“Thursday Thoughts” – 4.13.17
Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, SUNSPRA President

SUNSPRA Medallion Awards – I hope you’re working on your award submissions! The April 30 deadline is quickly approaching! This year, take home some nice hardware (or clearware, in this case) for the excellent PR work you’ve completed over the last year. Entries are submitted entirely online in an easy-to-use process. CLICK HERE for more information. SUNSPRA members can check out our “members only” section of www.sunspra.org for award-winning entries from last year.

FASA Conference – While picking up your awards in person on June 14 and enjoying lunch on SUNSPRA, you’ll also garner great professional development at this year’s FASA/SUNSPRA conference. These sessions specifically target the public relations profession:

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 - TBA

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

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

The Discover ’17 Conference includes top-notch sessions on today’s students and the future of our schools, opportunities for networking and recognition of Florida’s finest administrators. The three-day Conference is the place to be for quality education for Florida’s administrators, support staff and educators!

Registration Cost:
• Early Bird Member Full Conference Registration - $339
• Early Bird Non-Member Full Conference Registration - $389
• Member Full Conference Registration after April 14 - $379
• Non-member Full Conference Registration after April 14 - $429

**Conference Hotel:**
DoubleTree Orlando at SeaWorld
The DoubleTree is offering our $139 room rate from June 8 - June 20, 2017

[FASA Room Reservations Website]

• SUNSPRA-led and SUNSPRA-rich sessions offer great professional development for school PR professionals. In addition, the Sunshine Medallion Awards Luncheon offers tremendous exposure of award-winning projects to all attending districts, principals, superintendents, and other education leaders.

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 conference hotel room waiting list for free! Here are details on this year’s NSPRA Conference in San Antonio (click the graphic):

**NSPRA National School Public Relations Association**

[Communicate, Collaborate, Connect!]
Join us for the 64th Annual Seminar in San Antonio, July 9-12, 2017
Hyatt Regency San Antonio Riverwalk
Leading Off

**APR Is Really ABC**

*By Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, public relations officer, Marion County Public Schools, Ocala, Fla.*

April is APR month, so what better time to start thinking about your personal professional development? In this month’s Leading Off, we hear from some colleagues about their APR journey and the value of pursuing those three letters after your name.

Trend Tracker

**Create Powerful Videos for Digital Storytelling**

*By Derek Duncan, senior digital communications specialist, Parkway Schools, Chesterfield, Mo.*

Producing short videos for social media and websites is necessary to tell your stories. Plus, it can be simple and inexpensive when you use your smartphone. Learn more in this month’s Trend Tracker.

SucceStory

**Gold Medallion Winner — Peel District School Board, Mississauga, Ontario**

*Facts Matter: Working to Keep Our Students Safe and Healthy*

An updated health and physical education curriculum imposed by the provincial Ministry of Education was met with much criticism from parents and community groups. In this month’s SucceStory, learn how a communication campaign effectively quieted protests and created trust among key constituents.

Ron Koehler, APR, Named 2017 Barry Gaskins Mentor Legacy Award
Recipient

Congratulations to Ron Koehler, APR, assistant superintendent, organizational & community initiatives, Kent Intermediate School District, Grand Rapids, Mich., our 2017 Barry Gaskins Mentor Legacy Award recipient! The Barry Gaskins Mentor Legacy Award recognizes a practicing school public relations professional for mentoring and supporting the professional development of colleagues. Read on for more about Ron and the award.

President’s Corner
What You Don’t Know...Until You Do

By Julie Thannum, APR, assistant superintendent, board and community relations, Carroll ISD, Southlake, Texas

Learning happens in different ways and we don’t always know what we don’t know, but our colleagues will help us figure it out. This month’s President’s Corner encourages us to take advantage of the many opportunities we have to learn and share with school PR colleagues.

LEGISLATIVE & ISSUES UPDATE

THIS WEEK:

ICYMI: Florida education news in review, week of April 9, 2017
Even with the holiday week, it's been a busy time in Florida education news - not the least of which was a dispute over whether students should attend classes on Good Friday. Read Full Story

In new ads, teachers union calls for proper funding for public schools
The Florida Education Association is taking to the airwaves to call on lawmakers to better fund public schools. Read Full Story

Bell times recommendation is expected soon
Superintendent Jeff Eakins is expected to decide soon how much of a bell time change he will recommend to the Hillsborough County School Board. Read Full Story

Committee presents new textbooks, Collier school board to vote next month
For the first time in almost 10 years, a new set of social studies, history, language and art textbooks will grace the lockers of Collier County's public school students. Read Full Story

House, Senate far apart on school construction
As Gov. Rick Scott and the Cabinet approved the sale Tuesday of up to $233 million in education construction bonds, the question remains whether lawmakers will follow through on a second year of borrowing to fund building projects in the public-school, state-college and university systems. Read Full Story

At High Point Elementary, 'English language learners’ are beating the odds
Something good is happening at High Point Elementary, but the experts can't quite explain it. Read Full Story

District hopes to start elementary school mentoring
In an effort to help curb disciplinary issues and provide students and teachers with support, Bay District Schools Superintendent Bill Husfelt said Tuesday he is hoping to start a massive mentor-ship program in the district's elementary schools. Read Full Story

Hernando superintendent, USF clarify focus of performance survey
The long-delayed plan to allow Hernando County School District employees to rate the performance of superintendent
Lori Romano got back on track this week after the district smoothed over differences with a University of South Florida professor hired to create the survey. Read Full Story

Schools washing clothes so needy kids can focus on studies
Lake County Schools are launching an effort that they hope will help students meet the basic challenges of living so they can focus on their studies. Read Full Story

Compromise ahead for Florida education budget
Disputes over Florida's education budget proposals have found the state Senate and House $538 million apart, with leaders on each side sounding resolute to stand their ground. Read Full Story

Ashton principal to lead district's elementary schools
Ashton Elementary School principal Chris Renouf will become the Sarasota County School District's new executive director of elementary schools. Read Full Story

Which site is better for a high school: Alva or Gateway?
Gateway has more students. Alva has twice the room for growth. And both properties owned by the Lee County school district carry a list of reasons they should be selected - or passed over - as the next high school site. Read Full Story

DeVos announces Education Department hires
Education Secretary Betsy DeVos on Wednesday announced the names of personnel who will serve in key leadership positions at the Education Department, a move that comes after she spent the first two months of her tenure operating with a skeletal beachhead team. Read Full Story

Manatee school board bats around millage increase
County residents watched the teacher’s union and School District of Manatee County battle over salaries and benefits during a months-long contract dispute this winter and spring. As Manatee’s teachers pointed to better wages in neighboring counties, district officials had a simple retort - those counties receive more local funding because of voter-approved millage increases. Read Full Story

At High Point Elementary, 'English language learners' are beating the odds
Something good is happening at High Point Elementary, but the experts can’t quite explain it. Read Full Story

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