

## **Northwest Region Chapter Reports – March 2018**

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### **Idaho School Public Relations Association (IDSPRA)**

*Allison Westfall, chapter president*

The chapter had no activities to report.

#### **State or local issues that NSPRA should keep an eye on:**

- We are seeing legislative proposals to change elections related to schools. One proposal is to limit bond elections to once a year. Another shifts trustee elections from May to November in even numbered years. Another defines the difference between advocacy and sharing information about school elections. Penalties are identified for inappropriate advocacy.
- A proposal to establish non-profit scholarship organizations for high needs students to attend private schools is making its way through the legislature.
- A nearly 6 percent increase in funding for public schools.
- Schools are preparing for potential walk outs.
- Lots of dialogue around student safety. A new suicide prevention training for teachers is in the works.
- A foundation-funded public awareness campaign focused on the state's low education rating (*Ed Week*) and low rating compared to some neighboring states. It is called Don't Fail Idaho.

### **Oregon School Public Relations Association (OSPRA)**

*Alandra Johnson, chapter president*

**Chapter Well-Being:** Our chapter is growing. We are excited to see many new members and some new school public relations folks from districts that have not had one in the past.

During our fall conference, we had one of the highest attendance rates, with 51 folks attending. NSPRA President Tom DeLapp, APR, was the keynote speaker for that event.

The Facebook page is a huge draw, with members posting new items every day. Our officers respond and check on posts regularly. We also highlighted new members as they joined the group to create a welcoming atmosphere.

We are pleased to have recently updated our bank account to offer more flexibility and have also established a PO Box – two items that we believe will help ensure consistency as we transition from year to year.

We also just completely revamped our website – [www.ospra.org](http://www.ospra.org) – thanks to the help of one of our amazing members. We think this more professional website better reflects the professional, polished organization that we are.

**Chapter Projects/Collaboration Efforts:** We are in our second year of offering an awards program – celebrating a Communicator of the Year and sponsoring a scholarship to NSPRA (in honor of Joe Krumm).

**Professional Development Programs/Activities:** We are in the midst of putting finishing details on our spring 2018 conference, which will feature Shane Haggerty, APR, NSPRA VP, as well as keynote speakers from Parkway Schools. We believe these high caliber speakers will help us continue to draw in attendees.

**Major Chapter Issues or Concerns:** Nothing major to note. We are happy with our progress this year in the major areas we set out for ourselves.

**Issues or Areas That Could Use NSPRA Regional or National Support:** We are always on the lookout for dynamic speakers. It would be great to have a vetted list of topics and experts that we could look at to help us select speakers for our conferences.

We would love to see NSPRA come to the Northwest for the annual Seminar ☺. It would be a great show of support for school public relations in the Northwest.

**State or Local Issues That NSPRA Should Keep an Eye On:**

- Walkout resources are great (thanks!)
- School threats.
- School safety.
- Funding, as always, is generally the top concern for Oregon districts.

Other issues include:

- Graduation rates
- Equity
- Communicating with diverse audiences
- Safety
- Threats to schools and students
- Mental health of students
- Natural disasters, from snow to smoke

**Additional Items of Note:** We are excited about the progress our chapter has made this year. We are growing, active and thriving.

## **Washington School Public Relations Association (WSPRA)**

*David Beil, chapter president*

**Chapter Well-Being:** WSPRA is active and growing by 22% this year (144 up from 118). Our sponsorships continue to increase so we can offer the professional development opportunities our members are requesting. We have money in reserve, and we are currently planning for our Annual Conference

### **Chapter Projects/Collaboration Efforts:**

- Established a publication awards committee to review rubrics, categories and judging.
- We partnered with Ohio School Public Relations Association to judge each chapter's award entries.
- We are awarding four \$1500 scholarships to the NSPRA 2018 Anaheim, Calif., Seminar. All members can apply. Two scholarships are reserved for members who have never attended.
- In addition, a \$2500 annual NSPRA seminar scholarship was established in Tanya Rowe's name. Tanya was a WSPRA colleague who was tragically killed earlier this school year.
- Planning to add a summer conference in June or July of 2019.

### **Professional Development Programs/Activities:**

- Election Conference Sept. 21, 2017, with 127 attendees
- Fall Workshop Oct. 20, 2017, with 40 attendees
- Winter Workshop Feb. 23, 2018, with 74 attendees
- Annual Conference April 25-27, 2018
- Annual Publication Awards call for entries is open. Awards will be presented on April 27

**Major Chapter Issues or Concerns:** We are experiencing some challenges as a growing organization with an all-volunteer board. We hired an awards administrator this year to improve on the service we provide to members

**Issues or Areas that Could Use NSPRA Regional or National Support:** We have had a couple of new NSPRA members experience a delay in getting information from NSPRA. In at least one instance, the new member had to contact NSPRA three times before the issue was resolved. Maybe a proactive check-in and welcome to the organization from NSPRA to all new members could help to minimize this in the future?

**State or local issues that NSPRA should keep an eye on:** New restrictions on school levies in addition to the possibility of districts needing to develop new salary schedules over the next few months has many districts concerned about negotiations. There is uncertainty on both of these issues as the Legislature is currently in session. We anticipate more clarity as the legislative session is set to conclude in March.