

IMPORTANT DATES

Tuesday, March 22: Board of Education work session

Friday, March 25: Spring Break begins

Monday, April 4: Classes Resume & SHTA Executive Board meeting @ Fernway

Monday, April 11: SHTA Representatives Council meeting @ Lomond & State School Board Candidate Presentation, 6-7pm @ Lomond

SHTA *news*

March 21, 2016

ISSUE NO. 6

Message From the President

It's hard to believe that I have been teaching in Shaker Heights since 1997. I remember sitting in faculty meetings in the High School planetarium and having the sensation that I was in a Roman forum. Big and small educational issues were discussed with passion and insight. I often wrote quotes down because teachers and administrators were so insightful. Vocal disagreements were not uncommon among teachers and fellow teachers, teachers and administrators, and sometimes even among administrators themselves (including and not limited to the principal and superintendent). It sometimes became heated, but it was always civil. More often than not, the two debaters could be seen after the meeting walking down the hallway continuing to discuss the issue. It was a healthy environment of debate and dissent, discussing different ways of accomplishing a common goal, educating Shaker's students in the best way possible. The more I learned about Shaker Schools, the more I learned that that this environment was prevalent in all of the district. As a result, unique programs and classes were created across our district. Teachers were driven to present and defend their best ideas. Diverse opinions were actually generative and made our schools incredible places to teach.

My continuing hope is that we never lose the spirit of healthy debate and the encouragement of divergent opinion. Lockstep mandates and protocol can be tempting, as can the data that legitimizes them, but the cost is steep. What we stand to lose is the unique identity that has shaped this school district into one of the best in the nation. I hope that we continue to hire and retain top-notch administrators and staff who recognize that divergent does not equal disrespectful or non-compliant. A spirit of healthy debate has inspired approaches such as our open campus, our SGORR Program, our IB Programme, our Strategic Plan, and the list goes on and on.

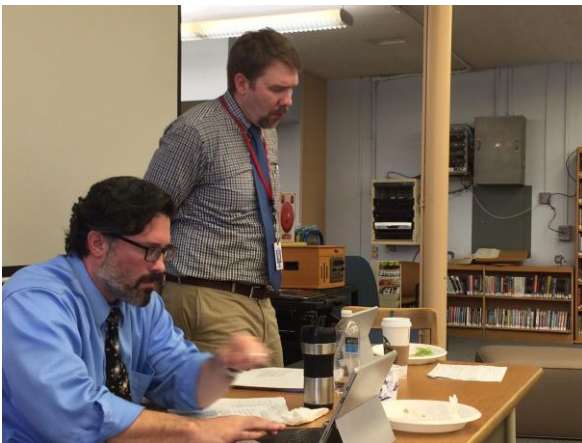
As our Schools continue to lose their institutional memory, through retirement and turnover, it's more important than ever that we do all that we can to maintain the spirit of healthy dissent that has made this district what it is today. Our past does provide a way to our future. Has it always been perfect? No. Do we have obstacles to overcome? Yes. Has the educational environment changed? Of course. However, if we embrace an ahistorical, post-No Child Left Behind mentality that values the test score and the programmatic checklist as the only indicators of our school district's success then we are lost. I trust all of us to make sure this never happens.

March has been an incredibly busy month. I consulted on member legal concerns. I dealt with transfer requests. I mediated member conflicts. I worked on member concerns at the Middle School with Tim Richards. I communicated with Mike Sears and Dale Whittington on a testing concern at the Middle School. The issue was resolved. I helped facilitate the SHTA Support Teacher ratification vote and membership drive. Chante Thomas-Taylor and Laura Ann Moore both made voting on the contract possible,

as did our building representatives. One-hundred percent of Support Teachers voted to ratify the contract. I attended the Insurance Committee meeting on February 22nd, the Every Student Succeeds Act Advanced Committee meeting on February 24th, the February 29th State of the Schools Meeting, and the March 2nd Master Planning Community Engagement Meeting.

