



The VOICE

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Upcoming Events

December 22: Early Release—Faculty Council choice

December 22: End of 2nd Nine Weeks

December 23—January 4: Winter Break

January 5: 1st day back (Teacher workday)

January 8: Students return

January 16: WSL Mtg @ Shrine Club in Ft. Pierce

Early Release Days An Issue—Again

At the Dec. 12th School Board meeting, the school board was presented with the draft of the 2018-2019 school calendar from district leadership. In general, this calendar is a standard calendar with no “controversy.”

That is, the calendar has a week of pre-planning, a full week off at Thanksgiving and winter break running from December 24-Jan. 4th for 10 month employees. Spring Break is proposed from March 18-22nd.

However, the district’s proposal is for the Board to approve a calendar *without* contractual Early Dismissal days designated because they are asking teachers to agree to eliminate 6 of the 12 days we have (for a loss of 12 non-student contact hours that teachers can use for professional development, planning, or uninterrupted record-keeping). Their proposal also eliminates any decision-making by the Faculty Council and designates their 6 proposed days as 3 for professional development and 3 for record-keeping (with one of the record-keeping days suggested as the last day of school).

There are a lot of opinions on both sides regarding the Early Dismissal days. However, the 24 hours of additional non-student contact time for teachers afforded by these days is not something we believe teachers want to

lose. As part of the conversation, we had proposed that the district protect all FIVE days of contractual planning time (if Early Dismissal days were cut to 3 for record-keeping) so that principals *could not* direct the activities of the teachers during their actual 45 minutes of planning time and could use any additional non-student contact time THEY created in the master schedule for the purposes of collaborative planning, professional development, etc. There was flat-out refusal on the part of district leadership to consider that as a resolution. Instead they offered to share half of a scheduled professional development day as a workday in February. This is still a net loss of non-student contact time in the workday for teachers who have more to do with less time to do it.

“No” is always a perfectly acceptable response to a bargaining proposal from either party. In this case, so far, both parties have rejected what the other is suggesting. So, in the absence of agreement the contract remains in place and we will be looking to place 12 early dismissal days on the calendar.

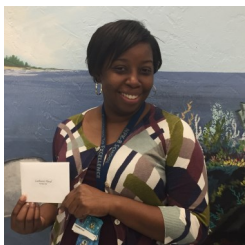
The issue here, as we repeatedly say, is one of time. Teachers need more not less. A proposal to do anything other than increase their time for planning is unacceptable.

Read the *Voice* to Win!!!

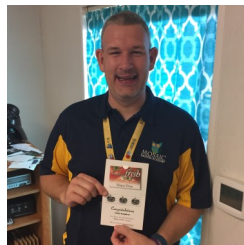
Read, *answer the riddles* and SEND your answer to

Barbara.Ziegler@floridaea.org

No Riddle for the December Voice - the Riddle master is taking a vacation!

Winners of \$10 Gift Card

LaShawn Floyd
Northport K-8



Chris Waldrop
MOSAIC

Answers to November Voice Riddles:

1. What did the discussion with Senator Negron focus on?
A: Teacher retention and recruitment
2. What brand new benefit is being offered by AFT this year?
A: \$5,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy

Focus On CU with CU VP Sandy Rohn

Hi all and welcome to December. The year is zipping by and our winter break is right around the corner.

Please remember that this is a very stressful time of year for all of us, including the students we work with. Please take your two 15 minute breaks and 30 minute duty free lunch.

This is a time for you to step away, relax and take deep breaths to deal with everything and everyone in a professional manner.

There is a lot going on in the legislature right now, so please take time to read the entire

Voice Newsletter to stay on top of everything. It is important that our Union is strong everyday so please stay informed and if you have a friend or coworker that is not a member, encourage them to join us as there is strength in numbers and every voice needs to be heard.

Did you know: According to your contract:

You can now use 6 of your sick days as personal days.

I hope you all have a wonderful month and enjoy your winter break.

Remember, we are stronger together...Sandy

Dear Santa: I Need A Case Of Paper... Hook Me Up?

Florida taxpayers pay taxes to fund public school operations. The intent is for schools, students, and teachers to have the materials and supplies they need to run the school and educate students.

So why do educators spend an inordinate amount of their personal-money on school supplies for their classrooms every year?

Since it is that time of year when supplies seem to be running low— paper, pencils, click charges, personal finances...what is a teacher to do? If the recent exchanges on Facebook concerning this very subject are any indication, it is pretty

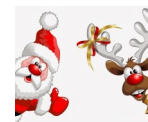
difficult to get more paper, pencils, etc. and some principals are claiming they “have no more money” for these items. Not true.

Every school has a discretionary budget (sometimes referred to as “The 1010 Budget”) for items the school, students, or teachers/staff need. In some cases, especially at high schools, those budgets are still in excess of \$200,000, but staff are being told to buy their own paper.

School budgets are public record and should be discussed at your Faculty Council meeting when needs arise. When teachers

ask for the budget information many are told “It is very complicated and you just wouldn’t understand how it works.” ***It is not complicated, it is just a budget.*** If you have trouble getting a look at your school’s budget, give us a call – we review them every month in our office because the district is completely transparent and sends them directly to us. We are happy to share.

So don’t ask Santa for copy paper for Christmas – ask your principal!



