



# TSPRA Update

a newsletter from the

texas school public relations association

## Stevens named TSPRA's 2004 Key Communicator

**J**ohn Stevens, executive director of the Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC), has been selected as the 2004 Key Communicator of the Year by the Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA). TSPRA President Pascual Gonzalez of Northside ISD introduced Stevens to a packed auditorium of education leaders on September 18, 2004, at the first general session of the TASA/TASB Joint Annual Convention in Dallas. Stevens accepted his award plaque and addressed the audience. *(A transcript of Stevens' speech is on page 2.)*

Stevens has served as executive director of TBEC since March 1992. TBEC is a collaboration that brings business executives and education leaders together in a long-term effort to improve Texas public schools. Stevens also represents the organization on several committees including: the Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Accountability, the Texas ACT Council Advisory Committee and ACT's policy research advisory committee and the Advisory Committee for the Eisenhower Science Collaboratives. In addition, he served as a member of the advisory committee for Princeton University's study of the Texas ten percent admissions rule. Stevens also is a founder and Chairman of the Texas Principals Leadership Initiative. For more information on Stevens go to <http://www.tspra.org/abou003d.html>

Since 1981, TSPRA has recognized a Key Communicator for outstanding contributions to public education through effective communications. The recipient may be a legislator, educator or professional in another field who has improved school communications; or a member of TSPRA who has contributed outstanding service to the profession of school communications. Recipients have included leaders from business, media, PTA, politics and education. Some past winners are: former SBOE Member **Will Davis**; former Under Secretary of Education and Dallas ISD Superintendent **Linus Wright**; past SBOE Chairman Jack Christie; former Texas State Rep. **Paul Sadler**; *Texas School Business* magazine Publisher **Annell Todd**; and Texas Coalition for Public Schools Coordinator **Carolyn Boyle**.

**Julie Crimmins**, Hays CISD, chairs TSPRA's current Professional Awards Committee. Other committee members include: **Karen Collier**, Humble ISD; **Lynda Queen**, Region 16 ESC; **Julie Thannum**, Carroll ISD; and **Steve Valdez**, Weslaco ISD.



*John Stevens, addresses TASA/TASB Convention attendees at the First General Session. (Photo courtesy of TASB)*

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# President's Perspective

**H**ello fellow TSPRAn,  
Oh my gosh, it's already October! We just returned from a very successful Executive Board Meeting held in conjunction with TASA/TASB Convention in Dallas where we dealt with a variety of TSPRA issues that will be of interest to you.

We are making plans for our February Conference which is shaping up to be a wonderful conference for veterans and rookies alike. The Conference chairs and the TSPRA Office are



*Pascual Gonzalez,  
Northside ISD,  
TSPRA President*

working very hard to provide high quality presenters and a meaningful experience. We will also be welcoming our new Education Foundation Division members. Look for a revamped and expanded Star Awards and a

joint reception with our new Foundation friends. We'll also resurrect the popular trip to the Coupland Inn & Dancehall instead of sign-up dinners. I know you'll enjoy the music and planned activities. Be sure you mark your calendars and make your reservations. Make a concerted effort to bring a new person to the Conference.

Unfortunately for us, we had two vice presidents resign but we have identified two highly qualified individuals who 'stepped up to the plate and accepted my appointment requests. **Suzie Czeschin**, Harlingen CISD, VP of the Gulf Coast area retired. She is replaced by longtime TSPRA member **Steve Valdez**, tele-vision information officer from Weslaco ISD/KWES-TV. Also, **Bonnie Schulenburg**, formerly of Ysleta ISD, moved out of the area and therefore resigned from her VP position representing the Far West region. She is replaced by another longtime TSPRA member, **Luis Villalobos** from El Paso ISD. They will represent their regions well. Please extend your con-



gratulations and support to them.

This newsletter is full of other information that I know you will find useful. I am so proud to serve as you President and only hope that I can make as significant contributions as my long line of distinguished predecessors.

TSPRA: The Spirit of Texas!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Pascual'.

Pascual Gonzalez  
TSPRA President

## John Stevens acceptance speech

*The following is a transcript of John Stevens Key Communicator acceptance speech delivered at the TASA/TASB Convention, September 18, 2004*

**T**hank you Pascual. Thank you TSPRA. I am honored to be thought of with the previous recipients of this award. I am fortunate to have a job in which I can work full-time to help improve public education, an institution I believe is critical to our democracy. At a time when so many forces pull us apart, we need a meeting place - our public schools, and a cause - the education of our youth - that can help unite us.

