



SUNSPRA

Sunshine State School
Public Relations Association



“Thursday Thoughts” – 9.8.16

Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, SUNSPRA President

IT'S TIME – TO RENEW YOUR SUNSPRA MEMBERSHIP

Last membership 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 Dept. of Education
- Cheryl Eppers - Deputy Director of Communications and External Affairs, FL Dept. of Education
- Alix Miller - Press Secretary, Communications and External Affairs, FL Dept. of Education
- Brian Mangan, Director, Fort Meyers Technical College, Lee County Public Schools

Welcome back to these **returning members**:

- Nancy Bloch, Executive Director, Florida School For The Deaf & The Blind
- George McDaniel, Assistant Director, Fort Meyers Technical College, Lee County Public Schools
- Debbie Krouse, Tech Support Specialist, Fort Meyers Technical College, Lee County Public Schools
- Christina Langston, Chief of Community Relations, St. John's County School District

Please renew today!

SUNSPRA CONFERENCE – YOUR THOUGHTS?

Having received little response, I'm submitting this to you again for serious consideration

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 – *could include*:
 - How to Handle The Digital Mindset (making the most of your tech world)
 - Going LIVE with 1 Person (Mevo & LiveStreaming)
 - Managing Media with Class
 - Declutter Your Desktop – Finding Your Way in a Digital World
 - PResenting the BEST Image – Look the Part, Act the Part, Be the Part
- 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

As this year's chair of NSPRA's Accreditation Committee, I'm challenging ALL my professional colleagues in SUNSPRA, NSPRA, FPRA and FPRA Ocala to step up and accept this challenge: *if you will commit to the APR process, I will help you achieve success any way I can!*

Once you sign up, you have one year to complete the process and take the CBE, or Computer-Based Exam. This year marks a brand new version of the test, so studying is more crucial than ever to ensure you're up to date with current PR practices and trends.

What can you do to prepare? Consider any or all of these options:

- I'm holding regular face-to-face study session in my local area (Ocala). You're welcome to telephone in and participate (conference calling).
- Study Buddies – pair up with someone in your local area to lunch with regularly, review materials, and quiz each other on a regular basis
- Webinar study sessions – available at a cost to you, these self-paced sessions give you a structured approach at your convenience
- APR Study Guide – a complete and thorough document to help you prepare for the exam
- Current Public Relations textbooks on the college bookshelf
- Other tools

I know FPRA offers its members local and state rebates to sit for the CBE regardless of outcome. As well, SUNSPRA will offer a \$100 rebate to any member who sits for the CBE.

Remember, there are three primary steps to achieving your APR:

1. Personal questionnaire
2. Readiness Review
3. Computer-Based Exam

Many candidates find the best way to prepare is a combination of study methods. Earning your APR is a process that makes you better at what you do every day. You'll discover you REALLY DO know what you're doing when it comes to implementing RPIE on a regular basis.

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.

LEGISLATIVE / HEADLINE RECAPS

Down to 4: Finalists listed for superintendent position

The St. Johns County School District is closing in on its superintendent search with four names advancing into the finalist phase. In-person interviews will begin the first week of October.

Third graders win their case for opting out

A lawsuit brought against the Florida Department of Education, the state Board of Education and six

school districts ended in what supporters are calling a "huge victory" for students who opt out of standardized testing.

Florida lawmakers eye teacher certification rules

Two key Florida lawmakers say they're looking to "blow up" the state's teacher certification regime, giving school administrators greater authority to hire instructors who don't follow traditional paths to careers in the classroom.

Forecast: State surplus shrinking fast

Florida's economic recovery over the past few years probably won't be enough to prevent Gov. Rick Scott and top Republican legislators from being forced to make tough decisions to meet some of their recent spending promises.

New teacher evaluation system doesn't change much

Calling it a "game changer," Florida leaders made a sweeping overhaul of teacher evaluations in 2011, tying those reviews to student test scores in a push to boost educator quality and, in turn, student achievement.

AND FINALLY...

What's your best social media tip these days? I'm 'Tweeting quite a bit, and re-Tweeting what some of my schools put out there. For you Facebook folks, what's capturing the most attention right now? And on Instagram, how are you increasing your audience exposure? I'm curious to see what creative approaches SUNSPRA members use to effectively communicate with their audiences. *Send me your best ideas to share in the coming weeks!*

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

Kevin

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