

# The Voice

[www.ceahio.org](http://www.ceahio.org)

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Columbus Education Association

November 5, 2007

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*The Voice*  
has been  
intentionally  
left blank.

## Go green

November is National Runaway Month. We can signal our support for troubled youth by placing green light bulbs in our porch light fixtures.

Turn on the light, and you can increase awareness of the issues facing runaways and help educate the public about the solutions and the role they can play in preventing youth from running away.



Huckleberry House, a local organization that provides housing and aid for runaways, began this effort here in Columbus four years ago. That year, they distributed 10,000 green light bulbs. Now the campaign is national.

Here is some of the information you can share:

- ☒ Huckleberry House served 1,409 youth in 2007.
- ☒ In 2006, 2,924 teenagers from Ohio called the National Runaway Switchboard Hotline.
- ☒ Family problems are the most frequently identified reasons why teenagers are on the streets.
- ☒ Before the age of 18, 1 out of 7 youths will run away from home.

To get your light bulb or learn more, call 294-8097 or visit [www.huckhouse.org](http://www.huckhouse.org).

## Whose betrayal?

*The Columbus Dispatch* series on teacher discipline has elicited a flood of responses from teachers, community members and from OEA. We urge you to stay positive and focus on the support that continues to pour in the wake of what is an unfair attack on all of us. The *Dispatch's* opinion is that educators aren't entitled to the rights of other citizens.



Here is what one editorial-page letter writer said: "What amazes me is the complete disregard for the due-process rights of individuals." She suggested the *Dispatch* concentrate on the hundreds of hours logged by dedicated teachers who are making great progress helping students.

The OEA has also weighed in:

- ➔ Student safety is already a prime consideration in public schools.
- ➔ OEA helped pass protective legislation, including mandatory background checks for anyone working with children.
- ➔ Investigations should be conducted if a teacher is suspected of harming a child.
- ➔ Investigations should be fair and impartial, and not conducted in the news media.
- ➔ It is possible to maintain due-process while ensuring the privacy of those involved.

## Counting the envelopes

Columbus City Schools is beginning its count of donations collected for United Way of Central Ohio. The goal is \$390,000. Thanks to everyone who contributed this year. Your efforts do a great deal for those in need, including the families whose children attend our schools.

This year was a banner year for the agency. United Way set its 2007 campaign goal at \$56 million—an increase of \$1.4 million over the organization's record-breaking 2006 total of \$54.6 million. Stay tuned for the tally and give yourself a hand!

Contributions to United Way of Central Ohio support more than 200 programs and initiatives including:

- Start Smart, supporting early learning
- After-school and youth development programs
- Programs to help people in crisis with access to emergency food, shelter and financial assistance
- The Franklin County EITC Coalition, providing free tax preparation services to more than 1,700 households, resulting in \$2.2 million in tax credits
- The Rebuilding Lives Initiative, which has created 772 units of permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless adults
- Community Properties of Ohio, which manages 1,000 low-income housing units across Columbus
- The Neighborhood Empowerment Grant program designed to improve neighborhoods

## Poor planning for MS redesign

On Thursday, Oct. 25, during a division meeting, middle school principals were informed by the Curriculum Leadership and Development office that the middle school program was being redesigned and teams of teachers were required to attend a mandatory in-service training the following day, Friday, Oct. 26. The teachers did not find out until late Thursday afternoon that they would need to prepare for substitutes.

This situation created a hardship on the entire middle school community for the following reasons:

- The difficulty of providing a substitute for every class on Mondays and Fridays results in teachers having to cover colleagues' classes. Instructional opportunities are lost.
- More detailed preparation has to occur—to create substitute lesson plans that guarantee that the pacing and curriculum guides are followed.
- The more teachers that are out of the school, the greater likelihood for discipline problems.

CEA promptly called the downtown administration who was not aware that a plan was finalized, rolled out to principals and the professional development planned and scheduled.

