

The Voice

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School day restored

CEA and the Administration have agreed to restore the hour to the student school day, with an eight-period day in middle and high schools beginning this fall. The teacher workday will consist of five class periods (52–55 minutes) with no more than 150 students per day. High school English teachers will have two conference periods, and all teachers in middle and high schools will have one full period for lunch. Any changes in this agreed-to schedule need approval from the Reform Panel.

The teacher workday will be 7:15 a.m.–2:45 p.m. for middle and high school teachers. The elementary teacher workday will be 8:15 a.m.–3:45 p.m.

School schedules for students are as follows:

High Schools	7:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
Middle Schools	7:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
Elementary Schools	9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
K–8 Schools	9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
Africentric ES	9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
Africentric Secondary	7:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
Alum Crest HS	7:30 a.m.–2 p.m.
Beatty Park ES	8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.
Clearbrook ES	7:30 a.m.–2 p.m.
Colerain ES	8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.
Ft. Hayes MEC	TBD
I-PASS	7:30 a.m.–1:45 p.m.

An added benefit of restoring the school day is the district's eligibility to apply to the Ohio Department of Education for waiver days for professional development.

Quarterly diagnostics suspended

Supt. Gene Harris announced that teachers will not administer the quarterly diagnostics scheduled in May, given the extended school year due to calamity days, "...we want to be sure that students are motivated to attend and participate for the remainder of the school year. Due to the timing of the scheduled administrations of the Ohio Achievement Tests (the week of Apr. 20–24) and the Grading Period 4 Quarterly Diagnostics (May 18 and 19), it has been decided not to administer the quarterly diagnostics due to the minimal number of weeks between the two test administrations and the remaining length of the school year with the students," Harris wrote in a memo.

Even though the quarterly diagnostics have been suspended for the fourth quarter, CEA will continue to advocate for valid, reliable formative assessments. You have already helped us make a difference by giving your feedback on our survey about quarterly diagnostics. The data from the survey presented at the Joint Labor-Management Committee meetings has demonstrated that the quarterly diagnostics need to be retooled. "CEA does not oppose formative assessments, but they should assist teachers in improving student achievement," said CEA President Rhonda

Johnson. "We will continue to work on issues about the testing schedule and support for grading and scanning tests."

High schools will continue their end-of-course exams at the end of Grading Period 4. Meanwhile, a joint committee will look at next year's testing schedule using this year's teacher surveys and data from the reading comprehension assessments to form their analysis and recommendations.

OEA testifies to Strickland's education plan

According to published reports, more than three hundred witnesses have given more than 50 hours of testimony on Gov. Strickland's House Bill 1 (HB1). Witnesses included members of the professional staff of the OEA.



Strickland's proposal to lengthen the school year by 20 days over a period of 10 years is supported by OEA. While OEA supports expanded learning time for students, the OEA staff testified to the critical need that state funding be increased to allow members to be compensated for the extended school year.

Strickland's proposed Ohio Evidence Based Model (OEBM) would increase the amount of funding provided to school districts throughout the state. In its current incarnation, the OEBM prevents some of the lower-wealth districts in Ohio from realizing the benefits of the new formula in the first few years of implementation. "OEA recommends making modifications to HB1, which would allow these school districts to capture more immediate benefits from the model," testified OEA Education Reform Development Consultant Russ Harris.

Gov. Strickland's proposal to modify the teacher licensure to a four-tier process is generally supported by the OEA. Testimony by the OEA staff favored the creation of a two-year, fast track out-of-the-residency program based on acceptable proficiency demonstrated in individual performance evaluations.

OEA remains deeply concerned about the governor's proposal to use the progress of students as a factor in teacher evaluations and licensure-levels. "OEA opposes the use of a single measure of student progress as a criterion for [employment] decisions because such measures do not account for all the variables that affect student achievement," testified OEA Director of Education Policy Randy Flora.

Additionally, OEA remains opposed to Strickland's proposed nine years for teachers to receive tenure. "We do not believe that lowering the termination standard accomplishes the mission of having high-quality teachers in every classroom," testified OEA Assistant Executive Director Rachele Johnson. "It may even discourage individuals away from the teaching profession. Mentoring and identifying teachers when they are having difficulty is arguably more appropriate."

Testing regulations

We all want our students to succeed. At a time when public education relies heavily on the results of high-stakes testing, it may be tempting to give our students extra assistance and, as a result, questions of ethics arise.

School districts, teachers and administrators have been accused of sharing test questions in advance, not following proper procedures and many other testing irregularities.

