

IMPORTANT DATES

Thursday, May 21: District Recognition Reception @ SHHS Upper Cafeteria. 3:45pm.

Monday, May 25: Memorial Day, Schools closed.

Wednesday, June 10: Close of School/Clerical Day.

SHTA news

May 19, 2015

ISSUE NO. 8

Message From the President

It is my pleasure to begin this final May President's Report with some good news! One of the true pleasures of this job, besides working with our membership, is being able to give the SHTA Service Award and Lifetime Service Award to outstanding Association members, both past and present. It is my honor to give both of these awards to two outstanding individuals and leaders for the SHTA.

The SHTA Service Award Recipient is our Vice President, Mr. Matthew Zucca. Matt has been in the District for 15 years, all at Fernway in second grade. He has been a member of the Association from 2000. Matt became a head building representative in 2003. In 2009-2010 he began his term as Secretary. From 2009-present Matt has been a member of the Investments Committee. In 2013-2014, he began his first term as Vice President. He has been part of the negotiation team for three negotiated contracts. Matt has been a member of the Legal Aide Committee since 2013. Matt has been a Shaker resident since 2008. He has two children in the system and one son who graduated in 2010. Prior to his career in education, Mr. Zucca was in investment banking for five years. Matt's fiscal knowledge was key in this year's negotiations as Assistant Chief Negotiator. His dedication to the elementary level and his role as Vice President has made Our Association an even stronger one. It is wonderful to be able to give Matt this award.

The SHTA Life Time Service Award Recipient is Our Past Vice President, Ms. Dollye Finney. If you know Dollye, you know that nothing beats the sound of her voice and the power of her own words. With that I will let Dollye's inimitable voice speak for itself:

"I came to work in the Shaker Height City Schools in 1986. I have worked in Moreland, Ludlow, Fernway, Sussex, Lomond, Boulevard and SHHS as a speech and language pathologist. I joined the union upon employ. At that time, the president of the SHTA spoke to the entire district on the opening ceremony. I was mesmerized by the powerful opening message brought by then president of the SHTA, William Scherer. His powerful speech, coupled with his piecing blue eyes, convinced me that I had landed somewhere great. In previous employment, I had been a member of AFT and OEA, but this SHTA was special.

I became actively involved in SHTA as a member of the Executive Board under the leadership of my friend and SHTA mentor William Scherer as the Legislative Chair about 18 years ago. After two terms on the Executive Board, I was elected Vice President and served in this office for seven terms.

I was privileged to serve my professional colleagues as the teacher representative to the PTO Council for approximately 16 years, SHTA Investment Committee, Race To The Top Committee, *The Night for The Red and White*, and other initiatives. I received the SHTA service Award presented by Dr. Rebecca Thomas and I am honored to receive the Lifetime Service Award.

My greatest accomplishment in the Shaker Height City Schools was my opportunity to serve the students and teachers of the district.” –*Dollye Finney*

Dollye has been a foundational member of the Shaker Heights Teachers’ Association and it is true honor to present her with this award. Dollye’s ideas continue to inspire Our Association and will continue to do so as we head into the future.

I look forward to presenting these awards and many others on Wednesday, May 21st, the afternoon of our District Recognition Reception. I encourage all of you to be there and celebrate the work and achievements of our colleagues who are receiving awards, continuing contract, and retirement. It is a wonderful capstone to our year as Shaker Teachers.

Typically, as a final report, I would give you an overview of my activity during the year. I feel like I do that with every report, so this month will be like any other. I will update you on the activities that make May my busiest month as President. On Mon April 20th, I met with High School SHTA members per request. On Tuesday, April 21st I took part on the interview panel for the Boulevard principal. On Wednesday, April 22nd, I met with SHTA Support Teachers and Our Officers, along with Consul Susannah Muskovitz to discuss the Constitution and By-Law changes necessary to make Support Teachers members of the Association. These changes will be shared with the membership this spring via email and voted on in the fall. On Thursday, April 23rd, I also met with SHTA members approaching retirement to explain the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning Severance Pay. On Wednesday, April 29th I met with the Cuyahoga County Educator Summit to finalize our mission statement and our position on Standardized Testing. These documents will be shared soon via the CCES Facebook Page and email. I will attend another meeting on June 3rd to finalize these documents. On Monday, May 4th I attended another round of Boulevard principal interviews and our Executive Board meeting. On Thursday, May 7th I sat on the interview panel for the Communications Director. I am also in ongoing discussions with Administration concerning an MOU on a modified job sharing agreement that will allow members to job share without a specific partner needing to be identified. I will share more information as this process continues.

It is also a time of change within our Executive Board. We are sad to see our esteemed Elections Chair Stacy Elgart retire, but we are happy to welcome Chante Thomas-Taylor as our new Elections Chair. With Chante’s departure from the Legal Aide Committee, we are fortunate to have Paul Repasy take his place. As Steve Smith steps back from the New Teachers committee to spend time with his young family, we are fortunate to keep him active as member and also fortunate that Lisa Hardiman will be taking over the Chairperson position. Another great pleasure as SHTA President is to see new leadership evolve on the Executive Board and throughout Our Association. Please take the time, if given the chance, to thank these individuals for stepping up!

At the end of my second term as President, I am happy to announce that I am running again for this important office. I will not campaign in this letter, as I am running unopposed. I will just say it has been one of the defining experiences in my careers as an educator and in reinforcing my values as a human being. I am continually impressed and humbled by the quality and character of my fellow Officers, Executive Board Members, fellow teachers and colleagues. I would like to thank all of the SHTA for this opportunity and I want to wish you relaxing, reinvigorating, and enriching summer with family and friends. We have had quite a year and there is more work that awaits in the fall.

Respectfully submitted,
John Morris

Reports from the Executive Board

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the SHTA as Vice President. This year has brought many new challenges to Shaker Heights teachers and the Association. As Vice President, I have represented the SHTA at PTO Council with this year's co-presidents Jeff Isaacs and Tracy Peebles. I would like to welcome incoming 2015-14 co-presidents Candith McMillan and Missy Sherwin. They will join us at the monthly SHTA Representative Council meetings the next school year.

I have worked this school year, as in years past, on the Investments Committee with Todd Keitlen, Chante Thomas-Taylor, and Investment Committee Chair Bill Scanlon. It is the responsibility of this committee to oversee and realign our investments (general fund) with Edward Jones Investments. I assisted in monitoring and adjust the funds with the other Committee members. We continue to enjoy a steady growth of our conservatively invested funds.

I served as the Teacher Liaison for the staff in assisting with *The Night for the Red and White*. *The Night for the Red and White* was again a huge success this year. Much of the success of this event is due to the efforts of our staff. Again I thank you for supporting this event.

Another duty I have is administering The Shaker Heights Teachers' Association Fellowship Grants. Again I would like to congratulate 2014 – 2015 winners:

Melissa	Becerra	Boulevard	Aquita	Shephard	Woodbury
Alison	Bradford	Boulevard	Chante	Thomas-Taylor	Woodbury
Stacey	Krantz	Boulevard	Mario	Clopton	Middle School
Ellen	Battle	Fernway	Debra	Quarles	Middle School
Tanutda	Devine	Lomond	Ellen	Roberts	Middle School
Lisa	Hardiman	Mercer	Linda	Roth	Middle School
Karen	Tritt	Mercer	Amanda	Ahrens	High School
Sally	Davros	Onaway	Brian	Berger	High School
Sanya	Godbold Bell	Onaway	Laura	Daberko	High School
Tim	Kalan	Onaway	Valerie	Doersen	High School
Paula	Klausner	Onaway	Amy	Fogerty	High School
Susanne	Peterjohn	Onaway	Aimee	Gey	High School
Katie	Porta	Onaway	Susan	Isler	High School
Laura	Robbins	Onaway	David	Klapholz	High School
Noreen	Smyth-Morrow	Onaway	Cathy	Lawlor	High School
Penny	Weiss-Flynn	Onaway	Molly	Miles	High School
Sara	Yurman	Onaway	John	Moore	High School
Tom	Deep	Woodbury	Sagar	Patel	High School
Ruth	Heide	Woodbury	Bill	Scanlon	High School
Sherri	Jarvie	Woodbury	Windy	Shiner	High School

In order to receive reimbursement this school year, your documentation must be submitted to me by May 29. Payments will not be made over the summer break. Reimbursements will resume in the fall.

