

ASPIRE Communication Plan



ASPIRE
Encouraging higher education for everyone.

OVERVIEW

Oregonians are blessed to have had visionary leaders who saw the need for educated citizens and took steps to ensure that Oregon high school students had every opportunity to receive education beyond high school. Legislators created the Oregon Student Access Commission (OSAC) in 1959 to develop programs that helped students further their education.

One of OSAC's programs is ASPIRE, which stands for Access to Student assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone. ASPIRE matches trained and supportive adult volunteer mentors with middle, high school, and community college students to develop a plan to help them meet their training and education goals beyond high school. In sites around the state, ASPIRE mentors also help guide students through the process of applying for and finding money to pay for postsecondary education.

Effective communication with a variety of audiences is a keystone of the ASPIRE program. Since each ASPIRE site and community are different, this communication plan provides an outline of approaches for various audiences rather than an overly prescriptive formula.

The plan is divided into two sections. Section 1 aims to help local ASPIRE site coordinators communicate with their local community, parents, students, and potential and existing volunteers. Section 2 provides guidance for the ASPIRE main office to communicate with state leaders and ASPIRE sites.

The ASPIRE program will benefit greatly by working from the bottom up:

1. Inspire students (Section 1)
2. Document results and stories (Section 1)
3. Share the results with decision makers (Section 2)

Please note the messaging matrices in Appendix A of this plan. It is also recommended that you reference the ASPIRE Style Guide, which provides detailed information about social media and public relations.

We recommend that you build a custom communication plan for your program based on the content of this communication plan, the ASPIRE Style Guide, and other resources in your community.

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SECTION 1: COMMUNICATIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

The following communication approaches, often called communication channels, are aimed at specific target audiences. Most of the approaches listed below do not require a dedicated communications budget. Communications approaches that do depend on a budget are indicated with an asterisk. Keep in mind that you might be able to find business sponsors or others to help pay for these costs.

Effective communication depends on repetition and consistency. You need to state your case over and over again for it to be heard. It is also important that the timing of your communications match what interests your audience has at any given moment. To aid you in planning, we have included a general “Key Messages” calendar that suggests seasonally appropriate messages for your key audiences.

1. COMMUNICATIONS TO STUDENTS

Students are a key audience for the ASPIRE program. They are the reason the program exists, so it is critical to engage them early and often.

a. Student communication objectives

- Ensure that every student is aware of the ASPIRE program.
- Generate interest and excitement among students to encourage their participation in ASPIRE.
- Create an image of ASPIRE as a welcoming program open to all.
- Encourage every student to talk with an ASPIRE site coordinator.

b. How to approach students (communication channels)

- Public address announcements.
- In-class announcements by teachers.
- ASPIRE listserv.
- Sports banners*.
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

- Clubs and church youth groups.
 - Sport team meetings.
 - Bulletin boards at music venues.
 - Agencies and organizations that serve youth, such as community centers, recreation centers, health clinics, etc.
 - Posters in school library and other common areas.
- * = Requires funding.

c. Frequency of communication

Ideally, students should receive a communication from ASPIRE at least once a month. For successful awareness, several messages clustered together in short bursts are more effective than evenly spaced messaging. In other words, ensure that students hear or see a coordinated set of messages through several different communication channels in a concentrated period of time, followed by a short period of no communication, and then another burst of multi-media communication. This “pulsed messaging” is more effective than a steady, once-a-month messaging strategy. This activity might resemble the following sample schedule:

Week 1

- Public address announcements.
- In-class announcements by teachers.
- Clubs and church youth groups posters.
- Meeting announcements by sport team coaches.

Weeks 2-4

- No messaging.

Week 5

- Public address announcements.
- In-class announcements by teachers.
- ASPIRE listserv.
- Sports banners*.
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
- Sport team meetings.
- Bulletin boards at music venues.

Weeks 6-9

- No messaging.

