

# THE PRINCIPAL STORY National Media Outreach Campaign

## Station Activities: Rhode Island PBS / Providence, RI

Rhode Island PBS<sup>1</sup> (RIPBS) conducted a regional campaign for **THE PRINCIPAL STORY** that reached 270,470 people through production/broadcast of *Rhode Island's Schools: Where We Stand*, events, website and DVD distribution. The national documentary was aired on September 24, 2009.

**Project Abstract:** RIPBS was awarded an outreach grant, funded by The Wallace Foundation and managed by Outreach Extensions, from April to October 2009. The station's objective was to increase awareness and support a conversation between education leaders and policymakers about how effective school leadership makes a difference to the success of schools. The Rhode Island Association of School Principals (RIASP) helped the station forge a link from education leaders to state legislators.

### Project Outcomes

- Presenting two screening/discussion sessions at RIASP's annual meeting in August enabled the station to alert 120 education leaders to the upcoming broadcast and outreach materials. The sessions' four panelists became the core of the local production.
- All 135 state senators and representatives received *The Principal Story Video & Print Resources* DVD (outreach DVD) and an explanatory letter from RIPBS and RIASP; the letter alerted them to the national and local shows. A screening for legislators is planned for early 2010.
- Based on website visits (500), distribution of the outreach DVD (150), distribution of the local program to six public libraries around the state and viewership by 250,000, the project built statewide awareness of the importance of good principals to school success.
- The project's video resources (local and national) are part of the curriculum for Rhode Island College's Education Leadership graduate program. This year, 37 students will watch the programs and receive the outreach materials.

### Project Activities

#### 1. RIASP Annual Meeting

Two sessions on THE PRINCIPAL STORY were held on August 4, 2009 at the annual RIASP meeting. Each session consisted of viewing the 23-minute Clip Reel, panel commentary, small group discussion, and group reports. Panelists, who later participated in RIPBS' local production, were:

- Norma Cole, RIASP president and principal of Western Hills Middle School, Cranston
- Meredith Caswell, principal, Cluny School, Newport; 2007 Middle School Principal of the Year
- Christopher Lord, Ph.D. in educational leadership, principal of Shea Senior High School, Newport

---

<sup>1</sup> **Station Profile:** In 1967, WSBE-TV Channel 36 transmitted its first broadcast signal from behind the Adams Library on the Rhode Island College campus. Today, the station has advanced to the digital era and sports a different name - Rhode Island PBS. But the station's commitment to providing quality educational programming remains as strong and steadfast now as it was in the station's fledgling days.

- Nancy Nettik, principal of West Kingston Elementary School, Wakefield and 2009 Elementary Principal of the Year for RI. In October she was named 2009 Elementary Principal of the Year by NAESP

*The Principal Story Field Guide* was distributed to 120 attendees. Postcards with dates/times for the broadcast of the national and local programs were also distributed.

## 2. Local Production and Broadcast

In partnership with RIASP, RIPBS produced a program that looked at local principals and leadership for the second installment of its series, *Rhode Island's Schools: Where We Stand*. Education journalist Kelley McGee (formerly of WJAR NBC10) moderated a 40-minute discussion with four Rhode Island principals who offered local perspectives and context for the issues raised in the national documentary. In the final 20-minute segment of the program, Kelley McGee interviewed Deborah Gist, Rhode Island's new Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. The local program aired immediately after THE PRINCIPAL STORY.

## 3. Engaging Rhode Island Legislators

A letter from RIPBS and RIASP was sent to all Rhode Island state senators and representatives along with the outreach DVD and tune-in postcard. Since the part-time legislature is not in session during the fall, RIPBS plans to host a screening in early 2010 when the General Assembly reconvenes.

## 4. Screenings/Discussions

- Screenings and discussions of THE PRINCIPAL STORY and RIPBS' local production were conducted during RIASP Principal Network meetings for assistant principals, elementary principals and high school principals in October.
- The Educational Leadership Department of Rhode Island College is using THE PRINCIPAL STORY and its outreach materials in its curriculum. RIPBS hosted screenings at its studios for three classes in November.

## Promotion/Reach

- Promoted and broadcast the local documentary reaching 250,000.
- An e-poster based on the postcard was distributed to 1,940 station members. RIASP sent it to superintendents, administrators, principals and other educators throughout the state, reaching 17,260.
- 500 postcards promoting the national and local broadcasts were designed, printed and distributed to RIASP conference attendees, state legislators, and libraries around the state.
- 160 people attended screening events at RIASP and RIPBS.
- 500 visited RIPBS's web page.
- 150 copies of the outreach DVD were distributed. Ten copies of the local show were distributed to RIASP, Rhode Island College and libraries around the state.

