

A Special Election Newsletter for members of Hillsborough CTA only, General Election 2012

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CONTRACT RATIFICATION

The HCTA Election Committee announced the ratification of the following tentative agreements on October 8, 2012:

- The 2012-2013 Salary & Benefit agreements for Teachers and ESP
- The 2012-2015 ESP Contract
- 2012 Changes to the Teacher Evaluation Handbook (related to EET) and selected Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) for Teachers

ESP Ballot Counts

YES votes: 1,673
NO votes: 15

Teacher Ballot Counts

YES votes: 5,397
NO votes: 118

The School Board ratified these agreements on October 9, 2012.

Thank you to the HCTA Bargaining Team for working diligently throughout the summer to ensure that these negotiations were productive and accomplished our main objectives.

Thank you to the HCTA Election Committee members who ensured that the process was completed in a timely manner and that all ratification

guidelines were followed.

Last, but not least, thank you to all of the wonderful volunteers who gave up their personal time to help us with the process.

HCTA's 2012 Bargaining Team:

Jean Clements (President)
Marilyn Dupree (Vice President)
Susan Anderson
Sabrina Gates-McCarthy
Barbara Haggerty
Miriam Hodges
Eric Mack
Analene McColloch
Sue Morgan
Diane Ortiz
Bob Padgett
Woodrow Samuel
Tamica Thomas
Jim Traun

HCTA's Election Committee:

Norma Goff (Chair)
Jim Roney
Tom Boyle
Kathryn Pasley
Diane Ortiz
Dan Sparks
Harrietta Willis
Jeannette Joseph
Dawnya Thomason
Denise Blair
Catherine Paunov (Alternate)
Barbara Miller (Alternate)
Tracy Foster (Alternate)
Wendy Anderson (Alternate)



New Teacher Orientation at Strawberry Crest High School

President Jean Clements addressed several hundred new hires, providing information about Hillsborough CTA. More than half of the new hires joined HCTA during the New Teacher Orientation and we extend a hearty welcome to all of them.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Jean Clements



Now that the dust has settled in our schools and worksites, it's a good time to look ahead and think about what's on the horizon this school year.

The big things coming up this year:

1. The November elections, the November elections, and the November elections. Which, by the way, really start early in October with mail-in ballots and early voting.
2. Court decisions on our state-wide lawsuits, and repercussions of those decisions.
3. March Madness, also known as the 2013 Florida Legislative Session.
4. Negotiations between HCTA and the school district regarding evaluations, compensation, and more.

So, how do each of these impact HCTA and HCTA members?

First, we must get real. You may hate politics and election seasons. But if you care about things like early childhood education; having adequate numbers of teachers and support staff; the ability to offer a full, rich curriculum to all students instead of a narrowly-focused test-driven curriculum; if you care about losing public school dollars to private school vouchers, and higher education affordability, then one thing is clear.

This election matters.

Let me illustrate. Who really believed Rick Scott would win? Not many I could find – not the pundits, the editorial boards, or even folks who voted for him.

Just imagine if he hadn't won that election:

- Pension take-back bills: vetoed.
- SB 736: vetoed.
- Millions spent on lawsuits: saved.
- Your income last year and now: 3% higher.

We must all vote. Absentee ballots (vote by mail) began going out on October 6th and last day to request one is October 31st. Early voting is from October 27th through November 3rd and Election Day is on November 6th. You can request a mail-in ballot at votehillsborough.org.

I'm guessing most of you *did* vote two years ago in the gubernatorial election. Clearly, your vote and my vote are necessary, but they are not enough.

So, don't just vote - make a difference!

Go to hillsboroughcta.org and opt-in to get more communications on the elections, candidates, ballot initiatives, and the issues. Sign up to commit one hour of your time to support your colleagues, your students, and yourselves. There are a variety of things you can choose to do for one hour and just one hour can make a difference in your future, your family's future, and your students' future.

For more about what's on the ballot this November, see the additional articles in this issue.

In the meantime, our lawsuits against SB 736 and state-mandated changes to our pensions are winding their way through the courts. We stand ready to manage the repercussions of whatever decisions come out of the courts.

If we lose, we will continue to find ways to strengthen your voice and strike local agreements which are better than state mandates. We will also keep working to change the laws and elect legislators who truly support public schools and the professionals who work in them.

