

A top-down view of a wooden desk with various school supplies. In the center is an open notebook with blank lined pages. To the left is a yellow stapler and a patterned cloth. Above the notebook is a bundle of pencils and a yellow pencil. To the right is a row of pens and pencils. The background is a light-colored wooden surface.

Proactive PR: A Punchlist for School Operations Leaders

VASBO Fall Conference

October 22, 2021

California schools are running out of money

Emily Hoeven · 7 hrs ago



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California school districts have two choices: Bite the bullet and make budget cuts now, or delay them and face even more painful decisions.



NEWS > EDUCATION

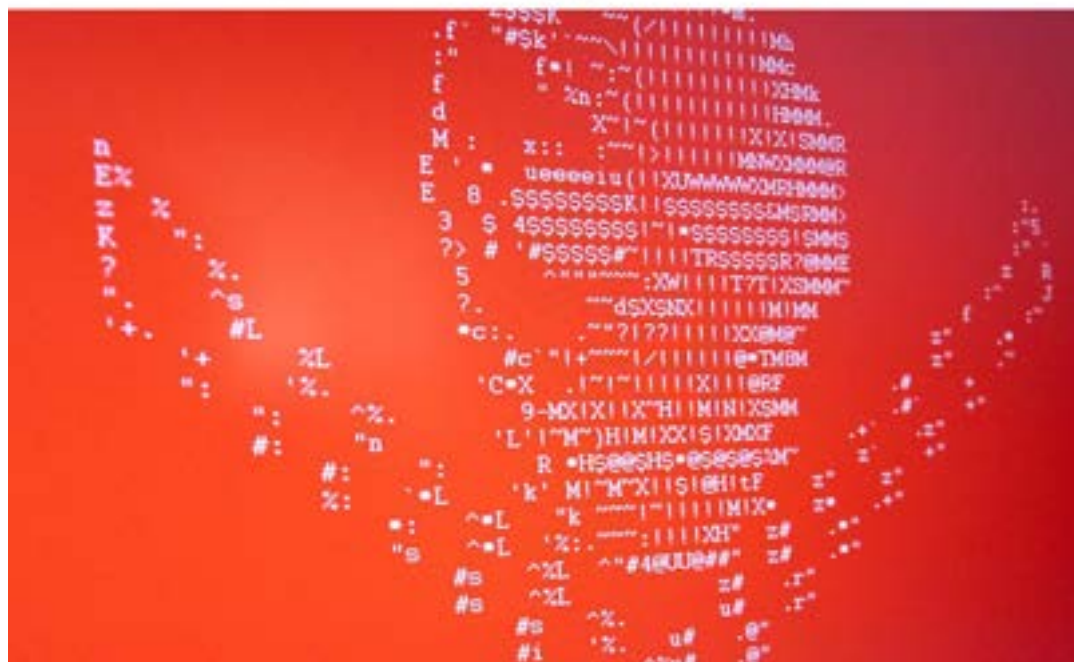
Eight campuses could close in Hayward because of declining enrollment

Declining enrollment and a budget shortfall put schools on the line



CYBERSECURITY

Ransomware actor pressures school district by emailing parents



Written by [Benjamin Freed](#)

OCT 6, 2021 | STATESCOOP

The malicious actors behind a ransomware attack against a school district in Texas attempted to extract payment this week with what one analyst said appears to be an entirely new tactic: emailing parents of students with a threat that if school officials do not pay up, their kids' personal information may be published online.

"We have been reading news and watching the video in the news article ... with feeling of frustration for how your EDUCATION PROVIDER care about your data and personal life," reads the email. "We can understand that they try to fool us, but they do same effective with you."

Allen ISD, which serves nearly 22,000 K-12 students about 30 miles north of Dallas, [acknowledged Sept. 28](#) that it had been the victim of a ransomware breach that earlier in the month disrupted a handful of systems — including the GPS routing software that guides school buses — and brought an extortion attempt threatening the release of staff and students' personal information on the open internet.

