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They're back!

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They're Back!

Welcome back to school! Although the summer is a great time to catch up where you are behind and plan ahead for the new year, it always lacked the energy of the school year to me. Now it's September, and the boys and girls are back in town, bringing their energy, enthusiasm and zest for life, reminding us of why we do what we do. Enjoy, and here's to a great school year!

Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Annual Poll

The Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Annual Poll on our nation's schools is a useful resource for school PR professionals. Here's a quick summary of findings from this year's poll.

Despite the wide adoption of the common core standards, nearly two-thirds of those polled, or 62 percent, said they had never heard of the common core standards. Of the 38 percent who said they had heard of them, many thought – incorrectly – that the federal government was forcing states to adopt them and that the common core covered every academic subject. Only 41 percent of those surveyed said they thought the common core would make American schools more competitive globally – a key goal of the initiative.

The common core brings along new student assessments, yet the public now says that increased testing is hurting American education more than helping. Only 22 percent of those polled said increased testing had helped the performance of their local schools, compared to 28 percent in 2007. This year, 36 percent of those questioned said the testing was hurting school performance; 41 percent said it had made no difference.

The poll also finds the public increasingly cautious about using standardized testing for teacher evaluation. This year, 58 percent of the respondents said they oppose using standardized test results for teacher evaluations – compared to 47 percent last year. Sixty-three percent also oppose the idea of releasing information to the media on how the students of individual teachers perform on standardized tests. Interestingly, 52 percent of American adults now say teachers should have the right to strike, up from 40 percent in 1980.

The poll also finds that 88 percent of parents feel their child is safe when he/she is in school – the highest percentage ever on the PDK/Gallup poll. When asked to choose between adding security guards or more mental health services to promote school safety, 59 percent of respondents would expand mental health

services whereas only 33 percent would opt for hiring more security guards. Moreover, the public also seems to be shifting toward an embrace of building screening procedures rather than reliance on armed guards. At the elementary school level, 57 percent of those polled said they agreed or strongly agreed that screening procedures similar to those used in government buildings should be implemented. In response to a separate question, 35 percent supported the placement of armed security guards in elementary schools. Similarly, 62 percent agreed or strongly agreed that middle and high schools should have screening procedures similar to those used in government buildings. By contrast, 48 percent supported armed security guards. Some of the highest “strongly disagree” percentages on the survey came in response to questions about arming teachers and administrators, with 47 percent strongly disagreeing with arming elementary teachers and administrators and 43 percent strongly disagreeing with arming middle and high school teachers and administrators.

Only 29 percent of Americans said children should be allowed to attend private schools at public expense.

Here is a one page flier about the results: http://pdkintl.org/noindex/2013_PDKGallup_HL.pdf

For all the information: <http://pdkintl.org/programs-resources/poll/>

Central Region Workshop

The central region will be having a workshop, on Friday September 13, 2013 from 9:30 am to noon at the PASBO office building, 2608 Market Place in Harrisburg. The first session of the workshop is “Public and Media Relations — Back to the Basics,” by Steve Manuel, College of Communications, Penn State University. The second session is “Alumni Development & Relations,” by Greg Hayes, Williamsport Area School District, and Madeline Bergman, North Penn School District. The two sessions will be followed by a round table discussion on marketing your school district. If you are so inclined, be prepared to share some ways that you have marketed your school district. RSVP to Greg at

Diane Ravitch to speak in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh

NYU research professor of Education and blogger Diane Ravitch is releasing a new book “The Reign of Error,” and will be speaking in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia on September 16 and 17th. Tickets can be purchased at this link

Member Request

Have any of your districts started putting together informational materials, talking points, etc. related to communications about the School Performance Profile? If so, would you mind sharing? Respond to Kristen Rawlings at krawlings@mciu.org.

Also on this topic, below is an article on the School Performance Profile. Basically, this new system is replacing the former school evaluation system of Adequate Yearly Progress. Community members and parents will be able to access an online database that provides detailed information on student and school performance and compares districts. The program is expected to launch on September 30th. Since PDE is

not providing districts with an early look at the system, there is some concern about being able to respond after the launch. Let's work together to be prepared!

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/federal_programs/7374/p/1433522

Membership Renewals

We are pleased to announce our membership renewal page is ready to accept credit card payments. You can register and pay online at this link or use the snail mail app and a check, whichever is more convenient for you.

Register by October 31st for a chance to win a free mobile app for your district, donated and provided by Parentlink. Thanks Parentlink!

http://www.penspra.org/protected/PenSPRA_MemberSignup.aspx

News From Around the State and Nation

Breakdown of budgets under Corbett. This piece explains why the explanation "funding cuts are just expired stimulus funding" is untrue.

<http://axisphilly.org/article/breaking-down-claim-of-historic-education-funding-under-corbett/>

The common core is still raising question from legislators, especially on the issue of testing costs.

http://www.phillyburbs.com/news/local/senate-committee-drills-education-officials-on-common-core/article_d55b48d2-4209-535e-9c04-91f78a99b78d.html

Superintendent study. A group of superintendents worked to re-define the duties of the modern superintendent.

<http://www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=29618>

Another helpful article on how to use twitter. Make sure to click on the twitter resource link included in the article which has a huge list of twitter chat tags.

http://www.multibriefs.com/briefs/exclusive/rise_of_the_connected_superintendent.html#.UiDcsdJt6_a

A Variety of National Statistics on Schools; Good Resource.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/09/03/back-to-school-by-the-numbers/>

Nathan Mains Named as new Executive Director of PSBA.

<http://www.psba.org/news-publications/headlines/details.asp?id=6001>

"Movements work." Opinion piece on the impact of school communication efforts and the resulting change in public opinion.

<http://yinzercation.wordpress.com/2013/09/02/movements-work/>

