



The VOICE

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Upcoming Events

February 9: Night of the Stars, LPA

February 13: Early Release—Recordkeeping

February 18: President's Day—Holiday for 10 and 11 month employees

March 15: End of Third 9 weeks

March 18: Spring Break for 10 and 11 month employees



Free Agents in a Teacher Friendly Market

One of the most challenging aspects of our job of advocating for members, is when a member calls with a complaint, but then insists that we not use their name out of fear of losing their job. Quite often, the issue is that the member is an annual contract teacher.

I want to take a few moments to give those educators who are working in fear, who are afraid to ask their supervisors to honor the contract and who call us up for help but do not allow us to use their name, a different perspective.

Here's the skinny: You are free agents in a teacher friendly job market.

Unlike a teacher with a professional services contract who is tied to the district, an annual contract teacher has no such ties.

With a teacher shortage of over 4,000 in Florida and an ever-shrinking pool of qualified applicants, you have a sought after skill set that is valuable. School districts across the state are scrambling to fill classrooms with licensed teachers.

In our district, a teacher who is non-reappointed at one school is very often picked up at another school before the ink is dry on their non-reappointment letter.

They need YOU, more than you need them.

While we would never suggest a lack of caution or tact in how you present yourself on the job, working in fear is not the way to have a satisfying career, and often makes it impossible for us to help sort out issues for our members. It also makes you less effective in advocating for what is best for students.

In many cases, an administrator is unaware of the issue and a simple phone call could solve any concerns – but we don't make that phone call without the member's permission.

We are working to retain teachers but remember, your skill and training are a very valuable commodity and as a free agent, you have options and strength.

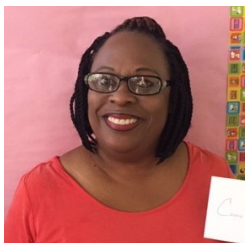
Don't be afraid to leverage those options and strength for the betterment of your working conditions and your students' learning conditions.

Read the *Voice* to Win!!!

Read, *answer the riddles* and SEND your answer to Barbara.Ziegler@floridaea.org by **February 19, 2019**

1. What should members do if they are not receiving emails from the CTA/CU office?
2. What is the next "big thing" in terms of negotiations?

Winners of \$10 Gift Card



Cassie Jerger
Dan McCarty Middle



Diane McClean
Transportation

Answers to January Voice Riddles:

1. What is the telephone number for the Employee Assistance Program?
A: 1-800-272-3626
2. What date must ballots be returned for the St. Lucie County's referendum?
A: April 23, 2019

Focus On CU with CU VP Sandy Rohn

Hello again, and welcome to February. On February 1st, we had the CU conference where **60 lucky support staff** participated in an amazing daylong Conference. Everyone I have spoken to loved it because of all the information they received about Stress Management and Teamwork. Participants also had time to talk to each other about what they do, why they do what they do as well as several other items. It was a hit and I hope more of you will decide to join us at the CU Conference next year. I want to thank the Staff and Leadership for pulling this together. The Union is always willing to provide training specifically for our support staff that the district does not always provide. Finally, I would like to thank School Board Chair Debbie Hawley for her welcoming remarks on behalf of the District. Her message of how important CU's are to both the district and the children we serve was very well-received.

Please watch out for information on the referendum the district is proposing to help increase salaries for our folks. Since the state won't fully fund us, we must go to the public for assistance. If there is an opportunity to share this information with relatives, friends and your community, please do. You will hear more about this in the next few months.

It's important for you to be aware of what's happening by reading this newsletter as well as any emails sent to you by the Union. If you are not getting our emails, contact the office to ensure we have a correct phone number and personal email for you. **This is vital, so we can reach you with any important news for which we are unable to use your school email. Please take a moment to do that now.**

Have a great month and remember that we are stronger, together. Sandy

Your Contract . . . Clarified! with Rebecca Petrie, CTA Vice President

I'm sure you've heard that the union will help you file a grievance but did you know that there are over 200 lines of language in the CTA and CU contracts protecting your rights and outlining the procedures to do so?

Keep reading for a *brief overview*.

CTA and CU Contracts

Article III - Grievance Procedure

The term "grievance" is defined as a written allegation that a dispute, disagreement, or difference exists between the grievant and the employer involving the contract. If the grievant institutes this grievance, he/she waives all rights

to use any other appeal procedure relating to his/her grievance until he/she has exhausted all the steps of the grievance procedure. A grievance may be withdrawn at any level but the same grievance may not be filed a second time by the same party.

