

Teachers unions challenge Teacher Evaluation System

by Sarah Brickman

On Jan. 16, the Sarasota Classified/Teachers Association (SC/TA) and the Florida Education Association challenged the Merit Pay Law in Leon County's Circuit Court. According to SC/TA Executive Director Barry Dubin, the law, which is part of the Student Success Act, inhibits the teachers unions' right to engage in collective bargaining.

Dubin also noted that the student growth portion of the Teacher Evaluation System (TES) is a major cause for concern.

"If I'm a teacher and my scores are pulled down by other teachers' students, I'm not very happy about that," Dubin said. "Your evaluation could be based on scores that you really have nothing to do with."

These evaluations, in turn, contribute to teachers' ratings on a four-point scale. By 2014, teachers' salaries are supposed to be tied to their ratings, although Principal Steve Largo said that he has not received any further details from the state yet.

Dubin said that he was in Tallahassee when the Senate passed the bill. He said that the act did not seem sufficiently developed. "They [the Senate] were just going to do it because it was on the political agenda," he said. "It was all about politics. It was never about education."

However, Dubin is not opposed to the methods the bill uses to evaluate teachers. "I'm really not opposed to objective ways of evaluation teacher performance," he said.

Dr. Denise Cantalupo, the Director of Research, Assessment and Evaluation for the Sarasota County School District, said that at the local level the district tried to accommodate SC/TA. "We really yielded to what they wanted, to what they believed was fair," she said.

Editor's Note: At the time this newspaper went to press, the lawsuit was still being settled.

Coach Donovan leaves 'big shoes'

After 34 years, Donovan drives golf cart into the sunset



Retired activities coordinator, athletic director and physical education aide Shannon Donovan escorts students to fields during fifth period, which she has done during lunch periods since Pine View moved to this campus. Michael Lewis, class of 2007, said, "I will always associate Coach with a golf cart and walkie talkie. And maybe the word 'Yo!'" PHOTO BY AISHA QUADIR

by Sarah Brickman

One look at Shannon Donovan's key ring indicated how involved she was on campus. There was a key to the gym, the auditorium sound booth, the locker gates, the fences on the north and south sides of campus, the chair room in the auditorium prop room and the lights in buildings on campus. Two were for golf carts — one hers and one another staff member's — that Donovan frequently drove around campus.

After working at Pine View for 34 years, Donovan retired yesterday. However, her legacy continues as one who exceeded obligations and dedicated herself to service.

Donovan began working at Pine View in 1979 as a physical education aide. On Pine View's old campus, she taught the physical education program for grades four through eight under another staff member. Here, she teaches physical education to seventh- and eighth-graders, and she oversees fields during third, fourth and fifth periods. Donovan has also served as the school's athletic director the past 12 years.

Donovan pursued a career in physical education because she enjoys being outside and working with kids. "I'm an outdoor person. I would go crazy if I had to be inside

all the time. I don't even like being in the gym," she said.

Soon after Pine View moved to its current campus, Principal Steve Largo asked Donovan to be the school's activities coordinator. "This was such a bigger campus, and we were able to do more things and really needed somebody to coordinate activities," Donovan said.

Donovan played an integral role in starting several Pine View traditions, including the high school dodgeball game, Spirit Day for seventh- and eighth-graders, tug-of-war on Senior Day and Special Olympics. Donovan also coordinated Open House for all grades, the second- and third-grade fall parade, Peramathon, student parking, the senior vs. faculty volleyball game, eighth-grade graduation and twelfth-grade graduation.

"I've been able to work with all different grade levels and not just been an aide for middle school PE. It's really opened me up to have contact with all grade levels," Donovan said.

Largo said that Donovan is directly involved with most of the events on Pine View's activities calendar. "She's my go-to person. That's for sure," he said.

"When I think of her leaving, what comes to my mind is, 'What is Pine View going to do without Coach Donovan?'" Largo said.

In addition to coordinating recreational activities, Donovan organized and implemented multiple service projects each year, including Pine View's annual school-wide project. "I think Pine View students can learn anywhere academically, but I think the opportunities that we've given kids to do community service has really broadened their horizons and given them a chance to know they can make a difference," Donovan said.

Donovan and Largo spearheaded Pine View's first character education project in 2001. After 9/11, Largo held an assembly in the gym and challenged the school to take on a project to support the sanitation workers who cleaned Ground Zero. Donovan led the school in collecting 500 pairs of gloves, and each contained a note from a student. When the workers received the gloves, some started to cry.

"It was neat, us being able to feel like we were doing something to bring some

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Students to 'Rome' through history

History simulation to take Pine View back to ancient Rome

by Aisha Quadir

On March 6, Pine View will be transported 2,100 years back in time to the golden days of ancient Rome: the era of the Pax Romana. As the republic transforms into an empire, Rome is thriving and Julius Caesar is alive. For citizens of the empire, life is good.

