

SUPPORT YOUR PROFESSION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

Article submitted by Joyce Skocic, Mt. Vernon Education Association

What is FCPE?

This is the Fund For Children and Public Education. Since no dues dollars can be used for political action, educators have a voluntary fund to support pro-public education, pro-teacher issues and candidates.

Why should I care about politics?

You are a public employee. You are paid with tax dollars. Your salary, retirement, health care, class size, curriculum, subject standards, teacher standards, school calendar, school day, standardized testing, even school lunches are all decided by politicians, state, local or federal. School boards are elected and taxes are levied. Your livelihood and work conditions depend on politics.

What can affect me?

When budgets are tight, the first thing cut is usually education. Reduction in Force (RIF) can

eliminate jobs, making bigger classes, limiting curriculum or extra-curricular activities and bussing.

What is pension envy?

Ohio is one of the few states to have a public employee pension system, like our STRS (State Teacher Retirement System). Every few years, Washington tries to absorb these into social security. Our lobbyists and pro-teacher representatives must fight to keep this from happening.

What is the GPO?

The Government Pension Offset is a law that penalizes public employees who have made contributions to social security and to systems like STRS, by forcing them to forfeit or take reductions in their social security benefits because they are eligible for STRS. This unfair practice must be repealed, and can only be done by pro-teacher members of congress.

Why the proposed recent changes to STRS?

The State Legislature must approve any changes to STRS contributions or benefits and healthcare, even though it is **our money**. Changes have been proposed by the STRS board because the State Legislature requires that the system improve its long-term funding status. Changes need to be made to make sure funds will be available for future retirees.

How can I help?

Contribute to FCPE. Every dollar helps protect public education, your job and your retirement. Ask your Building Representative for an FCPE envelope and make a contribution any time.

Remember:

If you are not at the table, you are on the menu. FCPE puts us at the table.

LOCALS ANNOUNCE ELECTIONS

The following locals will be holding elections for officers and/or OEA/NEA delegates for 2010:

Galion Education Association – March 26, 2010 (also proposed by-law changes)

Ashland City Teachers Association – March 16, 2010 (Delegates), April 2010 (Officers)

Fredericktown Education Association – March 2010

Mount Vernon Education Association – Week of March 15, 2010

Mansfield School Employees Schools Association – February 25 & 26, 2010

We did not get any nominees for APPLAUSE, APPLAUSE for this issue. Try to keep in mind someone or a group who deserves praise, and we will feature them in the next issue. Applause is a part of most cultures. Whether clapping or cheering, rooting or showing support applause shows praise and appreciation towards an individual or a group of honorees. As we enter spring and come upon the holiday season let us think of members who are worthy of Applause. Then, simply nominate them by sending a simple synopsis with their picture to Teach621@aol.com. Maybe they will be the next person to be in our APPLAUSE, APPLAUSE section of the Chalkdust magazine. They deserve our thanks.

