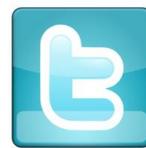




SUNSPRA

Sunshine State School
Public Relations Association



“Thursday Thoughts” – 5.11.17

Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, SUNSPRA President

As we all gear up for graduation ceremonies, no doubt your work schedules are dominated by video shoots, photo sessions, live webinars, streaming, media interviews, senior recognitions, cabinet meetings, and so much more. I’m proud to say I just left Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart (a Marion County native) after she named one of our Marion County teachers a finalist for 2018 Macy’s/FLDOE Teacher of the Year. It’s been a whirlwind of a week and summer’s just two weeks away. Then there’s the Florida Legislature dealing with funding for public education, our programs, our districts, our students, our schools, and more. There’s not enough time in the day to handle it all!

But, some of you found time somewhere to submit 17 entries for this year’s Sunshine Medallion Awards. I’m anxious to see the results and even more excited to hand them out next month in Orlando. Meantime, let me welcome **NEW MEMBER** Kim Stefansson, the Public Relations Coordinator for Escambia County Public Schools. Great to have you with us, Kim!

Here’s a look at what you can expect from SUNSPRA at the FASA conference in June:

Wed., June 14, 11am—12:15pm – “Managing Media with Class” with Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, Marion County Public Schools

Wed., June 14, 11am-12:15pm - “You Went Viral! Now... What Do You Do?” with Ben Tobias, Public Information Officer, Gainesville (FL) Police Department (moved up from Thursday)

Wed., June 14, 1:30pm-2:45pm – “Social Media: Handling Hateful Posts” with Greg Turchetta, Collier County Public Schools

Wed., June 14, 3:15pm general session – MEDALLION AWARDS

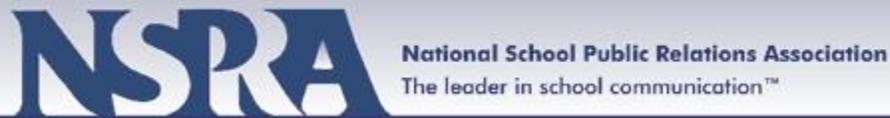
******NEW: June 14, 5pm - Dinner sponsored by SchoolMessenger and Peachjar (details tba)******

OPTIONAL: Thurs., June 15 – 11am-12:15pm – Medallion Award Workshop (if enough RSVPs)

For more information on the FASA conference, [click here](#).

Congratulations to Greg Turchetta, Collier County Schools, for winning a Golden Achievement Award from NSPRA, the highest award possible in the country for school PR!

Here's what NSPRA shared earlier this week:



Congratulations to Our 2017 Gold Medallion Winners

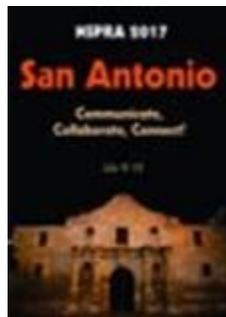
The Gold Medallion Award is NSPRA's most prestigious program award, recognizing superior education public relations/communication programs and projects. We are proud to announce this year's winners, who will receive their award at the San Antonio Seminar during the closing banquet on July 12. Details on these winning entries will be available following the Seminar.

- **Adams 12 Five Star Schools**, Thornton, Colo.
Five Star Needs: Investing in Every Student, Every School, Every Community
- **Alpine School District**, American Fork, Utah
Growing Forward: A Successful Plan for Development and Renovation
- **Ascension Public Schools**, Donaldsonville, La.
Growing at the Pace of Excellence
- **Capital Region BOCES**, Albany, N.Y.
BOCES Employee Resource Tool (BERT): Using a Social Intranet to Increase Employee Engagement
- **Capital Region BOCES**, Albany, N.Y.
Testing Water for Lead: Communication Resources for New York Schools
- **Collier County Public Schools**, Naples, Fla.
Opening the Classroom Window, One #tweetcher at a Time
- **Colorado Springs (Colo.) School District 11**
The Uniting of Two History-Rich Schools
- **Garland (Texas) ISD**
The Area's Newest Montessori Is Just Around the Corner
- **Grand Erie District School Board**, Brantford, Ont.
Be Well Campaign: Supporting the Child and Youth Mental Health Strategy
- **Racine (Wis.) Unified School District**
Academies of Racine: Transforming High School Education in RUSD
- **Ulster BOCES**, New Paltz, N.Y.
Ulster Community Forum on the Opioid and Heroin Crisis

Come July, NSPRA's annual conference heads west to San Antonio, TX. Conference hotels are already sold out but NSPRA offers a great concierge service that will find you another room AND put you on the waiting list for free! Here are details on this year's NSPRA Conference in San Antonio (click the graphic):



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Communicate, Collaborate, Connect!

