

RIDGEFIELD

SCHOOL DISTRICT

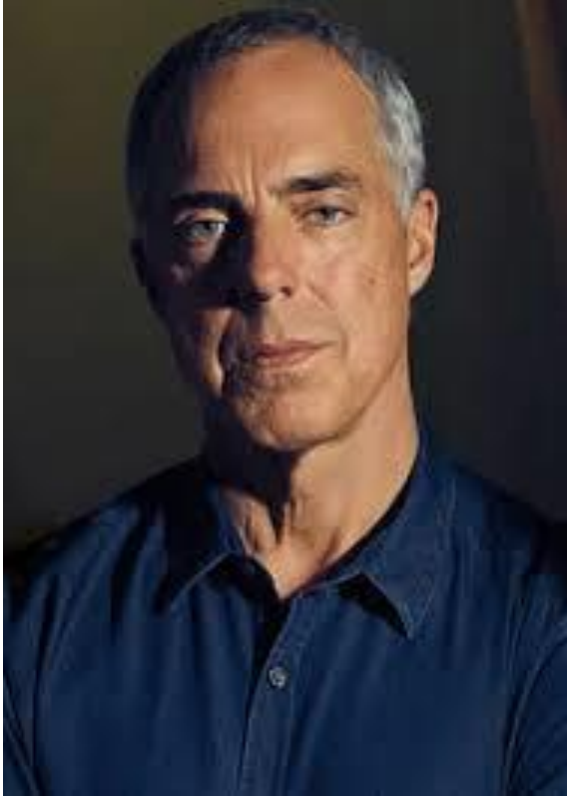
Effectively Engaging Your Community

WASA Incoming Superintendents Conference
July 24, 2022





It's not about you!



**“Everybody counts or
nobody counts.”**

-Harry Bosch



Pursuing PREMIER

It Starts Internally

- **What your employees say about you matters**
 - More credible voice than leadership
 - Internals with positive perceptions to share
- **Beware the power of employees with negative perceptions**
 - Have processes in place to encourage feedback
- **Don't forget about your students**
 - Most important perspective for many parents



It Starts Internally (and) It Starts Immediately



You can't go it
alone...



Building-Level Engagement

- **District cannot and should not lead everything**
Building specific activities – must support district culture
No rogue buildings
- **Annual Building Engagement Plans**
Internal/External Stakeholder Focus
Strategies, Resources, Timeframe, Measurement of success

3. *Grow Brand Ambassadors*

- What others say about you is more credible than what you say about yourself
TripAdvisor
- Provide them content
Make it easy for them to get information out
Helps with messaging consistency
- Leverage their enthusiasm and support
Trust them and give them room to move

Celebrate, Celebrate, Celebrate



Listen & Connect

- **ThoughtExchange Conversations**
 - What aspects of graduation are most important to you?
 - Share an example of #RidgefieldResilient
- **Patron Tours**
- **Unique Events**
 - Spudder Alumni Luncheon

Our People Matter

Ridgefield School District is a place where all people...
...discover their gifts;
...develop their gifts;
...share their gifts;
...and are recognized and appreciated for doing so.

Bob Chapman (Truly Human Leadership)





It's all about you!



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Chief Brand Officer

- **Culture builder**

Culture influences behavior and behavior drives decision-making

- **Guardian of the organization's values and core beliefs**

The way we do things around here

- **Consistency**

Develop your message and stay on message

- **Get Out There!**

If you're not telling your story, someone else will



PURPOSE STATEMENT

Ridgefield School District aspires to be the state's premier district, leveraging strong community partnerships to provide each student personalized learning experiences, opportunities, and skills that ensure success and unlimited possibilities.

QUALITY INSTRUCTION

We ensure research-based instructional practices are implemented in every classroom utilizing access to professional growth and collaboration opportunities to reflect on and improve our practices.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

We deliver a premier educational program dedicated to developing the whole child. We provide students with personalized academic and extracurricular opportunities while increasing student learning.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

We strive to provide safe, well-maintained facilities with 21st century learning environments in which all students can succeed. We will maximize the availability of our facilities to support community use.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

We create educational partnerships to promote collaboration, improve communication and provide programs for greater learning opportunities.





What Team members Can Expect

- ❑ **A flat organization**
- ❑ **The opportunity to influence district decisions from day one!**
- ❑ **Shared leadership**
- ❑ **An earnest interest in each team member's individual pursuits**

Treat people like volunteers!





Every steak needs its sizzle!

5. *Sweat the small stuff*

- **Details matter**
Public events must be show-stoppers
- **Invest in your public spaces**
For many patrons, this is the only parts of the school they will see; make it positive
- **Monitor social media**
The last thing posted is the “truth.” You better counter it with the real facts and always do so tactfully

Communications for school leaders

- **Communicate at regular intervals.** It can be weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly – just make sure to be consistent so families know when they can expect to hear from you
- **Write in your voice.** Find the right balance between being formal and conversational
- **Get your message out.** Someone is telling your story, it might as well be you!
- **Personalize communication**



Communications for school leaders

Communications channels

- **School and district websites**
 - This is often the first place families check for information, so be sure your messaging is up-to-date
- **Email newsletters**
 - Can be PDF attachments, or you can create online newsletters using services like S'more or MailChimp
- **Direct emails**
 - Simple and straightforward, but may not reach the wider community outside of parents



Communications for school leaders

Communications channels, continued

- **Letters to the editor**

- In some smaller communities, many people still rely on the local newspaper for information. Consider reaching out to see if your local paper would be interested in printing a monthly column from you. This helps you get your message out to community members who may not otherwise be engaged with your schools.

- **Social media**

- Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are still valuable communications channels (just be prepared for negativity in the comments). If you're comfortable being on camera, you can **upload interviews or Superintendent Updates to YouTube**, which is a great way for the community to get to know you.



Questions/Comments