

IMPORTANT DATES

Tuesday, March 24: B.O.E. Work Session

Monday, March 30 to Monday, April 6: Spring Recess

Tuesday, April 7: Classes Resume & SHTA Executive Board Meeting @ Fernway School

Monday, April 13: SHTA Representative Council Meeting @ Lomond School

SHTA *news*

March 17, 2015

ISSUE NO. 6

Message From the President

It's wonderful to start off the newsletter with good news. I am pleased to report that we ratified our contract with 96% of the membership voting to approve the contract and 88% of the membership coming out to vote! I believe we have a very fair three-year contract with increases to the base of 3%, 2.5%, and 2.5%. This contract represents a long awaited increase to our compensation package and is a step in the right direction for attracting and retaining the "cream of the crop" teachers to our district. I would also be remiss in not once again recognizing our team: Assistant Chief Negotiator Matt Zucca, Wendy Lewis, Mike Sears, Eileen Sweeney, David Klapholz, and Bill Scanlon. Past President Becky Thomas also served an invaluable role as liaison to negotiations and provided the insight into the district's finances that we needed in order to justify the funding for our increases. We are so fortunate to have Becky to still work with us and not only give us the institutional memory that we need as an association but also as a school district, especially as many of our central office personnel retire. Finally, I have said it before and I will say it again, we have the finest labor lawyer in Ohio if not the entire Midwest in the person of Susannah Muskovitz. Susannah's tireless efforts, inside and outside of negotiations, gives such strength to our organization.

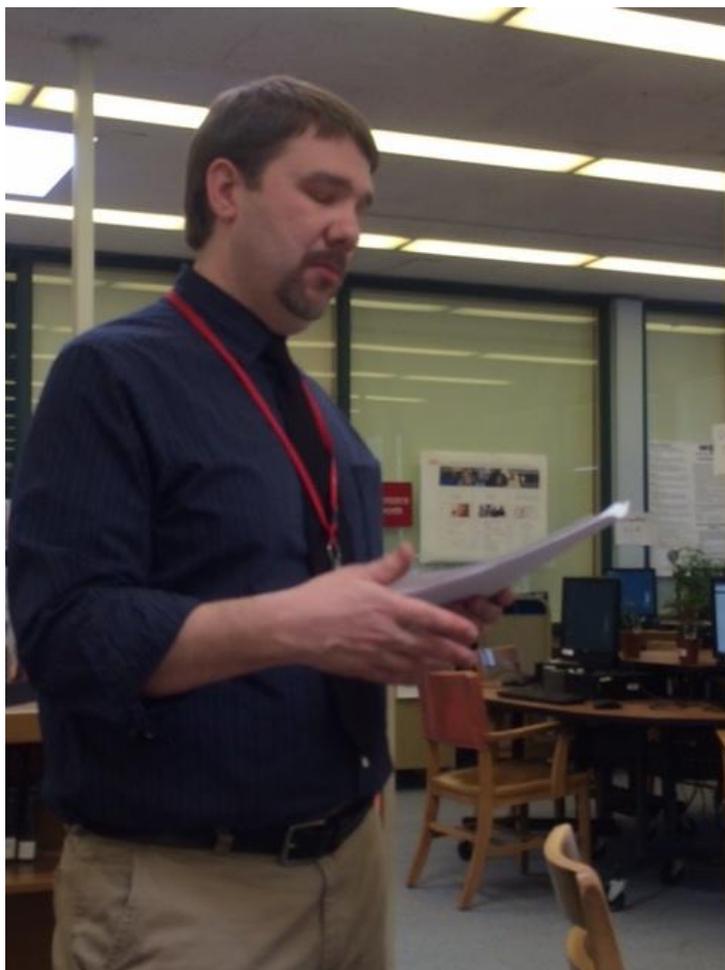
I would also be remiss in not acknowledging the power of Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) and the administration's wisdom in choosing to engage with us in IBB. The entire administrative team engaged us as equal partners in this endeavor and made a truly equitable and transparent negotiation possible. Greg Hutchings, Marla Robinson, Steve Wilkins, Erin Herbruck, Amy Davis, Bryan Christman, Darlene Bushley, and district consul Sue Hastings genuinely met us on a level playing field. We are also indebted to Mike Franczak, the patient and knowledgeable Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service mediator, who helped guide us through the process and ensure that we honored each other's voices. Also, I have to highlight Dr. Marla Robinson who re-introduced the IBB process to us and whose voice provided one of the strongest rationales to engage in this method. It is my hope that it will set a precedent for negotiations in the future.

