



SEA VIEWS

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Moving Education Forward



YOU DID IT!!!!

“If the people will lead, the leaders will follow” (author unknown). This quote embodies the activities of Seminole County teachers resulting in the Veto of SB6. April 15, 2010 (tax day) will always be remembered as the day teachers throughout Florida sent a huge message to those who would not listen, tried to pass very punitive laws, and were pushing goals more oriented to the profit world than to the success of our students, forgetting that our motto has been and should be for all, “Make Our Schools a Priority.”

Teachers attended two rallies held in Seminole County and other rallies in Volusia and Orange Counties, lobbied in Tallahassee, greeted Governor Crist in Tavares, wrote tons of emails, composed uncountable letters, and made a multitude of phone calls. They participated in the “Virtual Rally,” wrote letters to the editors, blogged, twittered, and corresponded on many Facebook pages within the state and out of the state. They spoke on radio talk shows and talked to their friends and neighbors, and numerous teachers were interviewed by the media. SB6 was an issue that showed all of us what we can do when we unite, and we united at levels I have never seen before.

SB6 legislation was designed to force educators to comply with Florida’s MOU in the Race to Top grant program without teacher input. The federal written analysis of Florida’s MOU indicated a lack of connection between the use of data and student achievement with no clearly defined pathways. Interestingly, the successful Race to the Top MOU in Tennessee was very different from Florida’s MOU, choosing to support and to develop the skills of teachers in part. You can find several articles on Tennessee’s plan on the SEA website.

None of us are against reform, but the word *reform* only means change. Change in itself is not enough nor worthwhile. We want real and meaningful reform, reform that will make a true difference, not another failed program. It must be reform that includes the voice of teachers who are on the frontlines each day. Teachers are well-educated professionals, and what they say is important.

Personally, I am very proud of Seminole teachers and the work they do. Thank you for all of your efforts inside the classroom and outside the classroom. Hold you heads up high and be proud of your contributions to our students, parents, community, and your profession. You are doing an outstanding job!

Gay Parker, SEA President



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...

TENURE—The Myth

MYTH: “Teachers earn tenure—a lifetime guarantee of employment—after just three years of satisfactory evaluations.”

Truth: *In 1982, tenure was abolished for public school teachers in Florida (Chapter 82-242, Laws of Florida). Professional service contracts must be annually reviewed and are subject to annual non-renewal decisions (Section 1012.3, Florida Statutes) based upon performance (primarily on student progress).*

During the first 3 years of probationary employment (which a School Board may extend to 4 years):

A teacher may be terminated for any reason or no reason during the first 97 days of the first year (Section 1012.33(3)(a)4, Florida Statutes);

At the end of each of the probationary years, a teacher may be terminated for any reason or no reason (Section 1012.33(3)(a)2, Florida Statutes)

An incompetent teacher may be immediately removed from the classroom.

Section 1012.33(6)(a), Florida Statutes, provides that a teacher “may be suspended or dismissed at any time for just cause.”

MYTH: The current legal process to remove an incompetent teacher (Section 1012.33(6)(a) is complex and lengthy.

Truth: *Written notice must be provided to the teacher listing the reasons for the action taken for removal from the classroom (tell them why they are being fired). The teacher has 15 days to contest the reasons which are provided. If requested within the 15-day period, the teacher is entitled to a hearing before the School Board or an administrative law judge, School Board’s choice, within 60 days (during which time the teacher remains suspended without pay and out of the classroom).*

The major difference between an AC teacher and a PSC teacher is that PSC teachers are entitled to be given a reason for dismissal and no reason is required for AC teachers. Current law (Section 1012.33(3)(e) and (f), Florida Statutes), requires remediation of a teacher with performance issues. The teacher must be notified of the deficiencies and be provided an opportunity for improvement, referred to as an Improvement Plan. In Seminole County, two university professors, the principal, and a union representative work together to support the teacher during this process with the intent of helping the teacher to improve his/her performance. THIS PROCESS IS VERY SIMILAR TO THE PROCESS FREQUENTLY USED IN THE CORPORATE WORLD. Let us all get used to saying DISMISSAL PROCESS—not tenure.

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 next year. The Bus Driver Notification Bill (**SB1058**), proposed by Sen. Aronberg, passed the Senate. The House version has not yet been placed on the agenda. This bill would require drivers to be notified if a student has been charged with a felony or a crime that would be considered a felony if the child were an adult. Current law only requires the principal and teacher be notified.

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!

Reasonable Effort List



What's a reasonable effort list? It's a list where your name is placed IF you have a satisfactory annual evaluation and are not recommended for re-appointment by your supervisor. Your contract states the district must make a *reasonable effort* to place you before hiring new persons. If, after receiving your annual assessment, you believe that this describes you, please call the office for more information.

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!!!**

End of Year Checklist for Evaluations

Article XXXII of the SEA Contract provides directions for teacher assessment. Each teacher should be familiarized with the forms and procedures to be used. Only the principal or his/her designee may evaluate teachers. All observations must be done openly.



The annual assessment must be completed no later than the last day of post- school planning. Remember that an observation, general assessment, or annual assessment can only be considered "*satisfactory*" when there is no rating of "*improvement needed*" or "*unsatisfactory*." An observation must be at least 30 minutes in order to be a part of the formal process. If you are on annual contract, you must be observed at least once per semester but these must be completed by April 1. *A word of caution:* if you are being observed more than this-and you're a member, you probably need to call the SEA office.

Teachers on Continuing or Professional Services Contracts will be evaluated once every three years on a long form which will include an observation. This process must be done prior to the last day of post school. During the other 2 years a short form will be used; teachers in this process must receive their form no later than May 1. The teacher must be notified, in writing, if there is to be any variation from this due to an administrator's identification of an area of concern. All forms must be given to the employee and must be signed. Your signature does not indicate agreement but only that you have been given a copy of the form. You also have the opportunity to write a response to the observation and the assessment that you receive.

Please call the SEA office if you have questions.

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.

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:

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| Katie Murphy | Sue Carson |
| K.T. Caldwell | Helen Horner |
| Amanda Clodfelter | Pam Sherry |



"Too often, school change processes and reforms are designed by education policy makers and administrators who view teachers as pawns in the system who must be moved to predetermined positions and roles to achieve externally defined goals.... Over the long haul sustained change cannot be accomplished without tapping the rich reservoir of leadership residing at the grassroots of every school—classroom teachers."

Teachers as Leaders
Ralph Fessler and Antoinette Ungaretti