes on Facebook, 1,704 Twitter followers and 9,579 views on its YouTube channel on May 12, 2014.

Facebook

The SBE Facebook page is complete, including custom tabs and regular posts. The organization provides a mix of content, including website links, photos, events and videos. However, engagement and use is not significant. The majority of posts receive only a few likes and a comment. This low level of engagement is most likely related to the changes to the Facebook algorithm.

In an effort to monetize its use, Facebook has changed its algorithm, exposing Facebook users to only a small percentage of posts from their friends and the pages they like. This algorithm provides the "opportunity" for organizations and businesses to pay for their posts to be shown to a higher percentage of their fans.

Many organizations have reduced use of Facebook because they find they no longer receive a high level of engagement. According to the research, only 1 percent of respondents receive information from the SBE Facebook page.

The research found almost no one (1 percent) uses the SBE Facebook page, and it was ranked as the least informative communication tool.

Twitter

SBE has significantly more Twitter followers than Facebook fans. The organization has seen a steady growth in its Twitter base during the past year, with a significant gain of Twitter followers each month. SBE saw a major increase in followers and engagement during the Washington legislative session. SBE tweeted primarily about the session and employed use of hashtags to aid those following key issues. SBE Twitter engagement declined after the session.

SBE has used Twitter to engage reporters. Reporters monitor Twitter for story leads, but it is less helpful to reach other audiences.

YouTube

SBE has 59 videos on its YouTube channel. The number of views for each video varies, with some having very few views and some videos with a few hundred views. Most recent videos have short descriptions, but SBE does not appear to be using keywords for its video content.

SBE uses YouTube to distribute bi-monthly videos to SBE Board Members. These videos are designed to inform and prepare Board members prior to a board meeting. SBE has received feedback from SBE Board members that these videos are helpful. These videos take about two hours for Ms. Lane to film and edit.

One of SBE's most popular videos is "Revised Washington Achievement Index." Not coincidentally, a link to this video was included in SBE's October 2013 email newsletter.

CFM reviewed a sampling of five videos at SBE's request. We found:

- Overall the video and sound quality were good. Videos with poor sound quality garnered the least number of views.
- Graphics and simple animations help explain complex ideas.
- The anti-bullying presentation video is nearly 15 minutes. The length of this video resulted in the fewest number of views.
- Video descriptions on YouTube are not very detailed and do not include keywords.

Recommendations

- 1. Reduce use of the SBE Facebook page.** While we do not recommend eliminating the tool, SBE should have appropriate expectations for engagement, reducing post frequency. Focus efforts on more effective tools, such as email newsletters and the SBE website.
- 2. Use Twitter for media relations and Olympia insiders.** SBE should use Twitter to reach both reporters and Olympia Insiders, and content should be targeted for these audiences. SBE should continue using hashtags to reach Olympia Insiders.
- 3. Test using a LinkedIn group.** SBE could use a LinkedIn Group to engage a particular professional group around a specific topic, such as superintendents and graduation requirements. Key stakeholders may be more comfortable having professional conversations on LinkedIn than on Facebook.
- 4. Create shorter news-type videos rather than showing full presentations.** Limit videos to less than 150 seconds, similar to a news segment.
- 5. Post PowerPoint presentations on SlideShare instead of making videos.**

5. **Improve video distribution.** Include links in email newsletters. Embed videos on the blog and the SBE website.
6. **Design videos for specific audiences.** SBE should consider producing videos about the important topics for key stakeholders. SBE has had success creating specific videos for its board members. Short videos can quickly brief superintendents or members of the legislature.
7. **Make video descriptions longer and include tags.** SBE should lengthen the descriptions so they include more keywords, and should include tags, making the videos easier to find via search.

Media Audit

Methodology

CFM reviewed 25 newspaper articles about SBE or including references to SBE. SBE staff provided links to the articles. CFM assessed the articles' tone and identified the authors.

Findings

SBE was more likely to be portrayed in a positive way when articles contained substantive issues such as charter schools and anti-bullying. The remaining articles mentioned SBE as part of the process, but contained neither a positive or negative tone.

Only a few reporters write most of the in-depth, education-related articles in Washington State. These include people such as Rafael Guerrero of the Yakima Herald, Donna Gordon Blankinship from the Associated Press and Ty Beaver of the Tri-City Herald. Articles by these reporters are sometimes re-published in other publications across the state. Other reporters cover education episodically. According to the research, reporters want to reach SBE easily but aren't sure who to contact or have trouble contacting Ms. Lane. Reporters want a local angle to stories. All reporters would like increased engagement from SBE directly to get an overview of emerging education issues.

