

The CEA Voice

www.ceaohio.org

Volume XLI, No. 27

Columbus Education Association

March 7, 2011



S.B. 5 passes Senate, goes to House

The game was on. Two players wanted to block Senate Bill 5. But Ohio Senate President Tom Niehaus (R) replaced these committee members with legislators who favor the change to Ohio's collective bargaining laws. The measure passed. It was a close vote: 7–5 in committee and 17–16 in the Senate.

It now goes to the Ohio House, where we are told that Speaker William G. Batchelder (R) is pushing the discussion along, hoping for quick approval.

But the fight is NOT over. We still have a chance to defeat this legislation. Senators had only a day to consider a 99-page amendment to the 475-page bill. Not every lawmaker is happy with it. Sens. Bill Seitz of Cincinnati and Scott Oelslager of Canton, who were replaced on the committees and Timothy J. Grendell of Chesterland—all Republicans—were opposed to the changes in contract dispute procedures, calling them unconstitutional.

“What a deal,” Seitz said. “It’s a ‘heads, I win; tails, you lose’ solution.”

Sen. Nina Turner, a Cleveland Democrat, said: “This law is not only unjust, it is unconscionable. But it is also un-American. It strips middle-class Americans of their rights.”

Sen. Jim Hughes (R) of Columbus also voted no.

The bill would bring major changes to the ways in which public employees deal with their contracts. The bill limits K–12 school employees in their right to collectively bargain such items as wages, hours and terms and conditions of employment.

Among the provisions, the bill:

- Gives the public employer the right to accept its own last best offer if the parties are unable to reach agreement on a contract
- Eliminates the right to strike for all public employees, imposing a penalty of up to \$1,000 or up to 30 days in jail, or both
- Requires that public employees pay at least 15 percent of the cost of their healthcare insurance premiums
- Reinstates pay ranges for all public employees, except for police, firefighters and teachers
- Bases teachers' wages on merit, including factors such as student performance

- Establishes matters not appropriate for bargaining, including healthcare benefits, privatization, workforce levels, class size and other provisions
- Gives preference to teachers under continuing contracts, then considers the relative quality of performance as the principal factor in determining layoffs
- Measures teacher performance by considering the level of license held, highly-qualified status, value-added student performance and evaluations

As Senate Democratic Leader Capri S. Cafaro of Hubbard told *The Dispatch*: “The amended bill still strips public employees of any means to effectively bargain and would put them in jail if they strike. Senate Bill 5 turns collective bargaining into a one-sided conversation where management always gets the last word.”

Bill supporters argue that the changes would allow governments more flexibility to deal with budget challenges.

Gov. John Kasich has said if the House approves it, he will sign it as soon as it clears the Conference Committee. Democrats and union leaders have said they plan to immediately ask Ohioans to overturn it.

On Tuesday, more than 25,000 people gathered in front of the Statehouse protesting these changes. Thank you for your efforts so far. You are the reason that the vote was so close.

We urge you to continue to get involved. Take action: Tell your legislators that this is a bad law. Write them, visit them, e-mail them and call them. Use OEA's toll free Educator Connector phone line at (888) 907-7309 to connect quickly and easily to state legislators. CEA will keep you updated on activities and events through e-mail and text messages. If we do not have your personal e-mail address or cell phone number, send a message to tellcea@ceaohio.org.

We have no time to lose!

Bargaining update

The CEA Board of Governors and the Bargaining Team have recommended bargaining priorities to the Legislative Assembly (LA) based on bargaining survey results. At the special meeting of the Legislative Assembly held on Thursday, Mar. 3, faculty representatives made amendments and voted on the recommendations.

Soon, the CEA Bargaining Team will formulate proposals based on those recommendations of the LA. The proposals will later be exchanged with the board's bargaining team.

CEA will e-mail members a list of the priority items voted on by the Legislative Assembly. If you do not have a personal e-mail address registered with CEA, send an e-mail to tellcea@ceaohio.org from your personal address, include your full name, building/unit name and cell phone number.

CEA will continue to update you on bargaining activities as they occur.

Article 211: Priority Round

The district is holding a special round for positions in Priority Schools. This phase of the 211 process begins on Friday, Mar. 11, for Alum Crest HS, Champion MS, Columbus Global Academy (6–12), Fairwood ES, Heyl ES, Lincoln Park ES, Linden-McKinley STEM, South HS, Southmoor MS, Weinland Park ES and West HS.

All teachers are eligible to apply for positions, even if they are in the midst of fulfilling a three-year commitment to a building.

The schedule is as follows:

Friday, Mar. 11Priority Round postings open

Monday, Mar. 14 . .Priority Round interviews open

Tuesday, Mar. 15Priority Round postings close

Thursday, Mar. 17 . .Priority Round interviews close

To apply for a position in one of the Priority Schools, send a cover letter, résumé and a copy of your teaching certificate/license to the building principal and the Senior FR.

