

Important Dates

Wednesday, September 26
Schools Closed: Yom Kippur

Thursday, September 20
Master Teacher meeting @
Woodbury Library, 4PM

Monday, October 1
SHTA Executive Board Meeting
@ Woodbury, 4:30PM

Monday, October 8
SHTA Representatives Meeting
@ Fernway, 4:15PM

SHTA news

September 18, 2012

ISSUE NO. 1

Message From the President

Although we are in the middle of September, allow me to say, "Welcome Back." I hope you have had a good start to the 2012-2013 School Year. I am excited to begin my second year as President of the SHTA and continue my work with all of you. I toured the buildings before school began and reviewed all of the upgrades and improvements to our facilities. I found that the custodial staff, ground crews, food service and clerical teams were very busy this summer. I know that many of our members completed curriculum writing in the schools throughout the summer to work on International Baccalaureate and other initiatives.

Over the summer, I continued to work on issues that concern our Association. I clarified contract issues with individual members and within buildings. I worked with the Cuyahoga County Union Summit. I met with Mike Sears and Bryan Christman concerning district finances. I worked with Dr. Bob Kreiner and Mike Griffith on parking issues resulting from the new athletic field construction at the high school. In August, I met with our Executive Board for planning and welcomed our new teachers to Shaker Heights. Finally, I worked with Vice President Dollye Finney and Past President Becky Thomas on new Welcome Back SHTA signs in the district and, thanks to Dollye's initiative, the beginning of the year treats you received in each of your staff lunchrooms.

One thing that I have been reminded of as the school year begins is that we must continue to demand our respect as professionals. If you find yourself in a situation where someone is being verbally aggressive with you, it is imperative that you immediately terminate the interaction, proceed to the nearest office and find SHTA support. We cannot allow ourselves to become a part of personal confrontations in the hallways, classrooms or offices of our work place. One of the true benefits of working with a group of professionals who support one another is utilizing that support. Don't "go it alone." Don't "tough it out." Consider seeking SHTA support as a way of showing solidarity with other professionals who may at some point experience exactly what you have.

And speaking of solidarity...It is time for us to express the fact that the Chicago Teachers' Union is completely justified and more than within its rights to go on strike. I would even argue that it is their moral imperative. We are obligated to defend our collective bargaining rights when they are as blatantly disregarded as they have been in Chicago. Don't let some voices in the media fool you. This strike is not about money. CTU has been forced to strike to ensure fair labor practices, safe learning conditions for students and working conditions for teachers, adequate resources and the negotiating process essential to a collective bargaining agreement. Don't be afraid to show your solidarity with the educational professionals of CTU by "Wearing Red for Ed", donating money, writing editorials or voicing support for their cause.

I continue to be dedicated to the ongoing work I do as President of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. I cannot think of a finer group of professional educators in the state or even the country. I will continue to advocate for our Association, our profession and our future as we seek to stem the tide of rhetoric and faulty logic undergirding the latest "War on Teachers." I am proud to work and, when necessary, fight for you and alongside you. Please continue to visit our website at www.shtaweb.org for archived newsletters, our FAQ and on-line editions of our Contract, Constitution and By-laws. Please also "like" the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association and The PAC of SHTA on *Facebook*. Know our meetings are always open and dates are listed both in the Shaker On-line District calendar and our web site.

Respectfully submitted,
John Morris

Reports from the Executive Board

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome back to our returning SHTA members and a warm welcome to our new colleagues. I hope that you all had a safe and restful summer and that your year is off to a great start. Over the summer, it was my pleasure to meet with the officers to plan, debrief and discuss the Association's agenda. It is an honor to serve with this team of officers. They are well informed and committed to the membership of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. We embrace good leadership in this tempestuous era for collective bargaining. It is essential that we continue to represent solidarity and a high level of professionalism that has been historically the backbone of the SHTA.

I would like to remind SHTA Fellowship recipients that your receipts for reimbursement are due at the end of the month. Please forward this information to me at Boulevard School. Please allow me 2- 3 weeks from the time of your request to receive your check. A number of Fellows have not yet submitted your receipts. I hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity.

