

The Voice

Rhonda Johnson, President

www.ceahio.org

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FAST Act will help schools

Shortly after President Obama's visit to the Ft. Hayes campus, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown and U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut introduced the Fix America's Schools Today (FAST) Act into both houses of Congress.



The bill authorizes \$25 billion in funds for school renovation and modernization across the country. Ohio could receive more than \$900 million in federal funding to modernize and repair its schools if Congress passes this legislation. Columbus City Schools could receive more than \$110 million through the FAST Act.

"The FAST Act would help school districts make critical repairs to existing facilities or supplement their current maintenance efforts," said Sen. Brown. "This bill is about jobs—but it's also about our education and our nation's future."

Sen. Brown's office estimated that more than 12,000 jobs for Ohio construction workers and skilled laborers would be created through this legislation. Additionally, schools upgraded with FAST Act funds would reduce their districts' utility costs through energy conservation and efficiency improvements written into the bill.

Forty percent of the bill's \$25 billion would go to the 100 largest high-need school districts in the U.S. The remaining funds would be split among state departments of education to administer through competitive grants.

The Columbus Education Association, National PTA, Council for Great City Schools, AFL-CIO, Ohio Federation of Teachers and the Ohio Education Association were the first organizations to immediately endorse the FAST Act.

The average public school building was built 40 years ago. If we put off needed school maintenance and repairs, it will cost our country more than a quarter-trillion dollars. CEA urges you to contact your member of Congress today. Use the CEAmobile app and select "Call to action: The FAST Act" at <http://bit.ly/ceamobile> to tell your member of Congress to fast-track the FAST Act.

On Thursdays, we wore red. On Nov. 8, we prevailed.

It started with an announcement: Gov. John Kasich intended to reduce the power of Ohio's public unions. It grew to a flurry of phone calls and meetings. Then the buses rolled in. Thousands of people protested at the Statehouse. Legislators heard the rumble.

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They closed the doors and approved Senate Bill 5.

These lawmakers apparently did not realize what they had started. Within 48 hours, the blizzard came: crowds in the Ohio Senate gallery, mountains of mail, floods of e-communication, the roar of rallies held statewide and the growing Facebook movement against this move to cut hard-working people off at the knees.

We were not having it. The war was on. We rose en masse, diligently using all the peaceful means at our disposal. We blogged. We posted. We stood on street corners. We gathered more signatures than we needed to repeal this legislation. Then we got out the vote. On Thursdays, we wore red.

Our voice was loud. It resonated. We overturned SB 5.

It was an exciting time, reminiscent of the beginning days of union organizing. CCS' Phil Hayes has captured it on video. You can relive it at <http://youtube.com/ceahio>. In this 21-minute replay, you can look back at what it took for us to prevail. See the faces of the people involved: all ages, all backgrounds, together in solidarity. You might be in this video! You should be proud of your efforts as an Association and share the video with your friends and family.

Expecting to be absent? Follow the rules

Here's the problem. Members think there is a shortage of substitutes. When teachers are absent, there never seems to be substitutes to take their classes.

Don't believe it. What is really happening is that some teachers may not be following the correct procedures for calling in absences, and some administrators may not be reporting teachers' absences to SEMS in a timely manner. Even those among us who follow the rules are having problems because there are other colleagues and principals who are not. It's a domino effect.

You must call SEMS, or you must call your principal if you find you cannot attend school due to an illness or emergency. You must make the call at least one hour and 30 minutes prior to your normal required reporting time, or as soon as possible thereafter. If possible, please estimate the duration of the absence.

If you know you will be absent for longer than 10 school days or you have already been absent that long, you must submit an absence form to Human Resources by the 10th day of your absence and include a physician's statement.

Before returning, teachers must contact Human Resources with written notice at least three school days before intending to return to work. If you have been absent Monday through Thursday, you must inform your school administrator of your return in advance; that is, by 2 p.m. the day before you wish to return.

Please review the *Master Agreement*, Section 701.03, to learn about other situations and their requirements. Call us if you need clarification.

Get involved. Run for an Association office.

CEA members have a unique opportunity to participate in the Association by running for office and by voting in CEA elections. It's a great way to be directly involved in decision-making, be a resource for your fellow members and make positive change.

The following positions will be open in the CEA Spring 2012 Elections: President and Vice President (two-year terms); Governors for Districts 2 (unexpired term ending July 31, 2013); 3, 6, Elementary School At-Large and two High School At-Large (three-year terms); 2012 NEA Delegates; and 2012-13 OEA Delegates.

Members may declare candidacy for these positions from Dec. 12, 2011-Feb. 3, 2012. The formal campaign period is from Feb. 4-Mar. 5. Voting will take place from Feb. 21-Mar. 5. The Elections Committee will tabulate votes on Mar. 6.

