



Navigator Schools 2024 Pitch Development

The following is a working preparation document developing Navigator School's Strategic Communications Plan for the upcoming year.

2024 Narrative Outlook

Larson Communications aims to generate proactive storytelling tactics for Navigator Schools to enhance its media presence and bolster its reputation. To strengthen Navigator Schools' reputation, we will strategize our storytelling approach. This includes a two-pronged approach: 1) building credibility of the Navigator Schools to increase brand recognition and 2) amplifying specific news, updates, programs, partnerships, and personalities of each school. For each, we will diversify the set of voices to include CMO leadership interviews, school staff, parent testimonials, student and alumni perspectives. This will give more depth to each school's local identity while offering a more nuanced and unified portrayal of Navigator Schools.

2024 Storytelling Opportunities

The following storytelling opportunities are narratives that will be developed into tactical pitch angles for our 2024 Strategic Communications Plan:

Prong I: Building credibility to increase brand recognition and support brand growth

- o Showcasing thought-leadership and educational expertise: Amplify Navigator School's unique differentiators in leadership talking points (like "Squads Model") and impactful data (like closing the achievement gap).
- o Spotlighting success stories of rural education: Highlighting innovative approaches and achievements in rural schools to inspire and inform others.
- o Advocating for mental health and well-being in rural schools: Raising awareness and providing resources for addressing mental health challenges faced by rural students and educators.
- o Bridging the digital divide: Advocating for equitable access to technology and internet resources for all students in the Central Valleys while highlighting Navi's work to ensure access to its students.
- o Preparing the community for new school openings: introduce Navigator Schools brand to editors in aspiring locales aligned with the CMO's 2024 petitions.

Prong II: Individual School Amplification

- o The Future of Agriculture and Education: Exploring the intersection of agriculture, technology, and education in preparing students for the evolving agricultural landscape.
- o Elevating Local Voices: Supporting the development of local podcasts and media platforms to share the stories and perspectives of the Central Valley.
- o Magnifying Current Events, Partnerships, Programs: Proactively providing media with news alerts so to promote local happenings of each school to build community awareness

2024 Predictive Index

Arising from LC's media landscape audit and marketplace analysis, the following themes are what media are interested in talking about next year.

- Continued Focus on Vocational Training and Job Skills: The demand for skilled labor in the agricultural sector and beyond is likely to drive further investment in CTE programs and partnerships with local businesses. Innovative models for work-based learning and apprenticeships will gain traction.
- Increased Attention to Equity and Access: Concerns about the digital divide and financial barriers to education will lead to initiatives aimed at bridging the gap between rural and urban communities. Advocacy for increased funding for rural schools and scholarships for low-income students will continue.
- Emergence of Local Media and Storytelling: The growing awareness of the unique challenges and opportunities of education in the Central Valley will fuel the development of local podcasts, blogs, and online communities. These platforms will amplify local voices and perspectives, influencing regional and national conversations.
- Technology as a Double-Edged Sword: While technology offers valuable tools for personalized learning and bridging the digital divide, concerns about data privacy, equity in access, and the potential for job displacement will need careful consideration and ethical implementation.
- The Rise of Community Partnerships: Collaboration between schools, businesses, community organizations, and government agencies will become increasingly important to address complex challenges and ensure successful education outcomes for all students in the Central Valley.
- National Recognition and Support: As the unique needs of the Central Valley gain more attention, national policy discussions and funding initiatives may begin to address the specific challenges faced by rural education systems.

2024 Editorial Focus

The following categories are where we envision our editorial focus will maximize the most impactful results.

- National or Regional Education Publications: Publications like Education Week, EdSurge, or The Journal of Educational Leadership could offer broader context and compare Navigator Schools to national trends in education.
- Spanish-Language Media: Local Spanish-language newspapers, radio stations, or online platforms could be missing sources of coverage. Hmong-language media may be an emerging market, as well.

