



# THE PELICAN POST

Collier County Education Association—Affiliated with FEA/NEA/AFT  
Serving the Education Community of Collier County

Vol. XXXX No. 2

FEBRUARY 2019

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I am not taking a full column of space this month as it is critical to provide all our members with information regarding the Fund Our Future Statewide Campaign.

Fund Our Future has three objectives: 1) Student Success, 2) Retain and Recruit and 3) Investment in Public Schools.

I am hoping with the information provided in this newsletter as well our revamped website coming soon, you will be able to share with your sphere of influence to support public education. Hope you can join us on the 4<sup>th</sup> and future events to come.

In Unity,

*Lisa Hicks*



## FUND OUR FUTURE

Fund Our Future is a statewide campaign to advocate for and shine a light on the needs of Florida's public schools.

After 20 years, we are clearly at a crisis point, and too many of our children – Florida's future – are not receiving the educational opportunities promised to them. We believe the path to achieving a world-class education system is grounded in three principles: investment in our neighborhood public schools, student success, and teacher recruitment and retention. All three of these principles support one overarching goal: *fund our future*.

Even though costs and demands have risen, our state invests less per student now than before the recession of 2007. At the same time, the Legislature restricted how much money school districts could raise to support our local schools. This one-two punch leaves too many school districts struggling to meet their needs; therefore, the protections stripped from educators that allowed them to advocate for their students without fear of reprisal must be restored.

The 2019 Legislative Session begins in Tallahassee on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>. **On Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>**, education stakeholders and community partners are engaging in a statewide collective action to urge the governor and Legislature to **fund our schools, fund our students, Fund Our Future!** In every county, local unions are organizing events, including sign waving, informational picketing, leafleting, and letter writing.

### Budget

The current budget (FY 2018-2019) for public education and our neighborhood public schools is woefully inadequate.

- The systematic drain of funds from our public schools to private, unaccountable charter management companies must end.

- Nationally, our public education spending ranks near the bottom. Florida was given an F on school spending by *Education Week's* national report card.
- Taxpayers support better funding for stronger schools. In the 2018 elections, local voters in 19 Florida counties chose to tax themselves in order to pay our educators as professionals and increase funding for public schools.
- Florida's average teacher salary is over \$10,000 less than the national average. Average salaries are \$8,000 higher in Georgia and \$3,000 higher in Alabama.
- Florida ranks 42nd in total education spending per pupil and 51st in public school revenue for every \$1,000 of in-state personal income. In other words, no other state collects less to support public schools than Florida – even though Florida has the 7th largest economy in the country!
- We can do better. The Legislature should follow the example of voters and Fund Our Future by funding programs designed to ensure student success, retain and recruit teachers and make an investment in our neighborhood public schools.

### School Safety

- Arming teachers is a reactive approach when we need to be focusing on prevention.
- Access to mental health services, guidance counselors, community supports and school building design and access are areas that must be addressed to build a more comprehensive approach to school safety.
- If guns are part of an appropriate answer, then we owe it to our children to provide appropriate numbers of professionally trained law enforcement personnel and the funding to support them.
- We want our schools to be secure learning environments for our children. Arming school personnel alters the learning culture of our schools and may raise rather than lower student concerns about their security.

### Florida's Teacher Shortage

- The most important school-based factor for student success is a well-prepared, experienced teacher.
- The burdens that have driven educators from the profession and created an unprecedented teacher shortage must be lifted.
- Florida currently ranks **45th in the nation** in teacher

(Cont. on Page 2)

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pay and **47th** in pay for our education staff professionals. Average teacher pay in the state has actually gone *backwards* in the past decade — decreasing by 12.2 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars from 2009 to 2018.

- Until we address the salary and working conditions that make teaching a less attractive choice for talented young people and those pursuing a second career, we will not be able to stabilize and improve our schools.
- Florida's efforts to address our well-documented teacher shortage have not improved the attrition of teachers from our schools and student education is suffering as a result.
- The Legislature has attempted short-term fixes to our supply problem such as waiving teacher preparation requirements, recruiting overseas, depending on failed bonus schemes, and promoting standardized, scripted lessons. These strategies have accelerated teacher turnover and weakened professional practice.
- Florida's Best and Brightest teacher bonus program should be eliminated, not revised.
- *Bonuses* can't guarantee a home loan or a car loan. And *'bonuses'* don't fund retirement after 30 years of service. If legislators truly want to address Florida's growing teacher and staff shortages, they need to pay educators the salaries that they deserve.