If we prevail, there will be new laws written and other strategies employed to cripple unions, silence our voices, and limit our choices – all designed to reinstate what we succeeded in getting tossed out by the courts.

Brace yourselves for the Florida Legislative Session.

The political realities in Florida have been grim for public schools and public employees for some time now, and that's not changing soon. While outcomes of national elections and

Florida Constitutional amendments will have immediate and palpable impact on our lives, we cannot prevent March Madness coming to Florida in the guise of the Florida Legislature. There are real threats looming from that body in March and April, and we must be armed and ready.

Our membership numbers must be decert-proof.

That means HCTA's membership must stay well over 50%, so if the anti-union forces in Florida succeed in passing the decertification law, stripping collective bargaining rights from every union without majority membership, we need never face the loss of bargaining rights here.

We must be able to mobilize quickly to make intelligent and convincing arguments, combined with persuasive public pressure, as we go through the next legislative session. HCTA's new communications tools will make it easier for us to keep you informed and for you to participate.

Negotiations with the district will also be critical in the upcoming year. In our 2012 negotiations just concluded, HCTA made significant progress in negotiating an administrative review process for teacher evaluations and we will keep the dialogue open as we see how the process evolves. In salary increases, we are still faring better than surrounding counties – all of whom have seen extended pay freezes, furlough days, pay cuts, and/or layoffs over the past few years.

This year we will begin looking at what the new, alternative career ladder salary schedule could actually look like. But make no mistake, the agreement and commitment is firm – non-negotiable – that whatever monies are available year-to-year will be applied proportionally and fairly to both the old, traditional salary schedule and any new career ladder schedule that is negotiated.

What happens in Tallahassee, Washington and the courts has significant impact on our schools, our budgets, our working conditions, and our lives. But even the best outcomes in all those arenas won't solve all the

problems with the day-to-day realities inside our classrooms and workplaces. I am deeply concerned about current workload levels and stressors in our schools.

We must work to establish and improve conditions for a more stable, sensible, and enjoyable work environment.

That involves a multi-pronged approach: protection of planning and teaching time; clarity on standards and curriculum; easily accessible and helpful professional development of varied sorts to better inform on evaluation rubrics, as well as specifics on how to continuously improve teaching and learning for greater success and enjoyment; and solving problems with the evaluation system.

How do we do that? First, we need to invoke and mandate the Get a Grip! Policy.

So, I am doing just that. The first four initiatives in my *Get a Grip! Policy* are as follows. Please feel free to send me other initiatives you would like to see included.

Reign in the excessive meetings.

We've seen way too many school calendars with meetings on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Required meetings belong on Tuesdays. The rest of the days belong to you.

Yes, we all have a responsibility to do our jobs as best we can. Yes, you may choose to meet with others, engage in professional development, work on special projects, or work with colleagues for various purposes. Yes, we are all part of a professional community at each worksite throughout the district, and should work together, collaborate, and be open to the suggestions and guidance of others for better outcomes. But, nowhere in those words do we abrogate your right to determine how best to use planning time.

Re-teach the meaning of "voluntary".

I'm thinking we should establish a quota on the use of the word, and penalties when the term is used incorrectly. If a meeting is called voluntary, why is attendance taken? If a training session is voluntary, but you're required to take it "sometime", then it must be offered at other acceptable times. If the meeting is voluntary, but the information

is essential, then the information must be clearly disseminated in acceptable ways.

Here's an idea - why not disseminate that info or provide that training on Tuesdays if it's so important? Perpetrators of thinly veiled attempts to violate contractual planning time by deeming something "voluntary" which in actuality you are expected to do, and will suffer negative repercussions if you don't, clearly lack respect for their colleagues and belong on the wall of shame.

Be cautious with SIP waivers.

Specifically those which result in the loss of planning time, or dictate how you spend your planning time. Again, your right to make decisions about the best use of your time, but I implore you to discuss thoroughly and think hard before voting on SIP waivers. Think forward to possible unanticipated consequences, and vote wisely.

Find and strike the right balance with testing.

We need to determine the right tests, and the right testing procedures for each grade level and special population. We need to ascertain exactly how much instructional time is lost due to formal testing activities in each grade, subject, and special population. A task force of teachers, parents, assessment experts, and district administrators should then thoroughly review what and how we test in each grade level, subject, and special population of students. That task force should then make recommendations based on their findings.