Recommendations

- 1. Identify key issues for thought leadership.** Articles about important substantive issues help support SBE's goal to be recognized as the leader in career and college readiness reform in Washington. SBE should identify its key issues and communicate its position effectively to the media.
- 2. Identify and track key reporters.** By tracking reporters in media coverage, SBE can identify reporters most likely to write in-depth stories about the organization.
- 3. Reach out to key reporters to build relationships.** SBE communications staff should proactively build relationships with reporters. Ms. Lane should occasionally call reporters to provide background about Board efforts and policy. Visit with reporters before or after Board meetings in various parts of the state. Initial contact should not be a pitch.
- 4. Call reporters to check in.** Though busy, reporters like background. Ms. Lane should occasionally call reporters to provide background about Board efforts and policy.
- 5. Give reporters Ms. Lane's contact information.** Include Ms. Lane's complete contact information in all emails and on the website. Provide Ms. Lane a business cell phone and give her cell phone number to key reporters.

Review of Communication Materials

Methodology

CFM reviewed a selection of SBE communications materials, including those used for legislative communications and communications with other organizations.

Findings

Overall, the materials reviewed were well designed, using color, charts and informational graphics. Good visuals help communicate complex ideas.

Recommendations

1. **Create a process for peer review.** Have a few members of the target audience review each communications piece to ensure it communicates complex ideas clearly.

In-person Meetings

Findings

During the past year, SBE has conducted a series of meetings every other month around the state. These meetings correspond with board meetings and were created for those who could not attend the board meetings. Attendees have the opportunity to interact with Ms. Lane and Mr. Rarick. Attendance has been low, but the meetings have created opportunities for engagement. SBE has noticed significant engagement from people who receive notices and notes about the meetings. However, awareness of the meetings is low, based on the online research conducted for this audit. There is a strong desire among Olympia-based stakeholders for more opportunities for informal meetings with SBE staff and the board.

Recommendations

1. **Make promoting out-of-Olympia Board meetings a priority.**
2. **Increase use of informal sessions but build relationships with key stakeholder groups.**
3. **Use videoconferences to supplement for in-person meetings.** A video conferencing tool such as Google hangouts would allow key stakeholders more informal access to SBE staff and Board members.

Appendix

Research Interview Summary

1. Opinions of the Board were generally positive.

- Many perceive the Board is now more active, thoughtful and willing to engage stakeholders.
- Improved communications and engagement efforts have had a positive impact on opinions.
- As a rule, stakeholders who have frequent contact with and access to board members have more favorable opinions.

Comments:

- *Among all the Education groups SBE is most highly regarded.*
- *They are thoughtful and take time in the big decisions to engage stakeholders.*
- *I have respect for the individuals on the Board. The ones I know try to be in touch with realities facing school districts.*
- *There is willingness in the Board to engage in more listening rather than telling.*

2. Not everyone is impressed.

- Some question the need for a State Board of Education. Responsibilities for education policy overlap several agencies and cause confusion.
- Others complain the Board is out of touch with education practitioners.
- Some from all groups have difficulty getting information, including the media.

Comments:

- *SBE is just one more agency to follow and influence.*
- *Their heart and intentions are good, but they don't listen well. They are not responsive to feedback from the field. They have made some decisions in recent years that have been or will be extremely difficult to implement.*
- *It is a board that probably doesn't need to be in existence. The OSPI could probably meet duties and obligations.*
- *When we needed information, it was hard to figure out who to contact. They didn't get back to me in a timely fashion.*

3. Stakeholders use a variety of sources to get information about State Board of Education.

- ListServ emails and press releases are most frequently mentioned.
- Personal contact with Board members and staff is very effective and influential.
- This includes attending Board and ESD meetings and informal conversations with staff and Board members in Olympia and throughout the state.
- Twitter and the Board's website are other key sources.
- Awareness of blogs is low and no one used the Facebook page to get information.