I am also proud this month to acknowledge the voices of my colleagues and community members who came out to speak on the behalf of Cathy Grieshop at the February 10th Board of Education meeting. It is with awe that I sat and listened to speaker after speaker re-iterate not only their positive experiences with Cathy but also their belief in the quality and integrity of our school districts and its democratic processes. I am eternally grateful for the continuation of my faith in this district that their voices represent. I am also ecstatic that Cathy is back in our schools and heading back to the job she was meant to have, educating the children of this great school district.

It's been a whirlwind of a month. Besides working on contract ratification, I communicated with membership concerning the tentative agreement, salary schedules and prescription coverage. I worked on legal issues with Susannah Muskovitz. I spoke to Channel 5 News and interviewed with the Shakerite. I attended the School Board Meeting and State of the School Address on Tuesday, February 10th. I addressed PARCC issues with staff and Dr. Stokes, especially related to technology issues. I consulted with Darlene Bushley, Dr. Robinson and Dr. Hutchings concerning retire/rehire issues. I attended the Cuyahoga County Educators' Union Summit on Tuesday, February 24th to work on a mission and testing statement. I updated the SHTA Facebook page. I facilitated Q & A on the Tentative Agreement, along with the Negotiations Team at the Middle School. I attended the Board Meeting in which the contract was approved. I attended the *Night for the Red and White*. I assisted a teacher with a medical issue with the help of Becky Thomas and I assisted with a personnel issue at the elementary level.

As we head into the spring, the days grow longer and the sun shines brighter. There is hope in the air. I am grateful for the hope *Our Association* continues to instill within me as well. I wish that as you head into Spring Break, you will find time to renew and refresh during our week long respite. I look forward to this break as well and then returning to the wonderful students and my outstanding colleagues in the Shaker Heights City Schools. All the best to you, my fellow SHTA members, as we head into a new season.

Respectfully submitted,
John Morris



**SHTA President John Morris
speaks at the March
Representative Council
meeting @ Shaker Heights
Middle School.**

Reports from the Executive Board

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Happy March Madness!

I hope that you are looking forward to a well-deserved Spring Break. Again *The Night for the Red and White* was held on Saturday March 7, 2015 at the Tudor Arms hotel. Thank you so much for your silent auction contributions and your attendance at *The Night for the Red and White*. I will share more information about the evening as it becomes available.

I would like to encourage all SHTA fellowship recipients to submit receipts for reimbursement as many winners fail to claim their awards each year. If you have questions regarding this process please feel free to contact me at #4692 or e-mail me at zucca_m@shaker.org.

As a member of the Negotiations team, I had the honor once again to serve the Association and work with extremely talented and professional members. The team of John Morris, Bill Scanlon, Dave Klapholtz, Mike Sears, Wendy Lewis, Eileen Sweeney and myself worked very hard to bring a fair contract to the Association. The dedication and passion that my colleagues brought to the negotiation meetings never ceased to amaze me. I thank them for their efforts.

I would also like to express my thanks and gratitude to the building representatives. You have served the members as a friend, liaison, cheerleader, patient advisor, and in many other countless ways. You act as their voice and bring their concerns to the SHTA Representatives Council Meetings in a very conscientious and thoughtful manner. Thank you for your service.

Please continue to help and support each other. If you have any questions for me feel free to contact me at 295-4692. Have a restful and well-deserved spring break.