Secondly, beyond the *Get A Grip! Policy*, HCTA is going to do a better job of making sure our members have easier access to the information you need and the support you want.

That includes evaluation biggies - helping you not to miss the stuff

you should not miss, with better articulated and accessible information on overviews, schedules, process, guidelines, and timelines. There is so much information available in tool kits, newsletters, pop-ups, and elsewhere, that it is easy to miss the information you need most.

It also includes ensuring that the professional development you want and need is available in a variety of ways. HCTA provides professional growth opportunities through online teacher learning communities (TLC's), rubric webinars, face-to-face rubric training, our long-running *Surviving and Thriving* workshop series, and more.

Last spring we launched an online TLC which included the use of video self-analysis following rubric training. In a highly insightful process, teacher members in small learning communities shared their videos for group discussion and learning. This past summer we launched our first annual *Learning Conference* and additional high-quality and innovative Professional Development offerings are in the works.

These highly acclaimed Professional Development offerings are all created and delivered by HCTA and HCTA members, ramping up a long HCTA tradition of being a union of education professionals leading the way to continuously improve teaching and learning for greater success and enjoyment.

Within the HCTA offices, we are in the midst of many changes to better address all the above issues and better serve our members. You can read more about those changes in our Executive Director's *State of Your Union* article.

Let me end with this: I believe this school year will be a better year than last year, and next year will be better still. Together, we will make it happen.

Have You Received Your 2012-2013 Member Packet?

All HCTA Members should have already received the 2012-2013 Member Packet containing the Member Book, Desktop Calendar and other important information.

If you have not received your packet, please send an email to communications@hillsboroughcta.org (you may also click on the email address to send an email). Please include your name and the name of your work site in the email.

In January of 1790, George Washington gave the first of what eventually came to be known as the "State of the Union Address".

The first line of his speech, said, "I embrace with great satisfaction the opportunity which now presents itself of congratulating you on the present favorable prospects of our public affairs."

While that speech was significantly more important than this "State of Your Union" message, I, nonetheless take great pride in communicating the improvements we've made over the past year, and the plans we have for the future. I also want to thank all of you for your patience as we negotiated favorable contract, salary and benefits terms for this year.

Contract negotiations are frequently viewed as the main responsibility of a union. Although negotiations are a vital component of what we do, the services we provide for members on a day to day basis throughout the rest of the year are equally important.

Those key services are:

- Member Advocacy
- Professional Development
- Member Benefits
- The overall operation of the union

Within each of those services, one of the key components is Communication.

Member Advocacy

Providing personal support, guidance, assistance and union representation to our members, or groups of members, is the primary service that we focus on each day.

Every work site within SDHC is assigned to a "cluster" and each cluster has a dedicated Members Services Specialist who is the primary contact for members within their cluster.

In order to ensure that we are able to respond in a timely manner and provide excellent service, over the summer we increased the number of Member Services Specialists (AKA Staff Reps) from six to seven and reorganized the clusters to provide more efficient and effective coverage.

You can locate the Staff Rep for your work site in the back of the 2012-2013 Member Services Book or on our web site.

Professional Development

Providing support in the manner of ongoing professional development is another important part of what we do.

For many years, we've provided trainings and workshops, such as Rubric Training, Surviving & Thriving, Mentoring Sessions and Certified Rep Training.

This summer, we expanded that and hosted our first "Learning Conference" (see "Summer Conferences" on Page 6 for more detail). Members who attended the conference found it to be so informative and beneficial that they have strongly encouraged us to make this an annual or biannual conference. We plan to do that and invite your input on the topics you would like to see covered.

Member Benefits

Although the majority of member benefits are provided via FEA, AFT or NEA, we do manage relationships and communication with their representatives and also work with benefits providers who are located here in Hillsborough County.

Over the next year, we will improve the benefits related content on our web site to make it easier to understand and will begin providing a monthly "highlight" explaining specific benefits in more detail.

Union Operations

Although "Union Operations" may not seem like something that is a direct service to members, the manner in which we manage the day to day operations of the union, including elections (officers, building reps), finances, etc., has a direct impact on our ability to perform the other services well.

HCTA Offices

As many of you know, the offices we are currently located in are not well-designed for supporting training and conferences, one-on-one meetings or celebratory events. The CTA River building is a HUD building and therefore subject to many more regulations than a typical office space.

