

The Voice

www.ceahio.org

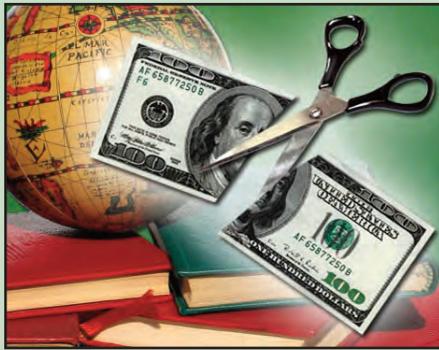
Volume XLII, No. 31

Columbus Education Association

April 2, 2012

Governor's mid-term budget: Waiting and wincing

Gov. Kasich has developed a mid-term state budget proposal that has plenty of his personal motives for our education system thrown in. His plan includes an array of policy changes that he is touting as necessary to make Ohio a more economically competitive state. His plan is called "Ohio's 21st Century Education & Workforce Plan."



Our big question is who is going to pay for all this? We also wonder where our governor has been all these years—living under a rock? Here are many items that have been proposed or tried before:

- ❖ The Third-Grade Reading Guarantee: Citing a recent report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation that flags third grade as pivotal for reading ability, Kasich wants all third-graders to be held back if they can't read, even if teachers already are spending extra time tutoring these students. This strategy has not worked in the past.
- ❖ Teach kids about careers: Kasich is leading the charge to have all students know more about work options and the type of education they need for those jobs. All teachers would be required to add this instruction to an already-overloaded curriculum.
- ❖ A new measuring system for school districts: Under the new plan, schools in all districts would be graded and compared just like their students, given A–F for their degrees of success in reaching new standards. According to Kasich, more than 90 percent of the state's schools would receive an "F."
- ❖ Let third parties decide which teachers keep their jobs: Kasich wants to let administrators off the hook by allowing outsiders to do classroom observations. He is recommending that teachers who don't pass must be subjected to a "test" (designed by outsiders) and fired if they can't pass. We don't need to tell you what our reactions are to this idea.
- ❖ Give dropouts another chance: Kasich is calling for unique curricula for students who have given up on graduating, with additional support services they need to ensure success. We agree that this could be a good idea. But it is not clear who would teach the students or where they would attend school—or who would pay for this additional layer of instruction.
- ❖ Grade the preschools: Kasich proposes assessing

all publicly funded early childhood programs. Right now, rating is voluntary. It's not a bad idea. We feel that many of these schools are not ready. We question what standards would be used and who would develop them.

We caution our governor: Take a step back and let's make sure we do this right. We will keep you informed as we receive more information about the plan.

Wear red on Wednesday

Apr. 4 is Solidarity Day. Wear your CEA solidarity T-shirt, or wear red on Wednesday. You can buy a T-shirt from the CEA office for \$6. Last year, we celebrated Solidarity Day on Apr. 4 in remembrance of the day Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated and to remember the great work he did for labor and working America.



Our work is not over. Last year, legislators in Ohio and Wisconsin began efforts to limit union rights. Now a radical right-wing group is trying to make Ohio a "right to work" state, gathering signatures for a November ballot issue to amend our state constitution. Cleveland's mayor and our governor are, essentially, trying to revive Senate Bill 5. See your Faculty Representative for a "WE ARE ONE" sticker, and keep reading your Voice for more details on this insidious anti-worker campaign.

Article 211 gone awry

We are in the midst of Article 211 interviews, and the posting process has been less than smooth. Postings were difficult to read and incomplete. Current principals were not listed, so applicants didn't know where to send their letters. One supervisor reportedly ignored the 211 rules and screened applicants without any input. We also have received complaints about inappropriate screening questions and rubrics.

We have a mutually negotiated complaint procedure detailed in Section 211.01(I) of our contract. If you have a complaint about how the procedures on Article 211 are carried out, you must file a written complaint within ten (10) calendar days of the occurrence. That complaint must be served to the employee relations department and to CEA. If both parties agree on the complaint's validity, a neutral third party will hold a hearing and make a final determination of its validity.

Follow this process, as stated in our contract, and according to administrative past practices. If your administrators are not complying, CEA stands ready to act and to support you.

Remember: No interviews are to be conducted during the intercession of year-round schools. No interviews are to be held during spring break.

