

Mideast Region Chapter Reports – November 2017

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VP's General Overview

All state chapters are reporting stable or increasing membership, except for Kentucky which has seen a decline. Areas of concern for the chapters were fairly common; ADA website compliance, the opioid crisis, the political environment, and funding cuts. Chapters are asking for NSPRA assistance and/or direction in these areas.

In the realm of best practices, MSPRA adapted the Sponsorship Investment Menu developed by OHSPRA as a means to generate more sponsorship revenue. Last year OHSPRA brought in \$16,000. MSPRA has been using the Menu for only a few months and already has solicited \$5,750 in sponsorship money, which is more than they brought in all of last year.

Most chapters are also reaching out to other state organizations to co-sponsor professional development events and present at conferences.

VP's Environmental Scan

CHESPRA appears to be steady and strong as a chapter. They are looking to develop new leaders within their organization. They have launched regional networking events called “Kappy Hours” – Keeping Abreast of Press, Policy and You.

The **INSPRA** (Indiana) chapter membership is steady. They have invited NSPRA President Tom DeLapp, APR, to speak at their annual conference. There is concern over the political climate in the state as it relates to education, specifically, vouchers and funding. Several local schools district are on the verge of financial collapse.

KYSPRA (Kentucky) is having problems. Membership is down and the board is burned out. They are looking for help or guidance from NSPRA on how to deal with their issues.

MSPRA (Michigan) is doing well financially and is in the midst of a membership push. Professional development is a key service offered to members. The chapter has brought in speakers from other state chapters as well as outside industry professionals.

OHSPRA (Ohio) is attempting to amend their bylaws in the area of board nominations and elections. They have reached out to NSPRA for guidance in this endeavor. Additionally, the chapter is actively developing relationships with other state educational bodies.

VP's Outreach and Travel

I spoke with many state chapter officers at the NSPRA National Conference in San Antonio in July.

Discussed ADA web site compliance via email with members that I met during my Gold Mine session in San Antonio.

Presented the Michigan SPRA School Communicator of the Year award at the Ottawa Area ISD Board meeting in October.

Presented a session on ADA compliant web sites at the Michigan Association of School Boards annual conference in November.

Chesapeake School Public Relations Association (CHESPRA) (Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, DC)

Chapter Well-Being: Our chapter is doing well. Membership has remained strong, with more than 100 members. We have just held our fall conference, with approximately 70 members in attendance. The conferences again are the highlight for our membership.

Chapter Projects/Collaboration Efforts: We completed our annual Communications Contest, which garnered more than 175 entries. Our VP of Public Relations worked with former print journalist, brand manager at Capital One and a collegiate professor who judged the entries and selected the winners.

Professional Development Programs/Activities: We are launching two "Kappy Hours" – Keeping Abreast of Press, Policy and You Hours, where we are getting our members to come together in their home regions to encourage times of additional networking, professional development and discussion.

Major Chapter Issues or Concerns: Right now, our major concern is the transfer of leadership. We have Board members who have served in the chapter's leadership for back to back years. It is time for us to transition leadership, and we're looking for new leaders to come on board.

Issues or Areas That Could Use NSPRA Regional or National Support: Again, we are still hearing there is a need for more guidance in regards to ADA compliance with websites.

State or Local Issues That NSPRA Should Keep an Eye On: Our Maryland members have shared that there have been multiple concerns in developing school calendars under new state direction that schools cannot open until after Labor Day.

Indiana School Public Relations Association (InSPRA)

Chapter Well-Being: Growth continues steadily as name recognition, outreach and partnerships increase. InSPRA has eight new memberships within the last 4 months, with a total of 64 members for 2017-2018. We increased our membership dues for the first time in 7 years (from \$100/corp. to \$120 and \$50 to \$60 for individuals). InSPRA has also polled the membership and is requesting a change in our bylaws from 1-year to 2-year terms of office.

Chapter Projects/Collaboration Efforts: As part of our outreach/professional development, InSPRA secured a booth at the Indiana School Board Association/Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents Conference. This is our second year exhibiting at the conference. It is a great way to create name recognition and have multiple one-on-one conversations with superintendents and school board members from across the state.