I attend the PTO Council meetings on behalf of the Association. These meetings are held approximately bi- monthly and appear on your PTO calendar. The Council at no charge - annually provides each teacher with the PTO calendar. All teachers and parents are automatically members of this organization. However, we ask that you donate to the annual PTO drive. You will receive a special teacher contribution envelope shortly and I hope that you will consider making a contribution to this important organization.

I also continue to serve as a teacher representative to the Race to the Top Committee and I will continue to inform the membership via this newsletter of important changes and updates.

The Investments committee, chaired by our treasurer, is continuing to maintain a close and vigilant watch over our investments. Please refer to the treasurer's report in this newsletter to review the status of our investments. I continue to operate as a member of this committee and meet with our investments professionals.

I am wishing you a safe a happy school year and I am looking forward to working with you all. If you have any questions for me feel free to contact me at 295-4916.

*Respectfully submitted,
Dollye Finney*



"Every truth has four corners:
as a teacher I give you one
corner, and it is for you to
find the other three."
Confucius

REMINDERS

If you wish to pay your dues by check, see your building representative before October 5.

Parking is now available for high school faculty with a parking sticker on the left side of their windshield on the northwest side of the oval (in front of Onaway).

TREASURER'S REPORT

Welcome back to a new school year.

In May the members of our Association approved the budget we are currently operating under. The financial report is included here.

I do want to point something out about the Association's finances. Last year we had an income of \$79,860.00 from membership dues but we incurred \$81,063.57 in bills. We are at the point where we, as an Association, spend more than we bring in. We need to begin thinking about addressing this situation.

If anyone has any questions about the Association's finances please give me a call at ext.6296.

Payroll withdrawal for dues (\$20 per pay), for those who choose that option of payment, will begin with the October 15th paycheck. Anyone who prefers to pay her/his \$200 dues all at once can provide a check to their building Representative.

The Investments Committee (Dollye Finney, Todd Keitlen, Matt Zucca, Chante Thomas-Taylor, and myself) will be meeting next month with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor, to discuss our investments and whether any changes need to be made.

Any member of the Association who makes copies for S.H.T.A. business should email me the number of copies made. I keep a running tally in order to pay the District for the paper used.

*Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon, Treasurer*

Budgeted Accounts on page #8

FINANCIAL REPORT

7/1/12

9/14/12

COMPOSITE BALANCE

Balance 7/1/12	869,229.39
Receipts 7/1/12 to present	10.05
Change in Valuation 7/1/12 to present	<u>22,612.19</u>
	891,851.63
Expenditures 7/1/12 to present	-5,196.38
Expenditures charged to last fiscal year 2011-2012	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL	886,655.25

BANK AND BROKER RECONCILIATIONS

A. KEY BANK (9/3/12)

Certificates of deposit 29 mo. @ 0.149%-Matures on 2/6/14	<u>21,211.77</u>
Total Certificates of deposit	21,211.77
Business Money Market Account (0.35% APY)	42,839.02
Unposted deposits and transfers	<u>0.00</u>
	64,050.79
Less outstanding checks	<u>-4,690.36</u>
TOTAL KEY BANK	59,360.43

B. EDWARD JONES (9/3/12)

Regular Association Account	437,447.17
Advisory Solutions Account	<u>389,847.65</u>
	<u>827,294.82</u>
TOTAL	886,655.25

**It is the supreme art of the teacher to
awaken
joy in creative expression and knowledge.
Albert Einstein**



“Ultimately, we teachers want to be treated with dignity and respect.”

A Chicago Teacher

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Welcome back to our senior staff and welcome to our newest members. While I hope everyone had a restful and healthy summer break, by now I’m sure we’re starting to feel like we never left.

My name is Mike Sears and I teach 7th grade World History at the Middle School. This is my 14th year in the district and my 17th year in education. This is my 8th year of involvement with SHTA, and my 3rd year as the chairperson for Professional Rights and Responsibilities. This position is also called Grievance Chair. My extension is #4770 and e-mail (sears_m@shaker.org) is also a great way to contact me.