For the past several months, our executive team has trudged through miles of red tape and regulations to get the sale of the building approved, so that we could have the opportunity to move to a location that would fully support the activities of the union in one location.

I'm happy to announce that the sale of the CTA River building went through in mid-September! CTA River

Apartments, Inc., the non-profit that owned the building, was renamed and took on a new focus immediately following the sale.

That non-profit became the HCTA Professional Learning Center, Inc. and has the primary purpose of providing education and training for all our members. HCTA Professional Learning Center, Inc. has purchased a new building at 3102 N. Habana Avenue, Tampa, FL 33607.

With over 18,000 square feet, spread over 4 floors, our new location will have sufficient space to host ongoing training, conferences, Rep Council and other events on site.

We hope to be able to move into the new building before the end of November, so stayed tuned for more announcements and information over the next few months.

Hours of Operation

We also expanded our hours for phone coverage. Our new hours are 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

Communications

Communications is a vital part of everything we do. Until the beginning of this year, we did not have a clearly defined vision or plan for communicating with our members.

Since January, we have built a new web site with significantly more useful information, we have implemented an email program that allows us to email all members directly (via school email) and implemented a process to allow members to opt-in to receive emails at a personal email address and receive text messages.

Over the coming year, we will add a secure *Members Only* section to our web site, so that we can share more detailed information with members regarding things such as union election results, political advocacy and activities and links to documents related to your every day jobs that will be highly useful.

I know I don't have to tell any of you about the importance of data, and one of our focuses "behind the scenes" is to improve our data management systems overall so that we can provide better service to you.

If you have suggestions for additional improvements, please send an email to: communications@hillsboroughcta.org.

NEW HCTA STAFF MEMBERS

Pam Jufko



Pam joined our team in June as the Member Services Specialist for Cluster 1. Pam is also taking on the role of ESP Liaison.

Prior to joining HCTA, Pam taught kindergarten for thirteen years at Chocachatti Elementary School in Hernando County.

Pam has always been an active union member and believes that unions play a vital role in ensuring that employees are treated fairly and with respect.

She was a building rep during her entire employment in Hernando County and was an Executive Board member with the Hernando County Teachers' Association.

She has been a delegate to the annual conventions of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the Florida Education Association (FEA), and the National Education Association (NEA).

Pam's drive to be an excellent advocate for our members, along with her experience as a teacher and a union building rep, is a combination that our team and the members in her cluster will greatly benefit from.

Woodrow Samuel



Woodrow joined HCTA at the end of July as the Member Services Specialist for Cluster 3.

Prior to joining HCTA, Woodrow taught multiple subjects in grades 6 through 12. His most recent teaching assignment was as the 8th Grade Language Arts teacher and Subject Area Leader for Language Arts at Sligh Middle Magnet.

Woodrow spent the past two years mentoring 1st and 2nd year teachers at Middleton and Chamberlain High Schools, Van Buren Middle School, Orient Road Jail, Falkenburg Jail, Juvenile Detention Center East & West, and the Leslie Peters Halfway House. He has been an active union member for his entire teaching career, and has served as an Alternate Building Rep and a Senior Building Rep.

Woodrow is married to a fellow public school teacher, who is also a proud member of HCTA.

His firsthand experience as a teacher in our county makes him a valuable addition to our team. His goal is to ensure the proper, professional and fair treatment of all teachers and ESP.

COURT RULING

In late January of this year, the Florida Department of Education published a new rule, Rule 6A-5.030, which purported to establish procedures for the DOE review, approval and monitoring of school district systems for personnel evaluation for instructional staff and school administrators, as required by the passage of SB 736 in the spring of 2011.

In fact, the rule substantially increased the evaluation reporting requirements stipulated in the original June 2011 checklist developed for SB 736.

When this new rule was adopted in March 2012, FEA challenged the DOE proposed rule and sued to block its implementation because the process was confusing and the state had provided inadequate guidance.

This summer, Judge John G. Van Laningham ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. However, his ruling was based strictly on the DOE's failure to follow the correct process in creating the rule.

But what does that mean?

It simply means that the judge invalidated one rule that is part of the implementation of the law, but the overall legislation still stands.

