

on Call



## Communication Counselors on Call

An Exclusive Partnership Between the  
Virginia Association of School Superintendents  
and Hunter Communications



Launched in 2016, this exclusive, on-demand service for Virginia school divisions is offered to only members of the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS). **Communication Counselors on Call** gives superintendents up to two hours of FREE consultation with a talented, seasoned school communication professional from Hunter Communications who will listen, advise and work with the superintendent toward mapping a plan for success, no matter how complex the issue.



### Why Is This Service Needed?

A critical need for superintendents is having professional communications support to help them build positive relationships and communicate clearly with their target audiences, including the local media, families, employees, students and the wider community. Without professional communications support, especially in the case of a crisis, school divisions are apt to make mistakes and unwittingly damage the positive relationships they seek with their stakeholders. With a seasoned professional at their side, superintendents can be confident that their strategy is effective and their messages are on target.



### How Does It Work?

A member of the Hunter Communications team will meet with the superintendent in person or virtually through a video conference tool (such as Skype) to assess, advise and provide guidance in specific areas. Depending on the needs of the superintendent and school division, this free consultation may cover one or more of the following areas, but is not limited to:

- Bond referendum campaigns and strategies
- Crisis communications counsel, such as for bus accidents, bomb threats and school disruptions
- Social media content strategies, including for Facebook and Twitter
- Publications, including annual reports, newsletters, student handbooks and more
- Website effectiveness
- Speechwriting and presentations
- Media relations, including pre-interview preps and on-camera training
- Communications for special initiatives, such as for back-to-school campaigns, redistricting, budget, and strategic plan rollouts
- Internal communications strategies, such as for employee newsletters and intranet content
- Community engagement strategies, especially on school system change such as boundaries or school start times
- Assistance with Freedom of Information Act issues
- Communication audit counsel

Following the free consultation session and depending on the complexity of the issues, Hunter Communications may make recommendations to the superintendent for additional consultation and services, for which the superintendent has the option of contracting directly with Hunter Communications.

### About Hunter Communications



Hunter Communications is headed by Barbara M. Hunter, APR, who since 1987, has led school districts and non-profit organizations in achieving excellence in communications. Barbara has served a total of 14 years as the chief communications officer in two school districts—Fairfax County Public Schools and Alexandria City Public Schools, both in Northern Virginia. In those districts she was a cabinet member for four superintendents with whom she strategized and advised on critical issues.

Today, she is president of Hunter Communications which provides school leaders with strategic solutions with one aim in mind: To create positive relationships between school divisions and their communities, families, and employees that ultimately support student achievement and the goals of the school division. As a leader with a local and national reputation for knowledge and experience, Barbara has earned multiple awards for her work, including the profession's highest—the Silver Anvil Award of Excellence from the Public Relations Society of America for a community engagement campaign on changing school start times in Fairfax County. Read more about her and her team at [www.huntercomm.biz](http://www.huntercomm.biz).

### How to Arrange for Your Free Consultation

To take advantage of this opportunity, VASS member superintendents may contact VASS Executive Director Ben Kiser at [b.kiser@vassonline.org](mailto:b.kiser@vassonline.org) or 804-815-7661 or Barbara Hunter at [bhuntercomm@gmail.com](mailto:bhuntercomm@gmail.com) or 703-863-8025.

