

The Voice

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Columbus Education Association

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Gov. Strickland speaks at OEA RA

More than 80 members from the Columbus Education Association represented you at the Ohio Education Association Representative Assembly (RA) on May 7–8. The OEA RA is the top governing body of the state association and is comprised of more than 1,300 delegates elected by local education associations throughout the state. There were 1,101 registered delegates at this year's RA.

Gov. Ted Strickland was presented with the 2010 OEA Friend of Education Award. The award honors a person or organization whose leadership, acts and support have contributed to the improvement of public education on a statewide or national level.

"When the economic crisis crippled Ohio, Ohio Governor Ted Strickland faced down a budget crisis and partisan opposition to fund and transform Ohio schools—including universal all-day kindergarten and smaller K–3 class sizes," said OEA President Patricia Frost-Brooks.

"This award means a lot," said Gov. Strickland. "In spite of all of our problems, I believe in Ohio. I believe in our public schools, our students and our teachers. With your support and input, we passed an historic education reform plan last year."

"Ohio owes a debt of gratitude to its teachers," continued Gov. Strickland. "Our state's education system has been ranked No. 1 in the Midwest and fifth in America. Thank you for that."

"Yet, these are exceptionally challenging times," said Strickland. "Many states are cutting education funding. In New Jersey, Governor Chris Christie has proposed a \$1 billion cut to education. In Utah, they have actually debated the idea of abolishing the twelfth grade and keeping the students at home to save money. I don't want those kinds of decisions made in Ohio."

Also at the RA, OEA President Patricia Frost-Brooks and Vice President Bill Leibensperger were reelected without opposition to another three-year term. Dale Kain was elected NEA Director #3; Gretchen Washington was elected NEA Director #4; and Janifer Trowles was elected OEA Board of Director At-Large (by acclamation).

Delegates and management staff contributed \$40,394 to the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education. Of that amount, the Capital District contributed more than \$8,000 to the fund. For the second consecutive year, the Capital District was the top contributor of the 10 districts that comprise OEA.

The RA approved the 2010–2012 OEA Strategic Budget, the 2010–2011 Resolutions Report and five New Business Items.



Gov. Ted Strickland

Classified work...not our job

First teachers, now school secretaries and other classified staff are being reduced. Without these front-line professionals, many of our building offices undoubtedly will run less smoothly. However, we want all teachers to know that classified work is not their responsibility.

If your building administrator asks you to perform the functions of classified staff, we urge you to say that CEA does not perform the work of another bargaining unit. Not only is it not our area of expertise, but classified unit members would not want you to do their work. To do so diminishes their bargaining power. Would we want laid-off teachers replaced with non-bargaining unit members? Absolutely not.

It is important that we show solidarity with the classified staff and support each other in these difficult times.

If you run into problems or have questions, call CEA.

NEA Foundation achievement gap grant kickoff

In January, the Columbus Education Association and the Columbus City School District were jointly awarded a five-year, \$1.25 million Closing the Achievement Gap Grant from the NEA Foundation. CEA and CCS were just one of three local union school district partnerships in the country to earn this amazing opportunity. A total of 13 schools in the Briggs and Linden-McKinley feeder patterns will participate in the initiative.

On Monday, May 3, nearly 100 teachers and administrators from participating schools attended the kickoff reception for the Closing the Achievement Gap Initiative held at the Columbus Downtown HS. CEA President Rhonda Johnson, Supt. Gene Harris, NEA Foundation President and CEO Harriet Sanford and Columbus Board of Education member Hanifah Kambon were in attendance.

"This grant comes at a good time," said CEA President Rhonda Johnson. "The administration is providing resources by feeder pattern from the bottom up instead of the top down."

"This feeder pattern thing is real," agreed Supt. Gene Harris. "I want us not to close but eliminate achievement gaps. If it can happen anywhere, it can happen in Columbus, Ohio."

"When looking at your submission, we could see a pattern of collaboration, commitment and engagement with the community," said NEA Foundation President and CEO Harriet Sanford. "In this flat world we live in," added Sanford, "teachers are the difference between what can and what will happen. We want you, the teachers, to be the agent of change, not the object of it."



Honor our speech and hearing specialists

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month. It's the time when we say *thanks* to the district's 61 speech-language pathologists and 3 audiologists.

Our pathologists, often referred to as SLPs, evaluate and treat communication disorders in children ages 3 to 21, helping them with spoken speech sounds, understanding and using words and improving fluency and voice use in regular and special education settings.

More than 3,000 students are in the district's speech-language program. Many of them are dealing with complex syndromes such as autism or learning or cognitive disabilities.

Audiologists evaluate and monitor the hearing of all CCS students, from birth to age 22. They screen students and refer them for other professional attention when appropriate. Being able to hear in the classroom is essential since children spend at least 45 percent of the school day in listening activities.

Thank your building's SLP and our audiologists, whose offices are at A.G. Bell/Huy ES.

