

## Northeast Region Chapter Reports – March 2018

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### **New Jersey School Public Relations Association (NJSPRA)**

*Lori Perlow, chapter president*

**Chapter Well-Being:** I'm thrilled to share that NJSPRA continues to grow and evolve. We currently have 51 paid members. However, there other school districts planning to join us this year as we're only half-way through our program calendar.

**Chapter Projects/Collaboration Efforts:** We just completed our second collaboration with the NJASA Superintendent Academy. NJASA invites NJSPRA to provide back-to-back training to new superintendents and soon-to-be superintendents. We were asked to provide a comprehensive crisis communications workshop which was provided.

We've been invited to partner with Rutgers University as they host a Branded workshop in May. Special pricing for NJSPRA has been offered and extended to NYSPRA and PENSPRA.

**Professional Development Programs/Activities:** In October, we hosted a workshop called "Hot Topic: School Websites and ADA Compliance – Is your school website accessible to all populations?" Elizabeth Thomas from the NJ Department of Education reviewed the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and provided tips to get your school district websites in compliance. Then Patrick F. Carigg, Esq. of the Lenox Law Firm in Lawrenceville, NJ addressed the legal side in regards to liability and how to respond if a complaint is filed against your school district.

In December, we hosted a workshop called "Social Media: Don't Delete that Comment! First Amendment Rights and Public Records." Eric Harrison, Esq., Partner at Methfessel & Werbel and Adam Weiss, Esq., Partner at Busch Law Group who covered the first amendment and social media aspects. Dr. Robert Zywicki, Superintendent of Weehawken Township School District, also presented on all of his efforts related to social media and getting out a positive message.

Next week, we're hosting a community engagement workshop. In May, we will host a workshop about being an office of one. We will also bring back "The Good, Bad and Ugly" which is a lightning round session of members sharing experiences from the year.

**Major Chapter Issues or Concerns:** We typically struggle with membership, but I'm pleased that our efforts seem to make this less of a struggle at the moment.

**Issues or Areas That Could Use NSPRA Regional or National Support:** Crisis communications – lessons learned from Broward County's recent tragedy.

**State or Local Issues That NSPRA Should Keep an Eye On:** NJSPRA is in the process of working with a county education services communications to begin offering school communication services. This would be a significant change in NJ where less than 10% of school districts have a communications professional on staff. Due to outdated regulations passed by the DOE, many superintendents don't realize that they can have PR services.

### **New York School Public Relations Association (NYSPRA)**

*Bill Cameron, chapter president*

**Chapter Well-Being:** New York has a growing membership, thanks in part to our Bylaws change that allows membership from regions next to our state that do not have NSPRA chapters of their own. We recently welcomed new members from Peel District School Board in Ontario because of this change.

**Chapter Projects/Collaboration Efforts:** We have initiated a five-year strategic plan for our chapter in areas such as membership and financial sustainability.

**Professional Development Programs/Activities:** Our spring 2018 conference (March) will offer a wide variety of professional development for our members. Our Twitter following continues to grow and we use the platform to share best practices.

**Major Chapter Issues or Concerns:** None at this time. We are in a period of solid growth and a focused effort on that.

**Issues or Areas That Could Use NSPRA Regional or National Support:** None at this time. We appreciate NSPRA's continual guidance on a variety of school PR topics.

**Additional Items of Note:** We plan to launch a new branding effort, as part of our five-year strategic plan.

### **Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association (PenSPRA)**

*Angela Linch, chapter president*

**Chapter Well-Being:** PenSPRA is an active chapter with a growing membership. We have regular workshops and bi-annual board meetings as well as an annual symposium.

**Chapter Projects/Collaboration Efforts:** PenSPRA was honored to present to The PA Association of School Administrators' New Superintendents' Academy Part 3: Professional and Community Leadership. Our presentation: Communication Strategies During and After a Tragedy or Crisis. We received lots of great questions from the audience, and good feedback from the organizers.

We are currently partnering with the Association of Pennsylvania Education Foundations (APEF) for our spring symposium, offering programs over two days for both groups. Many of

our members have overlapping duties in these areas, and so this is an excellent, convenient way to receive professional development.

**Professional Development Programs/Activities:** We continue to host regional workshop meetings as well as an annual symposium.

**Major Chapter Issues or Concerns:** Some of the concerns we have at the board level are around growing and marketing the organization with only a part-time ED. We have revised the job description, allocated additional resources to the position, and are looking forward to hiring a new individual in the coming months. This individual will be called upon to lend more support to visionary thinking for the organization.

**State or Local Issues That NSPRA Should Keep an Eye On:** Communicating with millennial parents!

**Connecticut School Public Relations Association (ConnSPRA)**

*Kimberley Eves, chapter president*

No report submitted,