I corresponded with Steve Wilkins on School Closing protocols. I communicated with Becky Thomas and Officers about the issue. I interviewed James Reed for HS Principal on March 3rd and attended the Community Meeting that night. I attended *the Night for the Red and White* on March 5th. I interviewed the second HS Principal Candidate, Jonathan Kuehnle, on March 7th and attended the Community Meeting that night. I attended the March 8th School Board Meeting when the Board voted to approve the SHTA ST contract. I corresponded with Meryl Johnson and Bill Lavezzi concerning an Ohio School Board Candidate presentation after the April 11th Representative Council Meeting at Lomond from 6pm-7pm. I met with High School Representatives and Members on the issue of the Principal Search. I had my weekly conversation with Dr. Hutchings and multiple conversations with Darlene Bushley. I sent out a reminder about the March 19th Job Fair. As busy as this month has been, I know that our Association does important work. We represent our members and their interests and I feel privileged to serve as your President.

Respectfully submitted,
John Morris



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

The SHTA is on



us @

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

Reports from the Executive Board

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Madness may be the appropriate word these days. As we approach Spring Break at a hectic pace with early end of the year student growth measure tests before break, only to return after break to enter another testing window. The testing windows don't ever seem to close but only transition into another assessment opportunity for different reasons, always claiming to be for the sake of "our children". Welcome to March Madness. So, over this spring break please take the time to relax, refresh and recharge. The break is much deserved and needed.

On a more positive note, *The Night for The Red and White* was again a wonderful event. For twenty-four years the Shaker community has been gathering to contribute to the deserving students of the schools. I want to 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 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.

Over the past month I have addressed concerns about Supplemental Pay and the outdated Index for Supplemental Contracts. My advice to all those contemplating accepting a contract or additional duties to ask what the compensation is and what the time commitment will be. Get information prior to agreeing to the duties. The index in the contract does not always reflect what is actually paid. There is a committee working on this issue, attempting to define and clarify pay and expectations. If you have questions ask your building administrator and head building rep for assistance.

I have also been working on K-4 assessment concerns. K-4 teachers at times receive unclear and inconsistent messages regarding assessments, timing, procedures, and reasons for using them. I have attempted to gather information that would address many of the concerns that members bring to me. I would welcome a streamlined consistent communication process.

For the past several months I have also attended many Master Planning meetings and have been part of a dialogue regarding the future of our school buildings. It is exciting to see and hear the potential for the buildings and new opportunities for education in Shaker Heights. Currently we have 8 building that provide the space where exceptional teachers do exceptional things for the young people of the city. Whether we teach in new state of the art buildings or historic architectural ones, it is the high quality teachers that really make the difference. I am in awe of the staff we have here in Shaker.

I continue to ask that you help and support each other. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 295-4692.

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Zucca

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



21, 2016

TREASURER'S REPORT

We are in the midst of a crazy presidential campaign year. It is ridiculous and comical. We must be aware of what each candidate has to say about labor unions. As entertaining as the debates are, the election of a certain candidate will have definite repercussions on our profession and our ability to support each other. So pay attention to their rhetoric and remember the SHTA when you examine the candidates.

This past month I have communicated with our accountants at Edward Hawkins & Co. to square away our tax forms. I am also communicating with our Edward Jones financial planner to set up a spring meeting to review our investments.

I would also like to forewarn everyone. A proposed budget for next year will be presented to Representative Council at the April meeting. This gives the Representatives a chance to discuss it with their members before officially voting on the budget at the May meeting.

The current financial report is attached.

*Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon*



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

SHTA is now on



@SHTAssoc

FOLLOW US!

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association

Balance Sheet Standard

03/17/16

As of March 17, 2016

	<u>Mar 17, '16</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Key Bank (checking)	57,540.03
Key Investments2	42,915.70
	<hr/>
Total Checking/Savings	100,455.73
Other Current Assets	
Edward Jones 13760-1-1	426,945.55
Edward Jones 13768-1-3	546,283.61
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Total Other Current Assets	973,229.16
	<hr/>
Total Current Assets	1,073,684.89
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TOTAL ASSETS	1,073,684.89
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LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	53.69
Retained Earnings	1,094,111.61
Net Income	-20,480.41
	<hr/>
Total Equity	1,073,684.89
	<hr/>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	1,073,684.89
	<hr/>

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association
 Profit and Loss Standard
 July 1, 2015 through March 17, 2016

