

**TAMPA BAY AREA COALITION**  
Of  
**School Administrators Associations**  
**Minutes of May 10, 2007, Meeting**

The 31st bi-monthly meeting of the Tampa Bay Area Coalition was held on May 10, 2007, at Brewster Technical Center in Tampa, Florida. The meeting commenced at 9:00 AM and concluded at 11:15 AM. Coalition Member Representatives present at the meeting were: Ed Stickles from Lee County, Robert Clark from Orange, Marjorie Ebersbach from Brevard, Dr. Neriah Roberts from Polk, Richard Wells from Seminole, Peggy Johns from Pinellas, Dr. John Miliziano from Hillsborough, Jim Knight from Hernando, and Rob Aguis from Pasco County. Terry Aunchman (Alternate) from Pasco, Loraine Colby and Jenifer Smith from Sarasota, Karyn Gary from Charlotte, and Dody Sapp from Volusia Counties contacted Dr. Miliziano with regrets for not being able to attend due to scheduling conflicts. Summer Robertson from Pasco and Susan Keller from Pinellas were in attendance as special guests.

Secretary Rob Aguis reviewed the minutes of February 7, 2007. Minutes were approved without any corrections or updates. Treasurer, Dr. Neriah Roberts, presented the treasurer's report and noted that the Coalition's account balance held by HASA, as of 3/7/07, was \$3,438.19 with all but one of the 12 member district having paid their 2006 – 2007 dues. The remaining member that has not yet paid its dues is Charlotte County. Dr. Roberts pointed out that the Coalition's funds are being spent frugally. Most of the expenses for funding the January 20, 2007, workshop in Orlando have been paid. The treasurer's report was approved as presented.

Dr. Miliziano commented on the 2007 Legislative Session by informing everyone present that the Drop Bill came close to passing again but ultimately failed. The good news was that Senate Bill 1948 by Senator Bill Posey and companion House Bill 861 by Representative Pat Patterson failed. If Posey's Bill had passed, it would have denied all Florida School Districts from rehiring retired administrators for a period of one year.

Connie Milito, Hillsborough County School Lobbyist, met with members of the Coalition, at the Valencia Gardens Restaurant for lunch after this meeting, to discuss the Legislative Session. Connie told those of us who met with her for lunch (Rob Aguis and Summer Roberts, Richard Wells, Jim Knight, Bob Clark, Neriah Roberts, Marjorie Ebersbach, John Miliziano, and HASA Members Mary Cunningham, Connie Hayden McPeak, and Elsa Tuggle), that she personally observed Jim Warford and Juhan Mixon work the Drop Bill very aggressively. Both Jim and Juhan were talking up the Bill with everyone they could. Connie felt that the Drop Bill came close to passing but at the last minute it was tabled in committee and never made it to the Senate floor. Connie felt that the Drop Bill had the votes to pass both the House and Senate if Senate leadership had not refused to hear it.

Coalition Members are now asked to contact the following legislators who worked to get the DROP Bill passed: Faye Culp who sponsored the Bill in the House; House Education Chairman Joe Pickens who passed the bill out of his Committee, Speaker Pro Tempore Dennis Baxley, Senate Education committee Chair Steve Wise who filed the Bill in the Senate and who also passed the Bill out of his Committee and Senator Don Gaetz. We also need to thank Juhan Mixon and Jim Warford for all they did in trying to get this Bill passed. Connie Milito also worked very hard on our behalf to get this Bill passed.

At the luncheon meeting with Connie Milito, Coalition members and members of the HASA Board wanted to know what needs to change in the future to insure better results with the Legislature. Three years in a row have gone by without any success in the DROP, the Health Insurance Supplement, or the 2% Retirement Multiplier. Discussion ensued on the feasibility of having the Coalition hire a lobbyist to help Juhan Mixon. It was also suggested that instead of filing Bills that seek to extend the DROP we should be filing a Bill that simply amends the existing retirement law so it would treat all educators the same on retirement issues. Another suggestion was not to continue seeking an across the board raise of the retirement multiplier to 2%. We should rather ask the legislature to amend the existing provision in the law that permits districts to designate 1% of their employees as Senior Staff and give them the 2% multiplier. Raising this provision to 2% of the district's employment pool would allow districts to give all their administrators a 2% multiplier. Connie and Bob said that the above examples are probably not workable and would raise other undesired issues that would complicate matters. The essence of the conversation was that we need a more creative or different approach on how to pursue these issues.

Another area of discussion with Connie had to do with the Coalition's relationship with FASA. It seems to most Coalition members that FASA sees the Coalition as a threat rather than a positive thing. Developing better communications between the FASA leadership, local Administrator Associations, and the Coalition seems to be an area that needs to be addressed. At the Forum Meeting in Orlando, after the workshop, it was concluded that FASA needs to increase communication with administrators throughout Florida especially during the legislative session. Jim Warford said that communications in the FASA organization rests with him and one other person and both are not technology experts. Administrators interested in legislative developments during the session want to be more informed and involved in helping with local lobbying.

On this communication issue it was suggested that instead of the Coalition hiring a lobbyist to help Juhan Mixon, the Coalition could offer to hire a communication tech for Jim Warford to help him during the several months that the Legislature is in session. The job of this tech would be to help Jim to more effectively communicate with all administrators in Florida interested in the passage of specific legislative issues. This person could co-ordinate with local associations by giving them up-to-date information and directing them on how to interact with the legislative process. Local associations could be a great resource that is going untapped at this time.

Bob Clark distributed the revised Tampa Bay Area Coalition Survey – April 2007 of Seven Benefits offered to current and retired administrators by the 14 districts. Several corrections were made by district representatives at the meeting. Bob will make the corrections and resend the survey results to John Miliziano for distribution to all Coalition members.

It was agreed by consensus of all members present that the Coalition will resume its previous practice of conducting local workshops for member districts on specific issues of mutual interest. A few issues to be considered are: How Districts are implementing Performance Pay; Repeal of Class Size Amendment; Proposed Bills to Divide Large Districts into Small districts; and other possible topics. Coalition Members are requested to propose other possible issues for discussion at future Coalition sponsored local workshops.

Hillsborough, Orange and Polk are planning to send representatives from their respective districts to the FASA Summer Conference in Orlando. Bob Clark said that his district was going to sponsor a Hospitality Room at the Summer conference.

**The next Coalition meeting is scheduled for Wednesday August 1, 2007. All Coalition Members are asked to mark their calendar and plan to attend.**