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Zucca



**SHTA Vice President Matt Zucca
at the March Representative
Council meeting @ Shaker Heights
Middle School.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

I was very proud of our Association last month. We supported one of our members and defended our collective jobs. We must pay close attention to our district's administration. We're on the same page about some issues but obviously not all.

Something I've been hearing from colleagues recently concerns me deeply. In past years I would occasionally hear a teacher talk about how crazy teaching has become and express a desire to leave the profession. Even though I've never seriously considered that path, I could understand someone feeling forced in that direction. This year the focus of these discussions has changed somewhat. Instead of the 'different profession' conversation, for the first time I've heard a 'different district' theme brought up. This saddens me. I love Shaker. I love my students. I love my colleagues. I love what we do for kids. This place has always been a place I wanted to share with as many people as possible. It troubles me that people I respect are seeing 'leaving Shaker' as a move to better their lives.

The current financial report is attached.

*Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon*



**SHTA Treasurer Bill Scanlon explains
our budget at the March Representative
Council meeting @ Shaker Heights
Middle School.**

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association

Balance Sheet Standard

03/12/15

As of March 12, 2015

Mar 12, '15

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings

Key Bank (checking) 20,073.50

Key Bank Investments 0.69

Key Investments2 87,909.40

Total Checking/Savings 107,983.59

Other Current Assets

Edward Jones 13760-1-1 456,155.84

Edward Jones 13768-1-3 580,082.38

Total Other Current Assets 1,036,238.22

Total Current Assets 1,144,221.81

TOTAL ASSETS 1,144,221.81

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Equity

Opening Balance Equity 53.69

Retained Earnings 1,114,846.01

Net Income 29,322.11

Total Equity 1,144,221.81

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 1,144,221.81

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association
Profit and Loss Standard
July 1, 2014 through March 12, 2015

03/12/15

	<u>Jul 1, '14 - Mar 12, '15</u>
Income	
Income	
Member Dues	121,200.00
Total Income	<u>121,200.00</u>
Investments	
Change in Value for Key Investment	-5,068.13
Edward Jones Investment Income	33,873.93
Change in Value in Edward Jones	-2,028.18
Interest-Savings, Short-term CD	8.95
Key Investments Income	<u>1,085.19</u>
Total Investments	27,871.76
Other Types of Income	
Miscellaneous Revenue	<u>673.00</u>
Total Other Types of Income	<u>673.00</u>
Total Income	149,744.76
Expense	
Operations	
Accounting	12,335.00
Compensation	18,683.00
Conferences & Meetings	1,736.15
Executive Board	581.27
Fellowships & Grants	1,575.00
Insurance	5,683.00
Legal	6,754.60
Legal Aid Committee	9,513.43
Negotiations	52,275.41
Officers' Expenses	2,299.40
Payroll Taxes	484.77
Public Relations	2,770.00
Publications	765.00
Social	286.00
STRS (PTO Contribution)	<u>4,680.62</u>
Total Operations	<u>120,422.65</u>
Total Expense	<u>120,422.65</u>
Net Income	<u>29,322.11</u>

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT

During the past month, I worked with the district Interest-Based Bargaining team to complete negotiations. It was a great experience and I think the new method helped our team be more productive than in previous negotiations. Thank you to all members who voted in the ratification election. Approval by the school board reminded me how wonderful it is to work in a community that truly values teachers.

Some members contacted me with questions about caregiver leave, sick leave, and FMLA. Others contacted me with questions about technology problems during PARCC testing and concerns about not being able to stream videos or use web-based applications during computer-based testing at the high school. I scheduled a meeting with John Rizzo to discuss these matters and review his report on the technology grievance. He and I will try to create a reasonable timeline for technology improvements that could be printed in the May newsletter.

The grievance committee decided to file two grievances this week. The first one is about the district-wide shortage of substitutes, and includes members from every building. It is a step two grievance, which means there will be a hearing at the administration building similar to the one after the technology grievance. The second one is a step one grievance within a building where a member will have a hearing related to an OTES observation, evidence that was presented, and interpretation of the OTES rubric.

