

The CEA Voice

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Duncan on ESEA

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965. The Act meant to guarantee federal funding to impoverished schools is reauthorized every several years. The 2002 reauthorization of ESEA has been known as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) for the past eight years.



Education Secretary Arne Duncan

Recently, the Obama administration released “A Blueprint for Reform.” The document sets forth the administration’s vision for what a reauthorized version of ESEA would look like. The 40-page document rewrites the federal role in education by building on the reforms already made part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. According to the Blueprint:

- Every student should graduate from high school ready for a college or career by 2020.
- New assessment systems are needed to measure student growth.
- States and districts will develop and implement systems of teacher and principal evaluation and support.
- Highly effective teachers and principals will be identified based on student growth and other factors.
- A new federal accountability system will reward progress and success and require rigorous interventions in the lowest-performing schools.
- Support of all students, including ELL, Native American, homeless, migrant and rural students.
- Race to the Top’s competitive grant program will be continued.
- The expansion of high-performing charter schools and public school choice will be supported.

NEA on ESEA

Two days before the Obama administration forwarded its vision of ESEA’s future to Congress, NEA President Dennis Van Roekel sent a strong message about the Blueprint.

“We are disappointed by this first effort by the administration to rectify the considerable problems in current education law,” said President Van Roekel. “We were expecting to see a much broader effort to truly transform public education for kids. Instead, this blueprint’s accountability system still relies on



NEA President Dennis Van Roekel

standardized tests to identify winners and losers.”

“We were expecting school turnaround efforts to be research-based and fully collaborative,” continued Van Roekel. “Instead, we see too much top-down scapegoating of teachers and not enough collaboration.”

NEA advocates for a reauthorized ESEA that includes:

- The use of multiple, valid and reliable measures of student learning and school performance over time
- Replacing AYP with a system that recognizes schools’ progress and correctly identifies struggling schools, providing them with support instead of punishment
- Ensure education professionals are part of critical decisions affecting students, schools and their work lives
- Provide school leadership that is effective in both operational and instructional leadership
- Ensure adequate and equitable funding for schools and fully fund critical programs such as Title I and IDEA

Principals in need of principles

The school year started off with great promise. The Partnership for Leadership Summit, open to both teachers and administrators, created the impression that this year was going to be different. The theme of the academy was *rigor, relevance* and *relationships*. Of the three, relationships was deemed the most critical.

Most staffs and principals work together to create an atmosphere of trust, professionalism and collegiality. However, our expectation of collaborative, collegial relationships is still not fulfilled in many schools. There are principals who yell at teachers in front of students or colleagues, who ignore teachers, who give *a hand in the face* to teachers expressing concerns, who change teaching assignments from fifth to first grade as a retaliatory measure or who do everything in their power to create an adversarial working environment. How can any meaningful advancement of our students occur in a school with a climate of opposition and conflict?

Until the district decides it cannot afford to have these principals as leaders, this behavior will flourish, and the mistreatment of staff will continue. Perhaps the district needs an effective model similar to the PAR Program to guide new principals or to intervene with experienced principals. As a start, the administration could use the data contained in the building surveys to help correct areas of deficiency.

Staffs need to stand together and put administration on notice that mistreatment of staff members will not be tolerated. Call CEA, and we will work with the PLDs to address problems. We will file grievances when the principal violates the contract.

Musical chairs teaching assignments

Well, here we go again: Start the music. Principals are looking at their teaching rosters and shuffling everyone around. As usual, when the music stopped, a good number of teachers were moved, once again, to other teaching assignments.



Many principals—amazingly—lack the human capital management skills they need to make the most beneficial assignments. HR hires the most qualified applicants for positions, but they give building principals way too much credit in knowing how to appropriately assign teachers to grade levels and subjects to best meet students' needs.

Many teachers find themselves changing grade levels literally every year. Sometimes it seems that these changes are made to encourage those teachers to quit. For instance, in one school, a former middle-school teacher was assigned to teach fifth grade, then the next year assigned to teach first grade. One principal called such a change of assignment *looping*. Apparently, she doesn't understand what the term means. It does not involve moving a teacher from fifth to first grade.

Looping means that a teacher follows a group of students to the next consecutive one or two grade levels. Perhaps this principal failed her math or logic classes. In that building, the principal moved 10 out of 15 teachers in to new assignments in one year.