One important fact about our current salary schedule is that the paycheck you received on September 16th should include a step increase if you qualify for one this year. This was not the case one year ago because our step schedule was frozen. Another way to increase your income this year is if you move horizontally on the salary schedule in November or April by reaching continuing education levels like B.A. + 15 or M.A. + 30.

Many supplemental contracts were not received until August, even though the contract states contracts should be received by June 30th. Make sure you sign your contract and return it to Kim Adams as soon as possible. Even if you see a supplemental approved on the Board Agenda, you will not be paid for your work until payroll has a signed contract from you. One thing our members could do to help with these delays is to make decisions in the spring about the following school year. If you resign from a supplemental in March or April, there is plenty of time for the administration to post the opening and have a new person in place before June 30th.

One part of the Affordable Care Act’s language on women’s health went into effect on August 1. However, we won’t be covered by this language until our next renewal date, which is January 1, 2013. After January 1, 2013, some preventive health tests and procedures for women will be free. If you’re interested in the specific items, here is a link to a news article about them: <http://www.care2.com/causes/8-ways-women-will-benefit-under-obamacare-starting-tomorrow.html>

The district policy for maternity leave is clearly outlined in the contract. However, new mothers have to decide how many sick days they want to use and if they want to take any unpaid leave through the Family and Medical Leave Act. If you are pregnant, please contact me right away so we can look at a calendar, and I can assist you in a plan that works best for you and your family. You should be aware that notes from doctors do not always allow for additional sick days to care for babies. For example, a note that discusses “failure to thrive” is an acceptable medical reason to use a sick day, but a note that mentions “bonding with the baby” will not be approved because that is not considered a medical condition that allows for a sick day.

Paternity leave is also mentioned in our contract. New fathers are permitted to use up to 10 sick days to help care for a new baby. No documentation from doctors is required for this leave. For both maternity and paternity leave, contact me before you contact the administration so you understand all of your rights.

It is your responsibility to keep the Personnel Department informed of changes in your family status (over the summer as well as during the school year) concerning **births, adoptions, deaths, divorce, marriage, or entry into military service.** If these changes are not reported to the Benefits Office within **30 days** you will NOT be permitted to make this change until the next open enrollment, which is usually in November. **Please contact Sue Garber at 4318 before the 30 day deadline. This may cost you money if you miss this deadline.**

Personal days are personal. No one needs to know why you are taking a personal day. You do **not** need to fill out a form about a personal day. You may simply enter it on AESOP. However, you are responsible for keeping track of your own personal days. If you enter a 4th or a 5th personal day, you will **NOT** be paid for those absences. You may not use personal days before or after a holiday unless you fill out the personal day request form and it is approved by both the building principal and the Personnel Administrator, Lisa Scott. Each case is handled on an individual basis. If you have a question about this, please contact me.

If you use more than 5 sick days in a row, a building secretary will have to enter days 6 and up into AESOP. The Personnel Department reserves the right to ask you for a doctor's note explaining your absence beyond one week. If you use 10 sick days in a row, the Personnel Department is required by law to send you a form about Family and Medical Leave. You may choose to continue using sick days with appropriate documentation or you may go on an extended and unpaid leave for family or medical reasons. Please call me if you foresee a situation like this one happening.

The current contract is available on our web site, <http://shtaweb.org>. I strongly encourage you to read it and use it as a reference. I'm also happy to help you with issues of interpretation and clarification.

*Respectfully submitted,
Mike Sears, chairperson*

MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The membership deadline this year is Friday, October 5th, 2012. If you pay your dues by check, please submit your check for \$200 to your building

representative. If you pay by payroll deduction, SHTA dues will automatically begin with the October 16th paycheck (\$20 per pay). Membership forms only need to be completed by NEW MEMBERS, or as a current member you wish to CHANGE your form of payment and sign up for payroll deduction. If you wish to stop payroll deduction and instead pay by check, please submit a letter requesting the change with your signature.

*Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Elgart, chairperson*

PAST PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome back! For those of you who may not know me, I am Rebecca Thomas. Before retiring in 2011, I served as President of the Association for six years and as an elementary school librarian for 35 years.

As Past President, I serve at the direction of the President, John Morris. I appreciate the opportunity to continue my involvement with all of you. As a retiree, I have more flexibility in my schedule so I am able to assist with meetings and errands during the school day. In June, I assisted a teacher with a building-level issue. I also attended the regular summer meetings of the Board of Education and will continue to attend the Board meetings and work sessions throughout the year. I maintain the SHTA website (shtaweb.org) and serve on the editorial board for the Newsletter. Dr. Morris asked me to present an overview of the responsibilities for building representatives, which I did at the September 4th meeting.

Educators are facing many challenges and we need a strong professional organization to represent our interests. The leadership of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association has an excellent working relationship with the administration and makes every effort to work cooperatively on issues and concerns. I look forward to assisting John Morris and the SHTA membership during the 2012-2013 school year.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Thomas, Chairperson*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

As the new chairperson of the Legislative Committee, I have been feeling overwhelmed by the daunting task of keeping all of you informed about current education legislation. Understandably so! As you know, we are in the midst of a wave of education reform that will surely affect us all.

Senate Bill 316 passed over the summer. This bill includes the Third Grade Reading guarantee, which calls for testing and intervention in reading beginning in Kindergarten and retention of third grade students who do not pass the Reading OAA.

In November, we will vote on Issue 2. If Issue 2 passes, the practice of “gerrymandering” (drawing voting district lines to the benefit of the party in power) will end. While this is not an education bill or reform, the practice has managed to help keep power in the hands of politicians that do not support collective bargaining. Therefore, it surely impacts us!

Currently, Chicago’s teachers are on strike. While many factors are involved, negotiations over teacher evaluation are at the forefront. The Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010 (SB 315) is Illinois’ version of Ohio’s HB 153. I spent some time comparing the two reform bills and they are quite similar in several ways, but I’d like to highlight just two. First, all teachers will be observed and evaluated to determine a teacher’s rating on a four point scale. In Ohio, the 2013-2014 school year will be the first year that every teacher will be evaluated using the new system. Secondly, student growth data will be a significant factor in the rating of teachers’ performance. In Ohio, student academic growth data will account for 50 % of each evaluation. This piece of the legislation and how it is being carried out in the Chicago contract negotiations is a major sticking point.

Here in Shaker, the Evaluation Committee has been diligently working over the last year and a half to redesign our evaluation system according to the HB 153 guidelines and our Race To The Top obligations. Rather than adopt the new Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES), we made a conscious choice to design a system that will work in our district. This new evaluation system is being piloted this school year and may be used across the district in the 2013-2014 school year. Specific plans for how we will adhere to the student growth data piece are undetermined as yet. HB 153

requires multiple measures to be used, some of which can be determined by individual districts. Teachers in Chicago may not have a voice about how their evaluations will be carried out or how student growth data will be collected and applied to their rating. In Shaker Heights, we have strong teacher representation on our evaluation committee to help guide the process at every stage. Throughout this year, I will report on the progress of this committee in this newsletter. I am also available to answer questions you may have about the upcoming changes in evaluation. Please visit the link for the committee on Shaker.org where you will find articles, videos, and minutes from our meetings.

Respectfully submitted,
Lena Paskewitz, Chairperson

POLICY COMMITTEE

The Policy committee manages issues with the Constitution and the By-Laws of the Association. If there are concerns about the Constitution or By-Laws this year, you will see those concerns described in this part of the Newsletter. In the absence of issues, I will use this monthly space to highlight a part of the Constitution or By-Laws that might be helpful to you. If you have any questions about the Constitution and By-Laws, feel free to contact me.

Welcome back, and have a great school year.

Respectfully submitted,
David Klapholtz, Chairperson

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Welcome Back!!!! We are looking forward to another year filled with fun and excitement. No other information to report at this time.

Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison, Chairperson

TEACHER EDUCATION

Every year I am amazed at the talent and background of the teachers that are hired into our district. Shaker is known as one of the best school districts in the country, and we continue to attract the top teacher candidates.