Comments:

- *The email ListServ and Ben will come to our ESD meetings and give updates. The effectiveness of emails and meetings depend on whether the information is relevant.*
- *Call the director or staff. The director may be more accessible. I use their website and follow their Twitter feed.*
- *There are superintendent meetings. Ben is at each of those once during the year. I attend Board meetings if he can't. There is also email, the website and other electronic sources.*
- *They are pretty responsive. I work with several school districts, local colleges and other education groups. They get back to me. They are not evasive. They are forthright.*
- *They are using social media. I follow them on Twitter. They use ListServ and email newsletters. I share these with our board.*
- *I have staff members who attend board meetings. Ben or a Board member attends our meeting as a liaison and shares information. When they attend, they ask for input. We also get agendas, and track activities. We watch their website to keep an eye on them. For the most part, outbound communication is good.*
- *I am on their general distribution ListServ. I get general updates by email. Sometimes Ben calls me.*
- *Staff contact. Ben Rarick and Jack Archer. When there is something pressing they forward it on.*

4. Changes Have Been Noted

- Stakeholders in all groups say communication from and engagement with the Board has improved. Stakeholders attribute improved communication to the hiring of Ben Rarick.
- Ben is well-known and accessible. He meets with stakeholders in Olympia and travels the state to meet with others.
- Jack Archer and Sarah Lane are available, but some media don't know Sarah.
- Some Board members meet with stakeholders in parts of the state but others do not.

The Board's Perspective

1. **Board members** perceive communication from State Board of Education has improved under current staff leadership.

Both board members interviewed agree:

- The Board should strive to achieve leadership in education in Washington State.
- Board members and staff should have an active role in communication.
- Personal relationships and engagement with key stakeholders are essential communication efforts.

However, there is less agreement about objectives and target audiences for the Board's communication.

5. One member wants the Board to lead the “conversation” regarding education in the State. The Board should use its position to advocate for education funding, quality and other issues.

- Communication should be strategic and play a role in supporting that leadership. Getting public support is important.

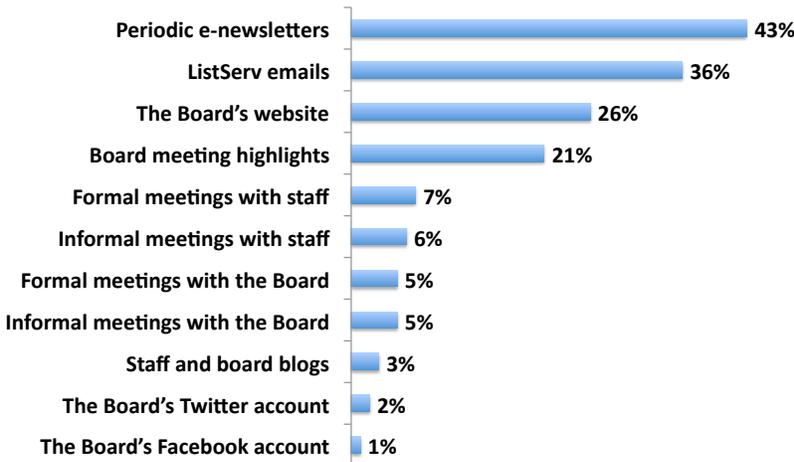
1. One member said awareness of the Board’s efforts is improving with key audiences, such as the legislature.

- Communication efforts should focus on selected key stakeholder groups, such as the legislature, educators and business leaders. Improving relationships and focusing communication on specific topics will improve results.

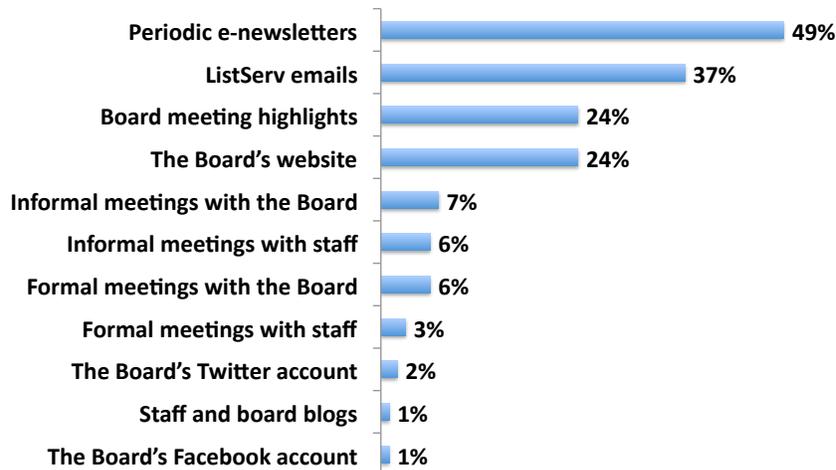
Online Survey Summary

Findings

Sources of Information



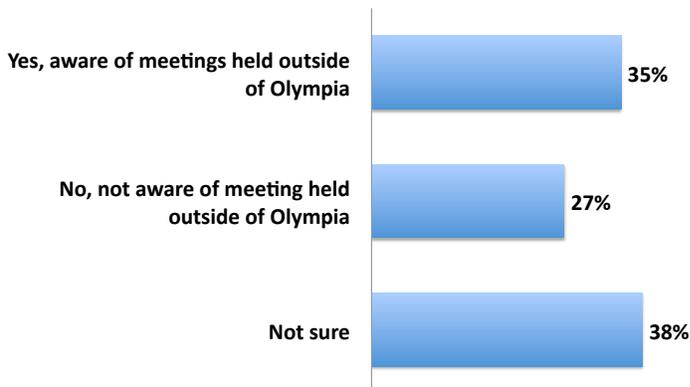
Of these, which do you find more informative? (Multiple Responses accepted.)