- Niche Publications: Select schools' specific programs or areas of focus, publications related to STEM learning, parenting and families, "Things to do" local calendar listings or roundups of community events, career readiness, or environmental initiatives
- National Education Podcasts with Regional Relevance: Podcasts like "Cult of Pedagogy" and "The EdTech Podcast" offer valuable insights applicable to rural education contexts.
- Student-Run Media: High school or college newspapers, radio stations, or online platforms could offer unique perspectives and insights from likeminded generations, or even alumni.
- Community Blogs and Social Media: Local community blogs, Facebook groups, or neighborhood forums might discuss the schools' activities, events, or parent experiences, providing valuable grassroots viewpoints.

Editorial Prospects

Aligning the above storytelling opportunities with the aforementioned editorial focus, we'll prioritize the following media outlets in our outreach.

Central Valley:

- Merced Sun-Star: Provides local news for Merced County, with occasional articles on schools and parenting.
- ABC30: Fresno-based ABC affiliate with occasional segments on education and family topics.
- KCRA 3: Sacramento-based CBS affiliate, but their coverage can often reach parts of the Central Valley.
- KJMJ: Fresno-based news radio station with segments on education and parenting.
- KVPR: Public radio station covering Fresno and Central California, featuring educational programming and family-oriented discussions.
- The Fresno Bee: Fresno's leading daily newspaper, delivering in-depth local news, insightful opinions, and engaging sports coverage.
- Fresno Family Magazine: Monthly publication focused on parenting and family life in the Central Valley.
- Central Valley Families Magazine: Online magazine covering family events, resources, and news across the Central Valley.
- Valley Parent: Online resource offering parenting advice, school information, and family-friendly activities in the Central Valley.
- EdSource: California education news website with frequent coverage of Central Valley schools.
- Central Valley Community Foundation Blog: Features articles on education, youth development, and family issues in the region.
- Central California Parent: Blog offering local parenting tips, resources, and event information.

Santa Clara County:

- San Jose Mercury News: The largest daily newspaper in Silicon Valley, covering news, sports, business, and entertainment.
- Palo Alto Weekly: A weekly newspaper covering local news, arts, and culture in Palo Alto and surrounding areas.
- Santa Clara Weekly: A free weekly newspaper focusing on news, politics, and culture in Santa Clara County.

Santa Cruz County:

- Santa Cruz Sentinel: The daily newspaper of Santa Cruz, covering local news, sports, business, and arts.
- Good Times Weekly: A free weekly newspaper focused on alternative news, arts, and culture in Santa Cruz County.
- Coast Weekly: A weekly newspaper covering news, arts, and entertainment in Santa Cruz and North Monterey County.

San Benito County:

- Hollister Free Lance: The weekly newspaper of Hollister, covering local news, sports, and events.
- San Benito County Herald: A weekly newspaper serving San Benito County, focusing on local news, government, and community affairs.
- Gilroy Dispatch: The weekly newspaper of Gilroy, providing news, sports, and features for the South Santa Clara Valley.

Alameda County:

- East Bay Times: The daily newspaper of Alameda County, covering news, sports, business, and entertainment.

Emerging Editorial Prospects

As Navigator Schools finalizes potential mergers and new school openings in aspirational locations, we will adjust the below prospects to align with approved priorities.

- Merced County Times: Online news source offering local coverage, sometimes featuring school events and parenting tips.
- Merced Kids Calendar: Online resource listing family-friendly events and activities in Merced County.
- Merced Family Magazine: Online magazine with limited content but might occasionally offer relevant articles.
- Merced Unified School District Website: Provides news and updates specifically about Merced schools.
- The Mercedian: Online student newspaper from UC Merced, may discuss local education issues.
- Merced Sun Star: Daily newspaper serving Merced County, California, and the surrounding Central Valley.
- Los Banos Enterprise: Local newspaper covering Los Banos and surrounding areas, with occasional articles on schools and family events.
- Valley Parent: Online resource offering parenting advice, school information, and family-friendly activities in the Central Valley, potentially including Los Banos content.
- Los Banos Unified School District Website: Provides news and updates specifically about Los Banos schools.

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