

## IMPORTANT DATES

**Monday, May 1:** SHTA Executive Board Meeting @ Fernway

**Monday, May 8:** SHTA Representative Council Meeting @ Onaway School

**Thursday, May 18:** District Recognition Reception @ SHHS Upper Cafeteria, 3:45PM. **WEAR YOUR SHTA TSHIRTS TO THE EVENT!**

**Monday, May 22:** SHTA VOTE for Officers, Representatives & Budget. @ each School Building.

# SHTA

## news

April 17, 2017

ISSUE NO. 7

## Message From the President

Happy Spring! March and April have been good, but busy months. I continued to help members with ongoing legal issues and answered members' legal questions, communicated with Middle School representatives on building concerns, and conferred with Director of Testing Dale Whittington on test training modules and Student Learning Objective (SLO) tests. I communicated on renewal issues, worked on transfer and licensure issues, worked on a job share issue, helped with medical leave questions, and fielded retirement questions. I attended the Professional Learning for Instructional Leaders (PLIL) session on March 16<sup>th</sup>, attended the Cuyahoga County Educators Summit (CCES) Steering Committee meeting, and updated SHTA and CCES Facebook pages. I spoke with Superintendent Gregory Hutchings and Director of Human Resources Darlene Bushley. I communicated with members and representatives at Lomond, communicated with Woodbury Head Representative Angela Goodrum concerning SLO concerns, and answered questions concerning transfers and applications. I worked on a calendar issue with SHTA Vice President Matt Zucca and Onaway Head Building Representative Paula Klausner, which, with the input of Onaway Principal Eric Forman, resulted in a positive resolution. I assisted with International Baccalaureate issues at the High School and I addressed supervising teacher/student teacher concerns.

Listing my activities as President is a regular feature of my message. It's often a long list. However, accomplishing these necessary tasks are only possible through the hard work and support of an incredible group of officers, executive board members, and representatives. One special group I would like to acknowledge is our SHTA head building representatives. These are the head representatives at the individual building levels that answer contract questions, listen to member concerns, meet with administrators, and communicate crucial issues to the officers. In acknowledgement of our head building representative's tireless efforts and expanded membership and representation challenges, the Executive Board and Representative Council, have decided to award honorariums to head building representatives in the following amounts:

Elementary Building Head Representatives and Support Teachers Head Representatives - \$100

Woodbury Head Representative and Middle School Representative - \$150

High School Head Representative - \$250

These modest amounts are a small acknowledgement of the incredible work our head representatives do. The truth of the matter is that when your head building representatives say, “no report” in the notes it means that they have worked diligently to help resolve building issues before our council convenes. We all thank them for their continued service. Honorariums will be awarded along with meeting stipend payment during the May meeting.

As a reminder, if you have not, please make a donation to the SHTA PAC Levy Campaign. It’s super easy. All you have to do is send a check, for any amount, to Bill Scanlon at the High School. No amount is too small. We need this levy for necessary capital maintenance and improvements throughout our district. Also, if you haven’t yet, please add your name as an endorser on the levy page (<https://sites.google.com/site/shakerheightslevy/home>) and request a yard sign if you live in the district!

It continues to be an honor to serve as President of the SHTA. I am grateful for all of our officers, executive board members, building representatives, and members. You are all extraordinary professionals. Please contact me with any questions or concerns at [morris\\_j@shaker.org](mailto:morris_j@shaker.org) or x6033.

*Respectfully submitted,  
John Morris*



**SHTA President  
John Morris at the  
April SHTA  
Representative  
Council meeting @  
Lomond School.**

The SHTA is on   us @ <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Shaker-Heights-Teachers-Association>

# Reports from the Executive Board

## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I hope that everyone had a restful spring break. It is hard to believe there are less than 40 school days left this year. Before the school year comes to a close, take a moment to reflect on all the wonderful work you have done for the benefit and success of our students. During this hectic time of constant testing remember that it is the relationships that you have developed and fostered this year with your students that they will remember and take with them as they grow and mature.

Congratulations to Kendra Agee-Barney, Mario Clopton-Zymler, Sharon Craig, Mary Ann Durkalski, Lauren Jones-Goodman, Nancy Kippen, Amy Knisely, Joseph Konopinski, Megan Konopinski, Scott Kovelan, Kristin Koterba, Larissa Martin, Erin Mauch, Lauren Meek, Laura Montgomery, Karie Murphy, Lauren Petsche, Kathryn Porta, Sandra Skandul, Robin Sweigert, Lumar Vargas, and Sarah Workman for earning Continuing Contracts from the district. This is a wonderful accomplishment for our colleagues.

