

The Voice

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www.ceaohio.org

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Background checks at a glance

Ohio law requires background checks, and recent changes in this law mean that we must pay even closer attention to the rules. Vendors begin screening at district locations this month. Please check the posted schedule on the CEA Web site at www.ceaohio.org/newsPage.aspx?artID=320.

Here are some clarifying points to help you navigate the requirements:

Who: All employees. Permanent and eight-year certificate holders are NOT exempt. Educators holding 2- and 5-year licenses will complete their background checks as part of their normal renewal process. Retirees leaving the system before Sept. 5, 2008, are exempt.

What: Background checks and fingerprinting are related tasks. Fingerprinting is the tool used to complete the checks. Your fingerprints are sent to the Ohio Bureau of Identification & Investigation (BCI) for a state criminal check. The FBI completes the national background checks.

When: The CCS deadline is July 15, 2008. Vendors will visit each location before June 5. If you are out when the vendor comes to your location, review the location list and find a different date/location.

Where: Everyone should visit the mobile fingerprinting units at your job location. The volume is simply too great to handle everyone at the central office headquarters.

Your principal will receive a list of all the employees in each building who are required to have the checks. Please check with this individual.

How: When you show up for fingerprinting, you will:

- 1 Bring a state-issued ID or drivers license.
- 2 Complete a waiver.
- 3 Provide your fingerprints.
- 4 Sign a log sheet.
- 5 Receive a transaction confirmation card.

Cost: You must pay for your own procedure. The cost is \$58 for both BCI and FBI checks and \$32.75 for the FBI check only—provided you already have filed your fingerprints. You must pay through payroll deduction if you use the service provider at the worksite. You may not directly pay the service vendor.

You may go to other vendors and then provide written evidence to the school district by July 15, 2008. But you must be sure to tell the vendor that the background check is for the “care, custody, and control of children.” All background checks that are done through an alternative vendor will be verified by the District with the Ohio Bureau of Identification & Investigation.

If you had a check done at another job, you may be able to submit those results—provided that those background checks were done by a vendor certified by the Ohio Attorney General.

Getting the results: If the results of the background checks are not returned to the district before school starts in the fall,

you will not be disqualified from working for the district. However, not having the checks done by July 15 will.

For more information: Call Dennis Carney (5820) with vendor or process questions, Cheryl Creamer (5658) with licensure questions, or Sue Messina (5602) with employee list or acceptable forms of identification questions.

Foundation evaluates union contracts

The Fordham Foundation recently published a report entitled *The Leadership Limbo*, which highlighted the teacher union contracts of the 50 largest school districts in the United States. The conservative think tank dissected the language of teachers’ contracts, grading them on a 4.0 scale in three areas: compensation, personnel decisions and work rules.

The 50 contracts were categorized from *flexible* to varying degrees of *restrictive*. Fordham’s study categorized five teachers’ unions as flexible, with the highest union scoring a C (2.62) on Fordham’s scale. All five unions that were described as flexible came from one of the 22 right-to-work states, where laws restrict the power and scope of collective bargaining.

While your Association’s *Master Agreement* was not evaluated, the Cleveland Teachers Union contract (the only Ohio teachers’ union scrutinized) was rated 49 out of the 50 contracts.

Nearly 40 percent of the teacher unions included in the study had either ratified or were in the process of negotiating a new contract. The study did not highlight newly ratified agreements.

The report indicates that school reform means that contracts should allow school administrators to pay educators more for teaching high-demand subjects such as math or science, use student performance (including standardized test results) in teacher evaluations, not adhere to seniority rules during the layoff or transfer process and outsource or subcontract school operations to non-union workers.

The CEA has been in the forefront of school reform in many areas, including teacher evaluation, compensation and assignments and transfers. We are not opposed to flexibility, but any agreements must be collectively bargained.

Know your rights as a member of CEA

It’s frightening to be the subject of a school district investigation. But knowing your rights can help you make the right decisions and seek the proper representation.

During an investigatory interview, management must inform the union member of the subject of the interrogation. You are entitled to the CEA representation of your choosing.

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. After the interview is over, the representative is allowed to add information to support the employee's case.

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

CEA has wallet-sized cards that you can carry with you. It is entitled *Weingarten Rights* and contains text from the 1975 U.S. Supreme Court Decision that clarifies your rights as a union member. If you need any help understanding these rights, call the CEA office.