Volunteers read the *I Know I Can* children's book

I Know I Can organized volunteers to read in 79 CCS second grade classrooms across the city, May 10-14. Volunteers read *I Know I Can's* self-titled book, a story that motivates students to think about going to college at an early age. In addition to reading the book, volunteers took time to engage second-grade students in a dialogue about why they should make college a part of their educational future.

Among the many volunteers were a number of community leaders, many of whom graduated from CCS. Some of this year's most notable readers included Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner, State Representative Ted Celeste, State Representative W. Carlton Weddington; County Commissioners Marilyn Brown and John O'Grady; Columbus City Council Members Eileen Paley and Andrew Ginther; CCS Superintendent Gene T. Harris; and CCS Board of Education members W. Shawna Gibbs and Stephanie Groce. Eddie Harrell, CEO of Columbus Urban League, and Janet Jackson, President and CEO of United Way of Central Ohio, found time to read as well.

Each spring since 1996, I Know I Can has distributed copies of the book to every second-grade student attending Columbus City Schools in an effort to help encourage young learners to make college a part of their academic goals. The coinciding volunteer opportunity helps to reinforce the book's message in a fun and experiential format. This would not be possible without the partnership and assistance of CCS elementary school teachers, principals and administrators.

For more information, visit www.iknowican.org.

TBS board elections

Teachers for Better Schools (TBS), CEA's separate political-action committee, advocates for teachers and raises money for political candidates, levy and bond campaigns and other ballot issues affecting Columbus teachers, as well as the school community.

At election time, TBS screens candidates for various offices and makes recommendations to the TBS Board of Trustees. The board sends its approved list to the CEA Board of Governors (BOG). The CEA BOG then makes endorsement recommendations to the CEA Legislative Assembly.

Our process of endorsement is highly respected, and our support is strongly desired by all candidates. CEA does not use

any dues money to promote individual candidates or issues.

Recently, TBS elected its Board of Trustee members. Congratulations to: Carol Wagner, President; Beth Masters, Secretary/Vice-President; Greg Goodlander, Treasurer; and CEA President Rhonda Johnson, by virtue of office.

The following is a list of the members of the TBS Board of Trustees: Karen Andermills (Oakmont ES), Michael Barnes (Kingswood Data Center), John Coneglio (Independence HS), Kriston Crombie (Centennial HS), John Hank (Walnut Ridge HS), Phil Hayes (Brookhaven HS), Deborah Huffman-Mirib (Independence HS), C.J. Jamison (Leawood ES), Rick Logan (CEA), Christy Maser (Eastmoor MS), Deborah McCoy (Indianola MS), Ezetta Murray (CEA), Georgia O'Hara (Centennial HS), Deb Starr (Broadleigh ES), Diana Turner (Northland HS), Diana Welsh (Dominion MS), Dwayne Zimmerman (Linden-McKinley HS) and Stephanie Zimmerman (East Linden ES).

Owls, snakes and science...*oh my!*

If you want to identify that critter in your yard, ask a fifth-grader. Kindergarten pupils know a lot about them, too. Students at Berwick K-8 were able to participate in a program called "Critters in Your Neighborhood."



They met Oz, the Barred Owl, Ebony, the Black Rat Snake and three more native Ohio animal species. They also studied animal skins and got to play an interactive animal-identification game.

Ohio Nature Education runs this nature program, which is aligned to state standards. It's a great way to teach your students about science. It's also a fun way for your students to do a volunteer project.

Marti Mercuri, a kindergarten teacher at Berwick K-8, has been volunteering for the program since last year. Marti volunteers by cleaning cages, feeding the animals or helping at programs around the city. She got her class involved, and the students raised \$100 through the Columbus Foundation and adopted a new opossum that was found on Henderson Road.

Check it out. Learn more about the critter programs at www.ohionature.org.

Special notes

- ❑ **Article 211: Round 2 Interviews will close on Tuesday, May 18.**
- ❑ You still can get a ticket for the **34th Annual CEA Awards & Retirement Banquet**, to be held **Friday, May 21**, at the The Westin Columbus. The social hour starts at 6 p.m., with dinner at 7 p.m. **Tickets are \$30**. Full tables are available. Reservations can be made by calling Judy Nelson at 253-4731. The banquet is free for Senior Faculty Representatives, retirees and honorees.
- ❑ Both of **OEA's endorsed candidates** for the **two active teacher seats** on the **State Teacher Retirement System Board** were elected. **Mark Hill** is a middle school math teacher with 21 years of experience and is also Vice President of the Worthington Education Association. **Dale Price** is a high school math teacher in the Toledo Public Schools with 27 years of experience and is also a union representative for his school. CEA congratulates Hill and Price on their election.
- ❑ There will be **CEA-R membership forms** posted in your staff lounge on **Monday, May 17**. Remember, you don't have to be retired to take advantage of the activities sponsored by CEA-R.