

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

Tony Gentile, Editor

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ARE YOU HQ?



Highly Qualified (HQ), a term left over from *No Child Left Behind*, has again found its way into the speech and thoughts of the “powers that be.” Thus, we have instructional assistants who must prove, by virtue of a test score, that they are indeed not only qualified, but HIGHLY Qualified, based on standards set by Florida’s Legislative body during last year’s session.

Although the initial law was set for enforcement for this school year, the start date was pushed back to *next* school year. The requirement in Seminole County is for ALL assistants (unless specifically omitted) to become HQ by start of 2010-2011. SCPS and SECA, working together, have agreed to provide two means by which this may be done: pass the ParaPro OR pass the assessment given at the end of a course developed by the AFT, *Meeting the Standards for Paraprofessionals (MSP)*. The first cluster will conclude April 30 and May 1, and the second cluster begins May 7 and May 8 at Lake Mary High School. For further information, contact Rosa Pickett at SECA 407-388-1131 or Boyd Karns at SCPS 407-320-0198.

Aronberg Bill Proposed to Keep Employees Informed

We are excited to announce that the bill sponsored by state Senator Dave Aronberg, D-Greenacres, aimed at improving safety and security in Florida’s schools, unanimously passed the Senate last week. The companion bill in the House has not yet been acted upon, however.

Senate Bill 1058 requires that when a child is charged with a felony or a delinquent act, the state attorney must notify the correct school personnel, starting with the superintendent and including other employees whose job duties include supervision of that child.

Under the current law, a superintendent is required to notify the school principal when a student is charged with a felony or delinquent act. The principal notifies the student’s teachers, but other supervisory employees are not provided this important safety information. This will change under the new law if SB 1058 passes. For example, school bus drivers, some of whom supervise between 60-80 children on any given trip to school or home, will also be notified. All student information is kept private as a result of federal law.

We are thrilled that legislation bills not only pertain to students and teachers, but the education staff professionals (ESPs) who care for these students day in and day out will also be included in notification process with passage of this bill. This bill allows ESPs the responsibility to take preventative steps regarding students who may pose dangers to others.



Governor Crist for THE Veto!

Thanks, too, to our friends in the Legislature who went against the grain and voted for the welfare of education employees, students, and public schools!

In November, we will remember...

NIPSCO President	Bruce Washington
SECA President	Cynthia Owens
SCSBDA President	Ora Lee Alexander



Legislative Update

During this Session, we faced SB6 with its House companion and celebrated when Gov. Crist vetoed it! Our state affiliate, FEA, does not believe that there are enough votes in the House or Senate to override the Governor’s veto. However, strange things sometimes occur in the waning days of a Legislative Session, so you are encouraged to continue to monitor the actions of this Legislature.

In other action, The Florida Tax Credit Voucher Bill, **SB2126**, was signed into law by Gov. Crist. This expands the Corporate Tax Voucher program increasing the cap on tax credits, expanding revenue sources that allow tax credits and increasing the scholarship amount for the next school year.

Retirement was also an issue. As of now, **HB5701**, which eliminates the Health Insurance Subsidy (HIS) for FRS retirees, did pass the House and was sent to the Senate but rumor has it that this is a dead bill, but it still bears watching! **SB2022**, which proposes to re-establish an employee contribution rate (which has not been done since 1974) has been sent on to the House after passing a floor vote in the Senate. FEA is still hearing that this bill will be passed. Calls and e-mails to your legislators urging them to vote “No” to SB 2022 or to change FRS in any way are urged. FEA is fighting any negative changes to the FRS. Again, watch the website (www.seminole-educators.org) for any changes and the need for you to contact legislators. Retirement issues affect all employees! Your help is needed in keeping the pressure on your legislators about these issues. Of course, budget discussions remain; however, the Senate and House budget chiefs indicated their differences will be resolved so as to end the session on time-and that’s April 30!

Membership

During the 2010 Legislative Session, SEA members, leadership, and staff worked tirelessly to defeat potentially devastating legislation. While we should be proud of these victories now, we can’t be complacent! Please join us as we work together toward the continued improvement of our schools. Sign up a potential member today and the new member will receive three months of services for free. Call the UniServ office for any questions.



UniServ Welcomes New Exec!



Tony Gentile recently has been hired as the Executive Director for Seminole UniServ. Tony most recently was a UniServ Director in the Bangor, Maine area. His teaching experience, however, was in Volusia County, where he worked prior to joining NEA-New York and the Maine Education Association. Tony’s first day was April 26, and he is already up to his elbows in issues impacting our members in our 4 locals! **WELCOME, TONY!!!**

2010 NEA Representative Assembly Delegates

The following list of members will be representing you at the 2010 NEA Representative Assembly that will be held in New Orleans this summer:

- Rosie Guerrido—SECA
- Cassandra Owens—SECA
- Randy Saunders—Bus Drivers