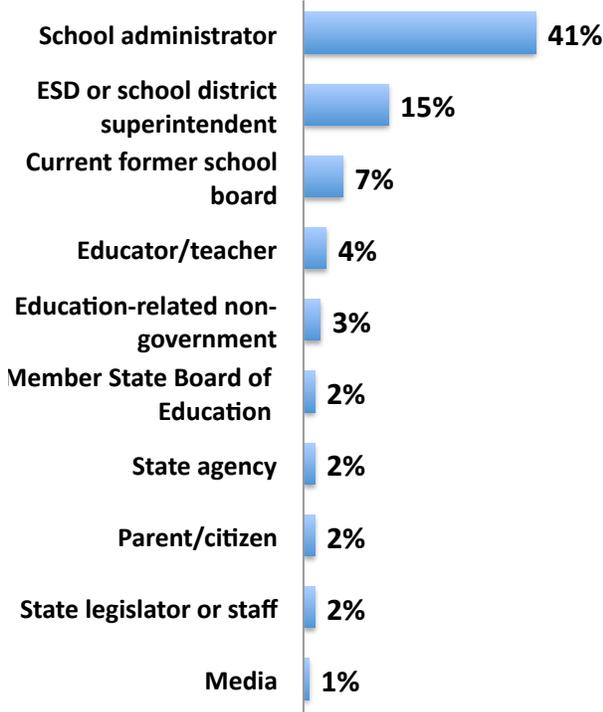
In what ways can the Washington State Board of Education improve communication with you?



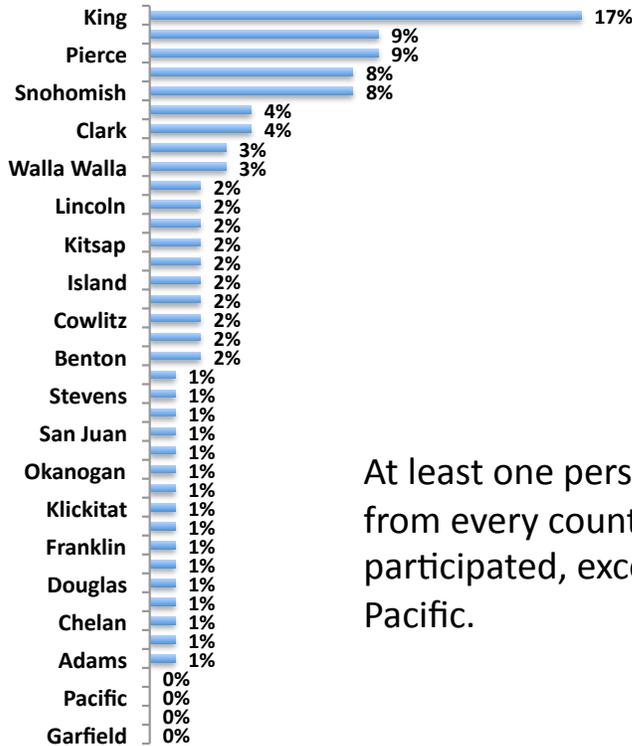
Awareness of Meeting Outside Olympia



Which of the following best describes your position?



In which county is your primary office or workplace located?



At least one person from every county participated, except Pacific.

Key Issues

The SBE communications staff has outlined the following as their key issues in the next few years. CFM felt this was a useful exercise and would be helpful for SBE as the organization is developing its next communications plan. SBE should focus on these issues and targeting their corresponding target audiences.

These issues and the corresponding audiences are:

- School funding
 - Legislature (influence to provide funding)
 - District Superintendents (to perceive SBE as an ally)
 - Voters (to create a climate where funding is maintained)
- Implementation of school and district accountability
 - District Superintendents (to feel helped and supported by SBE)
 - Assessment Directors (to engage current allies and convince those opposed)
 - Legislature
- Implementation of the 24-credit framework
 - Superintendents
 - WASDA (as partners)
 - School Board Associations
 - School Counselors
- Charter Schools
 - Legislature
 - Charter Advocates
 - Media
- Transitioning to an Outcome-Based Funding System (issue still developing, may change)
 - Superintendents
 - School Board Members
 - SBE Board Members

Transcripts from Peer Organization Interviews

Timothy Grisham, State Board of Health

Interview performed via phone on May 8th, 2014

1. Who are your target audiences?

We are a Public health rule-making body. We cover subjects such as water systems, sanitation and things like vaccination. Our target audiences typically are the local and state agencies that would have to enforce the rules, department of health, local board of health, doctors, concerned citizens, city and state officials and the general public.

