



Education Association of St. Lucie LOCAL 3616

February 6, 2024

The VOICE

Editor: Maureen Sinnott
371 East Midway Road
Ft. Pierce, FL 34982

Interest Card Campaign

New legislation that came along with HB256, the rules surrounding our conversion to eDues, also includes additional hoops and hurdles for public sector unions to jump through. Our union is no exception. Since none of our three bargaining units are currently at the required 60% threshold, we will be holding an Interest Card campaign. Here is some important information regarding the campaign.

- **What is an Interest Card Campaign and why are we having a campaign?**

When a group of employees wants to form a union, they must first show interest by getting a certain percentage of the potential members to sign cards expressing interest in being represented by a union. Thanks to the legislature's union busting bill (HB256), existing unions with membership below 60% of its potential members must complete the same process that is completed by employees to form a union.

- **If I sign an interest card does that mean I am joining the union?**

No!

Signing the card only tells the Public Employees Relation Commission (PERC) that you are interested in being represented by a union and that you support holding an election to be allowed to have EASL represent you as your union.

- **I thought we met our goal last year and didn't have to worry anymore.**

There are several parts to this answer.

First, our eDues campaign was the first step in meeting the state's new law. We had to convert existing members to a new means to pay dues since the law made dues deduction for education unions illegal.

Second, we are having members and potential members sign an interest card now in case we don't reach 60% membership by our date of renewal. All three of our bargaining units are currently below the 60% threshold. Once you sign an interest card, we will retain it so we will have it to send to PERC when needed.

- **So, what do I need to do?**

We will be sending additional details about the Interest Card Campaign including what YOU need to do to assure the union remains available to represent you and give you a voice in how your workplace is run. *In short, sign and return your card.*

- **How will I receive my Interest Card?**

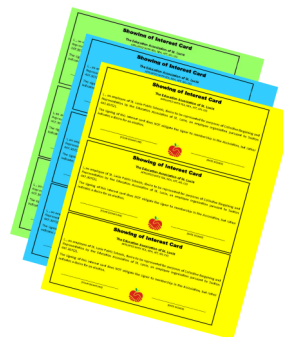
In most cases, your Interest Card will be placed in your mailbox at your worksite.

You will notice that the Interest Cards are printed on different colored cardstock. Each of our bargaining units is on its own color. Based on the colors outlined below, contact us if you notice a discrepancy with yours. It is critical that we turn your card in with the correct bargaining unit.

Yellow = CTA (instructional)

Blue = CU (clerical, paras, support staff)

Green = ProTech (identified managers and technical)



Continued on Page 2



Education Association of St. Lucie LOCAL 3616

Interest Card Campaign

- **What should I do with the Interest Card once I have it?**

You should SIGN and DATE your card. Your signature must be in ink, preferably blue or black. Your card will already have your name printed on it in three spots. Be sure to sign and date all three individual boxes. Return your card to your Worksite Leader. If you do not get your signed card to your Worksite Leader in time to be sent with your colleagues' cards, or if you are more comfortable doing so, simply place your card in an interoffice envelope and address it to: EASL Office.

- **What if there is an issue with my name?**

Your preprinted Interest Card will contain your first and last names as they appear on the payroll reports from the district. For your card to be valid, the name on the card must match payroll records.

If we simply got your name completely wrong, please let us know and we will provide you with a blank card. You can fill in your name and then sign/return the card.

- **When I sign an Interest Card, does that mean I am joining the union?**

No!

Signing the card only tells the Public Employees Relation Commission (PERC) that you are interested in being represented by a union and that you support holding an election to be allowed to have a union and for EASL to be that union.

- **What happens after I sign my Interest Card?**

If any of our bargaining units reach the 60% threshold, we will keep those cards on file in our office in the event we need them in the future.

If any of our bargaining units fail to reach the 60% threshold, we will submit the Interest Cards. PERC will schedule an election for that bargaining unit. We will send additional information regarding the election process if necessary.

If you have additional questions, please direct them to your Worksite Leader. You may also reply to this email or call at the office.

Once you have signed and returned your Interest Card, please check in with your colleagues to make sure they've done the same!

It's important to remember that all employees who belong to one of our bargaining units, regardless of union membership, are asked to sign and return their Interest Card.

These cards are how we demonstrate to the state that the eligible employees here in SLPS want EASL to continue representing them.

Of course, this is also an opportunity for us to invite those who haven't done it yet to JOIN our union!

==WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER==

**I'm sticking
with my union!**



Scan to JOIN

Friendly Reminder

In the education profession, there is no real “busy season”. It’s always busy season for educators!

The same holds true for us here in the union office. Currently, we have a full time staff of four people. While we all work hard to provide the best representation to our members, that work takes time and effort.

If you receive a Meeting Notice from the district or from your worksite administrator, it is important to reach out to a rep right away. Schedules are tight all around and most meetings require a plan and scheduling. The sooner we know about a meeting or concern, the sooner we can begin addressing it.

Excluding circumstances beyond our control, our office is staffed Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Messages left and emails sent outside of those hours will receive a reply as quickly as possible but typically during office hours.

We appreciate your understanding.

Educator Discipline

If you are the subject of a work-related investigation, whether conducted by an administrator, the district, DCF, or law enforcement, you are entitled to representation*. Consult a union rep before answering any questions or providing a statement.

