

J12 Community & Family Engagement Proposal

Prepared for:

Dr. Ben Derges, Superintendent
Tri Valley CUSD 3
410 East Washington St.
Downs, IL 61736
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Date of Proposal: January 29, 2026 Expiration Date of Proposal: March 29, 2026

If you are unable to execute within the proposal expiration window, we will update the proposal. In most cases, there is no cost increase but, occasionally, we may be subject to a postal rate increase or an upward trend in commodity components of the project, such as paper, printing, shipping, etc.

An Overview of the J12 Initiative:

The Linkage Between School Brand Story, Community Engagement, and Student Performance

Every entity, individual, product, or school has a brand identity. Left under-attended by its stewards, brand identity will be shaped by others. Often people with an incomplete, inaccurate, or even negative view of an entity will construct their own mental image of an organizational brand. Negative branding of our institutions is the number one reason for lack of support for and engagement with those institutions. Creating and reinforcing a positive brand is, therefore, an important but often difficult part of good organizational stewardship. Public schools are no different than any other organizational brand.

The best way to lay claim to positive branding, and all its stakeholder-engaging benefits, is to take active accountability for loudly, regularly, and frequently shaping and sharing your best, most positive brand story by engaging those directly involved in the brand experience—students, educators, non-certified staff, alumni, and other community members.

Ultimately, the linkage between school brand perception, community engagement, and student achievement is inextricable. The research on this point is overwhelming and irrefutable, which is why Governors and Statehouses across the country have been encouraging local public schools to more effectively tell their positive stories. Today, grant monies of several stripes are readily available for deepening community engagement which, at its essence, is what story-brand shaping of our public schools is all about: Telling the positive story, restoring trust, creating deeper engagement.

Why Now, and Why Journey12?

Public schools everywhere are finding themselves in uncharted territory with respect to public perception, concerns over curriculum, and pushback on policies which had, for decades, gone unchallenged. Meanwhile, funding formulas too frequently fail to keep pace with new State mandates, and many districts are seeing enrollment shrinkage, resulting in even further State and Federal funding erosion. And, while some see the current teacher shortage as temporary, the fact is, filling these positions has very nearly become a full-time role in and of itself. With all that is going on in public education, it is still the best way to guarantee a quality education to any child from ANY socioeconomic walk. And because well-educated communities are vital to both our local and national future, there is no better time to properly tell the story of public education than now. As important as it is to tell that story, it is equally important to get that story into the right hands, and those hands are those of taxpayers.

Four distinctly unique yet complimentary messaging media formats come together with a highly coordinated professional impact to punch-through the white noise of our time, sharing the stories of student achievement, teacher mentorship, programmatic strengths, alumni success, post-secondary guidance, and administrative leadership. The result is significantly enhanced community engagement resulting from well-established broad, deep, and engaging awareness of the good that is happening in your schools. As Alex Haley, author of 'Roots,' was fond of saying, "*Find the good and praise it,*" and that is precisely what we do throughout the entire year, in meaningful connections with your entire community taxpayer base.

Quarterly Magazine — Your story begins here.

Quarterly magazine features up-close, compelling stories about your students, teachers, alumni, administrators, community volunteers, and programmatic strengths of your schools. These stories are written by our professional education editors and contributors and are designed to share your school's inspiring stories to better engage your community in the depth and breadth of what's happening inside your buildings. These kinds of stories bind the school, its students, and its community together in a way that is unprecedented for most public districts.

As a new awareness begins to take root within your community, unexpected supporters and allies will begin to surface. Current parents will, of course, take particular interest in the deeper stories of their children's school, but it is also likely that typically neutral or even negative voices in the community will begin to align with the school in a more positive fashion. Retirees, grandparents, parents of younger children, and local business owners all have something unique to offer, and Quarterly Magazine presents them with an open door to your school as it shows up in their mailbox multiple times throughout the year.

You may be surprised and either disappointed (or not!) that the effective reach of social media in typical rural American school communities is only 8-11% of all community taxpayers. That doesn't mean that only 8-11% of residents have or participates in social media; that number is significantly higher. It means that the messaging or postings done by or on behalf of a school only resonates with 8-11%. Mind you, we're fans of technology and the leverage it can provide—when it works. Read on to see what we've learned about the engagement leverage of digital versus traditional direct mailed printed magazines. Spoiler alert: It isn't even close.

We interview your chosen local subjects via Zoom and handle all content, design, and production of Quarterly Magazine, distributing a single copy to every household and commercial address in your district in addition to a digital issue we make available to you for inclusion on your website and social media channels. Quarterly is 24-pages, including covers.

Why a magazine? Because amid all the social media white noise, and online content spilling out of our smartphones, a locally relevant, beautifully prepared printed magazine showing-up in a mailbox is far more disruptive and attention grabbing; it gets noticed, it gets read. And people tend to hang on to magazines instead of deleting or scrolling by 98% of the email or social media notifications they receive. The research is clear on this, but we've got dramatic anecdotal evidence we can share as well.

Building on your school's positive brand with inspiring stories is an excellent way to connect with your community and create deeper engagement. It will impact student achievement and outcomes in direct and indirect ways, including broader taxpayer support for ballot referendums.

Community Impact Video — Bringing the audience into your story.