I would like to again thank all of you who supported *A Night for the Red and White*. Close to 800 tickets were sold for the event this year. Since it began in 1992, the *Red & White* has raised more than \$2.5 million to support arts, technology, and health and fitness in each of Shaker's eight schools.

Please continue to submit receipts for reimbursement of Teacher Fellowship Applications. The deadline for reimbursement is the beginning of October 2016.

Please continue to help and support each other. If you have any questions for me feel free to contact me at 295-4692.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Matthew Zucca*

**SHTA Vice President  
Matt Zucca at the April  
SHTA Representative  
Council meeting @  
Lomond School.**



## TREASURER'S REPORT

The Investments Committee (Todd Keitlen, Matt Zucca, Chante Thomas-Taylor, and myself) will meet with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones financial advisor, the first week of May to look over our investments.

Next month's Representative Council meeting (May 8<sup>th</sup>) is when SHTA Building Representatives will be discussing Our 2017-18 SHTA budget and sending it to the membership for approval. A preliminary budget was distributed to the Representatives at April's meeting to take back to their buildings for discussion. I would remind everyone that next year is a negotiating year so that will be reflected in the budget. If you have any concerns please let your head building Representative know, so it can be communicated at May's Representative Council Meeting. Or you are welcome to email/call me directly (ext.6296).

*Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Scanlon*



**SHTA Treasurer  
Bill Scanlon at the  
April SHTA  
Representative  
Council meeting @  
Lomond School.**

SHTA Is now on



@SHTAssoc

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# ***EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS***

## **PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT**

In the last month, I worked with Director of Human Resources Darlene Bushley to schedule a grievance hearing regarding standardized testing practices at the Middle School. The hearing is scheduled for April 24. I also worked with Ms. Bushley and Supplemental Committee Co-Chair Eileen Sweeney to finalize recommendations to the School Board. We scheduled a meeting for April 19.

As always, I continue to assist members with questions and concerns about maternity leave, paternity leave, the use of personal days, sick days, and medical leaves of absence. The Human Resources Department has a page on the district website that answers many questions about insurance benefits and leaves of absence. It is a valuable resource, especially if you need immediate assistance: <http://www.shaker.org/insurance.aspx>.

There is also a page from the Payroll Office that includes information about tax sheltered annuities and maternity leave considerations: <http://www.shaker.org/Payroll.aspx>. The maternity leave section includes a power point presentation from June 2015 that guides you through the entire process for using sick days and FMLA.

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

## **EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

The evaluation process should be coming to a close across the district, both for administrative and peer evaluations. Please contact me, or any member of the evaluation committee or your building representative, if you have any questions or need help completing the final steps of the process. The final steps are the same as last year - input of performance rating and SGM into eTpes and teacher “pinning” of final rating.

The Evaluation Committee will continue to review and revise the evaluation process and forms, taking into consideration your feedback and experiences. We will be meeting again this spring to continue these efforts and prepare for next year. Please be sure to contribute questions, suggestions, and challenges associated with evaluation. Concerns some of you have shared regarding alignment of the rubric to your specific position, including single subject teachers, support teachers, and others were communicated to the committee in March. The committee is suggesting that concerned groups or individuals communicate specifically which parts of the rubric do not apply to your position so that we may further review this concern. These concerns should be shared with a committee member as soon as possible to be considered during the revision process for next year.

Peer Evaluation continues to be a successful program that supports teachers in collaborative professional learning. The Evaluation Committee is looking to increase the number of participants next year with the support of both central and building administrators. Peer Evaluation intent forms have been sent to everyone. Completed forms should be submitted to your building principal by April 26. Building principals will then approve or deny your participation, *citing reasons for his/her decision on the form*. Applicants will be notified by May 17. Please consider joining this program! Individuals will not be required to find their own partner in order to apply. OTES Training will need to be completed by the end of September 2017. The following is a list of scheduled trainings around the state between now and September. If you wish to register for one of the trainings, log in to your SAFE account and search for events with the keyword “OTES”.