No wonder Florida started this school year with more than 4,000 teacher vacancies statewide – and the DOE projects over 10,000 teacher vacancies at the end of this school year. (Collier County started the school year with roughly 360 vacancies and still has about 50 open positions.)

### Be Visible Be Vocal

In order to call attention to the plight of public education in Florida, we must roll up our sleeves and begin by educating the public. How do we accomplish this mission? By being visible and vocal, that's how.

To start, FEA is asking teachers to participate in Wear Red for Ed days. CCEA is asking all teachers to wear Red for Ed on the 4th Tuesday of every month, or if you feel so inclined, wear red every Tuesday of the month!

Speak up to friends, neighbors, and family members by using the information in this edition of the *Pelican*. Teach folks what they need to know so we can gain their support in order to Fund our Future!

*Compiled from FEA Press Release and Op Ed*

### IT'S AS EASY AS A PHONE CALL!

Leave a 5-second message and tell them what TEACHERS think!

Senator Kathleen Passidomo: (239) 417-6205  
 Representative Bob Rommel: (239) 417-6200  
 Representative Byron Donalds: (239) 417-6270

## LOCAL COMMUNITIES SUPPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This past election cycle showed us all that local communities not only support their local public schools but are willing to pay extra for them! Eleven counties in Florida passed their first referendums last fall to help fund public schools, joining eight other counties that voted to continue their existing referendums. It is unfortunate that it has come down to local communities having to tax themselves since the Florida Constitution itself claims that *"The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida . . . It is, therefore, a paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education of all children residing within its borders."*

Given the clarity of these constitutional requirements, it would seem that local referendums to adequately fund public schools should not have to take place. Unfortunately, our elected legislators continue to cut the taxes that fund our schools while at the same time expand their efforts to support for-profit charter schools and voucher schemes which drain off what little funding is available.

Clearly there is a disconnect among the voters who keep sending these same lawmakers back to Tallahassee but so strongly support public school that they are willing to place an extra tax on themselves! Our mission as educators, then, is just as clear: we need to educate voters. It can start with simple one-on-one conversations. The next time you discuss your vocation and/or public schools and someone acknowledges how underpaid teachers are, or asks why schools are struggling financially, try explaining to them that when politicians lower taxes, doing so ultimately cuts the budget for education which results in underfunded public schools and underpaid teachers.

*Jonathan Tuttle*



### REINTRODUCING FYRE

FYRE is a state wide initiative orchestrated by FEA. It stands for Florida's Young Remarkable Educators and its purpose is to motivate young teachers and provide support through discourse and camaraderie. Collier county is proud to have restarted their FYRE group and is always looking to add new members. While we appreciate teachers of all ages, FYRE **does** have an age limit of 30; sorry to all those young at heart.

Please look to next month's bulletin for more information!

Until then, follow us on Facebook!

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/colliercountyfyre/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/colliercountyfyre/about/?ref=page_internal)

## PLAN TIME

We are starting to hear from several schools that trainings and Professional Development are occurring during teachers' plan time. CCPS's website specifically states that PLC, Lesson Study, and other assignments should NOT be made during teacher planning. The district contends that one planning day a week may be used for collaborative planning. CCEA vehemently disagrees with this contention as per our contract language in 4.022:

***"The teacher's 37.5 hour work week shall include 250 minutes of planning/preparation time within the student day to the greatest extent possible. Exceptions to this 250 minute weekly time within the student day should be addressed by the Faculty Advisory Council. Assignments shall not be made by Principals that infringe on the EMPLOYEE's daily block of planning/preparation time except for emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances or with the EMPLOYEE's approval. No EMPLOYEE shall be required to utilize his/her planning time in the presence of students except for emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances or with the EMPLOYEE's approval."***

Ironically, the language CCEA relies on for our argument that no "Common/Collaborative Planning" can be required is the very sentence highlighted in the language above that the district has on their own website!

Further, 4.025 stresses the importance of planning time and requires principals to work closely with employees:

***"Both parties to this AGREEMENT recognize that increased faculty involvement is positive but causes problems with available work time. Principals will work closely with EMPLOYEES in developing schedules for meetings in order that work time is efficiently utilized, with as little infringements on planning time as possible."***

Once again, the district emphasized the importance of not infringing on planning time.

It comes down to the very first sentence in Article 4 (Working Conditions) and all FACs should begin their meetings with a review of this overarching provision:

***"The BOARD and the ASSOCIATION acknowledge that the EMPLOYEE's primary responsibility is to teach and that his/her energies should be utilized to that end..."***

Please let our office know if you need assistance setting up a FAC meeting to address this vital issue.

