

Sonoma County Office of Education – Job Description

Classified Management

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Definition:

The Director of Communications focuses on establishing strategic communications efforts that develop and maintain positive relationships with schools and school district's employees, parents and students and government and nonprofit organizations. The Director of Communications ensures that all communications efforts enhance opportunities for youth in the county and further the mission of the Sonoma County Office of Education. This responsibility entails establishing and facilitating effective, state-of-the-art communication channels that are open, vibrant and timely in conveying pertinent, impactful information and messaging about the County Office of Education and public education with all sectors of the communities throughout Sonoma County. These channels include but are not limited to: social media, media relations, website development, electronic and print newsletters and advertising. The Director of Communications manages the Communications Department, including the position of Community Engagement Specialist. The director works closely with the County Office of Education leadership team to ensure that communications efforts support key organizational goals.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

Incumbent provides strong creative, critical thinking, strategic planning, budgeting and management skills along with high-quality, professional-level communications, writing, website development and graphic design expertise for diverse and evolving projects in an independent manner. Uses judgment and initiative in performing duties. Requires the ability to serve in an advisory capacity to others.

Supervision Exercised and Received:

The Director of Communications is responsible to the County Superintendent and works under their direct supervision. Employees in this class receive intermittent supervision within a broad framework of policies and procedures. Supervision is received from the County Superintendent or designee. Employees in this class may direct, supervise and formally evaluate the work of other employees. Employees in this position may also work with and manage contractors and consultants.

Example of Duties and Responsibilities:

Duties and Responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Researches, plans, organizes, directs and coordinates the development of a strategic communications plan to foster a climate of understanding about the County Office of Education's mission, goals and activities.
- Monitors news, educational publications, social media and community input in order to identify challenges and emerging issues faced by the county office. Works with the superintendent and Leadership Team to recognize internal and external marketing and communications opportunities and solutions and define and execute strategies to support them.

- Plans and maintains consistent, open communications between staff, district personnel, parents and students and community partners. Identifies appropriate channels for disseminating relevant information to these stakeholders. Measures effectiveness of communications efforts through ongoing research and makes adjustments as necessary.
- Maintains awareness of and ensures compliance with relevant state and federal laws and regulations, Sonoma County Office of Education Board Policies, Superintendent Policies and Administrative Regulations.
- Works closely with the county superintendent to understand and support their policies and priorities, including: researching legislative and policy issues; drafting commentaries, memos and position papers; and produce articles and presentations on timely topics facing education.
- Supervises, assigns and evaluates the work of the Community Engagement Specialist.
- Develops and administers the annual program budget for the communications department.
- Collaborates with other departments to execute initiatives, including working with information technology on the implementation of the county office website and registration system.
- Coordinates and manages the production of agency publications including newsletters, videos and other multi-media publications, topic-specific publications, research briefs, brochures, fact sheets and other general organizational documents. This includes planning, writing, data research and analysis, designing using desktop publishing tools, taking pictures and video and contracting with vendors as necessary.
- Manages the development and maintenance of the county office website. Coordinates with on-site technical staff and outside consultants as needed.
- Ensures that organization's website and digital documents comply with online accessibility standards. Provides training to the County Office of Education employees and district staff as necessary.
- Edits and provides consultation to other departments in drafting internal and external publications as needed.
- Oversees systems and style guides that ensure organization-wide adherence to the County Office of Education branding and style. Develops, maintains and the County Office of Education Style Guide. Identifies and implements systems that ensure organizational forms and documents are professional and stylistically consistent.
- Works collaboratively with all the County Office of Education internal and with external stakeholders in order to maintain current, clear communications.
- Edits and provides consultation to other departments in drafting internal and external publications as needed.
- May assist departments with writing grants for County Office of Education programs and may advise departments on strategies for successful grant applications such as wording and formatting. May implement or oversee grants.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

Employment Standards:

Knowledge of:

- Effective communications and public relations strategies, including how to research, plan, implement and evaluate an effective public relations campaign.
- Research methods.
- Strategic planning and project management.
- Familiarity with education issues, organizations and operations, including current issues in

education.

