



SUNSPRA

Sunshine State School
Public Relations Association

“Thursday Thoughts” – 5.26.16

Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, SUNSPRA President

If you’ve never heard me talk about accreditation, then pay attention to the next few paragraphs. If you have heard me discuss APR, indulge me and glean from the next few statements.



What is accreditation, and why is it important at all? Universal accreditation is an international process fewer than 20 percent of PR professionals aspire to and reach. Think of the APR credential (Accredited in Public Relations) as an advanced degree without two years of expensive tuition. Earning accreditation is your advantage when it comes to your next career move. The “APR” credential after your name indicates your subscription to professional, ethical, principled communications and personal standards in your chosen PR position. Based on the “RPIE” formula, accreditation repositions your mindset to clearly focus on Research, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation in every PR project you undertake.

The APR process involves three steps: a written professional profile, an oral presentation to a panel of your APR peers, and a computerized test with clear objectives in mind. Rest assured, earning your APR is no simple matter. You won’t “coast through” the process regardless of how long you’ve been in the profession. It does take time, effort, and investment. But it all pays off when you finish and understand the importance of RPIE, professional and ethical standards, and other components. Quite honestly, adding those three letters to your name is icing on the cake because you will look at your work in such a refined light.

I will continue promoting APR and its importance. I’m happy to share any insight, answer questions, or offer advice on how to advance in the process. If you wait until you have time, I promise --- you’ll never have time! I tried that excuse time and time again... but finally made time in 2012 to complete accreditation.

If you’re really ambitious and earn your APR, you can take it one step further to earn the highest credential possible in our profession in this country --- CPRC, or Certified Public Relations Counselor. Offered by another PR organization, I’m happy to have a conversation with you off-line about this subjective-based endeavour with APR as a pre-requisite.

Meantime, next week I have the pleasure of notifying 2016’s Sunshine Medallion Award winners. I hope you entered... and I hope you win!

Thanks to School Messenger, we will celebrate at the Renaissance Hotel at Sea World Orlando during Wednesday’s afternoon session on June 15. Watch your inbox for official notification next week.



SCHOOLMESSENGER®

This year’s awards are exclusively sponsored by School Messenger. Remember, all winners get to attend all sessions that day without charge. Lunch is provided to winners by our friends at Peachjar.



Remember, NSPRA hands out its awards this summer, too. I’d love to know which SUNSPRA districts and members won awards – so let me know in a friendly email when you receive notification! We want to celebrate with you and recognize you among our membership!

And if you're familiar with FPRA, that awards season is in early August. No doubt SUNSPRA members entered that fierce competition, too... I know at least one person who did!

I continue looking for a **social media expert** to share insight with my principals and assistant principals. The opportunity is for two identical sessions to be presented July 22 here in Ocala/Marion County. Times are 9:55am-10:55am and 11:05am-12:05pm. As a district, Marion County Public Schools utilizes Twitter for social messaging. Individual schools use multiple platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, Vine, and others. If you're interested in presenting, please [contact me](#) ASAP.

What's a bloggeographer? Read on...

Wylie's Writing Tips

May 24, 2016 // **Your Weekly Guide to Catching Your Readers**

Snowed under

Journalists — more overworked, still underpaid

Call her a predator.

Elisa Lagos was an Edward R. Murrow and Peabody award-winning TV producer for ABC News. Make that editor. Make that *both*.



Baby, it's cold out there Journalists have more to do, fewer folks to get it done. So how can your PR materials help? [Image by Jean-François Chénier](#)

Elisa, now a communications associate at World Education Services, attended my 2015 NOT Your Father's News Release Master Class. There, she shared that she wasn't alone doing double duty at ABC. In fact, many broadcasters now have two, two, TWO jobs in one.

How are journalists' jobs changing — and, more important, how can you adapt your PR pieces to these changes? ...

“What I really like about a release is when it scratches my reader’s itch and not your client’s itch.”

— A trade journal editor quoted in *Public Relations Tactics*

“One tip I learned from Ann has enhanced the interest of the media at least threefold.”

— Carl Walton, spokesman, U.S. Postal Service

NSPRA Chicago '16 – July 17-20

Who is heading to Chicago this summer for NSPRA '16? Please let me know! SUNSPRA always enjoys strong representation at this national conference... not to mention great food and social time.

LEGISLATIVE / HEADLINE RECAPS

Orange school officials tout graduation rate

Orange County school leaders touted the district's successes - including a 90 percent graduation rate at its 19 traditional high schools - during the annual State of the Schools presentation Wednesday in downtown Orlando. [Read Full Story](#)

Manatee third-graders who refuse state testing can't go to fourth grade

Third-grade students who refused to take the state-mandated English Language Arts exam and refuse to take a state-approved equivalency test will not be able to move on to fourth grade, according to district officials. [Read Full Story](#)

Collier students play county commissioner to experience highs, lows of running government

Seventh graders at Gulfview and Immokalee middle schools tried their hands at running local government Wednesday afternoon from the austere chambers of the third floor of a government building that none of the students had been to before and few really knew existed.

[Read Full Story](#)

Pledge of allegiance law prompts questions about student rights

Last fall, a Panhandle school district posted signs in all of its classrooms inviting students to say the Pledge of Allegiance each morning but reminding them they did not have to recite it or even stand while classmates did. The signs created an uproar in Santa Rosa County, home to the busiest Naval air station in the world, as many parents felt they were unpatriotic.

