

The President's

Solidarity Report



In this Issue: Care about public education?, Jeff Larsen for School Board, The biggest con, Teachers Rally to Amanda Murphy's Defense, BOO BASH, BACKPACK FULL OF CASH, PCTA-PESPA PAC endorsements

Care about public education? Prove it with your vote!

We all know the problems we face in education today. We live it every day. We see it in the faces of our students as we are forced to teach from a script made by people who are all about test scores. Our jobs are no longer about teaching our students the skills they will need to succeed as well rounded, civic minded citizens. It's all about the test.

We know the problems come from those lawmakers who are determined to undermine public education so that they, and their cronies, can profit on the backs of our educators and students. They set us up to fail so that they can point to privatization and the free market economy as the saving answer. This is not news to us; they do not hide their true intent even as they pass laws to weaken the only obstacle in the way of privatization, teachers unions. What is disturbing is not that greedy people are trying to kill public education, but that our District takes full advantage of the ugliness passed down from Tallahassee and uses it against their employees.

Any parent that ever gave their kid a birthday party and had more than a half dozen kids to look after will wonder how teachers handle a full class every day. We know that class size matters. We know it, parents know it, and the District must know it but, they take full advantage of changes in class size to overload our classes.

Educators and parents protested against toxic testing and finally got the state to back off. Pinellas County Schools took that baton and ran with it. Our students still have so much instructional time taken up by testing that when the year-end comes, they are so burnt out and over it that they don't have anything left to give to a final. Elementary school kids, including kindergarten, are taking bi-weekly assessments. Sadly, I asked a teacher if she ever finds time to read to her kids for enjoyment and she told me there was no time. This bothered me very much as I still remember how my classmates and I were so captivated when our teacher read a chapter from the Alfred Hitchcock Three Investigators novels for kids. There was nothing our teacher could ask of us that we would say no to, as long as she promised to read to us.

While the District ignores the alarming number of teachers fleeing the profession because of the micro-managing, the unnecessarily heavy workload, and the demoralizing unprofessional treatment, they leave us no choice but to advocate for ourselves and our students. It is vitally important that we all vote and do what we can to get out the vote! This November can mean the pendulum will swing back toward a rational appreciation and funding for public education or it could continue to swing further in the current direction intended to kill public education. The direction depends on all of us. We are educators, not bystanders. If we want to teach our children anything other than bubbling in a test paper, do it by example and let them know that you voted for public education friendly candidates and that you did it for them. Ask people if they care about Public Education? If they say yes, ask them to prove it!



The biggest con directed toward working families ever!

As soon as the Supreme Court ruled in the Janus v. AFSCME case that “fair share” or closed shops were illegal and that no public employee in the country could be forced to pay union dues, the attacks on unions became fiercer and more frequent. You may have heard from the organization “My Pay, My Say” folks who are encouraging you to save your money, don’t pay dues to a union. There are a few things they neglect to tell you that you already know as a union member but you may want to remind others about.

- In Florida, we have never been forced to join a union, we do so because we want a voice and there is strength in numbers.
- You don’t save money by not being in a union, you diminish our bargaining power which results in lower raises and benefits. Non-members cost the entire bargaining unit money over a career which effects our retirement benefits.
- States with higher membership density pay substantially more than those with less union membership.
- They attack us because we stand in the way of corporate profits from privatizing public education.
- They are partnered with the James Madison Institute, a group that wants to instill free market ideas on public education. They are all about charters, vouchers, and private schools. This departure from the level playing field of public education would lead to segregation and those who can afford it, getting a better education than those who are less able to pay. It would also lead to cuts in services as competing schools will reduce their prices in order to attract customers (students)
- Those of us who believe all children deserve a free public education system, regardless of where they live or their socio-economic background, need to tell “My Pay, My Say” where they can go. We must all defend against this encroaching enemy and fight back hard with our greatest tools, knowledge and the vote.

SO, BEWARE AND REMEMBER:



= Union busting + the destruction of public education

Teachers Rally to Amanda Murphy's Defense Local unions and FEA condemn opponent's deceptive attacks on the Senate candidate

NEW PORT RICHEY, Fla. – The Florida Education Association (FEA) and teachers' unions in Pasco and Pinellas counties are stepping up to defend Amanda Murphy, candidate for state Senate District 16, against the deceptive smear campaign targeting her record on education launched by opponent Ed Hooper and his campaign handlers.

Murphy has long been a strong supporter of public schools and educators. She vows to fight to fully fund public education and has committed herself to raising salaries for teachers and education staff professionals to at least the national average. In fact, she has put her commitment in writing, signing the FEA Education Salary Pledge.

“Teachers and education staff professionals know Amanda Murphy cares about the issues that are important to them,” said FEA President Joanne McCall. “She has a proven track record of supporting public schools and educators, and we look forward to having her stand with us as an advocate in the Senate. She will do what’s right for our students. In the race for District 16, Amanda Murphy is far and away the better candidate for public education.”

Murphy is endorsed by the FEA and local educators in the race for Senate District 16, which represents portions of Pinellas and Pasco counties. Local teachers' unions slam Hooper and his handlers for their attacks on Murphy.

