



# SUNSPRA

Sunshine State School  
Public Relations Association

***“Thursday Thoughts” – 6.2.16***

**Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, SUNSPRA President**

## CONGRATULATIONS

to the winners of SUNSPRA’s 2016 Sunshine Medallion Awards, exclusively sponsored this year by:



- 1<sup>st</sup> place - “k12 connect” Broadcast TV program – Marion County Public Schools
- 1<sup>st</sup> place - “Attendance Matters” Themed Campaign – Marion County Public Schools
- 1<sup>st</sup> place - “#LCSFirstDay” Parent / Community Involvement – Leon County Schools
- 1<sup>st</sup> place - “Casey’s AR Reading Heroes” Recognition Program – Castle Creek Elementary, Orange County Public Schools
- 1<sup>st</sup> place - “Real Talk Podcasts” PR Tools / Other – Duval County Schools
- 1<sup>st</sup> place - “Adult Education” Branding Campaign – Brevard County Schools
- 1<sup>st</sup> place - “After School Programs” Overall Image Campaign – Brevard County Schools
- 1<sup>st</sup> place - “Citrus Schools Community Connection” Special Purpose Publication – Citrus County Schools
- 1<sup>st</sup> place - “Sarasota County Schools New Logo ReBrand” Campaign – Sarasota County Schools
- 1<sup>st</sup> place - “2015-16 Florida Virtual School Course Catalog” Special Purpose Publication – Florida Virtual School

Among these, who will win Best of Show? Those winners, along with everyone listed above, will be honored at a special luncheon, awards ceremony, and post-awards session on Wednesday, June 15, inside the Tradewinds Restaurant at the Renaissance Hotel at SeaWorld Orlando. Of course this is during FASA’s Summer Conference, at which SUNSPRA members Greg Turchetta (Collier) and Dylan Thomas (Orange) will present “Making Your Own Newsroom: Sharing Your Own Success Stories” with conference attendees (same day @ 11am-12:15pm).

In addition to School Messenger®, we say “THANK YOU” to Peachjar for sponsoring this year’s luncheon!



## APR Could Mean More Pay

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.

Research conducted by the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) finds Accredited practitioners earn on average more than those without certification. Just how much depends on job title and experience, of course.

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.

## **Social Media Expert Sought**

I am still 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.

## **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. I know of 2 people going as of now...

## **LEGISLATIVE / HEADLINE RECAPS**

### **Consultant advises Hillsborough school district to shed more than 1,700 jobs**

The Hillsborough County School District can save \$404 million over five years, a consultant says. But

to do so, it will need to phase out 1,761 front-line jobs, more than half held by teachers.

### **[Read Full Story](#)**

### **Manatee superintendent blames Florida education officials for shifting stance on retention**

Late Tuesday, Manatee schools superintendent Diana Greene changed her previously firm position on the retention of third graders who did not have a state test score. To that point, she insisted the children have a reading result on the Florida Standards Assessment or the alternate SAT-10 to be considered for promotion. **[Read Full Story](#)**

### **'Opt out' parents seek lawyers' help in battles over third-grade retention**

Throughout Florida, parents of third graders who refused to take state exams are consulting attorneys about their legal options for fighting school districts' plans to hold back their children. Florida law prohibits third graders who fail state reading tests from being promoted to the fourth grade, unless they are granted a "good cause" exemption. But parents who participated in a statewide "opt out" movement argue the law doesn't apply to their children, who skipped the tests but have demonstrated reading proficiency in other ways, like through classwork.

### **The use of substitute teachers on the rise**

After 13 years in public schools, Kyrah Mattson has come to know that having a substitute teacher means an "easy" day. There may be a worksheet or a movie, but "never anything serious," the 18-year-old said while enjoying her last weeks of high school. **[Read Full Story](#)**

### **More Trouble for Testing at Lake Nona**

Five more Advanced Placement exams have been invalidated at Lake Nona High School, forcing about 200 students at the Orange County school to retake them. Exams in chemistry, environmental science, French, physics and Spanish were thrown out by the College Board, which administers them, either because desks were too close together or partitions were set up at the wrong time, school district officials said. **[Read Full Story](#)**

### **If court strikes down private school tax credit program, public school crowding could follow**

Surging student enrollment isn't the only pressure Florida school districts face as they try to keep up with growth. Tens of thousands of kids attending private schools using tax credit scholarships could pour back into the system, too, if the courts find that voucher-like program unconstitutional. **[Read Full Story](#)**

### **Administration lays out draft rule for school accountability**

Proposed federal guidelines would allow states to decide how to use a mix of test scores, academic growth and other measures like chronic absenteeism to identify failing schools and children who are struggling the most. The draft rule released Thursday spells out a broad framework for states to consider as they design new accountability systems to improve schools and narrow achievement gaps. **[Read Full Story](#)**

### **Home school convention attracts parents fed up with traditional education**

The largest home school convention in the country kicks off Thursday in Osceola County with more than 20,000 home school families in attendance. The Florida Home School Convention has become the epicenter of the home school movement, with a huge increase in the number of students getting their education outside a traditional classroom.

### **[Read Full Story](#)**

### **Florida third graders without reading test scores have few options for promotion, state says**

Parents in several Florida counties are getting angry as they receive word that their children face another year of third grade, despite their classroom performance. It's all because the children opted out of the Florida Standards Assessments, and don't want to take a different exam to prove they deserve to move on -- regardless of what state statute requires.

**AND FINALLY...**



SUNSPRA is now 'Tweeting! That's right. Find us @SUNSPRA and follow us! Great stories to share throughout Florida and SUNSPRA districts!

Again, congratulations to our 2016 SUNSPRA Medallion Award winners listed at the top of this issue!

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

*Kevin*

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