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Tragedy in Oklahoma

Everyone is surely still shocked and stunned at the news from Oklahoma yesterday; another horrific loss in an elementary school this year. In what has become all too familiar of a pattern, we review our CERT plans, counsel anxious students and reassure our families that our districts are as ready as they can be should we face a critical event in our districts. Yet we feel powerless as we watch another community struggle, and we see ourselves in their faces, even if they are half a country away. It is hard to go about our work and even sometimes feels a small bit disrespectful.

All we can truly do is this - Support our schools, offer help in whatever way we can, hold tight to our families, and take some time to grieve.

Thanks for the work you do to keep children as safe as possible in your community.

Common Core Standards on Hold

On Monday Governor Corbett opted not to seek approval of the Common Core standards as they are written, and sent them back the state Board of Education to make modifications. Reports state that this sudden change was based on concerns about the standards raised by lawmakers and the public.

Recently, conservative groups have protested the standards as a federal intrusion into local school control. Liberal groups view the standards as restricting teachers' freedom. Other states have already started to slow implementation of the standards because of the rising opposition.

Modifications to the standards are still being discussed, but will eventually be sent to the committees and commission for review and acceptance later this summer. School districts were told to continue their plans to implement the standards for next school year.

Here is some additional information on the common core shift:

<http://www.mcall.com/news/nationworld/pennsylvania/mc-pa-common-core-standards-20130520,0,6532743.story>

Corbett issues a hold on Common Core Standards

http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2013/05/corbett_orders_delay_in_common.html

2013-2015 PenSPRA Officers

The election results are in and we are pleased to announce that Vicki Flotta, of Bethel Park School District, will become our President as of July 1st. She will be joined by Jason Davidek, of South Butler School District, as President-Elect and Angela Linch, of Souderton School District, as Secretary/Treasurer. Many thanks to these outstanding professionals for accepting the challenge of leading PenSPRA into the future.

Symposium Feedback from Non-Attendees

Recently we performed a survey of Symposium attendees which will help us ensure we are meeting your professional development needs with our offerings. If you were unable to attend the Symposium, but have any feedback to share about the timing, location or topics, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or Symposium co-chairs Kim Newell or Jason Davidek.

NSPRA Membership and Annual Conference

PenSPRA is an informative, friendly and important resource for your professional development here in Pennsylvania, but if you haven't considered taking the next step to the national level, you should! PenSPRA is part of the larger national organization NSPRA. (The National School Public Relations Association) Membership in NSPRA offers you many of the same benefits you receive from PenSPRA; just on a national scale. As an NSPRA member you learn from leading PR professionals across the country.

Like PenSPRA, NSPRA also has an annual conference. It is held in July and shifts from region to region around the country. This year's conference is in San Diego, CA. (What a great city to visit!)

I have attended many NSPRA conferences over the years and found them to be very valuable. If you are debating attending, don't hesitate! It is well worth the time and investment. I also attended the pre-conference "New Professional" and "APR Prep" workshops which are offered every year, and both are excellent.

Here's a look at this year's program:

<https://www.nspr.org/files/docs/SeminarAtAGlance13.pdf>

News From Around the State and Nation

Did you know charter schools are responsible for 23% of disputed open records requests, of all public agencies in PA?

http://articles.philly.com/2012-10-11/news/34388598_1_charter-schools-traditional-public-schools-open-records-law

Social Media Resources for Principals. The book written by the Keynote speakers from our symposium is included in this ranking.

<http://the21stcenturyprincipal.blogspot.dk/2013/04/7-must-read-resources-on-social-media.html>

How a school district in Kansas launched a successful social media campaign.

<http://edudemic.com/2013/05/social-media-parents-students/>

Finnish schools have been in the news quite a bit recently. Here's a blog post written by a top Finnish educator about the difference between the two country's approaches.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/05/15/what-if-finlands-great-teachers-taught-in-u-s-schools-not-what-you-think/>

This is written by a principal in NY. It is an analytical look at why teacher/educator evaluation systems are flawed.

<http://roundtheinkwell.com/2013/05/18/why-the-ny-vam-measure-of-high-school-principals-is-flawed/>