

The Voice

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Is your certificate current?

A number of teachers have received notices from CCS HR Director Mira Wright about their certificates expiring June 30, 2012. Please make sure your credentials are up to date. You must complete the required coursework or CEUs necessary for renewal to be certified by the Ohio Department of Education for the 2012–2013 school year.



Teachers who possess a limited contract must submit a completed application, fee and official transcripts showing the completed coursework and/or CEUs to the Local Professional Development Committee (LPDC) by Feb. 1 or risk non-renewal in April. The LPDC will forward all approved applications to Human Resources by Mar. 1.

Teachers who possess a continuing contract must submit a completed application, fee and official transcripts showing the completed coursework and/or CEUs to the LPDC before June 30, 2012. Failure to do so will result in suspended employment with the district.

All expiring eight-year professional certificates must be transitioned to five-year professional licenses. To do so requires completion of 6 semester hours, 9 quarter hours and/or 18 CEUs of coursework relevant to classroom teaching and/or area of certification since the latest date of the certificate to be transitioned. Also, a completed Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) must be submitted and then approved by the LPDC prior to completing any coursework. You must also have a current BCI and FBI background check on file with the Ohio Department of Education.

Those renewing their professional licenses for the FIRST time are responsible for the design of an IPDP based on the needs of the educator, the students, the school and the school district, subject to approval of the LPDC. In accordance with the approved plan, the educator must complete 6 semester hours, 9 quarter hours and/or 18 CEUs of coursework related to classroom teaching and/or the area of licensure as approved by the LPDC since the issuance of the license to be renewed. Coursework and CEUs may be combined.

To find out more about the requirements for these and other categories, please contact Nancy Young, Teacher Certification/Licensure, at 365-5658. Questions concerning CEU credits are available through the Northgate Center at 365-5039.

Please note: It is critical that you do NOT mail your application directly to the Ohio Department of Education. Send the materials to the LPDC or to Human Resources.

Be there for your colleagues

What if you became ill and had to make the choice of going to work or losing everything?

Each year, that's exactly what happens to some of your colleagues. They experience devastating illnesses and injuries that require long recovery periods. Fortunately, there's a way we can all help. It's called catastrophic leave, and we need your donations now.

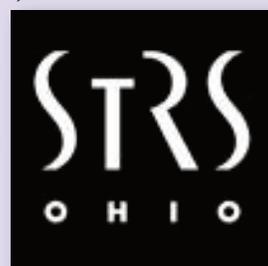
A member of the bargaining unit who has exhausted all accumulated paid leave as a result of a catastrophic illness or injury of a temporary nature may be granted additional sick leave days through the donation of accumulated unused sick leave by other bargaining unit members who volunteer to do so.

Take the time to fill out a sick leave form available at your workplace. To donate to a specific person, enter your name at the top of the CCS "Report of Employee Absence" form. In the "Comments" section add the words, "Catastrophic Sick Leave Donation." Write in the name of the intended recipient. If you are going to make a general sick leave donation, fill out the form with "Catastrophic Sick Leave Donation" in the "Comments" section. Be sure that you and your principal or supervisor sign the form.

We have been experiencing a shortage of donated days for more than a year. Please take this simple step and help your fellow educators.

STRS sets record straight

In September, the Buckeye Institute, an Ohio-based right-wing think tank, released a misleading report entitled, "Taxpayers on the Hook: Taxpayer Contribution Rates for Ohio Government Pensions Outpace National Averages." The report claimed that the 14 percent employer contribution to STRS was the ninth highest out of 34 states with similar teacher retirement programs. However, the report failed to take into account that Ohio's public employers do not contribute to Social Security. In reality, the employer contribution rate is below the national average when you factor in the Social Security contribution rate of 6.2 percent that 22 states make on behalf of their public educators. With this factored in, STRS ranked 20 out of the 34 states in the report and 7 among the 12 non-Social Security states.



The Buckeye Institute report also suggested that 401(k)-style defined contribution plans are better alternatives for Ohio's public employees. However, study after study has shown that these plans do not offer sufficient economic security and leave their enrollees ill-prepared for retirement. Simply put, defined benefit plans offer greater retirement benefits at a lower cost than defined contribution plans.

Harris awarded Ohio Superintendent of the Year

Dr. Gene Harris is one of the country's longest-tenured urban school superintendents. In the leadership position for a decade, she is one of the elite in the nation, where the average inner-city superintendent stays in the job for four years.