This year I served as a member of the Negotiation Team. As a member of the Negotiating Team I had the honor once again to serve the Association and work with extremely talented and professional members of the Association. The team of John Morris, Bill Scanlon, Dave Klapholtz, Mike Sears, Wendy Lewis, Eileen Sweeney and myself worked very hard to bring a fair and deserving contract to the Association.

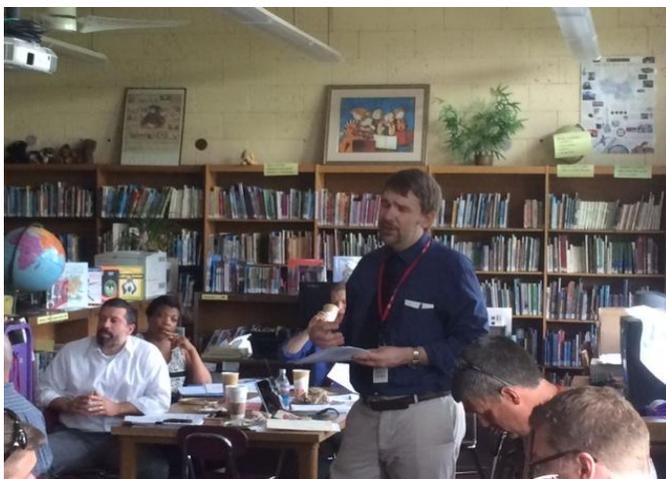
Finally, I would like to thank Association President John Morris again for his excellent leadership of our Association. His tireless efforts, day in and day out, keep our Association strong. He continues to negotiate and advocate behind the scenes with such composure, confidence, and professionalism. We are truly lucky to have him as Our President. I also want to thank the Officers, the Executive Board, the Building Representatives and all the Association members. I wish all of you a restful summer. The fall will present us with many challenges, but we will be ready.

*Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Zucca*

SHTA President, Dr. John Morris & the 2015 SHTA Service Award Recipient, Vice President Matthew Zucca.



SHTA President John Morris & Vice President Matt Zucca speak at the May Representative Council meeting @ Onaway School.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Before the May Executive Board meeting I prepared a budget for the 2015-16 fiscal year. I presented that budget to the Executive Board with zeros written in for salaries. The Executive Board approved the budget for presentation to the Representative Council the following week. The Representative Council discussed the budget at the May 11th meeting and voted to have the budget reflect a 4% increase to the salaries of the six salaried Association employees. The Council voted to increase the per meeting remuneration by 4% as well. The budget then approved for placing on the May 18th ballot. The current financial report is included.

Some of the activities I performed while fulfilling my duties as Treasurer this year are listed below:

- I attended every Executive Board Meeting and every Representative Council Meeting throughout the year..
- I maintained our insurance through Musgrave Insurance.
- I met with the Investment Committee and Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor, twice this year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring to evaluate our Edward Jones investments and make changes that were deemed necessary.
- In the Fall I attended a union summit with other local labor organization leaders.
- I met with representatives from Key Bank to set up investments for Association funds.
- I met with our accountants at Edward Hawkins & Co. at various times throughout the year to submit our books for a compilation process and to complete the paperwork for our Form 990 tax filing.
- I collected donations in honor of Jim Caffrey and sent the money to Mission Stove, the charity his son created.
- With the help of some colleagues I composed the SHTA letter responding to the Board of Education's threat to terminate a Lomond teacher's contract.
- I attended several Board of Education meetings throughout the year.
- I communicated with the Shaker Heights Board Office to pay the salaries of our six paid Officers and Committee Heads, along with the relevant STRS and Medicare payments.
- I was a member of this year's Negotiations Team and spent many hours involved in the negotiation process.
- I paid the members of the Negotiations Team a salary for their work negotiating the three-year contract.
- I paid the S.H.T.A. Representatives their compensation for attending the meetings throughout the year.
- I prepared the 2015-16 fiscal year budget for approval by the Representative Council at the May Association meeting.
- I paid bills throughout the year and balanced the checkbook, reimbursing any Association expenses incurred by our members.
- I kept accurate record of our finances throughout the year, maintaining a paper record of every transaction.
- I met with and discussed Association business with the other Officers and Executive Board members throughout the year when needed.

This school year started out the same way each has for the past few years; seeing colleagues and discussing how their summers went, reflecting on the past, and anticipating the new school year. The hectic craziness of the previous school year always comes up, and inevitably, someone says, "Well, it can't get any worse." This past year was especially "worse." From the slew of state-mandated tests to our own administration attacking our teachers, it has been a very long year. But, as usual, our collective response is dazzling. From the creation of Test Mania to the outpouring of support at February's School Board meeting, the action and resolve our staff is astounding. And as a result of that collective determination, I continue to be proud to call myself a teacher in the Shaker Heights City School District. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and the Association as a whole. Have a happy summer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bill Scanlon