Our board members and executive director continue to be asked to speak to various school administration groups, which we are always happy to oblige.

The Chapter is currently reviewing how we can restructure sponsorship opportunities that create a win-win-win for sponsors, members and the chapter.

Professional Development Programs/Activities: The Indiana Chapter is planning its state conference for March 2018. We have invited NSPRA President Tom DeLapp, APR, to be the keynote speaker.

We have purchased the PR Power Hour series and encourage our chapter members around the state to host.

The Indiana Chapter held its first-ever InSPRA Boot Camp in September. The focus was on those new to school PR or others who needed to brush up on social media/crisis communications/etc. Six people attended the half-day session.

Major Chapter Issues or Concerns: The ability to remain apolitical in this public education hostile environment/administration.

Issues or Areas That Could Use NSPRA Regional or National Support: Perhaps addressing the opioid crisis/how it is impacting schools/tips for school PR folks.

The continuing attack on public schools. Indiana is the poster child for vouchers

State or Local Issues That NSPRA Should Keep an Eye On: School funding. Many of our public schools in Indiana are precipitously close to financial catastrophe thanks to property tax caps (now in the state constitution) and a plethora of other legislative decisions.

Kentucky School Public Relations Association (KYSPRA)

Chapter Well-Being: We are seeing a slight decline in membership, but we're not sure about the underlying causes. My observation is that staff in communications positions are not being replaced as they retire, or their positions are being combined with other teaching or staff positions.

I think our chapter is unhealthy. While we have an organization manager who receives a small stipend, most of the work is done by volunteers. Our work fills all the available time, and the organization is not a priority so it suffers from a collective lack of time and attention. Board members, particularly the executive board, end up doing the bulk of the work, so by the end of their terms they are burned out and not interested in continuing to serve the organization.

Our fall conference awards program, OASIS, is in flux. In previous years KSBA (the Kentucky School Boards Association) has taken care of judging entries and provided financial support, but they have decided to withdraw that support due to shifting priorities. We intend to restructure OASIS this year and bring it back in 2018.

Chapter Projects/Collaboration Efforts: We hope to collaborate with the Kentucky Association of Government Communicators for our spring conference. There is a lot of overlap between our work and theirs, so it makes sense to combine efforts to provide professional development.

Professional Development Programs/Activities: The fall and spring conferences are our major professional development effort.

Major Chapter Issues or Concerns: As a board I think we are struggling with having the time and resources needed to give to KYSPRA to keep it viable and healthy. As PR professionals we are stretched thin trying to serve our districts to the best of our ability.

We are struggling with how to offer value to our membership. Some of our members struggle with getting money from their districts to participate in KYSPRA events. Some of our members are so overwhelmed by their work that they simply don't have the capacity left over to be involved in KYSPRA.

We are struggling with finding better ways to make use of digital events and collaborative PD with similar organizations so we can offer our members a broader menu of PD options. While live events have their place, we need to find ways to offer PD that's digital and personalized.

Issues or Areas That Could Use NSPRA Regional or National Support: Any efforts that the NSPRA could make to help state organizations network and collaborate to offer PD to members would be helpful. I think NSPRA should offer consulting to chapters who are having problems. It would be helpful to have someone come in from the outside and suggest structural changes that need to be made to help the organization become more healthy.

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

- Implication of ESSA
- Charter schools – how can public schools compete with the advantages that charters offer?
- Continuing declines in state and federal funding, and the increasing need for local funding of public schools

Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA)

Chapter Well-Being: There are several indications that our chapter is doing well, although the results of our membership drive are not fully known at this time. Our listserv has been very active with members sending requests for examples or information with prompt responses from other members. We love this organic interaction!

Weekly MSPRA Minutes about various topics are well received with this comment on a recent “Minute” post that detailed legal requirements for school websites: *“Perfect timing!! I was just talking with Dale (my supt) about having to find out what is required on our website. LOVE this MSPRA Minute!!”*

Our closed Facebook Group has been active as well and is watered and fed by committed board members.

