



Texas Chapter, National School Public Relations Association  
**Texas School Public Relations Association**

406 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Suites 101-105  
Austin, Texas 78701  
512.474.9107

**Denise Blanchard, TSPRA President**  
Amarillo, Texas

**Helen Williams, TSPRA President-Elect**  
Highland Park ISD

**Patti Pawlik-Perales, TSPRA Immediate Past President**  
Alamo Heights ISD

**Linsae Snider, TSPRA Executive Director**  
Austin, Texas

**Julie Zwahr NSPRA South Central Vice-President**  
Little Elm ISD

## **Mark of Distinction Recognition Program For NSPRA Chapters**

### ***Section II - Special Focus Areas***

#### ***Category A-Chapters with less than 50% NSPRA membership***

#### ***2. Special PR/Communications Program, Project or Campaign***

- ✓ Continuing Annual Project/Program***

**Continuing Annual Program, Project, or Campaign:**

**Celebrate Texas Public Schools (CTPS)**



**Explanation and overview of overall effort:**

The Masonic Lodge of Texas first recognized Texas Public Schools Week (TPSW) in 1950. The event was to be celebrated in conjunction with Texas Independence Day on March 2<sup>nd</sup> of each year. Since the provision of a free public education was a major reason political ties were severed with Mexico in the mid-1800's, the Masons determined that the first full week in March would be the designated "week" to celebrate and honor Texas Public Schools. The Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) has managed this initiative for more than 30 years.

TSPRA bylaws specify a standing committee for this project with appointments made by the TSPRA president. For more than 30 years this committee created a TPSW kit that was sold to member and nonmember districts for this celebration. The kit included a yearly theme, artwork, proclamations, media releases, student, teacher and parent activities, classroom lessons, lesson plans, engraved/printed marketing supplies and materials that could be purchased from a third party vendor.

With the onset of high-stakes testing in Texas, it became more challenging for public schools to celebrate Texas Public Schools Week during the first week in March. The number of TPSW kits sold dwindled from 1,300 to less than 100 per year in the past decade.

In 2010, TSPRA members voted to change the campaign from Texas Public Schools Week to Celebrate Texas Public Schools (CTPS). The intent of the name change was to continue to celebrate our Texas public schools, but to allow districts to locally determine a date that was best for their respective school calendars. The CTPS committees continued to develop kits similar to what had been done in previous years.

Finally, in the spring of 2012, the TSPRA Executive Committee researched the initiative and made three conclusions:

1. Something was not working. Only 50 kits had been sold during the 2011-2012 school year and the majority of those sales were to non-member districts.

2. TSPRA members and their districts were no longer celebrating Texas Public Schools nor were they designating a week for Celebrate Texas Public Schools.
3. The 2011 Texas Legislature had made radical financial cuts to public school funding and inaccurate information about Texas public education was spreading like wildfire through the legislature and media.

TSPRA leadership decided the CTPS program had to be revitalized to better serve the needs of our members and to provide a vehicle to support public education in our state.

The San Antonio area TSPRA members agreed in the spring of 2012 to convert the CTPS initiative into a campaign that could be used to celebrate Texas public schools all year, as opposed to one week of the year. The project was officially re-commissioned and unveiled to the membership as a year-round program during TSPRA's 2013 annual conference.

A major sponsor agreed to support the program, allowing TSPRA to inaugurate the CTPS video contest, which asked students throughout the state to produce one-minute videos touting the benefits of a Texas public education. Winning campuses received cash prizes of \$1,000.



**Statement of chapter goals and objectives for the program/project/activity:**

**GOALS**

1. Get more return on efforts to develop logo, theme and marketing materials
2. Give more support to local school districts and TSPRA membership
3. Generate more name recognition for TSPRA
4. Generate better awareness and positive feelings about Texas public schools
5. Honor the original intent of the TPSW initiative

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Use 2012-2013 as a transition year
2. Provide additional benefits for school districts including
  - a. Monthly activities related to annual theme that are associated with "special weeks"
3. Continue to develop annual theme
  - i. Provide online logo generator to customize with school district or campus name
4. Rebrand CTPS
  - i. Design new logo that will represent CTPS year after year

- ii. Establish CTPS standalone website
- iii. Establish CTPS social media presence
- 5. Create a statewide vehicle for students to share stories of their public schools
  - a. Solicit corporate sponsorships
  - b. Promote the profession by expecting students to use effective communication practices to share their stories
- 6. Educate Texans on Texas Constitution related to a free and public education for all.

**Timeline and calendar of events/activities:**

See attached

**Communication plan related to program/project/activity:**

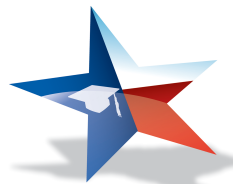
See attached

**Documentation and copies of all related materials:**

- Monthly CTPS activities
  - See attached
  - Also <http://www.celebratetps.org/ctps-resources> (login required)
- Texas Public School Week theme/artwork
  - See attached, logos, proclamation, posters and other supporting material
  - Also <http://www.celebratetps.org/ctps-resources> (login required)



- Rebranding Efforts
  - Logo
    - See attached



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- CTPS stand alone website
  - <http://www.celebratetps.org>
  - log in for viewing members only section
    - user name - NSPRAMOD
    - password - nspraawardjudges
- Facebook page
  - <https://www.facebook.com/CelebrateTexasPublicSchools>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/tspraoffice>
- Twitter

- TSPRA
    - CTPSCampaign
  - YouTube
    - [www.youtube.com/celebratetxschools](http://www.youtube.com/celebratetxschools)
- CTPS Student Video Contest
  - See attached
    - Sponsorship agreement
    - Rules
      - <http://www.celebratetps.org/ctps-video-contest>
    - Announcement
    - Entries
    - Scoring rubric
    - Regional Judges
    - Regional finalists
      - <http://www.celebratetps.org/ctps-video-contest/video-contest-regional-finalists>
    - State Judges
    - State winners
      - <http://www.celebratetps.org/ctps-video-contest/video-contest-winners>
    - Photos of winners being announced at 2014 annual conference
    - Thank you sent to sponsor from winning elementary campus
- History of TPSW and Texas public education
  - See attached
    - <http://www.celebratetps.org/about-ctps/history-ctpspage/history-of-tpsw>
    - <http://www.celebratetps.org/about-ctps/history-ctpspage/history-of-public-education-in-texas>

**Identification of target audience and explanation of desired outcomes:**

Primary Audience –TSPRA’s 800+ membership.

