

The Voice

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Columbus Education Association

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Black History Month: Great educational strides

During February, we remember the contributions of countless Americans who were left out of the history books for many decades. It's a unique yearly opportunity to share the accomplishments of those American heroes and to emphasize that American history isn't the purview of any one group of people.

Black History Month began as "Negro History Week" in 1926 when historian Carter G. Woodson urged fraternity brothers of Omega Psi Phi to help promote the achievements of black people to help combat prejudice and build a sense of pride among his people.

He chose the second week of February to commemorate the birthdays of the two Americans who perhaps most greatly influenced the lives and social conditions of African Americans, Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

This year's theme is "At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington."

During the month, we usually honor such notable people as Rosa Parks, but many academic leaders have made impacts on society by breaking barriers or creating opportunities for children that they never had before. Here are some of them:

- ♦ Cornel West is redefining what it means to be a professor. As a political activist going back to the 1970s, he continues to encourage his colleagues to lead by example by participating in civic discourse and protesting unjust policies.
- ♦ Charlotte Forten's book, *Life on the Sea Island*, was the story of Forten's time as the first black teacher at a famous mission during the Civil War. She later worked for the Treasury Department recruiting black teachers.
- ♦ Maxine Smith worked with the NAACP to desegregate Memphis schools in the early 1960s. Maxine Smith escorted the first black children to attend a desegregated schoolhouse in Memphis.
- ♦ Nathan Hare protested with his students for five months when his university attempted to cut funding for his program, which was the first university black studies program in the country.

Each year at our Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Dinner we give the Helen Jenkins Davis Award. She was the first black teacher hired by the Columbus schools. Davis (who was hired in 1918) also was the first witness called in the 1976 school desegregation trial in Columbus. This year's award was presented to our own history maker, Dr. Sybil Brown, math teacher and STEM club advisor at Northland HS.

Commission hears about "real" student success

How do we define "real" success? Is it about test scores?

Educators addressing the Columbus Education Commission (CEC) believe scores



can provide crucial information, but students need to learn to set their own goals and use many means, chiefly technology, to achieve them.

Tom Vander Ark, former education director for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, called the explosion of on-line tools and technology "the biggest change in learning since Gutenberg, and it's happening faster."

At its Jan. 24 meeting, the commission heard from Brad Mitchell of Battelle for Kids, Pankaj Shah of OARnet, Stu Johnson of Connect Ohio, as well as educators from South-Western City Schools, the Metro Early College High School and the Graham Charter Schools.

This meeting was one in a series aimed at helping leaders understand how they might improve student success at school and beyond. The commission is working on a report it will present in the spring.

Here are some key points from the last meeting:

- There are different ways to define success. Students must be encouraged to aim higher through goals that measure more than memorization for a test. South-Western City Schools use test data to find out why students are not achieving, then target problem areas. Metro HS uses a "mastery approach," through which students must earn an "A" in a subject to progress to the next class. The Graham charter schools also ask students to design their own projects and explore the answers outside the school building, so they can learn real-world lessons.
- Technology is key. Students at Metro HS and at Reynoldsburg's STEM Academy described their use of online courses that let students, with teacher support, set goals and personalize learning.
- The commission has scheduled six site visits, CAHS, Reynoldsburg Schools, the Metro HS, North Franklin Elementary (South-Western Schools), the Graham Expeditionary Middle and Primary Schools and KIPP Journey Academy.

Learn more about what presenters told the commission, go to reimaginecolumbuseducation.org.

Offer your ideas

The commission is asking Columbus residents to share their ideas about education at eight public forums to be held from 6–8 p.m. beginning Feb. 5. Dinner will be provided. These are the dates:

- + Feb. 5: Wedgewood MS, 3800 Briggs Road
- + Feb. 6: Centennial HS, 1441 Bethel Road
- + Feb. 12: Linden-McKinley STEM Academy, 1320 Duxberry Avenue

- † Feb. 19: South HS, 1160 Ann Street
- † Feb. 20: Briggs HS, 2555 Briggs Road
- † Feb. 26: Buckeye MS, 2950 Parsons Avenue
- † March 5: Columbus Collegiate Academy-West, 115 S. Gift Street
- † March 7: East HS, 1500 E. Broad Street

You are invited to attend any of these meetings. However, a special forum will be held at the end of February for CEA bargaining unit members. Keep reading *The CEA Voice* for details.

Superintendent search

The Board of Education has begun the process of searching for our next superintendent and has contracted with the executive search firm, Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, to assist the Board with this process.

The Board is seeking your input for the desired characteristics and skills that you would like to see in our next superintendent. Staff members are invited to attend one of the five regional focus group meetings. The 4:30 p.m. sessions are for staff only; the 7 p.m. sessions are open to the public. Feel free to attend at any location and at either time:

- West Region: Monday, Feb. 4, 4:30 p.m. & 7 p.m., Binns ES, 1080 Binns Blvd.
- South Region: Tuesday, Feb. 5, 4:30 p.m. & 7 p.m., Ohio Avenue ES, 505 S. Ohio Avenue
- East Region: Wednesday, Feb. 6, 4:30 p.m. & 7 p.m., East Columbus ES, 3100 E. 7th Avenue
- North Region: Monday, Feb. 11, 4:30 p.m. & 7 p.m., Colerain ES, 499 E. Weisheimer Road
- Central Region: Wednesday, Feb. 12, 4:30 p.m. & 7 p.m., Oakland Park ES, 3392 Atwood Terrace

Please take time to provide your input about this important decision.