I appreciate especially the business leaders across the State that have been and are steadfast in their support for public schools and TBEC's efforts to improve them.

I am proud of the educators and students in our public schools. Given time and appropriate resources, they have performed up to all of our ex-

pectations over the past ten years, and earned nationwide acclaim for their success.

In recent years, TBEC has been bold, but not reckless, in working with elected leaders to raise the bar for public schools. You know well the higher standards and performance expectations that are in place - the TAKS tests, the checkpoints of the Student Success Initiative, the 11th grade exit-tests, the Recommended High School Program, and the TAKS-based accountability system.

Now at this important time, TBEC will again be bold, but not reckless again, as we join with you in asking our elected leaders and policy makers to establish a finance system for public schools that matches our highest performance expectations.

I believe the people of Texas will not punish them, but rather thank them and reward them for doing right by our public schools and the children they serve.

Thanks again for this award. It means a great deal to me. And thank you all for what you do for the public schools and students of our state.



*Pictured (l-r,) are TSPRA Exec. Dir. Judy Farmer; Key Communicator John Stevens; and TSPRA President Pascual Gonzalez.*

# Nashville hosts summer NSPRA Seminar

**T**wenty TSPRAs attended the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual NSPRA Seminar in Nashville, Tennessee on July 11-14, 2004. "Creating Advocates: One Clear Voice for Our Schools" featured outstanding keynote speakers and topic sessions of great benefits for school public relation people.

Our Texas Chapter received awards honoring our distinguished work in school public relations. TSPRA President **Pascual Gonzalez** accepted certificates recognizing our association as a **2004 Blue Ribbon Chapter** and **honorable mention for the 2004 Distinguished Year-Round Chapter Award**. With this recognition comes some valuable opportunities to new TSPRA members: a one-year NSPRA membership for 2004-5 and certificates offering \$100 off and another offering \$250 off registration for the 2005 NSPRA Conference in Boston. You'll hear more about this from TSPRA's Scholarship Committee.

More than 100 topic sessions on issues relevant to school pr were available during the three days. Workshops were noted with special icons to denote tactical sessions; those related to management/strategic planning; leadership development to assist participants in choosing their sessions.

**Steve Knagg**, long-time TSPRA member from Garland ISD, was presented with the 2004 President's Award, the highest, most prestigious award given by NSPRA. Knagg was honored for his outstanding contributions to the field of educational public relations and his many years of dedicated service to NSPRA.

**Katy ISD's Public Relations Department** received a **2004 Gold Medallion** for their Leadership Katy ISD, community relations leadership program. Initiated in 2003 in response to the challenges of extremely rapid school district growth and diversification, the award-winning program also was recognized in February 2004 with the **TSPRA Platinum Award** for the most outstanding school public relations program in Texas. In addition, Katy ISD staff presented the Leadership Katy ISD program as a topic discussion session on September 19, 2004 at the TASA - TASB Convention in Dallas.

According to **Kris Taylor**, Katy ISD communications director, the district used research data and its own experience with public involvement in creating a program that would develop an evolving cadre of active, well informed community supporters familiar with both operations and issues. Each year a new class is formed, representing a "snapshot" of the community in regard to geography, ethnicity and gender. Members participate in a series of monthly sessions focusing on various topics: finance, demographics and long-range planning, construction and facility planning, support services, curriculum development, instruction and assessment, special programs and services; human resources and technology.

NSPRA's new five-year initiative - the **Communications Accountability Project (CAP)** - was unveiled during the annual meeting. This ambitious program is planned to document and prove the specific ways in which good communications is an essential element to achieving real success in schools and their districts.

In these next five years, NSPRA is committed to helping school leaders better understand and develop the synergistic relationship between strong educational communication and student and school achievement and success. Through CAP, NSPRA will demonstrate how accountability and trust are fostered by strong communication—throughout school districts and their communities but specifically in the instructional and administrative areas.

NSPRA's CAP Project will be organized through the Foundation for the Advancement of Education, NSPRA's 501(c)(3) subsidiary, that was designed to promote professionalism and research in school communications and public relations. Major components of CAP will include: research; fundraising; products and services; demonstration projects and evaluation. The NSPRA Board of Directors has contributed an initial \$5,000 to demonstrate their commitment to the success of this project. For more information, visit NSPRA's web-site, [www.nspr.org](http://www.nspr.org)



*TSPRAs Louise Henry, NSPRA Regional Vice President for the South Central Region, and Pascual Gonzalez, TSPRA President, Northside ISD, display the 2004 Blue Ribbon Chapter Award TSPRA received during NSPRA's summer seminar in Nashville. The award recognizes the achievements our chapter made during the 2003-04 year.*

# Texas Public Schools Week 2005

**E**very Reason to Succeed is the theme for the 2005 Texas Public Schools Week (TPSW). February 28-March 4 has been designated the main week to celebrate and communicate the value and success of Texas public schools. Districts may celebrate any week in March 2005 if that first week is not convenient.

