

For Immediate Release

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\$58 million of pension payments to 494 working Lee School employees exposed!



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The names and titles of 494 Lee County School Employees who are receiving \$58 million¹ of pension payments and collecting \$27.2 million² in salaries to do the same job at the same time, was released today, capping an 8 month investigative research by the Taxpayers Action Group (TAG).

“494 over-paid, most over 65 years old, are receiving outrageous School Pensions of \$58 million plus \$41 million a year in compensation at the same time to do the same job, not counting supplemental pay, cashing out of unused days and take home cars”, noted Dave Jaye, of the Taxpayers Action Group, who conducted the analysis of data provided by Lee County Schools and the Florida Department of Management Services. “Replacing the 494 Double Dipping Lee School Employees with freshly trained and newly educated entry level people would **save taxpayers \$24 million** each year **without cutting a single School job**³! Only 66/494 approximately 14% of Drop Double Dippers are traditional Classroom teachers (attached).

“The highest paid Lee Schools Double Dipper is Melissa Robery, one of **two** Principals at ‘Turn Around School’ taking a total compensation is \$162,071 a year **plus a School pension payments of \$273,403!** Karen Manzi is the **second** Principal at ‘Turn Around School’ receiving total compensation \$148,038 **plus a School pension of \$256,728** at the same time (Lee Schools provided data PRR 18-541). Why are there two Principals at one, small school?” asked Dave Jaye. “Before becoming Double Dippers, Lee Schools Senior Managers were paid 24.06% of their salary into their retirement compared to 8.26% employer pension payments for teachers and regular class employees⁴.

¹ Excel Sheet attached from Florida Department of Management Services, subset of entire State DROP employees September 2018 Todd.Gunderson@dms.myflorida.com

² PR19-137 Lee County Schools

³ The starting pay, step increases and final pay of all positions is listed online, <http://www.leeschools.net/job-descriptions-salary-schedules>

⁴ Garry Green Chief of Research and Education 850-488-5706 garry.green@dms.myflorida.com

“Replacing DROP employees with freshly trained, entry level employees means that Lee Schools could have avoided borrowing \$25 million on September 12, 2018 to pay for Hurricane Irma related damages,⁵” noted Ron Pure, Chairman of TAG. “The decision to borrow \$25 million rather than end the DROP



Double Dipper program is another example of the poor management decisions of the Lee County School Board and School Bureaucrats. The Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP)⁶ allows School Districts and government units *the option* to allow employees with 30-33 years of service to retire, collect their pensions and then rehire these retired employees their highest pay. ”

“A detailed research project by TAG back in June 28, 2018 showed that Lee Schools could have saved \$21 million by replacing these over paid, over the hill Employees with freshly educated and trained entry level employees,” observed Dave Jaye. “Due to the growing, outrages public retiree pension and health liability, on July 1, 2018 the Employer salary match (taxpayer paid) of DROP public employee pensions increased to 14.03%⁷ compared to teachers who receive 8.26%. Today, Lee County Schools would save over \$24 million a year in costs without cutting a single position! Taxpayers and students are on the hook to pay \$27.9 billion in unfunded public pensions⁸ and \$4.5 billion liability in retiree health care⁹.” The unfunded public pension and retiree health care liability is a \$1,544¹⁰ liability for every man, woman and child in Florida and growing!”

“Replacing Retired Double Dippers would also save Florida Taxpayers an additional \$818,352 since Retired Double Dippers **are the only Florida public employees receiving a salary who don’t pay 3% of salary to support their pensions**”, said Ron Pure, Chairman of the Taxpayers Action Group. “These Double Dippers further cheat taxpayers by not paying the 3% of their pay into the Florida retirement system, just like every other public employee must do since 2011.”

⁵ <https://www.news-press.com/story/news/education/2018/09/12/lee-county-school-board-borrow-25-m-cover-storm-related-expenses/1276692002/>

⁶ <https://uwf.edu/media/university-of-west-florida/offices/hr/documents/DROPques.pdf>

⁷ https://www.dms.myflorida.com/workforce_operations/retirement/employers/contribution_rates

⁸ <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/politics/political-pulse/os-florida-pension-fund-20180116-story.html>

⁹ <https://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/study-florida-underfunds-health-benefits-for-its-retired-workers/7Bzzu5VMhWDPRCZiwhInUM/>

¹⁰ $\$32,400,000,000/20,980,000 = \$1,544.32$

“Lee Schools keeps crying poverty and are using tax dollars to push for an \$80 million a year, 10 year sales tax increase. Replacing the Double Dippers with new employees saves \$24 million a year which reduces the need for much of sales tax proposal,” said Ron Pure. “We again call upon Lee School Superintendent



Greg Adkins to simply not renew the contracts of these 482 Lee School Double Dippers when all Lee School contracts expire on June 30, 2019 (except for Greg Adkins', \$309,057 a year three year contract¹¹) said Ron Pure, Chairman of the Taxpayers Action Group. “Going forward, the School Board and Superintendent should not allow any more retirees to be hired as Double Dippers.”

Lists of these Lee Schools Double Dippers by name and by salary and pension payments are attached and available from the Taxpayers Action Group at dave.jaye55@gmail.com. “When these Double Dippers finally retire for the second time, these retirees will continue to receive even higher pension payments. These Double Dippers also receive additional supplemental payments and cashing out of unused days—at the highest level pay, not the salary when the unused days were banked!” noted Dave Jaye. “One Hundred and one Lee Schools Double Dipper employees are compensated over \$100,000 and 420 over \$50,000 a year *plus collecting big pensions at the same time!* The average salary of all employees in Ft. Myers, FL is \$43,685¹²”.

“Collecting a pension and huge salary at the same time is abusing the taxpayers and denying \$24 million a year of services for Lee students,” noted Ron Pure. “It has been 40 years or longer since these Double Dipping school bureaucrats earned their College degrees. Many of the 40 Double Dipping Retired Secretaries, Clerk Typists and Clerks didn’t even earn more than a High School Diploma! Lee School Double Dippers include 2 “Messenger/Couriers, 17 Janitors, 10 Bus Drivers, Nine cooks and many others who are not School core mission employees”.

“Students, employers and the taxpayers would hugely benefit from having fresh, newly educated and trained entry level employees. Think about how much technology, finances, business and training has changed over the last 10 years and many of these Lee School Bureaucrat Double Dippers haven’t been in college since 1978! Not renewing the contracts of these 482 Lee School Double Dippers would be good for the Double Dippers, students, employers and taxpayers,” observed Ron Pure.

¹¹ <https://www.news-press.com/story/news/education/2018/06/05/lee-county-school-board-approves-new-contract-superintendent/672249002/>

¹² <https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Location=Fort-Myers-FL/Salary>.

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For more information on this research project see the attached Excel documents Double Dippers by Salary and Double Dippers by Last Name and a Word document titled “**Description of the Taxpayers Action Group Research methodology about Double Dippers**” and Dave Jaye 586-488-5177 dave.jaye55@gmail.com.