

IMPORTANT DATES

Board of Education Work Session
Tuesday, February 23, 2021

Sankofa at HS – TENTATIVE
Friday, February 26, 2021

Sankofa at HS – TENTATIVE
Saturday, February 27, 2021

SHTA Executive Board Meeting –
Virtual, Monday, March 1, 2021

SHTA Representative Council Meeting –
Virtual MS, Monday, March 8, 2021

SHTA *news*

February 17, 2021

Message From the President

I had intended to write this column solely on the administration and the SHTA's continued efforts towards racial equity, but I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that the lack of communication, collaboration, and respect from Superintendent Dr. David Glasner around re-opening schools continues to present a profound block towards our shared goal of keeping our schools safe for both students and staff. It is creating grave concerns about not just his leadership style but his decision making. The SHTA Representative Council continues to discuss these concerns. Even though Dr. Glasner has scheduled a meeting with the SHTA leadership, it is the first since August. One meeting will not replace the need for ongoing teacher and staff input in the decision-making process along with deliberate, clearly articulated planning. I add this preface in the hopes that this dynamic will improve moving forward so we can continue focus on the crucial issues I discuss in the body of this column...

The traumatic events of the past few years have necessitated a renewed commitment on the part of Americans and American Educators to focus on Black Lives and Black History, not only in February but throughout the year. The blatant racism we saw resurface during this last election cycle was a brutal reminder that we have not left the legacy of racism behind. The killings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd and others by police sworn to protect them, the continued racial violence exemplified by the murder of Ahmaud Arbery by predatory white supremacists, and the silent complicity of so many of our systemically racist institutions came to the fore. Now more than ever, American Educators must embrace anti-racism.

The question is: how do we become an anti-racist school district and union?

I may have strong opinions that do not match up with our administration, that much has become obvious over the several months. But what I do agree with, and applaud, is our administration's very real and genuine efforts

to make Shaker an anti-racist school district. De-leveling our classes, bringing in a Strategic Planning team with a racial lens, adding an Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with Dr. JeffriAnne Wilder, starting a Black Teachers Task Force, focusing on Black Excellence, and leaning forward with the community-inclusive Equity Advisory and Action Team are all part of the ongoing effort to help our district realize its potential as a place of genuinely equitable, open, anti-racist, and inclusive education. It has proven to be and will continue to be a challenging task. Hard conversations have occurred and will need to continue, but we know that this is not just a product-oriented task. This is an opportunity to reimagine what our district can be and how this awareness and these efforts can never leave us if we genuinely want a better world for all our students.

As SHTA members we can and we should support these efforts, as well as take our own. I know from personal experience that de-leveling and differentiation are herculean challenges that few who are not directly in the classroom can appreciate. However, after nearly 25 years in the classroom, I am tired of seeing classes that are entirely Black or entirely White. Not to oversimplify, but this visual has been indicative of the “two schools” experience Black and white students have reported experiencing in Shaker for generations.

If de-leveling and differentiation go towards achieving the reality of truly equitable and diverse classrooms, I believe we have no choice but to be “all in”.

I am also personally and professionally grateful that Dr. Angela Goodrum has chosen to take and shape the role of Chairperson of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the SHTA. Her experience, passion, and knowledge of the classroom and district will go a long way in making our intersections with the district’s equity efforts resonate with our Association members. Likewise, I would be remiss in not including the Black Officers and Executive Board Members. Secretary Darlene Garrison, Interim Vice President Lisa Hardiman, Elections Chairperson Chante Thomas, Public Relations Chairperson Selena Boyer, and Special Education Chairperson Tito Vazquez are SHTA leaders who exemplify Black excellence every day and who represent all our teachers with their integrity and example. Our Representative Council is also fortunate to benefit from the leadership of Boulevard Head Representative Angela Anderson, Lomond Head Representative Donita Al Amin, Woodbury Representative Aquita Shepherd, High School Representative Enid Vazquez, and all our Black members throughout the district. And, let me say publicly, I am committed to doing whatever it takes to add more Black teachers to our district and more Black leaders to our Association.

It’s been an eventful month. I spoke weekly with Dr. Glasner. I updated the SHTA and CCES Facebook pages. I spoke with HR Director Barb Maceyak about contract and member concerns. I attended the January Equity Implementation Meetings. I met again with SHTA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Chair Dr. Angela Goodrum and District Equity Director Dr. JeffriAnne Wilder to discuss the ways SHTA and District equity efforts can intersect. I worked on class action arbitration based on the district’s interpretation of Sick Day, FMLA, and COVID.

I spoke with Special Education Chair Tito Vazquez concerning member concerns. I discussed ongoing Health and Safety Concerns with SHTA Occupational Health and Safety Chair James Schmidt. I spoke with Susannah Muskovitz about FFCRA MOU. I signed off on the FFCRA Extension MOU. I communicated with Dr. Glasner concerning COVID vaccination survey and pending arbitration issues. I sent out a Facebook reminder to staff. I worked on two members' legal issues. I spoke with HR director Barb Maceyak concerning personnel issues.

I helped an elementary member with an issue. I communicated with Dr. Robinson about a medical concern at Mercer. I communicated with Vice President Lisa Hardiman about medical concerns at Mercer. I communicated with Publications Editor Andrew Glasier and Past President Becky Thomas concerning #greatblackretiredteachersofshaker. I communicated with Dr. Glasner about staff concerns dealing with moving away from Hybrid to all-in person or at home approach. I communicated with Dr. Glasner about staff concerns dealing with moving away from Hybrid to all-in person or at home approach. I communicated with Dr.

Robinson concerning staff COVID diagnoses at the Middle School. I sent out email communications to membership. I talked with Dr. Glasner about potential arbitration compromise. I spoke with Dr. Glasner about a proposed calamity day for the second vaccine on March 9th and a remote instruction day on the 10th. I am glad to see for this formalized and encourage the district to consider an additional remote instruction day due to the reported side effects from the second vaccine.

Black History is American History. We are reminded of this fact in February and should keep it in mind for the other eleven months of the year as well. Similarly, the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association is a Black Teachers' Association. Our Black members are essential and elemental to our identity. We need more Black membership, representation, and leadership. It is one of my core values to increase these elements through my leadership. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me, or Dr. Angela Goodrum, if you would like to be a part of these efforts. It remains an honor to represent the SHTA as President. If I can help you with any other issues, please do not hesitate to reach me at morris_j@shaker.org.

Respectfully submitted,
John Morris

Reports from the Executive Board

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We are all trying to deal with the stresses that seem to continue to mount daily. Yes, our jobs by their very nature are so stressful sometimes; it exhausts many of us. Put on top of the regular stuff, all that has come with a pandemic that has lasted one year and counting, teaching usually feels like an impossible feat. A decision was made, not by us, the people who have to actually make it all work to teach concurrently. This concurrent model was a direct contradiction of teachers' educated recommendations. Most recently, another decision was made, **again** without our input, that the district's hybrid model was suddenly eliminated! That means for some classrooms, the number of on-site students has doubled!

This most recent change was made A MERE WEEK BEFORE TEACHERS RECEIVE THE VITALLY IMPORTANT VACCINE.

There is not a word strong enough to describe the kind of stress, frustration and fear that comes with these district choices. I think that sometimes these monumental decisions that are made, could and should take into account the needs of the people who are actually doing the heavy lifting. Teachers should be consulted and our recommendations followed before making these changes that directly and adversely affect us.

I have been communicating with Holly Coughlin, the Executive Director of the Shaker Schools Foundation. As I mentioned last month, ***A Night For the Red and White*** is ON! I encourage all members to attend this virtual event on Saturday, March 6th at 8:00 pm. This annual affair is critical to raising funds to support our students. Last year significant funding was for equipment and resources for the District's I3 initiatives: Inquiry, Innovation, and Imagination. This year's event will support the newly-launched **Educational Equity Fund** to help enact the District's important diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. A letter and silent auction contract was emailed to all members. Please consider donating to the silent auction. Donations from Shaker staff members are always a big hit with our parents and other people attending this event. Staff will have to be extra creative this year due to the pandemic but the possibilities remain endless.

The SHTA Teacher Fellowship recipients are encouraged to submit receipt documentation to collect reimbursement. This money can be used to enhance your professional development. Receipts should be sent/emailed to Bill Scanlon and Cc'd to Matt Zucca.

