

The President's

# Solidarity Report



In this Issue: SB 7070, Internal Job Transfers, Annual Contract Non-Renewals

## **FEA: SB 7070 will harm public schools and students while failing to address teacher shortage**

April 25, 2019 - TALLAHASSEE — The Florida Education Association (FEA) is disappointed, but not surprised, that the Legislature continues to move in the direction of giving away tax dollars to unaccountable private and religious schools. The “Family Empowerment” voucher in Senate Bill 7070 is virtually identical to the “Opportunity” voucher that was found to be unconstitutional just over a decade ago after then-Gov. Jeb Bush signed it into law, but that is not the only reason the FEA opposes this voucher expansion.

Though the Legislature loves to talk about “accountability,” their actions reflect just the opposite. Today’s vote will funnel taxpayer dollars to schools whose diplomas may not be accepted by “the receiving educational institution or employer,” according to the Florida Department of Education’s own website.

We know that the majority of students who use the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship return to public schools within two years, and when they return, they perform worse than their peers who never left. “It’s clear that this expansion of vouchers is not about what it is best for students, but what is best for private schools and for scholarship funding organizations,” said FEA President Fedrick

Ingram. “This program will divert hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars from our neighborhood public schools.”

In addition, SB 7070 includes language that was never heard in a Senate committee and was placed into the bill just hours before its final vote. The expansion of the Schools of Hope charter program via Opportunity Zones was never fully vetted by the Senate, which is not only a serious breach of protocol but a slap in the face to all voters who expect their legislators’ due diligence before a vote.

As if that wasn’t enough, this same amendment further erodes local control from school districts in determining where, when, and under what circumstances new schools can open.

While Senate Bill 7070 creates a series of new problems, it does nothing to help solve one of the largest problems facing Florida’s students: the ever-growing teacher shortage, which is predicted to soon reach 10,000 vacancies. Since the Florida Legislature began appropriating money for teacher bonuses in 2006, Florida’s teachers have fallen from 28th in the nation in average pay to 46th. Too many educators who would love to keep teaching in our schools simply cannot afford to do so. Despite this, the Legislature doubled down on providing bonuses instead of funds for competitive salaries. The new version of Best and Brightest is just the latest in a long string of failed bonus programs that will do nothing to recruit and retain qualified teachers.

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## **APPLYING FOR INTERNAL JOBS (TRANSFERS)**

Are you sure you are viewing all the available internal postings? It has come to our attention that some may not be logging into the internal application page. If you are looking to transfer, please take the time to make sure you are on the right page by logging into the internal login page.

**Step 1:** Go to the internal application login page ([www.pcsb.org](http://www.pcsb.org)) Employment, Current Employee Application or use this direct link  
[https://ats3.searchsoft.net/ats/trans\\_login?COMPANY\\_ID=OA002067](https://ats3.searchsoft.net/ats/trans_login?COMPANY_ID=OA002067)

**Step 2:** Log in to the internal application. If you have already logged in before and remember your username and password, then simply log in.

If this is your first time trying to log in, please follow the instructions located on the left side of the internal application login page. If you do not receive a password recovery email (and have checked your Clutter folder), please email Mr. Vllahu ( [vllahug@pcsb.org](mailto:vllahug@pcsb.org) ) to manually reset the password for you.

If you click on ‘having trouble logging in?’ and type your PCSB email address, but the system does not find an application, you may go back to the login page and try to create an account. A full-time instructional employee (excluding contracted services and co-teachers/substitutes) will have the ability to create an account and start an internal application. When you click on CREATE ACCOUNT, you will need to create a unique username (try using your PCSB computer username) and password. Please use your PCSB email address when creating your account and your actual social security number which is used to verify that you are in the internal database. Note: this account will not affect any accounts you have with the district.

**Step 3:** Upload the required documents. After you’ve logged in, click on My Application at the top left (under the PCS logo) and go to the Attachments page. On the Attachments page, you should be uploading an up-to-date version of your resume and a letter of intent/interest which pertains to the job for which you are requesting a transfer.

**Step 4:** Apply for jobs. The system allows you to apply to more than one job posting. To apply to a job posting, go to the Jobs menu at the top and then All Jobs

Click on **View/Apply** (left of a job posting) to read the job posting’s details

Click on **Apply for This Job** to apply to the job posting.

That’s it!