2. How are your audiences different than the Department of Health?

Department of Health is an enforcement body. They can suspend licenses and close things down. We are a rule-making body. There is no appeals process. We create the rules for other agencies to carry out. The department of health has a lot more interaction with the public that is not policy-based.

3. What tools do you use?

Email list, Twitter, Facebook, opt-in list and a website.

4. What do you find to be more effective for reaching your target audiences?

Opt-in email list, Twitter and press releases. Facebook isn't very useful anymore. They changed the algorithm so the reach is very small. You have to have one so people can contact you, but for external communication it's less useful. This is a recent change as of early last winter.

5. Is part of your communications plan involve some sort of in-person outreach (such as meetings or events)?

Whole purpose is public rule-making meetings.

6. How is that working?

Defined by Robert's rules of order. Every meeting has a public comments session. Most of what we do is to get people to the meeting to participate.

Julie White, California State Board of Education**Interview Conducted via email on May 16, 2014****1. Who are your target audiences?**

Our target audiences are the public and the news media. Equally important, our audience is educators in California's 1000-plus school districts. In the last several years, California has made substantial policy and funding changes in our education system. My post (Director of Communications, State Board of Education) is newly created to help highlight how these policy and funding changes improve our schools.

2. How are your audiences different than other state education agencies?

The state board of education sets education policy in the state. It relies on the department of education to implement the policy.

3. What tools do you use?

As this is a new position, we are establishing new communications protocols and procedures.

4. What do you find to be most effective for reaching your target audiences?

At the moment, one-to-one contact is very important. Journalists are responding favorably to having a contact person at the State Board. Superintendents in the state also know me and are reaching out.

5. What isn't working?

The State Board's web presence is located within the California Department of Education website. We're working on ways to improve our web presence.

6. Does part of your communications plan involve some sort of in-person outreach (such as meetings or events)?

Yes, our State Board of Education staff is small, and my role is a very public one. It is important for the public, news media and educators to be able to connect with me.

7. How are these in-person meetings or events working as communications tools?

California has made some unique policy and funding changes in the last several years and it is critical for educators to help inform their local districts about these changes and to engage parents, students and community members. Teachers and principals are the most trusted messengers in public schools. We want to help empower these educators to explain how we're improving schools.

Media Audit

Title	Author	Date	Source	Type	Subject	City	Tone	Link
OSPI releases new way to measure student success	Peter Clark	12/31/13	Issaquah Press	Newspaper	growth	Issaquah	Neutral	http://is.gd/wpq9o1
Port Townsend woman to head up state Board of Education	Unknown	12/24/13	Peninsula Daily News	Newspaper	member	Port Angeles	Positive	http://is.gd/Vk08Y7
Two Tri-City residents named to Board of Education	Ty Beaver	12/20/13	Tri-City Herald	Newspaper	member	Tri-Cities	Positive	http://is.gd/SsZ9ZT
No further action in Kennewick High band case	Tri-City Herald Staff	12/12/13	Tri-City Herald	Newspaper	bullying	Tri-Cities	Neutral	http://is.gd/nmoB0v
No further action in Kennewick High band case	Unknown	12/12/13	Tacoma News Tribune	Newspaper	bullying	Tacoma	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link
No further action in Kennewick High band case	Unknown	12/12/13	Bellingham Herald	Newspaper	bullying	Bellingham	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link
Washington Charter Opponents Turn to Lawsuit	Mary C. Tillotson	12/3/13	Heartlander Magazine	Online Magazine	charters	Chicago, IL	Negative	http://is.gd/Bvws10
Scott Walker Has 'Nothing to Do With' Native American Mascot Fight	David Freedlander	11/29/13	The Daily Beast	Blog	mascot	New York, NY	Neutral	http://is.gd/aWc8Yi
Washington State Board of Education unanimously voted to adopt an anti-bullying resolution	Unknown	11/17/13	Enumclaw Courier Herald	Newspaper	bullying	Enumclaw	Positive	http://is.gd/z0jqWH
State education board adopts anti-bullying policy	The Columbian	11/16/13	Columbian	Newspaper	bullying	Vancouver	Positive	http://is.gd/amQLGW
Anti-bullying resolution to be considered	The Columbian	11/14/13	Columbian	Newspaper	bullying, meeting	Vancouver	Neutral	http://is.gd/OANsmr
Native American Mascots: Respectful or Offensive?	Unknown	11/13/13	Seattle Times	Newspaper	mascot	Seattle	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link
Kennewick marching band behavior called unseemly	Associated Press	11/3/13	Spokesman -Review	Newspaper	bullying	Spokane	Neutral	http://is.gd/JuS9pp
Sexual harassment alleged at Yakima band festival	Unknown	11/3/13	Yakima Herald	Newspaper	bullying	Yakima	Neutral	http://is.gd/uxFVuH
Letter says Wash. Marching band was inappropriate	Unknown	11/3/13	KING 5	TV	bullying	Seattle	Neutral	http://is.gd/dlmff7

