

The Voice

www.ceahio.org

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Columbus Education Association

February 7, 2011

Bargaining update

CEA President Rhonda Johnson welcomed the members of the 2011 Bargaining Team to their first meeting on Jan. 26. Bargaining Team Chairperson Deborah Huffman-Mirib thanked members for their willingness to serve and gave them their charge. They received reports from OEA staff members who summarized the landscape for bargaining in Ohio.

Team members will meet on Feb. 7, 9 and 10 to review members' responses from the CEA Bargaining Issues Survey. Team members will compile the results and convert them into the CEA Bargaining Priorities Survey, which will be sent to members' personal e-mail addresses in approximately one week.

If CEA does not have your personal e-mail address and you would like to participate in the upcoming bargaining survey, send your personal e-mail address to tellcea@ceahio.org. Include your name and building/unit. If you have blocked your e-mail address from SurveyMonkey, go to www.surveymonkey.com/OptOut.aspx to unblock it.

CEA is reaching out

CEA is proud to announce our involvement in the Reach Out and Read (ROAR) Community Book Drive. ROAR is a pediatric literacy program sponsored by Nationwide Children's Hospital. The program is dedicated to encouraging family literacy in the home and putting age-appropriate books in the hands of children during well-child visits. Approximately 90 percent of the patients who benefit from this program are CCS students.



The campaign runs from Monday, Feb. 7–Friday, Mar. 11. This is a great opportunity for CEA to give back to the community. Since 2007, CEA members have donated more than 12,200 books valued at \$85,000. We would like to exceed last year's campaign collection of 3,500 books. Please support this year's ROAR campaign by donating two new books appropriate for children ages 6 months to 5 years old.

CEA has added an exciting new component to the campaign. Members who donate at least three new books will be entered into a drawing to win a NOOKcolor. Give your books to your FR or campaign chairperson, and ask for an entry form. Send the completed form to Tracey Johnson at CEA by Thursday, Mar. 17.

On Saturday, Feb. 12, Barnes & Noble will donate 15–25 percent of the day's sales to our campaign when you use Bookfair #10405363 at checkout. Also, you can shop at www.bn.com from Feb. 12–17 with the bookfair number. Share this information with your family and friends to join in the campaign.

For more information, contact Tracey Johnson at CEA (253-4731); or e-mail her at tjohnson@ceahio.org.

CEA blood drive

On Wednesday, Feb. 9, you can provide a much-needed service to the community by supporting CEA's blood drive at The Ohio State University's Student Union on N. High Street. Teachers who are assigned to OSU on PD day are invited to give blood during the lunch break or after the sessions end.



Winter weather has resulted in the cancellation of more than 14,000 blood and platelet donations, with a total shortfall of more than 1,500 here in our own community. The blood supply is low, and Type O negative is at a critical level. No matter your blood type, you are needed.

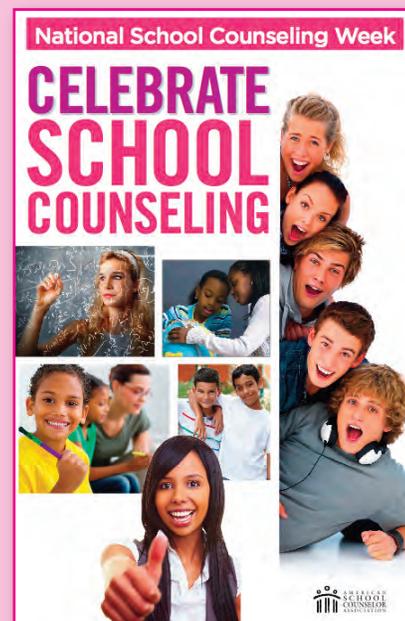
When you give, you save lives; and you also help OSU win the American Red Cross Big Ten Blood Drive Challenge, ending Feb. 25. When you give on Feb. 9, you may enter a drawing to win free groceries for a year from Kroger. Details are at www.redcrossracing.com.

