



# SUNSPRA

Sunshine State School  
Public Relations Association



## ***"Thursday Thoughts" – 6.29.17***

**Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, SUNSPRA President**

As June wraps up and we head into the July 4<sup>th</sup> long weekend, I hope you're either finding time or making time to relax and celebrate with friends and family. Day-to-day school PR takes its toll on us, doesn't it? I know right now I'm working on a massive calendar project, issuing three media releases so far this week, sharing school grades with our community, helping a referendum oversight committee with its public presentation, and lots of other responsibilities. Oh yeah, then there are media calls and emails to answer! And the requests for public records. Yes, indeed, the buzz never stops in the world of school PR. This is why it's so important to *make* time to relax. Build it into your day. Maybe it's the last 10 minutes of lunch (if you even take a lunch break!), the last 15 minutes of the day (just to wrap up), or somewhere in between the interruptions.

To lead, you have to listen. And to listen, you must be attentive. When we're running around, swamped with projects, jumping from one task to the next, and juggling two cell phones, dozens of emails, multiple social media platforms, and everything else, we're not always attentive. Remember, ***"nothing changes if nothing changes."*** Change your day by building in some quiet time. I promise, it will refresh, rejuvenate, and re-energize you for even more tomorrow!

Now, on to this week's new information:

**WELCOME NEW MEMBER** – Maura Howl, APR, Supervisor, Communications & Grants Management, Manatee County School District

## **FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE & ISSUES UPDATE THIS WEEK**

### **Florida School Grades See Impressive Gains During 2016-2017 School Year**

Over half of Florida's public schools received an "A" or "B" letter grade for the 2016-2017 school year, according to a new report released Wednesday from the Florida Department of Education.

[Read Full Story](#)

### **A-F grades bring good news, bad news for Fla. charter schools**

Six Florida charter schools could face closure under state letter grades released today. State law requires charter schools to shut down if they receive consecutive F's. It creates several safe harbors for charters that target disadvantaged students. They can apply for an extra year to raise their grades if they predominantly serve children assigned to low-performing district schools, or out-perform nearby alternatives. ([more](#))

### **Gov. Scott says he wants to 'permanently' expand Bright Futures, increase loan transparency**

During a visit to Miami-Dade College on Wednesday, Gov. Rick Scott said he would push to "permanently" restore Florida's Bright Futures scholarship program back to 100 percent coverage of tuition and fees. The statement comes two weeks after Scott vetoed Senate Bill 374, which would have done just that. But Scott found other provisions unsavory enough to scrap the bill completely. In his veto letter, Scott expressed disapproval with the bill's restrictions on Florida colleges, writing that it "impedes the State College System's mission by capping the enrollment level of baccalaureate degrees and unnecessarily increasing red tape." ([more](#))

### **Taking cell phone videos, photos banned on LCS buses**

Leon County Schools no longer will allow its bus riders to record video or take photos on their cell phones. [Read Full Story](#)

### **This school is offering \$3,000 signing bonuses to teach middle school math.**

Whoever lands a gig teaching sixth grade math at Manatee School for the Arts is kind of a big deal. [Read Full Story](#)

### **Medulla Elementary surprises 'super smart star explorers' in Lakeland**

Medulla Elementary's "super smart star explorers" got a surprise Tuesday from the school's principal and staff, who visited the homes of 41 students who achieved a Level 5 on Florida Standards Assessments this year. [Read Full Story](#)

### **School Bus Safety Bill Inspired By Teen's Death Signed Into Law**

The "Cameron Mayhew Act" is slated to take effect Saturday, after Governor Rick Scott signed the bill into law aimed at increasing school bus safety. The new law increases the minimum penalty for drivers who illegally pass a stopped school bus, resulting in the injury or death of another person. It includes a \$1,500 fine and a one-year driver license suspension. It stems from last year's death of Cameron Mayhew, who was struck by a car as he walked to his stopped school bus. ([more](#))

### **Manatee County charter school sent recruitment letters to local public school teachers**

Manatee Education Association president Pat Barber was worried about losing some of her best and brightest teachers before a local charter school started targeting them. "I'm always concerned about teachers who decide to change jobs," says the leader of the Manatee County teacher's union. ([more](#))