Title	Author	Date	Source	Type	Subject	City	Tone	Link
Complaint from parents at Oregon high school says Wash. Marching band acted inappropriately	Unknown	11/2/13	The Republic	Blog	bullying	Columbus, IN	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link
Letter says Wash. Marching band was inappropriate	Unknown	11/2/13	San Francisco Chronicle	Newspaper	bullying	San Francisco, CA	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link
Complaints filed about sexual harassment by Kennewick High band students	Ty Beaver	11/1/13	Tri-City Herald	Newspaper	bullying	Tri-Cities	Neutral	http://is.gd/nc4iqq
Complaints filed about sexual harassment by Kennewick High band students	Unknown	11/1/13	Tacoma News Tribune	Newspaper	bullying	Tacoma	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link
Two Kirkland schools named 2013 Schools of Distinction	Unknown	10/28/13	Kirkland Reporter	Newspaper	awards	Kirkland	Positive	http://is.gd/FBed6Q
Port Townsend to end offensive name, as NFL keeps it alive	Chris Daniels	10/17/13	KING 5	TV	mascot	Seattle	Neutral	http://is.gd/Anx8PP
14-year-old who fought cancer 3 times takes on bullying	Meg Coyle	10/15/13	KING 5	TV	bullying	Seattle	Neutral	http://is.gd/WUMjsS
School Boards Demystified	Ursula Ghirardo (Guest Opinion)	10/14/13	The Arlington Times	Newspaper	school boards	Arlington	Neutral	http://is.gd/NYASBj
Teen cancer survivor fights bullying with state policy petition	Greg Allmain	10/11/13	Federal Way Mirror	Newspaper	bullying	Federal Way	Neutral	http://is.gd/69snY5
Official: W.V. keeping charter school options open	Rafael Guerrero	10/3/13	Yakima Herald	Newspaper	charters	Yakima	Neutral	http://is.gd/v1Sgm7
3 Washington school districts interested in authorizing charters	Associated Press	10/2/13	KING 5	TV	charters	Seattle	Neutral	http://is.gd/fEPnV4
School districts file charter notices of intent	Theresa De Lay	10/2/13	Bonney Lake Courier Herald	Newspaper	charters	Enumclaw	Positive	http://is.gd/9RaUDA
West Valley among 3 districts interested in authorizing charter schools	Associated Press	10/1/13	KIMA	TV	charters	Yakima	Positive	http://is.gd/fqZvFb
3 WA school districts say they plan to apply to be charter school authorizers	Unknown	10/1/13	The Republic	Blog	charters	Columbus, IN	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link
Open Mike focuses on charter schools	Unknown	10/1/13	Connecticut Post	Newspaper	charters	Bridgeport, CT	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link