Give and you could win

CEA's Reach Out and Read Book Campaign kicked off on Feb. 7 and ends on Friday, Mar. 11. Members are asked to donate at least two new books. See your faculty representative for the location in your building to drop off books.



If you donate three new books, you are eligible to enter the drawing for a NookColor™. See your FR for an entry form, and return it to CEA no later than Thursday, Mar. 17. Only one entry per member is allowed.

FRs can begin dropping off books to the CEA office starting Friday, Mar. 11. Make sure your building/unit name is clearly written on the box or bag of books. We encourage everyone to participate in this worthwhile campaign. If you have any questions, contact Tracey Johnson at 253-4731; or e-mail her at tjohnson@ceaohio.org.

Additional PAS awardees

Following a careful review of results by the Joint Performance Advancement System (PAS) Committee, the following individuals won their appeals for completing their PAS projects during the 2009–2010 school year: Cynthia Boyd, Starling MS; Shalonda Davis, Avondale ES; Jodie Fissel, Avalon ES; Kristin Foster, Trevitt ES; Katherine Goldman, Valleyview ES; Patricia Johnson, Dominion MS; Melinda Marquart, Parsons ES; DeAndrea Ndirangu, Weinland Park ES; and Cynthia Wilimitis, Northtowne ES.

Each person will receive a \$2,500 stipend. Board legislation has already been approved.

If you must take extended leave, take note

Article 702 of our *Master Agreement* outlines our negotiated policy on extended leaves. Federal law provides us unpaid leave for up to 12 weeks, with a guarantee that our job will be held for us. Reasons for such leave:

- Complications during and after pregnancy or prenatal medical care
- Adoption or foster care
- Care of a spouse, son or daughter or parent who has a serious health condition
- A serious health condition that makes it impossible to work

Certificated employees who are absent for more than 10

consecutive days need to comply with the following:

- Complete the Application for Leave form, and submit medical documentation.
- Submit forms and documentation 10 days in advance if the leave is planned or no later than the 10th day of absence.

When you return from leave, you must let the district know in advance. The means:

- Seven days in advance if in paid status
- Thirty days in advance if in unpaid status

You also must provide:

- Release from CCS Health Services, unless leave is for a family member, paternity or adoption
- Your release form to Health Services within 14 days of the date the physician releases you back to work
- Proof of adoption from adoption agency, court or other legal body for adoption leave

Some exceptions may apply. For questions, contact Cathy Jones at 365-5881.

CEA runoff election schedule

Voting in the CEA Elections ends on Mar. 7, with ballot tallying on Mar. 8.

There are five candidates for Minority Governor At-Large, so in the event of a runoff for that position, the election dates for that race are as follows: Campaigning, Monday, Mar. 14–Monday, Mar. 21; voting, Tuesday, March 22–Monday, Apr. 4; and ballot tallying, Tuesday, Apr. 5. See your FR to obtain a ballot.

Special notes

- ❑ The final date of **notice of intent to retire** for teachers assigned to the recently identified priority schools (**Fairwood ES, Heyl ES, Lincoln Park ES and South HS**) has been **extended** from Feb. 1 to **Mar. 31, 2011**. This means that bargaining unit members in those schools are still eligible for **enhanced severance pay** for the 2010–2011 school year.
- ❑ The **deadline** for applications for **CEA scholarships** is **Friday, May 6, at 5 p.m.** Two scholarships are available: the **\$1,500 Christa McAuliffe Scholarship** awarded to an education student and the **\$1,000 CEA General Scholarship**. Both are renewable for up to four years but at a reduced level from the first-year award. CEA members can go to <http://bit.ly/eSj3rJ> to download the application form.
- ❑ **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*: **Neil Avenue, OT/PT and Windsor ES**.
- ❑ The **CEA Travel Group** is offering a fabulous trip to **Spain and Portugal** from **June 10–21**. See Madrid, Toledo, Avila, Salamanca, the Shrine of Fatima, Coimbra and Lisbon and many other nearby sights. The cost for the trip is **\$3,532, airfare included**. A **deposit of \$500** is due by **Tuesday, Mar. 15**, to Marty Adler, Bexley Travel, 2940 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH 43209. Call CEA at 253-4731 to let Carol, Rick or Ezetta for more information.
- ❑ Some CEA members may be able to deduct a portion of their **union dues** on their **income tax returns**. If you are a **full-time employee** and are on **Pay Plan A** (21 Pays), you can deduct **\$774.96**. If you are on **Plan B** (26 Pays), the amount is **\$774.07**. If you have **switched from Plan A to B**, the amount is **\$720.18** and if you **moved from Plan B to A**, **\$828.85**. **Half-time employees** on **Plan A** (21 Pays) can deduct **\$436.46** and **Plan B** (26 Pays) would allow a **\$436.46** deduction.