

MEMORANDUM

To: Coalition Communities 2.0 Joint Board

From: Jim Merrill, Bernstein Shur

Date: April 21, 2021

RE: CC 2.0 2021 Communications Plan

I. Overview

The following communications plan is prepared to demonstrate strength and clarity in three areas:

- **Message:** We have discussed the general thrust of CC 2.0 and your advocacy efforts, but a separate meeting is recommended to identify and hone key messaging points and establish a uniform set of talking points.
- **Tools and Organization:** What tools do we wish to deploy to convey our message and engage stakeholders? How do we identify, train and deploy surrogates? What timetables and external events do we care about for our messaging purposes?
- **Logistics and Management:** How we oversee communications efforts day-to-day, setting systems and metrics by which our communications and organizational efforts can be administered most efficiently and effectively.

In addition to touching on these points, the plan set forth below lays out a timetable through the end of 2021, to further develop messaging and communications opportunities as we work through the 2021 legislative session and look ahead to 2022.

II. 2021 Timetable and Plan

As we look at the remainder of 2021, a proposed timeline for CC 2.0 messaging and communications efforts include:

- **April – May 2021:**
 - Approval of web developer and commence development of website
 - Begin developing “Education Funding” one-page explanatory collateral piece
 - Develop Tier 1 opinion leader outreach list

- Facilitated messaging meeting to fine tune and approve key talking points as set forth above
- Publication of op-ed in the *Union Leader* outlining formation of Coalition and purposes behind it
- Review messaging opportunities as education funding issues are discussed in Legislature, to include but not be limited to committee testimony and letters to House and Senate committees and House and Senate leadership
- **May – June 2021:**
 - Analyze remaining education funding bills that remain viable for session for potential messaging opportunities
 - Assess potential strategic alliances and partnerships
 - Begin to identify potential CC 2.0 messaging surrogates – legislative champions, community, business and civic leaders.
 - Begin bi-weekly update communication to CC 2.0 membership
 - Begin developing CC 2.0 social media presence
 - Complete development of website
 - Complete “Education Funding” collateral
 - Continue review of messaging opportunities as education funding issues are discussed in Legislature
 - Continue development of Tier 1 opinion leader outreach list
 - Hold meeting of full CC 2.0 board for update
- **June – July 2021:**
 - Continue identification of potential CC 2.0 messaging surrogates
 - Continue bi-weekly update communication to CC 2.0 membership
 - End of legislative session communication to legislators
 - End of legislative session virtual meet and greet and informational webinar
 - Initiate Tier 1 opinion leader outreach
 - Publication of op-ed in the *New Hampshire Business Review* outlining Coalition purpose, key messaging, and reviewing legislative state of play
 - Review retained and returning bills for messaging opportunities
 - Roll out CC 2.0 social media platforms
- **July – August 2021**
 - Continue Tier 1 opinion leader outreach
 - Continue bi-weekly update communication to CC 2.0 membership
 - Continue review and monitoring of retained and returning bills for messaging opportunities
 - Develop plan for fall regional messaging opportunities – webinars, community speaking opportunities at chambers of commerce, non-profits and editorial boards as examples - and develop proposed schedule and associated slide deck
 - Develop issue survey for mail to and consideration by legislators

- Plan media and messaging training session for identified CC 2.0 surrogates
- **August – September 2021**
 - Complete issue survey and mail to legislators
 - Continue Tier 1 opinion leader outreach
 - Continue and prepare implementation of fall regional messaging plan
 - Continue bi-weekly update communication to CC 2.0 membership
 - Continue review and monitoring of retained and returning bills for messaging opportunities
- **September – October 2021**
 - Continue bi-weekly update communication to CC 2.0 membership
 - Continue review and monitoring of retained and returning bills for messaging opportunities
 - Follow up with legislators on issue survey
 - Hold meeting of full CC 2.0 board for update
 - Implement fall regional messaging effort
 - Publication of op-ed in the *Portsmouth Herald* laying groundwork for 2022
- **October – November 2021**
 - Assess early 2022 bill filings for potential messaging opportunities
 - Continue bi-weekly update communication to CC 2.0 membership
 - Continue and prepare implementation of fall regional messaging plan
 - Hold meeting of full CC 2.0 board for update
- **November – December 2021**
 - Continue assessment of early 2022 bill filings for potential messaging opportunities
 - Conclude fall regional messaging plan
 - Hold meeting of full CC 2.0 board for update and legislative preview
 - Hold “Back to Session” education funding webinar for legislators
 - Publication of op-ed in the *Concord Monitor* setting tone for 2022 session

III. Logistics

In addition to the proactive communications and outreach measures outlined above, CC 2.0 must also be prepared for rapid response needs that will undoubtedly arise from time to time. This will usually come in the form of a media inquiry seeking comment on an emerging issue, typically on a deadline requiring a response within a few hours.

Given the likely exigencies of time associated with an incoming inquiry, and the size of CC 2.0, it may be difficult to quickly achieve consensus among the Joint Board before a statement needs to be issued.

Our procedural recommendations are as follows:

- A. Any media inquiries received by CC 2.0 members concerning CC 2.0 activities or objectives will be forwarded immediately to Jim Merrill of Bernstein Shur.
- B. Merrill will be the on the record spokesman for CC 2.0 in all circumstances.
- C. When a media inquiry is received by Merrill, either directly or as forwarded from a CC 2.0 member, he will:
 - Draft a response on behalf of CC 2.0;
 - Circulate the draft response to the CC 2.0 Joint Board by email for its review
 - Note in the same email the source of the media inquiry and the time deadline in which a response is required
- D. The CC 2.0 Joint Board, having received draft response and information concerning an inquiry, will promptly provide its input concerning the draft response
- E. In those instances where the deadline for a response is within the same day, and the CC 2.0 Joint Board is unable to respond concerning the draft response in a timely fashion, the Chair of the CC 2.0 Joint Board shall be authorized to decide on how and whether CC 2.0 responds.
- F. Upon authorization from either the full CC 2.0 Joint Board, or the Chair alone depending on the exigencies of time, Merrill will issue an approved statement on behalf of the organization.
- G. If timely authorization of a media statement cannot be secured from either the Joint Board or the Joint Board Chair, Merrill may use his discretion to issue a statement without any such prior approval. While good faith efforts will be made to secure prior approval of a statement, the Joint Board recognizes in some instances that may not be possible and that certain responses will become standardized and more easily provided without such approval.

IV. Conclusion

As with any communications plan, this memo sets forth a framework for messaging and engagement over the coming year. However, we recognize from experience that such plans need to be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances or emerging opportunities from time to time. Working with CC 2.0 leadership, we will remain vigilant and engaged, and work to continually promote a dynamic messaging plan that forwards the organizations goals and objectives under all circumstances.