

The CEA Voice

www.ceaohio.org

Volume XXXVIII, No. 21

Columbus Education Association

January 28, 2008

Testing time waster

It's hard to believe we're halfway through another school year. What's astounding, however, is how much time testing has eaten from our classroom schedules since winter break.



Since Jan. 7, teachers have given nearly 30 standardized tests, including the Dominic, given in grades 2–5; quarterly assessments given in grades 2–12, and the full-length OAT practice test, given in grades 3–8.

At minimum, that's 60 hours spent giving the tests, not to mention the hours spent teaching the test format through sample questions and practice exercises and filling out paperwork. Teachers are frustrated by the enormous amount of testing; and our students are burnt out, also.

Spring isn't here yet and more testing is coming.

CEA wants the administration to reconsider the amount of testing required. This includes the time it takes to administer, score and scan the tests. Teachers have spent more time giving multiple assessments than instructing students in the month of January.

Another level of frustration in the testing saga is teachers have reported numerous mistakes on the quarterly assessments, including no correct choices for test items, typing/keying errors and items that cover material not yet covered in the pacing guide. This is another example of the waste of the valuable time our teachers spend correcting the errors made by the district.

We have forwarded to arbitration the grievance filed in October and hope to resolve the testing issues.

Stay tuned. And pay attention to the hours you are spending. It's time the administration recognized that they are wasting the talent in our classrooms.

Speak out!

Share your stories about how testing is affecting your and your students. To comment on the testing conditions that exist in your school, go to the CEA Blog at: <http://blog.ceaohio.org/wordpress/index.php/2008/01/23/speak-out-testing-time-waster/>.

To register:

- ❶ Click on the **Register** link in the top right hand corner of the blog.
- ❷ Choose a username (you are not required to enter your name), and enter your non-CCS email address.
- ❸ A confirmation email with your username and password will be sent to you shortly after you register.
- ❹ Once you receive your username and password, log in and speak out!

King honorees provide inspiration

Look forward and continue to value the potential in our young people. Learn from the examples set before us.

Those were the messages of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Dinner honorees Rev. Leon Troy and Cathy Nelson. Troy received the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award, and Nelson received the Helen Jenkins Davis Award.



The dinner was held Jan. 16 at the Hyatt Regency.

Troy, a former Columbus Board of Education member known for his community activism, spoke of the need to maintain momentum in a difficult educational climate.

He called himself an "environmentalist," who cares about students and the communities in which they are raised and the effort required to ensure their success—which is really the success of society at large.

"You've got to learn how to invest in young people," he said.

Nelson, a career Columbus educator, developed a curriculum based on the history of the Underground Railroad, told the CEA audience that she was a student of Helen Jenkins Davis and was inspired by her example.

"This award stands above all the rest," she said. "It has been given to me by my peers, and more than my peers, by my friends."

Keynote speaker Thomas N. Todd set the stage for the awards with a lively call to remember those who have made a difference in the community, especially those who helped Dr. King, yet don't often appear in the history books.

Todd is a history-maker himself. The Alabama native was the first full-time black law professor at Northwestern University.

Todd warned listeners about becoming complacent and accepting whatever they are told by politicians, officials and public relations firms. "This is a dangerous era. There is an attack on education, intelligence and common sense. This includes high-stakes testing," he said. "Somebody has convinced you this is education," he told the audience.

"We are overcharged and shortchanged," he said.

He said the answer for everyone, as it was for Dr. King, is education. "It's the key that opens more doors than any I know of."

Sick leave rules

It isn't easy to get through a school year without needing to use sick leave. But remember, there are specific procedures you must follow when you take time off for illness:

If you are absent for a full school day or longer, you must:

- Inform your principal or call the Substitute Employee Management System (depending on your building's procedure) at least one hour and thirty minutes prior to your normal work day.

- If possible, estimate the duration of the absence.
- If you are to be away longer than two weeks (10 school days), you must submit a form to the Human Resources Department by the 10th day of absence and include a physician's statement.

Before returning, you must:

- Give at least three days written notice to Human Resources before returning to work from an extended absence if in a paid status. If in unpaid status, it is necessary to give 30 days notice to Cathy Jones, HR Administration, 365-5881.
- You must also submit a statement from your physician that you may return to work without restrictions to Health Services at least 3 days prior to your return. You must contact Board Physician Dr. Sheryl Stephens, Sixth Street Annex, 365-5824. Call for availability.
- Return to work no sooner than the date you specified.

Forms and additional information are available on the CCS intranet at: <http://cpsnet.columbus.k12.oh.us/applications/inetdept.nsf/Department+Pages/Human+Resources-Main?OpenDocument>. For clarification, see Section 701.03 of the contract, call CEA at 253-4731 or call HR at 365-8307.

Bargaining team news

Did you enjoy having three weekends off over winter break? Do you prefer to have spring break following Easter or at some other time? Did you know we bargain for our school calendar? Your votes decide our next calendar.

