

Communications contest
Child protective services law change
An investment in knowledge...
NSPRA early registration
Building trust in bad times
News from around the state and nation

Communications Contest

Our annual communications contest launches on Jan 5th! Although the categories are the same this year, the entry process will look a little different. PenSPRA's contest is being hosted online by a company named Pitchburner. Our neighbors at NYSPRA used Pitchburner's interface for their contest and were very happy with the results. Pitchburner's website is user friendly and will provide all entrants with feedback from the judges. Look for the link to register and enter the Communications Contest on January 5th!

Child protective services law change

Revisions to a child protective services law go into effect on Jan 1, 2015 and are likely to have implications to schools. There are two issues that involve schools. The first is that the list of "mandated reporters" has expanded and now includes volunteers who work with children as well as child care providers and school personnel at all levels, religious leaders, doctors and health care professionals, social workers, librarians, and law enforcement. These volunteers who work with children are now required to have background clearances. As you can see in the three articles below, there are some questions as to what exactly defines a "school volunteer." Some schools are defining it as any volunteer who has contact with students, and others are saying if a teacher is always nearby it is not necessary for volunteers to have clearances.

The second change is that mandated reporters must now report suspicions of child abuse to police, the state's ChildLine hotline, or directly to child welfare authorities through an online BEFORE reporting it to his/her supervisor. Prior to these changes, reporters were supposed to report to his/her supervisor first. There are also now penalties for any reporter who fails to report abuse. As many school district employees are mandated reporters, these changes will clearly impact our staff.

Clearance requirements for school volunteers

<http://www.post-gazette.com/news/education/2014/12/15/New-Pa-law-expands-clearance-requirements-for-school-volunteers-employees/stories/201412150005>

Nonprofits prepare for new reporting requirements

http://lancasteronline.com/news/local/schools-nonprofits-prepare-for-new-child-abuse-reporting-requirements/article_d31b396e-823d-11e4-85de-43f22a9b9116.html

Nonprofits are concerned about the cost of clearances

http://lancasteronline.com/news/local/new-law-proving-confusing-and-costly-to-youth-leaders/article_00d43692-823b-11e4-8920-3360f20b7dac.html

An investment in knowledge....

Everyone has heard the powerful quote from Benjamin Franklin, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." Well, some researchers took these simple words a few steps further and proved what careful and thorough investment in education could truly result in. While you may not totally agree with

their five areas for educational investment, the numbers are staggering. They proved an investment of 6.2 trillion in education would yield a return on investment of \$225 trillion! Details here <http://www.forbes.com/sites/randalllane/2014/12/01/heres-a-plan-to-turn-around-u-s-education-and-generate-225-trillion/>

NSPRA early registration

The NSPRA conference is in Nashville Tennessee next summer; July 12 – 15. Save big by registering early, before January 23rd, and you will be on your way to enjoying some great country music, making new school PR connections and learning lots of new tips and tricks to take back to the office.

<https://www.nspr.org/civCRM/event/info?id=100>

Building trust in bad times

This is a great checklist to run through when you are going through one of those bad times in your district!

http://www.nspr.org/e_network/2014-12_leading_off

News from around the state and nation

Pension totals expected to lim 466 million next year

<http://www.pottsmc.com/general-news/20141208/pennsylvania-pension-costs-to-climb-by-466m-next-year>

Pension math; aka really big numbers

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-12-09/no-escape-from-pension-math-in-pennsylvania.html>

Senator Casey sponsoring a computer science education bill

<http://www.mcall.com/news/local/easton/mc-easton-casey-computer-science-coding-20141208-story.html>

Hour of code proves popular with students

<http://www.post-gazette.com/business/tech-news/2014/12/10/Hour-of-Code-shows-that-anyone-can-handle-computer-language/stories/201412100014>

New report shows poverty at all-time high in PA

<http://thirdandstate.org/2014/december/public-school-poverty-new-normal>