



THE PELICAN POST

Collier County Education Association—Affiliated with FEA/NEA/AFT
Serving the Education Community of Collier County

Vol. XL No. 6

FEBRUARY 2020

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

If we are to make this the “Year of the Teacher,” **taking action is how we make that happen.**

Thank you for being a dues-paying member and thank you for wearing red on Wednesdays. These actions unite us, but our profession and our students need you to do more.

Start with checking out feaweb.org and utilize the **Take Action** and **Find Your Legislator** pages.

Personal actions you can take:

- Sign up for FEA Action Alert texts by texting “edactivist” to 31996
- Sign up to receive the weekly FEA Frontline Report
- Join the Working Families Lobby Corps
- Follow FEA and CCEA on social media
- Like FEA’s Facebook page and watch for quick session updates
- Follow FEA on Twitter (@Floridaea)
- Follow FEA on Instagram (@Florida_ea)

At school:

- Help your Building Representative; if your school doesn’t have one, attend a Representative Council meeting yourself.
- Talk to potential members at your school and encourage them to join us to strengthen our voice.
- Help distribute materials or update the CCEA bulletin board.
- Attend your CCEA building meetings.

In the community:

- Share your experiences with your friends and family.
- Utilize your community groups for help to advocate for public education and give them the links to write to state legislators and receive legislative updates to stay informed.

Thank you for taking action.

In Unity,

Lisa



CELEBRATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Yes, we’re turning the Old Capitol **red** next week to celebrate public schools. We hope you join us in highlighting the importance of public schools in your communities. This is an opportunity to amplify our message and bring attention to the critical issues facing our public schools next week as the nation celebrates Public Schools Week 2020.

Continuing our theme of the Rally Continues, we have also asked locals to focus on next Wednesday as a day of action. Please promote this day of action by wearing red and taking some kind of group action such as gather at the flag poll or plan a mass walk in to show solidarity. And we all know the phrase ‘no picture, didn’t happen’ – so please take photos and share on social media with the hashtag #FundOurFutureFL.

Remember that every day next week there are small actions we suggested members take:

- Monday: Why are you proud of your public schools? Have a conversation with people you know about why you are Public School Proud – and post on social media.
- Tuesday: Take on Tallahassee Tuesday: contact your legislators telling them the importance of fully funding public education.
- Wednesday: Wear Red and take action! Gather at the flag poll, show solidarity by walking in together and take pictures of video to post on social media using #FundOurFutureFL.
- Thursday: Thank an educator who impacted your life. Post that thank you on social media. Ask your superintendent to write a public letter or op-ed supporting Public Schools Week!
- Friday: Share on social media what a fully funded public school could look like to highlight what our students deserve.

Please join us in keeping the issues facing our public schools and Florida’s students in the forefront.

You can find out more about this national initiative by visiting <http://lovepubliceducation.org/publicschoolproud/>

In Solidarity,

Fedrick C. Ingram, President FEA

LEVELS OF PUNISHMENT

When a teacher is called to the principal's office or sent to the Administration Center, there are different outcomes based on the severity of the accusation and other mitigating factors. There are one of four levels of discipline that could occur. Like a court case, there is always more than one side of every story. Many teachers are aware of their constitutional right to "remain silent," however, that right does not generally extend to the relationship between employee and employer. This right of the 5th amendment prevents the government from forcing a person to testify against themselves in a criminal matter. As a union member, you have a right to have a union rep present, but "pleading the fifth" is not the same in front of your boss as it is in front of a judge. The only time this is applicable is when a teacher is being accused of a crime. Public employees cannot be compelled to waive their right of immunity as a condition of employment if a criminal activity is the accusation. CCEA members who might find themselves in this situation are given legal counsel.

So, what are the four levels of discipline? In order of least to most severe they are as follows:

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

This basically is a summary of the facts, letting the teacher know we (Administration, Union and member) talked, here is what we talked about, in the future do this.

LETTER OF REPRIMAND

A sterner level of discipline, this letter goes in your file and warns of the serious nature of this violation of School Board policy and/or ethical concerns. In some cases a letter will be forwarded to Florida Department of Education.

SUSPENSION WITHOUT PAY

This level is sometimes used on the more serious cases or when the employee has already been given a letter of reprimand for a similar offence. The suspension can be from 1 to 5 days. If it is at the maximum number, it will usually be accompanied by a statement of "last warning", or last chance agreement.

