

Public Engagement



Leading Now

Reflective, Proactive, and Responsive Approaches



Leading Now supports superintendents and system leaders to navigate political complexity and strengthen public trust as they advance their commitment to all students.

Interested in joining a cohort? Or gaining access to our crisis toolkits? Please visit leadingnow.org/join.

Mode of Communication	Key Approaches
<p>Reflective</p> <p><i>Your job matters - and so do you.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your primary values and use them as guideposts when faced with difficult decisions. • Prioritize your well-being – both physical and mental. • Maintain personal values and ethics while navigating savvy political concessions. • Strengthen your personal narrative – why your set of life experiences led you to your current role; your story has the power to connect.
<p>Proactive</p> <p><i>If you don't tell your story, someone else will.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be visible – in schools and in the community. • Prioritize relationships – including those with people who don't agree with you. • Lead with transparency and authenticity. When there is silence, it is filled with a story; make sure you're the one telling it. • Leverage social media. Effective storytelling over time prevents a crisis from controlling the long-term narrative. • Cultivate cordial and professional relationships with reporters. No comment is a comment, so responsiveness is key. • Foster strong internal communication and culture so that initiatives and messages are successfully received. • Welcome open dialogue and meet dissension with curiosity. Debate behind closed doors leads to public messages and initiatives having a much better chance at success.
<p>Responsive</p> <p><i>An ounce of prevention...</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize the first hour of a crisis, which is the most critical time. • Get in front of the story; the success of responsive communications in times of an issue or crisis depends on how well the proactive foundation has been built. • Prepare, prepare, prepare. Have crisis toolkits ready to go on a variety of scenerios; toolkits should include emails, callouts, website posts, media statements, and more. In addition, practice through scenarios and tabletop exercises of how to respond in the most severe events. • Express empathy. Defensiveness erodes trust. • Prevent escalation by reaching out. Sitting face to face and talking, rather than assuming intent, can make all the difference.

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