Her longevity and her success on the job haven't gone unnoticed. Former recipients of The Buckeye Association of School Administrators' Ohio Superintendent of the Year award passed the title on to her earlier this month. Harris gave credit for her award to the district's parents, staff and community and to her family.

"I am energized every day working with our immensely talented teachers, principals and support staff on behalf of our students," said Harris. "Every segment of the community—business leaders, community-based organizations, parents, faith leaders—has partnered with schools and the district to support our kids. That makes the work enjoyable and is a major factor in our academic progress. There are not many urban superintendents who can make this claim."

Harris, who holds a Ph.D. in education from Ohio University, took the top job in 2001. She promptly pledged to move the district from the state's "academic emergency" ranking to "academic watch," and then to "continuous improvement," where CCS now ranks. She has declared that her next major goal is a 90 percent graduation rate.

She has vastly improved the school district's relationship with the business community, calling upon it for guidance, and hiring business executives to assume positions that weren't handled efficiently. *Catalyst*, a school reform journal, noted that CCS has had five consecutive clean state audits since 2002.

Harris' work with CEA also is noteworthy. It's not always easy, but Dr. Harris strives to find solutions to problems, and has proven to be a willing, capable, good-faith, negotiating partner during some of the most challenging years the school district has faced.

Harris' nomination will be forwarded to the American Association of School Administrators' for consideration for the National Superintendent of the Year award.



Dr. Gene T. Harris

I Know I Can

Did you know...I Know I Can's mission is to inspire, enable and support Columbus City Schools students in the pursuit and completion of a college degree?

Did you know...I Know I Can assists over 500 families with submitting their FAFSA each year?

Did you know...I Know I Can awards over 1,000 students with its \$1,200 grant annually?

Did you know...I Know I Can put over 200 students through an Algebra 1 readiness camp this summer?

Did you know...I Know I Can serviced over 600 CCS middle school families through its Blueprint: College parent engagement workshops in 2010–11?

Did you know...I Know I Can hosted over 1,200 8th graders on college campus tours last year?

Did you know...every dollar you donate to I Know I Can directly benefits the students of Columbus City Schools?

I Know I Can appreciates your continued support of its programs and services and asks you to consider I Know I Can in your 2011 charitable giving.



MLK is approaching

We are all excited about CEA's 33rd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Dinner.

This year, it will be held on Thursday, Jan. 12, at the Hyatt Regency Columbus. If you haven't been to one of these celebrations, you are in for a treat. The King Dinner is the oldest such commemoration in Columbus. It is always a moving and inspiring experience and one of our members' favorite events, with our noteworthy speaker and the presentation of awards.

This year, our keynote speaker is the Rev. Jesse Jackson. Tickets will go fast. Get yours now by calling CEA. Individual tickets are \$30. Tables of eight are \$240.

CEA will announce the winners of our major prizes, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award and the Helen Jenkins Davis Award, in the Dec. 5 *Voice*.



Reach Out and Read at Barnes & Noble

Saturday, Dec. 10, is a great day to do some early holiday shopping and support a worthy cause. On this day, Barnes & Noble (B&N) will donate a percentage of your purchase to CEA's Reach Out and Read book drive. Go to any Central Ohio B&N and give the bookfair number 10575470 at the check out.

Growing Up Buckeye children's author Brent Saneholtz will be reading during storytime from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at the Lennox location at 1739 Olentangy River Rd.

Can't make it to a B&N location on Dec. 10? You can still support Reach Out and Read by shopping online at BN.com/bookfairs from Dec. 10–15 by following these steps:

New to BN.COM?

1. Go to BN.COM/bookfairs, and click "Start Shopping Now"
2. Shop from the entire site—almost everything is eligible for our bookfair
3. Set up a new account when you are ready to check out
4. On the bottom of the payment page, check the box where it asks, "Is this a bookfair order?"
5. Type your bookfair ID: 10575470 in the space provided and continue with checkout

Already Have An Account?

1. Go to BN.COM/bookfairs, and click "Start Shopping Now"
2. Shop from the entire site—almost everything is eligible for our bookfair
3. After you have made your selections, proceed to Checkout. From the Checkout page, click on the "Change" button on the upper right of the Payment tab.
4. Payment screen will expand, and you will see the "Check this box if it is a bookfair order" on the bottom of the page.
5. Type your bookfair ID: 10575470 in the space provided and continue with checkout

So mark your calendar; and join CEA on Saturday, Dec. 10, or online and help us support pediatric literacy.

Special note

- ☐ CEA thanks the following building/unit that has recently **completed its United Way campaign: Africentric EC SS.**