



SUNSPRA

Sunshine State School
Public Relations Association



“Thursday Thoughts” – 10.27.16

Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, SUNSPRA President

AWARDS time

Under separate email last week and this week, I sent nomination information on this year's Outstanding Superintendent Communicator and Margie Davidson Leading Light Awards. The emails contain entry forms and deadline details. I hope you'll make time to nominate your superintendent and/or someone special who truly helps students behind the scenes. Special thanks to

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for once again returning as our exclusive sponsor for these prestigious honors.



2015's winners!



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 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! ***I encourage you to renew today!*** Thanks to those of you who have renewed so far... hoping our other members renew to keep SUNSPRA a strong chapter!

Welcome back:

- Greg Turchetta, executive director, Communications, Collier County Public Schools
- Maribel De Armas, manager, Communications & Design Services, Collier County Public Schools
- Leanne Zinser, supervisor, Communications & Community Engagement, Collier County Public Schools
- Gary Leatherman, director, Communications & Community Relations, Sarasota County Schools
- Scott Ferguson, supervisor, Communications & Community Relations, Sarasota County Schools

- Mina Ajrab, website specialist, Communications & Community Relations, Sarasota County Schools
- Kerry Padrick, assistant superintendent, St. Lucie Public Schools

LEGISLATIVE / HEADLINE RECAPS

Palm Beach schools receive \$11.6 million for choice programs

Palm Beach County's choice programs are getting a \$11.6 million boost from the federal government. Part of the U.S. Department of Education grant will be used to start new International Baccalaureate programs at Grove Park and Palmetto elementary schools in West Palm Beach and Howell L. Watkins Middle in Palm Beach Gardens. Carver Middle in Delray Beach will receive a portion of the grant to expand its existing program.

How the political clout of a charter school mega-company could be at risk in Florida

One of Florida's largest for-profit charter school management companies, Academica, has long enjoyed considerable influence in the state Legislature. Until last year, two Academica employees served as state lawmakers — and the brother-in-law of the company's founder also held the education purse strings in the House.

ACLU cautions Pasco's Ridgewood High School over dress code threat

A Ridgewood High School administrator's threat of arrest for a student planning a dress code protest has brought a stern rebuke from the ACLU, which offered in turn a threat of its own.

Minorities, poor hit hardest by stricter Bright Futures requirements

Tens of thousands of Florida's poorest students are finding it harder to afford college because of tougher qualifications for the state's Bright Futures scholarship. The academic scholarship was created in 1997 to keep the state's top students in Florida schools. But the legislature voted in 2011 to increase the required scores on ACT and SAT tests, fearing out-of-control costs caused by standards they considered too easy.

High School Athlete's Impromptu Singing of National Anthem Goes Viral

Some high school athletes have been attracting headlines of late by kneeling during the National Anthem. But a San Antonio volleyball player recently made her own news by stepping up during the traditional pre-game ceremony. When technical difficulties sidelined the recorded version of the anthem, Holmes High School senior Marina Garcia did what needed to be done — she picked up a microphone and sang. At the end of the impromptu and stirring a cappella performance of the Star Spangled Banner, her teammates, the opposing team and the audience all cheered. Captured on video, Garcia's performance quickly spread via social media and earned her appearances on the ABC World News and Fox & Friends. As a member of a military family, the Northside ISD student said the song holds a special place in her life.

Kids at Florida High School Can Graduate With a Bachelor's Degree

Many U.S. high schools offer dual credit programs, but the National Association of Secondary School Principals knows of only one where students can simultaneously earn their high school diploma and bachelor's degree. Florida Atlantic University High School has about eight of each year's graduating class of 130 accomplish the dual-degree feat. Nearly 100 percent graduate college by age 19, and more than half enter graduate or professional school. About 700 eighth graders apply annually to FAU High and 140 are accepted based on their grades, their score on a college entrance exam and recommendations. The price is right too. The state funds the school's budget, so tuition and textbooks are free. Students only have to pay an annual \$500 university activity fee.

Mock-Election Day Voting Instructions and Ballots

Two weeks ago, [NTW shared details](#) about an opportunity for schools to take part in the National Student/Parent Mock Election's Mock-Election Day. Voting instructions and ballots for schools and districts that signed up for this free civic education project are now available at www.nationalmockelection.org. Participants can cast their votes online from October 25th through November 3rd.



It's not too late to [register your school or district](#) for Mock Election and contribute to educating students about the value of participating in the democratic process. Students, teachers and parent who choose to join get to review candidate profiles, discuss issues and cast their vote. Ballots are easily accessible via smartphones, tablets, laptops and computers, and votes are tallied in real-time. By taking part, you help teach young Americans to get up and vote during election time.

PR Power Hour: Using Political Campaign Tactics to Influence Others to Action

[Register Now!](#)

Date & Time: Friday, November 4, 2016 — Noon ET

Prepping your superintendent for a last-minute media interview on a controversial issue and need to frame the message in five minutes? Meeting with an influential parent or community leader that you need to get on your district's side? Our next [PR Power Hour](#) is **Friday, November 4, 2016 at 12 noon (ET)** and here to help.



In [Using Political Campaign Tactics to Influence Others to Action](#), you'll learn some of the basic concepts used in advocacy, organizing and political campaigns that can be applied in a variety of situations, including addressing controversial issues. Learn how to use a message box to frame issues in oppositional situations and more.

For NSPRA members, the cost is \$50 per registered attendee; non-NSPRA members pay \$80. Registrants can access an audio file of the webinar for an additional \$10. Those who register for five or more Power Hours receive audio files of each purchased webinar at no additional fee.

[Register online now!](#)



Presenter: Pat Mogge, director, community engagement & outreach, High School District 214, Arlington Heights, Ill.

Host: Jason Gaston, APR, coordinator, public/media relations, Hoover (Ala.) City Schools and NSPRA Southeast Region vice president

AND FINALLY...

I actually laughed out loud watching this video... you deserve some laughter so take a few minutes and [watch this video!](#) Great answers from students on some of their tests!

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

Kevin

Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC

SUNSPRA President

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