At this month's meeting for the new teachers and their mentors, I highlighted some contract language that especially affects them. I also gave each new teacher a list of important dates they should keep in mind as they progress through the school year.

Also, non-tenured teachers have some important dates to keep in mind:

- Salary Reclassification – Coursework must be completed by the **November and April Board Meetings**. Requests must be submitted in time for the November and April meeting.
- Tuition Fund – Deadline for applications is **December 1st**.
- Evaluations – December evaluations and March Evaluations
 - Evaluations must be sent to the Personnel Office no later than 7 days prior to the April Board of Education Meeting.

Please remember that my role with the Association is not just to assist new teachers and their mentors. I am also available to any **non-tenured teacher** who may have any questions or concerns. Please contact me to discuss any aspect of the evaluation process or any other area of your employment in Shaker Schools as you move towards tenure within our district. I can be reached through the district e-mail (smith_st@shaker.org) or at Lomond (295-6385).

*Respectfully submitted,
Steve Smith, Chairperson*

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE OF SHTA

Last year, we witnessed the devastating effect of the Ohio State House of Representatives and the Senate being under the majority control of one party. The results were power-hungry policy making decisions that attempted to attack the working class. The Kasich administration, in concert with the legislative

branch, attacked firefighters, police, teachers and all collectively-bargained public employees. This summer, their attacks focused on the Cleveland Municipal Schools with the strategy to divide and conquer. They passed The Cleveland School Plan under the guise of doing what is in the best interest of kids. This plan includes many of the components embedded in Senate Bill 5, which the citizens of Ohio soundly defeated. The current administration has sent a clear message that they will continue to attempt to erode collective bargaining rights and promote policies that favor the 1%.

As a result of the 2010 census, Ohio has lost representatives due to its declining population. The Republican led House of Representatives and Senate have conspired to create a new district map that favors their party. Gerrymandering causes disproportionate political representation in our state level democracy. "Ohio's district maps ...received widespread criticism from citizens and editorial boards of major newspapers across Ohio for destroying competition, dividing communities, and giving one political party an unfair advantage over the other party." - Plunder Bund (<http://s.tt/1gOhe>.) The map that the Republicans have proposed thrusts together large geographical areas with divergent needs. Yes, drawing up the district map is the spoils of the party in power after a census, but it is time to question this long held process. On the November ballot, a proposal to remove the districting map from political factions and into a non-partisan committee will be up for vote under the name Issue 2.

- Issue 2 would establish a 12-member commission to draw the state's legislative and congressional districts, a process now controlled by elected officials.
- Proponents argue the commission would help take politics out of the redistricting process, which they say has been plagued by partisanship at the expense of voters. Republicans controlled the process last year and approved maps that benefit the GOP.

Issue 2 attempts to level the playing field and create a system that embraces citizens’ participation in the democratic process. This concept of fairness that was apparently beyond the grasp of our legislators’ comprehension is actually quite simple. In fact, it’s so elementary that we have included it in the recently adopted [Social Studies standards](#) in Ohio (2010) – for students to master by age 8!

- The core standard that emphasizes these basic concepts is found under the heading of *Civic Participation and Skills*.

“Civic participation embraces the ideal that an individual actively engages in his or her community, state or nation for the common good. Students need to practice effective communication skills including negotiation, compromise and collaboration. Skills in accessing and analyzing information are essential for citizens in a democracy.”

Ohio Third Grade Social Studies Standards.

I strongly urge you to actively engage in the campaign to pass Issue 2.