**Balance Sheet Standard
As of May 13, 2015**

05/15/15

May 13, '15

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings

Key Bank (checking) 4,300.42

Key Investments2 86,722.63

Total Checking/Savings 91,023.05

Other Current Assets

Edward Jones 13760-1-1 459,805.67

Edward Jones 13768-1-3 588,874.20

Total Other Current Assets 1,048,679.87

Total Current Assets 1,139,702.92

TOTAL ASSETS 1,139,702.92

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Equity

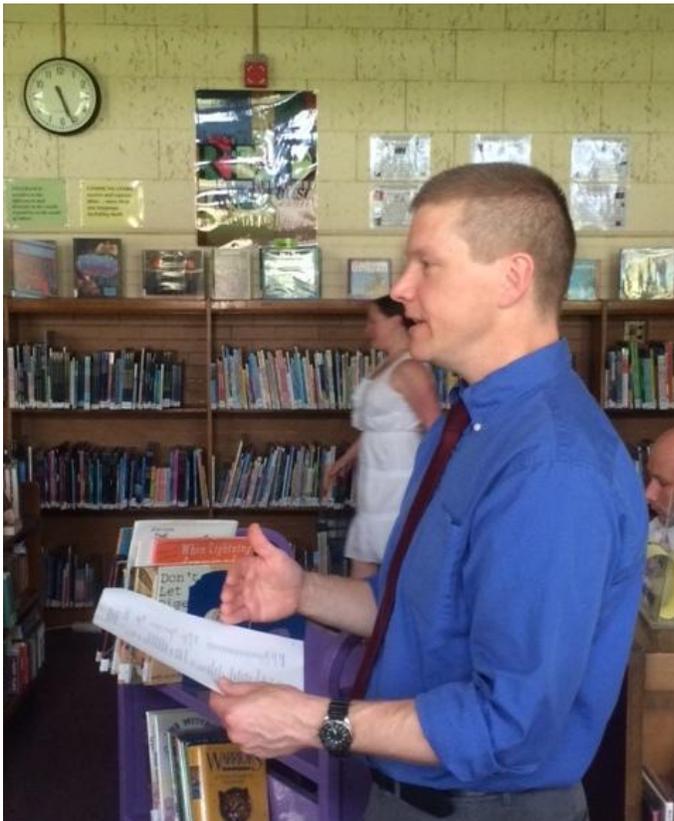
Opening Balance Equity 53.69

Retained Earnings 1,114,846.01

Net Income 24,803.22

Total Equity 1,139,702.92

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 1,139,702.92



**SHTA Treasurer Bill
Scanlon at the May
Representative Council
meeting @ Onaway
School.**

**Shaker Heights Teachers' Association
Profit and Loss Standard
July 1, 2014 through May 13, 2015**

05/15/15

**Jul 1, '14 - May
13, '15**

Income	
Income	
Member Dues	121,860.00
Total Income	121,860.00
Investments	
Change in Value for Key Investment	331.33
Change in Value in Edward Jones	400.74
Edward Jones Investment Income	36,994.32
Interest-Savings, Short-term CD	8.26
Key Bank Investment Income	152.94
Key Investments Income	1,238.36
Total Investments	39,125.95
Other Types of Income	
Miscellaneous Revenue	673.00
Total Other Types of Income	673.00
Total Income	161,658.95
Expense	
Operations	
Accounting	12,335.00
Compensation	27,933.50
Conferences & Meetings	2,544.43
Executive Board	609.18
Fellowships & Grants	1,862.00
Insurance	5,683.00
Legal	9,004.60
Legal Aid Committee	9,513.43
Negotiations	50,504.18
Officers' Expenses	2,299.40
Payroll Taxes	698.65
Public Relations	5,891.74
Publications	945.00
Social	286.00
STRS (PTO Contribution)	6,745.62
Total Operations	136,855.73
Total Expense	136,855.73
Net Income	24,803.22

SECRETARY'S REPORT

This has truly been a very busy and exciting school year. Starting in the summer of 2014, my duties included attending an Alice Training to become familiar with new lockdown procedures that other school districts have adopted. Officers of SHTA, started dialogue with our Support Teachers last summer. I was invited to attend the district's New Teacher Orientation.

Once the school year started, I began taking notes at our Executive Board and Representative Council meetings along with keeping accurate attendance records. The Happy Hour at Los Habaneros was a huge success and I actually won a gift card by playing one of the trivia games created by Selena Brown. The district created a calendar committee and they shared their calendar creation at the December school board meeting. I attended this meeting so that I would have a better understanding of the proposed calendars created. As *The Night for the Red and Whit* quickly approached, raffle tickets were sold to help with the contribution made by SHTA. This year, SHTA raised over \$500 selling raffle tickets for this event. As always, the black tie event was absolutely beautiful.

I had the opportunity to be a part of the interviewing panel for candidates applying for the Chief of Staff position. It was a rewarding experience and I learned so much by being a part of this panel. I also, sat on the panel for the district's Educational Visioning Services. Our membership voted to allow Support Teachers to be a part of our Association umbrella. I have created mailings for the Support Teachers and attended meetings to discuss issues or concerns.

With the end of the year just around the corner, I would like to thank you for allowing me serve as your secretary of our Association. Have a wonderful summer and enjoy your time off. ☺

*Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison*



The SHTA is on



us @

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Shaker-Heights-Teachers-Association>

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT

As I reflect back on the past year, two disturbing trends related to my position with SHTA come to mind. First, respect for teachers and their rights are at an all-time low. Second, responsibilities and expectations for teachers is at an all-time high. While these are national trends, the 2014-15 school year proved that neither Ohio nor Shaker Heights are immune to the anti-teacher mood sweeping the country.

In September, I wrote about the “frozen supplemental contracts,” which are still frozen. The collective bargaining agreement approved in March included a side letter about committees that would study supplemental contracts. As far as I know, no committees have been formed. In October, I wrote about the November elections and we all know how those turned out. We continue to have a majority of our state legislators obsessed with rating teachers based on results from flawed standardized tests that take away instructional time from students. In November, I wrote about a school calendar that takes away instructional days. Teachers raised their concerns to the administration. The calendar was unanimously approved by the Board of Education.

In December, a grievance was filed about a variety of problems with the district’s technology. Working computers should be a minimum standard in a profession like teaching and in a school district like Shaker Heights. In January, I wrote about OTES concerns and registered for a program on teachers’ legal rights related to OTES. In February, I signed a petition to support a colleague who almost lost her job for doing nothing wrong in her kindergarten classroom. I also attended a school board meeting on her behalf. The school district still does not have a security plan for scenarios when students leave the classroom and do not return in a reasonable amount of time. In March, grievances were filed about the shortage of substitute teachers and the evaluation process. In April, I heard that department chairs at the high school were blocked from viewing job applications. I discovered a few days later that I, too, no longer had access to *applitrack*. I recently saw more job openings posted for Shaker Heights teachers than for any other similar district in northeast Ohio. Many of these openings are because of retirements, but others are due to resignations, non-renewals, and early retirements.

Our strategic plan’s vision statement says, “*Shaker is the first-choice school district for all students.*” Shaker also used to be the first-choice school district for all teachers, which made it a wonderful place for students and their families. Please send me comments or suggestions about what we can do to attract and retain the best teachers (sears_m@shaker.org). I will forward your ideas to Human Resources.

Congratulations to Matt Zucca and Dollye Finney for winning SHTA awards this year! I have had the pleasure of working with Matt on two negotiations teams. He brings a tremendous passion for his students and colleagues to the bargaining table. Dollye mentored me as a new member of the executive board when she served as vice president. I encourage all members to attend the District Service Recognition Reception on May 21st at 3:45 in the High School’s Upper Cafeteria. It is a great opportunity to enjoy fellowship with your colleagues across the district, and to honor them for their many contributions to our students and community.

I want to thank the entire SHTA membership for giving me the opportunity to serve in this position. I enjoy the work and meeting so many colleagues from different buildings. Have a nice summer.

***Respectfully submitted,
Mike Sears, chairperson***

PUBLIC RELATIONS

As the SHTA Public Relations Chair this year, I have worked to promote the Association through community advertisements, support of student programs, teacher appreciation efforts and T-shirt sales. I have attended Executive Board and Representative Council meetings to keep membership informed about PR efforts and to take part in Association discussions.

Arrangements for advertisements in Shaker Life Magazine, The Shakerite, and The Gristmill were made. Student support was given through contributions to the Woodbury Creating for Change effort and to the charity of the son of our beloved Jim Caffrey. Teacher Appreciation gifts for members were distributed during Teacher Appreciation Week in early May. I am proud of serving the Association as the Public Relations Chair.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Bognar, chairperson

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

It has been my pleasure and honor to serve as the first official Evaluation Chair! Working with the Evaluation Committee to further develop and improve the evaluation system and co-coordinating the Peer Evaluation program have been the focus of my work this year. I have also worked to address individual questions and concerns and communicate evaluation information to all of you. The roles this position takes on will continue to evolve and be clarified in coming years. It is not yet clear how Teacher Evaluation, including both Teacher Performance ratings and Student Growth Measures, will ultimately impact our profession. It will continue to be essential for the Association to have a representative whose focus is representing your interests with evaluation.

Over the last four years, the teachers and administrators on the committee have successfully developed a collaborative working relationship. Although some members have left and new ones have taken their place, the culture of the committee remains the same, and I hope this continues as we move forward. Our work to successfully develop and implement an evaluation system that supports real professional growth and meets OTES requirements is not complete. Given the complexity of our work, the task of effectively rating a teacher's performance and supporting real professional growth is clearly challenging. It is my hope that the efforts of the committee to amend the rubric and improve the process will result in a system that allows for a more accurate reflection of a teacher's practice.