Thank a librarian

National Library Week is Apr. 8–14. The entire month of April is also a time to honor our school librarians. Today's libraries make print and digital information affordable, available and accessible to all people. Libraries provide cultural heritage and genealogical collections, materials in print and electronic formats, job-seeking resources, ESL and citizenship classes, and many other creative and resourceful programs.



At school, librarians help students explore the world and develop their critical thinking skills. Honor our nation's librarians with a special thank you for their dedication to our students. Go to: www.ala.org/conferenceevents/celebrationweeks/natlibraryweek.

Money matters for CCS parents

Hundreds of families learned the ins and outs of college financing at the third Blueprint: College Middle School session this February. Reaching over 800 families this year, Blueprint: College is making great strides in building college awareness and engagement among CCS families and parents.



While students participated in curriculum focused on teaching them the basics of financial literacy, parents attended breakout sessions outlining six topics pertaining to college funding. Session topics included scholarship preparation, activities calculating the cost of college, how to maximize financial aid on the bubble, the I Know I Can Save Smart IDA program, setting up a 529 college savings account and, finally, how to begin planning financially for college in the future.

Each breakout session is designed to provide vital information for parents so they can be prepared mentally and financially for the ever-increasing costs of college. "It's the final piece to the puzzle we've been building over the last few months to help families begin planning for college."

Middle school is a critical age for students and parents to begin developing their college plans. The earlier they start, the greater their chances of reaching their post-secondary education goals.

I Know I Can will host one more workshop for families in April, as well as a College Exploration Day on Apr. 21. All campus exploration participants will also receive free tickets for their family to attend the OSU spring football game. Teachers, please encourage your middle-school families to attend these sessions and begin setting their college goals today. Remind them, I Know I Can is here to help.

Visit www.iknowican.org for more details on the April Blueprint: College Middle School sessions. We hope to see you and your students there.

Flexible spending guidelines

The district has changed the way we use our flexible spending accounts. We now have PayFlex debit cards, which can be used at doctor's offices and places where we need to purchase medical items. Here are the procedures we must follow to comply with IRS rules:

- ◆ Save all your receipts for services using the PayFlex card. You may be asked to provide documentation (based on IRS guidelines) to substantiate your spending. Expenses that cannot be substantiated

could result in the PayFlex card being suspended.

- ◆ You may claim money left in last year's account after the end of the plan year, as long as the services were provided between Jan. 1 and Mar. 15. Use the PayFlex reimbursement form. Do not submit these to Aetna. You may obtain a form from human resources on the CCS intranet or at www.healthhub.com.
- ◆ Submit your claims by Apr. 30, 2012, or forfeit your account balance.

Special notes

- ❑ Be advised that the medical management guidelines for our new insurance administrator, **Medical Mutual of Ohio**, may differ from Aetna's guidelines. **Our benefits remain the same, but treatments or procedures that were previously approved by Aetna may need to be preauthorized by Medical Mutual.** So, if you are planning to have a procedure that you previously had in 2011 or 2012, contact a Medical Mutual customer service representative at 1-800-382-5729 for preauthorization.
- ❑ Join us for the **CEA Awards and Retirement Banquet, Friday, May 18**, at the **Hilton Columbus at Easton**. Social hour is 6–7 p.m., with dinner at 7 p.m. The cost is \$30 per ticket, with tables of 10 costing \$300. **There is no charge for Senior Faculty Representatives, retirees and other honorees.** The reservation deadline is **Wednesday, May 2**.
- ❑ If you still have books for the **Reach Out and Read** campaign, please drop them off to the CEA office this week. If you cannot deliver them, contact Tracey Johnson at 253-4731 or email her at tjohnson@ceaohio.org.
- ❑ 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*: **Columbus Global Academy, Neil Ave. and Parkmoor ES**.
- ❑ **Formal campaigning and voting in the CEA Spring Run-off Election concludes Apr. 16**. The tallying of votes by the Elections Committee will be on Tuesday, Apr. 17. Contact **Michele Mays** at CEA if you have questions.
- ❑ The application **deadline for CEA scholarships for graduating high school seniors is Wednesday, May 2, 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. Go to <http://bit.ly/eSj3rJ> to download the application form.
- ❑ **Autumn 2012 fee waiver applications will be in buildings on Monday, Apr. 23**. Due to the early start of the autumn 2012 semester in Ohio colleges, the fee waiver process must be completed before the end of this school year. Even if you don't know the identifying course number or course name, complete the fee waiver application with as much information as you have at the time. Call Norma Oldham (365-8993) or email her at noldham@columbus.k12.oh.us once you have the course number.

