“School is…” Video Series

Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS)
Ashburn, VA

Target Audience: This campaign was produced for a general audience of students, staff, parents and community members.

Campaign Summary: Students in Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) primarily continued in distance learning for most of the 2020-2021 school year. Less than one-third of our student population made the decision to return for hybrid instruction as it was implemented in late spring of 2021.

On May 18, 2021, LCPS announced that students would be returning to school for five days of in-person instruction each week for the fall of 2021. The announcement was made via video by Interim Superintendent (now Superintendent) Scott Ziegler. Dr. Ziegler’s focus on student voice was brought to life through this video series where students shared what they looked forward to when returning to school in-person.

Following this full-length video announcement by the Superintendent, the Communications and Community Engagement Office produced a series of short “School is…” videos for use on social media throughout the summer months to help build enthusiasm for the return to school in the fall. The series focused on student engagement, traditions, activities and learning rather than learning loss or what students had missed due to COVID. The series of short videos is “evergreen” and can be used year after year. The series also was featured on lobby video monitors at our administration building and on our public access channel.

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Research

The low number of students returning to school for hybrid instruction in the spring of 2021 told us that our community was feeling some hesitancy about returning to in-person instruction for the fall of 2021. The Communications and Community Engagement Office needed to remind families about what makes the in-person school experience so special. After some brainstorming, we came up with a list of activities to highlight in the social media video series that would follow the Superintendent’s announcement.

Planning

This series was an easy lift from a planning perspective because it required the recording of no new footage. All of the footage in the eight episodes was repurposed from earlier videos produced by the department prior to the pandemic.
Implementation

The Superintendent’s announcement video was produced to generate excitement about the return to school. It featured black and white imagery during the segment devoted to distance learning and turns to color when he announces the return to in-person instruction. The announcement video also includes students talking about the aspects of the in-person school experience that they look forward to returning to in the fall.

The eight installments were released on a weekly basis during Summer 2021 as the school division counted down to back-to-school. The installments, which were less than :20 in length, were edited to include a consistent opening title card, music and closing.

Evaluation

Collectively, these videos were viewed more than 30,000 times on Facebook. The Superintendent’s Announcement garnered 7,000 views on Facebook and an additional 3,600 views on Vimeo. The individual installments received the following number of views on Facebook:

- The arts–2,400
- Pep rallies–5,100
- Friends–3,300
- Community service–1,900
- Football–1,800
- Band–3,600
- Sports–3,500
- Mascots–2,100

The campaign fulfilled our communications goal of putting a positive focus on the rich student experiences outside the classroom that make school fun and memorable.

Supporting Materials:

These are links to the full series of videos on our Vimeo channel.

- School is...
- School is the arts
- School is pep rallies
- School is mascots
- School is marching band
- School is community service
- School is friends
- School is sports
- School is football games