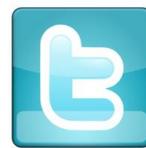




SUNSPRA

Sunshine State School
Public Relations Association



“Thursday Thoughts” – 4.27.17

Kevin Christian, APR, CPRC, SUNSPRA President

DEADLINE EXTENDED – you now have through Sunday, May 7, 2017 to submit your entries online for this year’s Sunshine Medallion Awards.

OK. You have an additional seven more days to submit your entries for SUNSPRA’s 2017 Sunshine Medallion Awards. I’m grateful for the extension and have several projects tapping my mind for potential trophies! Remember, 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.



2016 Medallion Award Winners



Will these be yours in 2017?

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 - “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

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

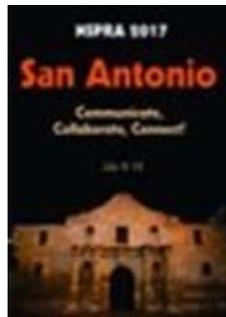
For more information on the FASA conference, [click here](#).

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

- Indira Jadoonandan, Curriculum Support Specialist, Adult Education Division, Miami-Dade County Public Schools



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):



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:

Senate committee spends all of 9 minutes considering major change in schools policy

That's how long senators on the Appropriations Committee spent this week to hurriedly describe, amend and approve their version of one of the most high-profile, substantial and costly education policy changes the Legislature will enact this year affecting K-12 public schools.

[Read Full Story](#)

State lawmakers end budget stalemate, but clash with Rick Scott looms

State lawmakers reached a tentative deal on an \$83 billion budget Tuesday that could end the session on time but could put them on a collision course with Gov. Rick Scott.

[Read Full Story](#)

Kindergarten students open their own restaurant

...Where else can you hand your money over to a 5-year-old manning the cash box, get waited on by kindergarteners - the boys wearing vests and ties, the girls wearing Caribbean-style floral blouses and head wraps - and enjoy a lunch of spring rolls, chicken panang curry and pork hum bao?

[Read Full Story](#)

Signs will warn sex offenders to stay off school grounds

Law enforcement officials will soon visit the homes of 760 sex offenders and 85 sexual predators in

Marion County as part of a new program aimed at reminding convicted sex offenders that they are forbidden to be on the property of schools and child care facilities.

[Read Full Story](#)

Orange OKs smaller campuses for new schools

Ending a long battle with school leaders, Orange County officials agreed Tuesday to loosen restrictions on future schools and allow the district to build campuses on smaller sites.

[Read Full Story](#)

State lawmakers end budget stalemate, but clash with Rick Scott looms

State lawmakers reached a tentative deal on an \$83 billion budget Tuesday that could end the session on time but could put them on a collision course with Gov. Rick Scott. A day after a stalemate threatened to derail the legislative session, Republican leaders in the House and Senate privately hammered out the broad terms of a deal that ensures both sides can claim victory for their top priorities. ([more](#))

Fla. Senate advances its version of 'Schools of Hope'

The Senate Appropriations Committee approved two bills today aimed at providing aid for struggling schools and attracting nationally recognized charters to their neighborhoods. Together, the bills are similar to the House's 'Schools of Hope,' a \$200 million plan to move students from struggling public schools into new schools operated by nationally recognized charter school operators. ([more](#))

Seven Miami-Dade schools among nation's best, according to U.S. News

Miami-Dade is home to seven of the top 100 high schools in the country, according to the latest annual rankings from U.S. News & World Report.

Design and Architecture Senior High in Miami's Design District, known as DASH, ranked 22 nationwide out of more than 20,000 public high schools, including both traditional public schools and charters. ([more](#))

Florida House bill on testing becomes latest education train

Like its counterpart in the Senate, the Florida House bill on state testing -- once 8 pages long -- has become its chamber's vehicle to push forward a patchwork of education policy initiatives found in a variety of other measures working their way through the legislative process.