03/17/16

Jul 1, '15 - Mar 17, '16

Income	
Income	
Member Dues	132,330.00
Total Income	132,330.00
Investments	
Change in Value for Key Investm	-3,198.52
Edward Jones Investment Income	41,291.97
Change in Value in Edward Jones	-97,349.26
Edward Jones-Fees & Charges	-3,963.88
Key Investments Income	613.95
Total Investments	-62,605.74
Other Types of Income	
Miscellaneous Revenue	1,001.00
Total Other Types of Income	1,001.00
Total Income	70,725.26
Expense	
Operations	
Accounting	
Banking	-45.00
Accounting - Other	5,100.00
Total Accounting	5,055.00
Compensation	19,927.00
Conferences & Meetings	2,489.01
Executive Board	1,848.98
Fellowships & Grants	1,141.83
Insurance	5,384.00
Legal	6,957.70
Negotiations	36,370.50
Officers' Expenses	220.00
Payroll Taxes	365.07
Public Relations	6,727.48
Publications	867.32
Social	327.00
STRS (TPO Contribution)	3,524.78
Total Operations	91,205.67
Total Expense	91,205.67

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT

During the past month, I attended two supplemental review committee meetings and one insurance committee meeting. The supplemental review committee will finish its recommendations in April. All district employees will soon have access to a free service called Health Advocate. It is being provided through our Express Scripts prescription drug benefit, and has several helpful features highlighted in the link below.

http://healthadvocate.com/downloads/member/@YourService009_Member.pdf

I also spoke with several members about maternity leave and followed up with a member about the administration's response to a grievance.

I shared evidence with both building and district administrators about inconsistent testing methods for student growth measures, especially the use of computers versus paper and pencil tests. Members at the Middle School brought these concerns to my attention. Here are some links to recent articles about the problem.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/reading-paper-screens/>

http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2016/03/school_districts_get_a_grades_on_paper_tests_but_f_grades_online_survey_shows.html

http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2016/03/theres_no_going_back_to_paper.html#incart_m-rpt-1

There is a possibility student growth measures will not be part of OTEs in 2016-17, which would be helpful to all involved in this unfair process.

Enjoy Spring Break!

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

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

As we look forward to the close of the evaluation cycle for the year, here is some important information and reminders! Evaluators should continue to add evidence to the Evidence Summary Form using observations data, walkthrough notes, conference information, and evidence submitted by teachers. A spring Walkthrough is mandatory for everyone. All evaluation work must be complete by May 1st. There is no longer a May Summative Form. The final performance rating is indicated on eTpes for those in a Formal Evaluation cycle in May. This rating is then combined with the SGM to determine the final rating. Teachers on an Informal Evaluation cycle will only have the SGM rating for this year. The Evaluation Committee will be reviewing changes in state mandates regarding the use of SGM in evaluation ratings.

The Peer Evaluation Intent Forms will be distributed to teachers shortly after spring break. The committee will also be reviewing the criteria for approvals and denials and we will be advocating for increased participation across the district. Please review the form and consider trying Peer Evaluation, if you haven't yet!

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

PAST PRESIDENTS COMMITTEE

I attended several meetings this month beginning with the Insurance Committee meeting on February 22. Watch for information about Health Advocate services. This is an employee support program that offers assistance for the employees and their family on issues related to billing, prescriptions, and other health-care concerns. The district should be sending information out in the near future.

At the Finance and Audit committee meeting on Feb. 25, Treasurer Bryan Christman and his staff once again received an Unmodified Opinion—the best possible rating—from the state auditors. Our district is fortunate to have the expertise of Mr. Christman and his department. One thing to be aware of is that there are new accounting requirements regarding pension liabilities. Individual districts are required to document the unfunded pension liabilities even though the pensions are collected and administered through state agencies (i.e., STRS, SERS, PERS, etc). As a result, school districts show a liability for millions of dollars that are not truly a part of their accounting. It is an exercise triggered by pension issues in other states.

At the Board of Education meeting on March 8 there was a presentation about the Family and Community Engagement program (FACE) as well as an update on the Facilities Planning. A Board work session is scheduled for Tuesday, March 22 at 5:00 at the High School to continue the discussion on facilities. Also, Mr. Christman reported that revenues are expected to exceed projections by \$400,000 while expenditures should stay on target.

