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Columbia Public Schools Foundation

Progress Report 2 EDIT

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A. Summary

As the youngest person working for the Columbia Public Schools Foundation, the other employees rely on me a lot to reach out to potential donors through social media sites. Of course, my generation practically lives through the Internet and any company or organization that is concerned with sustainability of their organization would notice this recent trend. Smart phones, laptops, ipads and other gadgets make communication and information easily accessible.

This past week, I created an outline with CPSF's most important information and information the board thought would be a necessity for potential donors. Some information included: where the donations are going each month, how much money is being allocated to each school, what the schools plan to use the money for and where other donations are coming from. I found that this information is extremely important because it establishes trust between CPSF and donors and it makes the donors want to continue to donate if CPSF is completely honest.

Also this week, I prepared a speech to give to the board. This speech would be details on a training session I would like to give to the board over social media. At the training, I would show the board how to navigate around the Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn sites; that way the board wouldn't need me and this would create sustainability within the public relations part of the foundation.

B. Personal Learning and Professional Development

This past week, I've learned the importance of speaking loudly and choosing wisely the words I say. While drafting my speech for the Columbia Public School Board, Mrs. Read, my supervisor, read over it and noticed that I mentioned "old" people in my speech. Of course that is offensive and she advised me to reword the sentences.

In addition to that, I began to take note of my choice of outfits for these meetings. I have to remember who my audience is and dress accordingly. No low-cut shirts and no tight-fitted pants. Although I didn't have trouble with that when I went to the meeting, my supervisor reminded me frequently. This has taught me that I need to always be aware of audience; if I don't have the respect of my audience, they won't listen to what I have to say.

C. Community Issues and Challenges

Last week while reading my articles for my progress reports, I realized that this problem of low funding is not just one in the Columbia or not even the state, it is nation wide. As school districts are facing massive budget cuts across the country, school programs, teachers and students are taking the hit. Across the country, 120 school districts had, as of August, moved to four-day school weeks while others are canceling field trips, shuttering after-school programs and charging students to play sports (Huffington Post).

The cuts are seen in Keller, Texas, where the district opted for a pay-for-ride transportation system versus cutting busing as a whole; in Georgia, where 20 days were slashed from the pre-kindergarten academic year; In California, where nearly half the districts axed or whittled away at art, drama and music.

The Columbia Public Schools Foundation is noticing that music and art are huge in schools. That is why in addition to monetary donations, we are also accepting violins and clarinets to put in the elementary schools.

Another article that stood out to me was titled, "Stop Budget Cuts for California Public Schools" by Erica Ruedas. It talks about California Governor Jerry Brown threatening to cut \$4.8 billion from public school funding unless his November tax-hike initiative passes. California public schools are already underfunded, and are facing laying off teachers, increasing class sizes to over 30 students, and shortening the school year by another week. All three already affect that amount of time and energy a teacher can spend with their students, and if the tax-hike fails at the polls, California schools will be forced to find as many ways to cut as much money from their budgets as possible, even as they reduce summer programs, music and arts programs, and auxiliary staff such as counselors and nurses. Additionally, bus programs and equipment budgets will be affected, leaving students stranded and using outdated or broken equipment (FreePetition.com). This is extremely saddening to me and it further proves my point of needing more not-for-profit organizations such as the Columbia Public Schools Foundation.

Chicago public school teachers began to protest instead of teaching Monday, launching the first teacher strike in the city in 25 years. The strike, announced Sunday night, left about 350,000 students without schools to attend and parents scrambling to find alternatives. The union that represents nearly 30,000 teachers and support staff in the nation's third-largest school district called the strike after negotiators failed to reach a contract agreement with school administrators despite 10 months of negotiations. Although this affects students heavily, strikes such as this one in Chicago makes us remember that teachers are people too. We often times forget that and they are very much underrated in America. That is why I was so happy when I found out that every year, the Columbia Public Schools Foundation has a teacher's appreciation week where donors' money goes straight toward the Teacher's Union. This shows that the teachers are not being taken for granted for the things they do.