Parents are reportedly sneaking \$250 monitors into their kids' schools to test air quality. One company says sales have doubled.

Classroom safety in 2021: It's time to talk CO2



By **BenQ**

Community contribution / October 18, 2021

With many students and staff making their long-awaited return to the classroom, the focus has now shifted to ensuring schools are as safe as possible.

NEW YORK

Former NYC education bigwig arrested in school food corruption scandal

By NOAH GOLDBERG and MICHAEL ELSÉN-ROONEY
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS | SEP 29, 2021 AT 3:22 PM



The Education Department's former food czar served "bribed chicken" at city schools, prosecutors charged Wednesday.

Eric Goldstein, 53, is accused of lining his own pockets through a secret stake in a sketchy food company that in 2016 had its products pulled from city schools after an Education Department staffer choked on a chicken tender with a bone. Executives at the Texas-based company then allegedly paid Goldstein a \$66,670 bribe and Goldstein reintroduced the tenders.

EDUCATION NEWS CHICAGO

CPS says some schools don't meet cleanliness standards, offers workers OT pay to fix problem

"Aramark needs to get custodial crews into the schools over the weekend to get them cleaned and up to CPS standards," the district wrote in an email to building engineers that was obtained by the Sun-Times.

By Nader Issa and Lauren FitzPatrick | Oct 8, 2021, 6:19pm CDT

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Central NY district in dire need of school bus drivers asks state to send in National Guard

Updated: Oct. 20, 2021, 3:21 p.m. | Published: Oct. 20, 2021, 3:20 p.m.



PATERSON PRESS

'Would you eat this?' Paterson BOE wants to fix \$5M lunch program after photos surface

Joe Malinconico Paterson Press

Published 3:54 p.m. ET Sept. 21, 2021 | Updated 4:03 p.m. ET Sept. 21, 2021

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PATERSON — Stomach-turning photos of lunches served last week at Paterson International High School have prompted city Board of Education members to call for changes in the district's \$5 million food services program.

No one was denying the "yuck" factor — or the authenticity — of the photos taken by a student and shared on a parent's social media accounts.

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The picture on the left is "chicken cheese steak". We don't know what's on the right.

Our kids deserve better.



Inside the exhausting start to Washington's school year: COVID outbreaks, school-bus cuts and more

Oct. 11, 2021 at 6:00 am | Updated Oct. 11, 2021 at 5:27 pm



PUBLIC RELATIONS

SOCIAL MEDIA

RADIO & TV

EVENTS

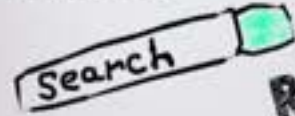
COMMUNICATION

INFORMATION

FEEDBACK

TRUST

REPUTATION



PUNCHLIST

- Reputation Management
- PR Tools & Training
- Working Out of a Jam

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

WHO WE ARE?

WHAT WE DO?



Building Your Brand

- What are you proud of that your community never sees/hears about?
- When I think about what defines [insert division name here], I think about...
- What's something that seems obvious within your division, but the general public seems to misunderstand?



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What are Your Division's Values?

- If you don't have them memorized...go online, look them up & put them on a sticky note on your desk
- Do your values resonate with you?
- How do you live those values?
- How do you ensure your staff live those values?



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Communication & Internal Culture

- Align with your values
 - *Be two way*
 - *Impact behaviors*
 - *Be authentic & purposeful*



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Information vs. Communication



**We are all
bombarded with
information**



**We all are
starved for
meaning**



**Connections are
created through
conversations**



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BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
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Reputation Killers

- Keeping silent
- Inconsistent messaging
- Talking at people
- Delays
- Spinning or massaging the truth
- Using language that is not understood



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Internal & External Reputation Management

- Always be up-front & honest
- If you ask for input truly consider feedback
- Address issues head-on – avoidance makes the issue bigger
- Communicate!