Help: If you have any questions, issues, or need assistance with any of the information presented above, you may email Mr. Vllahu,( [vllahug@pcsb.org](mailto:vllahug@pcsb.org) )

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## **Annual Contract Non-Renewals**

The final numbers are not in yet but so far, it seems that at least 95 teachers have been non-renewed. This comes at a time when teachers are in high demand and we can expect Pinellas will be among the Districts, scrambling to fill vacancies next school year. Many of the teachers who were non-renewed are effective teachers and I suspect that the District expects that most of them will be rehired at other schools. So why put them through a renewal?

Fear has been the fuel that runs this District. At the bargaining table, I was challenged on this issue by a Principal. He scoffed at the idea that teachers were afraid and he claimed that the number of non-renewals defy this being an issue. My reply was that it is an issue to the teachers who are non-renewed and to their families who will lose their health insurance and a steady income. I also pointed out that it is not necessary for a gunman to shoot everyone in the room,

in order to keep everyone afraid and compliant to his orders, He only needs to shoot one, and the climate of fear is solidly in place.

My gut tells me that what happened during bargaining; our contract gains and our solidarity, has caused the Principals to demand the District allow them to show us who is boss, and our District has given them the green light. This will not be the first time that PCTA has had to fight back against this type of union resentment, and if it is the wish of Principals and the District to waste time on an adversarial power struggle, we will oblige them. Those that think that they will be able to bypass teacher contractual rights by bullying and intimidation will find their efforts not worth the trouble.

If you have been non-renewed, here is what you should know:

**Article 31, Section C. #4** - If an administrator has performance concerns regarding an annual contract teacher, a PSC or CC teacher, the teacher will be afforded assistance through professional development and a prescribed improvement plan; provided, however, that any such development and plan will not affect the teacher's status as an annual contract teacher. An annual contract teacher may be non-renewed at the end of their annual contract subject to the right to appeal as set forth in Article 35.

The above language does not allow for a remedy to reverse the nonrenewal decision, however, we should not allow a contract violation like this to go unanswered so allow PCTA to file a grievance.

#### **Article 35, Section E – NON-RENEWALS**

1. Any teacher whose annual contract was not renewed may immediately apply for any available position within the district provided that they are certified, have not received discipline in the form of a Letter of Reprimand or above for that year, and have received a rating on the Summative Evaluation of Effective or Highly Effective for that year or the preceding year.
2. Upon request, the principal will provide a written summary of the rationale for the decision not to recommend renewal of an annual contract.

#### **Article 35, Section F – APPEAL OF NON-RENEWALS**

1. Teachers on a probationary contract, who have completed their contract term and received a score of Effective or Highly Effective on their Summative Evaluation, may appeal the principal's decision not to recommend the issuance of an annual contract.
2. Annual contract teachers at a Tier I or Tier II school who received a score of Effective or Highly Effective on their Summative Evaluation or who received less than Effective on their Summative Evaluation but had received Effective or Highly Effective on their Final Evaluations for each of the three (3) preceding years, may appeal the principal's decision not to recommend the renewal of their annual contract.

3. Annual contract teachers at a Tier III or Tier IV school have an expanded right to appeal the non-renewal of their contract. If the annual contract teacher received less than Effective on their Summative Evaluation but had not worked three (3) years, the teacher may nevertheless appeal the principal's decision not to recommend the renewal of their annual contract if they had received Effective or Highly Effective for each of the years they had been employed.

4. To initiate the appeal, the teacher will submit a written request to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources who will schedule a meeting with the Area Superintendent, the teacher and his/her representative. The principal and other staff called upon by the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources will also be present at the meeting. The principal will explain the basis upon which the decision not to renew or offer an annual contract was made. The Area Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources will determine the appropriateness of the recommendation. Such determination shall be in their sole discretion and shall not require just cause. There shall be no appeal from or challenge to their decision nor shall it constitute a basis for grievance.

5. If the recommendation, which is the subject of the appeal, is determined to be appropriate, the teacher shall be notified. If the recommendation is determined to be inappropriate, the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources may direct that the teacher remain at the school or may find alternative placement.

If you feel you have been unjustly non-renewed, here are your first three steps:

- ✓ Call the PCTA-PESPA office and ask for you Membership Service Director.
- ✓ If you are eligible (see Article 35 E #1) start applying for another position.
- ✓ Ask your Principal for a written summary of the rationale for your nonrenewal.

If you qualify for an appeal, PCTA-PESPA will be with you every step of the way.