The Peer Evaluation program will continue next year. Teachers on a continuing contract who are interested in participation have submitted intent forms to their building principals and are awaiting approval. Principals need to inform teachers of approvals and denials by June 4th. All denials must be communicated in person, with specific reasons for denial. Furthermore, any reason(s) must have been addressed with the teacher previously.

The feedback about the impact of peer evaluation on teachers' instructional practices is extremely positive. The opportunities to observe a colleague teach, reflect together, and develop strategies and goals for improvement are core elements of professional growth. I appreciate that these benefits continue to be supported. I will continue to help coordinate the program and assist participants in any way I can.

I look forward to continued work with the Executive Board, Representative Council, Peer Evaluation coordinators and participants, and the Evaluation Committee! Please contact me with any questions or concerns and please remember to read Evaluation updates in the monthly newsletters!

Respectfully submitted,
Lena Paskewitz, chairperson

PAST PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As Past President, I support President John Morris and his leadership team with matters that relate to the history and organization of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. I attend SHTA Executive Board and Representative Council as well as the Regular Meetings of the Board of Education and the Finance and Audit Committee. I work on the SHTA website by providing the information for updates and changes and I edit the SHTA Newsletter and other communications to the membership. I assist with updating membership and distribution lists. At the direction of the president, I work with individual teachers on various issues.

Many of my activities involve time—like attending district meetings and providing an SHTA presence. Being a leader for the SHTA is already a time-consuming responsibility. Hopefully, my attendance at meetings provides some respite for the officers who are not only serving the Association but are also teaching, planning, and assessing their students.

I appreciate the opportunity to continue to serve the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. As the summer break approaches, I hope each of you takes time to relax with family and friends.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Thomas, chairperson

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

I have truly enjoyed being the Social Committee Chairperson this year. All suggestions or ideas about future social events for the SHTA are being accepted for next year!

Every month I have the pleasure of hosting the Executive Board Meeting at Fernway School.

We had a very successful Autumn Happy Hour at Los Habaneros on Monday, November 3rd. More than 60 members attended this festive event! I would like to thank everyone who attended. We were fortunate to be able to give out many door prizes to thank people for coming and an additional 4-\$25 gift certificates to Los Habaneros to the winners of our trivia contest.

Our annual District Recognition Reception will take place on Thursday, May 21st at 3:45 p.m. in the High School Upper Cafeteria. We will eat and fellowship from 3:45-4:30 p.m. and the program will immediately follow. If you have not RSVP'd yet please do so as soon as possible. Because this is a catered event I want to be confident that I have ordered enough food! During these difficult times it is important that we support each other and celebrate our colleague's accomplishments! I look forward to seeing you there!

Have a safe and relaxing summer vacation!

Respectfully submitted,
Selena Brown, chairperson

POLICY COMMITTEE

A number of changes to our constitution and by-laws are being proposed to our membership in order to reflect changes in state law, district policies, and SHTA membership. This past Monday the SHTA representative council moved to allow a vote on amending By-Law VII section D regarding new language concerning political donations. This vote will occur in the fall and also will include numerous other amendments to our constitution and by-laws that were expedited executively for a vote in the fall regarding numerous language changes which include: wording in our contract that would be altered to reflect the addition of Shaker Support teachers to our association; proposed changes to wording that anachronistically refers to tenure; numerous technical changes involving adding descriptors and providing wording to correct past omissions. Members will receive proposed changes to consider before the vote that will take place in the fall. Anyone with any questions regarding the changes or the process of change can feel free to contact me at kalan_t@shaker.org.

As the policy chairperson this year, I have participated in the Teacher Evaluation Committee and continued work within my buildings to improve how OTEs is implemented. There have also been significant events this year such as a new contract, state mandates, and the addition of a subset of new teachers to the association that have required us to adapt to these new circumstances by beginning the process to amend our constitution. As policy chair, I have worked with others to help identify changes and implement the process through which we change Our Constitution and By-Laws. I would also like to extend a special thanks to John Morris, Andrew Glasier, and our attorney, Susannah Muskovitz who spent a good deal of time and energy reflecting on necessary changes.

*Respectfully submitted,
Tim Kalan, chairperson*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Over the course of the school year I have participated in many SHTA activities. As part of duties serving as the legislative chairperson, I have:

- Monitored and reported on the Ohio House and Senate of Ohio General Assembly for proposed and pending legislation that affects the SHTA membership.
- Monitored and collaborated on legislative positions of other Ohio teacher unions.
- Listened and solicited viewpoints of other SHTA members.
- Attended all SHTA Executive and Representative Council meetings.
- Wrote a monthly report for the SHTA newsletter.
- Communicated to SHTA members about the impact of pending legislation and new laws.
- Attended political events and engaged local and state officials about educational issues.

I am proud to have served on the negotiations team for our new contract. It was an honor to represent Our Association through the collective bargaining process. It was special for me, personally, to exercise my right to collectively bargain since I worked alongside many of our members in the fight against SB5. I am pleased with the new contract and how we worked with the administration through the Interest Based Bargaining process.

As the Political Action Committee Chairperson, I have encouraged the membership to take a stand on pending legislation and contact their Ohio representatives to ensure educators are helping shape policy. In the next year and beyond, we need to have greater participation in the Political Action Committee. A strong

PAC can fight for what in the best interest of the students, the institution of education and for teacher's rights. A strong PAC engages local and state level policy members and is a catalyst for change. Our voice, working collaboratively with other teacher unions, can be a powerful force. If you would like to join the PAC, please contact me at pacshed@gmail.com.

The legislative committee is continuing to monitor the progress of the bi-annual budget, otherwise known as House Bill 64. The bi-annual budget takes many forms as it travels out of committee and through the Ohio House and Senate. When initially introduced, Gov. John Kasich, proposed to change the funding formula for school districts across Ohio. This proposal redistributed money based on industry and student population demographics in districts. At the time, this meant Shaker Heights Schools could have an increase of state funding by approximately 15%. Other districts did not make out as well. Many districts, most in rural areas, could have budget cuts. New proposals from House legislators are proposing to guarantee that all districts would have at least the current level of funding. The bi-annual budget goes to the floor for a vote on June 30, 2015.

The Senate Committee on Testing has made its recommendations for changing the Ohio accountability tests. Highlights include, limiting tests to once per year, transparency in reporting, time results reporting, a better approach to testing students needing accommodations and state funding for testing should be considered. You can get more information at: <http://www.ohiosenate.gov/lehner/press/senate-advisory-committee-on-testing-recommends-improvements-to-state-tests>

Finally, I am proud to belong to an association that stood alongside of its' member, Cathy Grieshop, to fight with her against unfair disciplinary action. Cathy took a stand for herself and in the process made us all stronger. She deserves our thanks. I hope each of you has a relaxing and rejuvenating summer!

*Respectfully submitted,
Eileen Sweeney, chairperson*

TEACHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

This spring, 17 teachers were granted tenure from the Shaker Heights Board of Education. They will be recognized at the District Recognition Tea on May 22nd. I would like to congratulate the following teachers who are being recommended for continuing contract status this year: Chamaine Abrams – Middle School, Michelle Child – High School, Adam Cohen – High School, Valerie Crowley – High School, Libby Dang – Woodbury, Deborah Deep – Boulevard, Raymond Durban – High School, Karen Gainford – Lomond, Nicole Patterson – Lomond, Susanne Peterjohn – Onaway, Debra Quarles – Middle School – Kimberly Roberts – High School, Tana Roberts – High School, Windy Shiner – High School, Catherine Szendrey – High School, Holly Ushiroda – High School, Enid Vasquez – High School. Congratulations to all of you!

