



# SUNSPRA

Sunshine State School  
Public Relations Association



**“Thursday Thoughts” – 6.30.16**

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

Writing tips for the PProfessional... read on!

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**“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.’ The creation of the universe has a ten-word lead! So why do you need 40 words to say that your chief accountant has just completed the necessary certification? The answer, of course, is you don’t.”**

— John McIntyre, copy desk chief, *Baltimore Sun*

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## Lead on

Write better release openers

Are you still using the fact pack — cramming who, what, when, where, why and how into the first paragraph of your news release? Are you still married to the dated “XYZ Company today announced ...” approach?

These conventional formulas to release leads are formulaic, old-fashioned and — let’s face it — dull. Both approaches slow the story down, appear unsophisticated and are too stereotypical to stand out from the competition.

Instead, choose from these three more effective approaches. ...

[Read full article >](#)



### **Get to Know the APR and Become a Leader in the Field**

As a mid-career public relations professional, you know your success depends on staying relevant, resourceful, and inspired. Recognized worldwide, the Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) integrates timeless communications principles with contemporary strategies and tactics, and distinguishes you as a leader in the field. Invest time now to position yourself for future success.

### **I Already Have a Degree—What Can the APR Do for Me?**

The APR builds on the foundation of your educational degree, keeping you current on today's best practices and applications in the ever-evolving communications world. Stay on the forefront of industry knowledge, continue to refine your skills and take your work to the next level by achieving—and maintaining—this important credential.

### **Connect With a Network of Mentors**

Preparation for the APR ensures you have the tools to properly navigate challenging responsibilities, the vision to execute a larger strategy and the expertise to be a thought leader. But where do you turn to get your questions answered? Where extra support is needed, APR candidates are introduced to a tremendously skilled and experienced network of mentors, providing a lifetime of guidance and expertise.

I encourage you to think about APR... and how earning national accreditation will enhance your professional marketability and personal accomplishment. ***More to follow in next week's issue of "Thursday Thoughts."***



## **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 18<sup>th</sup> 7:30pm-11pm, register here: <http://offers.schoolwires.com/nspra-party-rsvp-0>
- Two Blackboard Professional Development Sessions:
  - Skill Session Tuesday, July 19<sup>th</sup> 8am-9am
  - Sponsor Session Tuesday, July 19<sup>th</sup> 9:15am-10:15am
- Bb Day July 21, 2016 8am – 12pm

## **LEGISLATIVE / HEADLINE RECAPS**

### **Florida Not Immune To National Teacher Shortage Crisis**

Florida is home to some of the country's largest school districts but according to a report from the Florida Department of Education, it doesn't have enough teachers. That means school districts are coming up with new ways to fill vacancies. [Read Full Story](#)

### **Florida taking public comment on new federal education law**

The new federal education law that replaced the No Child Left Behind act aims to turn over to the states key educational decisions, including those related to student testing, school accountability and help for struggling campuses. As it starts work on its plan to implement the new Every Student Succeeds Act, Florida is asking the public for advice. [Read Full Story](#)

### **Orange schools expands media relations department**

The Orange County school district has expanded its news media relations department, adding two more managers. Scott Howat is the new chief communications officer and Kathy Marsh is the director of media relations. The move is intended to improve communications and community engagement, Howat said. [Read Full Story](#)

### **Broward school district to offer child care to employees**

The Broward County School District will offer a new benefit to employees next year: district-run child care. Administrators are expanding a program in three alternative schools to make spots available for the children of employees. [Read Full Story](#)

### **Pinellas says new plan offers stronger focus on minority student achievement**

Pinellas County school officials on Tuesday unveiled a plan that they say will focus the district more squarely on improving the performance of minority students. For the first time in about 15 years, officials said, the district is making substantial changes to its strategic plan, adding two categories to the list of directions that guide the school system's actions every year.