Finally at our Drive-In Conference yesterday one attendee had been on the job 3 weeks, one 3.5 months, and another just a few months. When I asked the 3.5 months person if she was an MSPRA member, she said the Superintendent told her that was the first thing she was to do in her new role!

Chapter Projects/Collaboration Efforts: MSPRA members recently served as judges in the IL Communications Contest and the NY Communications Contest. In addition, the President Elect for the New York state chapter presented yesterday at our Drive-In Conference. She and our President Elect Karen Heath connected at the NSPRA conference in July and have been talking ever since!

We recently awarded our first ever “2017 Gerri Allen Communicator of the Year Award” to Michelle Ready of Ottawa Area ISD. One of our Board Members attended her district’s Board of Education meeting and surprised her! Priceless! We issued a press release and shared with our members. We selected a 2018 Superintendent of the Year and are preparing to present this award as well.

MSPRA continues to be a source for workshop presentations at the state level, as on October 24 one of our board members presented to the Executive Assistant Professional Development Workshop on school communications and social media. In November two of our board members will present regarding ADA compliant websites at the Michigan Association of School Boards conference.

We are moving forward with our new consulting project with Michigan State Education Network, a high-level organization working to design and connect a fiber network with every ISD and school within Michigan by leveraging the current networks to create more secure, dependable, and cost-effective Internet services. This includes working with leadership from the Michigan Department of Education and others to provide the messaging and tools to communicate this ground-breaking work to a wide audience.

Since our last report we have signed a two-year contract for administrative services from MASA (Michigan Association of School Administrators). They recently launched a new PD and membership software that allows our board members to access our member data and reports directly.

The Career and Technical Education push is on in Michigan and we have new opportunities to partner with those on the state level to promote (going-pro.com)

Professional Development Programs/Activities: Yesterday, October 26, 2017, MSPRA held an extremely successful Drive-In Conference with presenter Adrienne Leon, APR. She presented on Communications Planning with RPIE to 55 attendees in the morning, and then followed with an afternoon action lab. Members were highly engaged and there were many positive comments during the session. The most exciting pieces of this PD were the excitement and energy in the room as participants talked with each other. The networking was amazing and people were thankful just to have time to “think strategically.” Many board members were in attendance and spread out to network with members.

We have secured our March 2018 Annual Conference location and our March 2019 Annual Conference locations with signed contracts! This is a big deal for us as an organization to be more proactive. Karen Heath, PD Chair and our President Elect, is setting things up for a new PD Chair to step up for success– Tom Gould, an MSPRA 35 under 35.

In addition, Karen Heath created a Sponsorship Menu (patterned after Ohio’s SPRA’s menu) for the entire 2017-18 school year. Blackboard stepped up in a big way and other sponsors have signed on as well.

Major Chapter Issues or Concerns: High Temps in Michigan Classrooms. For the first time ever that we can remember, Michigan schools had to close in September due to high temperatures. While there is a law in place that school cannot start until after Labor Day, the state has been granting exceptions on a seemingly random basis. This puts schools in session earlier making lack of air conditioning a problem. Parents are frustrated because where bonds have been passed they expect air conditioning. This has also made common calendars impossible to maintain and hurt students attending regional programs.

Issues or Areas That Could Use NSPRA Regional or National Support: We do have a concern about the NSPRA membership chapter incentive that if our MSPRA membership expands and we have more members, the NSPRA incentive is more difficult to achieve because it is a percentage.

State or Local Issues That NSPRA Should Keep an Eye On: Immigrants are moving out of Michigan. Our schools that were growing and known for the biggest populations of Hispanic/Latino students are now losing families that are leaving the district, state, and even nation. Parents are afraid to let children attend schools. Schools doing home visits to connect with parents find them to be afraid to answer the door. The result is over a million dollars lost in one Michigan School alone which is located in one of the fastest growing area in the state. Some parents have stopped sending their children to school due to fear. Schools used to be protected areas but the federal guidance keeps changing. Families depending on meals and fundamental services not receiving them.

STREAM Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics – Competitive grants pit schools against each other for limited funding.

