



The Political Action Committee for HCTA

Public Ed AdVOTEcates

HCTA - PEA NEWS

HCTA'S SPECIAL ELECTION NEWSLETTER
July 2024



OUR SCHOOLS ARE ON THE BALLOT THIS YEAR!

This year's ballot will put Hernando voters' commitment to public education to the test. Not only will we see new school board members elected, but a number of ballot initiatives and referenda will shape the operations of our schools for years to come.

In the August 20th primary, EVERY voter—regardless of party affiliation—will weigh in on school board District 4 and the local referendum which seeks to move Hernando to an elected Superintendent.

The November 5th general election puts both Hernando school funding referenda in front of voters alongside the statewide constitutional amendment to move school board races from nonpartisan to partisan contests beginning in 2026.

To say that this year's election is of great consequence to our community would certainly be an understatement! It won't be enough to simply ensure HCTA members are informed and participate in this election cycle; we must take steps to ensure all of Hernando's public schools' supporters are informed and participating!

The HCTA Government Relations committee has been working in the background to prepare for days of action in support of our schools and welcomes your participation in any and all actions.

Action Calendar:

- Candidate Meet & Greet w/Gregg Laskowski7/9
- HCTA Does Politics in the Park @ Challenger7/11
- NAMI Candidate Forum @ PHSC, Spring Hill7/17
- Sign Waving8/2, 8/10, 8/14, & 8/17
- Red for Ed Day (Early Vote for Ed Day)..... 8/14

Contact:

Jason Daly (727-992-7107) jasonmdaly@yahoo.com
Adam Maternowski (352-610-1787) adammaternowski@gmail.com

Recommitting to Investments in OUR Schools

Both local school funding referendums will be on the ballot for renewal this August and the time to promote the value of these investments is NOW! BOTH are necessary revenue sources which impact employee compensation.



The half-penny local sales tax passed in 2015 has become a vital resource in maintaining Hernando Schools facilities.

Rising construction costs, creeping interest rates, and lower impact fees all mean that revenue is not keeping up with the cost of growth. Renewal of the half-penny does not constitute additional taxes nor does it seek to INCREASE funds available to the District. It simply ensures that current local funding for school construction is not reduced. Without these funds, costs of facility maintenance shift back to the general fund limiting what may be available for salary improvements and employee benefits.

Half of Hernando's millage referendum goes directly into employee compensation. For teachers, the millage supplements have been used to boost retention, paying our longest serving educators (15+ years) between \$3700 and \$4800 in the 2024-25 school year. Loss of the millage funds would have a direct and significant impact on take home pay for teachers.

Continuity of these funds is particularly crucial as the last of federal funds from the Inflation Reduction Act will be exhausted this year.

HCTA has endorsed both local referenda and we need YOUR help to ensure they are renewed.

- Visit the district website and review the Referenda Renewal FAQs.
 - <https://www.hernandoschools.org/our-district/half-cent-renewal-2022>
- Talk to your friends, family, neighbors and colleagues about the importance of these funds and ask them to support renewal with their vote this November!

After the 2020 election, Florida lawmakers made sweeping changes to our election laws, including changes that impact your voter registration status. Now, more than ever you should check your voter registration status to make sure these changes haven't affected you. Please take a few minutes and check your voter registration status TODAY. Here are a few things to check:



It will only take a few minutes to check. Scan the QR code to the left to make sure you are active, up-to-date, and ready to vote! **Let's make sure every vote counts!**

1 2 3

If you've moved since the last election, make sure your address is correct.

If you changed your name, make sure your name is correct.

Finally, make sure your voter status says "Active" — if not contact your Supervisor of Elections.



The Political Action Committee for HCTA

Public Ed AdVOTEcates

HCTA - PEA NEWS

HCTA'S SPECIAL ELECTION NEWSLETTER
July 2024

Endorsement Information is available on the HCTA website
<http://www.myhcta.org/take-action>

Local Elections Endorsement Committee Report:

As reported at the May Worksite Leader Meeting, the Local Elections Endorsement Committee has been working through the screening process to provide recommendations in our upcoming school board races.

The entire process began in March with the Local Elections Candidate Screening member survey. HCTA members were asked to provide their opinions on the qualities, qualifications and experience they expect from a candidate for school board. They were also asked to help identify the priority issues impacting students and teachers, and they were invited to submit questions that they would want candidates to answer. From this survey, the committee developed the candidate pre-screening questionnaire and interview questions.

Every candidate listed active on the Hernando Supervisor of Elections website was invited to participate in the endorsement screenings. It is a testament to value of educators' support that ALL candidates for school board requested an interview and were screened by our committee.

On Saturday, May 18th, the committee conducted candidate interviews at the HCTA office. Each member of the committee individually scored the candidates' responses using the member survey results to assess how closely the candidates' responses aligned with the priorities and values of our members. The individual scores from the interview were combined with scores from the pre-screening questionnaire and the composite scores were used to identify the candidates we are presented to the Representative Council for endorsement by our organization. On May 21st, the HCTA Representative Council voted to endorse:

- District 2 – Kayce Hawkins**
- District 4 – Gregg Laskoski**

In early June, our endorsed candidates were reviewed by the West Central Florida Labor Council (a regional body of labor organizations affiliated with the Florida AFL-CIO). Both candidates received the additional endorsement of the Labor Council.

As Kayce Hawkins was the only candidate to qualify in her race by the June 14th deadline, she is unopposed and will fill the District 2 seat on the Hernando School Board.

Gregg Laskoski will face two challengers in the District 4 race this August. If our endorsed candidate receives 50%+1 of the votes cast, the election will be decided. If no candidate wins a majority of the votes in the primary, a run-off will be held in the general election in November. Learn more about Gregg and how you can support his campaign here: <https://www.gregg4schoolboard.com/>

Significant time and energy has been invested in conducting a fair and balanced screening process which reflected the values and priorities expressed by our members. YOUR support for our endorsed candidates gives HCTA's endorsement meaning and value. Be the power in our collective voice and let's continue to stand together for our students, our schools, and our profession.


It is important to note that endorsements and recommendations are determined through democratic processes within our organization and are shared with our members for informational and educational purposes. Candidates and amendments that receive a recommendation from HCTA-PEA have been identified as aligned to the core values of our union and are deemed supportive of issues most relevant to public education and working families. All union members are encouraged to research the candidates and issues for themselves.

***Your professional association and our affiliate organizations know that your vote is a personal decision. However you choose to vote, please don't miss out on this very important election.**

The 2024 Florida AFL-CIO COPE Convention was held in Miami June 21-23. Union delegates from across the state considered endorsements for state offices and evaluated positions on this year's constitutional amendments.

The AFL-CIO recommends **OPPOSE - Amendment 1**

A complete list of the West Central Florida Labor Council's endorsements and recommendations can be viewed online https://actionnetwork.org/user_files/user_files/000/103/704/original/Endorsement_List_2024.pdf



DATES TO REMEMBER

Registration and Party Change Deadline for Primary Election (7/22/2024)

Early Voting for Primary Election (8/10/2024 9:00 AM - 8/17/2024 5:00 PM)

Primary Election (8/20/2024 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM)

General Election (Presidential) (11/5/2024 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM)

Vote By Mail?

Due to state legislative changes, Vote-by-Mail requests now expire after each General Election. If you would like to vote by mail in the 2024 election cycle, you must submit a new Vote-by-Mail request. New requests can be submitted through the Supervisor of Elections website.