The STEPS:

Informal Conversation

The grievant should first **discuss**, in person, the alleged grievance with the principal and/or immediate supervisor. (within 5 days)

Step I

A formal **grievance is filed in**

writing on the approved form with his/her principal and/or immediate supervisor. (within 15 days)

Step II

If the response to the grievance in Step I is not satisfactory to the grievant, he/she may **submit the grievance to the Superintendent** or his/her designee. (10 days)

Step III

If the response to the grievance in Step II is not satisfactory to the grievant, the grievant **may move the grievance to arbitration**

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Negotiations Corner

We will be discussing insurance, making this year's supplements permanent, as well as other issues that come up during the year.

However, the next "big thing" will be negotiating over the revenue generated by the referendum, assuming it passes.

We will be doing a lot more communicating with our members as the election date approaches, but there have been a lot of questions, and rumors, about the actual referendum language so we have included it here.

Stay tuned, there is a LOT of additional information headed your way regarding the referendum.

Referendum to Approve Levying One Mill for Teachers, Safety, Mental Health, and Operational Needs.

In order to raise the salaries of teachers and educational support staff, recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, improve school security, improve mental health services, and fund other essen-

tial operations that preserve important school programs, shall the St. Lucie County School District levy an ad valorem annual operating millage of one mill for four years, with all funds reviewed by a citizen advisory committee?

YES = FOR additional one mill for School District for four years

NO = AGAINST additional one mill for School District for four years

Your Contract . . . Clarified! (continued)

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(10 days) and the cost of the arbitrator will be divided equally between the parties. The grievant will pay the entire cost of arbitration if the grievant moves the grievance to arbitration without prior written consent of the Association.

So... what does all that mean?

A member of the bargaining unit who feels their contract has been broken can file a grievance.

Employees *cannot* file a grievance against a coworker.

Taking a grievance all the way to, and through, arbitration requires the approval of the CTA/CU as there is a cost involved.

The purpose of these procedures is to secure equitable solutions to problems at the lowest possible administrative level.

That's why it starts with a conversation before working up to the Superintendent and an arbitrator.

This article contains only portions of the contract language.

For more detailed information on grievance procedures, please see pages 6 – 9 in the CTA contract and pages 4 – 7 in the CU contract.

What contract language would you like to see clarified?

Let us know!

Contact the office at

(772) 464-6430

or via email at

Info@stluciateachers.com

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

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CTA/CU Executive Board

David Freeland, President CTA/CU: CTA Office
Rebecca Petrie, Vice President CTA: CTA Office
Sandy Rohn, Vice-President CU: FPC
Laura Lovett, CTA/CU Treasurer: Records Dept.
Lashawn Floyd, CU Secretary: NK8
Tammy Davis, CTA Executive Board: FKS
Alan Mathison, CTA Executive Board: LPA
Pamela Jenkins, CU Executive Board: SLWC
Claudia Martin-Vegue, CTA Executive Board:
SLWK8
Christine Derry, CTA Executive Board: TCHS

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Referendum Information!

April 3, 2019 - ballots are mailed out.

Completed ballots can be returned either by mail or
dropped off at 4 locations in St. Lucie County
(watch this space for further information)

April 23, 2019 - Ballots must be returned by this
date in order to be counted.

Please remember to submit your ballots on time!

The annual St. Lucie CTA/CU sponsored CU Conference

Navigating the Challenges to Your Success

was, once again, a huge hit with all who attended.

Thank you to:

School Board Chair, Debbie Hawley for her opening remarks
and to all those who worked so tirelessly behind the scenes
to make this day so successful.

We hope to see you next year!

20% Discount



Thank you for choosing
K-12 Tax Services, Inc.
We appreciate you and your
business.
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Sebastian, FL
For Drop off times OR
To schedule an appointment at
either the SLC CTA/CU Office or
at the K-12 Tax Service Main
office
Call
772-646-0037
Call or visit our website to
schedule an appointment
www.k12tax.com

**Official partner of SLC CTA/CU
St Lucie County Teachers!**

This entitles you to a discount of 20% off of
Tax Preparation for 2018 Income Taxes

Not to be combined with any other offer/discount

NOT redeemable for cash.

EXPIRES 10/15/2019