Ohio School Public Relations Association (OHSPRA)

Chapter Well-Being: OHSPRA membership is doing well so far this year with 108 current members. Our membership year just began in Sept. and we see more payments trickling in every week. Last year, we ended the fiscal year with 160 members and look to be on pace to meet or exceed that level this year as well. Our director of membership has been very aggressive by sending extra email reminders to those who have not renewed yet touting the benefits of membership. Additionally, as we typically do each year, we sent out a membership gift to encourage renewals — OHSPRA-logoed fidget spinners. Many members described the gifts as “fun” and “cute.”

The chapter continues to be fiscally viable and responsible. The chapter’s director of partnerships is being aggressive in soliciting sponsorships for the year and hopes to meet a goal of \$15,000. Last year, the chapter had a record sponsorship year by bringing in \$16,500.

Chapter Projects/Collaboration Efforts: OHSPRA has been asked to partner with Real Choice Ohio, a new association that is working to promote the value of public schools. The President and President-Elect have been to several meetings with Real Choice Ohio (RCO) and are working with them on a toolkit to help Ohio school districts better publicize their success stories and best practices. President Crystal Davis also recommended a communications consultant, Dr. Lisa Reigel of Educational Partnerships Institute (EPI), to work with RCO on the development of the toolkit. EPI was hired and is in the final stages of developing the toolkit.

Additionally, OHSPRA has been asked to be part of a collaboration of education-related associations working to promote public education via a School Walk-In Day. The Ohio Federation of Teachers is the lead organization in the effort and OHSPRA is also joined by the Ohio School Boards Association, Ohio PTA, Ohio Education Association, OASSA and OAESA. See following draft of the joint letter that the organizations plan to send out soon.

Professional Development Programs/Activities:

OHSPRA/OSBA FALL WORKSHOP

The annual joint Fall Workshop in partnership with the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) took place on Oct. 5 with 31 attendees. Last year, 63 attended the Fall Workshop, but that was a

record year. We typically have 20-25 people who attend the Fall Workshop so we are happy with the turnout this year. The cost was \$155 per person and since OHSPRA splits the profit with OSBA, OHSPRA will make approximately \$1500 on the workshop. The workshop agenda that follows.

OSBA CAPITAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS

OHSPRA board members have been selected to present two sessions during OSBA's 2017 Capital Conference in November. The session descriptions are below.

1. *"Survey Says ...?"* Tracey Carson, public information officer, Mason City (former OHSPRA Secretary); Patrick Gallaway, director of communications, New Albany-Plain Local (Franklin) and OHSPRA president-elect; and Crystal Davis, deputy director of communications, Ohio School Boards Association and OHSPRA president will present this interactive session to help answer the question, "What do your stakeholders think about your schools?" Surveys, data and information are more valuable than ever and you'll learn how to ask the right questions to the right people in the right way and how to analyze and use the information.
2. *Top 10 Social Media Tips: So you have a social media page...now what?* Mary Beddell, public relations director at Plain Local Schools (Stark County) (and OHSPRA Chapter Manager) offers her top ten tips for using social media effectively. Learn from a PR pro on the best apps to make your life easier, how to make a killer video without spending hours creating it and other time saving tips and tricks including a snap chat tutorial.

Major Chapter Issues or Concerns: Snapshot newsletter – we have continued to have issues with MailChimp newsletter delivery. The director of communications has looked into the matter and thinks that he has the issues straightened out. We will continue to monitor this issue to make sure that it has been resolved.

There were some issues with awards during the Spring Conference. Accordingly, at its October meeting, the board spent a good amount of time discussing and planning a revamp of the awards categories for the coming year.

Issues or Areas That Could Use NSPRA Regional or National Support: None at this time. NSPRA was very helpful to the president as she was going through the process of drafting the proposed bylaws language changes! Thank you so much for your help with this process!

