



SUNSPRA

Sunshine State School
Public Relations Association



“Thursday Thoughts” – 6.9.16

Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, SUNSPRA President

I am SO looking forward to handing out SUNSPRA’s 2016 Medallion Awards just days from now in Orlando! Showcasing the efforts of these PR professionals in front of school and district administrators – it truly is recognition well deserved!

Hopefully starting a tradition, we will post this year’s winning entries on our website – www.sunspira.org. We will also share judging comments with everyone who entered.

Here’s another look at the 2016 SUNSPRA Medallion Award winners:

CONGRATULATIONS

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



- 1st place - “k12 connect” Broadcast TV program – Marion County Public Schools
- 1st place - “Attendance Matters” Themed Campaign – Marion County Public Schools
- 1st place - “#LCSFirstDay” Parent / Community Involvement – Leon County Schools
- 1st place - “Casey’s AR Reading Heroes” Recognition Program – Castle Creek Elementary, Orange County Public Schools
- 1st place - “Real Talk Podcasts” PR Tools / Other – Duval County Schools
- 1st place - “Adult Education” Branding Campaign – Brevard County Schools
- 1st place - “After School Programs” Overall Image Campaign – Brevard County Schools
- 1st place - “Citrus Schools Community Connection” Special Purpose Publication – Citrus County Schools
- 1st place - “Sarasota County Schools New Logo ReBrand” Campaign – Sarasota County Schools
- 1st 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! Quintin Graves will be on hand to personally congratulate this year’s winners... as will Judd Aungst from Blackboard®, which is our “Welcoming Sponsor” this year. When you check in at the resort, make sure you get your Blackboard® goodie bag.



Blackboard®



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.

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... Blackboard is strengthening its presence this year by offering the following to NSPRA conference attendees:

- Blackboard Welcome Party
- Underground Night Club featuring the Tuxedo Band - Monday, July 18th 7:30pm-11pm, register here: <http://offers.schoolwires.com/nspra-party-rsvp-0>
- Two Blackboard Professional Development Sessions:
 - Skill Session Tuesday, July 19th 8am-9am
 - Sponsor Session Tuesday, July 19th 9:15am–10:15am
- Bb Day July 21, 2016 8am – 12pm

LEGISLATIVE / HEADLINE RECAPS

Uniforms out and earrings in? School District revisits dress code

The Alachua County school board will host a public hearing tonight to discuss changes to the 2016-2017 student conduct codes, which includes the district's dress code. The hearing is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. at Kirby-Smith Center on East University Avenue. [Read Full Story](#)

Transgender policy controversial in K-12 schools, but not at the college level

A federal directive that schools let transgender students use the bathrooms that best match their gender has ignited a furor in some of Florida's public schools, but it's largely uncontroversial among its colleges and universities, also subject to the policy.

Some state legislators and local school district leaders in Florida have rejected the federal guidance, which requires public schools to allow transgender students to use the bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond with their gender identities. But at the college level, leaders say they've been letting transgender students use the facilities they're most comfortable with for years, and haven't heard complaints from parents or students about the new rules.

Florida touts 'Best and Brightest' bonuses as teacher recruitment tool

Florida's Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program should be viewed as a "recruitment tool" to help lure teachers from other states to public schools in the Sunshine State, according to Florida Department of Education. The controversial program provides bonuses of up to \$10,000 to teachers who had high ACT or SAT scores back when they applied to colleges. [Read Full Story](#)

Report: lots of absent kids, but fewer school suspensions

New government numbers offer a mixed snapshot of progress for the nation's schoolchildren - with worrisome figures on how many students miss school, stubborn disparities on discipline, but encouraging strides in cutting the overall number of suspensions. The Education Department report found 6.5 million students nationwide were chronically absent in the 2013-14 school year. [Read Full Story](#)

Broward school district to hire private investigators to verify home addresses

The Broward County School District has a new weapon against parents who lie about where they live: private investigators. And at least one School Board member thinks the \$375 bill for each investigation should go to parents caught committing fraud. [Read Full Story](#)

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Why some gifted third-graders are being held back from fourth grade

There is a statewide push-back against the system that threatens to bar children from fourth grade because they defied Florida's testing protocols. They refused to take the Florida Standards Assessment in English and language arts this spring, and also refused to take the alternate route of proving their children read adequately with a portfolio of work – because school administrators are demanding portfolios be filled with what these parents describe as dozens of “mini” standardized tests. Exactly what they were trying to avoid in the first place.

In move to reignite school desegregation case, plaintiffs say Pinellas has failed black students

Despite promises made 16 years ago to settle a Civil Rights-era desegregation lawsuit, the Pinellas County School Board still isn't spending enough money to ensure black children catch up to their peers in reading and math, the plaintiffs said Friday. The allegation was one of 30 contained in a legal document delivered to the school district - the first step in a process that could land the 50-year-old case back in front of a federal judge. [Read Full Story](#)

Recess is coming to Pinellas elementary schools in the fall -- or is it? Depends on your definition of 'recess'

How do you define what recess looks like in schools? Is it wiggling around to a video inside the classroom, or free play outside? Each Pinellas County elementary school's administration will decide that as they work on their master schedules for the coming 2016-17 school year.

[Read Full Story](#)

AND FINALLY...

Our district is on 10-hour work days once again. This summer schedule affords more hours for productivity on a daily basis – but some days are really, really long! Just wondering how many of you switch your summer work calendar to work 10-hour days every Monday – Thursday?

As well, 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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