The Ohio Department of Education has procedures to identify and report testing irregularities. The guidelines include such vital information as how to define a test incident and what to do if you discover one. Here are the high points:

- ☞ A test incident is an occurrence that inappropriately influences a student's performance on a test, including: distractions such as noises, fire drills, sudden illness and defective test booklet pages; extra time given to take a test, use of a calculator or denial of 504-Plan accommodations; and security violations, such as use of cheat sheets, distribution of test copies before administration and altering of a student's answer.
- ☞ Staff must report all test incidents immediately to the district's designated staff person, who then reports it to the state education department within two business days of the occurrence.
- ☞ Non-district staff, school board members, parents or friends/relatives of a student or staff also can make reports.

Be sure you know and understand all testing procedures prior to the administration of the Ohio Achievement Tests. Your certification or licensure could be jeopardized for any testing violation. Call the Office of Accountability and Testing at 365-5785 any time you have any questions or concerns relating to the test administration.

Agreement on school calendar

Representatives from CEA and the Board have reached a tentative agreement for the 2009–2010 school calendar:

- The first work day for teachers will be on Monday, Aug. 24.
- Students will report Wednesday, Aug. 26.
- Winter break will run from Dec. 19–Jan. 3.
- Spring break will be held Friday, Apr. 2,–Sunday, Apr. 11, 2010.
- The final teacher workday is Friday, June 4, 2010.
- Calamity days will be made up at the end of the school year as necessary.

You can download the 2009–2010 school calendar at <http://tinyurl.com/cvmyq2>

NEA Foundation visits CEA and CCS

CEA recently hosted NEA Foundation representatives, who came to look at district and community programming as they evaluate us for a national grant.

Harriett Sanford, Foundation president, and Bill Miles, Director of Programs, visited to better understand our school district and community and determine our readiness to implement the Achievement Gap Grant. It is designed to accelerate the achievement rate for poor and minority students, closing the gap between them and their peers.

We feel positive about the visit. They seem impressed with our organization and our collaboration with the district and community.



Recipients of the grant will be announced Apr. 13. Two or three NEA locals will receive \$1.25 million each over five years to help teachers discover and share best practices and create community partnerships with agencies and families.

Bring canned food

Operation Feed, run by the Mid-Ohio Food Bank to benefit local pantries, is under way through May 8. A collection box is provided in your building for these most-needed items: canned pasta meals, canned fruit, tuna, canned vegetables, canned meat, soup and peanut butter.



Please participate in this worthy cause and help our community (and many of our students' families) keep from going hungry. The demand this year for food has increased by 20 percent, and 38 percent of the food donated is for children.

Central Ohio Labor Council turns 50

CEA President Rhonda Johnson, Vice President Sally Oldham and many of the Association's Board of Governors and staff attended the Central Ohio Labor Council's 50th anniversary program on Thursday, Mar. 26.

"Organized labor," said Ohio AFL-CIO President Joe Rugola in his opening speech, "is dedicated to the principle of treating workers as decent human beings." Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman and Governor Ted Strickland both spoke on the importance of labor in these tough economic times. Strickland reminded the audience of his ongoing commitment to using the federal stimulus money to restart Ohio's economy.

CEA congratulates and thanks our labor brothers and sisters for helping improve the quality of life for all workers in Central Ohio.



Special notes

- ☐ An **alternative interview panel** has been approved for **Wedgewood MS**. If we missed listing your school, contact CEA President Rhonda Johnson.
- ☐ A retirement party will be held for **Mary (Gooden) Jackson** at **94th Aero Squadron** on **Saturday, May 16**. Make reservations by Apr. 25 by calling Kimberly Reeder at (614) 266-2264 or Monica Beagle at (740) 739-0863.
- ☐ **Certificated teachers** now may **apply online** for **summer school positions** at all levels, OGT tutoring and summer bridge. The **deadline** is **Thursday, Apr. 9, at 4:30 p.m.** Visit www.columbus.k12.oh.us and click on *Staff*. For questions, call 365-5010.
- ☐ **ES Grade Card Pilot**—We want to thank the teachers who volunteered to participate in the **home pilot** for the **new eSIS login procedure**. A survey has been administered jointly with Kingswood Data Center and the CEA office. The survey responses will be forwarded to the Kingswood Data Center for evaluation.
- ☐ **Reminder:** The **deadline to submit an application** for the **CEA Scholarship** is **Friday, May 8, at 5 p.m.** Four scholarships are available for members' children who are high school seniors. Contact Judy Nelson at CEA at 253-4731 for more information. Download an application at <http://tinyurl.com/c2e8sy>.
- ☐ All **textbooks** being considered for final recommendation to the Columbus Board of Education for adoption will be on display until Apr. 30, at the Lower Level Hallway, Columbus Education Center, 270 East State Street, **9:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.**
- ☐ **Spring break** is Friday, Apr. 10–Sunday, Apr. 19. Schools will close 1/2 hour early on Apr. 9. Enjoy your break. *You deserve it.*