



## THE PEA COMMUNIQUÉ

### Up To Date Information for Our Members

Nov 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**Bargaining Update-** The 2010-11 Ratification is complete. All employees covered by the Teacher, Paraeducator, and ESP Collective Bargaining Agreements voted overwhelmingly to accept the agreements placed before them. For the full results you may visit the PEA website.

Your bargaining team has already been hard at work on the 2011-12 year. The new teacher evaluation system has been an ongoing discussion and will be brought to you for ratification at the end of this bargain. The subject of money is discussed at every session. The PEA has proposed salary Steps with \$500 for employees at the top of the scale. We have also asked for the longevity components of the Para and ESP contract to be restarted. Advanced Degree pay, as it relates to the Florida Statutory changes is also on the table and PEA is fighting to maintain Advanced Degrees pay while staying within the parameters of the law. Even in the current economy PEA feels these are reasonable proposals.

The District offered a one-time \$500.00 bonus and your team rejected that offer for several reasons. First, bonus money does not count toward your retirement (FRS). Second, bonus money gets taxed at a higher rate and for many the \$500.00 bonus would really only amount to approx. \$370 dollars. While we know that money is a priority, we want you to have your wages increase as that is what is best for your financial well-being. Most importantly however, PEA has poured over the District's budget and firmly believes the District has the money to offer its employees a Step raise and that they should do so without further delay. We are aware that the Board is having a special budget meeting when we return from Thanksgiving Break and we will keep you informed.

We appreciate the fact that, as a result of the last impasse, the Superintendent has begun to meet with both unions and a representative for the administrators to talk about how we move forward with making a plan to make wages competitive. That type of planning is something that PEA has been advocating about for years. We have been, and continue to push for Teacher and Support Staff salaries to be at the front of the budgeting process. This is essential if we are to gain and maintain the best and the brightest at all levels. Having the best teachers in the classrooms and the best support staff at every level helps ensure that our students get our best every day. Failure to address wages will only drive people out of the classrooms. We are also stating in every venue that we cannot wait for "the future." Something must be done in the immediate while we also look long term.

**Discipline Survey-** PEA has been fielding many concerns about discipline in the schools. Teachers and support staff alike have been telling us that the system needs some overhauling. In an effort to know what and where the issues are, PEA is conducting a 2 part survey. We broke it into 2 parts to make it more time efficient for you to participate. The first part was sent out on Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> and remains open for all to take. Thank you to the over 1400 who have already taken the survey. Your insights are invaluable! If you have not already taken the survey there is still time.

To access the survey enter <http://tinyurl.com/polksurvey> into your web browser and, when prompted enter the password which is **discipline**.

The second part of the survey will be sent out on Monday Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>. It will cover additional questions concerning this very important issue and will ask more classroom centered questions.

**School Recognition Money-** We are getting a lot of questions about School Recognition Money. School Recognitions Awards are funded separately in the state budget and are determined by the Department of Education. Due to the fact that high schools do not receive their 'grades' until December, the amount of money for each school will not be known until January. Paraeducators, Secretaries, the Principal, and others assigned to the school are all part of the Staff. In order for any plan to be implemented it must be approved by both the **Staff** and the **School Advisory Council**. Because the amount will not be known until January, the DOE has encouraged School Advisory Councils to prepare a plan to use the money by percentage.

If an agreement is not reached by **February 1<sup>st</sup>**, the money must be distributed equally to all classroom teachers currently at the school. While there is no requirement to include or exclude any employee when determining bonuses, PEA does encourage you to recognize the contributions of all staff to a school's success, including paraeducators and secretaries. Everybody needs to have a voice in deciding what is "fair."

**Legislative Season to Heat Up**- We are getting closer to the January start of the Florida Legislative session. Please know that this session will be very important to watch. Gov. Scott is talking about FRS again. There is also the ever present specter of damaging legislation to watch for. This is usually offered up in the name of accountability and, of course, the possibility of more attempts at union busting demand our vigilance. The powers in Tallahassee and several other states are trying to limit your rights to collective bargaining but know that we can, when we work together, stop them in their tracks! Just ask Ohio voters who overwhelmingly rejected legislation passed by their legislature and signed by their Governor. Ohio teachers and support staff, along with police, firefighter, and other public service unions didn't just get mad they got active and went to work educating Ohio citizens. By doing so they defeated this anti-rights legislation and sent a huge message to their legislators through the most powerful means of all—the ballot box! PEA will keep you informed throughout the session. Please make sure we have your home e-mail address as there is some communication that cannot be done via school mail. You can give us your home email by going to our website and clicking Contact Us and entering your information.

**Member Benefits**- During this holiday season don't forget to use your FEA Access Card to save. The card allows you to find many discounts and deals when you are out there shopping for holiday goodies. If you have misplaced your card please call our office so we can assist you with getting a replacement. If you recently joined PEA, please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

**Access has a New Mobile App**-There is a new mobile ACCESS APP available for your smart phone. It will allow you to find deals wherever you are! The information on how to download and activate the app is on our website [www.polkea.org](http://www.polkea.org). Look in the "New" Box for directions on this great new feature. Now, instead of printing a coupon, you will just be able to show the merchant your phone. Remember the deals are for restaurants, automotive care, entertainment, etc. Don't leave those savings sitting on a card in your wallet. Get activated and save!

**Remember friends don't let friend go unprotected! Invite a friend or colleague to join PEA today!**

POLK EDUCATION ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP/PAYROLL DEDUCTION CARD	
I authorize my employer, The Polk County School Board of Polk County Florida, to deduct the amount indicated and remit same as instructed by the Association. I understand that the deduction amount may change and consent to such change without the necessity of additional authorization. This authorization may be revoked with a thirty (30) day written notice to the Polk Education Association.	
PLEASE PRINT	
Name: _____	Soc. Sec. No. _____ - _____ - _____
(last)	(first) (mi)
Address: _____	Monthly Deduction Amt. \$48.98 \$24.74
City: _____	Zip: _____ DOB: ____/____/____
Worksite: _____	Home e-mail address: _____
Homephone: _____	Cell Phone: _____
Method of Payment: _____	Payroll Deduction _____ Cash _____ Paraeducator _____ Secretary/ESP _____ Teacher
Signature of Employee: _____	Date: _____
Local Association Representative: _____	
AFT Local Number: 7454 NEA Local Number: Teachers (530) Paras (531) Secretaries (532)	