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| President’s Letter: by JORJE BOTELLO |  | **Bargaining Update** |

My name is Jorje C. Botello, President of the Okeechobee County Education Association (**OCEA**). I am from Okeechobee; born and raised, Brahman proud, I have served the Okeechobee County school district for 16 years. I have held many leadership positions during my tenure at Osceola Middle School. I am a father of two beautiful children, and like many of you, this job puts food on our table. It gives our family a future. Organizations like **OCEA** are here to make sure your distant future is always within sight.

On June 1, 2019, **OCEA** and its partners were able to bring 10,000 books to give away for free to our beloved community. We also made a noticeable appearance at the 2019 Adam Bryant Minimal Regatta in July.

Unions have been around in America since the 1800s, and serve a great purpose; Collective Bargaining. Over the years **OCEA** has worked hard to obtain language in our contract that ensures fair working conditions. **OCEA** represents the Classified and Instructional staff of Okeechobee County. This year, we are looking to improve in a few areas; **Communication**, **Accessibility**, and **Representation**.

**OCEA** is currently in negotiations with the Okeechobee County School Board concerning salaries, the Aaron Feiss Guardian Program, and the newly required Reading Endorsements levied by the State of Florida. Notices of our meetings will be placed in your worksite mailboxes and you are free to attend our Negotiations, held on the third floor of the County Office.

**OCEA** also wants you to know about **FYRE** (Florida’s Young Remarkable Educators) a pat of our Union, that is open to any instructional or classified staff under 10 years of experience. **FYRE** recently hosted its Second Annual “Wine Down” event on Friday, August 16,2019, at the Union Office. Members in attendace were welcomed to tasty snacks and treats donated by our local restaurant partners; Brown Cow Sweetery, Zippy’s Wings, and gift bags from T-Mobile. Keep an eye out for the “Support Saturday Sessions” flyers, in which we open up our office as place to receive help with grading, useful work tips, or just conversation.

On behalf of **OCEA**, we hope you are having a wonderful and exciting year. If you have any questions please forward them to our mailing address or email (listed above), and we hope that you will consider joining us so that our voice will continue to be heard. Thank you!

**UPCOMING EVENT:** Wednesday October 9, 2019, Bargaining Session at District Office, 5:00pm (Wear RED)