



# THE SEAGULL POSTSCRIPT



The Official Newsletter of the Collier County Association of  
Educational Office and Classroom Assistant Personnel (CCAEOCAP)

Affiliated with the Florida Education Association/NEA/AFT

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October 2021

## NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

Your OCAP bargaining team began negotiations for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement on Thursday September 26<sup>th</sup>. During the session, the team brought forward a number of nonfinancial proposals addressing things like enhancing member rights for receiving notifications on issues affecting their working conditions, improving communication, working in a high job classification, parity with CCEA on the use of leave time, and a number of other issues. The first session was productive and we hope to carry that momentum into our next session which is scheduled for Wednesday October 27<sup>th</sup> at 4:30p at the Association Office.

Our financial proposal contains a plan that will allow the district to remain competitive in the marketplace with its wages. As you are aware, there is currently a labor shortage both in Collier and beyond and wages have been driven upward as a result. CCPS needs to be proactive in its pay practices to ensure that high quality employees are hired and retained. Our proposals are ambitious, but we feel they are necessary to keep and attract the caliber of employee that CCPS is accustomed to. As updates arise, they will be shared with the membership.

*Adam Schowalter, Executive Director*

## FEA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY 2021

I, along with OCAP President Connie Steed and member Clifonia Holmes had the privilege of attending this year's delegate assembly held in Orlando on October 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>. This was the first in-person meeting in two years due to the Covid pandemic. Many safety precautions were in place including proof of vaccination or a negative Covid test within seventy-two hours prior to the start, masks being worn at all times, and social distancing.

There was a different atmosphere, but this was a much needed meeting for the six hundred delegates attending. It gave everyone the opportunity to network and find out how other locals handled and are handling the challenges that Covid presented.

We celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> + 1 year anniversary merger of the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers merger in Florida, thus creating the Florida Education Association. Four of the five FEA Presidents spoke at the meeting including Maureen Denning, Andy Ford, Fedrick Ingram and current FEA leader Andrew Spar. Former President Joann McCall was unable to attend. Florida Senator Gary Farmer, along with State Representatives Vance Aloupis, Rene Plascencia, Fentrice Driskell addressed those present.

Florida Education Association Vice-President Carole Gauronskas is the first educational support professional to hold office on the board, first as secretary treasurer and now as Vice President. Mrs. Gauronskas started her career in education first as a volunteer in her son's school in 2000 then moving on to become an ESE Paraprofessional in an EBD self-contained classroom.

Sharon Drapper, author of *Out of my Mind* spoke about the recent pandemic. She asked us to remember what the children have been through saying that they are not the same just as we are not the same after what we have all experienced. She reminded us that we must take care of each other and ourselves.

At this year's meeting we adopted the budget for the 2022-2023 year and mapped out the future work of our union.

In Solidarity,

Maureen Hughes, CCAEOCAP Secretary/Treasurer

## IF IT'S TIME TO GO...

I have worked as the Member Rights Advocate for over seventeen years with CCAEOCAP. Every year before the pandemic, a few ESP employees would just quit a few months into the school year. It was rare and they usually were brand new to education and didn't anticipate all that is involved in this profession.

Fast-forward to 2020. It was a year like no other. More employees than ever decided, most with very valid reasons, that it was time to get out of the profession. This included teachers and support staff. Many retired early or left for different careers. While a world-wide pandemic was going on, this also was happening in many professions.

Now we are in 2021. Already this year I have seen dozens of teachers and ESP's decide to quit. Most do it professionally and with advance notification. Some on a moment's notice, with no warning to students, parents, or administration.

Working in education is a noble profession, one with which I believe to have the greatest responsibility and require the very best, most creative and passionate people there are. People all over the country are leaving this profession. Instead of filling our schools with great minds, we are burdening them with more and more bureaucracy. I just left a building meeting where an office secretary was telling me she has to fill in as a cashier on a rotating basis because the district can't hire enough workers. The best, most loyal employees are getting fed up, and many are deciding to take their skills elsewhere.

If you do decide to resign/retire, there are certain things to consider.

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**NOTICE**

State law states teachers must give 30 calendar days' notice, that does not hold true for ESP's. Two weeks is the acceptable standard.

**TIMING**

Try to make your last day as early in the month as possible. Your medical insurance runs through the last day of the month you resign. So, for example, if you said I resign effective October 31, your insurance ends October 31. If you add just one day and resign effective November 1, your medical insurance is good until November 30. That one day difference gives you 30 extra days of free insurance.

**SICK LEAVE**

If you have any days saved up, be very mindful of the fact that the district can enforce a 25% penalty on you for not giving proper notice. This could be VERY expensive for veteran employees. Days that you have saved for years can get whacked if you leave in haste. If you have 13 or more years of experience in Collier, your sick leave buy-out is at 100% of your current pay. You could be leaving thousands of dollars on the table.

**PROFESSIONALISM**

Even if you are not going to give the advance notice, there are ways to resign gracefully. Talk to your principal. A conversation is always best but if that is not possible, an email or phone call will do. I always advise people to keep it short and indicate you are resigning for personal reasons. You may hate your principal, but you might need his or her recommendation for your next job. Even if you have no intention of returning to CCPS again, it makes no sense to burn all your bridges.

*Lyle Farmar, Member Rights Advocate*

[www.ccea-ocap.com](http://www.ccea-ocap.com)

**OCAP MONTHLY MEETING  
2021 - 2022 SCHEDULE**

**Nov 11 / Jan 13 / Feb 10 / Mar 10 / Apr 14 / May 12**

**TIGER Meeting Schedule**

Nov 2 / Dec 7 / Feb 1 / Mar 1 / Apr 5 / May 3



Meeting info/details will be sent to TIGER Member home email address.



The Seagull Postscript is the official publication of the Collier County Association of Educational Office and Classroom Assistant Personnel located at 6710 Lone Oak Blvd., Naples, FL 34109.

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**Get \$50 For Each \*New Member You Recruit**

(\* Not previously enrolled in OCAP)

**Collier County Association of Educational Office & Classroom Assistant Personnel (CCAEOCAP)**

**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 CCAEOCAP, 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 \_\_\_\_\_