TERMINATION

Of course, this is the most severe form of punishment. Loss of employment is the strictest penalty a district can give to a teacher. The district knows the union will fight these with legal representation. Contrary to rumors, very few teachers are terminated. CCPS may not want to fight the legal battles but being a union member gives you this protection should you need it.

Lyle Farmar, Member Rights Advocate

THEY'RE COMING AFTER US AGAIN!

Two years ago, the Florida Legislature passed a law that would decertify any instructional union that fell below 50% membership. CCEA membership was almost 70% at that time, so as disturbing as this bill was, it was not a direct threat to our members. The indirect threat was in decertifying other FEA locals around the state. This includes our own local sister Association, CCAEOCAP (non-instructional employees served by this office). CCAEOCAP responded by increasing their membership 7 percentage points in 4 months and went into their recertification period with a 53% membership!

After seeing instructional unions around the state rally just as OCAP did, the Florida Legislature now wants to pass a bill that would force each member to sign up for the union every single year. HB1 (yes – number 1 means this was the very first bill introduced in the House this year) would require union members to rejoin annually. Currently, CCEA and all other local unions operate the same way as your insurance companies and many other businesses – you are enrolled until you cancel your membership.

The bill goes even further by requiring membership forms to be updated to include information to "inform" members of their rights NOT to join the union **in 14-point bold font** (yes, the bill actually includes this!). Can their desire to destroy public education unions be any more obvious? Don't these lawmakers have more important work to carry out on behalf of Florida's citizens?

If passed, this bill would create chaos at the beginning of every school year and would certainly have a negative impact on our membership numbers – perhaps driving membership below the 50% mark.

Florida legislators passed an anti-union bill two years ago. We saw CCAEOCAP and other local unions rally their members, grow their density, and sustain their membership. Let's stop THIS bill before it becomes law. We know our members will do whatever they have to do to protect their union – we have proof from two years ago – but let's not let them push us around like that again!

Write or call your legislators and tell them joining YOUR union is YOUR choice, you know you can cancel anytime, but that decision should be left to YOU and not the politicians!

Jonathan Tuttle, Executive Director

MEMBERSHIP DOESN'T COST - IT PAYS!

Please visit the CCEA Bulletin Board in your school to discover all the benefits that you can receive as a member of CCEA!

<https://feaweb.org/member-center/member-benefits/>

PRINCIPAL SURVEY RESPONSES

After a brief review of past CCEA Principal Assessment Surveys, we are very pleased to report that the average rating for this year was the highest it has been for at least five years. Scores ranged from 2.72 to 4.78 with an average of 3.88!

We send our gratitude to those building leaders who do such a good job guiding their schools through the difficulties presented by the state and district mandates and initiatives. These leaders know that the most important aspect of their job is to make sure their teachers – the number one influence on the students in their schools – are heard, appreciated, and supported.

This is not to say there is not room for improvement, however. Communication seems to be an issue at many of our schools. When all the comments from our survey were combined into one document (of 23,000 words), 43% reported communication as an area that can be bettered. It seems to us that this is an area that is generally within principals' control and could be ameliorated with very little effort.

Discipline, however, was once again been revealed as the number one area that needs the most attention by principals, according to our teachers. Scores for this item range from 2.10 to 4.56, with an average rating of 3.47 – by far the lowest ranked item in our survey. Additionally, 50% of the forty-four rated schools had at least one comment (and as many as ten) regarding the discipline issue. Middle schools have the most pressing concerns, generating half of the comments received.

“Morale” was the most frequent subject of the comments on the PAS, with 68% of schools containing at least one comment about this issue. The difficulty with delivering the message of “low morale” to the district is where to attribute the cause. With so many sources of directives and distractions laid at a teacher's feet, low morale seems to be the general trend of being a teacher these days. Our veteran teachers may remember a CCEA publication from 2004 entitled “Voices from the Classroom” where “low morale” was the number one issue in our schools. We do not know what it will take to keep this from being the number one issue in next year's survey as well.

Finally, “favoritism,” a feeling teachers have about preferential treatment among employees, is a widely used term among our members. While we found this comment from 30% of the schools reporting, we see that only five schools have more than one teacher comment about it. One school had eight such comments, and CCEA will certainly look into the situation there. As to be expected, “favoritism” is unquestionably not good for morale, but the real problem with favoritism is when it leads to disparate treatment among employees that might involve evaluations and/or discipline issues.

Thank you all for taking the time to complete these surveys. They will definitely help guide CCEA as we continue to strive to improve working conditions around the district, and we hope it helps your principals and district administrators as well.

