



PRESIDENT: KT Caldwell
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Tony Gentile
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From the President's Desk

Who Can Tell your Story?

Have you been attended a School Board Meeting lately? If you have, you have witnessed a small group of citizens who are yelling "CUT, CUT, CUT THE BUDGET!" School Board members listen to this group who speak at every meeting and who challenge the cost of education with every chance they get. Their voices are so loud and constant that the Board is being led to believe that this small collection of citizens represents the majority when they do not. Support for teachers remains strong, and to that end, teachers need to tell their side of the story.

You might say, "Well, Mrs. President, that is your job to tell the story," to which I would ask, "Which story is that?" Would you send in one person to defend your home, your children, and your livelihood? I would hope you would take up arms to protect what is yours. I have told the stories I know, and I will tell yours if you send them to me. But, would I tell it your way, with your passion and your insight?

What story will move the School Board? Not one with anger or spite, because I believe that what you send out into the world comes back to you. The story which would move the Board would be the one which tells how teaching has changed in the last five years. It would be a story that tells how you have done without or spent your own money to make your classrooms function. Tell of your broken dreams and disheartened spirit. Express how you went into this profession to make a difference and now feel that you just don't count. Tell the stories about students...of their needs, their dreams, and their goals, and your desire to make them all a reality. The Board also needs to hear what you need, what you dream, and your goals.

Here's the PLAN! Come to ONE School Board meeting, and plan to tell ONE STORY. If we have a team of teachers at every School Board meeting, then the Board will have no choice but to listen. Can you give one evening for your future? After all, who can tell your story better than you?

Should you have any questions or would like assistance in preparing your comments, feel free to contact me at the SEA office, 407-388-1131, and I will be happy to help.

Future School Board meetings, all of which occur at the ESC, are 9/27 (5:30 pm), 10/11 (6:30 pm), and 10/25 (5:30 pm).

KT Caldwell, SEA President

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Even though the Florida Retirement System (FRS) has been proven sound, the Legislature decided that public employees should make contributions into the retirement system. While a number of proposals were made, our state affiliate, the Florida Education Association, in a unified effort between state headquarters (officers and staff) and local affiliates lobbied and, while we could not hold off employees contributing, the amount of the contribution (3%) is significantly less than the Legislature wanted. Although each employee who participates in FRS is now required to make a 3% contribution, this is a prime example of how collective action can change things. Collective action, a united front, and a bad situation was made less catastrophic. The Legislature convenes in January, but *NOW is The Time* for action. Get to know your local legislative delegation and make them know you. E-mails, post cards and letters to their local offices to introduce yourself as a VOTING citizen who works to educate children in Seminole County and who is concerned about the plight of public education in Florida. Also *NOW is the Time* for you to encourage potential members to join. Now is the Time for Unity. For news on issues, go to the UniServ website at www.seminole-educators.org or to the state affiliate's site at www.feaweb.org. NOW is the time ...be a member and prepared!



Negotiators for the SEA and the District met on September 6th to exchange initial proposals for 2011-12 reopener bargaining. Since the current SEA/SCPS contract is in place for 2010-13, each year within that period is subject to "reopeners," or articles either party can revisit, or *open*, for the purpose of presenting modifications in response to past- and potential member issues, changes in state and federal laws, and so on.

This year, each party has brought forward reopeners to address changes brought forth by SB 736, the so-called "Student Success Act," passed in May 2011. Many of these changes are not favorable to teachers - at all. The Act makes some serious modifications to teacher contracts, declaring that all teachers without professional service- or continuing contracts as of July 1st will be on annual contracts for their entire careers (no way to earn PSC for those hired on or after 7/1/11), adding restrictions to the eligibility requirements for advanced degree supplements (again, for those hired on/after 7/1/11), mandating the elimination of seniority as a consideration for reduction in force, and subjecting all teachers to a brand new evaluation system in which 50% of the overall rating is based upon a value-added calculation of student growth.

In the face of these legislated "reforms," your SEA bargaining team is working diligently to mitigate the impact of these changes, providing thoughtful proposals that seek to regain some of the lost rights that have been stripped away while complying with the law, and preserving the dignity that our teachers deserve for being one of the main reasons why SCPS is the envy of districts across Florida.

While the last meeting didn't address financial items, like salaries, the SEA team has every intention of bringing forward proposals in future meetings which will seek to put money in the pockets of its members. There is much being said in the media, the schools, and the community about the District's budget crisis, but the SEA team has made it clear that each and every one of our members is enduring his or her own personal budget crisis as a result of several years with teachers being provided little or no increases or one-time bonuses while paying out of their pockets for classroom supplies, taking on more responsibilities, and paying 3% of salaries into the retirement system.

Bargaining for anything worthwhile is never easy. If it were, then it is likely that nothing gained was worthwhile. This year's negotiations will be a very involved and difficult endeavor, but with your support and your willingness to step forward if called upon, the opportunity for success at the table will be much greater. Please help us stand strong. Now is the time!