This pattern then continues over the course of the school year. Some communication channels, such as permanent posters and banners, should stay up throughout the year to serve as reinforcement for the pulsed messaging activity.

d. Communications samples

Your Coordinator Handbook and the Pocket Planner recommend timing of specific communications throughout the year. These recommended messages are time-specific and are often related to certain deadlines. For deadline reminders, communications should be very specific and repeated frequently in advance of the deadlines.

An example of a public address system announcement, intended to encourage students to talk to an ASPIRE site coordinator, might be written like this:

“Attention students; life doesn’t end after high school. Do you know what’s next for you? Take control of your life by signing up for an appointment at the ASPIRE desk in the school library. A few minutes can help you see what’s ahead and help you find a mentor to guide you. We look forward to seeing you.”

A hand-made poster in a visible location promoting the ASPIRE program might read:

Take Control of Your Life.
(Photo from ASPIRE photo library)
The future is in your hands.
Come to the ASPIRE desk in the Resource Room
and find out how you can get ahead of the game.
You deserve the best that life can offer.

(ASPIRE logo)
(Desk hours)

The ASPIRE Style Guide provides sample text for communicating with students via email, Facebook, and Twitter (pages 14-33).

2. COMMUNICATIONS TO PARENTS

Parental involvement is a key factor in the success of the ASPIRE program. Parents can encourage their children to participate and they are a great potential source of mentors.

a. Parent communication objectives

- Ensure that parents are aware of the ASPIRE program and its function.
- Encourage parents to build interest and excitement among their children to participate in ASPIRE.
- Create an image of ASPIRE as a welcoming program for all parents and potential mentors.
- Encourage parents to recommend that their child talk with an ASPIRE site coordinator.

b. How to approach parents (communication channels)

- ASPIRE listserv.
- Parent-teacher events.
- Sporting events.
- Printed material sent home with students.
- Mail.
- Newspaper: advertisement*, press releases, letters to the editor and opinion editorials (op-eds).
- Churches.
- Clubs.
- Bulletin boards.
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

* = Requires funding.

c. Frequency of communication

Parents should receive a bi-weekly communication from ASPIRE during the first two months of the school year, and a monthly communication at a minimum during the rest of the school year. As is the case when communicating with students, parents should see a coordinated set of messages about ASPIRE in several different channels of communication. Communications to parents might resemble the following sample schedule:

Week 1

- Note sent home with students with a call to action; a request that parents provide their email address to the ASPIRE site coordinator for online communication. Those that don't have email can be reached by postcard.
- Posters at parent-teacher events.
- Posters at churches, grocery stores, and other gathering places.
- Public service announcements in local newspapers, radio, and TV.
- Posters at sporting events.

Week 2

- No messaging.

Week 3

- Reminder postcards sent home to parents who have not submitted their emails.
- Email to parents thanking them for providing their contact information and updating them about the program.

Week 4

- No messaging.

Week 5

- Correspondence about the program, including upcoming events or deadlines.

Week 6

- No messaging.

Week 7

- Correspondence about the program, including upcoming events or deadlines.

This pattern then continues over the course of the school year, diminishing in frequency while still reminding parents of relevant deadlines. Permanent posters and banners should stay up throughout the year to serve as reinforcement for the messaging.

d. Communications samples

Your Coordinator Handbook and the Pocket Planner recommend timing of specific communications throughout the year. These recommended messages are time-specific and often are related to certain deadlines. For deadline reminders, communications should be very specific and repeated frequently in

advance of the deadlines.

An example of an initial parent correspondence, on an 8.5" x 11" sheet sent home with a student, might look like this:

Give Your Student a Head Start With ASPIRE

It's never too early to start looking ahead to the future after high school. Start your student on the road to success by encouraging him or her to visit the ASPIRE site coordinator [in the school library]. There, students will find a trained volunteer who can introduce them to the possibilities ahead and help them determine how to accomplish their goals.

ASPIRE is a program funded by the State of Oregon. ASPIRE matches trained volunteer mentors with students to help students find and access opportunities beyond high school. Trained volunteer mentors work individually with students to help them discover training and educational opportunities and find ways to pay for those opportunities.