It was problematic for me to hear the Superintendent's remarks about unions at both the Board of Education meeting and then again at Representative Council. Our Association has filed several grievances because issues were not dealt with through open discussion. Individuals facing discipline and dismissal have relied on the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association for support and protection. The new Support Teachers contract was negotiated even though the inequities could have been corrected by the Administration. Our Contract defines our role as professionals. It is disingenuous to think that we could just do without a negotiated agreement and just rely on the good will of the Administration.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Thomas, chairperson

POLICY COMMITTEE

This month I'd like to highlight a section of Article III of our constitution which concerns our purpose: *To share the educational expertise of the membership with the community, School Board and Administration to provide the best education possible for each child.*

During these consequential times it is important that teachers makes themselves heard and advocate what is best for the classroom. Please consider attending a school board meeting, facility planning meeting, or any engagement where you can share the impact of policy on our students

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Kalan, Chairperson

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The District Recognition Reception will be held on Thursday, May 19th at 3:45 p.m. in the High School Upper Cafeteria. It was so well attended last year and we are hoping for awesome participation again this year! As you know, we will have a full meal with dessert and so it is imperative that you RSVP when you receive the invitation (after Spring Break) so that I can plan properly. I am looking forward to seeing you all!

*Respectfully submitted,
Selena Brown, Chairperson*

SUPPORT TEACHERS

The SHTA-ST collective bargaining unit are nearing the end of a historical journey. The voting for ratification of the new SHTA-ST's bargaining contract agreement went smoothly. A gigantic shout out to all SHTA building Representatives who were able to make this a success! The votes came in at 100% (42/42). On Tuesday, March 8th, John Morris along with negotiating Support Teacher members, attended the school board meeting to here the long awaited board approval for themselves. Dr. Hutchings shared some positive insights of his experiences and future expectations on what is to come with our Support Teachers. Again, thank you all for your continued support on this effort that adds to keeping our district first choice.

*Respectfully Submitted,
LauraAnn T. Moore*

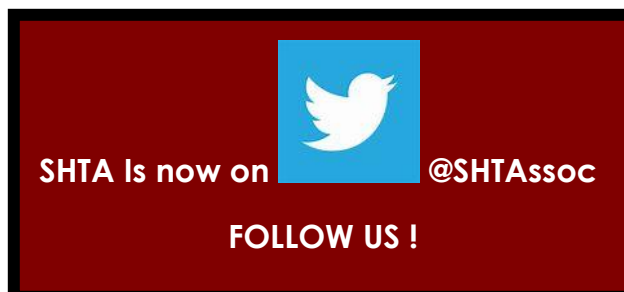
MEMBERSHIP & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The SHTA ST contract ratification results by building are listed below:

In conclusion: 42 total YES votes out of 42.

Lomond - 4
Onaway- 2
Boulevard- 4
Fernway- 4
MS- 7
ME- 3
Woodbury- 10
HS- 5
IC- 4

*Respectfully Submitted,
Chante Thomas-Taylor*



MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

MARCH 14, 2016, SHAKER HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOL

SHTA President, John Morris started the March 14th Rep. Council Meeting at 4:30PM.

David Glasner, Principal of Shaker Heights Middle School was present to greet SHTA members. He welcomed everyone to Shaker Heights Middle School. Mr. Glasner thanked Tim Richards and the other building reps. for building relationships and their hard work at SMS. He also thanked SHTA and shared that he is excited to work with all Support Teachers.

MINUTES from the February 08th Rep. Council meeting were accepted. Motion to accept minutes made by Aimee Grey and seconded by Linda Roth.

Administration Report

Erin Herbruck and Darlene Bushley were present to give a report on behalf of Administration.

John Morris started the report until Dr. Hutchings arrived.

1. Discussion about the five days of Professional Development before the start of the school year took place at the Calendar Committee Meeting. Great feedback from the survey relating to Professional Development days. The survey concluded that five days was too much time and three days not enough. Erin Herbruck discussed the dynamics of Professional Development days.
 - a. My Learning Plan feedback-teachers wanted more flexibility. Half-day content and half-day classroom.
 - b. There were different needs depending on the building.
 - c. We have a tool, My Learning Plan- the surveys that are completed are read and valued.
 - d. Everyone wants collaborative time and the data from My Learning Plan provided that information. Please make sure that you are giving feedback on My Learning Plan. It provides narrative and qualitative data that can be shared with no names.
 - e. Dr. Hutchings reported that this year, we should all know what to expect for our Professional Development days before we leave for summer vacation. The district is doing what teachers are asking for. We are listening to the voice of the people. Our role is to support the schools, remove barriers to help achieve the goals that we set.
2. Dr. Hutchings discussed the Principal process for Shaker Heights High School.
 - a. There are two finalists, James Reed III and Jonathan G. Kuehnle.
 - b. He is reading all emails from teachers, parents, students, community members and responding to the emails received.
 - c. Dr. Breeden and team visited Springfield City School District today, March 14th to discuss Mr. Kuehnle.
 - d. Members from Renaissance School of Humanities and International Studies in Cleveland Heights will be coming to Shaker Heights to discuss Mr. Reed.
 - e. Once we get feedback from stakeholders from current and former employees, hopefully we will have a decision made before Spring Break.
3. Dr. Hutchings wanted to clarify a statement he made at the Board of Education Meeting. During the meeting, he stated that "If I had it my way, we would not have Collective Bargaining Units to make decisions."
 - a. He feels that it should always be "We" when making decisions. Decisions should not be made by "Us" and "Them".
 - b. As professionals, we should share the same outcomes and we should be able to sit together and make decisions without lawyers present. We shouldn't need this when we are doing what's right.