### **Scott signs economic development, school funding bills**

Gov. Rick Scott signed 29 bills late Monday, including measures boosting spending on education, tourism marketing and economic development. By signing the bills, and vetoing five more, Scott essentially closed the books on this year's regular and special legislative sessions. ([more](#))

### **How important will education policy be in Florida's 2018 election cycle?**

The recent fight over Florida's education budget and conforming bill (HB 7069) looks likely to carry over into the 2018 election campaign, with some of the state's most high-profile politicians already fashioning pointed messages on the issue. [Read Full Story](#)

### **Teacher hiring freeze is lifted in Hillsborough**

A teacher hiring freeze, imposed earlier this month so the district could take stock of which vacancies it needed to fill, has been lifted, effective Tuesday, Superintendent Jeff Eakins said Monday. [Read Full Story](#)

### **School district may seek tax increase to pay for charter school bill**

The Florida Legislature blew a big hole in Rocky Hanna's budget. The Leon County Schools Superintendent is staring at a \$750,000 to \$800,000 bill he was not expecting. [Read Full Story](#)

### **On open records, half Florida's legislators rate F or D**

Half of Florida's legislators failed or nearly failed in a review of their support for public records and meetings given by Florida newspapers and an open-government group after this year's legislative sessions. In a "scorecard" produced by the Florida Society of News Editors and based on information provided by Florida's First Amendment Foundation — which tracked a priority list of public records exemptions — the 160 legislators totaled three Fs, 77 Ds, 71 Cs, and 9 Bs. ([more](#))

### **The Speaker and Commissioner exchange heated words on home rule**

The Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives and the President of the National Association of Counties have vastly different views on county and state relations. In response to an open letter of concern written by Leon County Commissioner Bryan Desloge and published statewide, Speaker

Richard Corcoran said if local governments stayed in their “constitutionally authorized lane” there would be no problems. ([more](#))

### **Alonso assistant principal walks away from job to see the world**

When Alonso High School assistant principal for administration Scott Hazlett announced he was resigning his position to take a year off and travel the world, the reaction ranged from shock to disbelief to some envy. [Read Full Story](#)

### **What's new in the coming school year? Recess and fewer required classes**

School may soon get a bit less stressful for students, with fewer tests, fewer rules and more play time. [Read Full Story](#)

**2017 Legislative Session** bills have been signed by Governor Scott. Below is the list of these education-related bills – the bill numbers are linked to the final enrolled text of each bill. Detailed summaries for each bill are available in FSBA’s [REVISED 2017 Legislative Session Summary](#):

[HB 15](#) – Educational Options

[HB 39](#) – Autism Awareness Training for Law Enforcement Officers

[SB 80](#) – Public Records

[HB 293](#) – Middle Grades

[HB 371](#) – Assistive Technology Devices

[SB 436](#) – Religious Expression in Public Schools

[HB 493](#) – Enhanced Safety at School Crossings

[HB 599](#) – Public Works Projects

[HB 749](#) – Adoption Benefits

[HB 781](#) – Designation of School Grades

[HB 989](#) – Instructional Materials

[HB 1109](#) – Private School Student Participation in Extracurricular Activities

[HB 1239](#) – School Bus Safety

[SB 7022](#) – Public Employees

[HB 7069](#) – Education

### **Major Elements of HB7069**

#### *Schools of Excellence*

\*Requires the State Board of Education to designate a school as a School of Excellence if the school's percentage of possible points earned in its school grade calculation is in the 80th percentile or higher for schools comprised of the same grade groupings, including elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and schools with a combination of grade levels, for at least 2 of the last 3 school years.

\*A School of Excellence must be provided the following administrative flexibilities:

\*Exemption from any provision of law or rule that expressly requires a minimum period of daily or weekly instruction in reading.

\*Principal autonomy as provided under s. 1012.28(8).

\*For instructional personnel, the substitution of 1 school year of employment at a School of Excellence for 20 in-service points toward the renewal of a professional certificate, up to 60 in-service points in a 5-year cycle, pursuant to s. 1012.585(3).