To learn more, contact:

3. COMMUNICATIONS TO TEACHERS AND COUNSELORS

Teachers and counselors are always interested in the success of their students. Because of their daily contact with both students and parents, they are also key links in the communication process. It is important that both the school principal and the ASPIRE site coordinator remind teachers and counselors frequently about the ASPIRE program and its benefits to all students.

a. Teacher and counselor communication objectives

- Ensure that teachers and counselors are aware of the ASPIRE program's existence, benefits and function.

- Encourage teachers to build interest and excitement among their students to participate in ASPIRE.
- Encourage counselors to work with the ASPIRE site coordinator to give students the best possible future outcome.
- Position ASPIRE as a fun and easy program open to all students.
- Encourage their students to talk with an ASPIRE site coordinator.

b. How to approach teachers and counselors (communication channels)

- Email.
- Direct contact.
- Staff meetings.
- In-box printed communications.
- Bulletin boards and break room postings.

c. Frequency of communication

Teachers and counselors should receive communications from the ASPIRE site coordinator or the school principal frequently in the first two months of the school year and at least monthly during the school year. As is the case with all communication initiatives, teachers, and counselors should see a coordinated set of messages about ASPIRE through several different channels of communication. A communication schedule for teachers and counselors might look something like the following sample:

Week 1

- Announcement and flyers provided to teachers and counselors at the in-service days prior to students' return.
- Posters in break room and teachers lounge.
- Posters in principal's office.
- Regular email reminders.

Week 2

- No messaging.

Week 3

- Email reminders .

- In-box reminders.

Weeks 4-5

- No messaging.

Week 6

- Correspondence about the program, including upcoming events or deadlines.

Week 7

- No messaging.

Week 8

- Correspondence about the program, including upcoming events or deadlines.

This pattern then continues over the course of the school year, diminishing in frequency while still reminding teachers and counselors of relevant deadlines. Permanent posters and banners should stay up throughout the year to serve as reinforcement for the messaging.

d. Communications samples

Your Coordinator Handbook and the Pocket Planner have recommended timing of specific communications throughout the year. These recommended messages are time-specific and often are related to certain deadlines. For deadline reminders, communications should be very specific and repeated frequently in advance of the deadlines.

An example of an initial correspondence, on an 8.5" x 11" sheet in each teacher and counselor in-box, might look like this:

The ASPIRE Program is Off and Running!

This year's ASPIRE site coordinator is [name here] and is ready to start helping our students prepare for life after high school. You can do your part by reminding your students about the ASPIRE program and its benefits.

As you probably know, ASPIRE is a program funded by the State of Oregon. ASPIRE matches trained, volunteer mentors with students to help students

find and access opportunities beyond high school.

Trained volunteer mentors work individually with students to help them discover training and educational opportunities and find ways to pay for those opportunities.

If you have questions about ASPIRE, contact:

4. COMMUNICATIONS TO MENTORS

One of the roles of the ASPIRE site coordinator is to be an inspiring leader to mentors. Mentors have busy lives with demands that pull them in many directions. To help maintain their enthusiasm and remind them of key deadlines and events, your communication should be consistent and positive.

a. Mentor communication objectives

- Keep mentors informed and engaged about deadlines, opportunities and other information.
- Ensure that mentors are helping their students stay up-to-date with applicable deadlines.
- Coordinate the sharing of useful tips among mentors.

b. How to approach mentors (communication channels)

- Email.
- Mail or phone.
- Direct contact.

c. Frequency of communication

Communication frequency should be as necessary to ensure that deadlines are met and relevant information is timely.

d. Communication sources

Your Coordinator Handbook and the Pocket Planner recommend timing of specific communications throughout the year. These recommended messages are time-specific and often are related to certain deadlines. For deadline reminders, communications of a deadline should be very specific and should be

repeated frequently in advance of the deadlines.

5. COMMUNICATIONS TO POTENTIAL MENTORS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The success of the ASPIRE program depends on having a sufficient supply of mentors. Ensuring this supply is a critical function of the ASPIRE site coordinator. It is also important to have community support in general. The community is your source of mentors and community goodwill is important in garnering political support, sponsorships, and donations for operation and marketing.