Thank a school counselor

Counselors do a lot during the school day. For instance, professional school counselors help students:

- set goals
- explore careers
- plan for college and select appropriate courses for post-secondary options
- develop skills in decision making, conflict resolution and problem solving
- help teachers include character, cultural competence and skill development in the curriculum
- involve families and communities in character education programs
- work with other educators and community resources to identify and address the needs of potential dropouts
- provide responsive programs, including short-term individual, group, family and crisis counseling and so much more

CEA honors our counselors during National School Counseling Week, Feb. 7–11. Take a moment to thank our licensed Columbus elementary, middle and high school counselors. Without them, we cannot fully succeed in educating our students.



Retirement system update

On Jan 27, the STRS Board voted to make major changes to its proposal to address the long-term solvency of the pension plan. This action was a result of a directive from leaders at the Statehouse.

Earlier this month, STRS was informed that Governor Kasich would not sign legislation that increased employer contributions or failed to reduce the funding period (the amount of time projected to pay off the plan's unfunded liabilities) to 30 years or less.

OEA does not support the new plan adopted by the STRS Board. While we understand the rigid timeline and the draconian constraints the Board was under, we believe that the cuts are too deep and do not offer sufficient flexibility to teachers who are nearing the end of their careers. In addition, the calculations this plan is built upon ignore billions of dollars in investment earnings over the past six months.

Improving the long-term solvency of the pension plan requires difficult decisions. Under any scenario teachers will be asked to work longer, pay more and receive less in retirement. OEA supported the plan adopted by

the STRS Board in October 2010. That plan shares the responsibility for improving system funding more equitably between active employees, retirees and employers.

The Board voted 7–3 to adopt the plan outlined below. There was also an amendment to remove the ability for the Board to levy up to a 14% employee contribution. That amendment failed by a vote of 5–5. Please note, all of these changes would require a change in state law.

Components of the new STRS proposal

Contributions: Additional 3% employee contribution with a three-year phase-in beginning 7/1/2012, plus language authorizing the Board by an additional 1%.

Retirement Eligibility: Beginning 8/1/2015, phase in a change in age and service requirements for full benefits to age 60 with 35 years of service. Retains age 65 with 5 years of service. Beginning 8/1/2015 early retirements are subject to actuarial reduction. Eligibility changes phased in according to the following chart:

Plan	Contributions	Retirement Eligibility	Final Average Salary	COLA	Retirement Formula
Current law	Employee: 10% Employer: 14%	Normal retirement: 5 years of service at age 65; 30 years of service at any age	Average of 3 highest years	3% annual COLA	2.2% for first 30 years; enhanced benefit for 35 years
Plan approved October 2010	Increase employee contribution: increase by 2.5% to 12.5% (phased in 2011–2016); increase employer contribution: increase by 2.5% to 16.5% (phased in 2016–2021)	Full benefits: 30 years of service at age 60 (effective 2015), 35 years of service at any age (phased in 2015–2023); retains 5 years of service at age 65; early retirements subject to actuarial reduction	Board to set FAS of 3–5 years (effective 2015)	2% annual COLA; new retirees defer COLA for 36 months (effective 2011)	2.2% for first 30 years; 2.5% each year over 30 (effective 2015)
Plan approved January 2011	Increase employee contribution: increase by 3% (phased in 2012–2015) with Board authority to increase to 14%; no change in employer contributions	Full benefits: Age 60 with 35 years of service; (phased in 2013–2023); retains 5 years of service at age 65; early retirements subject to actuarial reduction	Average of 5 highest years (effective 2015)	2% annual COLA; new retirees defer for 60 months (effective 2012)	2.2% for all years of service (effective 2015)

- ◆ Final Average Salary: Average of the five highest years of salary effective 8/1/2015.
- ◆ Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA): Effective 7/1/2012, 2% for all retirees, 60-month deferral for new retirees effective 8/1/2012.
- ◆ Retirement Formula: 2.2% for all years of service effective 8/1/2015 (35 years of service represents 77% of FAS).