P.T.O. Report – Candith McMillan was present to give the P.T.O. Report

1. It has been a very busy month with the Calendar Committee Meeting and Principal Search.
2. Big Project – Communication Summit
 - a. All communication from incoming and outgoing leaders – what's working?
3. Only one building is still using paper for newsletter but planning to switch to online.
 - a. Goal is to get newsletters to be seen by more people. Need to improve sign-up percentages (currently 40%).
 - b. Total elimination of golden rod is about 3 years away.

Officer's Report

President, John Morris

- Consulted on a member legal concern.
- Dealt with transfer requests.
- Mediated member conflict.
- Dealt with a member concern at the Middle School with Tim Richards.
- Worked with Mike Sears and Dale Whittington on a testing concern at the Middle School. The issue was resolved.
- Helped facilitate SHTA Support Teacher ratification vote and membership drive. 100% of Support Teachers voted to ratify the contract.
- Attended the Insurance Committee meeting on February 22nd.
- Attended the ESSA Advanced Committee meeting on Wed. February 24th.
- Attended the February 29th State of the Schools Meeting.
- Attended the Wed. March 2nd Master Planning Community Engagement Meeting.
- Corresponded with Steve Wilkins on School Closing protocols. Communicated with Becky Thomas and Officers about the issue. Discussions continue
- Interviewed James Reed for HS Principal on Thurs. March 3rd. Attended Community Meeting that night.
- Attended *The Night for the Red and White* on Saturday, March 5th.
- Interviewed Second HS Principal Candidate today, March 7th. Attended Community meeting that night.
- Attended the March 8th School Board Meeting when the Board voted to approve SHTA ST contract.
- Corresponded with Meryl Johnson and Bill Lavezzi concerning an Ohio School Board Candidate presentation on Monday, April 11th Rep. Council Meeting at Lomond from 6pm-7pm after the Rep. Council Meeting.
- Met with High School Reps and Members on the issue of the Principal Search.
- Had my weekly conversation with Dr. Hutchings.

Vice President, Matt Zucca

- Attended *the Night for the Red & White*, an event that supports Shaker Schools, lovely affair. Will get final numbers from the Shaker Schools Foundation.
- Answered Retire and Rehire questions.
- Attended the March 2nd Facilities and Planning Committee Meeting.
- Worked on K-4 Report Card issues.
- Answered Supplemental concern questions.
- Caring Teachers, discussed the change in Summer School Program.
 - In the past, program was directed toward intervention needs for students.
 - This year, it is more like a Summer Camp Program. This is not a SHTA issue but there are some concerns.
 - Any questions about summer school, please direct to Lisa Gibson.

Secretary, Darlene Garrison

- Please be sure to sign the attendance sheet before you leave each meeting.

Treasurer, Bill Scanlon

- Attended *the Night for the Red & White*
- Meeting with Financial Planner and Investment Committee is scheduled for the month of April.
- Have been busy paying bills and making sure that payments for the Negotiations for SHTA ST were all taken care of.
- A proposed budget will come out in April for members to browse. Vote on proposed budget will take place in May.
- Please be sure to review the Balance Sheet Standard and the Profit & Loss Standard.
 - Total Assets are over 1 million dollars.
 - Total dues collected including SHTA ST is \$132,330.00.

Executive Board Reports

Teacher Education, Lisa Hardiman

- No report

Membership/Elections, Chante Thomas-Taylor

- Thank you for your help with the vote for the SHTA ST contract.