I have attended several Black Teacher Task Force meetings. The general meetings are monthly and are led by District Equity Director Dr. Jeffrienne Wilder and co-facilitated by Superintendent Dr. David Glasner and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Marla Robinson. A steering committee has also been established of which I am also a part. The steering committee's objective to help focus our goals and direction of this new and important committee's work.

I also attended two Teacher Advisory meetings which were led by Dr. Glasner and Dr. Robinson. One of our jobs as members of this committee is to give feedback to Dr. Glasner and Dr. Robinson regarding various happenings in our individual buildings and our school district. If you have any questions or concerns that you would like discussed at these monthly meetings, I encourage you to speak with your building's Teacher Advisory representative.

***Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Hardiman***

TREASURER'S REPORT

Happy February everyone. This is the time of year when I would normally be preparing my volunteer club for our Staff vs. Student basketball game and explaining to my Physics students the details of their big hands-on electricity project. But instead we are getting vaccines and dealing with the constant stress of keeping distant from our students. I feel consistent fear for the health of my colleagues while at the same time feeling nonstop sorrow for these painful conditions my students must power through. Everyone involved makes major decisions on a daily basis, decisions that could have life-changing effects. For this reason, I think it's essential that everyone have all the facts pertinent to this paramount time in all our lives, which is why I submitted the following public comment at the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, February 9th:

On Tuesday, February 2nd, Dr. Glasner sent an "Onsite Learning Update" out to all staff informing them that he made the decision to double the number of students coming into the buildings at one time. In that email he stated "adherence to District [Student](#) and [Staff](#) health and safety protocols, enables us to ensure that students and staff also will remain safe."

The linked and referenced 'Student health and safety protocol page' states that students should "Maintain a physical distance of six feet from peers whenever possible." So why then are desks at the Middle School placed only 3 feet apart? And if this corner had to be cut in order to make this "Onsite Learning" decision possible, was the community notified?

If parents are making the decision of whether they should send their child into the schools during a global pandemic, they should be made fully aware if any safety protocols have been changed.

I spoke this month with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor, and the members of the Investment Committee to make some minor changes in our investments. I communicated with our Edward Hawkins accountants to finalize our 2019-2020 Compilation Report. I have that to share if anyone is interested. I also communicated with the accountants to submit information for 1099 reports for a few of our vendors.

I attended an event sponsored by the City of Shaker Heights with Debbie Irving, author of *Waking up White: Finding Myself in the Story of Race*. It is a powerful book worth the read.

***Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon***



EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT

During the past month, I:

- Met with Human Resources Generalist, Denise Johnson, about specific supplemental contract requests and the work of the Supplemental Committee
- Shared a sample Supplemental Request form with both Denise Johnson and Human Resources Director Barbara Maceyak
- Helped a member with a request for a reduced time schedule
- Assisted a member with an FMLA request related to Covid-19
- Communicated with members about PPE requests at the high school
- Spoke to members about upcoming maternity leaves
- Met with Treasurer Bryan Christman and HR Director Barbara Maceyak about an incomplete FFCRA (Covid-19 leave) form completed by a member
- Spoke to a teacher about what to expect at a fact-finding meeting
- Attended the SHTA Executive Board February meeting
- Attended a SHTA building meeting at the Middle School regarding the end of hybrid-learning

Important Announcements:

- If you are completing an FFCRA Covid-19 leave request form, make sure you complete the 2nd page about which type of leave you are requesting (Personal or Sick) to supplement your pay and ensure you receive your full daily pay rate while on leave
- Insurance Committee has a meeting scheduled for February 25
- The deadline for spending 2020 money in a dependent care flexible spending account will likely be extended until December 31, 2021 or December 31, 2022

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

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Hello Everyone! Over the last month, I have participated in the Teacher Advisory Group with colleagues across the district and administration, worked with my Building Leadership Team on IB recertification and other building concerns, communicated with SHTA Executive Board members regarding various issues, answered individual evaluation questions and concerns, and worked collaboratively with Human Resources Director Barb Maceyak and the Evaluation Committee to restart our transition to OTES 2.0. These tasks, in addition to concurrent planning & teaching and mentoring a student teacher, have kept me busy! I know that all of you have just as much on your plates. We all need to continue to support each other and prioritize our own mental, physical, and emotional health in order to successfully make it to the end of this school year!

While the evaluation process this year remains the same as it has been in the past, the Evaluation Committee has decided that evaluations should focus on collaborative support during this unusual and stressful year. No teacher should feel pressured or have additional tasks assigned by their evaluator and all evaluators should approach the evaluation process with “grace”. If you feel that your evaluator, or other administrators, are not following these protocols, please inform me immediately. Administration decided not to take the Covid-19 exemption this year with the understanding that these protocols would be followed by all evaluators.

The transition to OTES 2.0 has several components. They include:

- Training all administrative and peer evaluators in the new system. This training is currently being organized by Barb Maceyak and myself with the ESC. Please be sure to promptly respond to any emails regarding this training.
- Shifting from a separate Student Growth Measure (SGM) to using High Quality Student Data (HQSD) throughout the evaluation process. You may remember that last year we surveyed teachers regarding the assessments currently used that meet the HQSD criteria. We will continue to seek input to determine how we can most effectively make this shift.
- A transition from using eTPES and uploading Shaker forms to using the new Ohio Evaluation System (OES) and the OTES 2.0 rubric and forms. This will eliminate some of the extra steps we have been doing using eTPES.

Our most recent Evaluation Committee meeting occurred on February 3. We had a productive and collaborative discussion regarding our approach to the selection and use of HQSD and I believe we are on track to a smooth and well-planned transition. Teachers and administrators having professional discussions to solve problems and make decisions that meet the needs of all concerned is collaboration. This example of the benefits of true collaboration can serve as a model to other district collaboration efforts moving forward. As long as teachers are left out of any problem solving and decision-making processes, we will continue to have major challenges in this district.

*Respectfully submitted,
Lena Paskewitz, chairperson*

SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

This past month I attended and participated in all SHTA Executive Board meetings. I interacted, communicated and collaboratively solved various concerns with the Director of Exceptional Children Elizabeth Kimmel in our monthly virtual meetings, including multiple phone conversations on a weekly basis.

I provided support to various SHTA members concerning issues including but not limited to Covid-19, job placement, personnel issues and work option. I communicated with SHTA President Dr. John Morris over various district wide Exceptional Children concerns. I have communicated with Director of Exceptional Children, Elizabeth Kimmel, on multiple fact-finding concerns with SHTA members. I represented multiple SHTA members at SHHS and SMS in Fact-Finding meetings. I participated in a Fact-Finding meeting with the Woodbury administration and a SHTA member concerning delivery of services and job requirements for Exceptional Students.

I attended and participated in two Black Teachers Task Force meetings. One for the Steering Committee and the monthly district wide meeting facilitated by District Equity Director Dr. JeffriAnne Wilder.

I continue to work collaboratively with SHHS Assistant Principal Ms. Jacquelyn Baker on various issues to improve the functionality and support to the Exceptional Children department at SHHS.

I would like to bring praise and attention to various educators who go above and beyond to support the Exceptional Students in our district. There are plenty to name, but I would like to point out high school Intervention Specialist Kim Roberts. Kim is a Multiple Disability teacher, and has been the pillar for the MD program at Shaker Heights High School for many years. Kim is one of the most dedicated educators at the high school and in the district. Often, Kim works additional hours at home, (too many) to provide exceptional delivery of services to the students she educates. Kim is a true leader and has never once complained about

taking on additional duties due to the unannounced prolonged absence of a fellow educator. Kim simply did what needed to be done.

*Respectfully submitted,
Anastacio "Tito" Vazquez, chairperson*

PAST PRESIDENTS COMMITTEE

In January and February, I attended the regular meetings of the Board of Education and the meetings of the Finance and Audit Committee. I provided SHTA President John Morris with information from the February meeting focusing on the public comments.

Working with Publications Chairperson Andrew Glasier, I assisted on the Facebook postings focusing retired Black Shaker teachers (#greatblackretiredteachersofshaker).

