

# The Voice

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

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Columbus Education Association

February 11, 2008

## Testing saga

CEA has filed a grievance with the district listing testing overload, test schedule timing and the increase in clerical duties as a concern.

Superintendent Gene Harris has agreed to look at the district's quarterly testing system schedule. She told CEA at the last Joint Labor-Management meeting the goal is to make sure teachers have enough time between tests to use the results in classroom instruction.

At CEA's insistence, Dr. Harris had extended the testing deadline to Feb. 8.

Also as a result of CEA's communicating your concerns regarding testing, Sherry Rose-Bond, Director of Assessment and Testing for CCS, will be holding a focus group meeting with 10 representatives from the various high schools across the district. The topic of the meeting will be testing at the high school level, including the OGT.

This is a positive step from CCS in response to our continued dialogue over testing issues at Joint Labor-Management meetings.

It's a start. But these two actions do not go far enough to address the multitude of concerns CEA has about testing.

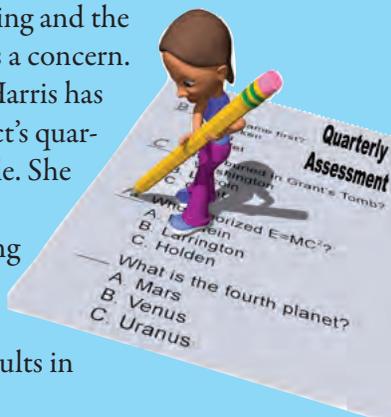
CEA has also discovered that the questions written for the quarterly assessment are not necessarily checked closely for accuracy before they appear on the tests. Many of them are invalid because of incorrect or confusing wording, incorrect answers or lack of a correct answer on a multiple-choice list.

We are not the only ones who question the value of these additional, often redundant assessments. Several superintendents have produced a joint report stating that quarterly assessments do not produce results that help teachers help students. If a skill is taught early in the quarter, using the results of the test at the end of the quarter is too late to provide appropriate intervention.

We call on the administration to do more than readjust the schedule. These tests need serious examination for possible elimination altogether. We say: Let our teachers teach. Let them use their own measures to assess the students they know well.

## Leading the way...partnerships

Columbus teachers have a long record of close cooperation with colleagues at local universities. In particular, over the years we have formed many alliances with the College of Education and Human Ecology at The Ohio State University. This has led to a number of reciprocal agreements.



Nearly 25 years ago, our friends at OSU invited CEA to join them in a new organization called the Holmes Group. This group of nearly 100 major teacher-training programs was interested in radically changing the way future teachers would be taught. A catchphrase called for major changes: "Tomorrow's Schools, Tomorrow's Teachers and Tomorrow's Colleges of Education."

CEA was actively involved as the effort transformed into the Holmes Partnership, today consisting of more than 60 colleges. Members must apply as a three-way partnership including the college, local teacher unions and local school administrations.

Everyone is a peer, attacking the great issues confronting American education. One of the vice presidents of the Holmes Board is from Columbus and represents the CEA. Every year we send a team of members to the joint meeting.

The Holmes Partnership recently added a national member category and has welcomed the following partners: The American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, National Education Association, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the American Federation of Teachers.

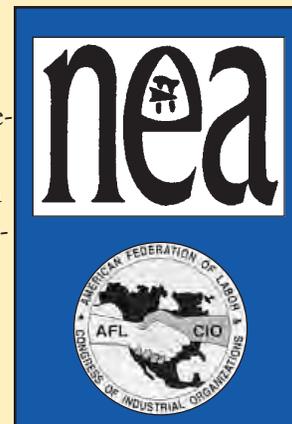
One can see the value of the Holmes Partnership with such varied representation at the table.

## Yes on Labor Solidarity Partnership

In the spring of 2006, the National Education Association and the AFL-CIO signed the historic Labor Solidarity Partnership Agreement. Years in the making, this agreement allows NEA locals, such as the Columbus Education Association to affiliate directly with the national AFL-CIO, as well as join AFL-CIO labor councils and state labor federations.

Both the NEA and AFL-CIO are fiercely democratic, independent organizations that share a strong commitment to economic and social justice, resting on the foundation of high quality, universal public education. While the NEA comprises 3.2 million members in the field of education, the AFL-CIO's nearly 9 million members are working men and women from every race, ethnicity and walk of life.

As educators, we see the mounting effects of budget cuts, privatization of educational services, vouchers, proposed health care and pension restructuring. Legislation at the state and federal level amount to nothing less than efforts to destroy our employee organizations. The officers and leadership of your Association wholeheartedly recommend voting to join the AFL-CIO Labor Solidarity Partnership Agreement later in the spring.



## Don't change grades

The practice of changing grades earned by student athletes is strictly governed by the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA).

OHSAA Bylaw 4-4-8 prohibits grade changes for athletes for work done after the close of a grading period, except when the inability to complete the work is due to illness or an accident verified by a physician. In addition, the grade must first have been entered as an incomplete, not a grade that is subsequently changed to reflect this work.

Many staff members are not aware of these limited exceptions, and schools must forfeit games in which ineligible athletes compete.

If a coach changes a student athlete's grade or asks a teacher to change a grade, the coach may be suspended from coaching for up to three years. The penalty for the classroom teacher is undefined.

In general, athletes cannot avail themselves of grade improvements for work done after the last day of a grading period. And, teachers should not be asked to change grades for them. Please be aware of these limits.