***Respectfully submitted,
Eileen Sweeney, Chairperson***

Budgeted Accounts	7/1/12					9/14/12
<u>Account</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Debits</u>	<u>Transfers out</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Transfers in</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Accounting	5000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00
Compensation for officers, representatives, et al.						
President	9302.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,302.00
Vice President	5581.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,581.00
Secretary	5581.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,581.00
Treasurer	5581.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,581.00
P.R. & R. Chairperson	5581.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,581.00
Editor	4653.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,653.00
Building reps. and alternates	10000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
Conferences and meetings	2500.00	304.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,195.01
Fellowships and Grants	3500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,500.00
Insurance	5000.00	4,375.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	625.00
Legal	5000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00
Negotiations	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Executive Board expenses	500.00	377.56	0.00	0.00	0.00	122.44
Officers' expenses	500.00	138.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	361.17
Payroll taxes	550.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	550.00
Publications	200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00
Public Relations	4000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00
Social	1800.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,800.00
STRS(TPO contributions)	5100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,100.00
TOTAL	79929.00	5,196.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	74,732.62

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

September 10, 2012

Woodbury School

The President, John Morris, called the meeting to order at 4:25 p.m.

Dr. Randy Yates, Woodbury Principal, welcomed the SHTA Representative Council.

The minutes of the May 2012 meeting were unanimously approved.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT: Lisa Scott reported a smooth opening for the school year. She stated the teacher evaluation notification will be sent out. She wished everyone a successful year.

PTO REPORT: PTO Council did not have a representative present at the meeting.

OFFICERS' REPORTS:

PRESIDENT

John Morris reported that he met with the members of the Union Summit working on area teaching concerns. He toured all the schools before the opening of the school year. He had a meeting with Bryan Christman regarding school finances. He helped resolve parking issues at the high school. He has been working with administration concerning ongoing staffing concerns. He also met with the SHTA Executive board members in August.

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dollye Finney stated she attended the August PTO Council. She will attend the other PTO meetings throughout the school year. She encourages members to donate to the PTO's annual fund. She asked that teachers who make contributions should identify themselves as such. She discussed plans to positively market the Association throughout the school year. She will be attending Race to the Top meetings during the school year as well. She also attended the Executive Board summer meeting.

SECRETARY

Matt Zucca explained the duties of the Secretary. He informed the Rep. Council members of the attendance procedure. He met with Executive board members during the summer and the new teachers.

TREASURER

Bill Scanlon discussed duties of the Treasurer. He discussed the current financial report and the 2012-2013 budget. He will meet with the Association's accountants. He met with the new teachers over the summer. He discussed the potential need to increase Association dues.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PAST PRESIDENT

Becky Thomas stated she has attended monthly Board of Education meetings.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Steve Smith discussed his responsibilities. He stated that he recently met with new teachers before school started and attended the new teachers' mentoring meeting.

MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS

Stacy Elgart discussed the membership drive. She outlined the procedure for paying Association dues. She passed out membership information to all the head building reps. She stated that membership is currently at 390.

POLICY

Dave Klapholz had no report.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Eileen Sweeney encouraged members to stay active regarding political issues concerning teachers.

LEGISLATIVE

Lena Paskewitz informed the Rep. Council about the link from Shaker.org that discussed House Bill 153. She also attended Teacher Evaluation Committee meetings and Performance Compensation Committee meetings.

PUBLICATIONS

Andrew Glasier asked that articles for the SHTA Newsletter be submitted to him by email at glasier_a@shaker.org. The deadline for submissions to the newsletter is the Wednesday after each representative council meeting.

LEGAL AID

Wendy Lewis had no report.

SOCIAL

Darlene Garrison had no report.

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mike Sears stated that he recently met with new teachers. He has been working with members regarding maternity and paternity leave. He has been working with the administration concerning supplemental contract issues.

BUILDING REPORTS

The following reps asked questions, expressed concerns, or made statements on behalf of the membership in their buildings:

Fernway and Lomond stated their buildings looked great and they had a smooth starts except for the untimely light replacement project.

Boulevard, Mercer and Onaway all had smooth starts to the school year.

Woodbury had concerns about the very limited time allocated to classroom set up.

The Middle School reported that they had a successful Curriculum Night. Many teaching teams hosted a social gathering for parents and students that were well attended. An air conditioning system in one of the teachers' lounges was not working. It was also reported that an Association member has been receiving aggressive and threatening comments from an unhappy parent. Administration has responded and talked to the parent about their inappropriate behavior. The situation has not been resolved and will be closely monitored.