In the event of a run-off election, the formal campaigning period will be from Mar. 12-Apr. 2. Voting takes place Mar. 20-Apr. 2. The Elections Committee will tally votes on Apr. 3.

MLK tickets are going fast

Join us for one of the most memorable dinners in our history. On Jan. 12, we welcome the Rev. Jesse Jackson to CEA's 33rd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Dinner held at the Hyatt Regency Columbus.

Jackson is an American civil rights leader, Baptist minister, former U.S. presidential hopeful and one of the country's most popular speakers.

We also will honor our own. This year's dual winners of the MLK Humanitarian Award are Pastor Dale B. Snyder, senior pastor of Bethel AME Church in Linden, and Columbus City Council Member Priscilla R. Tyson. Our recipient of the Helen Jenkins David Award is Jimmie K. Beall, guidance counselor at Monroe MS.

Don't delay. Get your tickets. Reservations can be made by calling the CEA office. Tickets are \$30 and tables of eight are \$240.

Retired and still learning

There's a lot going on this winter for our retired Association members, and each activity is an opportunity to continue to learn. CEA-R has organized several upcoming events.

Heard of Meals on Wheels? On Jan. 9, CEA-R will visit LifeCare Alliance, which administers this and other lifesaving programs to the homebound and seniors.

Human trafficking is another topic that affects our community. Julie Clark of DOMA International will talk on Feb. 10 about the Bloom! program helping women move from being victims to survivors. Their Project Green Light aids schools in incorporating Anti-Human Trafficking into their school curriculums. Lunch will be at J Liu in Worthington.

On Jan. 24, CEA-R invites you to Havens Corners Church in Reynoldsburg to hear from animal rights advocate and author Margo Mayberry. On Feb. 13, CEA-R members will take a tour of Port Manatee, Fla., the closest U.S. deep-water seaport to the Panama Canal.

The coming season also includes Vaud-Villities on Apr. 21 and a visit to the Phoenix Bat Company in Plain City, followed by lunch at Der Dutchman.

Also in April, CEA-R will tour Tiffin with a stop at The Ritz Theater and a visit backstage, followed by a stop at the Tiffin Glass Museum.

CEA-R dues are \$10 yearly or \$100 for a lifetime membership. If you are a retired CEA member, consider joining

this active and interesting group of people. To find out more, go to www.cea-retired.com/.

We would like to thank our retired teachers for always supporting CEA with their volunteer efforts.

Changes in lost materials claims

Long ago, when a school building flooded and the teachers lost all their personal teaching materials, CEA's Board of Governors created the Lost Materials Fund. The funds came from interest earned on CEA accounts. Before the economy tanked, we were able to fund many more lost items, such as teacher cell phones, broken car windows and slashed tires. But our accounts are not earning a lot these days, and the board's auditors have advised us to limit the payouts from this fund.

For the time being, our reimbursement limit is \$100 and the payout is only for teaching materials and teaching equipment. When times are better, we hope to cover other personal losses.

If you need to make a claim, you can find a claim form on www.ceaohio.org, under "forms." Our *FR Notebook* has also been updated to reflect the change.

College? Yes!

Do your students and parents know how much it costs to attend college? Will they be ready?

Yes, they can. Blueprint: College will help.

This four-part series by I Know I Can helps the parents of middle school students understand what it takes to help their children attend college. The series helps families understand what a college education means for your children's futures. Families learn about budgeting, saving, and accessing financial aid and scholarships through hands-on exercises and informational meetings. Students learn about the ACT and can get a tour of Ohio State University.

Remaining upcoming workshop dates are College Prep 101, Dec. 13 and 15; Money Matters, Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, 2, 7 and 9; Make It Happen, Apr. 17, 18, 19, 24 and 26; ACT Explore, Mar. 17 and 24 and OSU tour, Apr. 21.

Call 233-9510 or email info@iknowican.org to get involved or for more information.



Special notes

- Make sure no one has to choose between getting well and having a paycheck. **Donate days to the catastrophic sick leave bank.** Use a sick leave form to make your donation. Be sure that you and your principal/supervisor sign the form.
- Christopher Morris, Mifflin MS**, has been approved for 24 days of catastrophic leave. So far, 8 days have been donated. Mr. Morris would appreciate our help and support.
- CEA thanks the following buildings/units that have recently **completed** their **United Way campaigns: Medina MS and Siebert ES.**
- Join the Central Ohio Labor Council AFL-CIO and the **Columbus Blue Jackets** for a fun night with your family and other union families on **Feb. 24, 2012, 7 p.m.**, at the **Nationwide Arena**. Call **Tom Johnson** at **246-4241** or send an email to **tjohnson@bluejackets.com** to purchase tickets. Tickets sell for \$30 or \$65 each.