Jonathan Tuttle

## PAY RAISES, NOT BONUSES!

When Florida's Best and Brightest Teacher Bonus program emerged several years ago, many questioned the logic and fairness of awarding "Highly Effective" teachers \$6,000 based on an ACT or SAT test score from years, even decades ago. In fact, shortly after the implementation of Best and Brightest, FEA filed a lawsuit. So, it is not surprising when, earlier this month, Governor DeSantis announced that he wanted to revamp the program and eliminate the ACT/SAT requirement. FEA, in a news release, called the proposal "a start toward fixing the discriminatory and unfair provisions of that bad legislation." What is important to keep in mind though, is what DeSantis is proposing is still a bonus program. Teachers need and deserve base pay salary increases, not another erratic bonus program.

Florida teachers' salaries are among some of the lowest in the country, ranking 45<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states. The state faces an ongoing teacher shortage crisis that will not be solved by throwing one-time bonuses to certain teachers based on an unfair teacher evaluation system. To recruit and retain teachers, Florida needs to increase the base salaries to a level competitive with other states. It is outrageous that the Governor's plan does not fund pay raises, only bonuses.

Clearly, raising teacher salaries is a better use of funds. We need to send a clear message to Tallahassee this legislative session: thanks, but no thanks. Tweaking and enhancing a divisive and demeaning program will do us no good. Increasing the base pay is the way to uplift the profession.

Merit pay and bonus programs do not help attract and retain teachers and they circumvent the collective bargaining process. They are inconsistent and unpredictable. While the amounts and criteria for these bonuses fluctuate based on the whims of legislators, teachers' base salaries stagnate as the cost of living rises and many are forced to flee the profession. Additionally, bonuses do nothing to support our pensions and social security checks upon retirement. We don't need random shots at one-time bonuses, we can buy lottery tickets for that.

Rosanne Mello  
CCEA Exec Board



**RALLY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION!**

**WEAR RED!**

**Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>**

**4:00 – 6:00pm**

Locations:

**AIRPORT & IMMOKALEE**

Southeast corner – park at Sam’s Club

**AIRPORT & PINE RIDGE**

Southeast corner – park near the gas station in the plaza

**AIRPORT & 41**

South corner in front of Starbucks – park in the plaza

**RSVP** to rhonda.shimel@floridaea.org if you plan to join us for this event (include the location) or are available to help make signs on March 2<sup>nd</sup> from 1:00 - 3:00pm at the CCEA office.



**TIGER ROUNDTABLE**

**With Stephanie Lucarelli**

Thursday, March 21, 2019

5:00pm CCEA Office



**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- 3/4 **Rally for Public Education** (4:00—6:00pm)
- 3/5 **School Board Meeting** (4:30pm / MLK)
- 3/8 **Teacher Planning Day**
- 3/11-3/15 **Spring Break**
- 3/19 **Exec Board Meeting** (4:30pm / CCEA Office)
- 3/21 **TIGER Exec Board** (4:30pm / CCEA Office)
- 3/21 **TIGER Roundtable** (5:00pm / CCEA Office)

The Pelican Post is the official publication of the **Collier County Education Association** located at 6710 Lone Oak Boulevard, Naples, FL 34109.

**Hours:** 8:30am - 4:30pm Monday - Friday

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**CCEA MEMBERS...**

**EARN A \$50 BONUS FOR EACH NEW\* MEMBER YOU RECRUIT**

\* EXCLUDES ANYONE PREVIOUSLY ENROLLED IN CCEA \*

**Collier County Education Association, Inc. (CCEA)**

**MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name First Name Middle Initial

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address City State Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Original Hire Date

Home E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee ID: \_\_\_\_\_

School Worksite: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Plan:

\_\_\_\_ Cash [Check # \_\_\_\_\_]

\_\_\_\_ Payroll Deduction

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

DB: \_\_\_\_\_

CCPS: \_\_\_\_\_

RB: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby authorize the District School Board of Collier County, according to arrangements agreed upon with the CCEA, to deduct from my salary and transmit to said Association such dues as annually certified by said Association. I hereby waive all rights and claims to said monies so deducted, except as noted below, in accordance with this authorization and relieve the School Board and all its officers from any liability therefor. This authorization shall remain in full force and effect for all purposes while I am employed by this school district or until revoked by me upon thirty (30) days advance written notice to the School Board's Business Office and said Association. The annual dues payments earmarked for the Collier County Education Association may be deductible as a miscellaneous deduction for federal income tax purposes.

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Recruiter's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_