YOUR CONTRACT:



- During the regular school year, your lunch break should be no less than 30 minutes and shall be duty free?
- If you are at a site where the program does not permit 30 minutes duty free lunch, your work day shall be reduced by the amount of time that lunch is not duty free?
- All elementary classroom teachers have two 40 minute blocks of time per day: 1 will be uninterrupted planning time and 1 shall be devoted to tasks assigned by the principal or other administrators and that it shall not be used to provide intervention instruction or for professional development?
- For elementary school non-classroom teachers, planning time will be provided utilizing the weekly equivalent provision?
- Secondary schools will provide an uninterrupted individual planning period every day to classroom teachers?

- The SEA Faculty Rep shall be entitled to hold a meeting not to exceed 60 minutes before, during, or after the teacher duty day except during a period of assigned duty?

All of your terms and conditions of employment are listed in the Official Agreement between Seminole Education Association, Inc. and the School Board of Seminole County covering the period of July 1, 2010-June 30, 2013 and that your Fac Rep has the latest edition? (The salary schedule has not yet been determined and is thus not listed)

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



During the 2011 legislative session, elected officials made great changes in Florida's public school system. Throughout the session, Seminole Uniserv was able to pull together as an organization. It was inspiring. We sent emails; made phone calls; held and attended rallies; wrote letters to the editor; etc. That degree of solidarity, courage, and strength is beyond impressive—it's phenomenal. We won some battles and lost some, but without the strength of Seminole Uniserv or FEA, it could have been disastrous. Ask yourselves, without our organization, who will be on your side when you need help?

In these difficult times, the need for Seminole Uniserv is greater than ever. We have seen and heard what many legislators think about teachers, support staff, and public schools. We know that we cannot depend on the current statehouse stronghold to advocate for public education, so we must speak loudly with one voice.

The key to our future success is our solidarity. Educators still need representation, advocacy, legal protection, contract enforcement, and especially a voice at the table which we can maintain with a strong Association membership. Collective bargaining will be limited to bargaining wages and fringe benefits, and discussion will still occur, but to bargain effectively we must have strong membership. Your Association is the only group advocating for public school educators. We can sit back and let it happen or we can resolve to regain what has been taken from us by sticking together and supporting each other. Doing anything less will only give our opponents what they want. Our detractors are counting on you to give up on this fight and to turn your back on your Association. As Winston Churchill once said, **"If we are together nothing is impossible, if we are divided, all will fail."** Let's not give them what they want. Let's stay together, work together, and fight together to protect and to regain what we know is right for our students, our public schools, and ourselves.

We ask that you recruit anyone who is not a current member, and share this information with them. Should you have any questions, please contact the Seminole UniServ office at 407-388-1131.



Attention - All Employees Who Subscribe to SCPS-provided Health Insurance!

In May 2011, the Schools Board approved the renewal of United Healthcare Plans for the 2011-2012 plan year. The Board is again offering single coverage at no cost to the employee.

There are three plans available from which employees can choose; the \$400 Deductible Wellness Plan, the \$1,500 Deductible Standard Plan or the Family Base Plan. In order to participate in the Wellness Plan, employees must have had an annual exam between August 1, 2010 and September 30, 2011.

If you wish to have the lower \$400 deductible, **PLEASE BE SURE TO HAVE A DOCUMENTED ANNUAL EXAM ON FILE WITH THE DISTRICT.** You can check to see if you already have a qualifying exam on file by going to the SCPS Employee Self Service page.

Online Information...

Do you want up-to-date information about what's happening with SEA, NIP-SCO, SECA, or SCSBDA? Would you like to access an electronic version of your contract or view the online calendar for important meetings and events for members?



Do you wish to get information about bargaining and the coming legislative session? If so, please go to www.seminole-educators.org, your online resource to keep you up to date on everything affecting members.

www.seminole-educators.org

Hot Topic...the New Teacher Evaluation System

In the past legislative session, Florida politicians made a number of significant changes to public education, passing laws that will affect teachers, students, and schools adversely. One of the big changes affecting teachers in SCPS and across the state is the overhaul of the teacher evaluation system. As a result of the sheer number of changes the law forces upon school Districts and because the Florida Department of Education has been slow to provide complete information and technical assistance, a great deal of misinformation is being spread in regard to this subject. Here are some important facts to help clarify the issues:

- Last year's evaluation forms will not be used anymore.
- The Teacher Evaluation Committee, comprised of over 30 teachers chosen by the SEA, conducted the preliminary work to line up the new form with the state-mandated model.
- Although the form has been developed, the SEA and the District must bargain over issues affected by the change in format. The new system cannot be implemented until this step is completed. Until then, administrators still have the authority to conduct observations and walkthroughs.
- There will be only one evaluation form for all teachers (no short form and no long form).
- Every teacher will be evaluated every year. Teachers new to SCPS will be evaluated twice in the first year.
- The form includes 61 indicators within 4 domains, but teachers will not be evaluated on all 61 indicators each year.
- The District is providing evaluator training for administrators and SEA has been invited to monitor the trainings to learn how the administrators are being trained.
- The District also is hiring a principal-on-assignment and a teacher-on-assignment who will develop the training and professional development opportunities for teachers to learn about the new system.

