

Alpha Kappa Chapter Meeting Notes
Legislative Day Meeting - February 7, 2015, 10 - 12 a.m.
Submitted by Rhonda Work

Following refreshments, our president, Dawn James, welcomed close to 30 members of the five DKG chapters in the Big Bend area. Gale Workman introduced Eric Riley, Legislative Analyst, Florida Education Association (FEA), who presented information related to education and legislation:

- The Legislature is starting to question exemptions and tax breaks which could affect education funding.
- Education policy issues reflect parental concern regarding testing; parents are becoming more vocal. FEA is collecting data regarding testing and conducting parent surveys. Also FEA is looking at one test only for grades 4, 7, and 11.
- The Senate is looking at over-testing plus testing tied to teacher evaluation; the current policy ties the two together.
- The Senate is also looking at the district established testing not state testing.

Other issues included law suits regarding school vouchers, construction money for charter schools, and charter schools seeking participation in public school bond issues.

Dawn James introduced Linda Edson, Legislative Co-Chair, Leon-Wakulla Retired Educators Association (LWREA) who presented their issues:

- Support legislation for adequate and equitable education for public schools, not charter schools.
- Monitor Florida Retirement System (FRS) to avoid any major changes.
- Ensure opportunity for employees to choose between pension or investment plan; no mandate.
- Maintain FRS health insurance subsidy and include increments for increased health costs.
- Advocate for 3% Cost of Living increase annually.

Linda also pointed out that in 2016, there will be an estimated 40,000 individuals in the workforce who will enter DROP. There will be a huge teacher shortage in the future. She urged members to sign up for her email notices and to contact legislators regarding important legislation.