



SUNSPRA

Sunshine State School
Public Relations Association



“Thursday Thoughts” – 9.1.16

Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, SUNSPRA President

This issue is sent in hindsight... because Thursday was a CRAZY day in many districts, including mine!

Hurricane Hermine – regular updates from schools districts throughout Florida... that can change often, as we know! Remember, you’re keeping students safe based on information most of the public doesn’t understand from 32,000 feet in the air. Many Gulf coast districts cancelled classes today and tomorrow. Inland and East-coast districts also made some changes or cancelled / rescheduled outdoor activities. Wherever you are, stay safe and remember to communicate clearly and accurately! Our communities are depending on us to do so!

IT’S TIME – TO RENEW YOUR SUNSPRA MEMBERSHIP

This year, SUNSPRA met the objective of increasing membership by 10 percent... except we actually increased 22 percent! It’s time to renew YOUR membership, so please [CLICK HERE](#) to complete your renewal process with the fillable pdf form. SUNSPRA is only as strong as its membership – and we are growing significantly, already in this new school year!

Welcome to our newest members:

- Megan Collins - Director of Communications and External Affairs, FL DOE
- Cheryl Ethers - Deputy Director of Communications and External Affairs, FL DOE
- Alix Miller - Press Secretary, Communications and External Affairs, FL DOE

Welcome back to these members who recently renewed:

- Nancy Bloch Executive Director Florida School For The Deaf & The Blind

SUNSPRA CONFERENCE – YOUR THOUGHTS?

We are working with FASA to create a “Communications / PR” tract for the 2017 summer conference.

Overall session topics discussed so far include:

- Diversity. Reaching our diverse/ELL students
- How to positively build school culture
- Closing the gap of student achievement
- Public Relations
- Setting panel discussions for all levels: Panel of AP’s for the Aspiring admins, Panel of Principals for the AP’s, Panel of Supt for the Principals, etc.

Here’s where you come in --- what would YOU like to see included as a session topic? As a school PR professional, certainly you have concerns and ideas to explore. What are some of those? Share with me and we’ll create a great SUNSPRA-led tract for our members and school administrators.



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

Within today's dynamic public relations and communications environment, hiring an individual with an Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) demonstrates personal drive, professional acumen, a commitment to ethics, and dedication to lifelong learning.

The APR integrates timeless communications principles with contemporary strategies and tactics, meaning candidates with this certification are always in step with the public relations industry and attuned to trends. You can trust that the APR is an accurate representation of an individual's present expertise and a true test of their potential to lead the field.

Preparing for the APR is an exercise in success, as the process provides an assessment of an individual's proficiency and accurately calibrates their craft, contacts, and career goals, so they will bring years of professional experience, industry knowledge, and best practices to your business.

It takes a professional—someone with exceptional experience, broad expertise, and strong dedication and values—to thrive in the public relations industry. The APR certifies that you're working with the best.

If you're considering APR, please let me know. I am happy to share my experience with the process. It IS a process, not something you earn overnight. But once you finish the process, it is an amazing accomplishment and wonderful milestone in your public relations career.

You won't be alone in the process. Each year, hundreds of PR professionals strive for their APR credential. Currently, about 20 percent of PR professionals worldwide hold the APR credential.

Florida Missing Children's Day - Monday, September 12th Capital Courtyard, Tallahassee



As proclaimed by Resolution of the Florida Legislature, Florida Statute 683.23, the "first ever" Florida Missing Children's Day was held on Monday, September 13, 1999. Each year parents, children, law enforcement officers and citizens gather to remember Florida's missing children who are still missing and those who will never come home again. The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and FDLE's Commissioner are invited as speakers. The objective of this day is to raise awareness of Florida's currently missing children, to educate the public on child safety and abduction prevention, and to recognize those individuals and law enforcement officers who have made outstanding contributions in the missing children issue.

LEGISLATIVE / HEADLINE RECAPS

Third-grade promotion ruling spells trouble for state

A Leon County judge Friday declined to immediately order that students in a potentially precedent-setting lawsuit be promoted from third to fourth grade, but her rejection of several state arguments could fuel a movement that seeks to allow children to "opt out" of a standardized test.

Critics Say \$5 Million AIR Fine for Glitchy FSA Test 'Inconsequential'

The Florida Department of Education may have fined the company responsible for the glitch-ridden Florida Standards Assessment, but critics say the fine won't solve the underlying problems of the assessment test. Earlier this month, the FDOE fined American Institutes for Research (AIR) nearly \$5 million because of problems with the FSA which left many students unable to complete the test or log into the computerized test at all.

Education groups put big money into political causes

Advocates on various sides of the education debate in Florida have plunged into the 2016 elections, but those spending the most remain tight-lipped about where exactly their resources are going. Two major groups — the Florida Education Association teachers union and a committee that supports the state's de facto school-voucher system — have poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into their efforts in recent weeks, funneling money to political committees or investing in their own direct-mail pieces.

Lawsuit revives an old debate: Should Florida's struggling readers be forced to repeat third grade?

Michelle Rhea knew her daughter, Berlynn, was at risk to repeat third grade — not because the girl couldn't read at grade level, but because she planned to skip the state reading test. To avoid holding her back, Rhea asked teachers at Berlynn's Orange County elementary school to develop a performance portfolio, as allowed in state law. But no one did, and this fall Berlynn found herself reassigned into third grade.

Florida's testing contractor loses \$4.8 million for 2015 exam problems

The testing company that administers Florida's key standardized exam has lost nearly \$5 million because of problems that marred the roll out of the computer-based tests in 2015, the Florida Department of Education said Friday.

AND FINALLY...

Hurricanes, bomb threats, weapons on campus, and other emergencies typically thrust us into "crisis" mode. We've all trained for it and know what needs to be done. Unfortunately, our audiences — mainly, parents and employees — don't fully understand what is considered when making powerful decisions. Remember to keep calm, explain, and have patience. Parents are concerned and frustrated with us because we are the decision-making authority for their most valuable asset — their children!

Enjoy your Labor Day weekend! And until next time, keep shining the light on school PR in Florida!

Kevin

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