
From the Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

**Time for Schools to Remind the Community:
“Here’s the Positive Contribution We are Making”**

All the current attacks on public schools have put many on the defensive.

No one is more aware of the problems they must cope with everyday than those who work in the schools. At the same time, they know that public education plays a fundamental and essential role in our society (as was made evident once again with the pandemic closures). And despite the attacks, the vast majority of school personnel continue to strive to make schools good places for kids.

It is time for schools to remind everyone about all the positive things local schools are doing.

The next six months will be an important time period for public schools to *demonstrate and widely communicate* how much they contribute to their students’ well-being and how much local communities benefit.

That time frame encompasses (1) the end of the school year, (2) the long summer months, and (3) the start of the next school year.

Schools are already planning what to do between now and then, and they can readily include strategies that emphasize all the positive things being done (and in the process counter criticism).

Here are a few matters worth social marketing (e.g., using social networks and local media):

- ***As the school year ends*** show and share how families and others in the community are
 - >joining in the end of the year celebrations
 - >expressing appreciation for what has been accomplished by students and the school
 - >indicating positive feelings and expectations about what is planned for the summer and next school year
- ***Share plans for increasing community engagement at the school over the summer and during the next school year***
 - >highlight ways for increasing community use of school facilities over the summer
 - >highlight ways the community will be engaged in planning related to
 - >>improving what is being taught and how it is being taught
 - >>enhancing student/lea
 - >>ensuring the new school year begins on a high note and with a critical mass of stakeholders engaged in making it successful

While planning already is underway, schools may need to consider expanding the planning group(s) to ensure engagement of representatives of family and other community stakeholders.

As to social marketing, there is a lot about this on the internet, and we have a resource online that is focused on: *Social Marketing as a Spiraling Facet of Program and Systemic Change* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/socmark.pdf> .
