

## **SAN MATEO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

### **CLASS TITLE: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, STRATEGY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **JOB SUMMARY**

Under the direction of the Superintendent, the Executive Director of Strategy and Communications develops, executes, supervises, and maintains comprehensive and wide-ranging internal and external communications; public, community, press, and government relations; and operates proactively to position the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE), its programs, and its partnerships to ensure that SMCOE's vision and mission are at the forefront of decision-making and implementation.

Working closely with the Superintendent, and as a member of Cabinet, the Executive Director of Strategy and Communications is the chief spokesperson and a leading advocate for SMCOE. The successful candidate will develop and later direct and oversee a comprehensive and proactive organization-wide communications and media plan (including risk management, pitching complex and meaningful stories that advance the SMCOE mission, developing the narrative) and manage media relations (including print, electronic, and social media).

#### **REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:**

##### **ESSENTIAL DUTIES**

The following duties are examples of assignments to be performed in this position. This is not a totally comprehensive list of duties; nor is it restrictive regarding assignments. It includes some start-up activities but also focuses on continuing activities.

##### **Planning and Strategizing to Ensure a Cohesive Direction**

- Prepare an overarching strategic communications plan
- Administer, plan, implement, and supervise public information, government and community relations and outreach, marketing, and information dissemination
- Articulate and actively pursue strategic, cohesive, transformative advocacy and policy roles for SMCOE.

##### **Being a Thought Leader and Partner**

- Coordinate overall thought leadership strategy and tactics.
- Maintain an active role in Superintendent's Cabinet, providing proactive guidance and "big thinking" on current and anticipated programs, issues, plans
- Coordinate the development of an annual legislative agenda that supports SMCOE's and local school district goals and interests, and highlights an agenda that seeks excellence and equity for San Mateo County children, schools, and communities

##### **Managing the Reputation and the Brand**

- Maintain and expand the SMCOE "brand."
- Direct agency-wide image and branding efforts and enforce institutional graphics standards.
- Coordinate, plan, and supervise the implementation of county-wide SMCOE events;
- facilitate community outreach programs to ensure SMCOE's presence at community-wide

## **Executive Director, Strategy & Communications - Continued**

conferences, events, special meetings to promote the important role of public education.

- Review and/or initiate grantwriting to support SMCOE goals; review program grantwriting and reports to ensure consistency of SMCOE messages.

## **Operating Proactively with Press, Media, and Social Media**

- Assist Superintendent and SMCOE in responding to and crafting proactive news, while also being responsive to media, elected officials, and the public at large
- Establish and maintain appropriate social media platforms, recognizing the uniqueness of each and the different audiences for each platform.
- Direct and coordinate SMCOE's media relations plans and strategies, including relations with print and broadcast outlets; prepare and approve press releases; host media briefings as needed.
- Draft a variety of high-profile materials including op-eds, news releases, program "briefs," video scripts, and proposal texts; create (or supervise the creation of) defined and intentional professional materials for agency-wide use.

## **Acting as Spokesperson**

- Serve as spokesperson for SMCOE to various groups and establish network and relations with district-level public information officers, education and parent advocacy organizations.
- Coordinate, participate, attend, and conduct meetings and committees; present materials and information concerning SMCOE programs, operations, activities; represent SMCOE at appropriate meetings.

## **Maintaining Comprehensive County Office-wide Focus**

- Develop and implement outreach and public information plans that frame SMCOE's vision, goals, and working strategies.
- Plan, implement, and maintain a regular(weekly) outreach vehicle for internal information flow, ensuring strong understanding of SMCOE as a "whole."

## **Leading a Team**

- Supervise and evaluate the performance of assigned personnel; interview and select employees; coordinate staff work assignments and schedules, review staff work to ensure compliance with established procedures.
- Develop, administer, and monitor department budget; ensure communications objectives are coordinated to reflect goals and objectives tied to SMCOE strategic direction.
- Complete special projects as assigned.