Title	Author	Date	Source	Type	Subject	City	Tone	Link
3 WA districts interested in authorizing charters	Unknown	10/1/13	Albany Times Union	Newspaper	charters	Albany, NY	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link
Educators aim to bring area charter schools	Debbie Cafazzo	9/30/13	Tacoma News Tribune	Newspaper	charters	Tacoma	Positive	http://is.gd/bj3A5S
Aspiring charter schools hoping to measure up	Rafael Guerrero	9/27/13	Yakima Herald	Newspaper	charters	Yakima	Positive	http://is.gd/Z85T5x
Panel invites charter school applications	Donna Gordon Blankinship Associated Press	9/24/13	Spokesman -Review	Newspaper	charters	Spokane	Neutral	http://is.gd/Xbzp0t
Washington taking applications for charter schools	Donna Gordon Blankinship The Associated Press	9/23/13	Yakima Herald	Newspaper	charters	Yakima	Neutral	http://is.gd/0qeslv
Washington taking applications for charter schools	Donna Gordon Blankinship, Associated Press	9/23/13	Columbian	Newspaper	charters	Vancouver	Neutral	http://is.gd/3elWwo
State Taking Applications for Charter Schools	Associated Press	9/23/13	KPLU	Radio	charters	Seattle	Neutral	http://is.gd/gR6TOV
Washington taking applications for charter schools	Unknown	9/23/13	The Daily News	Newspaper	charters	Longview	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link
Washington Charter School Commission opens application process for new schools	Unknown	9/23/13	Daily Journal	Blog	charters	Franklin, IN	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link
Tacoma shows new interest in charter schools	Unknown	9/22/13	Tacoma News Tribune	Newspaper	charters	Tacoma	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link
Spokane Becomes First Charter School Authorizer in Washington	Julia Lawrence	9/15/13	Education News	Blog	charters		Neutral	http://is.gd/pH5ENY
State board empowers Spokane district to OK charter schools	Rafael Guerrero	9/12/13	Yakima Herald	Newspaper	charters	Yakima	Positive	http://is.gd/DPww43
District 81 authorized by state to approve charter schools	KXLY Web Staff	9/12/13	KXLY	TV	charters	Spokane	Positive	http://is.gd/fgZ5lt
Charter schools one step closer in Spokane	Associated Press, Shawn Chitnis, & KREM.com	9/12/13	KREM	TV	charters	Spokane	Positive	http://is.gd/1BS1T2
First Washington District Chosen to Authorize Charters	Katie Ash	9/12/13	Education Week	Blog	charters	Bethesda, MD	Positive	http://is.gd/fVPVnc
Spokane to have first charter school	Jody Lawrence-Turner	9/12/13	Spokesman -Review	Newspaper	charters	Spokane	Positive	http://is.gd/qNN6Ax

Title	Author	Date	Source	Type	Subject	City	Tone	Link
Yakima County school districts to explore options of charter schools	Ada Chong	9/11/13	KIMA	TV	charters	Yakima	Neutral	http://is.gd/oXcvHi
Board of Education In Yakima To Discuss Charter Schools	Lance Tormey	9/11/13	KIT	Radio	charters	Yakima	Neutral	http://is.gd/r95LUm
Spokane district approved to OK charter schools	Jody Lawrence-Turner	9/11/13	Spokesman-Review	Newspaper	charters	Spokane	Neutral	http://is.gd/DK9Hd1
Wash. Charter school plan kicks offs	Associated Press	9/11/13	KOIN	TV	charters	Portland, OR	Neutral	http://is.gd/VYA3o1
Spokane School District OK'd as Charter Authorizer	Laura Murray	9/11/13	KNDO	TV	charters	Yakima	Positive	http://is.gd/qBCudN
State Board of Education approves Spokane School District as charter school authorizer	Unknown	9/11/13	Daily Journal	Blog	charters	Franklin, IN	Unknown (Dead Link)	Dead Link
Yakima, state education policymaker reflects at end of career	Rafael Guerrero	9/10/13	Yakima Herald	Newspaper	member	Yakima	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/tKszzx
Education board to address charter schools at Yakima session	Rafael Guerrero	9/10/13	Yakima Herald	Newspaper	meeting, charters	Yakima	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/XYZS3C
Charter school weighed for Battle Ground	Susan Parrish	9/10/13	Columbian	Newspaper	charters	Vancouver	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/GTI0je
State's McCleary report skips the hard questions	Unknown	9/5/13	Tacoma News Tribune	Newspaper	funding	Tacoma	Not analyzed	Dead Link
Johnson is a man with a vision	Ken Vance Editor	9/3/13	The Reflector	Newspaper	charters	Battle Ground	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/IVjnOI
Rules for charter schools approved	Jerry Cornfield	8/23/13	Everett Herald	Newspaper	charters	Everett	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/ZJgb3N
Charter school criteria to be decided Thursday	Jerry Cornfield	8/21/13	Everett Herald	Newspaper	charters	Everett	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/I7HMUj
Stillpoint School expands to K-6	Unknown	8/19/13	San Juan Islander	Newspaper	private schools	Friday Harbor	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/qfYSPF
Deadline: Students with life-threatening conditions medications due Aug. 20	Unknown	8/19/13	My Edmonds News	Blog	safety	Edmonds	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/NIUF0r
Charter school opponents may win - for now	Unknown	8/15/13	Everett Herald	Newspaper	charters, index	Everett	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/CIsTHP
2012 Chiawana High grad nominated to federal commission on student financial aid	Ty Beaver	8/11/13	Tri-City Herald	Newspaper	member	Tri-Cities	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/I0uYMO

