

The Voice

www.ceaohio.org

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Columbus Education Association

October 22, 2007

Don't let Congress forget

October is shaping up to be a critical month in the reauthorization of ESEA (Education and Secondary Education Act), and communication from you to your Congressional representatives will play a decisive role. Tell Congress to take the time to get the bill right for children and public education.



At issue: Congress is considering linking educator pay to student test scores. NEA strongly opposes this tactic.

Nothing in any ESEA plan should undermine educators' current collective bargaining rights. Use of test scores must not be a mandatory element of any program. Any program that rates educators and/or affects their compensation must be agreed to through bargaining. And where bargaining doesn't exist, through a 75 percent majority vote of teachers in the district.

All children have a basic right to a great public education. Our vision of what great public schools need and should provide acknowledges that the world is changing and public education is changing too. Meeting the criteria needed for great public schools requires not only the continued commitment of all educators, but the concerted efforts of policy makers at all levels of government to achieve the following:

- Quality programs and services that meet the full range of all children's needs so that they come to school everyday ready and able to learn.
- High expectations and standards with a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum for all students.
- Quality conditions for teaching and lifelong learning.
- A qualified, caring, diverse and stable workforce.
- Shared responsibility for appropriate school accountability by stakeholders at all levels.
- Parental, family and community involvement and engagement.
- Adequate, equitable and sustainable funding.

NEA has signed on to a joint statement with more than 80 organizations. To read more, visit <http://www.nea.org/lac/esea/eseaposition.html>.

Remember, this is your right

The court has ruled that during an investigatory interview, management must inform the union member of the subject of the interrogation. You are entitled to CEA representation. The CEA representative must be allowed to speak with the employee privately before the interview; and during questioning, the representative is permitted to interrupt to clarify a question or object to the interviewer's tactics.

However, the representative may not tell the employee what to say. He or she may merely advise him or her on how to answer a question. After the interview is over, the representative is allowed to add information to support the employee's case.

We also suggest representation any time the purpose of the meeting is for disciplinary action, reprimand, infraction of a work rule or board policy, questions concerning request or use of any leave, allegations of abuse or parental, student or community complaints.

CEA sent you a wallet-sized card last April entitled *Weingarten Rights* and contains text from the 1975 U.S. Supreme Court Decision that clarifies your rights as a union member. If you are new to the district, your PAR consultant has a card for you. If you need any help understanding these rights, please call CEA. We will be happy to brief you.

Peer Assistance for everyone

If you find yourself teaching in a new grade level category, building grade-level or subject due to reorganization, you should take advantage of the Peer Assistance program.

Anyone is eligible, and joining in no way reflects your ability to do your job.

The program is NOT the same as PAR (Peer Assistance and Review).

This Peer Assistance program is a volunteer program. Teachers are not evaluated. Anyone can participate in this program. You needn't be referred.



There are many reasons to seek this extra assistance. You may have: moved to another teaching level (elementary, middle or high school), moved from a non-classroom setting to a classroom setting, changed to a new teaching area, been released from PAR and now wish for additional assistance. Or you may just need support, even if you're a veteran.

To receive help from the program, call the district human resources department. A PAR consultant will call you to explain the program. You will be assigned a consulting teacher who will be your mentor. Your mentor will provide resources, conduct helpful observations, provide feedback and help you assess your skills. Your mentor will keep a record of your participation. All information will remain confidential.

For additional questions, call HR at 365-8307; or contact CEA at 253-4731.

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left blank.

Our united effort is needed

Did you know that 85 percent of a child's capacity to learn is established by age 5? Unfortunately, Franklin County does not have enough child care centers to meet the needs of families. There are more than 55,000 children in the county under the age of 6. Yet the current full-time capacity of child care centers and home providers in Franklin County is 32,825.

Full-time care is available for only 59 percent of Franklin County children ages 0–5 whose parents work.

Furthermore, the average cost of center-based early care and education for an infant is more than 31 percent of the median income for a retail salesperson in Ohio, making it unaffordable for many families and preventing some parents from working. And, more than 30 percent of Ohio's children who enter kindergarten need some type of intervention.

That's why it's important to give to United Way. Your donation makes possible funding for programs that help these youngest members our community.

In 2006–2007, a total of \$11,478,544 in United Way funds was invested in education programs.

Children in high-quality early care and education settings demonstrate greater language development, mathematical ability, thinking and attention skills and fewer behavior problems in kindergarten than children in lower quality settings.

When children start school with the skills necessary for learning, they are more likely to do well in school, attend college and become productive employees.

One dollar invested in early child care and education saves our community as much as \$3 to \$17 in future remedial instruction, welfare and prison costs.

