

# DRIVERS *Something About Our* NIPSCO SECA *Education Support Professionals*

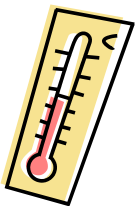
Paul Sanchez, Editor

Volume 6—April 2009

## Privatization

Thoughts of budget cuts, reduced funding and strained budgets cause all sorts of strange words to come forth. One word being heard is *privatization*. Privatization is outsourcing: current employees are out and a company is in. The Board says it will save money but research has shown it doesn't. In most instances, a company will come in with a low bid for the first year and then upon realizing the expense of providing services, raise costs in the next year. The Board says service and quality will not be reduced; common sense says you don't get more by paying less. Privatization is still the elimination of public employee jobs! You have a vested interest in SCPS! Current employees know SCPS. You know the employees, the schools and the students. You live here. You work here. Your kids go to school here. Know the facts about privatization. Now, SCPS is looking at privatizing grounds crews, who's next?

## Medical Insurance Up For Bid Again



As you know, the United Health Care renewal of 18% was not acceptable to either the Insurance Selection Committee or the School Board. As a result, we have gone out for bid in hopes of providing a quality, yet affordable, medical insurance benefit for all employees. Article XIX, Section A, of the SEA Contract established an Insurance Selection Committee. This Committee works diligently to ensure adequate health insurance as a benefit for employees. In these difficult economic times, this task becomes even more challenging. To ensure that your representatives on this committee, as well as the negotiations team, have your input prior to making difficult decisions, please take the time to respond to the survey that will be out this week.

Our current (2008-09) health insurance policy, United Healthcare Option 2, will continue through October 31, 2009. Representing NIPSCO, SECA and Drivers on the Insurance Selection Committee are: Bruce Washington, Eva Miranda-Morales, Chicky Cartwright and Christine Hancher. The Committee is chaired by Rick Harris, Retired SEA. Providing staff support are: Paul Sanchez, Executive Director and Andrea Reeves, UniServ Director.

## Know Someone Who Attended the National ESP Conference? Ask Them What They Learned!

More than 14 enthusiastic, curious and highly motivated education support professionals attended The National NEA ESP Conference held in Orlando March 13-15, 2009. It provided even more learning opportunities for ESP directors. The schedule was packed with informative, interactive and skill-building sessions on topics vital to ESP success in the workplace. They had leadership seminars for presidents and current and emerging leaders, plus full-day workshops on budget cuts, health care, diversity, and privatization.

"We came home with great organizing ideas and new ways to get our members involved in local activities," said Ora Lee Alexander President of the School Bus Drivers' Association. Also, Craig Hopes, President of NIPSCO, commented, "Once they connect and realize the great progress we've made through the Association, we are able to connect that to our locals and strengthen membership."

Ask your board of directors what they learned from the ESP conference!

## SCPS Budget Update

On our website, as well as the district's website, you will find a copy of the 2009-2010 Budget that was discussed at the School Board Budget workshop on Tuesday, March 24. While there is a great deal of information and misinformation in the district about salary cuts, know that



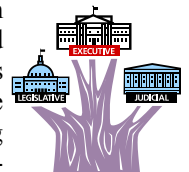
they are not being considered at this time as reflected in what was presented and discussed at the March 24<sup>th</sup> School Board Budget Workshop. Of the 317 jobs lost in this preliminary budget, it is UniServ's hope that most of these will be covered through traditional attrition (i.e., retirements and resignations). There is another budget workshop scheduled for April 21<sup>st</sup>. If we find, in April after the 2009 Legislative Session, that salary cuts are being seriously considered, please know the School Board cannot unilaterally decide this. Under Florida State Statute, "Financial Urgency" has to be declared first which then puts the School Board directly into expedited negotiations with us. However, since our contracts have re-openers every year for salary and other fringe benefits, I suspect traditional negotiations would commence.

We remain optimistic that the legislature and the Governor will do the right thing and the School Board's list of "not yet being considered" will not be considered.

As always, we will continue to keep you updated.

## Legislative Update

Week 4 and counting... of the Legislative session and already school employees, parents and students have rallied in Tally, lobbied legislators and met the media! All in an effort to get the message across: Fund Public Education! The big -and the bad-news is the budget. Florida's financial picture remains dreary. Gov. Crist requested that agencies plan for a 15% holdback of funds which would take effect in the May and June payments. FEA has urged the House and the Senate to act quickly to access the federal stimulus monies to help fill the gap. It is not too late for members and their families and friends to write, call, text and e-mail legislators. Your voices need to be heard! You are the ones who can speak to how much cuts to public education funding hurt. For details on current bills, go to SEA's Get Active site and then, "get active!"