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Perception of Criticism

- When we perceive criticism, rejection or fear “our bodies produce higher levels of neurochemicals that shut down the thinking center of our brains and activate protection behaviors. We become more reactive and sensitive. We often perceive even greater judgment and negativity than actually exists.”

Brent Furl in Big Potential by Shawn Achor



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Connecting with Differing Opinions & Values

- Expect the best
- Approach every interaction believing, “This person has valuable contributions to make and important things to say”
- Show that you understand
- Express empathy – it shows that you respect their core beliefs
- Don’t expect reciprocity – no strings attached



**OVERDRAFT
FEE**



PUNCHLIST

- Reputation Management
- PR Tools & Training
- Working Out of a Jam

Key to Success

- Convenient
- Push, not search
- Personalized
- Timely
- Short
- High impact



Internal Tools



Website



**Social
Media**



Video



Photos



Cell/Phone



Email



Text



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Today's 'Media'



Traditional



Digital



Social



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facebook®

You Tube
Broadcast Yourself





Local schools increase police presence as social media threats from clowns circulate

POSTED 10:30 AM, SEPTEMBER 30, 2016, BY [BECCA MITCHELL](#), UPDATED AT 05:55PM, SEPTEMBER 30, 2016

FACEBOOK 2K+

TWITTER

REDDIT

PINTEREST

LINKEDIN 1

EMAIL



HAMPTON, Va. - What some may see as “clowning around”, police say is no joke.

Raise Your Game

- Use tools strategically
 - *Think: audience, message, content, timing, desired result/action*
- Ask for regular feedback
 - *Listen to what people are saying*
- Learn from others



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Closing the Knowing-Doing Gap

- Consistent education
- Convenience of tools
- Frequent verification to monitor & improve performance

Six Secrets of Change, Michael Fullan



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Professional Learning for ALL Staff

- Bus drivers, cafeteria staff, custodians, maintenance, finance, HR, clerical, IT... **EVERYONE**
- **Topics:**
 - *Customer Service*
 - *Dealing with Difficult People/Situations*
 - *Communicating Effectively*
 - *Who We Are*
 - *Why We Do What We Do*



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Making the Most Out of Limited Time

- Embed into existing meetings & gatherings
- Focus. Focus. Focus.
 - *What do we need to work on? What's the issue?*
- Create opportunities for interaction & role play
- Make it real



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Bus Shortage Leading To Hours-Long Delays For Kids

Categories: News, Local News, KOVRTV, Top Story



Months into the school year, the alarming shortage of school bus drivers is still ongoing. Some parents in the Elk Grove School District now say their kids aren't getting home until late into the evening. The district is just one of many dealing with this issue.