The short story is that the DOE will have to toss some of its rules, write them properly and follow the appropriate administrative procedure to enact the rules(s). The underlying legislation requiring the use of student test scores in teacher evaluations still stands.

The FEA noted that the ruling does not invalidate teachers' 2011-2012 evaluations. Additionally, the ruling does not eliminate the statutory mandate to use student learning gains as part of a teacher's overall performance rating.

It does mean that any proposed rule changes to evaluations for the new school year may not be incorporated.

The State Board of Education may appeal the ruling in court. It also could try again to rewrite the rule taking into account the problems that Van Laningham detailed in his ruling.

STUDENT FEA/NEA PROGRAM

Do you have a student teacher in your classroom? If you do, please let them know that as a college/university student they qualify to be a member of the Student FEA/NEA program. Joining is easy, just go to <https://sites.nea.org/JoinNea/> and join.

For \$31 a year students receive Educators Employment Liability Insurance, \$1 million professional liability insurance and representation from trained education advocates and attorneys that specialize in Florida Law.

Additionally, they receive the same member benefits you do as a FEA/NEA/AFT member, including the FEA Access card that provides up to \$1,500 a year in savings.

Any student who is preparing to be an educator may join Student FEA. Students currently under an employment contract with a public school system are not eligible for student membership. Student members also have the option of attending the Student FEA State conference and if they are interested can run for leadership positions on the Student FEA Board.

Please help Student FEA ensure the future of our organization by asking your student teachers to join Student FEA today!

SUMMER CONFERENCES

HCTA Learning Conference

This summer we held our first “Quest for Excellence” Learning Conference. During this two-day event members chose from numerous available sessions to tailor the conference to their particular interests. Sessions included: Unpacking the Rubric, Pit Stop! Aligning the Rubric with Useful Strategies to Create Learning Success, Assessing Assessment: Tips on how to plan for embedding assessment into your lesson, “I HATE MY PLC!” - How to have purposeful & productive professional learning communities, Let’s Give ‘Em Something to Talk About! - Strategies for supporting classroom discussion which provide student access and accountability as well as inspire thinking and participation, and numerous breakout sessions covering topics such as the upcoming legislative session, understanding the contract, effective grant writing, the importance of collective bargaining and discussion time with HCTA leaders and staff.

Participants also had the opportunity to meet and talk with candidates for the Hillsborough County School Board and with Mark Danish, a Hillsborough County teacher and HCTA member who is the Democratic Candidate for Florida State House (District 63).

To wrap it all up participants enjoyed dinner while listening to an excellent speech by our Keynote Speaker, Betty Castor, former Florida Senator, Education Commissioner and President of USF.

HCTA members Sabrina Gates-McCarthy and Aimee Ballans took a leadership role in planning this awesome event. We thank them and the whole cadre of member trainers who made this event a huge success!



Betty Castor & Stephanie Baxter-Jenkins



Mark Danish & Gabby Sanandajian

FEA ESP Conference

This year’s FEA ESP Conference was held in Tampa at the Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore. The conference’s theme was: “Value, Vision, Voice, Vote: Building ESP Activism”. ESP from across Florida gathered to discuss and learn about building stronger locals to support and advocate for the needs of ESP members.

The conference was full of energy and enthusiasm and underscored the fact that ESP are essential to the success of every student and every school district and provided the information and tools needed to find and support elected officials who share those values. Hillsborough participants were: HCTA Vice President Marilyn Dupree, HCTA Board Members Linda Huie and Crystal Blanco, HCTA Members Guadalupe Valdez and Eric Mack, and HCTA Staff Rep & ESP Liaison, Pam Jufko.



Hillsborough participants joined colleagues to perform a rousing union rendition of *Lift Every Voice and Sing*.

AFT Convention

HCTA’s Delegates joined 2,500 colleagues for the AFT Convention in Detroit this summer. While they were there, many of our delegates joined local members going door-to-door to discuss the Michigan-AFT campaign to win a constitutional right to bargaining.

Solution-driven unionism was the theme of the Convention and AFT President Randi Weingarten stressed that “we need to act in innovative, creative and new ways - simultaneously refuting our critics, advancing our values, connecting with community and proposing solutions”.

Vice-President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, both gave rousing speeches and the delegates re-elected the top three AFT leaders. [Read more at www.aft.org/convention/](http://www.aft.org/convention/).



