Give the gift of reading

Did you know that 46 percent of central Ohio’s children entering kindergarten today lack the basic language skills they will need to learn to read? Did you know that children who cannot read at a third-grade level by age 8 are exponentially likely to enter the prison system? This is why supporting Nationwide Children’s Hospital’s Read Out and Read Community Book Drive is so important.

Reach Out and Read is a pediatric literacy program. Its mission is to prepare central Ohio’s youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. Focus is given to children living in poverty who face the highest risk for academic failure. Close to 90 percent of the patients who benefit from this program are Columbus City Schools students.

The Columbus Education Association’s involvement in the Reach Out and Read Community Book Drive began in 2007. CEA members have donated more than 15,000 books valued at $107,500. We would like you to help CEA exceed last year’s campaign collection of more than 2,900 books. Our campaign kicked off on Tuesday, Feb. 21, and ends on Friday, March 16. This is a great opportunity for CEA to give back to the community.

Please support this year’s Reach Out and Read campaign by donating two new books appropriate for children ages 6 months to 5 years old. Your building FR will have a location for you to drop off your donated books.

Members donating at least three new books to the campaign will be entered into a drawing to win a NOOK Tablet. Give your books to your FR or campaign chairperson and ask for an entry form. Complete the form, and send it to Tracey Johnson at the CEA office by March 22. The more you give, the more chances you have to win.

Our partner, Barnes & Noble (B&N), continues to support our efforts and will contribute 15–25 percent of online sales to our campaign. You can shop online through Mar. 1 and use Bookfair #10630838 to join in the campaign. Surf to www.bn.com. Please share this information with your family and friends.

For more information regarding the Reach Out and Read campaign, contact Tracey Johnson at CEA (253-4731); or email her at tjohnson@ceaohio.org.

211 calendar and staff reductions

By Tuesday, Feb. 28, teachers must be notified, verbally or in writing, that they are being staff reduced. Teachers who are in their second year of their assignment in a position through job fair, and teachers who were assigned their positions in the fall, are automatically staff reduced.

If a building is reducing the number of staff members due to a decrease in allocation, the staff members to be reduced are the least senior teachers (or volunteers) within the elementary grade level category (kindergarten and grades 1–5 or 1–6) or within the given middle or high school teaching area to be reduced.

Identification of staff-reduced teachers shall be based upon grade level assignment prior to reorganization for the following school year. When the principal is reorganizing the staff in elementary schools, kindergarten teachers cannot be reorganized into grades 1–5 or 1–6, nor can teachers in 1–5 or 1–6 be reorganized into kindergarten without an agreement between CEA and HR. For detailed information about staff reductions, please read Section 211.03 of the CEA Master Agreement.

Here are some other key dates for Article 211:
Mar. 19–22: Round 1 postings
Mar. 20–Apr. 16: Round 1 interviews
Mar. 26–Apr. 5: Intercession (No interviewing of year round school applicants)
Apr. 6–13: Spring break (No interviewing at all)
May 9–11: Round 2 postings
May 9–14: Round 2 interviews
May 30–31: Job fair(s)

Alternative interview panels

Vacancies in buildings/units or for city-wide programs will be filled through the selective interview process. The interview panel in a building consists of the principal, the Senior Faculty Representative, one elected member of the ABC and two parents/members of the school community panel.

In city-wide programs, a similarly constituted panel will conduct interviews.

If a building/unit prefers to have an alternative panel that does not meet these stipulations, the Senior Faculty Representative must send a written and signed notice to the CEA President with a list of the alternative panel members. Fax them to Rhonda Johnson at 253-5052 prior to conducting any interviews. Approved interview panels will be listed in The Voice.
Is this our students’ future?