The main focus of the Teacher Education Committee is a liaison for newly hired and non-tenured teachers. Throughout the year, I answered questions from teachers with the help of Association President Dr. John Morris. At the September New Teacher meeting, I met with the new teachers and their mentors. During this time, I went over specific parts of the SHTA contract that were especially important to new teachers.

I have enjoyed this position as Teacher Education Chair. I feel that even though I am an experienced teacher, there are always new ideas to learn from less experienced teachers. As educators, we too should never stop learning. Thank you for this opportunity to work on behalf of the Association. Wishing you a calm end-of-the-year and a relaxing summer!

*Respectfully submitted,
Steve Smith, chairperson*

LEGAL AID COMMITTEE

Greetings! This year our committee received two requests for legal aid. The first request, which was unanimously approved by the Representative Council, resulted in \$6536.70 being given to a member for their legal expenses. The second, and most recent request from another member, was voted on and unanimously approved at the February Representative Council meeting to assist a member with legal expenses. \$5000.00 was approved at that meeting.

Legal aid is here to listen to your requests and provide assistance when approved by the membership. It has been a pleasure being able to serve the membership in this capacity. I wish each of you a restful summer. Thank you for your continued support, as you can see, it has allowed us to be here for our members.

*Respectfully submitted,
Chante Thomas-Taylor, chairperson*

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

It has been a very busy year for the Publications Committee. As well as soliciting submissions, organizing material, taking pictures for the newsletter, assembling the newsletter, sending it to the editors, editing and distributing the eight newsletters this year, I have also attended all the SHTA Executive Board and Representatives meetings. I have written many editorials for the newsletter.

I would like to thank SHTA President Dr. John Morris, Past President Becky Thomas, high school English teacher Aimee Grey and high school Social Studies teacher Andi Glickman for their editorial eye that makes this newsletter as good as it is. They have taken time out of their weekends to examine the newsletter for your reading pleasure.

Next year, I will be increasing our digital presence by helming our Facebook page, opening a Twitter account, and taking charge of our website. If you have any suggestions please email me at glasier_a@shaker.org and stay tuned.

*Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Glasier, chairperson*

SALARY TENURE COMMITTEE

This year's negotiations were successfully completed utilizing the Interest Based Bargaining Approach. SHTA members received increases of 2%, 2%, and 2% over 3 years, with an additional 1%, .5%, and .5% for initiatives related to the strategic plan. Our prescription coverage changed with an additional tier being added and severance pay transitioned into a tax-sheltered account deposit for final payout. We will not negotiate again until our contract expires on December 31st, 2017. The updated version of the contract is available on ww.shtaweb.org. A limited number of large print hardcopies are available as well. Contact your head representative to make a request for a hardcopy.

*Respectfully Submitted,
John L. Morris*

MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

END OF YEAR REPORT

THE 2014-2015 SHTA REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

BOULEVARD: Jennifer Goulden - head rep, Naomi Loges - alt

FERNWAY: Annie Haney - head rep

LOMOND: Donita Townsend - head rep, Kevin Wagner - rep

MERCER: Lisa Hardiman - head rep, Robyn Feinstein - alt

ONAWAY: Paula Klausner - head rep, Jim Sweeney - alt

WOODBURY: Amy Santos - head rep, Lee Appel - rep, Aquita Shepherd - rep, Todd Keitlen - alt

MIDDLE SCHOOL: Paul Repasy - head rep, Terri Ann Hastings - rep, Kathy Manning - rep, Tim Richards - alt

HIGH SCHOOL: James Schmidt - head rep, Amanda Ahrens - rep, Brian Berger - rep, Aimee Grey - rep, Keith Szalay - rep, Tod Torrence - rep, A.T. Vazquez - alt

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY BUILDING

<u>BUILDING</u>	<u>MEMBERS</u>
Boulevard	24
Fernway	23
Lomond	34
Mercer	30
Onaway	28
Woodbury	62
Middle School	70
High School	132
TOTAL	403

On Monday, March 2, 2015 the membership approved the tentative agreement between the School Board and the SHTA for our contract effective through December 31, 2017.

CONTRACT TENTATIVE AGREEMENT RATIFICATION VOTE

<u>BUILDING</u>	<u>ACCEPT</u>	<u>REJECT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Boulevard	23	1	24
Fernway	22	0	22
Lomond	29	0	29
Mercer	23	1	24
Onaway	25	0	25
Woodbury	51	4	55
Middle School	59	5	64
High School	107	3	110
TOTAL	339	14	353
Percent of Total Votes	96.03%	3.97%	

MAY 18th ELECTION RESULTS

On Monday, May 18, 2015, the membership elected the 2015-2017 Officers, the 2015-2016 Representative Council and approved the proposed budget.

The Officers elected to serve a two-year term:

THE 2015-2017 SHAKER HEIGHTS TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President	John Morris	High School
Vice-President	Matthew Zucca	Fernway
Secretary	Darlene Garrison	Woodbury
Treasurer	William Scanlon	High School

The tenured members elected to Representative Council to serve a one-year term:

THE 2015-2016 SHTA REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

BOULEVARD: Jennifer Goulden, Angela Anderson

FERNWAY: Andee Hassell

LOMOND: Donita Townsend, Steve Smith, Jill Dipiero

MERCER: Nicole Smith, Robyn Feinstein

ONAWAY: Paula Klausner

WOODBURY: Lee Appel, Angela Goodrum, Aisha Mason, Aquita Shepherd

MIDDLE SCHOOL: Tim Richards, Kathy Manning, Linda Roth, Anna Hruby

HIGH SCHOOL: Amanda Ahrens, Brian Berger, Aimee Grey, David Peterjohn, Joel Rathbone, James Schmidt, Keith Szalay, A.T. Vazquez

PROPOSED SHTA BUDGET RESULTS

<u>BUILDING</u>	<u>FORAGAINST</u>	
BOULEVARD	20	1
FERNWAY	17	0
LOMOND	32	0
MERCER	21	0
ONAWAY	24	0
WOODBURY	47	0
MIDDLE SCHOOL	35	0
HIGH SCHOOL	83	3
TOTAL	279	4

*Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Elgart, chairperson*

A Special Thank You to Stacy Elgart-Mallin

It takes many people to make the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association successful. Some of them are more visible—like the officers; others work behind the scenes performing tasks that are vital to the organization. Stacy Elgart-Mallin, Membership and Elections Chairperson, has served the Association for more than twenty years. She is retiring this year and her skill and attention to detail will certainly be missed.

Stacy's expertise with databases and technology has been a gift to our Association. Each year, she updates the membership files and provides information for the collection of dues. Her membership files are the reference point for all communications and elections. She is responsible for the ballots and for tabulating the vote. Without Stacy's talent, Our Association would not have run efficiently.

At the Middle School, Stacy is a trusted colleague. Paul Repasy, Head Representative from the Middle School, thanked Stacy for her willingness to listen to issues and provide insights. He knew he could go to her when he needed input on issues facing the middle school and he relied on her advice and discretion.

One thing you may not know is that Stacy's husband, Jim Mallin, was the Membership and Elections Chairperson before her. Of course, those of us who know Stacy realize that she assisted Jim with the database. So, Stacy's service goes beyond her own years as Chairperson. And she has offered to assist Chante Thomas-Taylor as she transitions to managing this committee.