Hillsborough Delegates to the 2012 AFT Convention

NEA RA

The NEA Representative Assembly is the largest democratic decision-making body in the world. Nearly 8,000 educators gathered in Washington, DC to determine education policy for the nation’s largest union. They also gathered to hear from leaders in politics and education, and to honor their colleagues. Key speakers were the 2012 National Teacher of the Year, Rebecca Mieliwocki; Judy Near, NEA’s Education Support Professional of the Year John Stocks delivered his first address as NEA Executive Director, challenging educators to become “social justice patriots.” Gov. Mark Dayton of Minnesota received the “Greatest Governor” Award. The annual award recognizes and honors governors who have made major, state-level education strides that improve public schools. [Read more at www.nea.org/grants/52497.htm](http://www.nea.org/grants/52497.htm).



Hillsborough Delegates at the 2012 NEA Representative Assembly

MARY GONZALEZ HAS LEFT THE BUILDING



Mary (right) with Yvonne Lyons (seated)

Although we didn't want to let her go and we miss her immensely, Mary Gonzalez retired from HCTA this summer.

Mary will remain an active participant in our union through her membership in HEA-R (retired branch of HCTA) and her involvement with NBCT programs, but our offices won't be the same without her here on a daily basis to provide keen insight into the best way to support each of our members.

Looking Back at a Great Career

When Mary ran for President of HCTA in 1992, she was an English teacher at Leto and Gaither High Schools and an active union member for 19 years. During those years she filled many roles within the union: building representative, election committee member, executive board member, bargaining team member, state delegate to the NEA Convention, PAC Chairperson, and many others.

Mary's election statement quoted Lord Tennyson's Ulysses: "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

Mary won that election and proved she wasn't kidding when she said, "And not to yield". Within months, in September 1992, HCTA declared a bargaining impasse due to financial cuts the school district proposed. It took until March 1993 for them to reach an agreement, but in the end the union was successful in gaining a salary increase for all of the employees in its bargaining units.

In October of 1993, Mary was part of the HCTA delegation that met with President and Mrs. Clinton to provide input on educational policy and children's issues.

In 1994, working with ESP President Peggy Diaz, Mary was instrumental in bringing about our current governance structure unifying ESP and teachers.

Mary was re-elected in 1994 and 1996 in uncontested elections. During her tenure as President, HCTA also

created the Hillsborough Consortium for Technology & Education.

The consortium's purpose was to establish and operate a Center for Technology & Education (CTechEd) to provide ongoing training to teachers and ESPs.

Mary spearheaded the constitutional amendment initiative "Reclaim Education's Share" (RES) with the goal of ensuring that public education receive the appropriate share of state revenues. HCTA gathered 34,500 signatures of the 400,00 gathered statewide. Although the Florida Supreme Court struck the amendment down, it resulted in the Legislature establishing scholarships with lottery



Mary, The Cat in the Hat, Andy Ford at a "Read Across America" event

dollars.

When her tenure as HCTA President ended Mary continued working for HCTA as the Member Services Specialist responsible for teacher services & new initiatives.

Mary has also been a very active supporter of and advocate for National Board Certified Teachers. As HCTA's staff liaison for members who had achieved National Board Certification, she made several trips to Tallahassee in 1998 and 1999 to lobby the state legislature to pay NBCTs extra money as compensation for their accomplishment and expertise. As a result, today, NBCTs earn an extra bonus each year.



Mary & her best friend, Toni Brummond, campaigning for Bill McBride for Governor

In 2001 and 2002 she returned to Tallahassee to lobby for having NBCT bonuses count toward retirement.

Mary has also been the President of the CTechEd Board of Directors since 2005 and has served on numerous district committees every year, such as Recruitment & Retention, Elementary Issues, and Benchmarks Committees and the Accomplished Teaching Academy Task Force, among others.

In 2010, the NBCT Council honored Mary's commitment to supporting NBCTs by creating the "Mary Gonzalez NBCT Scholarship Fund". The college scholarship is open to children and grandchildren of board-certified teachers.

In May 2011, the first scholarship was awarded to Clint Cagle, a Wharton High School senior, whose mom, Joni, is a board-certified special education teacher at Hunter's Green Elementary.