[Read Full Story](#)

### **Cost concerns kill effort to keep two Pinellas charter schools open**

The families of more than 700 kids once flocked to Windsor Preparatory Academy and East Windsor Middle Academy because they didn't like what the Pinellas County school system had to offer. On Thursday, that system became their last hope for keeping their troubled charter schools alive.

### **EEOC looking into Florida teacher bonus program**

A federal agency that investigates workplace discrimination claims has decided to continue its probe into Florida's controversial teacher salary bonus program, and a state administrative judge ruled earlier this month that a Sarasota County school pathologist should receive money from the program.

[Read Full Story](#)

### **Amid dispute with teachers, Volusia district looking to hire more**

Only a few weeks removed from college, Chelsea Marino scored her dream job - teaching kindergarten at Ormond Beach Elementary School next year...Marino, a product of Flagler County

schools, is one of at least 131 teachers hired at a recent Volusia County schools job fair. [Read Full Story](#)

### **School app lets parents keep eyes on their children**

There's no fooling mom and dad about your school day anymore. Already, parents can monitor grades, get notified about absences and communicate directly with teachers through social media.

[Read Full Story](#)

### **After superintendent's resignation, board uncertain of future**

After former Superintendent Owen Roberts resigned from Alachua County Public Schools on Tuesday, school board members were uncertain what would happen next...The board will meet Monday to discuss Roberts' interim successor. [Read Full Story](#)

### **Court rules against unions on teacher performance pay**

A South Florida appeals court Wednesday sided with the Broward County School Board in a dispute with unions about carrying out a 2011 law that called for performance-based pay for teachers. The law required teachers on annual contracts to be placed on a performance-based salary schedule, though other teachers were "grandfathered" so that they continued with an earlier salary structure, according to the ruling.

### **School Board does away with student uniforms**

Polos are out; T-shirts are in, according to the Alachua County Public Schools' dress code approved Tuesday. The dress code does away with the district-wide uniform, which required students to wear collared shirts at school or school-sponsored events during the school day. [Read Full Story](#)

### **Hildebrandt makes surprise bid for superintendent**

The race for Leon County school superintendent moved into uncharted waters Wednesday as Woody Hildebrandt announced he is running against his one-time close friend, Jackie Pons. [Read Full Story](#)

### **Making the Grade in America's Cities: Assessing Student Achievement in Urban Districts**

Many US education reform efforts focus on student performance in large, urban school districts. The National Assessment of Educational Progress's Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) program provides data on student achievement in these districts, but differences in student characteristics complicate comparisons of district performance. [Read Full Story](#)

### **Broward school police department gets \$2.1 million in extra funding**

It will take an extra \$2.1 million to get the Broward County School District's police department up to date on overdue payments owed to municipalities that assign officers to schools. As administrators continue investigating issues in the police force, school board members agreed Tuesday to allocate that money so that the four cities - Davie, Fort Lauderdale, Miramar and Plantation - can be paid.

[Read Full Story](#)

### **Ransom Everglades School buys one of South Florida's most expensive properties**

One of the priciest properties in Coconut Grove is off the market after Ransom Everglades School agreed to purchase the 6.9-acre La Brisa property last Thursday. The school announced the purchase last Thursday and said the sale was finalized Tuesday. [Read Full Story](#)

### **Florida Department of Education begins collecting public input on federal accountability law**

As promised, the Florida Department of Education has begun collecting public input on its efforts to implement revisions to federal education accountability laws. One day later than anticipated, the department launched a website for interested people to give advice and ideas on such concepts as what types of success measures to use other than testing.

[Read Full Story](#)

## **AND FINALLY...**

I'm a musician for passion. It's what I've always done in life. Yes, I have other jobs to pay the bills, including this PR "gig" as some refer to it. Occasionally, I hear other musicians who move me beyond

passion to something that's only explained with emotions, tears, and goosebumps. Let me know if this impacts you the same way it did me: ["Voctave" – The Great Movie Medley](#)

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

*Kevin*

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