The High School wanted to thank the building administration, central administration, and the City of Shaker for their efforts towards alleviating parking concerns around the school. They also wanted to thank Gloria Cottingham for her efficient and pleasant way she conducts business.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: Dr. Thomas gave a presentation overviewing the duties of the Building Reps.

At 5:40 p.m. the SHTA Representative Council went into executive session.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER: John Morris thanked the Woodbury representatives for hosting our meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2012 AT FERNWAY SCHOOL.

*Respectfully submitted,
Matt Zucca, Secretary*

WHY CHICAGO TEACHERS NEEDED TO STRIKE!

This newsletter is a publication of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association, an independent organization of professional educators in the Shaker Heights City School District. Signed editorials represent the opinion of the author(s) and may or may not reflect the thinking of other officers or members of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. Members and friends of the Association are invited and encouraged to express their opinions or share information via this newsletter.

I am stunned by the audacity of hope of the Chicago teachers on strike. They are on the front line of the battle over public education. As I read and watch the news concerning the strike, my heart goes out to them and their students, who only wish to get back to their classrooms. Yet there are reasons why they are picketing. Many reasons. They hope to see a future where teachers, not politicians create the educational initiatives. They hope to see an era where teachers are respected for the nationally important jobs they have. The implications of this battle will resound throughout the country and speak to the future of public education.

Politically, teachers have become the scapegoat for the ills of public education. There are minimal differences between the education policies of President Obama and Republican nominee Mitt Romney, mainly in the use of state-sponsored vouchers. Both wish to increase privatization of education by allowing greater increases in charter schools. Both have attacked teachers' unions for being outdated and protecting struggling teachers. Both have pushed for greater accountability through use of test scores that have proven to be a disaster where they are implemented. Neither sends/has sent their children to public schools and both have given up on public education.

It is up to teachers to regain control of the discussion concerning education. This strike by Chicago teachers is merely the first of many, I am afraid. Our supporters in the past have abandoned us and we need to speak for ourselves above the drone of politicians and pundits who have poisoned the conversation.

Let's begin with why Chicago

teachers have left the classroom to protest. As in Cleveland, Mayoral control of public schools has been a complete disaster. The current mayor and former Obama Chief of Staff, Rahm Emmanuel, has arbitrarily increased the school year and school day without following the negotiated contract or consulting the Chicago Teachers' Union. He has closed neighborhood schools throughout Chicago, which has been damaging to the impoverished students of these neighborhoods. He has continued to fund underperforming and unaccountable charter schools. He has forced teachers and schools to base their success on student test scores while demanding that teachers are fired and schools are closed when students' standardized test scores are low. As a result, many capable teachers have left the Chicago schools to teach in surrounding communities, who realize, like all of us, that students' test scores are a poor indicator of teacher effectiveness and merely reflect a student's socio-economic class. Reliance on test-scores means reduced instruction in the arts, athletics, social studies and any other non-tested curriculum, further eroding the morale of teachers and students. Mayor Emmanuel also wants to reduce access to resources and increase class sizes in order to create savings for the city. Emmanuel has consistently refused to meet with Chicago Teachers' Union representatives, has broken the contract on several occasions and has attempted to bully teachers into submission. It is under these circumstances that 98% of the more than

26,000 teachers and support staff voted to strike.

I have heard others call Chicago teachers greedy, lazy, underworked, ineffective, and some more awful adjectives. The teachers are just working with the tools they are given. For years, that has meant disrespectful administrative leadership, increases in children in poverty without comparable increases in support services, lack of safety in the buildings where they work, crumbling infrastructure, lack of resources, lack of planning time, 30 to 60 students in a class, stripped down curriculum based on standardized tests and many other indecencies. Now, to add insult to injury, Mayor Emmanuel wants to overhaul the system again without any regard for the teachers or the negotiated contract. The failed practices of the past, even if repackaged and renamed, continue to fail. Instead of fighting with educators, maybe politicians should ask them what works and what doesn't. For what happens in Chicago will drastically change the profession I love.

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