[Read Full Story](#)

Donors cut county's student lunch debt by \$7,000; \$23,000 still owed

At least \$7,134 in donations have been made to chip away at the lunch debt carried by thousands of the district's students, said Allison Monbleau, director of food services.

[Read Full Story](#)

Volusia school officials tout economic benefits of borrowing \$135M for capital needs

Borrowing more money upfront, for example, would allow the district to dive into critical replacements and repairs and avoid further maintenance costs as infrastructure continues to age.

[Read Full Story](#)

Cardinal Newman star athlete wears Black Lives Matter prom dress

...As the 17-year-old smiled for the cameras, she said she knew the dress was bigger than prom or her.

[Read Full Story](#)

Principal changes at 23 schools

Superintendent of Schools Heidi Maier on Friday announced principal changes at 23 schools - or nearly half of the total - for the 2017-18 school year, a shakeup she deemed necessary to implement new countywide curriculum and combat years of lackluster student performance

[Read Full Story](#)

Push to Let Kids Use Sunscreen in Schools Underway

A new movement is underway to let kids use sunscreen in schools without a note from a doctor or parent. Currently four states have laws requiring schools to allow students to use the lotion. But that's not the case in most states because it is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration as an over-the-counter drug and, as such, many school policies ban it without approval from home or a doctor's note. But a bill being pushed by [Washington](#) state lawmakers would exempt sunblock from being classified as a medication so children could use it on campus, at school-sponsored events or during field trips. [Six other states](#) also are considering similar measures to help protect children. Medical experts say the ability for youngsters to use sunscreen prevents a lot of early sun damage and saves them from the development of skin cancer in later years.

Kansas H.S. Reporters Prove the Value of Student Journalist Protections

A team of Kansas high school journalists made big news for themselves recently after an investigative piece questioning their incoming principal's qualifications [led to her abrupt resignation](#). Although the six student reporters were pressured to stay out of district personnel matters, their persistent online research uncovered numerous concerns related to the newly hired administrator's college records and past job performance. The incident underscores the importance of a bill now pending in neighboring Missouri that would place more restrictions on school administrators who want to censor student journalists. Under current Missouri law — as elsewhere — school officials can censor anything they consider "sensitive material." The [new law would limit censorship](#) to stories that are libelous, invade privacy, violate law or incite a clear and present danger. The bill's sponsor said it's important to encourage student journalists to be truth finders and fact finders.

Digital Communication Seen as Effective Response to Federal Mandate

Many schools are already using digital tools and platforms to increase their capability to communicate with students' homes. But new demands under federal law will stretch their ability to effectively use technology to involve parents in their youngsters' education. The [Every Student Succeeds Act sets a higher bar](#) than its predecessor in mandating that districts conduct outreach to "all parents and family members" in order to receive parent-engagement funding. Advocates admit that technology platforms alone cannot fulfill parent-involvement requirements, but when used properly they can increase engagement and two-way communication. In fact, a [study published by Columbia University](#) and a recent [working paper released by Harvard University](#) show that parent-teacher digital communication — when promoted under the right circumstances — can improve student outcomes.

Connecticut Won't Use State Test Scores in Teacher Ratings

Connecticut will no longer use state test scores in teacher performance ratings. The state's board of education recently [voted to adopt new standards](#) for using state mastery test data, explicitly prohibiting the use of those test scores in evaluating teachers. School districts are still required to measure teachers in part on their students' testing success, which makes up a little more than 20 percent of the teacher evaluation rating. But now they will have to choose from a number of non-state exams to assess teachers in that category. School districts have had the authority to decide whether to include state tests in teacher ratings since the board adopted a new evaluation system in 2012. But the requirement that they actually do it never went into effect as the board voted four times to delay implementation. Officials said the move puts emphasis on the proper role for state tests as a goal-setting tool for teachers.

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

Kevin

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

SUNSPRA President

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