Expect us to be on the menu and not at the table if either of the GOP presidential frontrunners wins the battle for the nation’s executive office in the November General Election. The former Senator turned-presidential hopeful has said, “Primary (and) secondary education is a failure in America, and at the heart of it is the teachers’ unions...” Despite the need to improve our students’ kindergarten readiness, he would cancel early-education programs like Head Start. “It is a parent’s responsibility to educate their children,” he said at an Iowa Caucus campaign stop. “It is not the government’s job.” Indeed, in a January debate, the former Senator promised that, if elected, he would “…repeal all of the federal government’s role in primary and secondary education.”

The other presidential hopeful, a New England millionaire, said in 2007, “I like testing in schools.” In his book published in 2010, he supported the idea of teaching to the test, saying, “I’m all for it.” He thinks that your class size has no bearing on your ability to educate your students, saying that smaller class sizes are simply “promoted by the teachers’ unions to hire more teachers.” This presidential hopeful said in 2010 that when it comes to education policy, “School accountability, school choice and cyber schools will be priorities.”

When it comes to education policy, “School accountability, school choice and cyber schools will be priorities.”

Stand up and fight for the President that has stood up and fought for us. Help us win our fight by becoming an Educator for Obama. Go to http://www.neafund.org. Your President, your country and your students are counting on you.

UNCF drive begins soon

Mar. 5 marks the kickoff of the Columbus City Schools UNCF workplace campaign. UNCF, the United Negro College Fund, has been America’s prominent scholarship organization serving children from all ethnic backgrounds who desire to attend college. Originally founded in 1944, UNCF serves more than 60,000 students annually with over 10,000 scholarships and 400 programs. This year Columbus City Schools staffs are invited to participate by donating to the UNCF-Columbus City Schools Scholarship Fund. Half of the money we raise will be used specifically for students from Columbus City Schools who desire to attend college and break the generational cycle of poverty. Our goal this year is to raise $200,000. If every staff person made a gift of $100 through payroll deduction, we would reach our goal.

Please consider supporting the UNCF-Columbus City Schools Scholarship so that we can impact the children we work with for a lifetime, “because a mind is a terrible thing to waste!” For more information, visit www.uncf.org or call Natalie Coles at 221-5309.

Retiring Class of 2012: We need you

Most of us who are retiring have many papers to fill out, to's to cross and i's to dot. To PLOP or not to PLOP is the question. However, there is another consideration that retirees should make—donating days to the Catastrophic Leave Bank.

As you know, many colleagues are faced with illnesses that deplete sick leave accounts. CEA Vice President Sally Oldham said, “Fortunately, I have been a lucky one. I have not suffered through the diagnosis and treatments of life-threatening illnesses. I am asking that you donate some days so others will not have to worry about the loss of a paycheck on top of their illnesses.”

Look at the super severance guidelines and decide how many days you can afford to donate to help others. Fill out the Employee Absence Form. Indicate the number of days you would like to donate, and have your principal/supervisor sign the form. “You and I can help others by this simple act. Do it because you can. Pay it forward,” stated Sally. “What a difference one day will make in another member’s life.”

CEA voting is now

We are now in midst of campaigning and voting. Ballots were sent from CEA to Senior Faculty Representatives through school mail. The ballots for itinerant staff were mailed to school addresses or U.S. mail addresses. If you have not voted, contact your faculty representative for a voting date. Also, contact Michele Mays at CEA if you have questions. The CEA Elections Committee members will pick up ballots on Tuesday, Mar. 6.

Faculty representatives assemble

We thank everyone for attending the Legislative Assembly (LA) held on Feb. 2. The main focus of the meeting was the CEA elections.

The LA is the policy-making body of the Association. All FRs should attend the meetings of the Legislative Assembly. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, Mar. 1, at 4:30 p.m. at the Columbus Downtown HS.


Special notes

Mar. 2 is the deadline to apply for continuing contracts. Eligibility requirements can be found in Section 401.16 of the CEA Master Agreement.

Early voting for the Mar. 6 primary election has begun. Request an absentee ballot or vote in person at your local county board of elections now. Check the Ohio Secretary of State’s Website at www.sos.state.oh.us for locations.