“This is the same Ed Hooper who voted in favor of taxing public sector workers in the FRS system 3 percent of their wages! The same Ed Hooper who voted to place all new teachers on annual contracts so they can be let go without “just cause” or due process. A politician who voted in favor of cutting \$1.3 billion from public education should not be casting stones at anyone,” said Mike Gandolfo, president of the Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association. “Amanda Murphy has been and remains a constant and continued supporter of our local schools and those who work in them.”

“Pasco educators know when they have support in Tallahassee, and a quick look at Ed Hooper’s voting record shows he is no friend to public education. As a past state representative, Amanda has always supported educators. She supported increased funding for public education and has been a vocal advocate for programs and services that address the needs of Pasco County citizens. We stand with her and look forward to working with her when she is in the Florida Senate,” said Don Peace, president of United School Employees of Pasco.

“This sort of desperate lie by Ed Hooper is just another example of the same old political games Tallahassee politicians like to play,” said Murphy. “I stand proudly with our public educators in their fight to bring more Tallahassee dollars back to the classroom. That’s why I intend on fully restoring the \$1.3 billion that Ed Hooper voted to cut from our public schools.”

**WE HAVE A TABLE AT THE BOO BASH,
JOIN US FOR SOME HALLOWEEN FUN!**



HELP US DO WHAT EDUCATORS DO BEST, PUT SMILES ON THE FACES OF CHILDREN.

BACKPACK FULL OF CASH

PCTA-PESPA is proud to partner with the Pinellas County Council Parent Teacher Association to present showings of the documentary “*Backpack Full of Cash*”, on three consecutive evenings at three locations. This is a great opportunity to demonstrate to parents, what the true cost of vouchers, charters and privatization has on our students and on the future of public education. Please plan on attending one of the showings and spread the word to colleagues, friends and parents of our students.

Pinellas County Council

PTA[®]

everychild. one voice.

“A BEAUTIFUL FILM—TREMENDOUSLY MOVING! ...EVERYONE WHO VALUES DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION NEEDS TO SEE THIS.”

— JONATHAN KOZOL, ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND AUTHOR OF *SAVAGE INEQUALITIES*



A FILM EXPLORING THE REAL COST OF PRIVATIZING AMERICA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BACKPACK FULL OF CASH

NARRATED BY MATT DAMON

Monday Oct. 15th - 6:00pm at Gibbs High School

Tuesday Oct. 16th - 6:00pm at Largo High School

Wednesday Oct. 17th - 6:00pm at Countryside High School

Tickets are **FREE!** Please come and inform yourself on an issue we all care deeply about: our children's education.

&



**The Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association -
The Pinellas Educational Support Professionals**

PROUDLY PRESENTS:

Narrated by Matt Damon, this feature-length documentary explores the growing privatization of public schools and the resulting impact on America's most vulnerable children. **BACKPACK FULL OF CASH** exposes the world of corporate-driven education “reform” where public education – starved of resources – hangs in the balance.



**3 Nights, 3 Locations,
NO CHARGE**

*PCTA-PESPA Political Action Committee
Recommendations*

School Board, District 2 Jeff Larsen

School Board, District 3 Nicole Carr

School Board, District 6 No Endorsement

Senate District 16 Amanda Murphy

Senate District 24 Lindsey Cross

House District 65 Sally Laufer

House District 66 Alex Heeren

House District 67 Dawn Douglas

House District 69 Jennifer Webb

Chief Financial Officer Jeremy Ring

Attorney General Sean Shaw

GOVERNOR

Andrew Gillum

Recommendations on Constitutional Amendments:

Amendment #1: Oppose

Amendment #4: Support

Amendment #5: Oppose

Amendment #7: Oppose

Amendment #8: Court ruled to remove it from ballot



*** *The PAC Committee urges everyone to read through each amendment in its entirety. They are very misleading and convoluted. They can sound like you are voting for something good but then include items entirely unrelated to each other. It is possible to be voting for something you are against because it is titled on behalf of an issue we can all agree on. Make sure you understand exactly what you are voting for.*

IF YOU LIVE IN THE EAST LAKE/TARPON AREA

Tom McKone has been working in our District as a substitute teacher working with some of our most challenging students. He served on the East Lake Fire Commission and is the only fire commissioner to attend classes and attain the certified district official certificate from the Florida Association of Special Districts. He was also a founding voluntary trustee of the Firefighters Pension Fund.

Men like Tom McKone live for public service. Tom volunteers his time with an organization that called Abilities of Florida Inc., a non-profit corporation that provides rehabilitation and employment services for individuals with disabilities. They have helped many of our wounded veterans and my family was blessed by their assistance when my son Rocco became permanently disabled.

Tom is a good man and a true public servant who will do a good job for his community and department. Please remember to vote for Tom McKone for Seat 2 on the East Lake/Tarpon Fire District Commission.

Elect
Tom
McKone
EAST LAKE FIRE COMMISSION
www.votetommckone.com

Paid for by Tom McKone, candidate for East Lake Fire Commission