Dues for Tax Purposes  
 Call the office at:  
 407-388-1131

**School Board Vice-Chair Refuses to Meet with Association Leadership**



It is with disappointment that we report to the membership that Ms. Sandy Robinson, School Board Vice-Chair has refused to meet with your association leadership. As you know, both the SEA President and the Executive Director of UniServ are charged by the membership to meet on an as needed basis with individual School Board members. Every year at the conclusion of negotiations (which were difficult this year as a result of an impasse hearing), individual meetings are set up with school board members. In Ms. Robinson's e-mail response to Executive Director Paul Sanchez as she did not call him back, she felt she had plenty of opportunity to hear from the association at school board work sessions. While the Association is disappointed in Ms. Robinson's decision to not meet with us (even though we have generously supported her over the years in her bid for the school board) we are taken aback because we believe it is her duty, as an elected official, to meet with the leadership of the exclusive representative of teachers and other non-management employees in the school district.

On a positive note, other School Board members have met with association leadership when requested and the meetings have been very productive.

**Unemployment & Career Development Workshops Planned**

SEA and Seminole UniServ will be sponsoring, again this year, a series of unemployment and career development workshops. In addition to reviewing how to navigate the Florida Unemployment process, we will be covering added benefits provided in the Federal Stimulus Package.

Additionally, resume writing and job interviewing will be covered at these workshops. The first workshop will be held at 5:30 p.m. at Lyman High School media center. If you are a member who may need this information, please plan on attending. You may RSVP to the UniServ office at [sea@scps.k12.fl.us](mailto:sea@scps.k12.fl.us) or 407-388-1131.

An additional workshop to be scheduled May 20th.

**WHAT? STRESS REDUCTION WORKSHOP**

**WHEN:** Thursday, April 16 at 5:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Lyman High School Media Center

**WHO:** Members of SEA, SECA, NIPSCO, School Bus Drivers Association

**WHY:** You deserve a break today! Come and have some fun as you relieve the stress of budget reduction, job reduction and work overload!

You may RSVP to the UniServ office at [sea@scps.k12.fl.us](mailto:sea@scps.k12.fl.us) or 407-388-1131.

**SECA Elections**

SECA members will be voting for NEA Delegates a new way for the first time. We will be sending out an all member email with detailed instructions on how to access the AFT Leader-Net system where you will log in, vote for the appropriate number of delegates and then type in your name and worksite in the space provide. You will then be able to "click to send" and your results will be tallied with the other members who vote.

**Bus Driver's Elections**

The Bus Driver's election for NEA Delegates (Local and State) will be held on April 16, 2009. The Executive Board elections will be held on May 7, 2009.

**NIPSCO Elections**

NIPSCO will be voting the same way as they have done in the past. The week of April 13 — 17 you will be able to vote for President of NIPSCO, Custodial Director and NEA Delegates (State and Local). All other positions have been elected by acclamation.

Vice President: Craig Hopes  
 Treasurer: Lucy Jackson  
 Dir. Trans/Warehouse/Security: Bruce Law

**FRS Pension Funds Decline – Benefits Not Impacted**

As expected, with a stock market in steep decline, the value of the FRS pension fund has declined to \$120.4 billion. This represents 93% of the liabilities or promised benefits. Ennis Knupp and Associates, a financial consulting firm, made this report yesterday at a meeting of the Investment Advisory Council of the State Board of Administration (SBA). The SBA invests Florida's FRS funds.



Fortunately for retirees and our members, not all of the money would be withdrawn at once, meaning there is no risk that the fund will go bankrupt or that Floridians won't receive their benefits. Remember, there is a liability for any employee who has vested (six years service) no matter their current age. Because FRS and other pension plans will not pay out every penny at once, many state pensions are far from fully funded. Florida's is actually considered among the strongest in the country.

A Standard and Poor's report on state pension funds, using 2007 data, ranked Florida as the third best fund in the country. From 1985 to 1997, Florida's pension fund was underfunded, it rose from a 54.3 percent funding level to 91.3 percent. It then rode the economic boom of the 1990s and early 2000s, and at its highest point in 2000, the pension was funded at 118.1 percent of liabilities.

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