

Creating a Newsletter for Community Action

Awareness and open communication among families, schools, and military installations is imperative to ensure the success of military-connected children. However, equally as important is the awareness and involvement of the local community in understanding the challenges faced by military-connected children and helping them to meet their unique needs in places outside of the classroom.

One way to cultivate awareness of and inspire community involvement with the special population of military-connected children is through the creation and dissemination of a regular newsletter. School Liaisons can work together with families, schools, and installations to develop collective consciousness and share news about this important and ever-changing demographic in the local community.

Tips for Creating a Successful Community Newsletter

A community newsletter about military-connected children can be a powerful tool to aid the work of the School Liaison and raise awareness about issues around military-connected children and families. An important function of a newsletter is that it identifies the writer or writers as a conduit for important news and events on the topic. In this way, a newsletter can help School Liaisons better facilitate relationships with key stakeholders. As opposed to a publication like a newspaper that covers a variety of topics that range from local to regional to national and sometimes even international, a community newsletter covers a discrete local area and focuses on one general topic. It helps residents, businesses, and other local groups connect to each other. An effective community newsletter

- is both easy and fun to read;
- establishes a professional yet informal tone that reflects both the seriousness of the topic as well as the spirit of the local community;
- establishes strong relationships with community contacts across a variety of sectors;
- stays up-to-date on issues that affect its readers and constituents (news, events, policy, etc.);
- is released and disseminated regularly (monthly or quarterly is common);and
- is available in public areas and locations (grocery stores, community centers, etc.).

Fundamental Components of a Community Newsletter

There are three main categories to consider when thinking about what to include in your newsletter:

1. Feature stories

These are original stories about local people and events. Examples may include profiling a military-connected family that is new to the community, reporting about a local school board meeting, or sharing how a local business is doing their part to support military-connected children.

2. Columns

These are regular sections of the newsletter devoted to a particular topic or highlighting a particular community example of a certain type. For example, a column might regularly highlight local, state, or Federal policy updates that impact military-connected families, or it might focus on communicating tips to families, schools, community leaders, and others about how to do their part in ensuring the success of military-connected children.

3. Calendar of events

A calendar includes the dates, times, location, and a brief description about local events that pertain to the topic of military-connected children and their families. The creation and maintenance of this calendar can be made simpler by monitoring neighborhood and community centers, libraries and schools, military installations, and all relevant Web sites on a regular basis.

Sample Content Ideas for a Newsletter About Military-Connected Children

The following are some sample content ideas for a newsletter about military-connected children and their families. Remember, if you want to reproduce an article or parts of an article in its entirety, be sure to obtain the required permissions:

- Articles around statements and memos from the Military Child Education Coalition
- Advertisements promoting U.S. Department of Education Webinars on topics of import, such as Impact Aid funding and school choice
- Advertisements showcasing opportunities to make financial contributions to causes that support military-connected children, such as the Newman's Own Foundation (more information available at www.militaryfamily.org)
- Columns highlighting state policy updates that impact the education of military-connected children
- Personal stories and contributions from military-connected students, teachers, and families
- Events and important dates to remember
- Links to additional information