With the attention placed on public schools at the national level and with Texas in the media spotlight, this is a perfect opportunity to highlight the successful programs, school districts and students in public schools. Regardless of funding, the basic principles of educating students are the same. Our public school teachers and staff are com-

mitted to ensuring that every student can learn and succeed.

Be prepared! Order forms for this year's TPSW promotional kit will be mailed to all TSPRAs, school superintendents, principals and any one who ordered last year. The form can also be downloaded from TSPRA's website. Mail in your order form with a check or purchase order. FAX orders will also be accepted with a valid purchase order number. *No phone orders, please.* The kits will be shipped the first week in January 2005 allowing plenty of time to order specialty items from **Brady Hull and Associates**.

Kudos to this year's TPSW Committee: **Rachel Cruthirds**, Carrollton-



Every  
Reason to  
Succeed

Texas Public Schools Week  
**March 2005**

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Farmers Branch ISD, chair; **Tamera Ringo**, Coppel ISD; **Verone Travis**, Grapevine-Colleyville ISD; **Laura Jobe**, Mesquite ISD, **Tisha Heskett**, Little Elm ISD; **Karen Thomison**, Killeen ISD; **Tohma Morrison**, Lewisville ISD; **Brandie Wallace**, **Cindy Randle** and **Amy Johnson**, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD.

## Audit and Teller Committees meet

**A**udit Committee Chairman **Tim Savoy**, who now serves as public information officer for the Texas Youth Commission, and his committee members **Stephanie Ferguson**, New Braunfels ISD, and

**Marilyn Kuehlem**, Texas Education Agency, came to the TSPRA state office in September to conduct the annual member financial audit. They reviewed receipts, check stubs, canceled checks, bank statements,

equipment, business operations and the CPA's end-of-year report. Their report states: *The Audit Committee found the financial records to be in order and commends the Association and the Executive Director for establishing and following generally accepted accounting procedures.*

**Sean Hoffman**, Judson ISD, and his Teller Committee, **Kathy Anthony**, Austin ISD, and **Bill Britcher**, Leander ISD, came to the office to certify the ballots on the most recent bylaws/standing rules changes regarding TSPRA's new education foundation division. The amendments passed overwhelmingly with Amendments 2, 4 and 5 passing unanimously and Amendments 1 and 3 each having one vote against the changes.

TSPRA's official documents, new membership brochures, dues forms and website, have all been changed and updated to reflect the inclusion of the new education foundation division. **Cindy Randle**, who was appointed by President **Pascual Gonzalez**, will serve on TSPRA's executive committee as chairman of the education foundation division through the February 2006 annual conference.

## There's still time to register for the FALL LEGAL WORKSHOP

Register now to attend TSPRA's **Legal Issues in School Public Relations Workshop**, on Tuesday, November 9, 2004 at Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD's Technology and Learning Center, 2427 Carrick, Farmers Branch, Texas. The session is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Registration forms and information are available on TSPRA's website - [www.tspra.org](http://www.tspra.org). **Dianna D. Wojcik**, Attorney with **Bracewell & Patterson**, L.L.P., will discuss topics relevant to PR professionals. A second Legal Workshop is planned for April 12, 2005 in Austin. Registration fee for the workshop is \$110 for TSPRA members and \$125 for non-members.



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***Unlocking a wealth of knowledge and experience***

## Document Vault premiers at [www.tspra.org](http://www.tspra.org)

**T**SPRA's Document Vault is live at [www.tspra.org](http://www.tspra.org) and ready for sub-



scribers. This online resource of more than 275 school district public relations documents, available only to subscribers, will help you communicate more effectively with parents, staff and the community. Drawing on the skills and experience of our own TSPRA members, the Vault is a valuable source of letters, resolutions, news releases, policies, procedures, sample speeches, ads, promotions and much more. For only \$45 for TSPRA members and \$145 for non-members, you'll receive a one

year subscription to the Vault. Go to TSPRA's homepage and you'll see the yellow box announcing the Document Vault. Download the information form, select your user name and password, and send the form and payment to TSPRA. You'll soon have access to the best resources available for school pr professionals.

The Vault, the inspiration of Past president **Kirk Lewis**, Pasadena ISD, came about through the hard work of himself, his committee, staff and our members contributions.

