

The Voice

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Columbus Education Association

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OEA on Strickland's proposals

Governor Strickland has shown leadership in his proposals for the state budget, school funding and education reform, placing public education as the top priority for state government. The Governor's ideas represent an opportunity that cannot be wasted.



Governor Ted Strickland

The Ohio Supreme Court has ruled Ohio's current school funding system unconstitutional—the Governor's proposal helps to remove funding inequities throughout the state. The Ohio Education Association (OEA) supports the conversion levy mechanism as proposed by the Governor, allowing communities to provide additional revenue for education while preserving representative taxation.

In addition to changes in school funding, Strickland has proposed extending the school year by 20 days over the span of ten years. OEA supports expanded learning time for students. At the same time, it is critical that members are compensated for any further time spent in the classroom.

Both OEA and the Governor want a highly qualified and well-trained teacher in every Ohio classroom. Strickland's proposed increase in the time it takes for a teacher to receive tenure from three to nine years is unwarranted. It should not take an informed employer that long to determine if a teacher is successful and effective. To attract and retain high-quality professionals in public education, Ohio's teachers need evaluation systems and employment rules that are fair and even-handed.

Governor Strickland's proposal to support new teachers, provide additional time for teacher collaboration and mentoring and encouraging teacher leadership through revised teacher licensure is admirable. OEA must further examine the details to ensure that the proposal will attract, prepare, support and retain high-quality teachers. OEA will fight to preserve the rights of those who hold teaching licenses and ensure that any changes in licensure be phased in without abridging members' due process rights.

The Governor has not clarified how he specifically intends to use the "progress of students" as a factor in teacher licensure levels. OEA steadfastly opposes using standardized test results in making high-stakes decisions about teachers and their licenses to work in the profession. Value-added data systems can provide information that educators can use to make curricular and instructional decisions, but there is insufficient evidence of the validity and reliability of the test results for high-stakes decisions.

No calendar yet

The district is taking its time acting on your requests for important dates on the 2009–2010 school calendar.

CEA representatives met Mar. 2 with DeWayne Howard, Director of Labor Relations, to negotiate the calendar based on your preferences. But the district is dragging its feet. We are still waiting for central office administration to give Howard the go-ahead to make a decision. Apparently, Mr. Howard is afraid of taking responsibility for the duties that go with his job.

We continue to push. We know how important this is to the district staff, CCS employees, students, parents and the community need to have information so they can make plans for the next school year.

CEA members have told us they want the following schedule: First work day for teachers, Monday, Aug. 24; winter break Dec. 19–Jan. 3 inclusive; and spring break from Friday, Apr. 2,–Sunday, Apr. 11, 2010. You have specified a last teacher workday for Friday, June 4, 2010.

To view the proposed 2009–2010 school calendar, go to www.ceaohio.org/gd/Templates/Pages/GDContentViewer.aspx?Content=1733&UseMimeType=1.

Unfair Social Security provisions could be removed

Both houses of Congress are considering identical versions of the Social Security Fairness Act.



This is good news for

educators. Passage would mean repeal of two provisions: The Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

These provisions reduce or eliminate benefits that public employees or their spouses have earned and are expecting in retirement. They can impact anyone who works in a public-sector job and does not pay into Social Security for that job, but anticipates the Social Security benefits from another job they or their spouse held. Continuation of GPO/WEP discourages talented people from entering the teaching profession.

It is helpful to tell your personal story to our Ohio Senators and House members who support this bill. If you or a friend or relative have been or will be harmed by the offset or windfall provisions, tell them to vote for the repeal of these provisions.

Urge Congress to:

- Pass the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 235 and S. 484)
- Remove the unfair offset that takes away earned benefits from retired public employees who have earned social security benefits
- Move the Social Security Fairness Act forward for a vote

To learn more, visit www.nea.org/home/16491.htm.

Grievances update

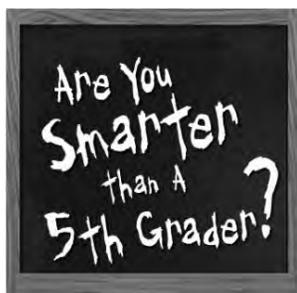
CEA's main role is to advocate in your best interests by making sure the administration adheres to the practices required by our mutual agreement. We always advise our members to try working out problems internally, but this is not always possible. Each month, we will inform you of the grievances CEA is working on for you. This month's grievances are listed below.