Policy, Tim Kalan

- Attended Planning and Facilities Meeting on March 2nd.

Public Relations, Bob Bognar

- SHTA Publication will be in the High School Yearbook.
- Putting together gift for Teacher Appreciation, suggestions are welcome.

Evaluation, Lena Paskewitz

- May 01st is the end of the evaluation cycle.
- Hopefully, we will be moving forward without the SGM piece.
- Peer evaluation intention forms will be coming out soon. Hopefully, we will have more peer evaluators – training dates coming soon.
- No May Summative Form this year.

Legislative, Eileen Sweeney

- Attended Supplemental Committee Meeting. Working on Educational Leaders supplemental contracts.
- Monitoring the State Superintendent of Education.
- Health and Human Service is up for renewal, please encourage approval.
- We need to remember SB5, it is still a threat to us.

Publications, Andrew Glasier

- All submissions for the newsletter are due Wednesday at midnight.

Past President, Becky Thomas

- Attended Insurance Committee Meeting. Health Advocacy information will be rolled out May 01st. This tool will be really helpful. If you have questions concerning your health insurance someone will be able to assist you.
- Attended Finance and Audit Meeting. Bryan Christman and his staff were commended by the state auditors.
- Attended the Board of Education Meeting. Look to approve the facilities master plan in May.

Social, Selena Brown

- Working on the district's Recognition Reception. It is scheduled for Thursday, May 19th. Please talk it up with staff members and sending a RSVP is important.

Legal Aid, Paul Repasy (Absent)

- No Report

Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Mike Sears (Absent)

- No report

SHTA ST, LauraAnn Moore

- Negotiations for SHTA ST are official complete!! Attended Board of Education Meeting on March 8th with other Support Teachers. Thank you for assisting with this process.

Building Representative Reports

Boulevard, Darlene Garrison gave the report on behalf of Jennifer Goulden

- No Report.

Fernway, Andee Hassell

- It's been reported before that contractors are drilling and working during the school day. It becomes very noisy during instruction time.

Lomond, Donita Townsend

- Concern about Student Growth Measures being taken so early.
- Teachers had training relating to testing today, March 14th and the tests for students are next week. Darlene Bushley said that she would look into this.

Mercer, Nicole Smith

- Some ELA book orders are trickling in; some will still be able to be used for instruction this school year.
- Questions about ELA assessments, most specifically about the future of ELA committee meetings, especially in regards to preparing third trimester ELA assessments.
- Concerns about the short window of time between assessment periods and how quickly we are having to assess students for growth measures.

Onaway, Paula Klausner

- Worked with a member on a supplemental issue. The issue was resolved.
- Physical incident dealing with a first grade student, an aide and a teacher.

Woodbury, Angela Goodrum

- There are several teachers who have been advising a club, paperwork for payment has been filled out but they have yet to be paid for their services.
- A teacher has been advising an activity for 2/3 of the school year. She was told that they could not pay her because there were too many advisors.

Middle School, Tim Richards

We question an Administrator being allowed to return to work on a half-day schedule after two SHTA members were denied the same request over the last two years.

Testing:

- We were able to work with Marla Robinson to change one of our testing schedules so teachers could proctor their own students. A case of "doing what's best for students"
- Teachers requested that standardized tests be taken with paper & pencil in the name of "doing what's best for students". This did not happen. Direct implications on staff OTES ratings.
- CAP testing took place in October and now March. These tests are supposed to be measuring a full year of curriculum.

Instructional Rounds took place on February 18 and February 22 with the focus on how collaborative learning was taking place in our classrooms. While the process was completely non-evaluative teachers questioned the need for another initiative.

Continue to work with Erin Herbruck to provide support for our co-teachers.

Dealt with a harassment situation where a teacher was being sexually harassed by a group of students. Led to a discussion with administration regarding IEP students and available discipline measures.

In general building membership has feeling of disunity and lack clear and consistent communication. Staff receives information in pieces from team leaders, department chairs, hall-mates, rumors, or not at all. The Principal's Bulletin is not enough for all staff to feel united and/or to be on the same page.

Continue to work on reimbursement for a staff member's phone stolen by a student.