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

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Public Relations Committee is currently revising the SHTA shirt order. The new focus will be in lowering the cost per shirt. The Public Relations Committee has also begun preparing to order the teacher appreciation gift. The focus of the gift will be visibility and advocating for the profession.

***Respectfully submitted,
Bob Bognar, chairperson***

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Evaluation Committee met in early March. We are continuing our work to revise and improve the rubric. The goals of these revisions are to clarify the criteria and provide examples of various ways the criteria could be met. Furthermore, we are working to revise the system to better facilitate a focus on professional growth as the main purpose of evaluation. We are using the feedback we have received to help guide our discussions and decisions. Please continue to give both constructive criticism and examples of positive experiences!

***Respectfully submitted,
Lena Paskewitz, chairperson***

PAST PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I attended the February and March meetings of the Board of Education and the February meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee. At the F&A meeting, the auditors from the State of Ohio reported that the financial practices of the Shaker Heights City Schools received the best possible opinion—"unmodified". The District's Treasurer, Bryan Christman, and his staff deserve our appreciation for their excellent work. Also, at President John Morris's request, I have assisted two teachers as they deal with issues with Administration.

If you haven't already done this, I recommend that all of you subscribe to the SHTA Facebook page and to the page for the *Shakerite*. The *Shakerite's* coverage of recent events has been outstanding and the posts on the SHTA page provide information about local and national activities related to education and unions.

Finally, I am proud to be participating in the work of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. I was especially proud of the support our Association showed for a colleague. We cannot allow bullying behavior and it was important for us to show our solidarity. Thank you for allowing me to continue to assist you.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Thomas, chairperson

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Service Recognition will be held on Thursday, May 21st in the High School Upper Cafeteria at 3:45 p.m. I am currently working with our caterer on the menu. I encourage everyone to attend, whether you are being honored or not. Let's support all of our colleagues! I hope to see you there!

Respectfully submitted,
Selena Brown, Chairperson

POLICY COMMITTEE

In times of stress and tumult it is easy to lose one's grounding, and forget the importance of an integrity built upon perseverance and principle. For that reason I believe we should reflect on Article III of our Constitution:

ARTICLE III PURPOSES

To share the educational expertise of the membership with the community, School Board and Administration to provide the best education possible for each child.

To accept responsibility for promoting and maintaining the principles of the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession. To promote and to protect professional welfare of members by achieving professional salary schedules, satisfactory tenure policies, sound retirement systems and such other improvements as will encourage professional growth, high morale and career security.

To encourage teachers to exercise their rights and privileges as citizens and to accept, willingly, leadership in school affairs and in the civic affairs of their community. To promote democratic teacher participation in the formulations of educational policies. To be an active participant with other educational organizations as designated by the membership in the formation of educational policies.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Kalan, Chairperson

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

In the Ohio Senate, State Senator and Senate Education Chair Peggy Lehner of Kettering, Ohio announced the creation of a Senate Advisory Committee on Testing. The committee will be made up of various educational experts from across the state and will make recommendations to the Senate on required assessments. "We hear the anxiety and confusion the new state tests have created for students, their families and teachers," Lehner said this week. "For this reason, we have assembled a group of top teachers, school leaders, curriculum specialists and other experts to help inform the Senate as to what policies and tests add the most value to our children's education."

The committee will be evaluating the administration of the new tests given to students in the 2014-2015 school year and make recommendations to the Senate on how to improve state testing. Committee will be comprised of teachers, superintendents, curriculum directors, testing specialists, state board of education members, senate members and other educational experts.

The Senate unanimously passed H.B. 7, which protects students taking tests for the 2014-2015 school year from unforeseen consequences as schools transition to the new state assessment model. The legislation was amended by the Senate to ensure schools do not lose state aid for students not taking tests this school year.

The state legislature is still considering recommendations made by State Superintendent Richard Ross to House Bill 487, the Mid-Biennium Review. Ross recommended eliminating the use of student learning objective tests as part of the teacher evaluation system for grades pre-K to 3 and for teachers teaching in non-core subject areas in grades 4-12.

