



3 Ways a CM Can De-Stress the Construction Process

Your architect has wrapped up the construction documents, trade contractor bids have come in and shovels are ready to meet the dirt. Keep these three expectations of your CM in mind in order to alleviate the burden of construction.

Capital improvement projects are both exciting and daunting times for district administration. Your normal duties become compounded by the burden of delivering enhancements to the students' educational environment. Any type of capital improvement can also be filled with unknowns, anxiety and apprehension. Most likely, your construction management (CM) partner has made statements indicating they will "keep the project on schedule" and "maximize the budget". These broad-based statements are certainly reassuring, but they don't provide enough detail on what to expect from a CM on a day-to-day basis during construction. To fill the information gap, ICI has identified three areas where your chosen CM must assist district administration, lighten your

burdens and ultimately allay the school board's construction concerns. So as your architect wraps up the construction documents, trade contractor bids come in and shovels are ready to meet the dirt, keep these three expectations of your CM in mind:

1. Setting Realistic Expectations

Early on in the design phase the CM must begin to prepare principals and staff for any impacts to the learning environment during construction. Setting early and realistic expectations mitigates frustration and unwanted surprises as construction activity begins. Educators must be aware of construction impacts well in advance on both a building-wide



and classroom-specific level. Noise levels, loss of windows, temporary parking lots, relocated entrances or restricted areas are just a few of the items your CM should take the lead on overseeing. Early meetings among the entire project team should highlight to the administration and faculty that short-term drawbacks will lead to long-term benefits.

2. Taking the Heat!

A construction problem arises – now what do you do? The answer: nothing more than breathe a sigh of relief that the district hired a CM. Why? Because it is the CM's responsibility to solve the construction problem and, equally importantly, present the solution to the school board. The rationale for the CM "taking the heat" is twofold. Your CM leaders are experts in K-12 construction and will be well-versed in addressing board and community concerns. CM leadership is responsible for accuracy of information and for fielding any resulting questions. They should deliver the message to the school board. Second, the basis is simply that a CM is paid to "take the heat." Your CM becomes the first line in diffusing matters with the school board; not you.

3. Satisfying the District's Communication Needs

The golden days of a weekly construction progress report sent via email as a means of project communication are long gone. Our data-hungry, technology-savvy culture has driven the demand for construction progress updates to be provided in multiple ways and based on unique district preferences. Your CM should generate standard items such as board reports, but they should also embrace the use of technology to communicate updates to a far broader range of interested parties.

Your CM should have a live-feed webcam of the construction site posted to multiple websites for access by board members, administration, the community and students. Drone videos provide compelling construction footage and create anticipation and support among stakeholders. Virtual Reality (VR) technology is perhaps the most impactful means of all for a CM to employ in order to communicate construction progress. VR is as close as an individual can get to feeling like they are on the job site without the safety risks of public tours.

How can all this information and footage be easily dispersed to the board, administration, faculty, staff and students? Social Media! Twitter, Facebook and YouTube are exceptional communication tools and your CM should be active on these platforms.

Seventy-six percent of teens say they use social media¹. Districts can create a real sense of community during construction by relying on their CM to use social media communication tools. For example, ICI recently produced a 360° construction progress tour at West Leyden High School and uploaded it to YouTube. Within days, it had more than 1,700 views!

¹Lenhart, A. (2015, April 9) *Mobile Access Shifts Social Media Use and Other Online Activities*
<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/09/mobile-access-shifts-social-media-use-and-other-online-activities/>

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