High School, James Schmidt

- Several members have expressed concerns that when they submit student referrals to Assistant Principals, there is often no response from the Assistant Principals. Teachers would like to be made aware of the outcome of any discussion between the students and the APs, and the consequences that the students were given, if any. In some cases students have been sent back to classes in which they were extremely disruptive without the student ever receiving any consequences for their actions. Teachers would like to know this information within a day or two of the referral, if possible.
- I met with Mr. Reed, John Morris, and several other faculty members regarding the possible teaching assignment of a member for the 2016 – 2017 school year.
- The faculty met to discuss the letter of recommendation that the High School SHTA Representatives submitted to the Administration in early February in support of Mr. Reed to remain the principal of the High School. (This letter was written to illustrate how Mr. Reed has positively affected the learning environment at the High School. It was written before the district's principal search began and before any other candidates were known.) Since the meeting, over 80% of the High School membership has approved the letter.
- Several members were concerned that the group of administrators and teachers conducting site visits for the principal search were not coming to the High School, but were going to Mr. Reed's former employer, Cleveland Heights High School. Dr. Hutchings addressed this concern in his report, stating that he is in constant contact with Mr. Reed and the staff here at the High School and is therefore familiar with his performance and qualifications in his current position as interim principal of the High School.
- Several members have expressed concerns that there is a discrepancy between the dates that we are being asked to administer our post-tests for our Students Learning Objectives and the date that the administration actually needs this data. Some departments reported that they are being asked to submit their data as many as six weeks prior to the actual due date, with little response from the District Administration when asked why this change was necessary.

Support Teachers, Bonnie Gordon

- Questions about how Support Teachers will fit into OTES Evaluations. *Process will be the same across the board.*

Old Business

- None to report.

New Business

- None to report.

Good of the Order

- Thank you Middle School Reps. for hosting our March Rep. Council Meeting.

Motion to Adjourn

- Motion made by Bill Scanlon

March 14th Rep. Council meeting was adjourned at 6:01 PM.

April Rep. Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 11th at Lomond Elementary School.

*Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison*



**SHTA March Representative
Council Meeting @ Shaker
Heights Middle School.
Special thanks to SMS
Representatives Tim Richards
& Linda Roth for hosting the
meeting.**



**SHTA President John Morris,
retired SHTA Vice President
Dollye Finney and SHTA
Treasurer Bill Scanlon at *the
Night for the Red & White***



WHY I QUIT WORRYING AND LEARNED TO LOVE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING!

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.

At the last Shaker Heights Board of Education meeting, the school board unanimously approved the new SHTA Support Teachers contract that had taken seven months to negotiate and had corrected many wrongs that had been part of our system for decades. Support teachers in our district have been treated like second-class citizens by administrators by being given terrible working conditions at paltry pay. Many support teachers held teaching degrees and worked with some of our most needy students. Through the hard work of many and collective bargaining, these teachers now have decent working conditions.

At this same meeting, Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings stated that he “wished we didn’t need collective bargaining.” The irony was not lost on many in the audience. He later clarified that what he meant was that we should feel free and open to bring our concerns to the administration and discuss them because that is the “Shaker way.” This utopian thought has no bearing on reality. The Support Teachers dilemma is a case in point.

Collective bargaining has a long and storied past. From its beginnings in the beginning of the 20th century, many unions have used it to gain fair compensation and safe working condition for their members and others. It is collective bargaining that grew the middle class in the 1950s in the United States and allowed for the growth of industry. Without collective bargaining we would not have sick days, vacation days, pensions, a 40-hour workweek, weekends, and many more staples of this country that most of us take for granted. In our profession, collective bargaining has created gender equity unlike any other career in America today. While in most careers, women make less than men, teachers are paid equally for their hard work and education regardless of their gender, a powerful statement to our students. Teachers have also emphasized safe working conditions because our offices are the classrooms of our students. Teachers have bargained for better education models and much of our time in collective bargaining is spent creating rules that benefit our students.

We only have to look to the state of Wisconsin to see how very important collective bargaining is. Since Governor Scott Walker has stripped state workers’ unions, including teachers, from being able to collectively bargain, teachers have been fired at the discretion of the administration without due process, wages have stagnated and health care benefits have become more expensive. The mood in schools throughout the state is gloomy (http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/14/magazine/scott-walker-and-the-fate-of-the-union.html?_r=0).