I wrote a letter to SHTA President John Morris highlighting information from the CDC director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, regarding the return to school. One of the factors she emphasized as being necessary for a *safe return* was **dedensification**. Sadly, Shaker has chosen to do the reverse of this, even as staff members and students have become infected with Covid-19. More students in classroom spaces along with crowded hallways and lunchrooms are not evidence of reducing the density. At the February meeting of the Board of Education, the majority of public comments expressed concerns about the need for more transparency from the district, stronger safety protocols, and the confusion about the decision-making process of the administration.

*Respectfully submitted,
Becky Thomas, chairperson*

POLICY COMMITTEE

This month's SHTA constitutional focus concerns the flexibility of our Representative Council to take action within the structure and bounds of our Articles and By-Laws.

ARTICLE XI - INTERPRETATION states: *The power of interpretation of this Constitution and the By-Laws shall be vested in the Representative Council. Any ruling of the Representative Council may be reversed by a majority vote of the membership.*

Any questions about decisions or deliberations can be made to me at kalan_t@shaker.org.

*Respectfully submitted,
Tim Kalan, Chairperson*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Chalkbeat [reports](#) that President Biden is paying a lot of attention to schools, in part because he wants to get parents back into the workplace. He signed an [Executive Order](#) that recommends (not requires) that:

- schools reopen (this has already happened)
- there be a nation-wide reopening policy (instead of differing by state)

•teachers be vaccinated as soon as possible.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a [guide](#) to help talk about risk in opening of schools.

EdWeek [reports](#) that Dr. Anthony Fauci is talking about the importance of getting teachers vaccinated.

And in non-pandemic news, The Plain Dealer [reports](#) that Governor DeWine has decided to cut the Ohio budget for education less than he originally stated.

*Respectfully Submitted,
David Klapholz, Chairperson*

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Despite the snow on the ground, spring is near! The planning for our Annual District Recognition Reception has begun. The District Recognition has been scheduled to take place on Thursday, May 20, 2021 in the High School Upper Cafeteria. Please mark your calendar! This plan is contingent upon Covid-19 numbers being low. The Association is thrilled that over 800 employees have opted to take the vaccine. We also have a second plan if an in-person, indoor option as described above is impossible.

While I know it can be difficult, please take as many days as possible or better yet, all of your Spring Break for yourself! You have earned this and deserve it!

*Respectfully Submitted,
Selena Boyer*

MEMBERSHIP & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Payroll deduction for SHTA dues began with the October 1st paycheck - \$33 per pay for 10 pays. **Most of our members' payment for dues will be complete after the February 16th paycheck deduction.** Our organization has 464 SHTA and SHTA ST members! Thanks very much for taking the time to review the membership lists and provide feedback regarding changes at your schools. All members should have received a membership card, if not please let me know and I can send your card.

Here is the breakdown by building:

Boulevard 31 total members

Fernway 31 total members

Lomond 40 total members

Onaway 34 total members

Mercer 34 total members

Woodbury 69 total members

Middle School 84 total members

High School 143 total members

District 1 member

*Respectfully Submitted,
Chante Thomas-Taylor*

SHTA-ST COMMITTEE

On January 22, 2019, after eight months of negotiations which involved mediation and fact finding, the last Support Teacher contract was finally approved by the Board of Education. At that time, Intervention Specialist Support Teachers and English Language Learners Support Teachers were placed on the SHTA salary schedule based upon their respective years of teaching (capped at five) and education level. All Support Teachers were supportive of this victory and felt confident that soon Skills Support Teachers and IC Support Teachers would be afforded the same respect.

After the Fernway fire, teachers at Fernway received stipends for classroom relocation and for meetings and work done over the summer. Support Teachers were not on the list for these payments. When presented with the contract, we were paid for classroom relocation, but not for summer work because we were support teachers. I informed my Principal about what I had done during the summer and also provided that information to SHTA. However, the District said no.

In the Fall of 2019, after much reflection, I decided it was time for me to file a grievance. I saw my job as a Reading Skills Teacher to be the same as the jobs of ELL Teachers. We all assessed students, analyzed data, identified students needing intervention, created schedules and provided intervention. The grievance was filed and denied. The reasons given for denial were that I was not required to write plans or create assessments. I was doing more than was required and was to be paid only for what was required. I found that explanation to be unacceptable. We all know that it is impossible to teach without planning and assessing. Because SHTA was planning to file a future class action grievance, we withdrew the grievance without prejudice, which meant that we could come back to it at a later date.

In the spring of 2020, our class action grievance was filed. The Superintendent agreed that our jobs were identical to Reading Teachers in the District. However, their offer to us was a real shock. They would RIF the entire unit and hire half of us back on the teacher scale. Obviously, we could not vote for that. This response was despicable, underhanded and grossly unfair. I could not believe that Shaker would stoop to that level. It wasn't the Shaker that I have known and loved.

During the summer of 2020, Skills Teachers were called upon to help. More classroom teachers were needed to reduce class sizes. About half of the Skills Teachers were hired for these positions and their positions were not filled. Those of us who were left, worked as Remote Learning Partners and provided targeted support to students within that role. We also wrote all of the Reading Improvement Plans for our buildings and shared them with parents.

Over the Years, Skills Teachers have stepped up to challenges when needed. We have moved into classroom positions, served as Remote Learning Partners, covered classrooms so that classroom teachers could attend meetings, filled in as substitutes and proctored standardized tests. However, our main goal has always been to provide targeted intervention to our most vulnerable students. IC Support Teachers at the high school have the same goal. They are Teachers and Counselors who help students needing personalized learning to succeed and graduate.

Our Strategic Plan emphasizes the need for equity, equality and fairness. We want all of this for our students and we want it for ourselves. We need enough staff to provide consistent intervention and we need respect for the Teachers who provide that intervention. We need the District to show respect for all Teachers. We are ALL Teachers and we all do Teacher work.

***Respectfully Submitted,
Margaret "Peg" Rimedio, Chairperson***

SHTA PAC COMMITTEE

This month, I attended the SHTA Executive Board meeting and the Representative Council meeting. I continue to update the [SHTA PAC Facebook](#) page. Some of this month's highlights include:

- [The AFT petition to Pass the American Rescue Act.](#)
- [Randi Weingarten's](#) ideas on how schools can safely open.
- The [Woodbury Creating Change](#) initiative.
- SHTA's [#greatblackretiredteachersofshaker](#) posts.
- The [fabulous Amanda Gorman's](#) video inspiring children to talk about racism.
- And much more about teachers, education, unions and issues concerning teaching while in a pandemic.

Check it out and let me know if you have any must read articles to share or initiatives our PAC should be involved in.

Wishing you good health and peaceful moments,

*Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Grieshop, Chairperson*

SICK DAY TRANSFER COMMITTEE

I have been managing the donations for the one SHTA member who has applied for and been accepted to the program and provided clarification for several other members about the process for becoming a part of the Sick Day Transfer Program. I will be happy to provide guidance and information confidentially (Schmidt_j@shaker.org).

*Respectfully Submitted,
James Schmidt, Chairperson*

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Monday, despite repeated requests to reconsider by both the SHTA and members of the community, Woodbury, the Middle School, and the High School all returned both A and B groups of students to in person instruction. While the high school administration has stood by the commitment to maintain appropriate social distancing in the classroom, classrooms at the Middle School and Woodbury have desks closer than 6 feet apart and may have up to 26 students. At Woodbury, there are multiple classrooms that have their student desks under the 6 feet distancing guideline. The unfortunate reality of all of this is that we are finding more and more evidence that 6 feet truly isn't even enough. Studies have shown that [without masks the virus can spread more than 20 feet](#), which will be the conditions in the cafeterias in those buildings. We heard in the webinar (available at https://www.shaker.org/Intranet_Videos.aspx) that the District sponsored with professionals from UH that we should have proper ventilation and maintain at least 6 feet of distance, but [were also told that 6 feet doesn't mean we're 100% safe](#).

Again, in spite of science, we are back, in what very well could be unsafe working conditions.

The incident at Mercer and the one at the Middle School both belie the fact that there is viral spread in the schools even when we were observing the 6 feet distancing and mask wearing measures. Our administration has stated that, “Our attention to physical infrastructure, as well as our practices of mandatory mask-wearing, regular hand-washing/sanitizing and maintaining safe physical distancing, will continue.” Apparently, they have determined that 3 feet of social distancing is enough. They are wrong.