Secondary Audience –

1. Texas public schools with 1,000 or few students
2. Texas public education school children

Desired outcome was simple – to increase the number of TSPRA members using the CTPS products while still allowing access to the program to non-members. In addition, the video contest gives students exposure to the communications industry, while allowing them to tell their own stories about the good work being done in Texas public schools.

**Documentation/demonstration of measurable outcomes, effectiveness and success of the program/activity:**

In June 2012, the TSPRA Executive Committee voted to increase dues by \$50 to include the use of and access to CTPS year-round materials for all dues paying members. Prior to this vote, access to CTPS materials involved an additional fee. The extra member benefit was communicated to the membership throughout the year.

Members appreciated access to a member service that could be used and accessed online when and how they chose to utilize it as well as customized to individual district needs. Members are made aware of new and updated resources via the weekly TSPRA newsletter and TSPRA eBlasts. Currently, new materials are available on a monthly basis and are specific to that month.

The CTPS website was created to serve both audiences. Monthly activity sheets, student video contest information, key school dates, etc. can only be accessed via a login. TSPRA members use the same login as for the TSPRA website.

Non-members can access the CTPS website to receive historical information about Texas public schools and the Celebrate Texas Public Schools program. They must join the association to receive access to the goods and services developed by the CTPS committees.

A school district must have at least one TSPRA member to be eligible for students to enter the CTPS Student Video Contest. Members are expected to promote this opportunity to campuses and students. A total of 35 entries were received during the inaugural year of the CTPS Student Video Contest. The number of entries increased to 54 during the 2013-2014 school year.

TSPRA members serve as judges. This has allowed more members to become involved with the CTPS project. Entries are first judged at the regional level and the regional finalists advance to state-level judging. Judges are selected by regional TSPRA vice presidents and are TSPRA members with videography and ITV expertise. A scoring rubric was created specifically for the student contest and the judging process mirrors the protocols used for Star Awards judging. Students receive feedback about the quality of their work from "real world experts."

An agenda item during each general session of the 2014 Annual Conference designated time for the CTPS committee to announce the winners of the CTPS Student Video Contest and share the historical details of the program. TSPRA members and their superintendents were asked to accept the cash awards on behalf of the students in their districts. The winning videos were played for the entire audience to celebrate. Members returned to their districts and arranged for representatives from contest sponsor Randolph Brooks Federal Credit Union to present the cash awards to the students during campus assemblies. Most of the check presentations were made during the first week in March-the official Texas Public Schools Week. To date, TSPRA and RBFCU have awarded \$10,000 in cash prizes to the public school children of Texas. RBFCU airs the videos on screen in many of their branch locations in Central Texas. They have already verbally committed to continue the sponsorship in 2014-2015.

“Education: It’s BIGGER Here” served as the 2013 annual conference theme. This enabled the CTPS committee an opportunity to showcase the branded concept. Members were allowed to experience and become acquainted with the brand as it appeared on banners, printed materials, the conference mobile app, slideshows and the hotel marquee! Since that time, districts have used the theme/logo for local convocations, teacher appreciations and teacher of the year and back to school events. Some have even customized the theme to include their district name.

Any social media posting is expected to include the branded logo. A banner depicting the branded logo decorates the TSPRA Resource Center (exhibit) at both the TASA/TASB Convention and Midwinter Conference.

TSPRA’s Star Awards recognition program added a new category recognizing the best CTPS Campaign and use of the year-round campaign. Rockwall ISD received recognition for their efforts to Celebrate Texas Public Schools throughout the school year. Members now see the use of the CTPS resources as a means to winning Star Awards recognitions.

Volunteers to continue to build the CTPS project grew from 29 in 2013-2014 to 47 for 2014-2015. Additional components will be added to the program for this next school year. CTPS is once again a valued member service of TSPRA.

All members have access to the CTPS resources. More members are involved in developing the products and there is excitement about involving students in the project.

**Explanation of how program/activity relates to NSPRA’s Goals and Objectives:**

The CTPS campaign correlates with NSPRA goals and objectives in the following manner.

- TSPRA serves as a sole source supplier for CTPS resources for non-member districts (typically districts with fewer than 1,000 students and no communications specialist on staff)
- All materials, resources, and products are developed by TSPRA members
- TSPRA members may enter local CTPS campaigns in Star Awards and student videos in the CTPS Student Video Contest and receive recognition among peers.
- The number of TSPRA members volunteering to assist with the continued development of the program has increased
- The CTPS-branded logo has provided statewide credibility and visibility to TSPRA
- The launching of a standalone CTPS website has increased opportunities for the non-education community to access resources pertaining to public education that are reliable and accurate
- The revitalization of the project has connected TSPRA membership to others who support public education
- CTPS committee relies on the NSPRA *Resources for Planning the School Calendar* for planning monthly activities.

- TSPRA is recognized by other education associations as valued experts in the arena of public schools communications practices.