Join us for the [64th Annual Seminar](#) in San Antonio, July 9-12, 2017
[Hyatt Regency San Antonio Riverwalk](#)

LEGISLATIVE & ISSUES UPDATE THIS WEEK

Lawmakers talk education, environment and tourism

A sweeping K-12 education bill was narrowly passed that would mandate recess for elementary school children, expand a controversial teacher bonus program, tinker with the state's oft-criticized standard testing system, and offer financial incentives to charter school operators who would agree to take students who now attend chronically failing schools. The education budget also decreases the base student allocation — money given to school districts for every student they educate — by just over \$27.07. The state will provide \$4,133.64 per student. ([more](#))

After years of trying, Fla. charter schools might get access to district property tax revenue

Since 2012, some Florida lawmakers have pushed to require school districts to share their local property tax revenue with charter schools. Proposals to that effect have surfaced multiple times. But they've never passed, until now. Under a wide-ranging bill, approved by the state House and Senate on the final day of an extended lawmaking session, a portion of local property tax revenue would follow students to whatever public school they attend — district or charter. ([more](#))

A Full Summer: As School Year Ends, Food Insecurity Increases

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, more than half of Florida's public school students are eligible for free or reduced priced meals during the academic year. Yet during summer vacation, the need for healthy, fresh foods can actually increase. But some local community groups are teaming up to try and fill in the gap. During the school year, some Leon County cafeterias are packed with kids getting what may be their only dependable meal of the day. But Rick Minor says hunger doesn't take a summer vacation. He heads Second Harvest of the Big Bend. ([more](#))

Gov. Scott ready for budget with 'surgical but massive' vetoes

Gov. Rick Scott keeps a veto pen on his desk, but considering his total frustration with the 2017 Legislature, it looks more like a machete. Now the question is whether he's willing to use it. Ignored by his fellow Republicans, Scott is considering massive line-item vetoes in the new \$82.4 billion budget. He's also considering something more drastic: a veto of the entire budget, which hasn't happened in 25 years. ([more](#))

All eyes on Gov. Rick Scott as he considers budget veto options

Gov. Rick Scott keeps a veto pen on his desk, but considering his total frustration with the 2017 Legislature, it looks more like a machete. Now the question is whether he's willing to use it. ([more](#))

Bay District officials blast education bill

A day after the Florida Legislature narrowly passed a massive, hodge-podge \$419 million education

bill (HB 7069), Association of Bay County Educators President Alexis Underwood stood before the Bay District School Board and urged every parent and property owner to call Gov. Rick Scott and ask him to veto it. Underwood decried the process behind the bill, which she said took measures voted down in committee and added them to the 278-page conforming bill “in the middle of the night” Friday before putting them forward for a vote Monday. ([more](#))

Critics sound off on education bill, say cuts seem inevitable

The controversial education bill that had become a linchpin for passage of the larger state budget was approved Monday by the Florida Legislature in Tallahassee. The Republican-controlled House passed the bill 73-36, while the 20-18 vote in the Senate, also led by the GOP, was far closer. ([more](#))

Nine ways Florida schools would change if the Legislature gets its way

For the second straight year, Florida lawmakers spent the closing hours of their session debating hot-button education issues. And again, despite some hand wringing, they adopted a few measures that had much more support among the political classes than from educators, parents and students.

[Read Full Story](#)

Lake educators say Legislature didn't provide enough testing relief

The Lake County School District did not receive the testing relief it was hoping for as the Florida Legislature finished its work this week.

[Read Full Story](#)

Leesburg, Kissimmee teachers named finalists for Florida Teacher of the Year

Tammy Jerkins had just finished a math lesson Tuesday at Leesburg High School when Florida Education Commissioner Pam Stewart greeted her with a giant \$5,000 check

[Read Full Story](#)

\$419M schools bill headed to Gov. Scott, after barely surviving Senate vote

Lawmakers struggled to pass a controversial \$419 million, 278-page K-12 public schools bill on Monday, the final day of the annual session - as senators acknowledged parts of the rushed legislation were flawed and would need to be fixed when the Legislature reconvenes in 2018.

[Read Full Story](#)

Riverview High teacher cleared after group claims she pushed gay rights on students

A teacher at Riverview High School who was accused by a conservative organization of banning crosses while advocating for gay rights has been cleared of wrongdoing after a school district investigation.

[Read Full Story](#)

School board urged to keep funding Teach for America

More than 140 teachers, parents and students crowded the Duval County School Board meeting Monday night and several dozen spoke for about three hours, urging the Board to keep funding Teach for America.

[Read Full Story](#)

State will limit public spending at schools' foundations

Florida universities and colleges will be forbidden from spending taxpayer dollars on foundation salaries under new rules being phased in by lawmakers.

[Read Full Story](#)

Massive education bill alters testing, recess, teacher evaluations, bonuses, charters

Lawmakers approved a giant, multi-pronged education package Monday that backers cheered as an education game-changer and critics called manipulative and detrimental to public schools. The 278-page bill eliminates a section of Florida's often-criticized, 2011 teacher merit-pay law, changes standardized testing rules, mandates recess for elementary school children, expands a controversial teacher bonus program and provides new bonuses for most teachers for the next three years. ([more](#))

Florida Legislature approves dramatic charter school plan

The Republican-controlled Florida Legislature on Monday narrowly approved a sweeping education bill that would steer more money to privately run charter schools, require recess in elementary schools, and tinker with the state's oft-criticized standardized testing system.

The legislation, which was a top priority for House Speaker Richard Corcoran, barely edged out of the Florida Senate on a 20-18 vote where some Republicans joined Democrats in opposing the measure. Corcoran said that the changes are even more dramatic than the A+ plan put in by former Gov. Jeb Bush nearly two decades ago that created the state's first voucher program and created the state's current school grading system. ([more](#))

Duval school leaders say education bill will decimate schools; want Scott veto

Leaders of Duval County Public schools urged voters Monday to call on Gov. Rick Scott to veto the state budget bill because provisions in it may drastically cut public school funding, programs and even whole schools in Jacksonville.

The changes, they said, will add to charter school coffers while "decimating" regular public schools and sharply undercutting local School Board authority. ([more](#))

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

Kevin

Kevin Christian, [APR](#), [CPRC](#)

SUNSPRA President

Public Relations Officer / Coordinator of Multimedia Productions

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