April 25-27 Columbus  
June 6-8 Leesburg  
June 13-15 Columbus  
June 14-16 Tiffin  
June 19-21 Elyria  
June 26-28 Medina  
June 27-29 Columbus  
June 28-30 Independence  
July 26-28 Independence  
August 8-10 Independence  
September 5-7 Independence  
September 26-28 Independence

If you are currently participating in the Peer Evaluation program, please share with your colleagues the ways in which you have benefitted! Thank you for working hard to help your colleague grow!

*Respectfully submitted,  
Lena Paskewitz, chairperson*

### **PAST PRESIDENTS COMMITTEE**

In the past month, I attended the Finance and Audit Committee meeting and the regular meeting of the Board of Education. At F & A, it was announced that the League of Women Voters endorsed the May 2 Bond Issue and Permanent Improvement Levy. A recommendation was pending from the Mayor's Financial Task Force. That recommendation has since been received.

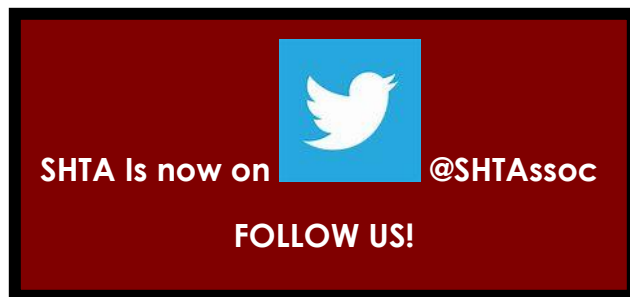
This is an important vote that will impact funding for the Shaker Schools. Passing this bond issue and levy will release monies from the General Fund that have been used for building maintenance. The Permanent Improvement Levy will provide an ongoing revenue stream for future maintenance needs.

I strongly encourage your support for the May 2 Bond Issue and Permanent Improvement Levy.

At the April 11 meeting of the Board of Education there was a presentation about Instructional Coaching. The benefits of coaching were presented along with the need for more consistent access to Instructional Coaches. Ultimately, this is a financial issue. Teachers need to communicate the benefits of daily contact with Instructional Coaches in order to promote this as a needed support service.

On another topic, I have become involved in a volunteer activity. It got me thinking about fund raising. I think the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association could consider a fund-raising activity. The monies could go to the SHTAPAC or to a specific service/charitable group. What about a fun run or a flea market or a carnival? I could see students paying money to dunk their teachers! I think this could be fun and beneficial. Contact me at my Shaker [email—Thomas\\_R@shaker.org](mailto:Thomas_R@shaker.org) if you have any comments or suggestions.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Becky Thomas, chairperson*



## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

Article VIII of our SHTA Constitution deals with our Association's Representative Council. The Council meets once a month during the school year to share information, discuss current issues, and determine ways to help our membership through problem solving, support mechanisms, and advocacy. Soon it will be time to elect our Association's executive board, as well as members of our Representative Council. Section B of Article VII states:

***" Any member who has been a member for the three years immediately preceding the election or appointment shall be eligible to be a member of the Representative Council. This requirement will not apply to Support Teachers until three years from the date their bargaining unit was certified by SERB."***

If you have been a member of the Association for three years and have an interest in participating in a leadership position, or questions concerning these positions, do not hesitate to approach your current building representative for more information.

***Respectfully submitted,  
Tim Kalan, Chairperson***

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

The District Recognition Reception will be held on Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup> 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! **Don't forget to wear your SHTA shirt!** I am looking forward to seeing you all! 22 of our colleagues will be awarded tenure this year! There's no better way to end the school year than to have your efforts and accomplishments celebrated amongst colleagues!

***Respectfully submitted,  
Selena Boyer, Chairperson***

## **MEMBERSHIP & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**

This May, the membership will elect our 2017-2019 officers. Any member on tenure, who has been an active member for the three years immediately preceding the election, is eligible to be an officer. Each candidate for office must initiate his or her candidacy by means of a petition containing the signatures of at least five percent of the active members. Please contact me to obtain a petition. They must be filed with me no later than 4pm Friday, April 28, 2017.

If you are interested in serving as a representative for your building for the 2017-2018 school year, please submit your name to your head building representative by Friday, April 28th. Any continuing contract member, who has been an active member for the three years immediately preceding the election, is eligible to be a building representative. Current building representatives will be placed on the ballot unless I am notified by Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup> to remove your name.

We will elect officers, representatives and vote on the proposed budget on Monday, May 22th.