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

- The continuing heroin epidemic — what role schools will play in education, prevention, treatment?
- ESSA
- Website accessibility (ADA compliance)

Additional Items of Note:

COMMUNICATION TO MEMBERS

Newsletters: Our Snapshot newsletter, which was first published in August 2015 continues to do well and has been published over the last quarter according to the following schedule:

- September 2017 — OHSPRA Exemplary Chapter article, Fall Workshop promo, membership renewal notice, invite your superintendent to join OHSPRA promo, OHSPRA website resources promo, Spring Conference Save the Date, School Messenger Infographic

NEW TREASURER

Josephine McKenrick, director of communications at Mariemont City Schools, resigned from the Board effective June 12. President-elect Patrick Gallaway was appointed interim treasurer until a permanent replacement was found. Patti Koslo was appointed by the president and approved by the Board as the new Treasurer on June 26, 2017, by special email vote.

SCHOOL WALK-IN DAY DRAFT LETTER



<<Date>>

Dear _____,

Thank you for the work you do for students. We have come together to let you know that we are proud of you. And we are grateful for your passion and dedication to helping our students succeed.

As your professional organizations, we are uniting around an effort to lift up the great work you do, highlight it and celebrate it by telling and sharing stories from our public schools in which everyone in our communities can be proud.

Whether you are a teacher, janitor, bus driver, cafeteria worker, school nurse, classroom aide, principal, superintendent, school board member, parent or any number of other people who make schools work well, the role you play is critical to student success. We are proud of the work you do for students and want to invite you to be part of our celebration of that pride.

Our statewide groups are gathering stories and information for our (#OHPublicSchoolProud) campaign. (#OHPublicSchoolProud) posts photos, videos and details about the great work and cool things happening in your schools and classrooms every day across Ohio. (#OHPublicSchoolProud) showcases why you are proud of Ohio's public schools on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/OHPublicSchoolProud and Twitter @OHPublicSchool.

While our campaign will continue throughout the year, our efforts will culminate in a week of activities in schools and classrooms <<dates>>. Mark your calendars - we'll ask you to join us by hosting a walk-in before school starts, invite members of your community in to see your school or plan special classroom activities to celebrate and show why you are #OHPublicSchoolProud. Use your own ideas or one of ours - we'll provide toolkits with easy-to-follow steps on how you can celebrate with us. Then post your photos and videos on your social media with the hashtag (#OHPublicSchoolProud) so we can all see how you're celebrating your pride in Ohio's public schools and "like" and retweet your posts.

The campaign goal? Simply to generate and expand a positive, wonderful pride in our public schools.

You work hard. You deserve to be celebrated. Won't you join us?

Sincerely,

Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators - Julie Davis, Executive Director
Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators - Ken Baker, Executive Director
Ohio Education Association - Becky Higgins, President
Ohio Federation of Teachers - Melissa Cropper, President
Ohio PTA - Susan Hans, President
Ohio School Boards Association - Rick Lewis, Executive Director

JOINT FALL WORKSHOP AGENDA



OSBA/OHSPRA Joint Fall Workshop



Engagement: All Audiences, All Platforms *How To Get It All Done In The Age Of Electronic Communication*

- 9:30 a.m. Introductions/Welcome
- Crystal Davis, Deputy Director of Communication Services, OSBA; President, OHSPRA
Kari Basson, Coordinator, Community Relations and Auxiliary Services, Kettering City Schools; Director of Professional Development, OHSPRA
- 9:40 a.m. What's All the Buzz About Snapchat and Instagram?!
- Mary Beddell, Public Relations Coordinator, Plain Local Schools; Chapter Manager, OHSPRA
Patrick Gallaway, Director of Communications, New Albany-Plain Local Schools; President-Elect, OHSPRA
- Two veteran communication pros share Snapchat and Instagram tips, success stories and how students help them with posts. Bring your mobile devices and laptops for this interactive session.
- Noon Lunch (provided)
- 1 p.m. Getting the Most Out of Your Social Media Efforts and Measuring 'ROI'
Rick Adams, Partner, 300m
Scott Gerfen, Communications Manager, OSBA
- Hear how the pros track and measure social media engagement on Facebook and Twitter — still considered the social media “kings” — when connecting with various audiences.
- 2-2:15 p.m. Break
- Learn the latest tips, tricks and apps that will take your social media platforms to new heights.
- 3 p.m. Adjourn