

The CEA Voice

www.ceaohio.org

Volume XXXIX, No. 4

Columbus Education Association

September 15, 2008

New CEA Web site has many features

When you visit www.ceaohio.org, you will notice some big changes. We have launched a new site with new features.

The best one is that you now can search for information you need about legislation, deadlines, the contract and events simply by clicking on your area of interest or by using the ever-present search box.

We believe this site is more convenient and easier to use. Please let us know what you think. Give us a call at 253-4731, or e-mail bhern@ceaohio.org.



CCS report card

The Columbus City School District maintained its highest-ever academic rating and made gains in other areas according to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The district earned a rating of "Continuous Improvement" for the 2007–2008 school year on the state report card released in late August. Equivalent to a "C" grade, this marks the second consecutive year that the district has maintained this designation.

The state also weighs and combines test-score data for students, yielding another indicator known as the Performance Index (PI) score. Locally, the average PI score of school districts in central Ohio seems to be hitting a glass ceiling, increasing only one-tenth of a percent over last year's scores. CCS's PI score increased 1.2 points, a tenfold increase over the local average. This marks the third consecutive year of a PI score increase. Additionally, CCS increased its students' passage rate on 16 of the 28 state-mandated achievement tests administered in grades 3–11.

For the first time ever, ODE factored in value-added data to both school and district report cards. The new value-added measure determines the amount of academic growth students achieve in a year's time. Columbus students made a year's worth of academic growth—an achievement only one of the seven other large urban districts in Ohio was able to match. New with the inclusion of value-added data on the state report card is the "Excellent with Distinction" rating. Colerain ES and Indian Springs ES are the first CCS schools to earn this honor. "While some might categorize the progress made by our students as modest, this is a major accomplishment made possible by our teachers," said CEA President Rhonda Johnson.

"We kept our Continuous Improvement rating, provided a year's worth of academic growth and increased student achievement. The fact that we were able to do this despite a shortened school day, fewer teachers and increased class size is a testament to the dedication and talents of our teachers," said Johnson.



Know your contract—class size

Class size can sometimes present challenges and can take time to recalculate and resolve. Usually, class-size issues are dealt with by Oct. 1. But CEA and the administration have agreed that we need to move more quickly. So this year, class-size issues will be dealt with by assigning substitutes where deemed necessary and to reorganize by Sept. 24. After that date, staff-reduced teachers will move into the positions being held by substitute teachers.

If class-size issues still have not been addressed by this time, the building's Senior Faculty Representative should let CEA know so that problems can be addressed in a timely fashion.

Here are the size limits (Article 301 of your contract):

- ◆ Classrooms for grades 1–5 should have approximately 25 students each, but no class will exceed 29 students in K–3 and 30 students in 4–5.
- ◆ Middle school classrooms should not exceed an average of 30 students per class and no more than 180 students per day.
- ◆ High school classes should average 28 students in each departmental area but not exceed 36 students. No high school teacher shall instruct more than 150 students per day.
- ◆ High school and middle school physical education, music and other activity type classes may exceed 150/180 students.
- ◆ Teachers can agree to handle more students if they so elect and the principal so elects.



Set your stride

CEA is proud to once again sponsor the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk on Sunday Oct. 5. We want to show strong support of this event. Last year more than 20 teams formed to participate.

Form a team at your school and join thousands of others to raise funds for a future without breast cancer. Your team members do not have to be employees of the district. Some schools even encourage students and their parents to join their team. This is a great opportunity to involve the community in your school's efforts.

There is no fee to register, and you can register up until the day of the event. The first 50 people to register online will receive a free CEA Making Strides T-shirt. Sizes are limited so register early. When your registration is confirmed, you will receive a shirt. To register, visit the CEA Web site; and be sure to list CEA as your team company.



Sick leave bank deadline Sept. 30

Each year, some of our colleagues experience devastating illnesses and injuries that require long recovery periods. Many of us would like to assist one another during these times. That's why we have a sick leave bank to which you can donate two days of your sick leave. A needy employee may receive as many as 10 donated days.

But there are features of this program that now can help the donor. Anyone who has joined the bank by donating at least two sick days, and then exhausts his or her own share of sick days, may take a loan from the bank of up to 10 days.

