

Demonstrate your Excellence!

Symposium

Communication nudges

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Communications Contest

Our annual communications contest has launched. Although the categories are the same this year, the entry process looks a little different. The contest is being hosted online by a company named Pitchburner. Pitchburner's website is user friendly and will provide all entrants with feedback from the judges. Here is the link to register. The contest is open until February 20<sup>th</sup>. Demonstrate your Excellence!!

Symposium

PenSPRA's annual symposium is set for Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup> in Bedford Springs, PA with a networking event kick-off on Thursday evening. We're planning a great agenda that will include information on State College Area School District's successful referendum campaign. In addition, we expect to hear from the Pennsylvania State Police on best practices for communicating in a crisis and a third topic to be announced soon.

Register for your hotel room here by Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> to receive the discounted rate:

Register for the symposium here:

Communication "Nudges"

This article has some interesting thought triggers in it. Through the use of simple communication reminders, called communication nudges, these schools are improving the academic results of their students. Give it a read, and think about what you might be able to do in your district to nudge your parents or students and use simple communication techniques for powerful returns.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/18/upshot/helping-the-poor-in-higher-education-the-power-of-a-simple-nudge.html?mabReward=R1&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&region=CColumn&module=Recommendation&src=rechp&WT.nav=RecEngine&\\_r=1&abt=0002&abg=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/18/upshot/helping-the-poor-in-higher-education-the-power-of-a-simple-nudge.html?mabReward=R1&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&region=CColumn&module=Recommendation&src=rechp&WT.nav=RecEngine&_r=1&abt=0002&abg=1)

## School board awareness/candidate workshops

There are school board elections this May and November. Here is some information that may be of use in your district. The first is the social media school board awareness campaign that PenSPRA created. This is a series of Facebook posts/Tweets you can schedule over a series of days to share information about school boards through popular social media channels. The text for the campaign is at the bottom of this newsletter.

Also, the EPLC is hosting regional workshops for school board candidates or other interested parties. Candidates from your district can attend to learn more about being a school board director. The details are here:

<http://www.eplc.org/2015/01/register-now-eplc-2015-regional-workshops-for-school-board-candidates-and-others/>

## High School Grad Rate at Highest Point

Don't be fooled by all the negative headlines. America's high school graduation rate is currently at its highest rate of 81%! That is correct – not the 50% you often hear in the news. 81% of American public high school seniors are graduating on time.

[http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR\\_2010-11\\_to\\_2012-13.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR_2010-11_to_2012-13.asp)

## News from around the state and nation

Wolf is sworn in as governor and pledges one of his three main goals is “schools that teach.”

<http://www.mcall.com/news/nationworld/pennsylvania/mc-pa-gov-tom-wolf-inauguration-20150120-story.html#page=1>

Governor Wolf wastes no time in reviewing the situation in York City schools

[http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2015/01/gov\\_tom\\_wolf\\_reviewing\\_york\\_ci.html](http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2015/01/gov_tom_wolf_reviewing_york_ci.html)

Governor Wolf names Lancaster Supt. Rivera as Dept of Ed Secretary

[http://lancasteronline.com/news/local/wolf-appoints-sdol-superintendent-to-top-education-post/article\\_41d107d8-a004-11e4-9e41-6f614560bad9.html](http://lancasteronline.com/news/local/wolf-appoints-sdol-superintendent-to-top-education-post/article_41d107d8-a004-11e4-9e41-6f614560bad9.html)

Governor Wolf fires Corbett's pick for Open Records Director

[http://www.pennlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/01/expect\\_a\\_court\\_battle\\_over\\_wol.html](http://www.pennlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/01/expect_a_court_battle_over_wol.html)

Court rules the SRC cannot cancel Philly teacher's contract

[http://www.philly.com/philly/news/20150123\\_Court\\_SRC\\_cannot\\_impose\\_terms\\_on\\_teachers.html#oBytLJD2YHdwfb4g.99](http://www.philly.com/philly/news/20150123_Court_SRC_cannot_impose_terms_on_teachers.html#oBytLJD2YHdwfb4g.99)

Senate hearings on NCLB

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/senate-begins-debate-on-education-law-focuses-on-testing/2015/01/21/583b24d4-a19b-11e4-b146-577832eafcb4\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/senate-begins-debate-on-education-law-focuses-on-testing/2015/01/21/583b24d4-a19b-11e4-b146-577832eafcb4_story.html)

Education was missing from President Obama's State of the Union speech

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2015/01/21/what-obama-didnt-mention-in-his-state-of-the-union-speech/>

School board awareness social media campaign text

Have you always wanted to know more about school boards? Today we are launching a school board awareness campaign! #aboutschoolorboards

A school board is a legislative body. School directors are elected locally. They serve four year terms without pay. #aboutschoolorboards

School boards have 9 members. Although elected locally they are state officials. By law they administer a school system. #aboutschoolorboards

To be elected or appointed to a school board, you must be a PA citizen, 18 years old, of good moral character, and... #aboutschoolorboards

... (2of2) you must be a resident of the school district for at least one year prior to election or appointment. #aboutschoolorboards

Other laws prohibit you from being a school director; You're ineligible if you've been convicted of an "infamous crime." #aboutschoolorboards

School code prohibits school directors from being employed by or doing business with the district where they serve. #aboutschoolorboards

Some federal, state & local government employees whose jobs involve federal funding may be ineligible for school board. #aboutschoolorboards

School board directors are elected to 4 yr terms or are appointed by the board to fill a vacated seat between elections. #aboutschoolorboards

An appointed board member will serve two years at most before they must be elected. #aboutschoolorboards

Five school directors are up for election in one election cycle and four directors are up in the next election cycle. #aboutschoolorboards

The 5-4 rotation over 2 election cycles prevents a school board from having 9 new members, which would be disruptive. #aboutschoolorboards

Board members may be elected at large, by region or by a combination of at large and by region.  
#aboutschoolorboards

When school boards elect by region, school directors must live in the region to be elected to the seat.  
#aboutschoolorboards

When school boards elect at large, school directors may live anywhere in the school district.  
#aboutschoolorboards

In (insert your district's name here), school directors are elected (choose appropriate answer for your district) by region, at large, at large and by region. #aboutschoolorboards

School board candidates circulate a petition & receive signatures from at least 10 registered voters to get on the ballot. #aboutschoolorboards

School board candidates file a statement of financial interest, like a tax return, with their school district.  
#aboutschoolorboards

School board candidates also file expense reports if they spend more than \$250 on their campaign.  
#aboutschoolorboards

School board primary elections are held the third Tuesday in May. For the 2015 cycle the date is May 19<sup>th</sup>. #aboutschoolorboards

School board general elections are held in November of odd-numbered years. For the 2015 cycle it is Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>. #aboutschoolorboards

The board of elections publishes a calendar with all the needed dates for school board elections.  
#aboutschoolorboards

So, what do school boards do? Here are some of the required duties: Adopt textbooks, levy taxes, adopt a budget... #aboutschoolorboards

More board duties: Adopt courses of study, adopt the school year calendar, hire the superintendent & other employees...#aboutschoolorboards

Board duties part 3: Draft and pass collective bargaining agreements, adopt and enforce policy for school activities... #aboutschoolorboards

Board duties part 4: provide grounds and buildings, and provide education for children with special needs. #aboutschoolorboards

That was a very brief overview of what a school board handles. See for yourself by attending a board meeting! #aboutschoolorboards

General board meetings and board committee meetings are always open to the public, except during executive sessions. #aboutschoolorboards

Hope you learned a lot about your school board during this awareness campaign! Search the #aboutschoolorboards hashtag for a recap anytime.