Representative Lynn Wachtmann (R-Napoleon) has indicated he will soon introduce a bill as a vehicle for the changes recommended by the pension plans. At introduction, the bill is expected to have “placeholder” language based on plans adopted in 2009 (without increased employer contributions). The new STRS plan and other changes will be incorpo-

rated into that legislation.

While much will continue to evolve on this issue, OEA's position is unchanged. OEA supports the plan adopted by the STRS Board in October 2010. This plan offers equitable solutions and are phased in over a reasonable period of time to minimize the impact of those near to retirement.

The chart on the following page compares current law, the plan adopted by the STRS Board in October 2010 and the new plan adopted by the STRS Board.

Contact your state legislators, and tell them about the importance of your pension and the need for changes that treat teachers fairly. Go to www.legislature.state.oh.us/ to find your House Representative and your State Senator. CEA will continue to keep you updated on this critical issue.

Fiscal Year	<2015		2015–2017		2017–2019		2019–2021		2021–2023		2023+	
	Age	YOS	Age	YOS	Age	YOS	Age	YOS	Age	YOS	Age	YOS
No Reduction	Any	30	56	31	57	32	58	33	59	34	60	35
No Reduction	65	5	65	5	65	5	65	5	65	5	65	5
Reduced	55	25	55	26	55	27	55	28	55	29	55	30
Reduced	60	5	60	5	60	5	60	5	60	5	60	5

Spring quarter CCS/OSU Outreach Courses

The CCS/OSU Outreach Courses for Spring Quarter 2011 will be open for online pre-registration Jan. 31–Feb. 13. Available courses are:

- ◆ 4–5 Endorsement: Integrating Mathematics and Science in the 4th and 5th Grades (EDU T&L 682)
- ◆ Building a Foundation of 21st Century Teacher Skills and Tools (727.23)
- ◆ Compassionate Teaching: Understanding the Other from Within
- ◆ Delivering Effective Services to Enhance the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs (EDUPAES 769)
- ◆ Ecopsychology: Exploring the Human-Nature Relationship (EDUT&L 925)
- ◆ ESL: Field Experience in Second Language Teaching (EDUT&L 887)
- ◆ Graphic Novels as Literature: Engaging Reluctant Readers
- ◆ Impacting Teaching and Learning: Engaging, Enhancing, Empowering the Brain (EDUT&L 727.10)
- ◆ Improving Student Behavior Through Collaborative Problem Solving
- ◆ Linguistic Materials for Teachers (EDUT&L 612)
- ◆ Parent Professional Partnership (EDUPAES 677)
- ◆ Practical Lessons for Today's Principal
- ◆ Rigor, Relevance and Relationships to improve Academic Achievement

- ◆ School- and Family-Based Interventions

For more information about these classes and to pre-register, go to www.columbus.k12.oh.us/osu and click on “Spring 2011 Courses,” then read through the two information pages to get to the list of courses.

Special notes

- ❑ The **declaration period** for CEA elections ended on **Feb. 4. Campaigning** for the open positions is **Feb. 7–18**, with **voting Feb. 22–Mar. 7** and **ballot tallying Mar. 8.**
- ❑ **Candidate filing deadlines** for statewide and electoral unit **OEA Board of Directors** positions are fast approaching. A **Capital 1** Board of Directors member will be elected at the Capital Spring RA on Wednesday, Apr. 27. The declaration **deadline** is **Friday, Feb. 11.** Contact Judy Nelson at CEA (253-4731) to obtain a declaration form.
- ❑ **Secure your pension.** Sign the petition to **re-elect Tai Hayden** to the **STRS Board.** She needs 500 signatures from active teachers and faculty contributing to STRS. Forms have been sent out to each local president and each OEA field office. **These petitions cannot be copied or reproduced.** You can request that petitions be sent to you directly by contacting Robert Davis in OEA governmental services at davistr@ohea.org.