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HCTA President Jean Clements Wins Re-Election

Tampa -- Jean Clements was re-elected today for a three-year term as President of the Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association (HCTA). Clements received a majority of the votes in a three-way race that provided members with choices from a broad range of leadership styles.

Clements won 54 percent of the votes. Joe Thomas, a Social Studies teacher at Newsome High School, came in second with 29 percent; and Leo Haggerty, a Social Studies teacher at Wharton High School, received 17 percent of the votes.

Clements, who taught for 23 years in the county and has served the past nine years as HCTA's President, has drawn national attention for her leadership in the education reform debate. Under her leadership, fair dismissal rights were incorporated into Hillsborough's teacher contract after the Florida legislature revoked its tenure laws for Florida's teachers last year. During the worst recession in recent times, Hillsborough employees did not experience layoffs or furloughs despite deep budget cuts by the state, but instead received additional pay and bonuses in three of the past four years, due to successful HCTA negotiations with the district. Immediately prior to this recession, Hillsborough teachers benefitted from the largest salary increases ever seen in the district.

The "Empowering Effective Teachers" or EET program, with substantial changes in teacher evaluations was one of the primary issues in the campaign. "This is not an easy time to be a teacher," said Clements. "Reforms are being imposed by the state on every district in Florida. In

Hillsborough, we rolled up our sleeves, and with the active participation of many of our members, we worked hard to ensure that teachers and our union have a strong and continuous voice in determining what education reform looks like here. The work we have done has enabled Hillsborough teachers to have greater input and flexibility than other districts, as well as more time, support, and training. We don't claim to have all the answers, but we are committed to constant review and continuous improvement.”

Although the results of the election show solid support for Clements, the vote confirms that many union members have concerns about EET. “We have repeatedly shared these concerns with the district and will continue that dialogue with renewed vigor and credibility,” said Clements. “As the union moves forward we expect to be able to continue our collaborative relationship with the district while we remain focused on making sure teachers have continuous input and that their voices are heard. The professionals in our schools, who work with children every day, care passionately about the well-being and future of our students and schools! I will continue to keep our members’ input and influence strong in our efforts to improve our schools and profession.”

Voting also concluded today for other HCTA Board positions. The results of the election are:

Board Seat, District 4 (Teacher): Pearl Ershery, Guidance Counselor at Marshall Middle School.

Board Seat, District 6 (Teacher): Christie Fojaco, Kindergarten Teacher at Essrig Elementary.

Board Seat, District 10 (ESP): Linda Huie, Assistant Teacher at Adams Middle School.

FEA Board, Seat 1: John Perry, 5th Grade Teacher at Bryan Elementary – Plant City.

New officers will be installed in June, 2012.

The Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association (HCTA) represents over 9,000 teachers and education support personnel (ESP's) employed in the Hillsborough County School District. The union is an affiliate of the Florida Education Association (FEA), the National Education Association (NEA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the AFL-CIO.

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