Finally, I recommend the article published by the online blog, *Plunderbund*, reporting the problem with the lack of accountability of charter schools. The article titled (and hyperlinked here), "[ECOT Charter Schools: Ohio's Dropout Factory](#)," highlighting the continuing problems with the state's largest online charter school. The article reports in great detail the poor academic figures including the ballooning dropout rate. Yet, Governor Kasich continues to support this program.

*Respectfully submitted,
Eileen Sweeney*

**Think education needs a new direction?
Consider running for School Board!
The AFL-CIO is holding a
Candidate's training session
Need more information:
contact Eileen Sweeney at:
etsclv@sbcglobal.net**

MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The membership approved the tentative agreement between the SHTA and the Board of Education for our new three-year contract. Here are the results:

Contract Tentative Agreement Ratification Vote

March 2, 2015

<u>Building</u>	<u>Accept</u>	<u>Reject</u>	<u>Total Votes</u>	<u>Total Members</u>	<u>Percent Voting</u>
Boulevard	23	1	24	24	100.00%
Fernway	22	0	22	23	95.65%
Lomond	29	0	29	33	87.88%
Mercer	23	1	24	30	80.00%
Onaway	25	0	25	29	86.21%
Woodbury	51	4	55	62	88.71%
Middle School	59	5	64	69	92.75%
Senior High	107	3	110	131	83.97%
Total	339	14	353	401	88.03%
Percent of Total Votes	96.03%	3.97%			
Percent of Total Members	84.54%	3.49%	88.03%		

This May, the membership will elect our 2015-2017 officers. Any tenured/continuing-contract member, who has been an active member for the three years immediately preceding the election, is eligible to be an officer. Each candidate for office must initiate his or her candidacy by means of a petition containing the signatures of at least five percent of the active members. Please contact me to obtain a petition. They will be available when we return from spring break and must be filed with me no later than 4pm Friday, April 24, 2015.

*Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Elgart, chairperson*

TEACHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Some helpful information about salary reclassification:

27.07 Board action on salary reclassification for those staff members who have accumulated additional approved credit hours, beyond the master's degree, will be taken two (2) times a year, at the regular Board Meetings in November and April.

Those teachers employed with the District as of March 31, 2011 who have met each of the qualifications of having their Master's Degree and being on continuing contract shall receive the initial double jump reclassification at the same time other action for salary reclassification is taken. This action is to be taken at the first Board meeting after an applicant has completed all necessary requirements and has completed the necessary forms for the Shaker Heights Personnel office.

Requests must be submitted on the appropriate form by the date designated by the Superintendent in order to be eligible for reclassification. Requests must be accompanied by a transcript of credits. An official letter from the registrar of the college or other acceptable evidence may serve temporarily until a transcript can be obtained.

Requests reaching the administrator in charge of personnel after the date set by the Superintendent will not be acted upon until the following official date for approval or reclassification.

While responsibility for notifying the administrator in charge of personnel rests with the individual teacher, this office is available for any assistance.

Approval made at the November Board meeting will authorize the full salary adjustment applicable to the particular salary reclassification. The amount of this adjustment is prorated over the remainder of the contract year. Approvals acted upon at the April meeting will be for one-half the reclassification salary adjustment. This amount is then prorated over the remaining months of the contract year.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have: 216-295-6385 or smith_st@shaker.org.

*Respectfully submitted,
Steve Smith, chairperson*

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

March 9, 2015, Shaker Heights Middle School

SHTA President, John Morris started the March 9th Representatives Council Meeting at 4:30PM. **David Glasner, Principal of Shaker Heights Middle School** was present to greet SHTA members. He shared that it has been a pleasure working with staff and it has been helpful to have a partnership with everyone.

MINUTES from the February Representatives Council meeting were accepted. Motion to accept minutes made by James Schmidt and seconded by Bob Bognar.

Administration Report

Dr. Marla Robinson was present to give a report on behalf of Administration.

Dr. Robinson wanted to share 4 items with SHTA membership.