The Calendar Survey Committee is in the process of creating a survey of calendar options for the next school year. A subcommittee of the Bargaining Team will insure the delivery, collection and processing of all surveys. The committee will be communicating with all bargaining unit members to vote and voice their choices.

Building use should be regulated

By law, the school district is required to find uses for vacant buildings. One of those options is to lease buildings.

Superintendent Gene Harris has invited the Graham and Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) schools, both charter programs, to use some of these facilities.



The Graham School has expressed interest in leasing Brentnell ES, which was closed at the end of the 2005–2006 school year due to declining enrollment.

The KIPP School has expressed interest in leasing Linden Park ES. It closed at the end of the 2005–2006 school year.

We are especially concerned about this latter program. The program begins fifth grade and uses a lottery enrollment system. It has a reputation for *sucking* the brightest children from the surrounding local schools and for favoring students whose families have the most influence with school officials.

The school would be in a part of the district where we are working hard to revitalize opportunities and reach out more effectively to families. The introduction of another charter school might sabotage this plan.

The Linden area has more than 1,000 CCS students currently enrolled in charter schools, making it the most heavily-recruited area in Columbus.

School Board Member Shawna Gibbs asked if another building could be made available to KIPP outside of the Linden area instead of Linden Park.

We agree. And we ask the board to take a second look at its requirements for leasing buildings. CEA believes the district could be opening the door to a stampede if leases are not

properly controlled.

Our primary duty is to our schools and our programs.

If rules are not adopted, “Every sponsor who has a charter school to market in the Columbus area will cry ‘Me too!’ until they find an opening,” said CEA President Rhonda Johnson. “The CCS buildings belong to the public whose tax dollars built them.”

Join teachers in District 2

TBS is CEA's political action arm. It keeps its eye on the political arena, raises money for political candidates, levy and bond campaigns and other ballot issues affecting Columbus teachers and the school community.



Because CEA does not use any dues money for political activities, we urge teachers to join TBS, preferably by payroll deduction. Even a small contribution makes a difference.

The following is a list of payroll deduction contributors to TBS who work in buildings/units in CEA District 2. We urge members in all districts to join them:

Zakiah Al-Husaam, Laura Antoniak, Judith Ashmore, Dawn Ayres, Madith Barton, Jeffrey Becker, Joseph Begeny, Jan Bell, Heather Campbell, Priscilla Caris, Marcia Carter, Peg Cleary, Christopher Conrad, Sandy Cox, Kristan Crosby, Amanda Crum, Hilde Culp, Julie Didlick, Leslie Dingess, Hanaa El-Youssef, Patrick Fein, Jodie Fissel, Anasoraia Flood, Matt Hawkins, Cynetha Henderson, Al Hernandez, Rita Hinz, Christina Hoerig, Sandra Hoffman, Laurene Holloway, John Howell-Sanchez, Julia Huffner, Teri Keller, Christopher Klemm, Maureen Knotts, Toni Link, Cindy Love, Lynn Markle, Andy Merritt, Keith Morefield, Gigi Morelli, Mary Morris, Bruce Mortland, Brian Morton, Bernadine Neal, Renee Pearson, Jenny Plemel, Carol Rafferty, Kimberly Randall, Mike Rehner, Jose Rosa, Amy Roush, Deborah Shepherd, Leslie Sims, Kaye Skopin, Frank Smith, Jo Smith, Drew Stefanik, Mary Swartz, Pamela Treboni, Diana Turner, Angela Valtman, Dan Walker, Kathleen Welton, Betty Winland, and Ardelia Young.

We will continue to recognize members who contribute by payroll deduction in future issues of *The Voice*. You can add your name to the list by joining TBS. A form can be found on the CEA Web site or by calling us.

Special notes

- ❑ **Income tax time:** Members who qualify may be able to deduct their Association dues. The amounts are: **Pay Plan A (21 pays)**—\$734.14; **Pay Plan B (26 pays)**—\$731.15; **changed from Pay Plan A to B**—\$681.52; **changed from Pay Plan B to A**—\$790.89; **Half-time Plan A**—\$425.29; **Half-time Plan B**—\$425.29. Dues spent on lobbying efforts are not deductible on your federal tax return. The amount for this past year was \$23.58. For your convenience, the above amounts already reflect the deduction of this figure.
- ❑ The **Spring 2008 Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (OCTELA) Conference** will be held March 7–8 at the Crowne Plaza North, 6500 Doubletree Ave. (formerly Marriott North). This year's theme is *Celebrating the Power of Reading*. Featured speakers include: Susan Campbell Bartolletti, Rick Sowash and Loung Ung. For more information, contact Ruth McClain at 457-0626 or at mclain@bright.net or visit www.octela.org.
- ❑ **CEA Spring Elections:** Members may declare candidacy until Feb. 8 for President, Vice President, Governors for Districts 1, 4, 5, 8 and 11, delegates for the 2008–2009 OEA RAs and the 2008 NEA RA. Campaigning will be Feb. 11–25. Voting will be conducted Feb. 26–Mar. 10. Votes will be tabulated Mar. 11. Declaration forms are available from the CEA office or on the CEA Web site.