

## **HASA Legislative and Benefits Committee**

Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2006

The Committee met from 5:00 to 6:00 PM at the School Administrative Building in the School Board Auditorium. Present at this meeting were James Goode, Holly Eckstein, Sylvia Albritton, Ernest Fernandez, Linda Cobbe, and Michael Phillips. Ken Allen and David Smith arrived as the meeting ended. Nuri Ayres, Lou Ceretta, Rick LeGendre, and Phillip Carr telephoned that they were unable to attend this meeting but wanted to be on the Committee.

John Miliziano explained the role and function of the committee as being six fold:

Political Action committee (PAC): Entire Committee

Tampa Bay Area Coalition: John Miliziano (Chair), Ken Allen (Alternate)

Benefits Providers: Lou Cerreta (Chair)

Research: Rick LeGendre (Chair)

Legal Defense: Entire Committee

Salary Study: David Smith (Chair)

Four of these Committees are chaired by a member of the HASA Legislative and Benefits Committee. The other two Committees are the responsibility of the entire committee. John distribute a one page description of the four Group Rate Providers that now offers discounted services exclusively to HASA members. It was also announced that this Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> of January there was a State Wide Workshop being held at Jefferson HS. John also said that any committee member wishing to attend the Legislative Days in Tallahassee on March 19 – 21 needs to tell Dr. Ken Allen. HASA budgets money to send 6 to 8 members to these legislative days and pays for travel and lodging. Those that attend can also earn two in-service points for attending.

All members in attendance were asked to fill out an information page so John will be able to communicate with them at home and at work. Members of the committee will be informed primarily via e-mail or telephone calls.

The legislative priorities for 2006 were reviewed by members receiving #1 and #2 2006 Florida Legislative Updates. All Committee members were asked to contact the following legislators who have filed three of the four Bills that we are advocating for in 2006:

### **DROP**

Representative Ralph Arza has filed House Bill 659 that would extend the DROP for administrators. [ralph.arza@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:ralph.arza@myfloridahouse.gov) Phone 305 827-2720 or 850 488-1683.

Senator Charlie Clary has filed Senate Bill 1064 the companion to Arza's DROP Bill. [Clary.charlie.web@flsenate.gov](mailto:Clary.charlie.web@flsenate.gov), Phone 850 833-9159 or 850 487\_5009.

## **RE-EMPLOYMENT AFTER RETIREMENT**

Representative Bill Proctor has filed House Bill 389 that would allow the re-employment of administrators one month after retirement without penalty.

[bill.proctor@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:bill.proctor@myfloridahouse.gov), Phone 905 823-2550 or 850 488-2977.

Senator Stephen Wise has filed Senate Bill 102 the companion to Proctor's Bill.

[Wise.stephen.web@flsenate.gov](mailto:Wise.stephen.web@flsenate.gov), 905 573-4900 or 866 365-2124 or 850 487-5027.

## **HEALTH INSURANCE SUBSIDY**

Representative Bob Allen has filed House Bill 105 that would increase the Health Insurance Supplement for Retirees. [bob.allen@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:bob.allen@myfloridahouse.gov), 321 449-5111 or 850 488-4669.

Senator Alfred Lawson has filed Senate Bill 442 the companion to Allen's Bill.

[Lawson.alfred.web@flsenate.gov](mailto:Lawson.alfred.web@flsenate.gov), 850 487-5086.

It would also be helpful if you could contact your local legislators and let them know that the above three bills have been filed and that you would like for them to consider co-sponsoring these bills and/or supporting them.

John also gave Committee members a "Working Draft" 2005 Legislative Priorities, Position Paper and Talking points document that were used last year that is still relevant. John also provided a two and one half page document entitled "The Florida Retirement System" that was prepared last year by Larry Carmichael. These two documents make excellent reading and should be studied carefully.

John also provided a one page chart that was recently updated by Rick LeGendre showing the retirement benefits given to educators by our neighboring states.

Attendees were also given the list of Hillsborough Counties Legislative Delegation.

A one pager of talking points opposing the recent legislative initiative to split large Florida School districts was not available at this meeting. However it has been made available and I will attach it to this e-mail so you can read it and use it appropriately.

The next meeting of the HASA Legislative and Benefits Committee will be schedule as soon as the need arises. Please be on the lookout for further e-mails concerning legislative developments. Also log on the HASA WEB Site [www.hasaonline.com](http://www.hasaonline.com) for HOT MAILS.

1. While the School Board has not taken a vote on this particular bill, when the legislature has debated this issue in the past, the Board at the time did not support the proposal.
2. There is no real magic in size. Microsoft is praised as a business model, and the size of the company has not inhibited its excellence. We believe the size of our school district does not inhibit our excellence and I believe our SAT scores supports my beliefs.
3. Reform debates should be focused around product and not process. I think that this issue dilutes the focus on student achievement because it falls into an "us against them" issue that has nothing to do with children. We should be concentrating on the reform issues like middle school and high school reform that the districts, the Governor and the legislature have been working on for the past few years.
4. I have learned that there are always complicated, unintended consequences from any constitutional amendment. And this proposal has never even been studied for its impact on Florida. I would hope that we have learned something about a concept that in its simplicity sounds absolute, but in its reality could be problematic...like the Class Size Reduction constitutional amendment.
5. One of the issues never studied has to do with debt that the school districts in the state have incurred. How will the debt be distributed? How would dividing up districts...or the possibility of dividing up the districts impact our bond rating?
6. Another issue not studied – the resulting need to re-design the school funding formula used in the state, one that is recognized nationally for its fairness and constitutionality and has withstood court challenge on fairness and equity.
7. One of my biggest concerns is that this constitutional amendment could increase the possibility of creating poor districts and poor schools – since County school districts were designed to distribute wealth and minimize the poverty of all the children in the county
8. The possibility of re-segregation of public schools will be greatly increased.
9. This is a proposed joint resolution for a constitutional amendment. There are many steps before it can pass through the legislature, then through a referendum campaign. At that time there would have to be a second local referendum to implement the proposal.
10. During the legislative process we will continue to work with legislators to address this proposal.
11. At this time, based on the evidence we have of the probable consequences of this proposal, and based on the experiences in many other urban areas where this type of organization prevails, (i.e.: Cleveland, Los Angeles, Dallas, Philadelphia, Detroit, etc.) I would not recommend to the Board to support this proposal.