

On the Move...

“Official Publication of the Huntsville Education Association”

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I am Thankful for all Teachers

I am thankful for teachers
And all the hard work you do.
Teachers work long hours and sleep
less too.
Trying to teach students rules and academics
each and every day,
So they can become productive citizens in the
world today,
And at the of end of their career, they can smile and
say,
I made a difference in a child's life in
numerous ways.

Message on membership and payroll deduction:

Starting with your first paycheck of this new year (September 30), dues will be collected through payroll deduction. **Please check your stub to make sure your membership dues are being deducted and your membership is up to date. If you do not see a deduction for your membership dues, please contact the HEA office immediately.** No public school employee should go without the protection, benefits, and advocacy of membership in YOUR professional Association. If you have questions, please contact your building reps, HEA office, or UniServ Director for assistance. Thank you for being a member!

Superintendent Search Update

On 10/20/16, the School Board voted 3-2 to modify the contract of Mr. Drake, the Interim Superintendent. Initially, the Board advertised that the interim would not be eligible to apply for the position on a permanent basis and this was reflected in Mr. Drake's contract. The Board's contract modification on 10/20/16 removed that portion and now Mr. Drake is eligible to apply for the Superintendent position.

On 10/27/16, the School Board met and received the results of the community input meetings and survey conducted by the Alabama Association of School Boards. The top three concerns of both the community as a whole and the employees specifically are as follows: 1) creating a positive climate for employees; recognizing their accomplishments, 2) building public confidence, understanding, and trust in the system, and 3) recruiting and retaining a staff that can effectively serve all students. AASB is also conducting the candidate search. The job vacancy will be posted in early November and must remain for at least 30 days. AASB will narrow down the pool of candidates to 5 finalists, which will be presented to the School Board. The planned timeline is for the Board to make its decision by February so that the new superintendent could possibly take office by early March. The Board must have a new superintendent named within 180 days of Dr. Wardynski's resignation, which was on September 15. We will continue to advocate for a superintendent in the best interests of our members and the students we serve.

November is National Health Awareness Month Please remember to:

1. Take a loved one to the doctor for routine check ups/examinations as well as yourself
2. Eat healthy foods
3. Exercise
4. Get plenty of rest
5. Think positive thoughts

Honoring Advanced Degrees: What's Changing, What's Not

HB121 passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Bentley this year contained your 4% pay raise but also an amendment from Sen. Del Marsh regarding payment for advanced degrees. The amendment would, for the first time, place an in-field requirement for certified K-12 personnel to advance on the salary schedule based on earning an advanced degree. There has been a lot of inaccurate information floating around about the amendment, so here is what it does and does not do:

- ◆ **If you have already earned an advanced degree, the in-field requirement does not apply to you.** You will remain at your current placement on the salary schedule, regardless of the discipline in which your advanced degree was earned. It only applies to individuals who have not made progress toward an advanced degree by January 1, 2017.
- ◆ **If you are currently in an advanced degree program, or plan to begin such a program before the end of the calendar year, the in-field requirement will not apply to you.** The amendment specifically exempts “a teacher who has made progress toward earning an advanced degree before January 1, 2017.” The State Department of Education (SDE) has sent out a guidance letter that they will deem “progress” to mean someone has completed at least one graduate course from an accredited school with a grade of “C” or higher by July 1. **In short, someone who plans to pursue an out-of-field degree and wants to get paid for it must start their program this coming semester (January) to have a course completed by July.**
- ◆ **Advanced degrees in education administration and counseling are exempt from the in-field requirement.** No matter what you teach, an advanced degree in school administration or school counseling will allow you to advance on the salary schedule.
- ◆ Local school systems can give exemptions, with SDE approval, to the in-field requirement. If you teach “a subject that is in critical shortage” as defined by your local school system, with approval by SDE, the in-field requirement can be waived.

- ◆ **You cannot lose your salary schedule placement due to an involuntary new teaching assignment.** The amendment specifically exempts a “teacher [who] is required to transfer to another area or subject” from the in-field requirement.
- ◆ The amendment codifies that advanced degrees awarded after January 1, 2017, must be earned from an accredited institution. That was already the rule through an SDE regulation, but the amendment now makes it law.
- ◆ The amendment makes clear that the in-field requirement is to be “liberally construed” in favor of self-contained teachers. If you teach in an elementary setting, you will have great latitude in what areas of study will qualify as in-field.
- ◆ SDE will have to adopt regulations as to what degrees will be deemed to be in-field for what teaching areas. AEA will be heavily involved in that process to ensure the maximum flexibility possible.

For more information, please contact UniServ Director Adam Keller at adamk@alaedu.org

Monthly Membership Give-Away

As part of our ongoing membership recruitment drive, HEA is happy to announce ways you can win! Each month from October 2016 to March 2017, HEA will have two give aways. Every new member who joins that month will be entered into a drawing. Every member/building rep who recruits a new member will be entered into a drawing—the more members you sign up, the more entries you will have!

Knowledge is POWER

(Volume 1, number 2)

HB121 passed by the legislature and signed by the governor in 2016 contained a pay raise/cost of living adjustment for all public school employees in the 2017 Fiscal Year. All employees making less than \$75,000 get a 4% salary increase. All employees making more than \$75,000, except for principals and assistant principals (who get the 4%), get a 2% salary increase. You should see this pay increase reflected on your October paycheck. HEA and AEA will continue to advocate for salary adjustments for all of our members at both the local and state level.