



SUNSPRA

Sunshine State School
Public Relations Association



“Thursday Thoughts” – 7.7.16

Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, SUNSPRA President

SCHOOL GRADES RELEASED – [Click here for complete details.](#)

Along with school grades, July is here, which means the 2016-17 school year is here, too. Orientations, early release reminders, first day preps, tons of media requests, formal budget approvals, public information – it’s all addressed thanks to you and your staff (if you have one!).

As you concentrate on 2016-17, I remind you about the benefits of your SUNSPRA membership. Beyond networking opportunities and legislative insight, membership keeps you up to date on current trends in Florida’s public school system. Weekly emails like this one keep us connected and focused on strategic, effective public relations. Professional development opportunities present themselves as webinars, seminars, conferences, and speaking and sharing opportunities.

Membership dues renew later this year – so keep an eye on your inbox for renewal options.

Meantime, read on to discover our newest members, why it takes a “PRo” to be even better, NSPRA award winners from SUNSPRA, and lots more interesting information.

Thanks for your membership!

SUNSPRA Welcomes...

- Athena Yannitsas, Marketing Specialist, Adult & Community Education, School District of Palm Beach County
- Christopher Binnix, Communications Specialist, Adult & Community Education, School District of Palm Beach County
- Jane Kim, Manager, Training and Development, Adult & Community Education, School District of Palm Beach County



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 News

Congratulations to Collier, Duval, and Orange County Public Schools – all captured great honors and awards from NSPRA's 2016 Medallion Competition. Here's a look at how they fared:

Collier County Public Schools, Greg Turchetta, Executive Director of Communications

Golden Achievement - *50 Schools, 3 Months, 1 Social Media Plan*

Award of Excellence - [50 Schools, 3 Months, 1 Social Media Plan](#)

Award of Excellence - [Beyond the Classroom](#)

Award of Merit - *At-a-Glance Fast Facts About Collier County Public Schools*

Award of Merit - *Funding Your Child's Educational Future*

Award of Merit - *Social Media and Education*

Award of Merit - [2nd Annual iSTEM Competition](#)

Honorable Mention - [CCPS News](#)

Honorable Mention - *CCPS 5K Walk-Run*

Honorable Mention - *'Twas the Summer Before School Starts*

Honorable Mention - *CCPS Employee Benefits Handbook*

Duval County Public Schools, Matt Biegun, Supervisor of Video Communications

Award of Excellence - [Real School Episode 1901](#)

Orange County Public Schools, Dylan Thomas, Director of Public Relations

Award of Excellence - *Smart Is Cool Posters*

Award of Excellence - *Hall of Fame Program*

Award of Excellence - *OCPS Rivalry Love Posters*

Award of Merit - *Minority Achievement Office Brochure*

Award of Merit - *2015-16 Pocket Guide*

Award of Merit - *2015 Annual Report*

NSPRA Chicago '16 – July 17-20

Who is heading to Chicago this summer for NSPRA '16? I know of just two SUNSPRA folks going this year.

LEGISLATIVE / HEADLINE RECAPS

View 2015-16 Florida school grades with caution, Orange and Seminole superintendents warn

The superintendents of Seminole and Orange county schools issued a joint statement Thursday morning, urging families not to put too much stock in 2015-16 school grades -- particularly in comparison to those issued for 2014-15. Barbara Jenkins of Orange County and Walt Griffin of Seminole County noted that the grading formula will implement learning gains for the first time since the state changed tests and standards. As a result, they said, the grades must be considered as baseline scores, without consideration of the "partial" past marks.

Tampa man develops app for parents picking up kids at school

Those well-known traffic logjams may get Tampa Bay commuters' blood boiling, but they have nothing on the daily ordeal faced by millions of parents of school-age children: the afternoon dismissal car line...A Tampa entrepreneur is looking to change all that. Pat Bhava, a former restaurateur, has created a tablet- and smartphone-based system that manages a school's student dismissal process, automatically sequencing cars, displaying the status of students, and instantly handling chores such as updating lists for delegated pickup duties when a parent can't make it. [Read Full Story](#)

Financial crisis looming for schools?

Fears of what looms the following year is weighing on Escambia and Santa Rosa school superintendents as they plan their 2016-17 budgets. The state Legislature approved an increase of only 1 percent in flexible funds for each school in 2016-17. [Read Full Story](#)

Still no time frame for Florida school grades

It's the time of summer when Florida school grades usually get reported. But Department of Education officials tell the Gradebook that they don't have any information as to when the annual ratings will be released. They said department staff are reviewing data and the marks could be out "soon." [Read Full Story](#)

Florida prepares to implement new federal education accountability law

State officials are preparing to redesign Florida's long-established education accountability system in order to comply with a new federal law. While Florida began grading schools and districts based on student performance under former governor Jeb Bush, the state will have to amend some of its policies to meet the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

[Read Full Story](#)

School grades: Administrators fear worse A-to-F marks this year

Florida's public schools will soon get their annual A-to-F grades, and some educators fear a worse-than-usual report card thanks to the state's new, tougher grading formula. [Read Full Story](#)

An outsider sets in: How Avossa is changing county's 'calcified' schools

The leadership of Palm Beach County's public school system is undergoing its largest overhaul in recent memory, as Superintendent Robert Avossa remakes its upper ranks with a team of outsiders and cuts positions that he calls wasteful bureaucracy. [Read Full Story](#)

AND FINALLY...

I see PR challenges across the country and wonder how we, as public school PR professionals, can help. Dallas. Orlando. Virginia Tech. Sandy Hook. San Bernardino. Colorado Springs. Chattanooga. Charleston. Fort Hood. Washington DC. They all involve shooting tragedies of immeasurable proportion. As the PR leaders for our school districts, we, too, must be prepared for the unthinkable. Make time now to solidify your local PR contacts. Find and fashion an adjunct PIO to help you during critical times. Support others so they will support you. Know your schools. Know your principals. Know your superintendent. We have time now to prepare – praying it never reaches us. But at least we will be somewhat prepared to deal with what is becoming more common.

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

Kevin

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