## Making a difference in Columbus

Recently during a visit to Nationwide Children's Close to Home Clinic in the Linden community, CEA's Reach Out and Read Chairperson Tracey Johnson had the opportunity to see how the effort of last year's book campaign is making a difference in the community. She was amazed at the excitement displayed in the faces of the children, some as young as 2 years old, as they sat at the tables reading books donated by CEA members. It is this level of excitement for reading we would like to see spilled over into our classrooms.

The Reach Out and Read Community Book Drive is held in conjunction with Nationwide Children's Hospital. During well-child visits, the pediatrician gives new, age-appropriate books to children 6 months to 5 years old and gently-used books up to 8th grade reading level.

It is estimated that 90 percent of the children serviced through Nationwide Children's Close to Home Clinics are future and current Columbus City Schools students.

CEA is asking each member to donate at least one new book for children ages 6 months–8 years old to the campaign. Our campaign will run the entire month of February. For more information, please contact Tracey Johnson at 253-4731, or email her at [tjohnson@ceaohio.org](mailto:tjohnson@ceaohio.org).

## Fill out the survey

The *CEA Master Agreement* calls for an annual building survey to be conducted in February.

The results will be posted on the CEA Web site as soon as they are available. The survey gives helpful information about building climate. Teachers can use it if they are seeking to transfer to a different school. The information also tells us about our success and our difficulties so that we can acknowledge and address these issues.

Please note: This survey is NOT the same as the CEA survey that was recently offered to a sampling of CEA members.

The surveys and scannable response sheets should be sent to each building and distributed to all non-administrative certificated employees. Frequently, the survey is conducted at a staff meeting. The response sheets (only) should be returned to Evaluation Services by Monday, Mar. 3.

If you have questions about materials, call Evaluation Services at 365-5167.

## Article 211 calendar

We are embarking on the time of year when vacancies are posted and interviews are conducted. As you enter into this process, it is important to keep in mind that the CEA contract contains a number of procedures and protections that are meant to eliminate any discrepancies or missteps.

The contract language found in Article 211 must be strictly followed. Principals and faculty representatives will participate in Article 211 training, on Tuesday, Feb. 19, for elementary schools and on Monday, Feb. 25, for middle and high schools and department supervisors.

Article 211 packets will be delivered to buildings on Thursday, Mar. 6, and administrators have until Friday, Mar. 14, to notify teachers if they are being staff reduced.

Round 1 postings will open on Monday, Mar. 31. For additional dates, go to: [www.ceaohio.org](http://www.ceaohio.org) and click on Article 211 Planning Calendar, under CEA News.

Contract language for Article 211 begins on page 28 of the *Master Agreement*, and the 2008 Article 211 Manual is available on the CEA Web site. If you have questions, call CEA.

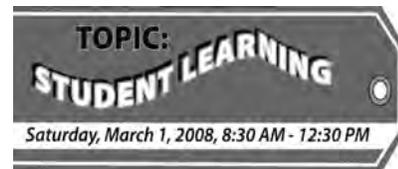
## New professional development session

Cogitate @ Northgate is a new type of professional development opportunity that lets you set the agenda, share your best ideas, talk over implementation issues of previous professional development offerings with other teachers and staff, and go away feeling satisfied with the time you invested.

The first event has the theme: Student Learning.

The class will be held on Saturday, Mar. 1, from 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. at Northgate Center. Registration is required. Email Sharon Clifford no later than Feb. 22. Participants will receive 0.4 CEUs, as well as a \$75 stipend.

For more information, visit the CCS Staff Development Web page, or call 365-5039.



## Special notes

- CEA needs your non-CCS email address.** The Association needs to be able to communicate union business with you via email without the worry of information being monitored by the school system. Send your personal email address to [bhern@ceaohio.org](mailto:bhern@ceaohio.org). For questions, call CEA.
- CEA-R members** who are in Florida in February will meet on Feb. 20 at the Beachhouse Restaurant in Bradenton. Lunch will be at 12:45 p.m. This has become an annual event. For CEA-R members who are in Columbus, a tour and tea will be held on Thursday, Feb. 21, from 12–4:30 p.m. at the Columbus Museum of Art. Information can be found in the brochure and on the CEA-R Web site at [www.cea-retired.com](http://www.cea-retired.com).
- Mandatory Substance Free Workplace Education/Training:** It is mandatory that all administrators and one CEA Representative and one OAPSE Representative from each worksite/department attend the 2-1/2 hour Substance Free Workplace Education/Training. Dates for training are Feb. 12, 13, 14, 19 and 20. Internal coverage must be arranged for staff attending this training. Administrators attending the initial training session will be responsible for training their staffs. All employees must eventually receive this mandatory training. To register go to: [https://cpsweb.columbus.k12.oh.us/applications/GeneralRegistration.nsf/\(ClassListing\)?openview](https://cpsweb.columbus.k12.oh.us/applications/GeneralRegistration.nsf/(ClassListing)?openview). Times on each day are: 7–9:30 a.m., 12:30–3 p.m. and 3:30–6 p.m.
- CEA Spring Elections:** Campaigning will be Feb. 11–25. Voting will be conducted Feb. 26–Mar. 10. Votes will be tabulated Mar. 11.
- Four **Blue Jacket Tickets** are available for the **Feb. 13** Chicago game. Call the CEA office at 253-4731 to purchase tickets.