We are ready to propose that Malcolm Gladwell's book, *Outliers*, be required reading for all administrators. Gladwell writes that a person needs about 10,000 hours to be considered an expert in a field. That is equivalent to about five years of teaching.

How do we expect to become experts in the curriculum if we are required to change our expertise areas every year? It's no wonder that our test scores are not where they should be.

The STRS ballots are coming...your future is at stake

The State Teachers Retirement System will mail out ballots and voting information April 2 for the election for two active board seats. The ballot information will contain instructions on how to vote by mail, phone or online at the STRS Web site. The deadline for voting is May 3, 2010.



CEA is supporting Mark Hill and Dale Price to represent the active teachers on the board. Both candidates agree that all groups participating in STRS share responsibility for securing the program's long-term stability. They believe that the STRS board should devise a phase-in period for eligibility changes, and those who have worked for decades toward retirement should not be forced to work five years longer to get their benefits.

Hill and Price also believe that cost-of-living adjustments for current and future retirees should be the same, and that the STRS board should work to find administrative savings and more fruitful investment returns, so that the system can work efficiently.

Learn more about OEA-endorsed candidates Mark Hill and Dale Price, as well as crucial issues facing the STRS board by <http://bit.ly/awEWoV>.

STRS alternative plan

The State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) board is considering alternatives to its proposal for pension benefit changes. The board met in February to look at the recommendations from Healthcare and Pension Advocates (HPA) for STRS. On the table are plans to increase the required years of service from 30 to 35.

HPA recommends a phase-in for increased years of service, beginning in 2015. It would operate on this schedule:

- 30 years of service until 8/1/15
- 31 years from 8/15 through 7/31/17
- 32 years from 8/17 through 7/31/19
- 33 years from 8/19 through 7/31/21
- 34 years from 8/21 through 7/31/23
- 35 years from 8/23 and beyond

HPA also recommends a 2 percent cost-of-living increase for both current and future retirees, deferred for 36 months and until new retirees reach the age of 60.

Special notes

- ❑ **Teachers** now may **apply online for summer school positions** at all levels, OGT tutoring and summer bridge. Visit <http://columbus.k12.oh.us/summerschool> to complete the application. The **deadline is Apr. 12 at 4:30 p.m.**
- ❑ The Ohio Foreign Language Association has recognized the **Columbus Spanish Immersion K-8 Academy** as the 2010 Outstanding Foreign Language Program of Year. The award recognizes K-12, as well as college- or university-level programs that go far beyond traditional language instruction methods, student achievement and that actively involve a collaborative group of educators. The award will be formally presented on Saturday, Apr. 10.
- ❑ **Northland HS Band Director Charles "Rick" Eckler** has been named the **2010 High School Music Educator of Year** by the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. Similarly, **Byron C. Lockett of École Kenwood K-8** has been named the **2010 Elementary School Music Educator of the Year**. Eckler and Lockett will receive formal recognition on Sunday, Apr. 11.
- ❑ **James "Satch" Sullinger, Northland HS basketball coach**, has been recognized as the **2010 Naismith National Boy's High School Coach of the Year**. The trophy, presented annually, is the most prestigious national award in high school basketball.
- ❑ **Friday, May 7, at 5 p.m.** is the **deadline** for applications for **CEA scholarships**. Go to <http://bit.ly/98fROO> to download an application.
- ❑ The **Capital District** is offering **scholarships** to members who are interested in attending the **OEA Leadership Academy**, to be held **Monday, Aug. 2-Wednesday, Aug. 4**. If you are interested, go to <http://bit.ly/93s0bT> to complete a scholarship application form.
- ❑ Round 1 of the Art. 211 process has ended. Give **CEA feedback** about what worked well and what could have been improved during the posting and interview process. Send your comments to tellcea@ceaohio.org.
- ❑ Applications for the **Teacher Dream Grants** must be submitted online to the CCS Development Office by **Monday, Apr. 12, at 4 p.m.** Go to: <http://www.columbus.k12.oh.us/dreamgrant> to access the online application. For further information, contact the Development Office at 365-8733.
- ❑ Senior FRs must submit requests by fax (253-0465) for **alternative interview panels** to the CEA President **prior to interviewing**. These are the buildings/units that have been approved since the last edition of *The Voice*: **Dana ES, Dominion MS and Ft. Hayes MEC**.