Dr. Glasner stated in a letter to a community member that, “we have been able to determine that we can safely bring all onsite students back while continuing to maintain social distancing and other health and safety protocols.” How did they determine this? He doesn’t say. I feign no hypothesis as to how this determination was made, but I will say that it is inaccurate to use the word “maintain” when there has been a change in the acceptable distance. Are parents aware of this? Some of them are, some are not, some may not even care there are many factors which each family must weigh in determining whether in person or remote instruction is appropriate for them. Regardless of those determinations, it is disingenuous to make changes whilst not acknowledging those changes have taken place, thus allowing families to make decisions based on incomplete information. We would still like to know how the District made this determination. We would like to know where the District is getting its information about 3 feet being an acceptable distance for students to sit.

Every single one of us wants students back. We all want a return to normalcy. It is a shame that our Administration decided that 4 days to wait was insufficient. It is a shame that when we faced two student groups and teachers contracting the Covid-19 virus and whole classrooms and teams forced to quarantine, the District was not reflective nor responsive. They simply kept barreling ahead, bound and determined to get all students back in the classroom. This is an important goal, to be sure, but at what cost? We have had teachers contract this virus from students. That is inarguable. We have had the virus spread from student to student. Will changes be made to protocols? They will not. Will we see more distancing? We will in fact see less. When we have administrators telling teachers not to open windows for proper ventilation because it is cold out, we cannot possibly have safety at the forefront of our agenda.

I hope I am wrong about the possible consequences of these changes. Maybe nothing bad will happen. No one can contract the virus if no one in the school has it. But with asymptomatic spread happening, with our administration becoming comfortable with using the lowest common denominator as their guide, with the vaccine close but still not still administered, the District is playing fast and loose with the science and we will be the ones who are affected.

You have the right to inform your building administrator that there is an unsafe work condition present and that they need to correct it.

As it stands, we believe this is maintaining 6 feet of distance between others and having proper ventilation in the room from outside air or a HEPA air purifier in lieu of outside air. Please make sure that this is the case. I would also recommend that if you are being asked to have lunch in your room, that you open windows to allow air flow in and the classroom door to allow the air to flow out. Fans blowing the same classroom air around does not help; it actually hurts. Outside fresh air is essential in maintaining a safe working environment. This might mean opening the window in your room an inch or two or it might mean opening three windows an inch or two. But it is your right to have a safe working environment. Please let me know if I can help advocate for you. Contact your head building representative and me if there is any issue for which you need our support. Stay safe, wear a mask, and maintain a minimum of 6 feet of social distancing.

***Respectfully Submitted,
James Schmidt, Chairperson***

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 8, 2021, on Google Meet

SHTA President, John Morris started the February 08th Rep. Council Meeting at 4:30PM. **Eric Juli, Principal of Shaker Heights High School** welcomed SHTA to the High School Virtual Rep. Council Meeting. Juli shared that it was a good day at the High School. Happy to report that an increasing number of students were in the building and no furniture had to be moved, added or changed. We didn't have to change a single thing, we were ready.

MINUTES from the January 11th, 2021 Rep. Council meeting, motion to accept minutes made by James Schmidt and seconded by Aimee Grey. Minutes were approved.

Administration Report

Human Resource Director, Barbara Maceyak

- Our focus is trying to organize all of the information for the vaccinations, getting all the time slots done and making sure the necessary information is getting to the ESC.
- Looking ahead to Bridge training for 2.0.
- Frequently asked questions, scheduled time, parking email will be sent out.
 - Photo Id and Insurance card should be copied and form will need to be filled out.

P.T.O. Report

- No representative present to give report

Officer's Report

President, John Morris

- Spoke weekly with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner
- Updated the SHTA and CCES Facebook pages
- Spoke with HR Director Barb Maceyak about contract and member concerns
- Attended January Equity Implementation Meetings
- Will meet again with SHTA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Chair Dr. Angela Goodrum and District Equity Director Dr. JeffriAnne Wilder to discuss the ways SHTA and District equity efforts can intersect
- Worked on class action arbitration based on the district's interpretation of Sick Day, FMLA, and COVID
- Spoke with Special Education Chair Tito Vazquez concerning member concerns
- Discussed ongoing Health and Safety Concerns with SHTA Occupational Health and Safety Chair James Schmidt
- Talked with SHTA Attorney Susannah Muskovitz about FFCRA MOU
- Signed off on FFCRA Extension MOU
- Communicated with Dr. Glasner concerning COVID vaccination survey and pending arbitration issues
- Sent out Facebook reminder to staff
- Worked on two members legal issues
- Spoke with HR Director Barb Maceyak concerning personnel issues
- Helped an elementary member with an issue
- Communicated with Chief Academic Officer Dr. Marla Robinson about a medical concern at Mercer
- Communicated with SHTA Vice President Lisa Hardiman about medical concern at Mercer
- Communicated with SHTA Publications Editor Andrew Glasier and Past President Becky Thomas concerning #greatblackretiredteachersofshaker
- Communicated with Dr. Glasner about staff concerns dealing with moving away from Hybrid to all-in person or at home approach

- Communicated with Dr. Robinson concerning staff COVID diagnoses at the Middle School
- Sent out email communications to membership
- Talked with Dr. Glasner about potential arbitration compromise
- Talked with Dr. Glasner about a proposed calamity day for the second vaccine on March 9th and a remote instruction on the 10th

Interim Vice President, Lisa Hardiman

- Met with Holly Coughlin of the Shaker Schools Foundation regarding the *Night for the Red & White*.
 - Event is scheduled for March 6th
 - Virtual event, asking everyone to come as you are and enjoy yourself
 - Letter was sent out to teachers asking for contributions to the Silent Auction
- Attended two Black Teacher Task Force meetings
- Attended Teacher Advisory meeting

Secretary, Darlene Garrison

- Attended Black Teacher Task Force meeting
- Attended the January PTO Meeting
- Asked to be a participant on the Shaker Alumni Hall of Fame Committee
- Assisted a member with an issue at Woodbury
- Please be sure to sign the attendance sheet.

Treasurer, Bill Scanlon

- Talked with our accountants to get our books squared away from last fiscal year
 - Got information for our 1099s that we have to send out
- Talked with our Edward Jones advisor, Brady Krebs about our investments
- Spoke with one of the High School PTO Co-Presidents about their opinion of us going back to school
- Attended equity book discussions

Executive Board Reports

Past President, Becky Thomas

- In January, attended the regular meeting of the Board of Education and the meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee
- Plan to attend the February meetings of those two groups
- Worked with Publications Chairperson Andrew Glasier on the Facebook posting focusing on retired black Shaker teachers (#greatblackretiredteachersofshaker)

Teacher Education, Lisa Hardiman

- No Report

Membership/Elections, Chante Thomas

- Verifying rosters and I have heard from many head reps who have cleared them up for me. Thank you
- I hope everyone has received their membership cards.

Policy, Tim Kalan

- Attended and asked many questions at the University Hospital Webinar
- Dealt with many member concerns about coverage and the UH Webinar.
- Attended a Teacher Evaluation meeting.

Evaluation, Lena Paskewitz

- Thank you Barb Maceyak for showing investment in all of the concerns that everyone is sharing.

- Had a productive and collaborative Evaluation Committee meeting last week and we are starting the process in transitioning 2.0 for next year.
 - Will keep you updated with information for Peer Evaluator training as well as what we will be transitioning to.

Legislative, Dave Klapholz

- Ohio Governor DeWine announced that there will be less of a cut for education that had been previously announced
- Federal Level - a big push to get teachers vaccinated. More details in the written report.

Publications, Andrew Glasier

- Sent out emails to membership
- Updated Facebook and Twitter account including issues with return of students, #lackoftransparency, #lackofleadership
- # Great Black Retired Teachers of Shaker social media campaign, with Past President Becky Thomas
- May I also get building statements from MS and Woodbury, will put in Editorial section
- Editorial from Peg Rimedio (In Executive Board notes), Nicole Sherman and Joel Rathbone.
- Executive Board please have blurb ready Wednesday at midnight

Social, Selena Brown

- Working with Senior Administrative Assistant of Human Resources Stacy Poole on the district recognition reception. Worked on a tentative date but we are waiting on approval from the administration. We have not heard anything as of yet.
- Attended two Black Teacher Task Force meetings.