By the Numbers:

New union members in November:

34

Number of Early Dismissal days guaranteed in the contract:

12

Total participants in the union's AFT-PD courses since August:

96

Union density for the combined CTA/CU (% of eligible employees who are members):

66%

Negotiations Corner

Negotiations never stop. The district and union continue to work collaboratively and there are many discussions that go on daily, but here are some of the things we are working on for you:

- ◆ A Holiday bonus for all bargaining unit members. The bonus is \$250 pre-tax and will be paid via direct deposit no later than December 22, 2017. This bonus is in addition to any additional compensation we negotiate under the terms of our agreement signed this summer. We will be returning to the table to discuss additional compensation when the final FTE numbers are released after the Winter Break.
- ◆ Additional compensation at three of our schools in Differentiated Accountability or turn around status (SGA, WBE, and SLE) this year. The grant funding these one-year incentives only allow the funds to be used for schools in this status, but for those schools it will result in an opportunity for instructional personnel to earn additional

compensation based on student performance.

The district and union continue to meet to discuss recruitment and retention, currently looking at ways to increase the district's ability to attract new teachers. Starting salary is part of that discussion, but we are also looking at other ways to encourage new teachers to choose St. Lucie as their home. Retention remains as important as recruitment for us in the "retention and recruitment" discussion so changes in pay will need to maintain equity between new and veteran teachers.

Finally, we are going to begin to plan for a possible move to self-insurance. While premiums would still be tied to usage, our hope is that by being self-insured the district and union would have better control over costs and plans, and would be able to retain a lot of what we currently pay out as profits to Florida Blue.

Negotiations will continue after the winter holidays.

Substitute Shortages Create Districtwide Problems

At the December Steering Committee meeting, the lack of substitute teachers and the problems with splitting classes was discussed.

The issue is a statewide problem as student behavior intensifies and the state teacher shortage continues. Locally, the district, as of December 1st, raised the pay rates for substitutes to: \$71/day for all substitutes who have AA and BA degrees; \$90/day for Green Zone Schools; and \$100/day for long term substitutes. The hope is that this will help to draw substitutes to St. Lucie County and increase the substitute pool.

Even though increased sub

pay should help, we know that it will take a while to increase the substitute fill rate so what do we do in the mean time? Every school should now have a rotating list of faculty and staff who are available to cover classes when no substitute is available. This list should insure that the same people are not constantly being reassigned to a classroom.

At Steering we also shared our members' concern that splitting classes should be a last resort and not a first response. To help the situation it is also important for teachers to request a substitute as soon as they know they may need to be out. If

you are feeling ill during the night, but you think you just might be better in the morning, put it in for a substitute, even in the middle of the night! A substitute can always be canceled, but the earlier it is put into the system, the more likely it will be filled. We also discussed the connection between employee morale and attendance and hope to work with the district to create incentives to tackle attendance problems in schools and transportation. We will also continue to discuss and review sub fill rates and other data because as we all know, uncovered classes and buses create problems for everyone.

**St. Lucie Classroom Teachers' Association
and Classified Unit**

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CTA/CU Executive Board

Vicki Rodriguez, President CTA/CU: CTA Office
Christine Hill, Vice President CTA: CTA Office
Sandy Rohn, Vice-President CU: SGA
Laura Lovett, CTA/CU Treasurer: Records Dept.
Rebecca Petrie, Secretary CTA: SRE
Mona Webb, Secretary CU: Transportation
David Freeland, CTA Executive Board: FPC
Tammy Davis, CTA Executive Board: FKS
Alan Mathison, CTA Executive Board: LPA
Aurea Justo, CTA Executive Board: FLN
Pamela Jenkins, CU Executive Board: SLWC

Union Staff

Maureen Sinnott/ Member Support Specialist

Lucy Bravo/ Organizing and Communications Specialist

Barbara Ziegler/ Office Manager

The 2018 Legislative Session is Coming!

January 9, 2018 is the opening day of the 2018 Florida Legislative Session.

Get ready now to be an Education Activist by signing up for regular legislative updates on educational issues by:

STEP 1: Signing up for action alerts from FEA at <http://bs.feaweb.org/page/s/join-our-mailing-list>

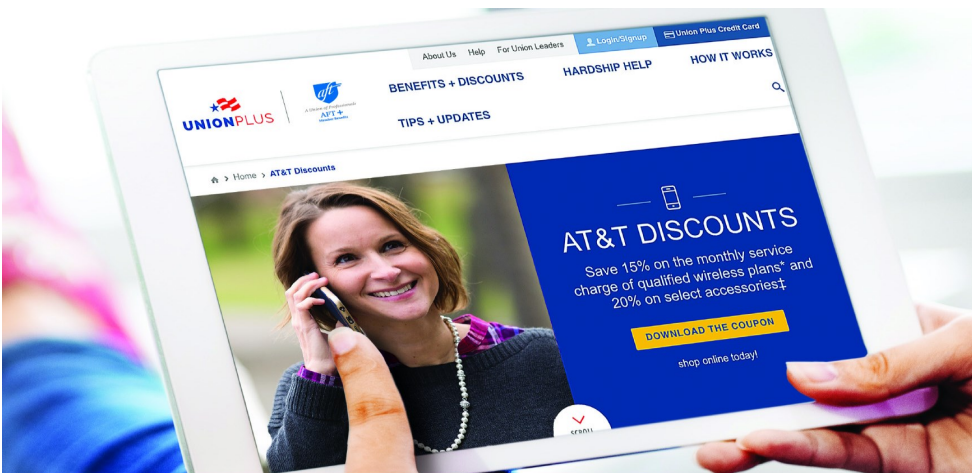
STEP 2: Following @BetterSchoolsFl on Twitter

STEP 3: Bookmarking <http://feaactioncenter.org/> on your home computer and phone.



On behalf of the staff and leadership of the St. Lucie CTA/CU we wish you the best of everything your holidays and time off from work can offer.

Be safe, have a designated driver, and use common sense when posting on social media!



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