



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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WHAT ABOUT ESPs?

Florida governor Ron DeSantis recently proposed to increase beginning classroom teacher pay to \$47,500. This is a significant increase for these particular school employees, but he has no plan to increase funding to increase salaries for Education Staff Professionals (ESPs). Research on the Florida Department of Education website reveals the meager salaries and salary increases for Florida's Bookkeepers, Clerk-Typists, Data Entry Professionals, Paraprofessionals, and Secretaries in our public schools over the years.

The average salary for an ESP in Florida was \$29,258 for the 2018-19 school year, an increase of 10.8 percent over \$26,930 in 2009-10.

There are significant differences between the average salaries in current versus constant dollars. The current-dollar increases over the years since 2009-10 may appear substantial for ESPs, but when the effects of price inflation are taken into account, the average ESP salary has actually decreased by 4.5 percent from 2009-10 to 2018-19.

The 2019 national poverty level for a family of four is \$25,750. This is only \$3,508 below the average salary for all the Bookkeepers, Clerk-Typists, Data Entry Professionals, Paraprofessionals, and Secretaries in all of Florida's public schools. According to FEA, Florida has nearly 50,000 ESPs who earn a wage below this poverty level.

Clearly, something needs to change. With the governor talking about significantly increasing salaries for some school employees, it is the perfect time to demand that he and the Legislature expand this conversation to include ALL school employees. To that end, FEA is calling for a Decade of Progress for Florida's Public Schools.

"FEA" is not some entity in Tallahassee; FEA is US - ALL OF US! We all need to take part in the action that is required to affect significant change in the way public education is funded in Florida. The 60-day 2020 Legislative Session starts on January 14th.

Decisions by elected officials WILL be made about funding public schools over the next two months. It seems to OCAP that WE ALL need to communicate with our elected officials to help them make decisions that are right for our students and for US!

Over the next two months, OCAP will be sending emails to your home addresses with talking points and links to help you communicate with the politicians that are supposed to represent US! They need to hear from US - ALL OF US!

CCAEOCAP MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION

WIN A FREE 65" TV

OCAP is starting a **MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION** this month with a chance for OCAP Members to win a free big screen TV.

The promotion will end on May 8th and the Drawing will take place on May 14th at the last OCAP Meeting.

All OCAP members have a chance to enter and win. The more entries you get, the better chance you have to win.

Here's how:

- Members will receive one entry for each time they are designated as the recruiter on an OCAP Enrollment Form. (*Previous Members of OCAP who are rejoining also qualify for this promotion.*)
- Every Member joining during this period will receive an entry.
- All Members at the school with the highest percentage increase in membership over the promotion period will receive an entry.
- All Members at a school with 100% Membership will receive additional entries.
- The Top 5 recruiters will receive additional entries.
- Members who attend the OCAP Monthly Meeting will receive an entry.

Recruiters of new* members will receive a \$50 bonus in addition to the contest entry. (**Not previously enrolled in OCAP.*)

Upcoming OCAP Meetings

February 13 th	5:30pm	I-Tech
March 5 th	5:30pm	Assoc. Office
April 9 th	5:30pm	Assoc. Office
May 14 th	5:30pm	Assoc. Office

WHAT CAN I DO IF MY ADMINISTRATOR VIOLATES MY EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT?

You have an Agreement with your employer - the contract between CCAEOCAP and CCPS guides the working conditions of your job. If there is a violation – written or verbal (although verbal is harder to prove) – you have several courses of action. Since the contract is a union contract, your first step should be to speak with your union representative first at your school and then the CCAEOCAP Staff. Always remember, the contract is a written agreement between the union and the district. The two sides agreed that the language in this contract is what will be followed. Don't ever feel that following the contract is going to "rock the boat" and make administration upset. The myth that administration will write you a bad evaluation or fire a non-instructional employee who questions them when a contract violation is just that - a myth. CCAEOCAP exists for that very reason, to make sure both sides follow the contract.

Let's say your assistant principal asks that you stay in the cafeteria during your lunch because there are not enough assistants available that day. The contract is very clear that you are allowed a duty-free lunch. You want to be a team player and decide to agree to pitch-in and help so you eat your lunch while supervising children. Has the contract been violated?

No. The key word here is "agree." Be careful about waiving your rights. What you should do in this situation is say, "Our Agreement says I am entitled to a duty-free lunch. When are you re-scheduling my lunch?" If your lunch is not rescheduled, or if it is rescheduled but you have to supervise students during that time (violation of the Agreement), comply with the directive and then contact your union rep.

A person in the situation should never fear any type of retaliation. Rumors persist that members who question administrators on contractual issues are fired or get bad evaluations. I assure you they are rumors. There are very few "bad" evaluations. Non-instructional employee terminations are quite rare, much less than teachers. You can go back and check the School Board minutes and see who was terminated. Union employees who have been terminated have been because of a just cause violation. They have been assigned a lawyer who has fought to get their job and back pay reinstated.

What else can the union do?

Twice a month Union staff sits down with the Director of Human Resources. We bring cases forward on behalf of our members. For instance, if you were asked to stay late one day and finish some paperwork, and you went over 40 hours, the OCAP contract stipulates that you would be paid overtime for anything over 40 hours. If you haven't been, we will make sure HR is aware and corrects the problem. If HR is unable to resolve the situation to your satisfaction, the contract has a grievance procedure that can be followed, all the way to arbitration if necessary.

You should be aware of what is in your contract, especially Article IV, which covers Working Conditions. Also, you should follow some very basic things when called into a meeting with administration:

1. Ask, in writing, what the meeting is about. You have a right to know, but it is your responsibility to ask.
2. Ask, again in writing, "Is there any chance this meeting can be disciplinary?" If the answer is yes, you have a right to postpone the meeting until a Union rep of your choosing can attend with you. At that time, call the union office immediately. Why get this in writing? As mentioned earlier, a written violation is much easier to prove than a verbal one.
3. During the meeting, the Union rep will take careful notes so you can concentrate on answering the questions. Only answer what is asked and don't elaborate.

Being aware of your contract is important. You can find it both on the Union website as well as the CCPS website under the Human Resource link by clicking on Labor Relations.

www.ccea-ocap.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 1/13 Fund our Future Rally in Tallahassee**
- 1/14 School Board Meeting**
4:30pm MLK
- 1/16 TIGER Roundtable**
With Guest Jory Westberry
4:30pm Assoc. Office
- 1/20 SCHOOLS CLOSED**
- 2/4 School Board Meeting**
4:30pm MLK
- 2/13 OCAP Monthly Meeting**
5:30pm ITech, Room A

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.

Office Hours: 8:30am - 4:30pm Monday - Friday
Phone: (239) 592-7773 **Fax:** (239) 592-6484
E-mail: collier@floridaea.org
Website: www.ccea-ocap.com

Connie Steed President/Editor
SteedCo@collierschools.com

Jonathan Tuttle Executive Director
Jonathan.Tuttle@floridaea.org

Lyle Farmar Member Rights Advocate
Lyle.Farmar@floridaea.org

Rhonda Shimel Office Manager
Rhonda.Shimel@floridaea.org