## 2005 TSPRA Conference Keynote Speakers

**H**enry Cisneros, American City-Vista Chairman, and Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice **Wallace Jefferson** are confirmed as 2005 TSPRA Annual Conference Keynote speakers. The conference, *TSPRA-The Spirit of Texas*, is scheduled for February 14-15, 2005 at the Austin Capitol Marriott.

Cisneros' current work with American CityVista (a joint venture with KB Homes) is the most recent example of his work in building cohesive communities and supporting strong public schools.

A living testament to American diversity and leadership, Cisneros achieved unprecedented success as the President of Univision (the nation's fifth-largest TV network), Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and four-term mayor of San Antonio.

Cisneros will share his vision of a strong resilient society, supported with quality public education for all, that stretches beyond the boundaries of race and class. He will discuss in more detail his belief in encouraging and facilitating the participation of all groups to help build deeply-rooted, cohesive communities that support the success of their young people and adults.

Wallace Jefferson made Texas

history in 2001 as the first African American ever to serve as a Justice on the Supreme Court of Texas. Recently he was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas. Chief Justice Jefferson graduated from John Jay High School in San Antonio and received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Michigan State University. He earned his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Texas School of Law in 1988.

Having developed a profound respect for the law at an early age, Chief Justice Jefferson's father had posted a copy of the Declaration of Independence in his room while he was in elementary school. This interest continued through Jefferson's education when he studied the Federalist Papers in depth while a student at Michigan State University.

Chief Justice Jefferson earned a reputation for appellate excellence at an early stage in his career. He founded his own appellate law firm with Tom Crofts and Sharon Callaway in 1991. Crofts, Callaway and Jefferson soon became one of the preeminent appellate practices in Texas. He has successfully argued two cases before the United State Supreme Court, a rare distinction for any lawyer.

Chief Justice Jefferson believes

that a judge has a confined role in our system of government—to interpret legislation designed to implement social and economic policies. In addition, he believes his role is to strictly interpret the Constitution and laws of this country and state and he will not hesitate to honor his oath to preserve, protect and defend constitutional rights that have made this country free.

### **2005 Annual TSPRA & Education Foundation Conference**

*Back-to-Back*  
at  
**the Marriott at the Capitol**  
701 East 11th Street,  
Austin, TX

**TSPRA - Feb. 14 - 15**  
**Foundations - Feb. 16**

It's not too early to make your hotel reservations. The room rate for both conferences is \$117 a night for a Single/Double/Quad room. **Call 512.478.1111**. Be sure to say you are part of the TSPRA (Texas School Public Relations Association) room block.

# PR Insights 2004

A professional development seminar presented by the  
San Antonio chapter of the Public Relations Society of America

**Saturday, Oct. 9 and 23, 9 am to 2 pm**

Intercultural Development Research Assoc. (IDRA), 5835 Callaghan Road

## Who should attend?

- PR practitioners with (recommended) 5+ years of paid, full-time professional experience who are interested in earning professional accreditation this year
- Accredited members who want to brush up on what's new in PR
- New practitioners who want to build on their knowledge of the profession
- Marketing/journalism professionals interested in a public relations career

## What subjects will be covered?

- Introduction to the new testing process
- Basic PR Concepts
- Publics and Public Opinion
- Communication Theory
- Research and Research Methods
- Planning
- Diffusion
- Code of Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations
- Key laws and court decisions
- Information Technology

Directions to IDRA: From Loop  
410, exit onto Callaghan Road.  
Go South for two blocks.  
Turn right into the parking lot.  
IDRA is in the Summit I building.

## Who is eligible to take the new APR exam?

- Members of PRSA, nine partner organizations
- Non-members belonging to member organizations of the North American PR Council (NAPRC)
- Recommended 5+ years of paid, full-time professional experience, or in teaching or administration of PR courses in an accredited college or university.

## PR Insights 2004 Registration

**\$100 for PRSA members and member organizations: \$125 all others**

Half the fee will be refunded to members who pass the accreditation exam within a year of participating in the workshop. A portion of the proceeds will be used to support public relations students in the San Antonio area. To register, complete the form below and submit with a check to the address shown by Friday, Oct. 1. Please use one form per person (copy the form as needed). No walk-ins, please.

## Questions?

Call Monica Faulkenbery, APR at (210) 397-8551.

## PR Insights 2004 Registration Form

Please mail completed form with check written to PRSA to: Northside ISD Communications Dept., Monica Faulkenbery, APR, 5900 Evers Road, SA TX 78238 **by October 1st. (Please print or type)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Org.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (incl zip code): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_