ALSDE Unveils New Website!

www.alsde.edu

(same address as previous site)

On February 15, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) debuted our newly designed website, www.alsde.edu (same address as previous site). The entire front page has been redesigned to highlight topics of interest and all sections of ALSDE, along with specific content on Plan 2020.

The Communications page has been redesigned as well with news releases, videos, policies, Daily News links and all other areas important to media.

All other sections of the department are a work in progress, as our Information Systems section along with Alabama SuperComputer, continue the redesign over the coming months.

A point of interest, the Data Center, will be redesigned in the coming months to ensure more ease in acquiring public records. Links to annual reports, and all existing documents are still available during the transition.

This is just the beginning of the reworking of our site, so please be patient. Feel free to call 334-242-9950 or email any member of the Communications staff and we can assist in finding information you may need. We hope you enjoy the look and ease of completed sections of our site.
The reality is on-camera work is challenging. You’re put under a microscope, and expected to perform, be natural and articulate, and speak with passion while staying on message. Oh, and remember to blink, smile, and not talk with your hands. Being on camera is distinctly unnatural—the lights, the crew, the pressure. So, how can you rise to the challenge when it doesn’t come easily to you?

Remember that it’s not what you say, but how you say it.
More often than not, people fixate on the words they use to deliver a message and give little thought to the delivery itself. Video is a visual medium, which makes the delivery far more important than the content. Yes, what you say must be correct, but consider the viewer taking in your message. As you speak, the words fly by. The viewer’s brain processes the words, but the feeling and experience will leave the stronger impression.

Be authentic, but not yourself.
Before you sit down and clip on a microphone, you should have a clear idea of how you want people to perceive you. How you’re perceived is different from just being yourself. Understanding the target audience and objectives will help you tailor your perceived self for the camera.

Understand how much editing will take place.
This is something people rarely consider. It’s quite common to edit interview footage down to two to three minutes or even just seconds! Your delivery must be clear, concise and well-delivered.

Don’t over-prepare, stay within your wheelhouse.
These two tips go hand in hand. If you’re speaking on a topic you know well, there’s no need to over-prepare, and your delivery will be natural. Over-preparation kills delivery. You’ll appear insincere, even canned. Stay with what you know, and the content will appear fresh. If you’re forced to deliver content that is not in your wheelhouse, plan your message carefully, but don’t lay out the delivery in advance. Save that for the camera.

Don’t try to hide anything.
There is no faux pas worse than trying to hide a technical element from your audience. If you have notes, put them on the table. It’s OK to look down at notes if you admit they’re there. If you have a teleprompter, don’t try to make it look as if you don’t. People use teleprompters all the time. If you want to add in a pre-taped segment, just mention and introduce it. There’s nothing wrong with pre-taping an element for technical reasons.

Looking Good on Camera!
We all have to do it, no matter how much we dislike it!
Here’s some quick tips!

OTHER IMPORTANT TIPS TO CONSIDER:
✓ Don’t dart your eyes.
✓ Don’t swivel in your chair.
✓ Don’t click it! Hold a pen to give you something to do with your hands.
✓ Don’t move into delivery mode (shifting your voice up an octave and beginning to act).
✓ Don’t beat yourself up for small slip ups. Almost everyone feels awkward on camera. That’s what editing is for.
✓ Do speak with confidence.
Remember, it’s OK to be nervous. Have fun!

(Derived from ragan.com article)
The Alabama College and Career Ready Standards of the Week!

Please feel free to promote on your website, newsletter, and social media sites!
Visit alsde.edu, then go to Communications Page to view.
Here’s the link to our new page for all AL CCRS images.
http://www.alsde.edu/sec/comm/Pages/stdofweek-item.aspx
Any school districts today use cloud computing to house information such as grades, attendance records, bus routes and health records. But most contract with a third-party vendor to house and manage the data, and—according to recent national surveys—vulnerability of student data is a real issue. Joel Reidenberg, co-author of a **2013 report on privacy and educational records**, says many districts are surrendering control of the data by not restricting its sale and marketing. His study showed that school officials often did not know exactly what information vendors received, nor were parents informed. Since schools must use data, safeguarding student privacy, ensuring information security, and **better communication about data use** must become top priorities, says Aimee Guidera, executive director of the **Data Quality Campaign**.

To help parents understand how schools manage student data, a **recent U.S. News article suggested four questions** to ask administrators. The questions, with some advice from Guidera and Reidenberg, are:

**What is being collected and how is it used?**

Student information often goes beyond grades and attendance. Many schools record suspensions or expulsions as well as student health records, including pregnancies and mental illness. Parents should understand the full spectrum of what is collected, as well as **how that information is used**, Guidera says. If schools aren’t using specific data points, parents should ask the school to stop collecting it and take it off their child’s record.

**How is the data stored?**

On-site or with a third-party vendor? The answer can have serious implications for student privacy. Parents should ask where the information is stored and what measures are taken to **protect their teen’s identity**.

**Who has access to the data?**

Access to student data should be restricted to teachers and designated staff, but lax vendor contracts might make data accessible to a wider audience. Parents should ask school officials to specify who can view student information and under what circumstances.

**When does it expire?**

Students are in school for a fixed number of years, but their data can live on in the district’s system long after they graduate. Vendors could also retain student data even after their contract with the district ends, Reidenberg says. His study found that only 13 percent of cloud service agreements addressed data security or data deletion.
A Look Back at 50 Years of APR

2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the APR credential, and this month’s Leading Off examines the history of Accreditation in Public Relations, the hallmark of professionalism for public relations practitioners.

Janet Swiecichowski, APR,
Executive Director,
Communications, Minnetonka (Minn.) Public Schools

... and Help Them Win a Grant

Here’s a way to promote and thank your great teachers. Parents and others can let teachers know what a difference they are making with the Thank a Million Teachers initiative from Farmers Insurance. When someone writes a thank you message to a teacher through www.ThankAMillionTeachers.com, that teacher can submit a brief proposal for a chance to win a grant valued at up to $2,500 for use in their classroom through the end of October, 2014. Beginning in March, the public will be able to vote on these proposals and throughout 2014, more than 100 teachers will be selected. Farmers also has committed up to $1 million in funds to classrooms and education programs throughout the country. Consider sharing this resource with your local parents’ groups and alumni organization.
Tip of the Week

Trademark Your District’s Logos? Here’s How

Trademarking isn’t just for business anymore. Today’s communication world requires school districts to maintain control over their branding symbols to ensure appropriate use. In this Tip of the Week, Zac Rantz, director of communication, Nixa (Mo.) Public Schools, offers NSPRA colleagues Trademarking 101, a short course on getting started.