

DRIVERS *Something About Our* NIPSCO SECA Education Support Professionals

Paul Sanchez, Editor

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NEA ESP Conference in Central Florida

The ESP National Conference will be held this year in Orlando on March 13-15. This will be a great opportunity for directors on the ESP boards to develop new skills and learn more about relevant, important issues. They will be attending sessions to help members gain professional development opportunities, to build strong internal and external relationships, to organize members, and to enhance NEA ESP members' ability to positively influence student achievement. The leaders of each board will be bringing this information back to the membership to share with you all.

2009 Legislative Training Scheduled

Seminole UniServ's annual legislative training has been scheduled for January 22, 2009. The training will be held at Lyman High School and start promptly at 5:00 p.m. following a brief SEA Faculty Representative meeting. Sharon Brownfield, FEA Government Relations Specialist will be the featured presenter. In addition to addressing FEA's 2009 legislative goals and priorities, the impact of the recent special session will also be discussed. In light of the financial crisis we are facing this training is very important. **ALL** members not working are invited and encouraged to attend. Those working will have the opportunity for a second training during one of your next regularly scheduled meetings (i.e., Bus Driver general membership, NIPSCO Board and SECA Board). A light dinner will be provided. Please plan to attend – it's that **IMPORTANT!**



SECA NIPSCO Reluctantly Vote Yes on 2009 Contract



By a small margin both SECA and NIPSCO have voted "YES" for the 2009 contract. The election has been certified by the SECA and NIPSCO Elections Committees and the results have been forwarded to Dr. Vogel to transmit to the School Board. Seminole UniServ recognizes that both the teachers and the drivers voted "NO"; however, their salary schedules are purely based on experience and advancing a step was critical to the integrity of the schedule. It is recognized that for both SECA and NIPSCO several internal promotions occur and employees are placed on steps that are not necessarily equivalent to their actual years of experience in the school district.

Regardless, we are all in this together and if anything changes as result of the teachers and drivers votes, SECA and NIPSCO will be included as a result of our UNITY agreement for the 2008-2009 contract negotiations.



Minority Affairs Committee Presents Conference

You are invited to celebrate diversity, enjoy the various cultures that make up SCPS and learn ways to improve Communications, make better Decisions and become more Assertive. How?

Register for the MAC Leadership Conference which is being held on Saturday, February 7 at English Estates. Registration begins at 7:45 a.m.; NEA is sending trainers from the Minority Leadership Development Program. A diverse group of exhibits from local communities will display ethnic and cultural items for your enjoyment and understanding. The day will close with a field trip to Eatonville—the oldest incorporated African-American community in the U.S. Conference closes at 4 p.m.; lunch prepared by Ernie Culbreth. Go to www.seminole-educators.org for details and for registration.

"We hope to provide an experience of learning for everyone at this conference, and we want to have some fun!" said MAC Chairperson, Ms. Lee Evans. Other members of MAC include Ora Lee Alexander, Teri Mahon, Dorothy Davis, Katie Murphy, Eva Miranda-Morales, Darleen Brown, and Sheila Thomas.

Drivers and Monitors Say NO to Salary Proposal



Drivers and Monitors have said NO to the School Board's salary proposal put forth for ratification as a result of the December 10, 2008 SEA impasse hearing. A narrow margin, 56% have voted NO while 44% voted YES.

As a reminder, if the contract now gets imposed by the School Board as a result of this vote, the School Board's last best offer, which includes medical insurance, uniform allowance etc., will still continue as these provisions were agreed to by both sides prior to the December impasse hearing.

Paul Sanchez, Chief Negotiator and Gay Parker, SEA President will be meeting with Dr. Vogel to discuss next steps as it is Dr. Vogel who will transmit the results of the contract vote to the School Board. We will keep you posted.

NIPSCO President	Craig Hopes
SECA President	Betty Bailey
SCSBDA President	Ora Lee Alexander

SECA CORNER



Dues for Tax Purposes
Call the office at:

Dues for Tax Purposes

January	
January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
January 22	Legislative Training 5:00 p.m. Lyman High School
February	
February 7	MAC Conference English Estates
February 16	President's Day
February 28	Support Public Education Rally 11:00 am—1:00 pm

FEA Offers Special Savings and Discounts Did You Know?

Now, more than ever, it pays to be a member! Your savings through local, state and national discount programs do add up. Look at your FEA membership card-ACCESS-it's your key to unlocking discounts on travel, movie tickets, dining, hotel stays and savings on insurance as well as mortgage programs. There are even some items that are complimentary: AIG Retirement offers Complimentary Financial Planning to UniServ members. Nationally, NEA and AFT Member Advantage offer "members only" programs of savings and discounts. For a listing, go to the UniServ website (www.seminole-educators.org) and check out the links: FEA, NEA and AFT and go to Member Benefits. The savings do add up!



Public Education Rally Planned – Hold the Date

FEA's upcoming Support Public Education Legislative Rally is scheduled for February 28, 2009 at UCF. While details have not been finalized, the rally is currently scheduled from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This rally is one of two being planned by the education community to demonstrate support for public education as state law makers plan to begin the 2009 Legislative Session. It is our hope that this UNITY demonstration will call attention to the devastation that cutting public education has on our children. Please mark your calendar now and plan to attend. Details regarding Seminole UniServ's support will be forthcoming.



Tax Break—You Deserve it!

Education employees around Seminole County often reach into their own wallets to buy school supplies for themselves or their students, mostly to benefit the student. You need to save receipts and keep good records to take advantage of various education related deductions and credits on your tax return. Eligible educators include those who work at least 900 hours during a school year as a teacher or counselor. It is worth up to \$250 whether or not you itemize your deductions on Schedule A. Take the educator expenses deduction on your 1040 form. For example, if you spend \$500 on classroom supplies, claim half of it directly on your 1040 as an educators' expenses deduction. Then add the other half to your potential miscellaneous itemized deduction amount. IRS Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Education, can help eligible employees understand the special rules that apply and decide which tax break to claim. Go to www.irs.gov for further information or call our office.

Special Legislative Session Impact on Schools

A new year. A special legislative session. Same old news: education will suffer even more cuts as legislators wrestle with reduced revenue to fund the state's total budget. The 2 week special session, which began on January 5, was called to further reduce the 2008-09 budget after, once again, tax revenue fell short of estimates. No county in Florida has been spared. Our state affiliate, with its cadre of lobbyists and legislative specialists is hard at work to try and reduce as much as possible, this negative impact on local school districts and employees.

As the first week of the 2-week long session closed, education had suffered a loss of \$365 million dollars, which is the equivalent of approximately \$140 less per student for the remainder of this year. Thanks to the efforts of FEA, some damaging language was avoided (it would have required districts with less than 2% reserves to enforce a proportional salary cut to all district employees, school board members and the superintendent). A victory, but there is yet much more work to be done. The exact impact on Seminole County will not be known until the close of the session. Further updates and calls for action will be posted at the UniServ website: www.seminole-educators.org

Political Action Voluntary

\$2.00 of what is collected in your total dues supports Seminole UniServ Political Action Committee (PAC). PAC has been established to support candidates who seek office that support public education. If you are not interested in participating, please send a signed written notice addressed to Chris Spiliotis, Seminole UniServ PAC Chair, at the Seminole UniServ Office and your \$2.00 will be refunded.