[Read Full Story](#)

Hillsborough schools will survey students about sex

The Hillsborough County School Board wants to ask students about sex. Citing alarming rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitting disease, Chairwoman April Griffin proposed including questions about sexual behavior in a survey the district will conduct about high-risk behavior.

[Read Full Story](#)

Polk Schools' discrimination policy under review by federal agencies; grants withheld

The Office of Civil Rights and the Department of Justice have pulled Polk's harassment and

discrimination policies for review. Some of the changes were in response to an order to Polk from the Office of Civil Rights. [Read Full Story](#)

Lake County students can opt out of the Pledge of Allegiance

Lake County School Board members tentatively approved a policy Monday - required by state law - that allows students to have the choice whether to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. According to the School District's Student Code of Conduct Policy, students have the right to "not to participate in reciting the pledge." [Read Full Story](#)

Pros, cons offered on Duval schools bathroom limits on transgender students

Duval's School Board heard from a half dozen people Monday about bathroom limits on transgender students, including the city's General Counsel's office. Jon R. Phillips, an attorney with that office, urged the School Board not to comment on issues linked to the recent lawsuit filed against the district over the issue, at least not until he talks to board members about legal ramifications, including potential Justice Department actions. [Read Full Story](#)

FL DOE: Submit New Anti-Bullying Policies by September 30, 2016

Following the most recent Florida legislative session, [HB 229](#), which revised Florida's school anti-bullying statute (F.S. 1006.147), became law. The statutory changes are fairly minor, but there is a new requirement that school boards adopt and review their anti-bullying policies every 3 years. On April 22, 2016, the Florida Department of Education ("FL DOE") issued a memorandum advising school boards that FL DOE has published a new Model Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy which takes into account the new statutory requirements. Additionally, although not required by HB 229, FL DOE is requiring school boards to submit their revised anti-bullying policies to FL DOE on or before September 30, 2016. Source: [DPS 2016-56](#)

State board adopts computer science standards for Florida schools

Florida now has official computer science standards, which schools could use to devise lessons and classes in that field. The State Board of Education on Friday added computer science to its science standards adopted in 2008. [Read Full Story](#)

School enrollment surging again in Hillsborough, Pasco and across Florida

The brief respite from surging student enrollment is officially over for school districts across Florida. Kids by the thousands are pouring in, with no end in sight. Jobs are returning in several sectors, along with housing starts, particularly in the suburbs. [Read Full Story](#)

Florida says testing season, done today, has been 'very successful'

Education Commissioner Pam Stewart said today that Florida's spring testing season has been "very successful" with more than 3 million computer-based exams completed. [Read Full Story](#)

Why bathrooms aren't the big issue for Dreyfoos transgender student

...As far as Alex - or her mom - could tell, there were no real rules about how to manage the transition from boy to girl at school - including her restroom choice. She went where she felt comfortable. [Read Full Story](#)

Senate candidates stake out a range of positions on education issues

To name a few, Rep. Ron DeSantis would advocate allowing federal dollars that support low-income schools to follow students to any schools their families choose, including private or religious ones. Todd Wilcox wants more opportunities for students to fulfill public-sector service obligations after college in exchange for tuition assistance. David Jolly hopes to work across the aisle to boost investment in early childhood education and need-based financial aid for college. All five of the Republican candidates would like to shrink the federal education department and limit its influence over policy making, although some wouldn't get rid of it entirely. The GOP contenders agree that decisions around standards, curriculum and testing should be left to states or local school districts.

Expelled: No Second Chances

With little state oversight, school districts across Florida have largely been responsible for drafting their own discipline policies. In some places that has led to innovative new ways to correct bad behavior. In other districts, such as Sarasota and Polk counties, the lack of oversight allowed schools

to kick students out for weeks, months and even years for misbehavior ranging from disrupting class to setting fires. Among Florida's 67 counties, Sarasota County expelled the second-highest number of students between 2010 and 2014, kicking more than 350 students out of their regular schools — averaging more than four expulsions per School Board meeting.

Lake Nona High students must retake Advanced Placement exams

Lake Nona High School sophomore Kevin Rice thought he was finished with his AP exams. But he found out this week that because him and his classmates' desks were too close together, they will have to retake the AP Psychology exam at 7:30 a.m. Friday, today. [Read Full Story](#)

Evers asks Scott, Bondi to protect schools that reject transgender policy

State Sen. Greg Evers is the latest to call on Gov. Rick Scott and Attorney General Pam Bondi to weigh in on the recent federal directive requiring public schools to allow transgender students to use bathrooms that correspond with their gender identities. Evers, a Pensacola Republican who is running for Congress, wrote a letter to Scott and Bondi on Friday asking them to protect school districts that refuse to comply with the directive from the federal justice and education departments.

Third-grade students improve slightly on state reading exam

South Florida third-graders performed slightly better on this year's state-required English-language arts exam, with each county seeing higher passage rates. The results released Thursday by the Department of Education are the first from this spring's batch of Florida Standards Assessment exams. Under a controversial state law, the test can determine whether a student gets to move on to fourth grade. Gains were modest, but Broward County's was the largest in the region, with 55 percent of students passing this year compared with 52 percent in 2015.

AND FINALLY...

Ever heard of the Holderness Family? Me, neither! [They're pretty hip](#), though! And a Clap Mob? Pretty cool!

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

Kevin

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