The days are a loan. Any sick leave you borrow must be repaid when you leave the district. Any outstanding sick leave will be deducted from your final paycheck.

We encourage you to donate days and to borrow from the bank if you need it. Bear in mind that if participation in the bank program drops below 10 percent, the program will be canceled.

The donation form is available on the CCS HR and CEA Web sites, along with a detailed description of the plan.

D.C. students paid

Washington, D.C., School Chancellor Michelle Rhee has announced plans to pay approximately 2,700 middle school students up to \$100 per month to improve the district's academic achievement. D.C. middle schools rank at the bottom of all urban districts in the country. Only 12 percent of 8th graders earn a proficient rating for reading, and 9 percent of students are on grade level for math.

D.C. middle school students could earn 50 points each month for improving their class attendance, manners, punctuality and grades and be paid \$2 for every point they earn. Each of the participating schools will set their own individual academic benchmarks for success. While students cannot participate without their parents' permission, only students will be able to withdraw money from their district-created bank accounts.

Dubbed "Capital Gains," the program was created by economist Roland Fryer of Harvard University's American Inequality Lab. The \$2.7 million cost to fund the program has been split between D.C. Public Schools and Harvard.

Pay-to-learn programs have their critics. A program in New York City that offered students \$1,000 for high scores on AP exams saw an increase in the number of tests taken but an actual decline in the passage rate on the test.

Should students be paid for their improved academic and behavioral performance in school? Go to *The CEA Blog* to comment on this topic in the newest *Speak Out*.

Legal services plan deadline is Oct. 31

CEA offers a Comprehensive Legal Services Plan through the law firm of Cloppert, Latanick, Sauter & Washburn. The retainer fee is \$425, and you can enroll until Oct. 31 to cover this school year. For payroll deduction, you must enroll by Sept. 30.



There are many benefits to enrolling, namely reduced legal fees and substantially reduced hourly rates, with a \$100 deductible, for such matters as:

- personal injury and debt claims
- real estate
- workers compensation
- domestic relations
- estate planning/probate
- credit problems
- criminal/traffic defense
- small business matters

CEA urges all members to take advantage of these benefits for legal services. For more information, contact Judy Nelson at the CEA office.

Peer Assistance available

The PAR Panel is pleased to offer a program to help you improve at your profession—Peer Assistance.

Peer Assistance (NOT the same as the PAR program) is strictly a voluntary, non-evaluative program for teachers requesting additional assistance if they:

- Recently moved to another teaching level.
- Recently transitioned from a non-classroom setting to a classroom setting.
- Recently changed teaching areas.
- Recently finished PAR as an intervention or an intern, but want some additional assistance.
- Would just like additional support.

If you are interested, please contact Mira Wright at 365-8307. She will contact the PAR Consulting Teacher, who will call you and your principal to establish the request and explain the program. A consulting teacher will work with you to provide resources, observe you at work and provide feedback.

We believe this is an opportunity for teachers to improve their effectiveness in the classroom. Those who have participated rave about what they have learned. Call CEA if you have any questions.

Extended coverage available

Nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists and others in health-care specialties may wish to participate in the extended Educators Employment Liability insurance program from the OEA/NEA. This coverage goes beyond your current coverage. It will cover you for "rendering services," and it will also cover claims that arise from "teaching and supervising." Most K-12 members in health care specialties do not need this extended coverage.

If you decide you need extra coverage, OEA will pay the premium, but you must return the form to OEA Legal Services by Sept. 26. If you have any questions or need a form, contact Rose Keller at 800-282-1500, ext. 3046.

Special notes

- On Sept. 11, CEA's Legislative Assembly decided which candidates and issues we would support. At press time, we did not have specifics. Look for our endorsements in the next issue of *The Voice*.
- FRs should have received a packet on the new grant approval process from John Farley, Director of the CCS Development Office. Ask your FR to share it with you. For more information, call 365-8733.
- CEA-R is soliciting donations to purchase a granite paver for the STRS Discovery Park in memory of John Grossman. If you would like to contribute, make checks payable to CEA and send to Marilyn Allen at the CEA office.

See us on the Web at

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



See the new CEA Website and the many new features that will be available soon.

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. Please contact us today and allow our experience to work for you. Call (614) 461-4455 or surf to: www.cloppertlaw.com for information.