Administration's request to meet with CEA to discuss this issue came after the fact.

The Joint Labor-Management Committee meeting was held on Monday, Oct. 22. The plan for middle school redesign and the upcoming professional development was not submitted as an agenda item by management.

CEA has filed a grievance on behalf of all middle school bargaining unit members. The district made a decision that impacts the CEA membership prior to discussing it with the President of CEA. This is in direct violation of the *CEA Master Agreement*, Section 108.01. This grievance comes on the heels of a similar grievance in which management failed to communicate with CEA prior to district-wide changes regarding the administration and grading of the OGT and OAT practice tests.

CEA will continue to utilize the grievance process if the

administration continues its practice of *decide, implement and tell CEA later*.

When the Association President contacted Superintendent Harris for her response, she said, "This is not the way to do business and this is not the way we will do business in the future."

Our members want our students to be successful, and we recognize that our middle schools must improve. We are, however, concerned that the front-line educators who have to execute the changes were not consulted in the redesign.

CEA stands ready to join with the Administration to make meaningful reforms; however, not at the expense of our students and teachers.

## Need to make insurance changes?

The open enrollment period for health insurance changes closes Nov. 15. Until then, you may change your group insurance coverage or start coverage (including health, dental, optional life and vision) after waiving it in the past. Changes will be effective Jan. 1, 2008.

This is your annual opportunity to compare the coverage and rates for the Traditional Care Medical, Choice POSII (PPO), and the Aetna Select (EPO)—all offered through Aetna.

Benefits staff will be available to explain the various health insurance options from 4:30–6:30 p.m. on Nov. 8 at the CEC at 270 E. State St. and from 3:30–6 p.m. Nov. 13 at Walnut Ridge HS library.

Please note: For information on open enrollment for Cafeteria 125 Plan and other voluntary benefits, please contact the Lang Agency at 866-242-9808.

Employees currently enrolled in a Flexible Spending Account must reapply every year, or their FSA amounts will drop to \$0.

For Long-Term Care thru MetLife, please contact Dehan and Associates at 235-3520.

Enrollment applications and rates are available at <http://cpsnet.columbus.k12.oh.us/applications>.

You need to complete one only if you intend to change your coverage. Be sure to use the appropriate form for each insurance type.

Return your form to the Benefits Section, Columbus Education Center. Applications received after Nov. 15, 2007, will not be accepted.

## Special notes

- ❑ Applications for the annual **Ingram-White Castle Grant for Teachers Program** are due the Columbus Schools Development office by **4:30 p.m., on Friday, Nov. 16**. For questions, call Betty Warnock at 365-8733.
- ❑ The **deadline to participate** in the **Sick Leave Bank** has been **extended** to the close of the business day on **Dec. 20**. Surf to: [www.cea.org](http://www.cea.org) to download a form. If you have questions, call CEA at 253-4731.
- ❑ Return **Winter 2008 Fee Waiver** applications to Northgate by **Friday, Nov. 9 by 5 p.m.**
- ❑ The ballots from the **CEA run-off election for Middle School Governor-at-Large** will be picked up on **Nov. 6**.
- ❑ The Buckeye Hall of Fame Cafe will host the **Franklin MS Teachers Reunion on Nov. 9** at 4:30 in the game room. Contact 301-9068 with any questions.
- ❑ **Flu shots** are free for staff who have Aetna EPO (Select) and PPO. Locations and times include: **Nov. 8, Africentric Early College**, 5:30–8:30 p.m.; and **Nov. 12, Brookhaven HS**, 4–8 p.m. Surf to: <http://www.ceaohio.org/newsPage.aspx?artID=288> for a complete schedule. If you have questions, call at 365-5824.
- ❑ **Blue Jacket Tickets** are available from the CEA office for the following dates: **Nov. 4**, St. Louis (4); **Nov. 12**, Nashville (2); **Nov. 14**, Chicago (4). Call the CEA office at 253-4731 to purchase tickets.