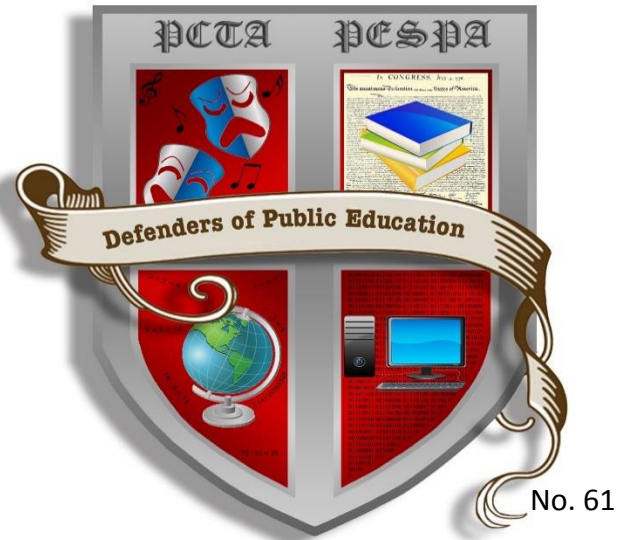


The President's

Solidarity Report



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So the election did not go well for public education

So the election did not go well for public education. It looks like we will have 8 more years of subsistence funding, irrational mandates, tax payer money going to religious, private, and charter schools and of course, union busting legislation. It is natural to feel down, worry about the future and to want to pull the covers over our heads and stay in bed for a week. Once the week has past, it will be decision time for us all.

We are educators and parents. It is not in us to roll over and die, or worse, to willingly give in and allow our students to be cheated out of their civil right to a free Public School education just because some greedy people have found privatization to be the new gold rush. So, we get off the floor, wipe the sweat off our brow and get back on the horse. We advocate for students, it's who we are.

Those of us who are veteran teachers remember a better time when teachers were respected by students, parents and administrators. We can recall the joys of teaching and the sparkle in the eyes of students bursting with pride upon realizing they had just learned something new. We gave our students a love of reading and of literature, not by having them take endless modules but by reading stories to them that captured their imaginations and took them to far-away places, real

and imagined. Sadly, teachers today tell me they no longer have time to read to their students. We veterans need to continue the fight to bring back the joy of teaching and learning.

The young teachers who have never known anything but pacing guides, extensive multi-paged lesson plans and stressful bell to bell reciting of some pre-written teaching script, must fight for something they have never known. They have heard about it and dreamed about it as they studied to earn their degrees and certification but never experienced it except for brief moments when they dare to divert from the script. These are truly the bravest among us as they fight to improve a system that would end their career, without just cause or due process.

We work in the only profession that experience is not valued. A thirty year master teacher who has always been highly effective is downgraded to effective or worse by an evaluator with only a fraction of their years of experience. The state sends out a notice to a teacher for having the highest student gains but their evaluation does not match the states assessment. Clearly, there is a great deal to fight for and we must all decide if our students and our profession are worth the effort needed to fight these injustices. American history is full of instances where the underdogs come out on top.

The election did not go well for public education but public education is too important a cause to let go without a struggle. We know what's coming and it will certainly be ugly. However, there are still forces working in our favor. First and foremost is the fact that all of Tallahassee's attempts to set public education up for failure has led to an exodus of teachers from the profession. For those of us that remain, the threat of losing our jobs because we disagree with our administrator has been somewhat lifted. There is no one left to take our place. Fire a teacher and they will be working tomorrow in Pasco, Hillsborough or Manatee. This is not a license to be insubordinate but it should make us feel secure enough to unleash the advocate inside each one of us.

So, the election did not go well for public education. So what? We still have superheroes on our side. Educators who are armed with a love. A love for their profession, a love for their students, a love of country and being able to develop future generations of civic minded American citizens. We have each other to watch our backs. Give us a week to lick our wounds and we will be ready for anything. Those lawmakers who want to mess with us should think twice about it because we understand what it is we stand to lose if we don't fight back. That's why we will win!