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Nonfaith-based Richland Montessori school adds elementary grades	Ty Beaver	8/11/13	Tri-City Herald	Newspaper	private schools	Tri-Cities	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/L4hhPT
Bunker Frank's Service	Don Schussler	8/7/13	Yakima Herald	Newspaper	member	Yakima	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/zyZSHD
Two positions are open for state Board of Education	Staff	8/6/13	Issaquah Press	Newspaper	elections	Issaquah	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/2BxJ29
Bad News on Charters and Private Schools	Melissa Westbrook	8/6/13	Seattle Schools Community Forum	Blog	charters, private schools	Seattle	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/qrty5q
Guest Column: Hats off to Longview schools	Commentary by Dana G. Rosenbach	8/4/13	The Daily News	Newspaper	grad requirements, index	Longview	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/INEdQ4
State board needs member versed in Valley school issues	Yakima Herald-Republic editorial board	7/31/13	Yakima Herald	Newspaper	elections	Yakima	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/5JTwy1
2 Board of Education seats up for election	The Tri-City Herald	7/29/13	Tri-City Herald	Newspaper	elections	Tri-Cities	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/Z9g3BW
2 Board of Education seats up for election	Unknown	7/29/13	Bellingham Herald	Newspaper	elections	Bellingham	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/mIPksP (Link didn't work)
2 Board of Education seats up for election	Unknown	7/29/13	Tacoma News Tribune	Newspaper	elections	Tacoma	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/6n8p05 (Link didn't work)
Two spots on state education board to be elected this fall	Rafael Guerrero	7/28/13	Yakima Herald	Newspaper	elections	Yakima	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/XuOArJ
Federal Way school leaders should take responsibility - Letters	Editorial by Austin Cooper, Washington Policy Center Research Assistant	7/26/13	Federal Way Mirror	Newspaper	index	Federal Way	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/OdSYii
Larrabee Elementary closure a motivator for challengers in school board race	Zoe Fraley	7/21/13	Bellingham Herald	Newspaper	index	Bellingham	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/xETo5E
Seattle Schools nearing finalized schedule for next year	Unknown	7/19/13	West Seattle Herald	Newspaper	waivers	Seattle	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/IOIOZi
State denies Seattle schools request to cut days from calendar	Chris Ingalls	7/18/13	KING 5	TV	waivers	Seattle	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/OkqrAl
Common Science Standards Get Thumbs Up From Wash. State Board	Erik Robelen	7/16/13	Education Week	Blog	NGSS	Bethesda, MD	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/iMLQtq



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Title	Author	Date	Source	Type	Subject	City	Tone	Link
Guest: Education reforms for state students blocked by WEA	Liv Finne	7/15/13	Seattle Times	Newspaper	charters	Seattle	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/0q1IRG
Spokane Public Schools step closer to charter schools	Jody Lawrence-Turner	7/10/13	Spokesman-Review	Newspaper	charters	Spokane	Positive	http://is.gd/vrbLU
Last-gasp suit over charters waste of time		7/10/13	Everett Herald	Newspaper	charters	Everett	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/8lXX8B
Money aside, Legislature missed on key schools issue	Unknown	7/7/13	Tacoma News Tribune	Newspaper	grad requirements	Tacoma	Link did not work	http://is.gd/4tBZnd
Editorial: Charter Schools Association an ally in shaping new schools	Seattle Times Editorial Staff	7/6/13	Seattle Times	Newspaper	charters	Seattle	Positive	http://is.gd/Raguy4
Turmoil in Port Townsend over elimination of mascot	Theo Lawson (Seattle Times)	7/6/13	Yakima Herald	Newspaper	mascot	Yakima	Positive	http://is.gd/qYZrOU
Spokane school district only one applying to authorize charters	Reprint of Ann Dornfeld story	7/4/13	Columbian	Newspaper	charters	Vancouver	Neutral	http://is.gd/Km6utV
Coalition suit challenges state charter schools	Unknown	7/4/13	Yakima Herald	Newspaper	charters	Yakima	Not analyzed	http://is.gd/5nPs78
Spokane Only School District Seeking Charter Authorizer Status	Ann Dornfeld	7/3/13	KUOW	Radio	charters	Seattle	Neutral	http://is.gd/ZkLlrr
3 top districts wrestle with charter school conundrum	Donna Gordon Blankinship	7/1/13	Olympian	Newspaper	charters	Olympia	Neutral	http://is.gd/EiOvqa