\*Exemption from compliance with district policies or procedures that establish times for the start and completion of the school day.

\*Calculation for compliance with maximum class size pursuant to s. 1003.03(4) based on the average number of students at the school level.

#### *Grades 3 -6 ELA and Math paper/pencil requirement*

\*Provides that the statewide, standardized ELA and mathematics assessments in grades 3 through 6 be delivered only in a paper-based format, beginning with the 2017-2018 school year and all such assessments must be paper-based no later than the 2018-2019 school year. Therefore, it appears that the paper-based format will be phased-in over two years.

#### *SAT/ACT study*

\*Requires the commissioner to contract for an independent study to determine whether the SAT and

ACT may be administered in lieu of the grade 10 statewide, standardized ELA assessment and the Algebra I EOC for high school students consistent with federal requirements.

### *Schools of Hope*

\*Defines a persistently low-performing school as a school that has earned three consecutive grades lower than a "C," and a school that was closed within 2 years after the submission of a notice of intent.

\*Defines a School of Hope as: A charter school operated by a hope operator which serves students from one or more persistently low-performing schools; is located in the attendance zone of a persistently low-performing school or within a 5-mile radius of such school, whichever is greater; and is a Title I eligible school;

\*A hope operator must submit a notice of intent to the school district having a persistently low-performing school. The notice of intent must include:

\*Academic focus and plan

\*Financial plan

\*Goals and objectives for increasing student achievement for students from low income families

\*Completed or planned community outreach plan

\*Organizational history of success in working with students from similar demographics

\*Grade levels served and enrollment projections

\*Proposed location or geographic area for the school and proximity to a persistently low-performing school

\*Staffing plan

### *Best and Brightest Teachers and Principals*

\*Best and Brightest Teachers: Scholarship will be in the amount of \$6,000

\*In order to qualify a teacher must:

\*Have a composite score at or above 80th percentile on SAT or ACT based on National Percentile Ranks in effect when the teacher took the assessment AND

\*Have been evaluated as highly effective in the school year immediately preceding the year in which the scholarship will be awarded, unless the teacher is newly hired and has not been evaluated.

### **David Simmons: We're not done yet with HB 7069**

Inter-party, cross-house fighting over the controversial education omnibus bill House Bill 7069 is not yet over, nor are efforts to stop provisions that could spell death sentences to under performing public schools, Republican state Sen. Dave Simmons vowed Wednesday.

[Read Full Story](#)

### **Fix inequitable treatment between charter, traditional schools, Sen. Gainer says**

Sen. George Gainer, a Panama City Republican, was expected to oppose HB 7069 in the state Senate's final vote. He spoke against the imbalance of treatment between charter schools and traditional public schools during that debate, and said he wouldn't take much more special favors for charters.

[Read Full Story](#)

### **Booker High School's resilient Rachel Shelley honored as state's Principal of the Year**

A homegrown kid who grew up "in probably every single low-income housing authority that existed in Sarasota," acted up in elementary school because she didn't know how a dishwasher sounded, and washed her Riverview High School cheerleader socks by hand, then warmed them in the oven, has been named Florida's "Principal of the Year." [Read Full Story](#)

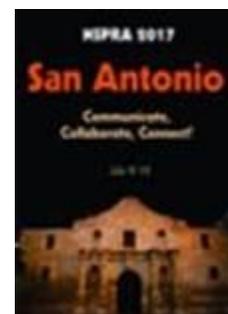
### **Legislative leaders announce committee week schedule**

Florida lawmakers will head back to Tallahassee in mid-September to kick-off the 2018 Legislative Session. Senate President Joe Negron and House Speaker Richard Corcoran outlined the interim committee week schedule in memos to their respective members Thursday. The schedule, as it stands right now, includes one week in September, two weeks in October and November, and one in December. ([more](#))



In just a few short days, 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

conference hotel room waiting list for free! For details on this year's NSPRA Conference in San Antonio, click the graphic to the right.



**Communicate, Collaborate, Connect!**

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

***Are you going?***

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

*Kevin*

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

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