Video is an extraordinarily powerful storytelling medium, and we use it here to tell your big story, as with Quarterly Magazine, through a series of stories, told through the lens of intimate interviews with your team members, students, volunteers, and/or alumni, and magnified with professional 'B-Roll' from within your buildings-in-action. We will build a professional, annual State-of-the-School Community Impact Video you can share through all your digital channels, including social media.

Your Community Impact Video typically runs about 5 minutes in total length and may be edited into separate modular components so that they can be easily split apart from the primary video and used in shorter, more specific applications in your social media messaging. Attention spans are short, so messaging must be relevant. By breaking your Community Impact Video into modular segments, you are far more likely to appeal to the audience you wish to engage, a key feature of good branding and messaging.

Note: This proposal includes no video. To add it, please inquire.

Localized Podcast — Continuing the school community discussion.

Localized podcast content about what's going on across the district offers a great way to keep your school community connected in an informal way to the happenings at each of your schools by featuring hosted discussion with leaders, faculty members, students, community members, and more. Done monthly (or less frequently, at your discretion) in a simple, 30–45-minute Zoom interview, your podcast will be available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, iHeartRadio, your own J12 Landing page, and more, and can be easily distributed and subscribed to through your school website and other digital channels.

Note: This proposal includes no podcast. To add it, please inquire.

Custom Program URL and Webpage — Good branding in order.

Because we believe your community is more likely to engage with your district and its stories if it is easier to do so, we create a simple webpage to which you may link from your primary district page, or, to which you may link directly from social media or through URL QR codes on various media and analog messaging. This is home base for all your media and collateral associated with the Journey12 Engage program, to include Quarterly Magazine, Podcast, and your Community Impact video. This is a convenience but is not the only place you can 'hang' your brand story material. We emphatically recommend that it be shared through all of your digital channels as well. And we are prepared to help you do that with special 'social media friendly' edits of your Community Impact Video, mobile responsive and flip book versions of your Quarterly Magazine, and any locally generated materials you may wish to share with your school community.

Respective Roles and Responsibilities of the Parties

Journey12

Journey12 shall be responsible for producing and/or acquiring all original copy and imagery associated with the production of Custom Landing Page, Quarterly Magazine, and any Community Impact Video, and Localized Podcasts.

Journey12 shall be responsible for all artwork, graphic design, printing, mailing, web development, podcast production, video production, and hosting services associated with any online content.

Prior to community distribution, Journey12 shall give Tri Valley CUSD 3 five (5) working days to proof and approve of shareable printed content and media. If additional time is needed, simply make the request of your project ambassador.

Tri Valley CUSD 3 Signatory

The Tri Valley CUSD 3 signatory shall be responsible for selecting story subjects and providing reasonable and necessary in-person, Zoom, and telephone access to him/herself as well as to District employees, students, and on-site community volunteers during the term of the program cycle such as is necessary to research storylines and prepare shareable content in various media formats.

The Tri Valley CUSD 3 signatory shall be responsible for proofing story copy, design elements, including program website landing page, magazine draft layouts, video draft cuts, etc. We typically try to turn any proofing task around in five (5) working days but can make accommodation as may be necessary. We strongly recommend that the Superintendent select an able assistant for this program. Someone who is intimately familiar with the staff, students, and broader community and who enjoys making connections for our storytellers tend to be the most qualified 'lieutenants' in this work.

Fees and Payment Terms

Cost and payment terms to Tri Valley CUSD 3 for Journey12 Services

One (1) year programming, beginning November, 2026 and ending October, 2027 .

The following ANNUALIZED fees are inclusive of all specified research, writing, any contracted video production, podcast production, printing, mailing, web design/hosting.

This proposal features:

4 Cycles (Choose 4 cycles from Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter) 24-Page Magazines via bulk delivery to your district office of 2,000 copies of each issue of your magazine for placement in your district service area at high traffic distribution points like libraries, city offices, convenience stores, restaurants, etc.

Total program cost: \$39,000

Payment terms are flexible and may be handled as a single payment or multiple payments split according to need. Some of our clients prefer to split the program cost across two fiscal years for budgeting purposes while others prefer regular quarterly billing. Some of our district partners like to tie their payment to grant cycles. We try to accommodate whatever works best for your district and budgeting needs. Just coordinate this with your project ambassador.



Proposal Agreement & Execution Page

Whereas the following respective signatories wish to enter into an agreement to produce the afore described Engage Engagement programming,

Beginning and concluding on the agreed-upon schedule, and,

Whereas the following respective signatories possess rightful, legal, and due authority to execute this agreement on behalf of their respective organizations,

SCHEDULE SHIFT: In the event of a delayed launch due to board approval timing or other unforeseen variables, each deliverable shall be re-scheduled to mutually agreeable partner consent.

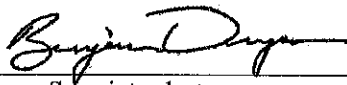
The agreement is, hereby, executed in accordance with the preceding terms, programs descriptions, and recitals.



One-year agreement



Two-year agreement



Dr. Ben Derges, Superintendent
Tri Valley CUSD 3

4-17-20

Date

Craig Williams, CEO, Journey12, a service of Speaking Volumes, LLC

Date