



TSPRA Update

a newsletter from the **texas school public relations association**

Overlap of purpose: Community Relations and Education Foundations

by Louise Henry, APR, CFRE, Marketing & Development Representative,
Cypress-Fairbanks Educational Foundation; NSPRA South Central Vice President

While legislators are boasting about solving the school finance formula, let's look at the big picture: after this legislative session, there will still be many funding needs unmet. As the new law is deciphered, school district staff will be scurrying to develop plans to fund programs left unfunded by the new financing plan.

Education foundations may be the logical place for some districts to look for help. In the last decade many education foundations have been created to assist school districts. While some warn about education foundations causing inequality in school financing, we can likely agree with Howie Shaffer, spokesman for the *Public Education Network*, that Foundations will not take the place of public spending on public education.¹ Foundations may, however, be able to fill the gap and at the same time raise community support for local schools and districts.

Foundations are raising funds from

**Learn more about
legal issues related to
education foundations.
Attend TSPRA's half-day
Education Foundation
Legal Workshop,
October 6, 2005.
See page 3 for details.**

the community and directing where those funds are spent. At the same time, school districts are educating the children of the community and are inviting community members to engage in meaningful work with the district to support that effort. Consequently, it is in the best interest of the school district to collaborate with the local education foundation, forging a concrete relationship so that funds will be put to the best possible use.

There are differing views about how a district structures support, coordinates the efforts between the local fundraising groups and ultimately, benefits. Sometimes the superintendent or a board of trustees representative has a vote at the foundation board table, and sometimes the district supports staffing/office needs for the foundation. Certainly the law must be followed to ensure that public funds are not being spent for the benefit of private organizations, and if the school district is providing in-kind goods/services, the return on investment to the district must be documented. The type of partnership can be argued both ways; that it is a partnership is not debatable.

"Any time you have citizens who are willing to support initiatives of the school district, you are working in tandem," said Pam Scott, director of partners in education, Cypress Fairbanks ISD. "It's a partnership that must be to the mutual benefit of both." Scott points out that the foundation and school district must understand the goals of the other.

And the goals will have some degree of overlap. As a result, community members may confuse the separate 501(c)3 foundation with the district. Thus, the district and foundation must collaborate and partner, effectively communicating with each other to facilitate progress toward the common goal.

School districts rely on bond elections to raise capital for buildings and major improvements, and the outcome is often a statement of the level of community support. As foundation volunteers ask for donations to support the school district, they are also getting feedback on the level of community support. Visionary leaders can take advantage of this feedback if they become involved with and extend their circle of influence through the foundation.

¹*District Administration, February 2005, "Fundraising Grows Up," by Ron Schachter*

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Register now for NSPRA Seminar

There is still time to register for the **National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) Seminar**, July 10-13, 2005 in Boston. *“Strong Schools, Strong Communities: Advancing Reliable, Credible and Accountable Communications”* is the best investment you and your school district can make. Don't miss this extraordinary opportunity for people new to school public relations as well as school PR veterans to sharpen skills and gain the insights necessary to help schools succeed and students achieve. Go to http://www.nspira.org/smap_events.htm to register.



Please let the TSPRA state office know if you are going to Boston so that plans can be made for a special Texas gathering at the seminar.

TSPRA 2005-2006 Committee Chairs

Annual Conference	Candace Ahlfinger & Executive Director
Ammerman Training	TSPRA Office
APR (Accreditation)	Tim Carroll
Awards (Key Communicator & Chapter)	Staci Stanfield
Audit	Stephanie Ferguson
BondAid Revision	Judith Saxton
Document Vault	Kirk Lewis & Brad Domitrovich
Education Foundation	Cindy Randle
Electronic Media Production	Steve Valdez
Executive Director Evaluation	Kari Hutchinson
Government Relations	to be filled
Leadership TSPRA	Kris Taylor
Legal/Legislative Workshop	TSPRA Office
Marketing	Karen Permetti & Clear Creek Staff
Membership/Mentoring	MJ McDaniel & Melissa Starnater
Nominating	Kari Hutchinson
NSPRA Award Entry	Patti-Pawlik Perales
Past President's Council	Mary Ann Simpson
Scholarship	Roxan DeRosier
Star Awards	Consultant & TSPRA Office
Strategic Planning	Kari Hutchinson
TASA/TASB Booth	Jamie Mount & Robin McAdams
Teller	Celina Bley
Texas Public Schools Week	Laura Jobe
Web	Verone Travis



One of our Own!