Potential mentors come from all walks of life. Some are parents of children at the school while others might be retired. Some may have no direct connection to your school: they might be business people, church or service club members, or community volunteers. To ensure that you have a good supply of mentors, you should cast your net far and wide in your community.

Remember that local businesses and media are happy to have their names attached to uplifting programs that help youth. The ASPIRE program has great potential for sponsor support.

a. Prospective mentors and local community communication objectives

- Ensure that people are aware of the ASPIRE program's existence, benefits and function.
- Build community pride, goodwill, interest and excitement in order to encourage community participation in ASPIRE.
- Encourage potential mentors to contact the ASPIRE site coordinator.
- Encourage potential sponsors to contact the ASPIRE site coordinator.
- Raise the visibility and reputation of the ASPIRE program in order to gain financial sponsors.
- Engage the community in educating target audiences about the value of postsecondary training and education.

b. How to approach potential mentors and the local community

- Email to school parents, community partners, churches, and service clubs.
- Parent-teacher events.
- Sporting events (banners*, public address system).
- Printed material sent home with students.
- Website banner ads*.
- Newspaper: advertisements*, press releases, letters to the editor and opinion editorials (op-eds).
- Radio and television PSAs (Public Service Announcements).
- Churches.
- Service clubs.
- Agencies and organizations that serve the community, such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Junior League, the Assistance League, community and recreation centers, United Way, etc.
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
- Face-to-face meetings with potential sponsors or media sponsors.

* = Requires funding.

c. Frequency of communication

Because most people lead busy lives and because there are a multitude of communication channels, communications should be as consistent as possible. This means trying to gain visibility in TV, newspaper, radio, Internet, posters, and every other free or sponsored (paid) media. Set aside time each week to focus on contacting the media or potential sponsors.

The best ways to build visibility in the community are by:

- Focusing on connecting with local media to run stories about ASPIRE. Reporters and editors are more likely to write stories based on information from people they already know.
- Soliciting in-kind sponsors that can support the program through advertising, banners, and posters.

- Building an email list of community groups willing to include your information in their mailed or electronic newsletters. For example, the city manager of a small coastal town in Oregon sends a weekly newsletter to a wide-range of individuals and groups and is often willing to include community information in his communications.
- Being persistent. Make sure that you build and nurture relationships. Stay in touch with your ASPIRE connections.

d. Communications samples

Because there are so many ways to connect with these diverse audiences and each communication channel is different, there is no single solution for all audiences. What is important is to keep your messages consistent across channels. Make sure that you include a specific call to action with each communication. This call to action will usually be to contact the ASPIRE site coordinator.

An example of a poster, using imagery from the ASPIRE photo library, to hang in shop windows might read like this:

Helping a Student is Helping Our Town

We need you to help ensure a better life after high school for our local students. Become an ASPIRE mentor and help guide young people to a positive future. It's not hard work and to ensure your success, we'll train you for this rewarding volunteer position.

We guarantee that you'll feel good about your contribution to our local youth.

ASPIRE is a program funded by the State of Oregon.

ASPIRE matches trained volunteer mentors with students to help students find and access opportunities beyond high school. Trained volunteer mentors work individually with students to help them discover training and educational opportunities and find ways to pay for those opportunities.

Contact [name here], ASPIRE site coordinator for
[school here] at [phone and email here]

ASPIRE logo/School logo

6. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE MEDIA

The ASPIRE program is full of good stories and news of interest to the community. The media like stories about overcoming obstacles, of people doing unusual or unexpected things, and of volunteers who give of their time to help others succeed. For example, a story could highlight ASPIRE graduates who pursued postsecondary education because of the support of community volunteers, parents, and the local ASPIRE site coordinator. Another story could profile someone who is the first in his or her family to attend college or trade school.