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

### **Knowledge of:**

- Professional and ethical practices of developing and maintaining effective public, community, and government and intergovernmental media, and school relations
- Principles and practices of ethical public information/dissemination and marketing
- Preparation and dissemination of public information
- Principles of leadership, training, performance evaluation, and equity
- Principles and practices of public policy development and legislative processes

## **Executive Director, Strategy & Communications - Continued**

- Educational and social issues and their impact on schools, youth, and public education
- Educational equity goals and an ability to work with persons from diverse backgrounds including school district personnel, families, teachers, and government leaders

### **Advanced Skill in:**

- Strategic thinking and planning, including organizational effectiveness and management practices
- Print and media relations
- Compelling writing, rewriting, editing diverse materials including but not limited to speeches, publications, OpEds, news releases, web content, social media, and sensitive correspondence
- Use of data analytics to inform marketing and outreach decision-making
- Project management and administration; program planning, budget development and monitoring, fiscal accountability; record keeping
- Effective consultation, coaching and technical assistance to SMCOE staff to ensure effectiveness of brand and materials reaching external audiences
- Exceptional written and oral communication and interpersonal communication
- Communication in critical situations (orally and in writing), preparing detailed, accurate reports as well as correspondence and media releases

### **Ability to:**

- Plan, direct, and coordinate diverse and comprehensive public and community relations, communications, governmental affairs, and strategic directives
- Work well under pressure, manage deadlines, and possess the ability to work effectively with both agency-based and non-agency-based constituencies as well as media
- Oversee staff of motivated associates to achieve strategic goals
- Maintain confidentiality
- Establish networks and positive working relationships within the County including with elected officials, school districts, community leaders and SMCOE staff
- Be an effective resource to school districts and school district public information officers.
- Develop strategies to raise the regional, statewide, and national profile of SMCOE and its programs.
- Articulate complex plans and policies to external audiences
- Articulate the importance of clarity and brand marketing to SMCOE staff
- Lead a small team to produce exceptionally high quality, innovative solutions to organization- wide problems
- Perform effective staff supervision and development; performance evaluations
- Communicate effectively orally and in writing to staff, partners, and the public-at-large
- Plan and implement short- and long-term marketing and branding communication strategies

### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

Any combination equivalent to:

- Bachelor's degree required in communications, public affairs, communications, journalism, or related discipline
- An advanced degree in communication, public affairs, communications, journalism, or related discipline is highly preferred

## **Executive Director, Strategy & Communications - Continued**

- 10-15 years of relevant job-related experience at a senior level in public relations, public affairs, media, advocacy communication or a related field, with demonstrated competence in strategy and communications
- Experience at a public agency or large nonprofit organization, including increasingly responsible experience in professionally-related position
- Evidence of understanding of visual thinking and graphics
- Writing experience in print and digital publications for diverse audiences
- Expertise in developing compelling content for web, multi-media, and social media platforms, working with professional graphic designers, programmers, and technical professionals
- Demonstrated success packaging, pitching, and placing media stories and opinion pieces in different outlets
- Impeccable attention to detail and follow up
- Experience with storytelling and creating narratives
- Evidence of excellent organizational, written, and oral communication

## **Preferred Qualifications**

- Fluency in Spanish a plus but not required
- Experience with PK-20 educational organizations helpful

## **OTHER CHARACTERISTICS**

- Highly collaborative work style
- Exceptional writing/editing and verbal communications strategies
- Strong track record as an implementer who thrives on managing multiple projects concurrently
- Relationship-builder with the flexibility and finesse to “manage by influence”
- High energy, maturity, and leadership with the ability to serve as a unifying force and to position communications discussions at both the strategic and tactical levels
- Commitment to work collaboratively with multiple constituent groups, including staff, trustees, program participants, and more
- Self-starter, able to work independently and entrepreneurially
- Innovative, resourceful, strategic, and visionary

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

Environment:

- Indoor working environment
- Driving a vehicle to conduct work
- Required to work hours beyond normal workday to participate in meetings, conferences, and professional development activities locally and outside the county; periodic travel will also be required

## **PHYSICAL DEMANDS OF THE JOB**

Not limited to the following:

- Ability to stoop, bend, sit, stand, stretch, grasp, pull, push and walk;
- Sit, stand and walk for extended periods of time;

- Hearing and speaking to exchange information and make presentations;
- Seeing to read a variety of materials.

**Approved by Personnel Commission:**

***Revised: March 11, 2020***

***August 9, 2017***

**San Mateo County Office of Education**