The simulation, which the John D. Woolever History Club has been planning for more than a year, will take place first through sixth period. Students, teachers and administrators will participate by dressing up, role-playing as deities and historical figures, and immersing themselves in Roman culture and mythology.

Twelfth-grader Manasa Narasimman, the club's president, is in charge of organizing the event alongside eleventh-grade co-directors Connor Rattigan and Sabrina Chianese.

"I'm excited to see how it turns out," Narasimman said.

The club's co-sponsor, history teacher Pat Regan, explained

that the campus will be divided as the Roman Empire was into different regions: Spain, Gaul, Italy, Macedonia and Numidia.

"In that sense, as students walk through the campus, they will have that sense of passage," she said.

"You can move freely within the empire ... All these territories are connected," Patricia Johnston, the club's other co-sponsor, said.

Narasimman said that the club determined how to divide the campus based on a map of the empire from 31 B.C.

This will be Pine View's third historical simulation in recent years, after the Berlin Wall simulation in 2010 and the American Revolution simulation in 2011. The History Club voted on the theme of Rome a year and a half ago. "What was a major motivation for this one was that ninth grade had world history. And we saw it as a topic that

could involve a large number of students, because it's part of the sixth-grade curriculum," Regan said.

During the simulation, teachers will play the roles of gods and goddesses. They will incorporate popular superstitions from ancient Rome into their lessons, and many of them will dress up. Students walking around campus will see patrols of soldiers, who "keep order in the empire,"

Johnston said, and may even witness these soldiers yanking "criminals" out of class. Students can get food at a feast held in Regan's room, or play Roman games in Johnston's room.

Students acting as the Vestal Virgins will guard the "fire of Vesta" in the gazebo, and the club will stage mock gladiator fights and demonstrations of hand-made catapults. Mock trials based on ancient Roman law will involve teachers.

Students who have physical education classes can participate in Olympic sporting events, and the winners will be awarded prizes. Two historical events will be reenacted: the assassination of Julius Caesar and the Battle of the Siler River.

The club is also putting on a play, written by eleventh-grader Olivia Angsten. She based the play on the myth of Romulus and Remus, the purported founders of ancient Rome. The myth is "one of the most connectable legends in our simula-



Ninth-grader Zach Blashinsky demonstrates the costume that he will wear during the simulation. Members of the costume committee are creating hundreds of outfits for a play, a fashion show and several re-enactments. PHOTO BY ZACKARY CORBETT

tion ... something at the very heart of the Pax Romana," Angsten said.

All students are encouraged to wear togas the day of the simulation, Narasimman said.

Ninth-graders Victoria Cangero, the simulation's costume director, and Zach Blashinsky, the assistant costume director, will be holding a fashion show during first period where students will showcase their togas, using the auditorium stage as a runway.

They will also be running a toga-making booth in the quad.

Researching, designing and making costumes for the hundreds of people involved in the simulation have been difficult for the simulation's costume committee, but Cangero said that they hope they have "overestimated, rather than underestimated" how many supplies they will need.

Blashinsky said that the costume committee looked to Halloween costumes for inspiration. "We did research online for examples from the period ... It's authentic, but with a modern twist," he said.

Donovan leaves 'big shoes' after 34 years

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positive out of that [9/11]. It was such a horrible thing," Donovan said.

Donovan described the Habitat for Humanity house that the class of 2007 built with help from the Pine View community as the "crown jewel" of Pine View's schoolwide projects. "Yes, it only did benefit one family, but it changed their lives. It freed them up to be able to focus on other things," Donovan said.

Michael Lewis, Pine View Class of 2007, led the project with classmate Ryan Corbett. "Coach was our go-to person for nearly everything we could have possibly needed — from advisory to approvals to media contacts. She made herself available around the clock. I can easily say it would not have been possible without her," Lewis said.

He continued, "Looking back, it is incredible to me that Coach was as patient and available as she was. You could approach her with absolutely anything ... Every time, she would give her full attention."

Donovan also helped students pursue their own community service endeavors at Pine View.

Twelfth-grader Henry Miller has coordinated Pine View's annual effort to support Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF since he was in fifth grade. Miller said that from the beginning, Donovan played a significant role in the program's success here. "She was basically the school-side enabler for the whole program. That means a lot," Miller said.

"I hope I have ... led people to believe that one person can make a difference, and if it's worth your time it's worth your best," Donovan said.

Largo said, "If I can think of anyone who truly embraces the whole notion of sharing of gifts, it's Coach Donovan."

"We need people to step up and fill those big shoes," Largo said.

Starting today, physical education teacher Joe DiGiacomo will be the new athletic director and third-grade teacher Misty Tucak will be the new activities coordinator.