1. Thank you for all of your support with *The Night for the Red & White*. The event was awesome and the support from the staff was greatly appreciated.
2. Thank you for having patience with all the testing and technology issues. We are working on the technology issue and we do apologize.
3. The building listening visits conducted by Dr. Hutchings are continuing. Please remember that questions are not being answered during the visit. Notes are being taken and we will address the concerns.
4. IBB Negotiations – we are very pleased with the bargained contract. The process was wonderful. Members of the negotiating team were honest, professional and we did have tough conversations. IBB fits with the Shaker way and again we appreciate your patience.

P.T.O. Report – There was no PTO representative present at the meeting. John Morris did remind membership that if they have not donated \$25 to the PTO, please do so as soon as possible.

Officer's Report

President, John Morris

- Worked on Negotiations
- Communicated with membership concerning the tentative agreement, salary schedules and prescription coverage.
- Worked on legal issues with Susannah Muskovitz.
- Spoke to Channel 5 News and interviewed with the Shakerite.
- Attended the School Board Meeting and State of the School Address – Tuesday February 10th .
- Addressed PARCC issues with staff and Dr. Stokes.
- Consulted with Darlene Bushley, Dr. Robinson and Dr. Hutchings concerning retire/rehire announcements.
- Attended Cuyahoga County Educators' Union Summit. – Tues. February 24th
- Updated Facebook page.
- Facilitated Q & A on the Tentative Agreement at the MS last Wednesday – Wed. February 25th.
- Attended the Board Meeting in which the contract was ratified.
- Attended *The Night for the Red and White*.
- Assisted a teacher with a medical issue with the help of Becky Thomas.

Vice President, Matt Zucca

- Attended *The Night for the Red & White*, an event that supports Shaker Schools. Lovely affair, good for community to see teachers supporting the schools.
- Attended the school board meeting.

- Attended the State of the Schools meeting.
- Participated in IBB negotiations. Proud of the team and all their hard work.
- Dealt with discipline concerns with union lawyer.

Secretary, Darlene Garrison

- Attended *The Night for the Red & White*.
- Shared raffle winners for *The Night for the Red & White*.
- Please be sure to sign the attendance sheet before you leave each meeting.

Treasurer, Bill Scanlon

- Passed out an updated financial report.
- Attended school board meeting to hear the approval of the contract.
- Money from *The Night for the Red & White* drawing was deposited.
- Worked on squaring away the P.O. Box used for SHTA.
- Busy paying bills and working with the accountant.
- Attended *The Night for the Red & White*.
- Key investments have gone down because some investments are from overseas and the economy overseas is not doing well.
- All payments have been made relating to negotiations. Please refer to financial report listed in the newsletter.
- We have paid quite a bit for legal assistance this year.

Executive Board Reports

Teacher Education, Steve Smith

- Attended the February Board of Education meeting.
- Worked with a member who had questions relating to Salary and Reclassification.

Membership/Elections, Stacy Elgart

- Thank you for the ratification vote.
- Eighty-eight percent of the membership voted and ninety-six percent approved the contract.

Policy, Tim Kalan

- Attended February Board of Education meeting.
- Attended OTES meeting.
- Worked on language changes in the constitution bylaws.

Public Relations, Bob Bognar

- Revising SHTA shirt proposal.
- Working on gift for Teacher Appreciation.

Evaluation, Lena Paskewitz

- Attended evaluation meeting last week.
- Working on revising the rubric, trying to put more of a focus on professional growth.
- Please continue giving feedback, it helps to guide the committee.
- If you have any concerns about the process, please email Lena Paskewitz.

Legislative, Eileen Sweeney

- Monitoring the following legislation:
 - a. Charter school- accountability
 - b. Testing limits at the Federal Level – Sherrod Brown
 - c. Ohio Senate proposed an advisory committee on testing
 - d. House Bill 7 – Safe Harbor
 - e. Senate Bill 92 – Bullying and safety
- Attended the March 04th Board of education meeting.
- Appreciate the opportunity to serve on the negotiation committee.