Legal Aid, Cathy Grieshop

- No report

PAC report:

- I continue to post articles to the [PAC Facebook](#) page.

Public Relations, Bob Bognar

- We will have an advertisement in the high school yearbook. It is all set-up and paid for.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Angela Goodrum

- Met with SHTA President Dr. Morris and District Equity Director Dr. JeffriAnne Wilder to discuss collaboration. Meaningful discussions relating to issues around our black and brown population. We are trying to come up with a platform where we can talk to the central office about the diversity issues in Shaker.
- Shared the mission statement with Dr. Wilder.
- We will meet once a month to talk.

Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Mike Sears

- Met with Human Resources Generalist Denise Johnson about specific supplemental contract requests and the work of the Supplemental Committee
- Shared a sample Supplemental Request form with both Denise Johnson and Human Resources Director Barbara Maceyak
- Helped a member with a request for a reduced time schedule
- Assisted a member with an FMLA request related to covid-19
- Communicated with members about PPE requests at the high school

- Spoke to members about upcoming maternity leaves
- Met with Treasurer Bryan Christman and HR Director Barbara Maceyak about an incomplete FFCRA (Covid-19 leave) form completed by a member
- Spoke to a teacher about what to expect at a fact-finding meeting
- Attended executive board meeting last week
- Attended SHTA building meeting at the Middle School regarding the end of hybrid

Important Announcements:

- If you are completing an FFCRA Covid-19 leave request form, make sure you complete the 2nd page about which type of leave you are requesting (Personal or Sick) to supplement your pay and ensure you receive your full daily pay rate while on leave
- Insurance Committee has a meeting scheduled for February 25
- The deadline for spending 2020 money in a dependent care flexible spending account will likely be extended until December 31, 2021 or December 31, 2022

Special Education, Tito Vazquez

- This past month I attended and participated in all SHTA Executive Board meetings.
- I interacted, communicated and collaboratively solved various concerns with the Director of Exceptional Children, Elizabeth Kimmel, in our monthly virtual meetings, including multiple phone conversations on a weekly basis.
- I provided support to various SHTA members concerning issues including but not limited to Covid-19, job placement, personnel issues and work options.
- I communicated with SHTA President Dr. John Morris over various district wide Exceptional Children concerns.
- I have communicated with Director of Exceptional Children Elizabeth Kimmel on multiple fact-finding concerns with SHTA members.
- I represented multiple SHTA members at SHHS and SMS in Fact-Finding meetings.
- I participated in a Fact-Finding meeting with the Woodbury administration and a SHTA member concerning delivery of services and job requirements for Exceptional Students.
- I attended and participated in two Black Teachers Task Force meetings. One for the Steering Committee and the monthly district wide meeting facilitated by Dr. Wilder.
- I continue to work collaboratively with SHHS Assistant Principal Ms. Jacquelyn Baker on various issues to improve the functionality and support to the Exceptional Children department at SHHS.
- I would like to bring praise and attention to various educators who go above and beyond to support the Exceptional Students in our district. There are plenty to name, but I would like to point out high school Intervention Specialist Kim Roberts. Kim is a Multiple Disability teacher, and has been the pillar for the MD program at Shaker Heights High School for many years. Kim is one of the most dedicated educators at the high school and in the district. Often, Kim works additional hours at home, (Too many) to provide exceptional delivery of services to the students she educates. Kim is a “True Leader” and has never once complained about taking on additional duties due to the unannounced prolonged absence of a fellow educator. “Kim simply did what needed to be done” to keep the standard of excellence and commitment to her students and the entire MD unit at the high school.

SHTA ST, Peg Rimedio

- Working on an editorial to talk about unfairness against Support Teachers.

Building Representative Reports

Boulevard, Angela Anderson

- District concern, our principal has been really good with communication and taking care of any concerns that we do have.
 - The district may push too soon to have children in the classroom and disregard any guidelines for safety and social distancing

Fernway, Victoria Goldfarb

- No Report

Lomond, Donita Al Amin

- Working with administration and HR for a member
- Concern at Lomond with students not wearing masks. Principal George Clark and Assistant principal Tina McCauley are working with teachers and students. It just seems that lots of teachers are reporting that students are refusing to wear masks.
 - Grade levels: 3rd grade (they just won't keep the mask on their face)
 - We remind students all day long to keep the mask on their face

Mercer, Nicole Cicconetti

- I checked in on members via email and text, and reminded them to reach out with any questions or concerns.
- Addressed member concerns via email, text, and phone calls--especially after the recent positive cases at Mercer and questions about the scheduled vaccine dates
- Principal Mr. Lindsey Florence held open office hours on Sunday, January 31st. I created a Google Doc and shared with members so they could express their questions and concerns. The doc was shared with Mr. Florence prior to the meeting to make him aware of topics to be discussed; Director of Exceptional Children Elizabeth Kimmel was present in the meeting as well. I kept diligent notes of responses from Mr. Florence and Ms. Kimmel. The doc was shared with all Mercer Faculty and Staff, as well with Dr. Morris and James Schmidt.
- Concerns again regarding our contract report time of 8AM and students arriving to our classrooms only minutes after 8AM. In order for staff to appropriately prepare for the morning, a few minutes after contract time does not suffice. Is this a consistent protocol at all the elementary buildings in the district?

Onaway, Paula Klausner

- Complaints about children being in the building just moments after 8:00AM. Teachers are having less and less time to plan
- Helping a member who has been given an additional class when other preschool teachers have just one class.

Woodbury, Angela Goodrum

- We had a meeting last week that generated a lot of questions. Principal Tiffany Joeseph was able to answer some questions to the best of her ability.
- The members at Woodbury generated a statement that I will share at this time...
 - As a building community of professionals and as members of the entire educational community in Shaker, we feel that...
While we know that in school learning is ideal and the transition to in person learning for students is part of the plan, it did not have to be done this way. The mandate to have all hybrid students return at once to the building was not made with consideration for what must be done to prepare safely and effectively with proper plans and arrangements in place. There has been no consideration for the safety and workload of our dedicated staff, who are the ones responsible for making this happen. Preparing effectively for the smooth return in regards to the many logistics, takes time. We are already going above and beyond during an unprecedented pandemic. We have been made to scramble to get everything ready. Leaving on Friday,

hoping that come Monday morning, all PPE is set up and in place in our classrooms, doesn't sit right. We are not vaccinated and are increasing the numbers of bodies in rooms by at least double.

A good leader recognizes that the success of the whole system relies on the quality of his school staff. And our health and well-being for us to do our jobs-that we call our profession, our passion-well. Effective leadership should desire to obtain the views of the teachers before making major/impactful decisions. We have not been given the courtesy over and over again, to have time to prepare and organize. Why not allow for some discussions and adequate time for planning?

Why couldn't our superintendent start with a dialogue or present his plan ahead of time to our district staff like, " this is what we are thinking/planning for... how can we roll out effectively with the support and commitment of our well qualified staff, who we hired because of their professionalism, qualities and skills?"

We deserve that time, safety and consideration to be able to be at our best in order to do our best for our most important students.

Middle School, Erika Pfeiffer

- Met with Principal Miata Hunter re: combined hybrid plan. Concerns fell on deaf ears.
- We have been fielding comments, questions, and concerns from teachers almost around the clock since the plan was leaked on Monday.
- We held a building meeting this week to share what we had been working on and to give a summary of the concerns we'd been receiving. We took additional questions and comments. Members expressed desire to consider a vote of No Confidence at the building admin level.
- We sent out a building SHTA survey re: vote of NC for Dr. Glasner and to gauge support for a building vote.
- Fielded member concerns over admin refusal to switch pod rooms to accommodate class size. Room 126 has a large capacity and few students. Room 125 has small capacity and many students. Admin declined to make this logical switch because it would require them to update in DASL.
- Fielded member concerns over the removal of the air purifier from the east gym. It was necessary for safety before, but now is not? Nothing has changed.
- Specific, recurring concerns with no clear answers include lunch duties, continued room-switching for teachers, class sizes, the Team Trailblazer Covid-19 issue, hallway traffic and behavior monitoring, consequences for negative behaviors, restrictions surrounding Raider Time, cross contamination of pods, shorter class periods and loss of instructional time, and compromises to educational delivery with the combined pods and students still at home.
- Extreme temperatures continue to be a problem. An increasing number of rooms now suffer from intense heat.
- Concern that "official" photos being shared by the District do not capture the reality of what is happening in halls and classrooms.
- Why did 4 instructional days constitute such an emergency that we could not have waited until after teachers received the first vaccine? What was the actual reasoning behind this?