Pascual Gonzalez, TSPRA immediate past president and executive director of communications at Northside ISD, has been named the Public Relations Professional of Year by the San Antonio chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. He was honored on May 5, 2005 at the Del Oro Banquet. Shown in the picture with Gonzalez are Marilyn Potts, (center), president of PRSA/San Antonio and Dr. John Folks, (right), superintendent of Northside ISD.

February 2006 TSPRA Conference

It's never too early to start planning for the February 2006 Annual Conference! *“We Believe that Every Child Counts”* promises to be an excellent professional development opportunity for anyone working in school public relations or with public school education foundations. Wednesday and Thursday, February 22-23 will focus primarily on school public relations topics. Friday, February 24 will be devoted to education foundations sessions for executive directors, staff and board Members. The 2006 Conference will again be held at the Austin Marriott at the Capitol. The hotel room rate is the same as 2005: \$117 a night for single or double occupancy.

This year the Marriott has made special arrangements for TSPRA conference attendees to make their hotel reservations on line. Go to www.marriott.com/ausdt. Input arrival and departure dates and RELRELA, the 2006 TSPRA Conference group code, at the bottom of the page on the right side. Then follow the rest of the instructions to complete the hotel reservation. Make your hotel reservations NOW to ensure lodging at the conference hotel!

The Call for Conference Presenters will be sent out from the TSPRA office in June. Start thinking about sessions that you could present.

New workshop opportunity this Fall

A special, half-day legal workshop focused solely on public school education foundation topics is scheduled for Thursday, October 6, 2005 from 8:30 am until 12:30 pm at the Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD Technology and Learning Center.

The registration fee will be \$95 for TSPRA members and \$115 for non-members and includes materials and refreshments. Registration materials will be available in early June. Space is limited so respond as soon as possible.

Lynn Rossi Scott of **Bracewell & Giuliani**, a partner in the firm's Public Law Section with offices in Dallas and

Fort Worth, will present the workshop. Scott has extensive experience in school law and public law involving representation of public school districts and frequently consults with public school education foundations. She holds a law degree from the University of Texas School of Law, a masters of science degree from the University of Houston Clear Lake and a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University.

In March 2005, the 60-year-old law firm of **Bracewell & Patterson** became **Bracewell & Giuliani**, when former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani joined the firm as a named partner at the firm's

new office in New York City.

Other Legal Workshops

A school public relations legal workshop is scheduled in the Houston area at Galena Park ISD on Thursday, November 3, 2005 from 8:30 am until 3 pm. Fees include materials, refreshments and lunch. Fees are \$110 for TSPRA members and \$125 for non-members. Watch the website for hotel information.

A spring legal workshop also is planned in the San Antonio area in May 2006. More details about this seminar will be available later this year.

School Bond★Aid, second edition in the works

The long awaited, revised and updated **SCHOOL BOND★AID** will be available in late fall 2005. **BOND★AID** is a complete bond election resource guide produced by the Texas School Public Relations Association and written by our members from personal experience.

TSPRA East Texas Vice President Judith Saxton, Mt. Pleasant ISD, and her

committee have been working on the new second edition which will contain recent Texas Ethics Commission guidelines and other relevant information for public school districts to ensure that they are publicizing their bond election initiatives according to current law. **BOND★AID** also contains chapters on Developing Year-Round Public Relations, Assessing District Needs, Em-

ploying Effective Media Strategies, Dealing with Opposition, Surviving a Failed Election and Maintaining Public Confidence. Actual case studies and sample materials are also included.

TSPRA premiered the original **BOND★AID** notebook in 1999. Plans for the new edition include going to a CD format to save on production and shipping costs.

Suggested date for TPSW set

For those of you planning your 2005-2006 school calendars, TSPRA has designated March 6-10, 2006 as the suggested week to celebrate Texas Public Schools Week (TPSW). This is the suggested week, but school districts can pick the week in March that works best for their schedule.

Laura Jobe, Mesquite ISD, is this year's chairperson for TSPRA's annual Texas Public Schools Week kit project. The kit is your complete resource for celebrating TPSW.

The TPSW committee will submit their 2006 theme and logo ideas to TSPRA's Executive Committee at their board meeting on June 9. After the

theme and logo are approved, kit production will start and the 2006 theme will be announced at the TASA/TASB Annual Convention in September. Order forms will be mailed in September and available on TSPRA's website.

Texas Public Schools Week kits are a major revenue source for TSPRA.

Please support the project by ordering kits for all your campuses and by ordering specialty items from our sole source provider **Brady Hull & Associates**. TSPRA receives 20 percent back from Brady Hull for specialty item sales. This year specialty item sales brought in more than \$12,000 in revenue.



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