From PAC:

- Tom Schmida (former president of the CH/UH Teachers’ Union) is working with Harriet Applegate from the North Shore AFL-CIO Federation of Labor. He is running a school board candidate’s training. Please forward me any names of individuals who would be interested in attending the sessions and I will forward them to Tom.

Publications, Andrew Glasier

- The *Shakerite* is doing a great job covering controversies throughout the school district.
- Anyone interested in sharing editorials in the newsletter, please forward them to me.
- All submissions for the newsletter are due Wednesday at midnight.

Past President, Becky Thomas

- Attended the Finance and Audit meeting. Auditors from the State of Ohio commended the work of the treasurer and his staff.
- Working with a specific teacher dealing with an issue.
- Attended the February and March Board of Education Meetings.

Social, Selena Brown

- Working on finding a caterer for the Annual Recognition Reception that is scheduled for Thursday, May 21st.

Legal Aid, Chante Thomas-Taylor

- No Report

Salary Tenure, John Morris

- IBB negotiations have concluded. The contract was approved by membership. Eighty-eight percent of the membership voted and ninety-six percent approved the contract.

Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Mike Sears

- Attended the Night for the Red and White.
- Worked with members concerning maternity leave and FMLA.

Building Representative Reports

Boulevard, Jennifer Goulden

- Substitute problem has calmed down.
- Technology was smooth for the testing.
- When does the raise go into affect? The March 16th paycheck, working towards that date.

Fernway, Annie Haney

- No Report

Lomond, Donita Townsend

- Concerning the upcoming Listening Meeting with Dr. Hutchings – idea is for individual teachers to speak. Teachers don't feel safe sharing with the current climate in the building.

Mercer, Lisa Hardiman

- Listening Meeting with Dr. Hutchings – was told that questions could not be written down on note cards.

Onaway, Paula Klausner

- Questions from members about who would be involved in the interviewing process for upcoming positions. Seems to be no members from support staff.
- MAP testing was at the end of January, has to be given again in a couple of weeks. Teachers are annoyed by this.

Woodbury, Amy Santos

- Complaints about communicating the schedule for testing. Students are missing too much instruction time while not participating in testing. Some students are just sitting in the auditorium.
- Dr. Hutchings Listening Meeting, staff members did speak their concerns and some staff members close to retirement spoke on behalf of others.

Middle School, Tim Richards

1. Testing Issues:

- A. Computer issues for 8th grade - some sessions cancelled
- B. Classes displaced because testing needed computers
- C. Teachers left on their own to figure out directions on test day
- D. First time in 20 years there was no adjusted schedule...numerous classes did not meet for at least a week.

2. SLO Issue: Due to testing, school trips, etc some teachers will have to figure out how to give SLO post-tests. They literally do not have enough class days left to complete the process because students will not be in class.

3. Physical Plant Issue: Leaks throughout the building

4. Personnel Issue: Teacher who reported to work sent home after surgery, forced to use sick days

5. New Schedule Issue:

- A. Department Chairs told they have to apply for the position next year.
- B. Department Chairs no longer have an extra period to perform duties...will teach full schedules
- C. There will no longer be full faculty meetings as Department Chairs have to meet every week...DIVIDE & CONQUER!

D. *Two departments only* are now forced to teach new 3:00 to 3:45 class period (Raider Time). All other departments surveyed to try and figure out what to do during that time. Situation caused after administration backed off declaration that students will not be permitted to take two foreign languages. 2nd time the *Shaker Way (parent complaints)* has dictated administration changing course.

E. Department Chairs told administration will "find someone else" if they do not like the changes.

High School, James Schmidt

- We continue to have an issue with classes not being covered and with the availability of substitutes. Security guards were used to cover two classes today. A matrix for covering classes was released by the administration, which indicates that they expect a lack of coverage to be the norm.
- I met with a teacher regarding nonrenewal of a contract.