Middle School Member Concerns:

Member 1:

- Why is there a movement to have more students enter the building when the staff has not had the opportunity to receive BOTH doses of the vaccine? (Let alone the first dose)
- What are the daily expectations of students attending in-person? (Phones, headphones, etc. are a problem). What are the fully remote students' expectations? (Cameras on should be a requirement) How will these expectations be presented to the students? These cannot be simply addressed in a 5 minutes

presentation rolled out by teachers. Admin needs to step up on leadership if they expect us to push out their agenda.

- Why would they suggest in the potential plan that student movement is limited, yet they are moving lunch to the cafeteria and gym with much larger groups of students? Aren't they now cross-contaminating pods more than they already are currently with specials and languages?
- What is the purpose of wasting more class time for the use of lockers? Lockers are not a valuable use of a student's time. Let alone staff members do not have a place to store their own items and we actually rotate more than the students.
- Why would students be allowed to cross-contaminate pods with the attendance of Raider Time in-person? How will we keep track of students for contact-tracing purposes?
- Why are we adding a new period of math/reading help? What are the expectations for this class? Are we responsible for planning this? Or is this another underdeveloped idea like pod champions, which will turn into babysitting?
- Why does the district/building seem so oblivious to the stress and fatigue many of us are expressing in meetings or just by reading the overall staff morale? The excuse of being flexible has waned extremely thin when we are continuously told that self care is important and new initiative after new initiative is poorly rolled out.

Member 2:

- Will we be given release time for vaccinations - what is the protocol for us to receive them?
- How will contact tracing be done considering that students will be eating and attending raider time in mixed groups (the CDC recommends contact testing and tracing for safe reopening)?
- Will there be a SHTA clarification on ventilation/windows?
- Is there anything we can do as an association?

Member 3:

- It is hard to deal with how they just spring stuff on us and never even ask our opinion.
- My concern is the large class sizes. They assured us we would only see half of our students at a time. My largest class has 28 - it is doable if some stay online. I have room for 24 (with maybe 3 feet distance?). (Teacher) and (Teacher) have classes of over 40. (Teacher) has a class of 30 with maybe 24 seats in the room. Are they going to redo the schedule??
- My other concern is behavior. As we get more and more students in the building there are going to be more behavior issues in the halls and in the classrooms. If I have a large number in the room and online I don't know how I can monitor the room and the online kids. Have they thought about having some virtual teachers just for the online-only students?

Member 4:

- One of my questions is that if they deem it safe for all of the kids to congregate for lunch, why can't they travel from class to class then? Can we at least go back to our own classrooms so there is something that makes our life a little easier? Especially if I heard that classes are going to be shortened, we need every minute possible to set up and get started.

Member 5:

- This was like a bomb dropped on us. When I started hearing rumors on Friday about kids coming back, I kept hearing March 1st as the date. I was somewhat ok with that, because I figured that it would be close to my 2nd vaccine dose and we would have time to adequately plan, which our department will definitely need because our schedule is very different from the rest of the building. When(...)it came out that it could be next week. My mouth dropped. I didn't even know what to say(...)I still don't know what to say. I am continually shocked (which apparently, I shouldn't be) by the lack of consideration for us as professionals by this administration. I am continually horrified by their lack of consideration of us as human beings. I do not understand this rationale at all. Yes, there are kids falling off the grid. But guess what? Those are the same kids who were failing last year also. Are there more this year? Perhaps. What's funny is that they think that everyone is going to just change back to coming into school if they can and it

will solve the problem. I actually don't think that will happen. In fact, there may be more kids who opt to stay home because of more kids being in their pods. I would love to know their rationale. If they were so worried about these kids failing, then how about checking attendance more stringently and following up? How about raising our standards instead of lowering them? I am not a huge fan of being online, but I would rather do that than be in the hospital with a ventilator.

- As for logistical concerns, we have some major ones on our end. In addition, this will affect Design. Not only because of numbers, but because of space. (We were told that we) may have to displace Design for lunches for a period. This is so ridiculous. And what happens to the workshop classes in the cafeteria?
- Other concerns I have are what happens when people get sick from the 2nd dose? Are they going to refuse to let us teach from home and struggle to find subs? I just heard that the building sub at Mercer is now sick. Have they considered this possibility?
- Another concern that I forgot to mention is when they combine our A/B week, it will combine 4 pods in the same area at the same time. If one kid gets sick, all 4 of those pods will have to quarantine and I would imagine that would include 2 teams or 4 teams of teachers too.

Member 6:

- Since all of us have never taught 100% virtually, I find myself staying up until 11-11:30 PM every night making engaging lessons for my students or staring at a screen for more than 10+ hours a day grading assignments (thank God for my migraine meds!). I felt last summer that I was better off than most teachers because I had already been using google classroom for years before the 1:1 roll out. Quite frankly, the 2 weeks they gave us at the beginning of the school year when they pushed back the student start date, only took care of my lessons for the first, maybe, 5 or 6 weeks of school. If I thought I was keeping my head above water that summer, then I don't know what my colleagues must be treading now. Since then, I have been a slave to Google, parents' emails/phone calls, OTEs evaluations, and faceless students on a laptop.
- If it isn't broken, why fix it? We are reaching the students that WANT to be helped and I am trying my damndest to touch every single life no matter the size of the impact. My anxiety flares when I hear that I may have to babysit more than 10 children in a room. I am already fighting the dress code and cell phone battle on the regular along with sounding like a parakeet repeating, "please pull your mask up over your nose" about a thousand times a day. I hope people are expressing their angst with this rush-order throw kids back in the school plan RIGHT BEFORE we are about to be vaccinated! We all could be fully vaccinated in just one month (pending on the questionable rollout), why the rush?
- I miss working for a place that has drive, ambition, and leadership. When I student taught at SMS over a decade ago, I knew I wanted to come back because I felt that I was valued, respected, and the staff was such a tight unit. Working for schools like (...) taught me much, but never was a staff so supportive of one another and allied for the common good of a school. Somewhere during my absence, a dark, laden cloud propped itself above SMS screaming for the sun to come blasting through. We lack leadership. SMS is a different place and I am disappointed that the place (...) has become so weighted and bleak.
- This has probably been mentioned approximately 50 billion times, but just for redundancy's sake: Wait until teachers are vaccinated. There would be far less pushback from teachers of the safety of their staff as the first priority.
- Get us supports we need to be able to teach our students:
 - GoGuardian: Solon and Painesville City have it which allows the teacher to see all of the students' screens to help them stay on task, technology issues, or complete any assignments...
 - Enable GridView: The program Beis shared with us at the beginning of the year to monitor attendance has updated where it can show you if there has been no activity on the student's end. However, it can only work if all students are present on the screen-hence why GridView needs to be turned on. IT said it was interfering with bandwidth but the internet is just as lagging now as it was when it was turned on. Again, this can be eliminated with the purchase of GoGuardian.
 - Grading Policy: There is no longer an incentive for students to complete the lessons and activities teachers are trying to engage with students during concurrent learning if there is no late penalty or

if the cheating policy is a warning and they get to redo the assignment. Don't we want to help students learn how to advocate for themselves to be problem-solvers? On top of that, it just shows how much admin values education when they start calling buses as I am wrapping up class. Five minutes may not be much to them, but for my last period which is over 50% students on IEPs, it means the WORLD to us!

- Holding students accountable. We are sending these kids to High School next year where their transcript matters no matter how they leave that building. To go along with the grading policy, now that Google Meet and Zoom both have "Disguise your Background" Feature, we should have them turn their cameras on so we can hold them accountable for being there during the lesson.
- Social Distancing Phone Garages & Dress Codes: The phone policy should be tighter. Students have created group texts for their pod and are chatting there rather than focusing on their work. Also, hoods and hats to hide their AirPods which (I believe CANNOT hook up to their Chromebooks) is incredibly frustrating. Do we have a dress code anymore?
- All of these things would be wonderful to at least talk about. If we have a smaller population in the building and we are steadfast in these policies then maybe there will be a change when we do go back to "normal". I cannot forget that before the extended break we were in a TRUE lockdown. I did not feel safe. I hold myself to a high standard and it's tough to constantly make concessions when I am not being met halfway.

