



SUNSPRA

Sunshine State School
Public Relations Association

“Thursday Thoughts” – 5.5.16

Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, SUNSPRA President

TIME FOR YOUR INPUT

Whew! I just finished and submitted my second entry for this year’s SUNSPRA Sunshine Medallion Awards. I have to admit it’s quite a task putting together an entry for this competition. It’s worth the effort, though, once you have everything in final form. Why? Because it completely illustrates what strategic public relations is all about – RPIE! Research, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation. For two years, you have read about APR, or the Accredited in Public Relations credential, in my weekly emails. The APR process is the heart of great PR – anything else is reactive PR, and we all know that is NOT the best policy!

If you submitted for this year’s Medallion awards, CONGRATULATIONS! You know it’s a major feat to put the entire entry together with the required components. If you did not enter, realize much of what you do is strategic – and you may not even realize it! You have through 11:59PM today to submit your entries so you still have time!

I’m excited for this year’s entries and will share the winning results on June 1. Stay tuned to your email inboxes!

As I’ve mentioned numerous times, we greatly appreciate School Messenger’s exclusive partnership as this year’s sponsor of our SUNSPRA Sunshine Medallion Awards! Many of you know Nancy Gallardo and her insight into the communications platform. We appreciate her efforts to secure this year’s partnership with School Messenger. Here is the scoop on this year’s Sunshine Medallion Awards process:

[CALL FOR ENTRIES](#) (link)

[STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE](#)
(link)



SCHOOLMESSENGER®

LINK TO ENTER: <https://sunspra.nonprofitcms.org/awards>

ALL submissions are electronic thanks to School Messenger. Please read the linked documents carefully and follow directions. If you encounter issues or errors during the submission process, please contact Marianne Lorentzen at **941-545-8476** or marianne@consultmarianne.com.

The entry fee remains unchanged @ \$75 per entry.

MANDATORY DEADLINES are important:

- **Submission Deadline – May 1, 2016 – extended through 11:59PM, May 5, 2016**
- Awards Notification – June 1, 2016
- Awards Ceremony – June 15, 2016

Good luck this year!

Our pre-awards lunch this year is sponsored by our friends at



We appreciate Quintin Graves and the input he offers

SUNSPRA and our schools. Following this year’s awards ceremony (in Orlando in mid-

June), award winners will gather for photos and brief introductions, with personal congratulations coming from School Messenger.



Open Position

There's an open position in Lee County Schools for a director of public relations and marketing. SUNSPRA colleague and doctoral candidate Amity Chandler is heading to Palm Beach County. Meantime, here's a link to the Lee County posting:

https://apply.leeschools.net/psc/HREXT/EMPLOYEE/HRMSEXT/c/HRS_HRAM.HRS_APP_SCHJOB.GBL?Page=HRS_APP_SC_HJOB&Action=U&TargetFrameName=None

NSPRA Chicago '16 – July 17-20

If you're heading to NSPRA this year, please let me know! SUNSPRA always enjoys strong representation at this national conference... not to mention great food and social time.

LEGISLATIVE / HEADLINE RECAPS

New teachers' contracts will bring major changes to Polk County School District

Major changes have been written into teachers' tentative contract agreements between the Polk Education Association and the Polk County School District. [Read Full Story](#)

Hillsborough Schools lighten testing load for students

...Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) and other state-mandated exams will remain the same. The change allows teachers to have flexibility with district-wide formative tests given throughout the school year. [Read Full Story](#)

Lee school board workshop leads with customer service

Getting feedback from customers - good, bad or indifferent - is important to the success of a business. [Read Full Story](#)

Scores of Sarasota teachers retiring

The Sarasota County school district is facing a challenge in finding teachers for next year, with more than 200 instructional vacancies opening as current teachers retire. The district also needs to hire another 100 or so to fill classified positions, such as custodians, bus drivers and food service staff. [Read Full Story](#)

'Culture' of discipline to change in Lee school's code of conduct

...The idea behind restorative justice is to curb students' time outside the classroom, giving staff the time to "dig deep" into the root cause of why a student may have acted up in the first place. The goal, explained Pete Bohatch, the district's student services director, is to intervene before a student gets into more serious and repeated trouble. [Read Full Story](#)

Students to bring their own devices starting next school year

The St. Johns County School District is discussing a "bring your own device" policy to meet student-to-device ratios required by the state. Costly infrastructure, wireless Internet and bandwidth updates are

already underway for all district schools, but financial restrictions won't leave much room for the district to provide computers for every student. [Read Full Story](#)

Flagler schools may be first in Florida to get football helmet safety system

When prep football kicks off this fall, Flagler County schools will be on offense regarding the prevention and treatment of high school football concussions. The purchase of new helmet-based impact technology will make it the first school district in Florida, and maybe the Southeast, to electronically monitor and track hits to players' heads on a district-wide basis. [Read Full Story](#)

'A fire burning' to keep expanding school choice in Florida, Hialeah lawmaker says

The Legislature's approval of a massive education bill and other innovative policies this spring has reinvigorated the "school choice" movement in Florida, a key Miami-Dade lawmaker said Tuesday. [Read Full Story](#)

Orange offers better pay to retiring teachers who work through last day

Orange County teachers who must retire six days before the school year's end can now earn better pay, if they finish out the year working as substitutes, a district spokesman said. [Read Full Story](#)

School Board grappling with possible drug testing for athletes

A proposal by Monroe County School District staff to bring back random drug testing of student athletes drew more questions than support from School Board members when they met Tuesday. [Read Full Story](#)

Housing authorities launch reading centers to help kids catch up

The benchmark is viewed by educators as a major predictor of later success. Children who are already behind are more likely to end up dropping out of high school, a path that often ends with unemployment, prison and a lifetime of low wages, said Jamie Toennies, senior director of education strategies for United Way Suncoast, a community nonprofit. [Read Full Story](#)

Student test scores have stalled nationally. What can be done about it?

...It was the height of the Bush administration, with No Child Left Behind in full swing. That was the law that required schools to regularly test their students in reading and math and sometimes face consequences based on their scores. [Read Full Story](#)

School libraries getting rid of nonfiction books

From dictionaries and encyclopedias to biographies and poetry collections, nonfiction books are disappearing from some Broward County high school libraries. [Read Full Story](#)

Manatee school board, commission to meet Tuesday to discuss possible sales tax hikes

Manatee County school board members and county commissioners will start conversations looking at whether the entities want to join forces in campaigning for voters to sign off on a sales tax initiative or whether the groups would have better luck convincing voters separately. [Read Full Story](#)

AND FINALLY...

[Rita Pierson: Every Kid Needs a Champion](#) – talk about an inspiring TED speaker!

Until next time, keep shining the light on school PR in Florida!

Kevin

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