

How to Make the Most of the OACS News Service

An Education Kit for OACS Members



OACS

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What is the OACS News Program?

The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) contracted Axiom News to conduct a high-engagement, whole-system news program. The stories highlight what's going on in OACS member schools and Christian education, celebrate accomplishments and connect people through knowledge sharing.

Journalists from Axiom News conduct the interviews, craft the resulting stories and post them on the OACS website every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning.

We call it a Stakeholder News program, because it shares lots of people's stories about their experiences, hopes and initiatives with regards to the OACS and its mission.

The storytelling process is called Generative Journalism, which centres on asking strength-based questions to bring out the best in people and organizations.

Are you interested in reading stories about your fellow OACS schools? Would you like to discover their successes? Their best practices? Their hopes?

Keep reading this guidebook to learn everything from what you can expect from the story-sharing process to how to call in a story idea.

Benefits of Sharing Stories

Learn From Others

You can quickly and effectively communicate across the OACS the best practices you are discovering in your work. Through sharing your best practices in a story, others who read about it can pick up the success and implement it in their work.

Stay Connected

The news is a great way to stay informed about new initiatives, events and emerging thoughts within the OACS. It fosters a sense of belonging, especially for schools that are spread across distances. People within the OACS have greater understanding of one another's contributions.

Get to Know Your Organization

Every story contains organizational knowledge. When you know your organization's story you can better understand the current environment and what needs to happen next. Search through the online stories and archives to research a best practice, a delivery model or find people who know how to do things you need done.

Celebrate Achievements

News stories are great ways to celebrate the good work happening in Christian schools every day. If you think a colleague's work should be recognized, [send in a story idea](#) to the newsroom. Each story has the potential to recognize individuals taking initiative, leading change and making a difference.

How the Story Process Works

Connecting

If you have a great story to share, we want to know! At times an Axiom News writer will contact you and ask to schedule an interview for a story, but we're always looking for your ideas. Check out the [How to Send in a Lead](#) section of this guidebook for more information.

Interviewing

Most interviews take place over the phone, and are about 5-10 minutes. We use an Appreciative Inquiry approach, which means asking strength-finding questions to discover what's working and what you want to see more of, as well as prompt thinking about future possibilities.

Writing

After the interview, the writer will use the notes to craft a story. Greatest strengths and assets discovered through the interview process are featured at the top of stories and the energized narrative flows from this point. Stories are written using Canadian Press style, a professional standard that creates consistency. See [The Style We Use and Why](#) to learn more.

Publishing

Stories will first be published on your organization's website. News never stops. Publishing stories frequently and on a regular schedule ensures high engagement.

Sharing

When the story has been published, share it! See the [How to Use the News](#) section of this guidebook.

The Style We Use and Why

Our newsroom writers implement style guidelines from *The Canadian Press (CP) Stylebook*, an industry standard used in newsrooms and business offices across the country. There are many benefits to both readers and writers for following this time tested reference guide.

Axiom News writers can stay focused on your organizational culture development, rather than spending time and resources deciding when to capitalize and how to punctuate. The stylebook ensures writers do not have to reinvent the wheel for each story by providing journalists with a set of guidelines and practices to follow.

We've selected CP style for several reasons. Firstly, CP style is what is taught in journalism schools, so it keeps our training costs — and therefore costs to you, our clients — low. It also saves on having to create a custom style sheet for your organization and keeps your style consistent.

Axiom News writers follow a story structure guideline, including a headline that speaks specifically to what the story is about and a sub-headline that provides more specifics. From these lead elements, the writer will form the story unpacking the lead elements with, plain language. Stories are around 350 words in length.

We write in the third person, from an individual perspective, not a corporate one. This allows the person being interviewed to freely express their thoughts, aspirations and accomplishments. It enables us to paint a picture of the events and circumstances that provide context to each story.

If you would like more information about CP Style or the Axiom News story structure, [contact Axiom News](#).

How to Recognize a News Story

Many things make a great news story. Events that excite school members, celebrate successes and move your mission forward are all examples of stories that will make great articles for your news program.

Perhaps you or one of your team members successfully completed a project with favourable results. Maybe an individual or group at work discovered a new best practice that's increasing efficiency. Perhaps a recent fundraiser brought people together to support a meaningful cause.

These are just a few examples of the types of stories we want to help you share.

Here are some key things to look for in a news story:

- Individual or team successes
- Showcasing of strengths
- Learned experiences
- Collaborative efforts
- Community initiatives

How to Send in a Lead

You can call or e-mail the newsroom with your story ideas. Our role is to do the interviewing and writing, so all you need to do is let us know the general story idea and who is the best person to interview — which could be yourself or other team members. You can also contact us to share photos from an event.

Axiom Newsroom:
Phone: 705-741-4421
Toll Free: 800-294-0051
Fax: 705-741-6055

To connect with Michelle Strutzenberger, News Chair, choose ext. 27 or e-mail michelle@axiomnews.ca.

To connect with another [team member](#) at Axiom, choose their extension through the phone system, or e-mail them using their first name followed by @axiomnews.ca.

We look forward to hearing from you!

5 Ways to Use the News

1. E-mail the Stories Around

When you read a story that resonates, e-mail it to your colleagues, friends, family, supporters and policy makers with your own comments and encourage them to get involved with the changes you're committed to making. Send a congratulatory note to the person highlighted in the story.

2. Print It Out

If a story you read inspires you, teaches you something or provokes thoughts, print it out! Post the story in a common area, like a staff room, for your peers to read. Put it somewhere you can see to remind you why you are involved in the change-making process. Carry copies to give away when the subject material comes up in conversations.

3. Send Stories to Your Local News Outlets

When your school is mobilizing to serve a human or community need, media outlets are going to be interested, especially if they are receiving e-mails from their audience suggesting story possibilities. Send stories to your local newspaper, television and radio station editors with your own comments and ask them to republish the story or follow-up with you. A school may use a story as a press release. It can only be altered from its original form with the permission of Axiom News.

4. Republish and Link to the Stories

Leverage the stories through republishing and referring to them wherever possible — in your newsletters, presentations and reports.

5. Share the Stories Through Social Networks

Active in the world of social media? Make sure to link the story on your Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts.

Learn More



Download Axiom News' free e-book entitled [*How To Change Your World By Sharing Stakeholder Stories*](#) to learn more about the importance of engaging stakeholders, asking catalytic questions, writing well and posting frequently.



Sign up to receive Axiom's Discovering Why Stories Work e-news editions. By signing up for this free resource, every two weeks you will receive an e-mail highlighting storytelling advice and results that organizations like yours are seeing from its story-sharing program. Sign up now through [this link](#).