Member 7:

- I would first like to say thanks to you both for your time and effort.
- If this plan is to be rolled out I would think it would go a long way to make sure the faculty has at least been given the opportunity to be vaccinated. And, for the vaccination to be given its proper incubation period to take effect before throwing us to the wolves. Why the need to consolidate pods right now is necessary I have no clue. There are new strain mutations popping up around the globe and the infection rate is not slowing down.
- I have a premature newborn daughter at home and my main concern lies with keeping my family safe and healthy. If that means I need to take a significant amount of time off work I will...

Member 8:

- How does a district morally choose to bring more students in the building when vaccinations are literally around the corner and have not been given or have had time to reach their full protection?
- How will you manage the spaces and air flow where students are eating?
- Will the district maintain the 6ft distance recommendations?

Member 9:

- My question to the administration is why do teachers have to continue to move? If students are going to be going to the cafeteria for lunch, why can't they rotate from room to room? There is so much instructional time being lost.
- Pictures of the "phase in" slide presentation were sent to me. It also states that class periods will be 4-5 minutes shorter in addition to the 5+ minutes that we lose because of teachers moving. Add to that "teachers will stagger students to lockers" at the end of day (probably will take 10 min). that's 20 min of instructional time thrown out the window for 7th period.
- I also am concerned with class sizes. I have one class of 25 students. There are only 22 desks in my room. I have no idea how they will be able to safely fit 25 students into my room.
- We are SO CLOSE to being vaccinated. Upper administration has made it clear that they truly do not care about their staff's safety, health, and well-being. It's sad.

Member 10:

- My safety isn't a statistic that can be brushed aside because of "the data." The administration team in the building does not have our best interest in mind when they roll out any new initiative followed by telling us the importance of self-care. If anything, it solidifies how delusional and blatantly inconsiderate they truly are. I understand they may feel pressure from the upper admin, but the behaviors issues, the infamous gun scare of 2020, and the lax discipline policies give me no faith in the return of a larger

student body. We all know how this will end. As for the upper admin, they have continuously undermined us as professionals by showing their lack of interest in our concerns and unwillingness to be transparent about their plans. I have no confidence in the building or the district leadership.

Member 11:

- Thank you for everything you do. While I do believe much of this was thrown on our admin, they have demonstrated over and over an utter lack of critical thinking, care of and advocating for the staff. They simply don't care that much about us. That isn't leadership.

Member 12:

- Why isn't there a united front across the district. For example, why does the high school staff have the opportunity to work remotely on Mondays, and it's not an option for everyone. I have real concerns about lunch duty assignments, as it can increase our risk of exposure.

Member 13:

- I certainly do not want to pit us teachers against each other...BUT the lunch period situation is the biggest and most dangerous cluster F of all!!! There really needs to be some equity to share the lunch coverage through the end of the year. I know we all will be inconvenienced to some degree but my department's teaching schedule (when you include lunch duty) takes us from 3rd period straight through 6th period. 3 hours and 40 minutes without a break through a normal lunch time. We have to eat at either 10AM or 2:45.

Member 14:

- Lunches with 105 people?

High School, James Schmidt

- Our opening was not great, so far after one day, no one has reported that desks have been added to the classrooms and we are still 6 feet apart in the classrooms. The hallways are crowded and that is an issue.
- Held a building meeting last week, the results...
 - We will submit a public comment about our displeasure of rushing back so fast and we are so close to getting a vaccine and without real justification. It has been signed by 50 people and okayed by 50 more people.
- Sent an email to Elizabeth Kimmel asking will teachers be informed if a student test positive for COVID.
- Attended meeting with members of administration, things are satisfactorily resolved or are still in progress.
- Hoping the district makes the right decision about having the day off after our second dosage of the vaccine.

Old Business – None

New Business

- Motion was made by Dr. John Morris that we consider a Vote of No Confidence against Dr. David Glasner. Supported from the floor by James Schmidt and Lee Appel seconded the motion.
- Motion was made by Dr. John Morris to table the discussion for the Vote of No Confidence until next meeting, seconded by Aimee Grey.

Good of the Order

- Thank you for your patience during this extraordinary long meeting.

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn meeting made by Victoria Goldfarb and seconded by Aimee Grey
- Meeting adjourned at 7:01PM

*Respectfully submitted by,
Darlene Garrison, SHTA Secretary*

TEACHING WHILE BLACK

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.

“Where did you come from?” were the first words she said to me as I mingled around the classroom, carefully trying not to bump into the awkwardly placed desks, with twenty sets of eyes staring, glaring, secretly wanting to know the same information for themselves. What I thought would be a nice, warm, “Meet the Teacher” gathering, that late August, quickly revealed itself to be an inquisition of my legitimacy to teach their children, their grandchildren, and their neighbor’s children. All I could think about was, this isn’t what I was expecting today. I guess in the excitement of preparing to continue my career in the Shaker City Schools system it never dawned on me that I would actually be questioned, as if I might not be intelligent enough to know my craft, and that I would be made aware of the privilege I just walked into, that allowed me to call myself a Shaker teacher. Is this privilege? Is this expectation? I’m not sure. I think so, but what does it mean to be a black Shaker teacher? I continued to wonder why some of these parents were looking at me as if their child’s chance of thriving just walked out the door.

I knew I was a good teacher and I knew how to communicate with families, but for some reason, I thought it would be assumed that I did have an inkling of education that might help me know how to teach their child. As different questions were fired at me regarding what college I attended, what part of Cleveland did I grow up in, and how I was able to get into Shaker, I began to think, “I’ve already been hired, relax!” I put on the smile that they were expecting and hid my frustrations while casually walking towards a plate of chocolate chip cookies I saw calling me from across the room. By the time the third parent came up to me and said “You went to Miami? Really?” I was done. I couldn’t believe the audacity of the parents to continue to want to check my credentials to my face. What’s interesting is that I never once said where I went to college, or anything, but for some reason these parents already knew, they even knew my minor in college, as well as that I had a musical background.

Were people really that pressed to find my resume somewhere and check me about what they read? Not one of these parents asked me about my teaching style, curriculum, teaching experience, or anything related to fourth grade. It was just about me.

Would they have dug so deep into a white teacher’s resume, found somewhere on the internet, and grilled them as if they were lucky to be here?

Just when I was about to devour my fourth cookie they were so good a Black grandmother approached me. She came up to me and pulled me close to her by my elbow and said “I’m so happy you’re here!” Then she put down her cup of punch, opened her arms, and said, “My grandbaby has never had a black teacher, and I see you don’t play with these folks either! Girl we’re going to have a good year!” Then she brought her granddaughter over to me and introduced us. I was just as excited to see her as she was me. I saw her big hazel eyes beaming! Just a second later one of the white grandparents that had been glaring at me, the entire time, came over and proceeded to tell me more things she heard about me (from my resume she researched). I looked at the grandmother, and she gave me “the nod,” with a smile as she and her granddaughter walked out the door. The nod gave me more encouragement and strength than she will ever know. It was at that moment I knew it wasn’t just the fact that some of these white parents and grandparents were questioning me because I was black, it was also the fact that they were questioning Shaker. “*How dare Shaker hire a black teacher I don’t know*” is what I felt some of these white families were saying deep inside. It’s as if because I was not a black teacher they already knew, or

was not a Shaker alum, that there must be something fishy going on. It seemed that teaching while black is accepted, if “they” know you.

I have been teaching twenty years, and loving children even more than those twenty, **and** have been a fierce advocate for our black and brown babies my entire career. I think the question those families should have really been asking themselves is “Are *we* ready for Dr. Patterson, because obviously, she’s ready.”

Nicole Sherman Patterson Ph.D., Grade 4 Teacher, Boulevard School

Safety First

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.