Although Mary has great plans to enjoy her well-deserved retirement, she's simply not the kind of person to just walk away from all of the things she has worked so hard to support for many years. She is committed to continuing to work with NBCTs and the union to support the rights of educators.

Thank you, Mary, from the countless people you helped, supported, comforted, and worked diligently for during your incredible career.



NBCT Council Dinner: (standing l-r) Mary Gonzalez, Donna Violette, Faye Cook, and Sue McCrossen; (seated l-r) Marshall Ogletree, Chuck Kiker, and Yvonne Lyons

jour•nal/'jɔːnl/

Noun: 1. A daily record of news and events of a personal nature; a diary.

Looking at the above definition of a journal, there are numerous questions that we can ask related to how the LTM Journal should be used.

- *How does this apply to improving our practice as teachers?*
- *How does the use of a journal about your teaching promote your professional practice?*
- *How does this impact our performance in Domain 4 of the evaluation process?*
- *What is the expectation for using the journal and what should we be putting in the journal?*

There has been much confusion surrounding the use and benefits of the LTM Journal.

Some teachers have felt that this was the place to share commentary about EET, the Danielson Rubric, their Peer Observers, or the new evaluation process. Others felt that their journal entry was written and then sent into cyberspace, where it was never again viewed by a flesh and blood person. Some felt that the journal made no difference in their final evaluation.

None of the above statements are a correct portrayal or application of the LTM Journal.

Let's debunk some of the "journal myths".

First, the journal is not the place for commentary about the process.

The journal is a site for reflecting about your professional practice. If you want to share thoughts about EET

and the evaluation process, it would be most helpful to share with HCTA and with great teachers.

Your contributions are valuable; by contacting both the union and the district, there can be an even more solid foundation for the dialog which continues to shape the evolution of the evaluation process in our district.

For concerns related to an observer (Administrator, Peer, or Swap Mentor), you should contact Stephanie Woodford as the district contact person and also share your concerns with your HCTA cluster representative.

"The journal is a site for reflecting about your professional practice."

Next, when writing in your journal, mark the entry "public" and alert your observer by sending them an email. Marking the entry as "public" allows only your observers to view the journal entry, but it does not automatically notify them that you've written in the journal. A response from the observer is not possible in LTM because the program does not support two-way communication. However, if you send them notification via email, you may request that they acknowledge receipt of the email.

At the end of the year, all journal entries are printed and given to Peer observers. Peer observers are required to read all journal entries as part of the synthesis of data when making final evaluation decisions,

even if they had already read them throughout the year.

The most important use of the journal is to share selected thoughts from your ongoing reflection about your teaching and student learning in your classroom and professional opportunities in which you are participating. By evidencing your ongoing reflection you are impacting information your administrator has for use when making final decisions about Domain 4 ratings.

For example, let's say you attended a training this summer and are planning to implement a strategy or framework in your classroom this year. You could create a journal entry to describe what you learned, how you plan to use what you learned, and why this will benefit your students. After initially using the strategy, you could comment on the impact on student learning, what you may change, and your future plans related to this strategy.

As you continue to refine the use of this strategy, include other "pit stop" commentary. In this type of entry you have identified a professional growth opportunity in which you participated and how this opportunity has impacted your teaching.

So here is the invitation:

Let's shift our application of the journal to demonstrate our ability to use reflection to enhance learning in our classrooms and to showcase to all observers who have access to LTM our commitment to professional growth.

Let's use our journals to maximize our ability to be "Rubric Warriors" who demonstrate excellence in teaching and in professionalism!

YOUR VOTE MATTERS!

DON'T RISK LOSING IT!

Election Day is a school day. You have just a few hours after school to make it to the polls. Any delay and you will lose your chance to vote. *Why take that risk?*

VOTE BY MAIL!

Voting by mail from your home is the easiest way to make your vote count. Simply go to www.votehillborough.org and request a mail ballot. It will be sent directly to your home, you fill it out and drop it back in the mail. It just doesn't get easier than that.

VOTE EARLY!

If you want to avoid the crowds, but love the excitement of actually going to a polling place, then early voting is for you! Early Voting takes place from **October 27 through November 3, 2012**. Voting procedures are the same as on Election Day. Unlike Election Day, when a voter must vote in his or her designated polling place, a voter may cast a ballot at any Early Voting Site in their home county.

Remember to bring a valid photo and signature ID when you go to Vote!