a. Media communication objectives

- Suggest stories to busy reporters.
- Ensure that the community is aware of the ASPIRE program's existence, benefits and function.
- Encourage potential mentors and sponsors to get involved with ASPIRE.
- Ensure that the ASPIRE program is part of the community fabric and a source of community pride.
- Position ASPIRE as a fun and easy program open to all students.
- Encourage parents and relatives to have their students participate in the program.

b. How to approach the media

- Direct contact.
- Email.
- Press releases and opinion articles (also known as op-eds) followed by direct contact to editors and reporters.

c. Frequency of communication

Building a relationship with the media takes time and persistence. You want to draw attention to your

program, while being careful not to over-saturate reporters and editors with information. When you think you have an interesting story, you should contact the reporter by email, or preferably by phone. When there are important events like an informational meeting, send an electronic press release with the pertinent information. Remember that reporters tend to shorten press releases from the bottom, up, so put the most important information at the top.

d. Communications samples

Your Coordinator Handbook and the Pocket Planner include recommended timing of specific communications throughout the year that might be relevant to the general community. Communications of a deadline should include specific reminders of the upcoming dates.

The Style Guide, page 29, provides a general format for press releases, but content varies depending on the message. An example of a press release might look like this:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information:
Jennifer Smith, ASPIRE site coordinator
jen@xxxhighschool.edu
P: 503.123.4567

Community Volunteers Sought

(YOUR TOWN), Ore.—(date)—(Name of school/organization) seeks volunteer mentors for the school's ASPIRE program. ASPIRE is a program funded in part by the State of Oregon. ASPIRE matches trained volunteer mentors with students to help students find and access opportunities beyond high school. Trained volunteer mentors work individually with students to help them discover training and educational opportunities and find ways to pay for those opportunities. Being an ASPIRE mentor is an important, fun, and rewarding experience.

There will be a one-hour meeting in the school

gymnasium at 5:30 PM, Tuesday, April 9, 2013, to describe the ASPIRE program and the role of mentors in its success. Everyone is invited to attend.

The ASPIRE program operates in more than 140 high schools in Oregon. It is a model of public/private cooperation aimed at improving the lives of all Oregonians. ASPIRE is a collaboration of teachers, counselors, and volunteers who help students receive information and guidance to access postsecondary training and education opportunities. The program engages more than 1,500 volunteers and reaches over 8,000 students in Oregon per year. You can learn more about ASPIRE on the ASPIRE website at: <http://oregonstudentaid.gov/aspire.aspx>

(Name of school/organization) is located at 1000 Main Street in (Your town). Refreshments will be provided.

7. COMMUNICATIONS TO LOCAL OFFICIALS

Local elected and appointed officials are an important audience for ASPIRE communications. Because they are active in the community, they can be very effective advocates for the program. In addition, they are often connected to state officials who are important to future funding of the program. Local officials most often have good access to the media and can be important conduits to reporters and editors.

a. Local official communication objectives

- Ensure that the community is aware of the ASPIRE program's existence, benefits and function.
- Encourage potential mentors and sponsors to get involved with ASPIRE.
- Ensure that the ASPIRE program is part of the community fabric and a source of community pride.
- Encourage local officials to advocate for funding for the program.
- Encourage constituents to have their students participate in the program.

b. How to approach local officials

- Email.
- Mail.
- Direct contact.
- Newspaper: Opinion editorials and letters to the editor (elected officials pay close attention to editorials and letters to the editor).

c. Frequency of communication

The objective of communicating with elected and appointed officials is to maintain a top-of-mind presence. Be sure to communicate with them at least four times a year, or more if you have relevant information for them. Furthermore, don't hesitate to ask them to use their influence to help you achieve specific goals.

8. SUCCESS MEASURES FOR LOCAL COMMUNICATIONS

Ultimately the most important measure of success for communications is the number of students receiving counseling from an ASPIRE mentor or site coordinator in a given year. Measuring your communication efforts each year, beginning with a benchmark year, can help you set goals for enhancing your communications in following years. Your commitment to measurement also helps ASPIRE's statewide office to show state officials the amount of effort provided by staff and volunteers toward program success.