Help us. Let's make sure each child enters kindergarten ready to succeed. Give to the United Way.

Know the contract: *classroom observations*

Classroom evaluations are a necessary part of the relationship between an administrator and a teacher. Observations are conducted for the purpose of formal written evaluations. Specific ground rules spell out the proper procedures. The teacher or evaluator may (but is not required to) request a pre-evaluation conference to discuss evaluative procedural matters. CEA encourages everyone to request a pre-evaluation conference. During this time, the parties may discuss personal educational philosophies and short- and long-term goals. No official written requirements may be attached to this conference.

A minimum of one and a maximum of three (announced) observations for evaluation purposes shall be accomplished through prior arrangement with the teacher. In addition, a maximum of three (unannounced) observations may be accomplished at the convenience of the building administrator provided the number of observations does not exceed the number of announced observations. At least one observation must be at least of 15 minutes in duration.

For more information, see the *CEA Master Agreement*, Section 401.04–.05.

Support STRS health-care bill

State Rep. Scott Oelslager (R-Canton) has introduced House Bill 315 to create revenue for STRS health care benefits. OEA and other organizations (members of the Health Care Advocates for STRS coalition) strongly support this bill.

As you know, health care premiums have risen over the past few years; and retired teachers, especially, have seen an increase in their expenses. Current projections show that the STRS health care fund will run out of money in 2021. This bill will provide a way for employees and their employers to pre-fund re-

tiree health care benefits. The plan would increase employee contributions to STRS by 2.5 percent of their salaries and the employer contribution by 2.5 percent of payroll.

These increases would be phased in over a five-year period in 0.5 percent increments.

Supporters will be instrumental in this proposal's passage. OEA urges all members to contact their legislators and ask them to support H.B. 315. You may also visit www.ohea.org for more information.

Submitting an IPDP

Ohio law states that an educator must have a current Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) approved and on file with the Local Professional Development Committee (LPDC) **before** beginning to earn credits to renew a license when it expires.

This year the Columbus LPDC switched to a new online software entitled *PD Planner*, a component of the Columbus Informational Management System (CiMS), for the purpose of creating and submitting IPDPs for approval. Currently, not all educator data files have been correctly transferred over to the new *PD Planner*. Thus, the system works for some, but not all Columbus educators. The committee is working to get this corrected. However, if you do not have a current IPDP on file and want to start earning college or CEU credits for your next renewal, please email Dean Fowls at dfowls@columbus.k12.oh.us and request an electronic IPDP form.

Special notes

- ❑ The contract provision for **professional leave** can be found in Section 702.16 (pages 75–76). If you have questions about leave procedures, or want to discuss whether a certain activity would be worth attending, call CEA. To download the application form and guidelines, surf to: <http://www.ceaohio.org/newsPage.aspx?artID=285>.
- ❑ Voting for candidates for Middle School Governor-at-Large in the **CEA fall run-off elections** is from **Oct. 23–Nov. 5**. The Elections Committee will **tabulate the votes** on **Nov. 6**. Please see your SrFR to obtain a ballot.
- ❑ There has been a great response to the new **Colonial short term disability** offering made available through CEA. The **enrollment period ends Oct. 31**. To read complete instructions on how to enroll, surf to: <http://www.ceaohio.org/newsPage.aspx?artID=282>. For assistance, contact your representative **Rich Heslop at 800-536-1424** or The William H. Meyer Agency at **800-728-7398**.
- ❑ The CEA **GLBT and Allies Caucus** will meet Wednesday, **Oct. 24**, at the **Clintonville Panera Bread** from 4:30–6 p.m. in the reserved room. The agenda includes discussion of the needs of GLBT students and teachers in CCS. For more information, email Karen Andermills at Kander-mills5337@columbus.k12.oh.us.
- ❑ **CEA scholarship assistance** is available for members who have **dependent children who are seniors in college**. Eligibility requirements and forms are available on the **CEA Website**. Send completed applications to CEA by **Nov. 2**.
- ❑ **Legal Services open enrollment expires Oct. 31**. Sign up for coverage. The annual retainer of \$425 per year includes six hours of consultation services with a \$100 deductible for the first hour. Contact CEA for details.

CEA Pre-Paid Legal Services Plan OEA/NEA Attorney Referral Program

At Cloppert, Latanick, Sauter and Washburn, we have dedicated ourselves to teachers in and out of the classroom. Our experienced personal injury, divorce, dissolution, criminal, probate and real estate attorneys are available to you at moderate rates which are lower than we normally charge our private clients.

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(614) 461-4455 or www.cloppertlaw.com