In Solidarity,

Mike

Message from our FEA President Fed Ingram

FLORIDA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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Dear Member,

Last night was filled with mixed emotions. During an election cycle, we become personally invested in a candidate or a cause, work extremely hard and watch as voters decide if they agree with us or not.

Some of our endorsed candidates lost, but there is some good news. In counties across the state, voters told us something very important: They support public schools. Because of your local unions' hard work, every local education referendum passed. In those 20 counties, this increase in education funding will have a positive impact for our members, schools and students. We also added seven endorsed school board members, 43 endorsed state House members, six endorsed state senators and 12 endorsed U.S. House members.

We are disappointed that our endorsed candidate for governor was not elected. However, a political outcome does not change who we are or what we do. We will continue to advocate for public schools, our students and educators. We believe that the success of public education is a non-partisan issue, and we are committed to working with elected leaders on both sides of the aisle.

Here are the facts: We are 45th in the nation in teacher pay and 47th in pay for our education staff professionals, our higher education members continue to experience stagnant salaries, too many of our members are struggling with student debt, and our schools are facing an unprecedented teacher shortage.

We will forge ahead. This weekend, the FEA Governance Board (170 local union leaders) will meet to plan our work over the next six months and beyond. One of our first meetings will be with the Florida Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart to discuss the working relationship between FEA and the Department of Education. Before the election, we began discussions with House

Speaker-designate Jose Oliva and Senate President-designate Bill Galvano to discuss our vision of public education. Today, we sent a letter to Governor-elect Ron DeSantis with that same request.

FEA is determined to find common ground with the new governor and lawmakers in both parties who share our commitment to public education. However, we are prepared to resist any attempts to undermine our public schools, our members and our students.

We need you to help organize in your community, visit with your legislators and community leaders, and continue to build critical grassroots support for public education.

Let's roll up our sleeves and get started for the sake of our students and our schools.

In Solidarity,

Fedrick C. Ingram, President
Florida Education Association
NEA, AFT, AFL-CIO

Hurricane Relief

By now you've seen the devastation that Hurricane Michael left in its wake as it ripped through Florida's Panhandle and parts of the Southeast as a powerful Category 4 hurricane. Many communities are still stranded without power, while others were totally wiped out.

We were lucky that the storm that devastated the Florida Panhandle spared the Tampa Bay area, but we must accept the reality that the next time, we may not be so lucky. The PCTA Executive Board has voted to adopt one of our devastated locals and help our brothers and sisters with a check for \$5,000 to help in the rebuilding process. Today, at a FEA Governance Board meeting, Mike Gandolfo will present the check to the President of Jackson County Educators Association, Dave Galloway.

[This drone video taken of Jinks Middle School in Panama City, Florida](#), gives you just a glimpse into the destruction that our students and staff have had to deal with.

Our FEA Union family has reached out to members in the area to make sure everyone is safe, and are in contact with organizations that coordinate relief efforts to determine when and what will be needed.

If you are interested, here's how you can help: Support your union sisters and brothers by donating to the NEA* and AFT** relief funds. One hundred percent of the money raised will come back to Florida to support hurricane relief efforts. Any and all donations would be greatly appreciated as schools and colleges start to reopen in the coming weeks.

[*Click here to donate to the NEA Hurricane Michael Relief Fund](#)

[**Click here to donate to the AFT Disaster Relief Fund](#)

We will continue to keep the Florida Panhandle community in our hearts as they work to rebuild after this disaster.

Thanks for all the help from our Union Activists

I want to thank all the members and their families, who came out to wave signs, to knock on doors, and phone bank for our endorsed candidates. Pinellas did our part thanks to you. With all that you have on your plates, you found the time to do your part and more. No matter what our results overall were, we were able to shake up our school board. We will have three new board members and it will be up to us to form a solid relationship with them. It has to be very clear by now that not listening to PCTA-PESPA members can shorten your time as a school board member. That is all we ask is that the School Board listen and address our concerns because our concerns impact student performance.

So, I want those activists that worked so hard toward our goals during this political season to know that you are appreciated and you make a difference. There are too many to name but you know who you are and you have the gratitude of the PCTA-PESPA leadership as well as each and every member. Thank you Union Activists. You make our union strong and vital.

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