- Current techniques for website development, implementation and management.
- Excellent computer skills and experience with graphic design, desktop publishing and web development software.
- Methods, techniques and principles involved in gathering, writing and disseminating information to and for the public or targeted audiences.
- Techniques for planning, editing and designing newsletters, brochures and other mixed-media publications, including preparation of camera-ready artwork that utilizes cost-effective print processes.
- Methods, techniques and principles of graphic design using desktop publishing software.
- Strategies and techniques of successful grant-writing.
- Principles of budget development and preparation.
- Basic office methods, practices and procedures.
- Superior writing and composition skills, including correct English usage, spelling, grammar, punctuation, semantics and syntax.
- Standard office machines and technology interface.
- Safe work practices.

Ability to:

- Read, write, and speak English independently.
- Respond promptly to requests from internal and external clients; provide needed information, assistance, training, materials and resources.
- Be available on nights and weekends as needed to respond to crises and other time-sensitive communications needs.
- Plan, organize and prioritize own work to meet deadlines and accomplish assigned tasks within established timelines, including maintaining accurate records and files.
- Maintain an orderly work environment and perform tasks in prescribed and safe manner.
- Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with those contacted during the performance of job duties and work as a part of a team to deliver high-quality services.
- Maintain and improve professional skills and knowledge.
- Be flexible and receptive to change.
- Understand and apply principles, techniques and procedures required for effective job performance, including “big picture” thinking, attention to detail and attending to all aspects of large and complex projects.
- Direct, supervise, coordinate and formally evaluate the work of others.
- Maintain consistent and effective communication with the County Office of Education clients and convey a positive impression of the County Office and the Superintendent.
- Organize, direct, coordinate and manage a variety of communications projects and programs.
- Work independently in a variety of situations; work on several major projects simultaneously and under pressure to meet deadlines; follow through on tasks with minimal supervision.
- Communicate in a professional manner both orally and in writing; demonstrate excellent writing skills.
- Accurately analyze and interpret information; communicate complex information effectively and appropriately to targeted audiences and/or to the general public.
- Develop written communications for others within careful bounds of stated or implied policy; and
- Work with others in authority and non-authority relationships on a routine basis.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of education and experience that would provide the knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

Education:

- Equivalent to completion of a Bachelors Degree.
- An emphasis in public relations or communications, or accreditation in public relations, is highly desirable.

Experience:

- Five (5) years of experience in a public or private agency (education-related field preferred) working in the area of communications, public relations and/or grant-writing, including writing experience that spans a wide range of communication purposes (i.e., formal letters, concise brochures, website content, newsletter copy, research articles, etc.).
- At least two years of website management experience, including knowledge of html code and content management systems.
- Extensive and varied writing and hands-on graphic design experience utilizing InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, etc.

Physical Abilities:

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.

- Must have normal (20/20) vision, corrected or uncorrected.
- Visual acuity sufficient to work at a computer screen frequently and throughout the day, near and far visual acuity, depth perception, color vision sufficient to recognize people, words and numbers.
- Occasionally standing, bending, and/or stooping.
- Lifting up to twenty (20) pounds on an occasional basis.
- Speaking and hearing ability sufficient to hear over phone and carry on routine conversations.
- See to read manuals, video display screens and other related material.
- Speak clearly.
- Sit for extended periods in a typing position.
- Reaching, pushing/pulling.
- Hand-eye-arm and finger dexterity to use a personal computer keyboard, ten-key and other common office equipment.

Work environment:

- Work is performed in an office environment with minimal exposure to health and safety considerations.

Other Requirements:

- Must be fingerprinted and a satisfactory Department of Justice records check must be received by the County Office of Education, prior to employment.
- TB testing will be required upon employment.
- Must pass a pre-employment physical (if applicable).
- May be required to obtain first aid and CPR certificates within the first 6-12 months of employment.

- May be required to drive with or without students; some positions may require a current California driver license, proof of insurance and possible participation in the DMV Pull Notice Program once employed.

Other:

- Revised: May 20, 2019
- FLSA Status: Exempt
- Bargaining Unit: Unrepresented
- Approved by: Personnel Commission