Hello and welcome!

Every year is a new and exciting challenge. I want to offer all of you the sincere wish that you achieve all of your professional goals and continue to touch young lives in the special ways that only you can.

I want to urge you to remain positive, and remember how fortunate we are. So many people we know have lost their jobs or taken pay cuts. Their children sit before you, feeling both hope and despair as they look ahead to the years in front of them.

As school-funding fights rage across the nation, we in Columbus City are fortunate. Our residents passed a levy, allowing us to restore classroom hours and maintain important programs. Our governor is addressing funding inadequacies. CEA members just negotiated a 1.75 percent pay raise and cash bonuses. Our insurance benefits for members and their families have been maintained and enhanced, in spite of the current economic climate.

Many of our test scores are steadily improving, which means you are making progress and our children are making important gains. You should feel proud.

We offer support and comfort to our friends in this and other school districts. Teaching is a team effort, encompassing the city, state, region and country. You’ve all got what it takes. You are tough. You are compassionate. You are teachers.

Please let CEA know how we can be of assistance to you as you start this exciting new year. If you have questions and concerns throughout the year about your job or district policies, please give us a call at 253-4731. Feel free to e-mail me at rjohnson@ceaohio.org.

May this be wonderful year!
Don’t give up your students’ recesses

The CEA Master Agreement affords the right of each elementary staff to conduct a written ballot to determine whether or not there shall be one or two 15-minute recesses per day. This ballot vote must be taken by the SrFR and be posted on the school’s bulletin board. In case of a tie, the principal makes the final decision. This decision will remain in effect in future school years unless the ABC or the principal calls for reconsideration. Reconsideration can only be requested once per school year. However, a change in the status quo can only be implemented after the first two days of the school year with the principal’s concurrence. It is clear—once you give up your contractual right to recesses, it is harder to reinstate them back into the schedule.

As stated in the classes we attended at the Partnership for Leadership Conference, physical activity pays intellectual dividends in the classroom. Students who were physically active did better on tests. Let’s pay attention to the data and not give up our hard fought for rights.

New school year; fresh funding perspective

CEA and OEA have been watching and lobbying for increased state funding for Ohio’s schools. We achieved that and more.

Because of Gov. Ted Strickland’s unwavering attention to education as a basis for Ohio’s future success, Ohio now is providing $6.8 billion in 2010 and $6.79 billion in 2011 for education. It also has revamped its funding methods to address imbalances highlighted by four successful state funding lawsuits. CEA is grateful and recognizes the sacrifices made to achieve this goal.

Here are the major details:

• In addition to increases in state funding, Ohio also received a 5.78 percent boost in federal funds from $788 million in federal Title I and IDEA stimulus funds over the next two years.
• A new school-funding system—the Ohio Evidence Based Model—defines the components of a high-quality public education and ensures that they are available to all children.
• An increase of a portion of some voted tax millage to produce more local revenue when property values increase.
• The Education Challenge Factor: adjustments to the formula base for teachers’ salaries (set at $49,914) based partly on concentrations of poverty, district property wealth, parent education levels and local student needs.
• Reduction of the dollars school districts must guarantee on their own before being awarded state funds.
• Funds for all-day kindergarten, increases for joint vocational schools, updated special education acquisition, Impact Aid, and rural schools.

As we begin the new school year, let us be grateful for the progress that has been when it comes to school funding.

Fee waivers available

Fee waivers, also known as college scrip, are outlined in Article 802 of the CEA Master Agreement. Fee waivers are available through a reciprocal agreement with Capital University (and the University of Dayton through Capital), The Ohio State University and Otterbein College. The Autumn 2009 Fee Waiver Applications should be in all buildings on Monday, Aug. 24. Please check with your administrator if you do not have one, or call Norma Oldham at Northgate Center at 365-5049. The completed fee waiver application is due back to Northgate by Friday, Aug. 28, 5 p.m. If you have a Priority I or a Priority II status, be sure to include the proper documentation with your completed application. Your priority status will automatically become Priority III without the proper documentation and may affect whether or not you receive a fee waiver.

Federal education laws: It’s time

It’s time again for Congress to reauthorize the seminal piece of education legislation that governs programs and spending priorities—the 44-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), first passed during President Lyndon Johnson’s administration.

You may know it as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), a dramatic departure from the previous compact. NCLB set explicit federal requirements for student outcomes, required all states to use a particular method for gauging student progress and established federal sanctions for schools where students did not measure up to federal requirements.

Many of us were not satisfied that these regulations would help children. Now we know we were right. Since NCLB was passed, there has been a growing chorus of protests about the impact of the law. While educators support the goals of the legislation—improving student learning and closing achievement gaps—seven years of experience has made it clear that the law is not working and needs to be overhauled.

CEA joins NEA, a host of children’s groups and 149 national organizations (including the National Governors Association and the National Conference of State Legislatures) in urging sweeping changes to the law. We call on the Obama administration to lead the charge and get the U.S. House and Senate working on these changes, summarized by the NEA:

• A partner approach of federal government and state efforts.
• Access for all children to education essential for success in the 21st century—especially those most disadvantaged.
• Correct identification of schools in need of assistance and provision of effective interventions and supports for staff and students.
• Mandated state remedies to address inequities in educational tools, opportunities and resources.
• Respect for collective bargaining for school employees.
• Support for programs such as English language acquisition, Impact Aid, and rural schools.
• A bank of knowledge about teaching practices available to teachers.

Special note

☐ We need your personal e-mail address and cell phone number. Please fill out the card you will get from your faculty representative or e-mail jnelson@ceaohio.org.

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