Here are a few useful measures for communication efforts that you could track:

1. Number of unique student contacts.
 - Start the first year with a baseline and try to build the number to 100% of students in your school.
2. Number of communication initiatives in the calendar, fiscal, or school year.
 - Number of emails sent.

- Number of posters hung.
 - Number of personal contacts with students, parents, potential sponsors, and community members.
 - Number of presentations to staff or to the public.
 - Number of contacts with the media.
3. Number of mentions of ASPIRE in the media:
- Set up Google Alerts for ASPIRE and keep a record of mentions. For your site, you might put, "ASPIRE AND (your city)" as one search term. You could also set up a Google Alert for "ASPIRE AND (the name of your school)" as a second search term.
 - Clip articles about ASPIRE from your local newspaper.
4. Number of parent contacts:
- Keep track of the number of parents that you contact and that contact you.
5. Number of public views or contacts:
- If you hang banners or posters at sports stadiums or other public places, you should be able to estimate how many people saw them.
 - If a local radio or TV station airs a public service announcement, you can get an estimate from the station of how many people were listening.
 - Media websites also have data on the number of people visiting their site. They can share this data with you.

SECTION 2: COMMUNICATIONS AT THE STATE LEVEL

Objectives

- Create and sustain awareness of ASPIRE with legislators and relevant Executive Branch personnel.
- Create awareness with relevant federal officials.
- Educate target audiences about the value of postsecondary training and education.
- Build brand equity for the ASPIRE program.
- Maintain a positive communication flow with legislators and relevant Executive Branch personnel.
- Create awareness with key editors and reporters.

Target Audiences

- Federal officials: includes Congressmen, Senators, their education staff, and any federal officials who have authority over relevant grants.
- State officials: includes legislators and education officials in relevant state agencies.
- Statewide media.
- Foundations and grantors.

Approach

Work with ASPIRE site coordinators to collect success stories and facts about the positive impact of the ASPIRE program on the State of Oregon. Compile into a concise, attractive report and distribute to elected officials and funders.

1. Approach federal officials via:
 - Email: See contact information here: <http://bluebook.state.or.us/national/index.htm>.
 - Mail: See contact information here: <http://bluebook.state.or.us/national/index.htm>.
 - Local district offices: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>.
2. Approach state officials via:
 - Email.
 - Direct contact. See <http://bluebook.state.or.us/state/legis/legis.htm> for office contact information to set up meetings.

- Mail. See <http://bluebook.state.or.us/state/legis/legis.htm> for office contact information to set up meetings.

3. Approach statewide media via:

- Direct contact.
- Email.
- Electronic press releases or opinion editorials in the newspaper, followed by direct contact.

4. Approach foundations and grantors via:

- Direct contact.
- Email.
- Formal Letters of Inquiry.

Background Information

For a general framework for communications, refer to the Appendix A: Positioning Matrix. The following supplemental information includes important facts to supplement the overall message.

- **WHO**

ASPIRE is a collaboration of teachers, counselors, and more than 1,500 volunteers who help an average of 8,000 students receive information and guidance to access postsecondary training and education opportunities each year. Studies show that ASPIRE sites serve students who are more economically disadvantaged than non-ASPIRE sites, and program participants are more likely to attend college as a result of participating in the program.

- **WHAT**

ASPIRE is one of the marquee programs funded by the State of Oregon. It is a critical part of our state's economic development and social services strategies. Educated citizens are key to a vibrant state. By matching trained volunteer mentors with students to help find and access opportunities beyond high school, this program is a very cost-effective use of taxpayer money. This state program is popular on both sides of the aisle.

- **WHEN**

The ASPIRE program operates in the participating schools and organizations throughout the school year.

- **WHERE**

ASPIRE is operating in over 140 high schools and middle schools throughout the state and plans to increase that number each year.