- We resolved an issue with the number of units approved for teachers involved with the SLO approval process. The teachers in question are now approved for up to 4 units, instead of the initial ½ of a unit. Thanks to Dr. Ann Spurrier and to Dr. Marla Robinson for their assistance with this issue.
- Testing has been ongoing and there have been several issues, but we wish to thank Mr. Mike Griffith and Karen Slovikovski for their hard work and for keeping teachers informed as soon as possible regarding necessary changes to testing.

March 9th Representatives Council meeting was adjourned at 6:26 PM.

April Representatives Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 13 at Lomond Elementary School.

*Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison, Secretary*



Special thanks to SHTA Middle School Representative Tim Richards for hosting the February SHTA Representative Council meeting at Shaker Heights Middle School.

Measure What Matters: A letter to our Representatives

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 a parent of three and have been teaching for 20 years. I received my undergraduate degree and master's degree in teaching from Brown University, where I studied and worked closely with educators like Ted Sizer (who is probably rolling in his grave at the mess we find ourselves in regarding public education). As a teacher, I have been firmly committed to providing my students with the skills and habits of mind that are essential for them to be thoughtful, engaged members of society, and I have done so in accordance to state standards, to IB principles, and now to Common Core.

At the same time, I have watched and panicked as the runaway train of accountability has steamrolled our politics and our schools. I have helped found Test Mania and have been a vocal advocate for reasonable assessment. I have written letters, I have accompanied my superintendent to Columbus, and I have continued to fight for children. I have followed – to the best of my ability – the changing policy and the lively debates, only to see the state press forward with an accountability system that is untenable and unconscionable. Quite frankly, I object.

I object to the concept that the more we test, the better our children will perform. Continuously weighing yourself will not help you lose weight; however, working out, eating well, and sleeping well – all activities that take sustained time and effort – often lead to success.

I object to the PARCC tests. They are too long,

they are inappropriate, they are not valid, and they do not inform instruction.

I object to using scores on tests to evaluate teachers. There is so much more to teaching and learning than students' performance on any test.

I object to politicians who continue to make policy that makes no sense. I am so tired of the two-faced rhetoric that accompanies this policy as well. Most recently, the state superintendent suggested limiting how much time teachers can spend preparing students for tests; that's like telling Urban Meyer that he can only practice a limited amount of time to prepare for the championship game.

I object to holding schools, parents, and teachers hostage to these tests. We all want our children to learn and to succeed, but threatening to withhold funding to districts if parents choose to refuse the tests smacks of bullying.

I object to claims that these tests will prevent a race to the bottom. I have witnessed the money spent on testing, on hiring people to organize and administer tests, on materials and technology needed to take the tests. Meanwhile, teachers and aides have not been replaced, class sizes grow, and libraries and computer labs are shut down for testing (at our high school, for example, our small auditorium is not available until April).

I object to the disorganized, callous and downright overbearing manner in which the ODE and the government have decided policy and shared information with school districts, parents, and teachers. The lack of transparency along with the change-by-the-minute approach are unprofessional and disrespectful.

I object to the undue stress and anxiety that testing has placed on children, all but wiping out the concept that learning can be joyful and unpredictable and filled with amazing twists and turns that may not be on the day's "I can" statement.

I object to the undue stress and anxiety that continuous test preparation and testing have placed on teachers, eliminating meaningful opportunities for teachers to engage students in discussions, to cultivate thinking, and to encourage students to delve into topics of interest.

I object to the notion that any one test can measure what

matters.

You have the power to make change. It is my fervent hope that you do so. It's time to recognize that uniformity does more harm than good. It's time to swallow your pride and get rid of PARCC. It's time to use the money that we save from getting rid of PARCC to fund schools, be it preschool programs, enrichment, the arts, or even allowing districts to hire more teachers so there can be smaller class sizes. It's time to stop blaming teachers for problems that are caused by policy and poverty and celebrate our efforts and our commitment to finding ways to teach all children. It's time to include teachers in discussions about accountability and assessment. It's time to give local control to school districts to determine ways to assess their students appropriately. It's time to get back to learning.

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