Stacy, all of us in the Association wish you the best in your retirement and we thank you for your many years of service to the SHTA.

Becky Thomas
SHTA Past-President



WANTED: SHTA PAC TREASURER

Seeking a politically minded Association dedicated person to oversee the duties of Treasurer.

DUTIES INCLUDE: Bi-Annual reporting to the B.O.E. & keeping abreast of state election laws. Time commitment is approximately a couple hours/month

**Interested? Contact Eileen Sweeney at:
pacshed@gmail.com**

WANTED: SHTA PAC MEMBERS

Seeking Association dedicated people to participate and represent the SHTA politically.

Committee members will develop political positions on issues impacting the SHTA and organize political actions. Time commitment is approximately a couple hours/month

**Interested? Contact Eileen Sweeney at:
pacshed@gmail.com**

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

May 11, 2015, Onaway School

SHTA President, John Morris started the May 11th Rep. Council Meeting at 4:25PM.

Amy Davis, Principal of Onaway Elementary School was not in attendance due to a family medical emergency. Paula Klausner shared a welcome to the SHTA from Amy Davis.

MINUTES from the April 13th, 2015 Representatives Council meeting were approved by James Schmidt and seconded by Aimee Grey.

Administration Report

Dr. Hutchings was present from central office.

- Dr. Hutchings shared the timeline for screening candidates for the High School Principal. The school district is working with the search firm Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates.
 - Three to five potential candidates will be presented by the firm on May 18th.
 - The first round interviews will take place on May 21st and May 22nd with the panel. The panel will consist of high school teachers, high school administration, high school P.T.O. representative, Parent representatives and student representatives.
 - The top two candidates will be moved forward to the second round interviews, which will take place on May 27th and May 28th. Candidates will go through a full day of interviews, school tour and meet & greets.
 - By June 5th, a finalist will hopefully be selected.
 - Just in case a candidate is not selected, the district will select an interim principal.
 - All information is located on the district webpage.
 - Boulevard principal is down to 2 finalists, one is internal and one is external.
 - Director of Pupil Services down to 2 finalists, one is internal and one is external.
 - Position of Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction was just recently posted.
- Principals will be conducting all interviews for teachers.
- A concern about the timing of posting open positions for teachers – Can the district start the process earlier? We have started the process earlier than previous years. The district had to create job descriptions and the process for interviewing which took time.

P.T.O. Report – No Representative was available to give a P.T.O. Report

Officer's Report

President, John Morris

- On April 21, conducted Boulevard Principal interviews.
- On April 22, attended meeting with SHTA Support Teachers. Voted on amendments, executive chair and negotiating team.
- On April 23, met with retirees to discuss severance pay issues.
- On April 29, met with Cuyahoga County Educators Summit.
- Stacy Elgart is retiring from the position of Membership/Elections. Chante Thomas-Taylor will resume this role in the fall.
- Paul Repasy will be the new Legal Aid Chair.
- Steve Smith is leaving the position of Teacher Education Chair to spend more time with his family and Lisa Hardiman will be taking over this position.
- This year, the SHTA President's Award will be awarded to SHTA Vice President Matt Zucca.
- This year, the SHTA Lifetime Service Award will be going to past SHTA Vice President Dollye Finney.
- Every Thursday, Dr. Hutchings and Dr. Morris meet to discuss issues and concerns.

Vice President, Matt Zucca

- Attended meetings with SHTA ST.
- Worked on fellowship grants. All receipts are to be turned in to me by September. Please make sure that the grant

is being used for Professional Development

- Attended Investments Committee Meeting.
- Has been working with Bernice Stokes and Dale Whittington to discuss issues concerning SLOs.
- Talked to Chris Auginas about the total for *The Night for the Red & White*. This year, was a huge success, we passed the amount raised from last year.

Secretary, Darlene Garrison

- Attended meeting with SHTA ST members on April 29th.
- Working on mailings for SHTA ST members.
- Attendance is going around, please be sure to check total number of meetings attended.

Treasurer, Bill Scanlon

- Attended Investment Committee Meeting.
- Attended meetings with SHTA ST members.
- Attended Achievement Gap Meeting at the Library
- Attended School Board Meeting.
- Shared proposed financial report as a preview to discuss with members before the vote on May 18th.
- Voting on the proposed budget will be on Monday, May 18th.

Executive Board Reports

Past President, Becky Thomas

- Worked on SHTA webpage.
- Current contract and Open Letter is now on the SHTA webpage.
- Attended the School Board Meeting.
- Attended the Finance and Audit Meeting.
- Annual SHTA Reception is on Thursday, May 21. All members of SHTA please try to attend.

Teacher Education, Steve Smith

- No Report.

Membership/Elections, Stacy Elgart

- Passed out ballots and signature lists for the May 18th vote. We will be electing officers, building representatives and voting on a budget.

Policy, Tim Kalan

- Worked on language changes in the Constitution and By-Laws.

Public Relations, Bob Bognar

- Sent all Head Representatives teacher appreciation gifts to pass out, I hope everyone enjoyed them.
- If you have not ordered your SHTA shirt, please do so ASAP. We are planning on wearing them at the Opening Convocation in the Fall. One hundred-twenty members have purchased a shirt.

Evaluation, Lena Paskewitz

- Evaluations are wrapped up; please check newsletters for more information.
- Peer Evaluator Intent Forms are due by Friday, May 15th.

Legislative, Eileen Sweeney

- Monitoring legislation.
- Looking for someone to take the role of treasurer for the SHTA PAC.

Publications, Andrew Glasier

- Wednesday at midnight all submissions are due.
- All executive board members, end-of-the-year reports are due Wednesday at midnight.
- This will be a long newsletter with well written editorials

Social, Selena Brown

- The Recognition Reception is all set for Thursday, May 21st. The reception will be held at Shaker Heights High School, upper cafeteria.
- So far, 140 members have sent in their RSVP to attend. Please encourage membership to RSVP, we would love to see all members present.

Legal Aid, Chante Thomas-Taylor

- No Report
- Attended Finance Committee Meeting

Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Mike Sears

- I am working on scheduling a grievance hearing about the shortage of qualified, reliable substitutes. During the past month, I have also assisted members whose limited contracts were not renewed. I went to a meeting with John, Bill, and Bryan Christman about changes in the severance packages for sick days. I heard from two members who think having a sick day bank is a good idea. I am currently working with a few members about FMLA, licensure issues, and involuntary transfers. I also attended a discussion about the achievement gap at the Shaker Main Library on May 7th.

Building Representative Reports

Boulevard, Jennifer Goulden

- Can members receive a hard copy of the current contract? Current contract on the webpage. You can request to receive a hard copy.

Fernway, Annie Haney – No Report

Lomond, Donita Townsend – No Report

Mercer, Lisa Hardiman – No Report

Onaway, Paula Klausner

- The phone list for IC list educators as certified tutors not teachers. Some are certified some are not.

Woodbury, Amy Santos – No Report

Middle School, Paul Repasy

- Stacy Elgart will truly be missed. She has done such an amazing job.
- Middle School staff needs to be commended for the IB authorization visit. Our staff did such a great job.
- Copy machines don't work.
- Worked with members on May Summative – questions and concerns.
- Dealt with Human Resource certification questions.
- Talked with building administration about hallway security.

High School, James Schmidt

- MYP meeting went very well.
- Attended the Finance and Audit Committee Meeting.
- Attended High School reconstruction meeting, our current method is not working.
- High School Representatives thank you so much for your help with gathering signatures for the open letter.