Our contract outlines several Progressive Discipline actions that may be taken against an employee:

- Summary of Conference
- Letter of Concern
- Letter of Reprimand
- Suspension without Pay
- Termination

Per Florida Statute 1012.796, school districts are required to report teacher discipline to the Florida Department of Education. This means that any of the above actions taken may be reported. If you were a member at the time of the incident that was investigated and maintain your membership, EASL is able to request an attorney to represent you in the DOE matter. must be a union member at the time of the incident and investigation to be eligible for union representation.



**FLORIDA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION RETIRED
Innovative Grant Winners**



Ann Hartman - \$150

Allapattah Flats K-8

Shannon Wood - \$150

Allapattah Flats K-8

CTA CU Retirees of SLC Memorial Educator’s Innovative Grant Winner



Renee Hawkins - \$300

Fairlawn Elementary



Education Association of St. Lucie Local 3616

371 E. Midway Road
Ft. Pierce, FL 34982
Office: 772-464-6430
Fax: 772-464-7446

EASL Executive Board

David Freeland, *President EASL: EASL Office*
Rebecca Petrie, *Vice President CTA: EASL Office*
Laura Lovett-Estima, *CU Vice President: Records Center*
Alan Mathison, *CTA Executive Board At-Large: LPA*
Mary Magnuson, *CTA Secretary: FPCH*
Lashawn Floyd, *CU Secretary: NPK8*
Claudia Martin-Veggie, *CTA Executive Board: SLWK8*
Pamela Jenkins, *CU Executive Board: SLWCHS*
LeAnne Carangelo, *CTA Executive Board At-Large: OHK8*
Aurea Barrios-Cardenas, *CTA Executive Board At-Large: MAN*

Union Staff

Maureen Sinnott/ *Member Support Specialist*
Lucy Bravo/ *Organizing and Member Advocacy Specialist*
Barbara Ziegler/ *Office Manager*

E-mail:

David.Freeland@FloridaEA.org
Rebecca.Petrie@FloridaEA.org
Lucy.Bravo@FloridaEA.org
Barbara.Ziegler@FloridaEA.org
Maureen.Sinnott@FloridaEA.org

Educator Grants

Grants for Educators - The NEA Foundation

THE NEA
FOUNDATION

EQUITY. EXCELLENCE. OPPORTUNITY.

Applications
are reviewed
three times a year
(winter, spring,
and fall).

Need a Grant?

Apply for the NEA Foundation's \$2,000 and \$5,000 grants for individuals and teams of education professionals to support instructional practice or professional development across all subject areas and grade levels. **Applications are reviewed three times a year (winter, spring, and fall).**

Download classroom resources from the NEA Foundation's Global Learning Resource page to help your students become 21st century global citizens. And join a learning community of educators committed to global education advocacy.

Want to Bring the World to Your Classroom?

These resources and opportunities can help connect you, your classroom, and your students with ideas and people around the world.

Find more resources and programs offered by the NEA Foundation—a public charity founded by educators for educators—at neafoundation.org. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube for updates.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK



Let's Talk Benefits with
Lucy Bravo, Organizing and Member Advocacy Specialist
This month's focus will be on the union benefit partner



IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR!

As an Educator did you know you are able to deduct certain expenses—

- ◆ **Educator Expense**—\$300.00 for classroom supplies that you were not re-imbursed for.
- ◆ **Student Loan Deduction**—up to \$2500 for interest paid on Student Loans
- ◆ **Education Credit**—for courses you pay for yourself
- ◆ **Retirement Savings Credit**—for contributions made to your 403 (B)

Let one of your union benefit partners, K-12 Tax Services, assist you with your tax return!

Save 20% on the cost of your tax return.

For drop-off times OR to schedule an appointment at either the EASL Office or at the K-12 Tax Service Inc. Main Office
Contact K-12 Tax Services, Inc. at 772-646-0037, www.k12tax.com, or K12taxes@gmail.com



Education Association of St. Lucie Scholarships



Awarded to four St. Lucie County public school graduates whose parents or legal guardians are Education Association of St. Lucie members in good standing. Applicants plan to attend either a 2- or 4- year college of higher education in the major of their choice. These scholarships are given in honor of public school educators and support personnel.

Qualifications:

- ❖ Graduating high school senior
- ❖ One parent or legal guardian must be a member in good standing of the Education Association of St. Lucie
- ❖ Must be pursuing a two or four year college degree
- ❖ Must have a GPA of 2.5 or higher



Daniel Hinojosa Memorial Scholarships



Awarded to one St. Lucie County public school graduate whose parents or legal guardians are Education Association of St. Lucie members in good standing. Applicants plan to attend either a 2- or 4-year degree in the field of Mental Health and/or Education. Preference will be given to a qualified candidate who will be entering the Mental Health profession but students who are planning to enter the field of education are also encouraged to apply. In memory of Daniel Hinojosa.

Qualifications:

- ❖ Graduating high school senior
- ❖ One parent or legal guardian must be a member in good standing of the Education Association of St. Lucie
- ❖ Must be pursuing a two or four year college degree
- ❖ Must have a GPA of 2.5 or higher
- ❖ Must be pursuing a degree in the mental health field and/or Mental Health and/or Education. Write a personal statement of no more than 500 words on one of the following topics:
 - Explain a personal experience with mental health concerns and how you will improve your life or the lives of others through education.
 - Tell why you are choosing to pursue a career in the mental health and or education field and explain the impact you hope to make with those facing mental health concerns.
 - Showcase your objective for entering the mental health and or education field.

Scholarship winners will be notified by mail and funds will be paid to the institution upon receipt of proof of enrollment.

To apply, visit www.educationfoundationstlucie.org click on the scholarship tab on the left of the page