



COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC

Presenter: Allison Silberberg, Vice Mayor, Alexandria, Virginia

Public Management

Lesson Description

In this lesson we examine the requirement for elected officials and public servants to establish accurate, efficient, responsive and varied channels of communication with the citizens they serve.

Learning Objectives

1. Respecting the role of the press in informing the public.
2. Learning how to maintain direct contact with constituents.
3. Understanding the value of public outreach.

Discussion Questions

1. Vice Mayor Allison Silberberg notes several ways she stays in touch with the members of her community – meetings, email, social media and public events. What are the ways in which you engage with your elected officials and public servants? What means have you found to be the best in making your voice heard?
2. In what ways will technology help or hinder the availability of information about and access to civil servants? What are some ideas for tools that can help citizens with and without access to technology to stay connected and informed?
3. How can citizens determine the accuracy of the information they are receiving from their elected officials? What tools or resources could be developed to aid in this practice?

Developmental Actions

1. Commit to educating yourself on the activities of your local, regional and national leaders.
2. Research their positions on the issues affecting your community and learn how they plan to address them.
3. Determine the best way to reach out and, where appropriate, engage with them.

About the Video Presenter

Allison Silberberg, the vice mayor of Alexandria, Virginia, is a writer and lifelong advocate for social justice issues. Elected to the Alexandria City Council in 2012, Silberberg has over 20 years of experience in community leadership and public service. Her writing focuses extensively on the role of the individual in creating social change. She is the author of *Visionaries In Our Midst: Ordinary People Who Are Changing Our World*, a book that profiles individuals who are making a difference in the U.S. Her writing has appeared in the *Washington Post*, the *Dallas Morning News*, and on PBS.org. Originally from Dallas, Silberberg has a B.A. in international relations and history from American University and an M.F.A. in playwriting from the School of Theater, Film and Television at the University of California, Los Angeles.