Old Business - None

New Business

- A motion was made – SHTA PAC should support candidates. Motion made by Andrew Glasier and seconded by James Schmidt.
- A motion was made to move SHTA PAC issue to vote and placed on the ballot in the Fall of 2015. Motion made by Bob Bognar and seconded by Tim Kalan.
- A motion to set the salaries for the President at \$9,868 and the salaries for the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Personal Rights and Responsibilites Chair and the Editor of the Newsletter each at \$5,920 was made by Tim Richards and seconded by Tim Kalan. Kevin Wagner proposed an amendment to change the salary amounts to \$9,964 and \$5,978. The amendment was accepted and the motion passed.

Good of the Order

- Thank you Onaway Staff for hosting the last SHTA meeting this school year.
- John Morris is participating in the St. Baldricks charity campaign to fund cancer research and would appreciate your support.

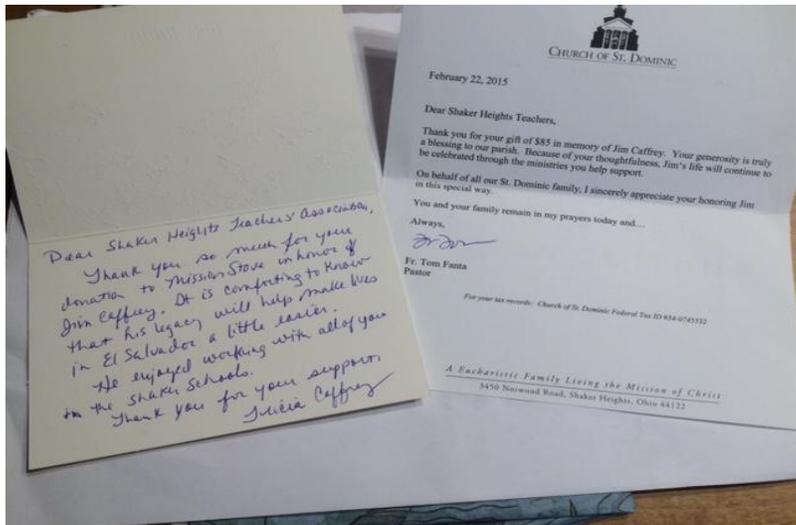
May 11th Rep. Council meeting was adjourned at 6:12PM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison, Secretary*



Special thanks to SHTA OnawaySchool Representative Paula Klauser for hosting the April SHTA Representative Council meeting at Onaway School .

Thank you notes from Tricia Caffrey & Pastor Fr. Tom Fanta of the Church of St. Dominic for the financial donation given by SHTA members to the Mission Stove non-profit in the name of Jim Caffrey.



Reflections from a Shaker Teacher

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.

We often ask our students to write a reflection at the end of a learning experience. The reflection allows the student to connect with the activity on a personal level and often helps to solidify the objectives of the activity. Since I am coming to the end of my experience as a Shaker teacher, parent and resident I would like a chance to share my reflections. As with all reflections, these are my views alone, seen through my lens.

My family moved to Shaker in 1994, left in 2000 and returned in 2002. We returned because we realized that, for us, there was no better place to raise and educate our children than Shaker Heights, OH. Our three sons thrived in the Shaker schools because of the unparalleled academic rigor and the outstanding music and journalism programs. This was our “Shaker Way” – that indescribable term for the district’s caché.

In 2005 I decided to return to school to become a teacher. My goal was to become the AP Economics teacher at Shaker Heights High School. After three years at another school, I achieved my goal.

But I gained so much more.

I gained the opportunity to work with some of the brightest, motivated, passionate educators anywhere. The administration encouraged collaboration and supported our creative, autonomous, approaches to education. The parents were partners in their children’s education and were fiercely loyal to the staff. This became my “Shaker Way” – a place where

teachers, staff, parents and administrators worked together towards a common goal. Was it perfect? No. However, we collectively strove to identify areas for improvement and worked together to design and re-design ways to keep Shaker a place where all students could achieve. And, most of the time, we had fun while doing it!

Recently something has changed.

While it cannot be accurately defined, the “Shaker Way” embodied the idea of a flexible approach that enabled students and the staff to develop pathways to learning. It embraced the notion that there is not one way to learn or to teach and relied on the relative strengths of those involved to form a cohesive whole. Teacher input was expected and valued. The “Shaker Way” has been re-branded into the Shaker Experience with its static checklists on the strategic plan.

We face untenable testing and data requirements from the state and the district. Many are forced to meet the often-competing requirements of new educational standards and the MYP. As a result, much of our time is spent in activities that are only loosely connected to true student learning. We have been caught in a pernicious cycle of reactive change, resulting in a demoralizing re-working of reports that take us further away from the authentic needs of our students. The opportunities that were created to foster collaboration have been co-opted by district and state demands. As a teacher, I began to feel that my input was overlooked and unwanted.

Change is inevitable and often necessary, but sometimes it goes too far or has little substance. Who is to blame? We are all pointing fingers in a way that reminds me of the Thomas Nast cartoon “T’was Him”. Frankly, it is time to move beyond blame and towards crafting a more proactive approach to external demands and to re-evaluate internal initiatives so that we can focus on what matters most to all of us – our students. None of us individually have the answers; we are all needed to weather these changes. One thing I do know for certain is:

Teachers are not the problem; we are an integral part of the solution.

Shaker is truly a unique place to live, learn and work. With meaningful and genuine input and leadership from those who work daily with the students,

we can continue to improve and to rebuild trust and morale. I will miss Shaker when I leave. I only hope that those who remain won't miss it as well.

Liz Plautz

SHHS SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER, RESIDENT, PARENT

Open Letter to State Senator Lehner

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.

May 12, 2015

State Senator, Peggy Lehner

District 6, Senate Building

1 Capitol Square, Ground Floor

Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Senator Lehner,

Thank you for surveying Ohioans recently about their opinions on standardized testing in K-12 schools. I recently read an article about the Senate Advisory Committee on Testing's work this spring. I sincerely hope both the Senate and the House listen to the committee's recommendations.

In almost 20 years working in education, I have never seen a school year be impacted more by the testing schedule than this one. In my role as a social studies department chair at a middle school, I organized an 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C. and a 7th grade trip to Chicago. These trips were scheduled for May at two different times. My principal told me in late August that the testing schedule left only three days for student travel, March 18-20. The tour company accommodated us, but we had to take both trips at the same time.

Science and social studies CAP post-tests were scheduled for the last week in March so the results could be used in OTES summative evaluations due in May. It was not ideal to test students on the PARCC, send them on a trip, and review with them for a day or two before more high stakes testing. If a teacher does not meet expected growth on the CAP post-test, their rating could drop to Ineffective. They would be in danger of losing their license if they do not show improvement over a three year period. The post-test includes content for an entire school year, yet has to be given by the end of March. This is a problem with the weight given to student growth measures in the OTES formula.

Our school tested 7th graders using pencils and paper, but we tested 8th graders on computers. Due to a shortage of both computers and bandwidth, groups of 8th grade students were testing most days of each testing window. Our school library was used for small group testing and make ups. It has become a testing center instead of a library since February. To further complicate matters, our students take the STARS assessment at regular intervals throughout the school year for math and language arts. Teachers use this data to improve instruction, which is required under the assessment data section of the OTES framework and rubric. When the second round of PARCC testing ended for 8th graders in May, the STARS testing began within a few days.

During both rounds of PARCC testing, students missed valuable instructional time. I spent 20 hours total with my testing group, which is almost three days of school. I almost had to cancel a trip to Columbus with the school's Model UN club in March. We were behind testing 8th graders because of snow days, and students were scheduled to take the PARCC during the conference. Fortunately, a parent of one of the students contacted me and we were able to reschedule the testing for Model UN students. In my 10 years as a Model UN advisor, there has never been a conflict in February or March with state testing until this year.