In our own district, the Support Teachers have been mistreated by administration and the Board until they were accepted into our Association and allowed to bargain collectively. All parties involved knew of the poor treatment. It was not some hidden secret that Support Teachers were vastly underpaid and made to do an unreasonable amount of work. Through the seventeen years I have worked for this district, I have known about their inability to face administration with their issues. This is exactly why collective bargaining was created, to bring voice to those that need it most.

Unions in the last forty years have been losing ground in the United States. Most Americans in skilled jobs no longer join unions or are unable to because of hostile state laws. In these states, you see poor working conditions, low pay and low morale. These are states where teachers are forced to take on second jobs to make ends meet, are forced to abandon their families on Friday nights to attend school functions, and work in classrooms with over 40 students. That is why collective bargaining is a gift. It allows teachers to teach without fear. It sets ground rules for all parties involved in educating our youth. Most importantly, it brings stability to our schools.

Dr. Hutchings' wish for an educational utopia is genuine but the very real need of teachers in Shaker Heights and throughout the country is to have a strong voice and to be provided rights made by collective bargaining. His utopian dream does not exist in our world of greed, bias and shortsighted thinking. It is in this world that collective bargaining creates rules that allow people to do their job to the best of their ability.

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BEHAVIOR & IEP'S

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Much of what happens concerning students covered by Individual Education Plans is governed by law. Our staff and administration have to follow myriad guidelines while collecting reams of data to provide some degree of empiricism to our decisions. The placement of students in a regular education classroom with proper supports is aligned with Federal and State Law and provides students with an education within a LRE (Least Restrictive Environment). In our district we have made a decision that the vast majority of students will be placed in a regular classroom setting following LRE guidelines. We have a strict inclusion based system that includes proactive methods such as Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans, and reactive methods such as Crisis Intervention. This model works for the majority of our students. Yet, I believe we are struggling with how to handle some of our students on behavioral IEPs with severe emotional problems that we are not resourcing properly. What do we do when our models for interventions aren't working? I believe problems have developed related to our philosophy and practice involving a certain myopia that ignores a rather significant part of the LRE equation – namely that a student's LRE is **not** the regular education classroom if there are chronic incidents of violent outbursts, including the assault of students and teachers.


Because of flawed policy or ineffective practice, we find repeated incidents where our classrooms are not safe. This is due in part to an apparent unwillingness to assign appropriate consequences to violent or harmful behavior, regardless if the student has an IEP related to behavior or not. An IEP is not a license to act with impunity. There is nothing in the law that prevents a student on an IEP from being suspended for attacking another student or teacher. And yet there seems to be a reluctance to do so. This creates many problems, not the least of which is often unsafe environments in our classrooms. The more insidious problem however, is that when we hesitate to provide appropriate responses to violent behavior, namely suspensions, we circumvent the process established by law to help determine LRE. A student on an IEP cannot be suspended for more than ten days in a school year without having a proper review of their placement through a manifestation determination. I believe many of these reviews would lead to conclusions involving changes of placement. To be clear, the problem is that we don't appear to be triggering that process in a timely manner in spite of voluminous documentation of assaults, bullying, harassment, etc..... I would argue our methods may be violating the spirit of the law by not providing either the special education student or the classmates of that student with the appropriate learning environment.

This situation may be related to another issue – the fact that we do not offer a proper continuum of services within the district. If a student's LRE is no longer the regular education classroom, where do they go? Because of our current lack of resources we should be creating capacity by developing a new setting to fit the needs of the students within the district. Perhaps a resource room model or an Emotionally Disturbed Unit that is

properly organized and staffed could be employed that would offer instruction and/or therapy if particular students can't be in the regular education classroom on a daily basis? The alternative is utilizing outside facilities, which are expensive propositions, though expense or a lack of capacity is no reason to embrace an inclusion-or-bust model that sacrifices quality of education and safety for expedience. Our administration could mitigate some of these issues by providing a clear and concise guideline to follow concerning violent outbursts and behaviors. In essence this policy would edify the notion that our district has a zero-tolerance for violence, bullying and harassment by stating that any act or assault against a student or teacher will be cause for that student's removal. Everyone from the principals on down to the students should understand that there will be support for predictable and adequate consequences related to behaviors that destroy our safe learning environments. Periodic reviews of our system should be conducted to ensure our practice and process are sound and effective, and professional learning time should be used to make sure these policies are implemented appropriately from the top to the bottom. I am hoping this conversation will lead to our district providing guidance and resources to better meet the needs of all our students.

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