Self-care is important. In the weekly school bulletin, SMS teachers are regularly reminded of this. In the face of what is quite literally a life-or-death scenario for us, the concept of self-care is little comfort. The feeling among Shaker Middle School teachers is that we are being told to take care of ourselves because the District is not taking care of us.

We are all well-versed in the consequences of hastily assembled plans with no consideration for the realities on the ground: Mixed messages about the opening of windows for ventilation, teaching in rooms where the air coming from vents ranges from 48-148 degrees, sudden changes from the CDC recommended six-foot distancing to three feet or less. Students continue to eat breakfast unmasked in classrooms, while now traveling to the cafeteria and gym to eat lunch. More than 200 students move through the halls to lunch locations at the same time, with little to no separation, triggering the removal of a necessary air purifier from one gym, where classes occur, to another gym, where lunch now occurs. The movement of both teachers and students is unsafe, as evidenced by the Team Trailblazer quarantine, which took place even prior to Combined Hybrid. SMS teachers have been willing and eager to share our professional insights and suggestions, but it is to little benefit when the hands of building administrators are tied.

With concurrent instruction, teachers are not able to give their undivided attention to either onsite or online students; everyone suffers.

When instruction was 100% remote, teachers could teach “bell to bell” and give equal focus and attention to all.

Upon starting A/B Hybrid, valuable instructional time was lost to teacher travel, sanitizing, logging in and out of technology, taking breakfast and lunch orders, and managing onsite and online attendance and student engagement. The shift to Combined Hybrid has exacerbated the issue with shortened class periods and increased need for sanitation and travel time, to say nothing of the unsustainability of indefinite dual teaching. Why was a Virtual Academy promised to the community, and then summarily scrapped without ever even implementing it?

The lack of substitute teachers remains a struggle. Teachers and other staff are being pressured to cover classes at a time when every planning moment is precious. Teachers are routinely working well beyond contract hours in order to meet the needs of their students as it is; they are simply unable (and should not be regularly asked) to take on any more. The reality is that more teachers must now take personal illness days due to the sheer physical and mental toll on top of the teachers who have fallen sick with COVID. The stress is literally damaging our health. Paraprofessionals and co-teachers are not always given substitutes and are sometimes even asked to BE the sub. This deprives vulnerable students of the accommodations they require and sets up staff for compliance issues. The fact is, a school cannot operate without adequate staffing. In a pandemic, staffing should be one of the very first components of planning.

Why the rush to bring all onsite students together in under a week? Why the rush before teachers received even the first vaccine, which would have been a difference of only FOUR days? Why is District leadership setting up an “us versus them” mentality by stripping away all educational autonomy from building administrators, who know the unique needs of their staff and students better than anyone?

Shaker Heights Middle School teachers want to be clear to the community: The images and messaging being distributed by the school and the district are not representative of reality. Families have a right to the truth about the daily school routine and not glossy propaganda.

Please take this editorial 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. It is not an indictment of our SMS administration, but a cry for help at a time when the professionals on the front lines feel endangered and ignored. This letter represents the perspective of an overwhelming majority of SHTA Members at the Middle School, who have continued to show up for our students despite the dangers and challenges. We only ask to be treated with the respect and dignity that we as professionals deserve.

*Respectfully submitted,
Erika Pfeiffer and Linda Roth, SMS Building Representatives*

COVID Risk Factors: airborne.cam

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 wanted to share a recently released website with you that can help you assess COVID risk factors. This site was developed by "Savvas Gkantonas, Daniel Zabotti, Dr Pedro Magalhães de Oliveira, Dr Leo C.C. Mesquita, and Prof Epaminondas Mastorakos, With contributions from: Philip Sitte, Andrea Giusti, Megan Davies Wykes, Adam Boies, Marc Stettler, Robert Nishida. The authors thank Churchill College for their kind support and Cambridge Enterprise for their assistance,” and uses some of the most up-to-date statistics on COVID that are available (at this time). Before we explore the website, please note "It is assumed that hands are washed and that individuals are far apart from each other — that is, the risk of short-range transmission by droplets/aerosol is not included and might be significant."

There are a variety of inputs that you can enter into the equation and it will run a risk-assessment for you, finding the percentage chance that you catch COVID in the given environment. I think it is important to start by saying I am NOT advocating using this to judge your/our workplace. Many of the variables you can input are

categorical, and to use this to judge a work zone, we would need to be in agreement with what inputs would apply. For example, prior to the HVAC assessment this past fall I would have put us in as "1 - poorly ventilated," but the schools have done a lot of work to correct those issues; bringing in air purifiers, fixing windows, etc. At the same time, I would highly doubt that our workplaces qualify as a "school" in this system as the "3 - school/office" was qualified as having central air. So where do we fall? Somewhere in between, I assume, but I am not an air quality expert (and neither are you.)

The website: <https://airborne.cam/>

The research behind the website: <https://airborne.cam/airbornedotcam.pdf>

There are some important lessons we can learn from it. Examples:

- 1) Set up your classroom inputs as best as you can, and then try just changing what type of mask you are wearing. It has many to choose from, and you can start to compare the relative effects of what masks you wear.
- 2) See what the difference in leaving the building for your lunch break means. Try inputting: 190 square meters, 3.5 m high, 8hrs, 1- domestic, 15 people sitting/breathing with a 1-ply mask and a COVID positive person in the room, which is an UNREALISTIC setting. None of us are sitting in a room with a COVID positive student for 8 hours. Look at the percent chance of catching COVID... then just change the one setting to get a 1-hour break for lunch in the middle of the day. The percentage drops from 2.2% to 1.8% just by leaving the building for a lunch break. Besides, give yourself a break from the mask. You need it. You deserve it.
- 3) Is it safe to play indoor soccer? Well, if there is no audience, masks used on the sidelines and Social Distancing... input 400 square meters with a height of 7 meters, a 2-hour game, typical maximum ventilation for those spaces, 30 players/coaches in the room, no masks and heavy exercise: only a 2.2% chance of catching COVID
- 4) Should you be singing/playing instruments? We are limited by the categorical options but if we consider the amount of breath that singing and playing an instrument takes, I changed it to "heavy exercise". Take the previous setting in (2) and change "sitting/breathing" to "heavy exercise" and the 2.2% chance of catching COVID goes up to 10.7% as the instructor who is "sitting/breathing." But the other students who are also "heavy exercise" have a 49.8% chance of catching COVID.
- 5) Want to scare yourself? Whatever environment you have picked, change the "1 Covid-19 positive person" to "3 COVID positive people" and watch the percent chance you catch Covid-19 go up.

I have to mention one more thing. While you play with the factors and make the best choices to fit your life and the lives around you, all of these choices lead to one important question: What level of risk is acceptable? This question is the unspoken heart of every debate happening right now. What risk is acceptable to you and your family? What level of risk can you force on others? What level of risk are we going to allow others to force upon us?

Joel Rathbone, Shaker Heights High Math Teacher

A Statement From WOODBURY TEACHERS

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.

As a building community of professionals and as members of the entire educational community in Shaker, we feel that....

While we know that in school learning is ideal and the transition to in person learning for students is part of the plan, it did not have to be done this way. The mandate to have all hybrid students return at once to the building was not made with consideration for what must be done to prepare safely and effectively with proper plans and arrangements in place. There has been no consideration for the safety and workload of our dedicated staff, who are the ones responsible for making this happen. Preparing effectively for the smooth return in regards to the many logistics, takes time. We are already going above and beyond during an unprecedented pandemic. We have been made to scramble to get everything ready. Leaving on Friday, hoping that come Monday morning, all PPE is set up and in place in our classrooms, doesn't sit right. We are not vaccinated and are increasing the numbers of bodies in rooms by at least double.

A good leader recognizes that the success of the whole system relies on the quality of his school staff. And our health and well being for us to do our jobs that we call **our profession, our passion** well. Effective leadership should desire to obtain the views of the teachers before making major/impactful decisions. We have not been given the courtesy over and over again, to have time to prepare and organize. Why not allow for some discussions and adequate time for planning?

Why couldn't our superintendent start with a dialogue or present his plan ahead of time to our district staff; *this is what we are thinking/planning for... how can we roll out effectively with the support and commitment of our well qualified staff, whom we hired because of their professionalism, qualities and skills?*

We deserve that time, safety and consideration to be able to be at our best in order to do our best for all our students.

Woodbury Teachers