Building/Unit/Administrator	Statement of Grievance	Relief Requested	Disposition
East HS Monique Jacquet Carl Chamberlain	Asst. Bldg Adm. subjected grievant to direct, and verbal criticism and unprofessional behavior.	Grievant be given an apology from Asst. Adm. That Asst. Adm. refrain from redirecting staff members in front of students and other staff members. That he refrain from yelling at staff members.	No evidence has been presented to support a claim that school administration violated, misinterpreted and/or misapplied Article 404.06 of the CEA/Board Agreement. Requested relief is denied. (Monique Jacquet) (<i>Teacher did not want to move to Step 2.</i>)
Arts Impact MS Nicole Edwards Michael D. Owens	Asst. Bldg Adm. subjected grievant to verbal abuse.	Asst. Adm. apologize to grievant for his conduct that occurred within earshot of children during after-school dismissal. That administration work with the Asst. Adm. to control such behavior in the future.	No verbal abuse took place, therefore grievance and requested relief denied. (Michael D. Owens) (<i>Teacher did not want to move to Step 2.</i>)
Medina MS Michelle Myles	Adm. failed to give reasonable support and assistance to teachers with respect to maintenance of control and discipline in the building. Adm. failed to utilize the Positive Behavior Supports program as adopted by the CCS district to maintain an environment conducive to learning. Adm. failed to give reasonable support when they failed to respond in a timely manner or give appropriate responses to 190s.	Adm. will provide all reasonable support and assistance to teachers with respect to maintenance of control and discipline in the classroom and within the building. Adm. will consistently enforce their discipline policy and will give appropriate and timely responses to 190s.	Step 2—Hearing Pending

Who is smarter: A principal or a 5th grader?

We would like to say the adult has better judgment. But we have our doubts. Lately, it seems the two are evenly matched.

For instance, any 5th grader could take a list of classes and match it with the teachers who are certified to teach the courses. A 5th grader also could assign teachers to classes they prefer.



But a 5th grader, like some Columbus principals, also might assign teachers to subjects and grade levels they have never taught, discouraging them so they will leave.

A 5th grader might also:

- ❶ change a teacher's grade level every year just to have some variety
- ❷ assign teachers based on gifts or favors, or how they dress or look
- ❸ reassign teachers just to get back at them for not agreeing with them
- ❹ assign teachers outside the subject area for which they hold an advanced degree.

Unfortunately, this is not a fanciful scenario. It happens every year. Across the district, some principals make decisions that endanger the stability of their school buildings.

We would think school administrators would know that research cites teacher quality as the most important variable in student growth and achievement. An analysis by Education Trust found that high-poverty students with high-quality teachers were more likely to meet state standards and prepare students for college. However, many high poverty schools may not have the highest-quality teachers due to the assignment practices of the school administrator.

CEA assures you that we are in your corner advocating for best practices, pushing our positive agenda for the best schools we can create—and striving to educate principals so they can “graduate” from fifth grade.

Capital District loses OEA Board seat

Now that nominations are in and money has been spent, the Capital District has found out that we will not have as many board seats as we had been told by OEA.

We got word recently that we now only have one seat. OEA President Pat Frost-Brooks announced Feb. 20 that because the Capital District has a three-year average of fewer

than 4,500 members, we no longer are eligible for two seats on the OEA Board of Directors.

This is unfortunate because we received printed materials from OEA indicating that Capital was eligible for two electoral units. We had advertised the positions, published notification in *The Voice* and spent money to mail postcards with that information. We were trying to comply with the election rules to ensure all our members have an opportunity to run for these positions. There was no indication on any paperwork, e-mails or any other correspondence that a change had occurred and we were in jeopardy of losing a seat.

In fact, the nomination period closed prior to Frost-Brooks' announcement. She has assured us that OEA will improve its process by notifying districts of changes in a timely fashion and writing a disclaimer on their materials.

Two members have submitted nominations for the single Capital seat: Kriston Crombie (Centennial HS) and Diana Welsh (Dominion MS). The election will take place at the Capital District Representative Assembly on Tuesday, Apr. 28. Nominations can also be made from the floor.

OEA's regional New Teacher Forums

Register for OEA's central regional New Teacher Forums and connect with new friends, learn about the Association and go home with gifts, resources and materials. There is no cost to attend, and all OEA members who are in their first, second or third year of teaching can sign up.

Join OEA on Thursday, Mar. 19, at the Crowne Plaza Columbus-North. Contact Debbie Roberts at 800-282-1500, ext. 3116, or e-mail her at robertsd@ohea.org.

Special notes

- ❑ **Martha Breton Diaz**, formerly Martha Williams (Columbus Spanish Immersion) has been **approved for catastrophic leave**. To assist Martha, **fill out an absence form** indicating the number of days to be donated. Send forms to **Cathy Tysen, Labor Relations**.
- ❑ **Reminder:** The **deadline** to submit an application for the **CEA Scholarship** is **Friday, May 8, at 5 p.m.**
- ❑ **Alternative interview panels** have been **approved** for the following schools: **Avalon ES, Binns ES, Brookhaven HS, Dominion MS, Douglas ES, Duxberry Park ES, Early Childhood Development, Eastmoor Academy, Hudson IT, Indianola K-8, K-8 Librarians, Linden-McKinley HS, Northgate Center, Speech & Language Pathologists, and Westgate ES.**