CEA members scholarship

The deadline for applications for CEA scholarships is Friday, April 26, at 5 p.m. This 26-year-old program provides scholarships for children of Columbus teachers. Two scholarships are available: the \$1,500 Christa McAuliffe Scholarship, awarded to an education student, and the \$1,000 CEA General Scholarship.

CEA finances the fund with interest earned from Association bank accounts. Both are renewable for up to four years, at a reduced level from the first-year award. Also, a one-year scholarship is awarded by CEA-R, and a senior at South HS will be awarded the Grossman Memorial Scholarship.

Go to http://bit.ly/TbVRib_CEA_Scholarships2013 to download an application form.

Ghosts in the MUNIS

Something creepy is going on with MUNIS. Now you see it, now you don't. On the second pay of each month (September–June), you are credited with 1.5 days to your sick leave balance. Looking at your Friday, Jan. 18, pay statement or on Employee Self Service, you could not tell that you had earned any sick leave at all. The payroll office assures us that the sick leave from January is there; you just can't see it. We have been told that this is just a one-time occurrence and will not happen again.

Let's hope that we are not going back to 1990s when employees' sick leave balances were likely to be incorrect. As we work to resolve these issues, keep your own sick leave records. We cannot, for the moment, guarantee you will be able to verify your information on MUNIS. We will keep you apprised of any developments.

Stop 'Right to Work' in Ohio

We've heard a lot about loss of labor rights in Wisconsin, "right to work for less" legislation in Indiana and, now, Michigan. There is a lot of misinformation about what this means. Many people think that the laws in those states required workers to join unions.

Quite the contrary. Unions are the bargaining agents for the employees, negotiating contracts with employers that are binding legal contracts. To do that, unions survey their members, prioritize their issues and negotiate collectively to settle the terms and conditions of employment. When workers want the strength that comes from members paying dues and non-members paying an "agency fee," their union—their bargaining agent—negotiates for that.

Laws don't give agency fee to a union. If union members want it, their union negotiates for it. Most unions struggle for decades to achieve this level of workplace strength. That's collective bargaining and democracy in action. It's one way that workers have voice at work.

It's time to educate and inform fellow union members about what 'Right to Work' really is: a way to remove our rights at work. It takes away the workers' democratic right to decide what terms they want to negotiate into their contract.

Join your fellow educators and other union members to man the phone banks on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Callers will work from the Ohio AFL-CIO at 395 E. Broad St.

Sign up for shifts at <http://bit.ly/115KUfLphonebank>, or contact Jessica Vernon at 329-5842 or jvernon@ohaflicio.org.

We need to reach you

CEA needs everyone's contact information, especially personal email addresses (NOT YOUR CCS EMAIL ADDRESS). We are lacking information from about 700 members. Complete the lime-green card that you received from your FR or send the information to tellcea@ceaohio.org. We will soon send an electronic survey to give members a chance to vote on next year's school calendar. Paper copies of the survey will not be sent to school buildings.

Special notes

- ❑ **Donate days to the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank** for CEA member **Ginger Hardesty**. Use a sick leave form to make your donation. Be sure that you and your principal/supervisor sign the form.
- ❑ **Campaigning for 2013–14 OEA delegates and 2013 NEA delegates ends Mar. 4. Voting** will take place **Feb. 19–Mar. 4**. Votes will be **tabulated** on **Mar. 5**. The races for district governors were uncontested, so they were elected by acclamation. Call CEA Elections Chairperson Michele Mays at 253-4731 with questions.
- ❑ **2012 dues deductions** for CEA members: **Full Dues, Plan A** (21 Pays) \$824.33, **Plan B** (26 Pays) \$825.83. **If you switched from: Plan A to B: \$765.83** or went from **Plan B to A: \$884.33**. **Half Dues** are \$460.42 and **Quarter Dues** are \$250.71.
- ❑ **Mar. 2 is the deadline to apply for continuing contracts**. Eligibility requirements can be found in Section 401.16 of the *CEA Master Agreement*.
- ❑ **Save the date** for one of our best-loved events. **The CEA Awards & Retirement Dinner** is **Saturday, May 18**, at the **Hilton Columbus Downtown, 401 N. High Street**. Social hour is at 6 p.m., with dinner at 7 p.m. There is no cost for retirees, honorees and Senior Faculty Representatives to attend this event.
- ❑ **Join CEA for a journey through the Holy Land** in June. Sights include Capernaum, Nazareth, the room of the Last Supper, the Garden Tomb, Masada and the Dead Sea. The cost, excluding air fare (TBD), is \$2,495. To hold your spot, send a deposit of \$100 to Bexley Travel, 2719 E. Main St., Columbus, OH 43209, or call Marty at 235-8813.