On a personal note, my daughter is in 2nd grade in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school district. She has had a wonderful year at school, as she enjoys learning and loves her teachers. Recently, she spent an entire week taking Terra Nova tests. She did not enjoy this week, and she worried about passing the tests. I imagine the school needed this data for OTES or for placements for next year. Maybe they were just preparing her for the years of testing ahead.

While the recommendations of the committee are a promising start, I would advise both the Senate and the House to explore other vendors, shorter tests, additional changes to the OTES formula, and fewer mandates from Washington, D.C. and Columbus to local school districts.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely yours,

Michael C. Sears
7th Grade World History Teacher
Chair, Department of Individuals and Societies
Shaker Heights Middle School
Shaker Heights, OH 44122

We Are Shaker!

District Service Recognition Reception

Thursday, May 21, 2015

3:45 p.m.

High School Upper Cafeteria

Shaker teachers...

show tolerance and respect for everyone

are committed to their profession

inspire students

are reflective about their practice

are excellent communicators

collaborate with each other



and SUPPORT and CELEBRATE their colleagues!

This event is sponsored by the Shaker Heights Teacher's Association and the Shaker Heights School District.

An Open Letter to the Shaker Heights City School Board, Central Administration, And Community.

May 13, 2015

We, the High School Members of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association, would like to express our significant concerns about the present and future direction of our beloved building and school district. We represent veteran teachers, new teachers, residents, and parents within Our Association. We see ourselves as among the strongest supporters of Shaker Schools. We teach the district's High School students, campaign for levies, vote for levies (since many of us reside and send our students to Shaker Schools), and are fully invested in the long term success of Shaker Heights High School and City Schools. Many of us are graduates of Shaker Schools, and many of us chose to move to this community, raise our children here, and send our children to Shaker Schools. Our purpose is not to tear down the district, but to build it up and make it stronger. With this core goal in mind, we are concerned about what we see as the following problematic trends in the direction that the district leadership has taken:

1. **More micromanagement of teaching:** Recent discussions about a uniform grading policy and mandated lesson plans are evidence of a micromanaged, de-professionalized approach that places conformity above creativity and ingenuity. Shaker Heights High School teachers know that good lesson planning must take into account the unique characteristics of each student, as do appropriate grading policies. Teaching is an inherently creative field. Micromanagement from central leadership pushes us in a more corporate direction that favors uniformity, consistency, and compliance as opposed to responsive instruction that results in deep learning for our students.
2. **Less autonomy for administrators, department chairs, and teachers:** One of the most distinguishing characteristics of Shaker Heights High School has been the wide array of unique programs and approaches the school has to offer. This has been due in large part to the intellectual freedom building leaders and teachers have been given to implement and support these programs. Much of this freedom has been sacrificed to district wide reform. Likewise, multiple voices, especially department chairpersons, have been relied upon to find and recommend candidates for open and specialized teaching positions within the High School. Much of this input has been sacrificed to a top-down, centralized application and hiring process.
3. **A pace of change that lacks reflection:** We realize that we are in an ever-changing educational environment. However, the pace at which this change is taking place is alienating our staff and building administrators. We have seen an unprecedented turnover in building administrators and we are losing veteran staff, not only due to changes in the retirement system, but because the rapid pace of change and the lack of teacher and administrative input has driven, and continues to drive, colleagues away. As any good teacher understands, proper reflection and thoughtful implementation leads to success. We believe administration needs to be more deliberate and reflective in the changes that take place at the High School and account for the voices of the seasoned professionals who teach and lead in our building. As one community member expressed last week at the focus group consulted for input on the next high school principal, the community wants leaders who are "not fixated on data and numbers," but who see the big picture of how initiatives are truly impacting the teaching and learning environment.
4. **Superficial efforts to integrate teachers' perspectives:** A significant issue is the lack of follow-through and genuine response to teacher concerns at the High School. We have seen teachers taken off of committees when they seem to be contradicting the prevailing perspectives. We have seen input requested on testing and assessment decisions be ignored. We have had programs implemented with little, if any, consultation with teachers, building administrators, or counselors. This top-down approach

to leadership is destroying the collaborative environment and energy which was once so prevalent at the High School. The former environment of collaboration and support between central administration, building administrators, counselors, and teachers is also the main reason our High School has been so successful. When people within the building are allowed to lead, it creates ownership of the institution, leading to a better work environment for administrators, teachers, staff, and students.

5. Changes yet to be addressed: We have spent inordinate amounts of time and energy on SLOs and on MYP, yet we haven't figured out how to ensure that students attend classes. A recent faculty survey suggests that the High School is desperate for a thoughtful way to create a culture of respect and that there are glaring issues with attendance. Yet, we haven't had the time or the support to work through these problems and find solutions. Furthermore, we continue to struggle to serve many of our students and have yet to have the opportunity to collaborate in order to develop strategies to encourage every student in the building to be his or her best self. Instead, we have made it harder for students to develop meaningful relationships with adults in the building, and we have made it harder for adults in the building to work together to meet the needs of the students and families.

Once again, we understand that change is necessary and often difficult. We also know that we have traditions of excellence, innovation, autonomy, and community responsiveness that we cherish at the High School and throughout the district. The results speak for themselves. We are among the top feeder schools to highly selective colleges and universities throughout the country. We have an extraordinary number of AP classes, the IB Diploma Programme, and IB MYP certification is imminent. We are among the top producers of National Merit Scholars in the area. We have unique and innovative programs that address the achievement gap such as MAC Scholars and MAC Sister Scholars. We serve our struggling learners through the TEAM Program. Is there room for improvement? Yes. However, our systems are not broken and in need of corporate-reform based repair. We have never been a "one size fits all" High School or school district. Why should we begin now?

Please take this letter in the spirit in which it is intended, to strengthen and improve our building and district as a whole and do what is best for our students. This letter represents the perspective of 98% of the SHTA Members at the High School. We are the most dedicated group of professionals that you can imagine and we want the best for our students, our children, our community, and our schools.

The High School Members of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association

Response to Open Letter by B.O.E. President Bill Clawson

May 12, 2015

Dear High School Members of the Shaker Heights Teachers Association,

I am writing on behalf of the Shaker Heights City School Board of Education to thank you for your heartfelt letter. It is important to Board members to hear your perceptions and thoughts, always and during this time of inevitable change. We, too, believe that the common ground among all of us far outweighs any potential differences. None of us believe our system is broken, in fact there is a deep and abiding belief that the Shaker Schools are among the best in the nation, if not the world.

We also believe that the direction our community members, students, teachers, administrators, and Board, set forth in our Strategic Plan encompasses much of what you laid out in your letter, as well as the similar comments and suggestions expressed to Superintendent Hutchings during the recent High School Faculty Senate meeting and during Dr. Hutchings' listening tour to teachers in all buildings.

As you point out in your letter, change is often difficult, but if there is constructive and engaged effort by all parties it also offers great opportunities for growth. We genuinely believe that working together we can move ourselves closer to the goals we all share and further the active engagement and growth of every student. We look forward to discussing teachers' concerns in an open and positive exchange of ideas. Given that the academic year is closing soon, I propose we schedule a dedicated Board meeting at 4:00 on July 1 as a roundtable discussion. SHTA officers and members you select would join the Board and Superintendent to discuss the highlighted challenges with greater specificity in a transparent forum.

We look forward to working with all of you as together we craft our District's future. Sincerely,

Bill Clawson

President, Board of Education Shaker Heights Board of Education