While some of the issues surrounding the new teacher evaluation system are still in flux, know that the SEA is closely monitoring the developments and continues to stay involved in this process. Stay tuned for more updates regarding this HOT topic!

Chicago!



Chicago was the place to be this past summer, where the 2011 NEA-Representative Assembly (RA) occurred. Delegates had the privilege of hearing from Vice President Joe Biden, NEA President Dennis Van Roekel, and many more educational leaders throughout the country. More than 8,000 teachers and ESPs from all 50 states gathered to share their educational concerns and solutions to help each other succeed. More than 75 new business items were presented at the RA including topics such as teacher evaluation, class size, ESE concerns regarding transportation, employee morale, and professional expectations. Our delegates from Seminole County spoke on the microphone with class and dignity and some were even elected to offices in different caucuses, such as GLB, CEEC, ESP, Republican, and Democratic Caucuses. It was difficult to hear that things are tough for education all over, but it was also encouraging to witness the solidarity shared by all delegates. People showed that together we can do anything for public education, and that as long as we are united we can only move forward. The following SEA members served as RA delegates this year, and each of them represented our Association well: *KT Caldwell, Sue Carson, Helen Horner, Sandra Ross, Becky Dumes, and Katie Murphy.*

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NOW IS THE TIME



Sharing our Victories!

Everyone knows that much of the work SEA does includes bargaining your contract, representing members, and filing grievances. What often goes unheard are the "little victories" SEA obtains which aren't necessarily large-scale cases getting broad attention in the media or in the schools. Since the end of the last school year, SEA was successful in resolving a number of issues in which you might not have been aware. Here is a sampling:



- Teachers at one school were notified in early August that they were being required to be at work on August 8 (before preplanning) for a workshop. Upon contacting the District and reviewing the contract with the appropriate officials, SEA was successful in getting the school administration to cancel the required work day.
- SCPS was one of a number of Districts in which one or more schools had FCAT "anomalies" present when tests were analyzed at the state level. While neither the District nor any teachers were found to be at fault, SEA Members who participated in the FCAT investigation were paid for their involvement in the fact finding process.
- SEA worked to get nearly every one of the annual contract teachers on the Reasonable Effort (to re-hire) list placed in jobs for 2011-12.
- SEA helped put the brakes on a Board draft document dealing with work- and personal use of online social media applications, like Facebook. The draft included a number of highly objectionable "guidelines" that would have encroached upon personal freedoms and individual privacy. While this issue might arise again, know that SEA is working with the FEA Legal Department in order to advocate for a policy which is fair, reasonable, and legal.
- Nearly 150 new SEA members were enrolled over the summer!
- SEA was instrumental in getting the District to remind several administrators who had chosen to declare staff dress codes that there is no District dress code for teachers and that creating one at a school is inappropriate.
- At several schools, SEA helped clarify that teacher planning time is uninterrupted and that teachers have duty-free lunches.

While there are even more cases and issues that have been resolved favorably for SEA and its members since last year, the content of many cases cannot be disclosed because of confidentiality issues. As the year progresses, SEA will continue to share its success stories, no matter how big or small they might be.

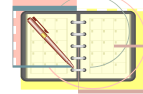
Reaching out to Students

Part of NEA's Vision, Mission, and Values statement sets forth a declaration of equal opportunity in public education, as it states: *We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.*

With that, a support group exists providing an opportunity to help some students. The Seminole Youth Alliance is a weekly peer-to-peer support group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth. The meetings are Thursdays from 6:15 - 7:15 pm at the Casselberry library. The group and its educational and social activities are facilitated by criminally background checked adults. If you know of a student who might benefit from this group, please share this information. www.seminoleyouthalliance.org is a chapter of the Orlando Youth Alliance, the main source for LGBTQ youth in Central Florida for 21 years.

Please feel free to pass along this information where appropriate. Members with questions may contact Katie Murphy at ktteaches@cfl.rr.com.

Important Dates



Thursday, **Sept. 15, 2011** SEA Faculty Rep. Meeting, 4:30 p.m. Lyman High

Thursday, **Oct. 6, 2011** SEA Exec. Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m. UniServ office

Thursday, **Oct. 20, 2011** SEA Faculty Rep. Meeting, 4:30 p.m. Lyman High

Oct. 27-29, 2011 FEA Delegate Assembly Rosen Center, Orlando

Thursday, **Nov. 3, 2011** SEA Exec. Board Meeting, 4:30 UniServ office

SAVE the date:

Friday, **Oct. 14, 2011** SEA Social ...More details to follow...