- **WHY**

ASPIRE is one of the primary strategies to implement the Governor's education initiative of "40-40-20, Oregon Learns". This visionary goal is for 40% of Oregonians to hold a bachelors degree, 40% to hold an associate degree, and 20% to hold a high school diploma. Because the average student-to-counselor ratio is 500:1 in Oregon, this program fills a critical gap. After implementing ASPIRE, many high schools have experienced an increase in their college-bound rates by 10% to 80%.

- **HOW**

Trained volunteer mentors work individually with students to help them discover training and educational opportunities and find ways to pay for those opportunities. This approach builds community and helps students and their parents.

Timeline/Calendar

The best time to communicate with legislators is during the summer months, before the legislative session begins. They have more time to meet with people in their district between active sessions. Once the session gets started, their time is much more limited.

Success Measures

It is important to stay pro-actively visible with state legislators on a consistent basis, rather than waiting until there are pressing budget issues. ASPIRE's

objectives in communication with state officials is to stay visible and relevant.

Staying in touch with the media is beneficial for both informing your various target markets about the ASPIRE program and for reminding public officials of the program's viability and importance to the state.

Successful communication at the state level can be measured in a number of ways, such as:

1. Number of target-market public officials reached through your efforts in a given time period; for example, one year.

- Direct contact/lobbying (Direct, face-to-face contact is generally more effective than email or letters, though the latter are far better than no contact.).
- Emails.
- E-newsletters.
- Invitations for site visits.
- Letters.

2. Number of media mentions in a given time period.

- Set up Google Alerts for "ASPIRE AND Oregon" and keep a record of mentions.
- Subscribe to a clipping service such as Vocus.com or Allen's PCB.

3. Number of grant applications submitted and number of communications with potential grantors

KEY MESSAGES FROM ASPIRE SITE COORDINATORS TO LOCAL COMMUNITY				
Month	Students/Parents	Mentors	Media, Community Organizations and Partners*	Site Staff
Sept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join ASPIRE. • Register for SAT/ACT. • Investigate options and deadlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Mentor Orientation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media: Student success story. • Community organizations to recruit students, mentors, request to be a speaker . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer students. • Schedule presentations. • Attend Staff Meeting. • Coordinate with School Open House.
Oct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet mentors. • Work on applications and essays. • Request recommendation letters. • Research college fair dates and locations. • Attend school open houses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin meeting with students. • Attend ASPIRE Fall Conference, highlight success stories! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Partners: Attend ASPIRE Fall Conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer students. • Conduct presentations.
Nov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Financial Aid Night and College Night events. • Do FAFSA forecaster. • Edit college essays. • Start researching scholarships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Financial Aid Night. • Create a test OSAC Scholarship Application. 		
Dec.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start OSAC scholarship application. • Submit college applications. • Prep for FAFSA submission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with students. 		
Jan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit FAFSA online. • Submit college applications. • Apply for scholarships. • Attend College Goal Oregon event. • Juniors: Join ASPIRE, register for SAT/ACT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media: Early-acceptance success story. • Community organizations: link to media article. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for referrals, suggestions for specific students to contact.

KEY MESSAGES FROM ASPIRE SITE COORDINATORS TO LOCAL COMMUNITY				
Month	Students/Parents	Mentors	Media, Community Organizations and Partners*	Site Staff
Feb.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit OSAC scholarship application due February 15th or March 1st. • Apply for scholarships. • Check on submitted college applications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with students. 		
Mar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit colleges over spring break (preview days and open houses). • Apply for summer internships/apprenticeships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with students. 		
Apr.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review award letters and assess financial aid options. • Complete ASPIRE Evaluation Survey. • Recruit incoming parents of freshmen as mentors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share success stories, identify students to encourage writing about their ASPIRE experience. • Meet with students. 		
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide! • Research and confirm housing. • Apply for summer job/volunteer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit ASPIRE Evaluation Survey, including written reflection by student about ASPIRE experience. • Meet with students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media: Student success story. • Partners and Community organizations: Recruit mentors. 	
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sr: Congratulations, request final transcripts, send thank you notes to mentors. • Jr., Soph., Frosh.: Join ASPIRE next year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you. 		