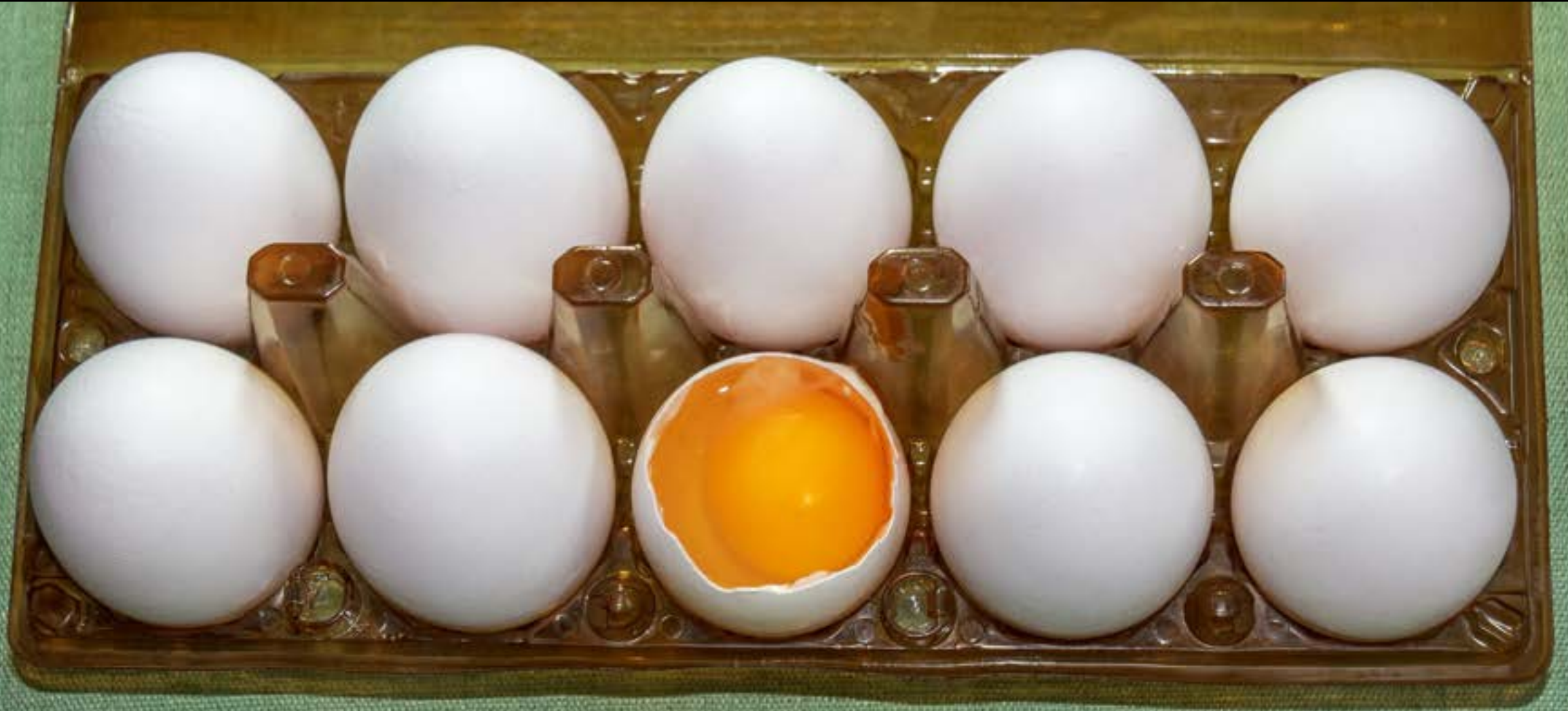


ACCOUNTABILITY

SUCCESS

PUNCHLIST

- Reputation Management
- PR Tools & Training
- Working Out of a Jam



- It's the dozens of daily small decisions that define your overall approach to doing the best, right thing

A pair of glasses with blue frames is visible in the upper left corner, resting on a dark, reflective surface. The surface is covered with numerous small, light-colored wooden blocks. In the center, five blocks are arranged in a row to spell out the word "PAUSE". The background is filled with more blocks, some of which are slightly out of focus.

P

A

U

S

E

Next Steps

- Determine your next steps:
 - *What actions do I need to take to get out of this PR mess and build back trust?*
 - *What actions will help me to be able to function after the crisis has passed?*



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Decision Factors

- Considerations
 - *What happened? Who is affected?*
- Complications
 - *Consequences? Alternatives?*
- Obligations
 - *Laws, safety, integrity, trust...*



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Crisis Communications

- Break your own bad news
- Use your words, not theirs
- Cameras, microphones & cell phones are **NEVER** off
- Know what you plan to say before you have to say it
- Always internal **FIRST**



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Leading & Learning

- If you need a minute, take one – you are human
- Everything will not go right – the goal is to learn from what worked & what didn't
- Debrief and put procedures, training and/or accountability measures in place to prevent the same crisis from reoccurring



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Proactive PR

- Communicate in ways that encourage conversations
- Communicate respectfully
- Follow up and follow through



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PUNCHLIST

- In Progress
- Completed
- Not Started