Jonathan Tuttle, Executive Director

PLAN TIME CHANGE: BRING IT TO FAC

The District and CCEA have been at loggerheads for years over the required use of planning time to hold collaborative planning meetings. Finally, after countless hours of meetings, surveys, and discussions, we have come to an agreement.

Collaborative planning is important to the district and to most of our members. CCEA had two problems with collaborative planning as it has been implemented in our district.

First, we felt strongly that our contract language prohibited any assignments during planning time. We agreed at our January Issues Committee meeting that one collaborative planning meeting per week would be a requirement, but it was left to the consensus of the team whether to hold it during planning time or before/after the student day. **In other words, teams can choose to have their weekly collaborative planning meeting during their planning period, but they cannot be required to do so.**

Second, CCEA heard from teams across the district that these meetings were being run by admin or by coaches at admin's direction. Sometimes that works well and sometimes it's necessary, but we found that most of the time teams would have to meet again to collaborate on what the team felt they needed to do during this time rather than admin. Therefore, we agreed that while admin or coaches can certainly attend to offer support, these mandatory meetings would be facilitated by the team leader or his/her designee.

Administration of course has the right to ask teams to meet with them outside of their planning time and has the right to facilitate those meetings themselves. Truthfully, with 29 elementary schools and about 150 teams across the district, it's safe to assume that not all 150 teams are as high-functioning as they can be, and they might need direction and support from the educational leaders in their buildings.

Finally, after looking at the wide discrepancy of the frequency of PLC meetings among schools, **it was agreed that teachers could not be required to attend more than two PLC meetings per month.** Many teachers find these meetings valuable to help them guide their instruction and there is no limitation to the number of PLCs that a teacher chooses to attend, but they cannot be required.

Here's the tricky part: It could be challenging to implement these changes so far into the school year; schedules have been set and plans have been made. At this point in time, this sudden change from outside the control of individual schools may make adjusting a schedule difficult. We strongly encourage the FAC at each school to have conversations with their administrators about the best way to accommodate these changes that best suits the needs of all concerned. We hope flexibility and understanding will be the starting point of these conversations as we move through the rest of this school year.

Jonathan Tuttle, Executive Director

PRINCIPAL SURVEY RESULTS
 Results will be available for viewing starting on Wednesday, February 26 at the CCEA Office
Members Only - No copies/photos

DISCOUNT MOVIE TICKETS
\$9.00/ea
 Purchase tickets at the Association Office
 6710 Lone Oak Blvd, Naples, 34109
 Mon - Fri / 8:30am - 4:30pm

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 3/2 **SCHOOL BAORD MEETING**
4:30pm \ MLK
- 3/4 **CCPS TRANSFER FAIR**
5:15pm \ GCH
- 3/9-13 **SPRING BREAK**
- 3/16 **TEACHER PLANNING DAY**
- 3/17 **CCEA EXEC BOARD MEETING**
4:30pm \ CCEA Office
- 3/19 **TIGER ROUNDTABLE**
4:30pm \ CCEA Office
- 3/24 **CCEA REP COUNCIL**
4:30pm \ CCEA Office

2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION INFO
<https://feaweb.org/issues-action/legislative-session/>

 **TIGER Roundtable** 
MEET THE CANDIDATES NIGHT
 Florida Legislature
 Thursday, March 19 \ CCEA Office \ 4:30pm

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EARN A \$50 BONUS FOR EACH NEW* MEMBER YOU RECRUIT
 *EXCLUDES ANYONE PREVIOUSLY ENROLLED IN CCEA

Collier County Education Association, Inc. (CCEA)
MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM

 Last Name First Name Middle Initial

 Mailing Address City State Zip Code

 Phone Original Hire Date

Home E-Mail Address: _____

Employee ID: _____
 School Worksite: _____
 Payment Plan:
 ___ Cash [Check # ___]
 ___ Payroll Deduction

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
 DB: _____
 CCPS: _____
 RB: _____

I hereby authorize the District School Board of Collier County, according to arrangements agreed upon with the CCEA, to deduct from my salary and transmit to said Association such dues as annually certified by said Association. I hereby waive all rights and claims to said monies so deducted, except as noted below, in accordance with this authorization and relieve the School Board and all its officers from any liability therefor. This authorization shall remain in full force and effect for all purposes while I am employed by this school district or until revoked by me upon thirty (30) days advance written notice to the School Board's Business Office and said Association. The annual dues payments earmarked for the Collier County Education Association may be deductible as a miscellaneous deduction for federal income tax purposes.

Employee Signature _____ Date _____

Recruiter's Name _____ Date _____