* Definition of Terms:

ASPIRE Community Partners: Agencies and organizations that contribute significantly toward the program in terms of funding or volunteers

Community Organizations: Local groups fall into two categories:

1. Service Organizations that raise money and contribute volunteers toward community projects. Examples: Rotary, Kiwanis, Zontas, and City Clubs. ASPIRE requests volunteers and financial contributions from these groups.
2. Non-Profit organizations that provide services to youth. ASPIRE asks these organizations for help involving students in the program.

SECTION 2: KEY MESSAGES FROM ASPIRE TO DECISION MAKERS			
When	Elected Officials (State and Federal)	Grantors and Foundations	State Media
Legislative Year (2013)	Summer: Meet personally with select legislators. Fall: Distribute success stories. Jan-Feb legislative session.		Fall: Success stories and ASPIRE facts.
Non-Legislative Year (2014)	Summer: Develop and produce success stories document.	Fall: Distribute success stories to foundations and individual grantors, follow up with a courtesy call to foundation administrators and individual donors.	Spring: Success stories and ASPIRE facts.

Background: The State of Oregon has a Citizen Legislature consisting of the Senate, whose 30 members are elected to serve four-year terms, and the House of Representatives, which has 60 members elected for two-year terms.

The Legislature convenes annually in February at the State Capitol in Salem, but sessions may not exceed 160 days in odd-numbered years and 35 days in even-numbered years. Five-day extensions are allowed by a two-thirds vote in each house. In odd-numbered years, the Legislative Assembly convenes on the second Monday in January, to swear-in newly elected officials, elect legislative leaders, adopt rules, organize and appoint committees, and begin introducing bills.

http://www.leg.state.or.us/bills_laws/genInfo/2012Calendar.pdf

APPENDIX A: ASPIRE POSITIONING MATRIX

Positioning Statement: Encouraging higher education for everyone.

ASPIRE TRUTHS	Accessible	Resourceful	Committed
KEY MESSAGES	We feel that all students, regardless of background, should have the resources and encouragement to continue their education and training after high school.	We provide mentoring, resources, and education to students and families about postsecondary options.	We offer group and one-on-one mentoring to help guide students through the process of achieving goals after high school.
PROOF POINTS	<p>ASPIRE encourages all students to further their education, set goals, and achieve career dreams.</p> <p>ASPIRE does not exclude students based on GPA, racial or ethnic backgrounds, nor is it directed toward a specific education option.</p> <p>ASPIRE works with each student’s individual goals whether they include vocational/technical careers, apprenticeships, private college, community college, or university.</p> <p>ASPIRE has over 140 sites across Oregon with plans for extensive growth.</p>	<p>ASPIRE helps students explore all postsecondary options including apprenticeships, college (university and community), technical schools, certificate schools, and military.</p> <p>The ASPIRE mentors guide students through a path to postsecondary education by offering guidance on exploring career options and selecting the right schools.</p> <p>ASPIRE gives students the resources to stay on-track with necessary deadlines including those for financial aid, testing, scholarships, and college applications.</p>	<p>ASPIRE mentors are trained community volunteers many of whom are parents or guardians of students, professionals or first-generation college graduates.</p> <p>The ASPIRE mentors work in groups at the middle school level and one-on-one at the high school level to guide students through the process of career and postsecondary education selection.</p> <p>The ASPIRE program is unique in the nation as a program offering volunteer mentors to all types of students.</p> <p>ASPIRE mentors walk students through every step of the process including identifying career and interest, applying for scholarships and financial aid, and school selection.</p> <p>ASPIRE engages more than 1,500 volunteers and reaches over 8,000 students.</p>
SOUND BITES	“We believe all students should have access to further their education after high school.”	“Our mentors work directly with students throughout the entire process of applying for postsecondary education.”	“Our volunteer mentors are committed to helping each student achieve success beyond high school.”
ELEVATOR PITCH	“ASPIRE, funded by the state of Oregon and free to students, is committed to ensuring all students have the inspiration, guidance, and resources to further their education beyond high school.”		



ASPIRE

Encouraging higher education for everyone.