Feds may allow new, fairer NCLB evaluation methods

Education Secretary Margaret Spellings announced in March that up to 10 states can begin to use students' test score progress rather than their actual scores in meeting federal progress goals for No Child Left Behind. Interested states would have to submit their proposal to the Department of Education.

This policy change will likely benefit suburban and rural schools more than urban schools.

Ohio schools Superintendent Susan Tave Zelman wrote in a recent report to superintendents that ODE intends to read the requirements and explore eligibility for these options.

Spellings unveiled the term *differentiated accountability*, a concept that would allow states to "vary the intensity and type of interventions to match the academic reasons that lead to a school's identification" as having academic achievement problems.

Under Spelling's initiative, states would maintain their current practice for determining AYP and for identifying schools in need of improvement. What would change are the processes for categorizing schools, systems of interventions and the interventions selected for the lowest performing schools. The new system deviates from the one-size-fits-all interventions currently mandated under NCLB.

Spellings recently listed some of the criteria. "States," she said, "must have approved assessment systems to measure student achievement. They must publish timely, transparent information about educational progress and challenges, as well as options for parents."

"And they must commit to building their capacity for reform, and focusing their most significant actions around their lowest-performing schools, such as the so-called 'dropout factories' that produce up to half of high school dropouts. By evaluating participants annually, my department will help identify proven methods for others to follow."

NEA President Reg Weaver lauded the move, saying "(This) is a long overdue step in the right direction. While we welcome the news, it...is regrettable, though, that Secretary Margaret Spellings—and her predecessor for that matter — have had the legal authority to make the changes she is planning to make now."

Article 211

Round 1 is well underway. The postings for Round 1 closed on Friday, Apr. 4. However, interviews will continue through Friday, Apr. 11. Buildings must submit selection agreement forms and rosters to the Curriculum and PLD offices by Monday, Apr. 14.

If you are selected for a position, be sure to keep a copy of your selection agreement form.

Round 2 postings will be available Wednesday, Apr. 23.

If you have any questions, call CEA. The complete 211 calendar and manual are available at ceaohio.org/newsPage.aspx?artID=302.

Joining TBS is the right thing to do

Congratulations to District 6 members who now support Teachers for Better Schools. This is CEA's political-action arm, a separate committee that advocates for the benefit of teachers in the political arena.



We wish to thank the following members who see the value of investing in the political process: Robert Bartels, Jenetta Bell, Lynn Bellamy, Gary Blosser, Christopher Bond, Amity Cauthorn, Steven Dain, Ann Dean, Cheryl Enders, William Engelman, Jesus Fabregas, Jan Fleming, Alicia Fowler, Lindsay Frendt, Barbara Gear, Barbara Greene, Darren Greschuk, Marcia Hershey, Joan Hudak, Robin Jeffries, Mary Judy, Alice King, Avis Kinkead, Beth Masters, Philip Maxwell, Teri Mullins, Diane Norman, Steve Paletti, David Perry, Karen Richards, John Rinto, Rebecca Senger, Julia Skidmore, Angela Stokes, Patricia Taylor, Karen Voellmecke, Kimberly Walden and Andrea Yoakum.

CEA does not use any dues money to promote individual candidates. Instead, we ask you donate to TBS. You can do this through payroll deduction. To download a TBS form, go to www.ceaohio.org/docs/content/4-TBS%20Membership%20Form.pdf.

Cogitate with us

Register now for the second Cogitate @ Northgate professional development activity scheduled for Saturday, May 10, from 8:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

The event is an *open space* meeting where participants schedule and select discussion groups based on their interests. Teachers share best practices, ask questions, problem solve and make connections with other teachers. Participants receive 0.4 CEUs and \$75.

No preparation is necessary, but space is limited. E-mail your reservation (name & building) to Sharon Clifford, Northgate Center, at scliffor@columbus.k12.oh.us.

Special note

A.G. Bell ES, Mifflin MS and Linden-McKinley HS are winners in the CCS recycling contest, **Put It In the Bin and Win**, promoting locations for drop-off recycling. The contest resulted in 546,600 lbs. of recyclable waste. Each school will receive a cash award from Giant Eagle.

Request for CEA Scholarship Application Form

Name of member making request: _____

Send application to (CCS address): _____



A completed scholarship application, along with a transcript and two letters of reference, must be returned to the CEA office by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 9, 2008.