***Respectfully Submitted,  
Chante Thomas-Taylor, Chairperson***

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The following items are changes **proposed** in the State budget:

### 1. Principal and Teacher Evaluation

The state budget made several changes to the way teacher and principal evaluations are conducted. Changes include which measures can be used and when.

While half of a teacher's evaluation is based on performance measures, the budget decreases the weight of the student growth factor from 42.5 percent to 35 percent and permits the use of instruments from the Ohio Department of Education for the remaining 15 percent.

### 2. State voucher/community school tax levies

- Expands the authority of school districts to levy property taxes for charter schools to include any school district that contains a charter school sponsored by an "exemplary" sponsor. Authorizes school districts to levy a property tax solely for and on behalf of one or more charter schools located in the district that is sponsored by an "exemplary" sponsor.
- Expanded the monetary amounts for vouchers at the high school and elementary level

### Supreme Court Ruling on special education

School districts must give students with disabilities the chance to make meaningful, "appropriately ambitious" progress, the Supreme Court said Wednesday in an 8-0 ruling.

The decision in *Andrew F. v. Douglas County School District* (2017) could have far-reaching implications for the 6.5 million students with disabilities in the United States.

The federal Individuals With Disabilities Education Act guarantees a "free appropriate public education" to all students with disabilities. The opinion held that "appropriate" goes further than what the lower courts had held.

"It cannot be right that the IDEA generally contemplates grade-level advancement for children with disabilities who are fully integrated in the regular classroom, but is satisfied with barely more than *de minimis* progress for children who are not," read the opinion, signed by Chief Justice John Roberts.

The case drew a dozen friends of the court briefs from advocates for students with disabilities who argued that it is time to increase rigor, expectations and accommodations for all.

### Supplemental Committee

I have been working, along with Mike Sears, Andrew Glasier and the entire committee on finalizing the supplemental negotiations proposal. We are hoping to meet one more time to wrap up and present the draft to Dr. Hutchings and Dr Morris by May1st.



## Right to Work is WRONG

Attempts to pass laws preventing collective bargaining at the county/township level near Cincinnati have called tactics into question. The representative proposing the new law based the rationale on one businessperson's frustration with the unions and wanted a "go-around".

In Gov. Kasich's State of the State speech, he continued to propose a requirement for teachers to spend up to three days of professional development in a local business. He believes teachers' need a better understanding of businesses to better prepare their students for the 21st century job market.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Eileen Sweeney, Chairperson*

## SUPPORT TEACHERS

Most of the support teachers have been using the ShakerTES Evaluation rubrics with success this year. Sometimes it takes creativity to get the rubrics to fit our needs, but things have been going smoothly. One issue is Woodbury ST's that do not use parts of the rubric. We are consulting with Evaluation Committee Co-Facilitator Andrew Glasier. Another issue is that there are no new rubrics for the IC Support Teachers, so they have not been evaluated this year; Vickie Schmidt is working on the new rubrics.

Hope that works! It's all information I received AFTER the meeting, so if you just want to say there's no report for this month, the next one will have the new stuff.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Bonnie Gordan for Latina Pope, Chairperson*

**SHTA April  
Representative  
Council  
Meeting @  
Lomond  
School.**



# MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

## April 10, 2017, LOMOND SCHOOL

**SHTA President, John Morris** started the April 10th Rep. Council Meeting at 4:32P.M.

**Carina Freeman, Principal of Lomond Elementary School** welcomed SHTA membership to Lomond. She shared that Lomond has been having a fantastic school year through collaboration. Lomond has completed a self-study and have incorporated Daily 5. The collaboration of staff and SHTA is greatly appreciated.

**MINUTES** from the March 13, 2017 Rep. Council meeting were accepted and approved. Motion made by James Schmidt and Seconded by Tim Kalan.

### Administration Report

**Darlene Bushley, Director of Human Resources and Stephen Wilkins, Assistant Superintendent Business and Operations** were present from central office.

- There was no report given by administration.

### P.T.O. Report

**Heather Weingart, Co-chair of the PTO Council** was present for Rep. Council meeting.

- Thank you for your donations and your support.
- Online spirit sales made \$500. The next online spirit sale will take place in the Fall of 2017.
- Senior Clap-out Day is scheduled for Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup>.

### Officer's Report

**President, John Morris**

- Helped members with ongoing legal issues
- Communicated with MS representatives
- Communicated with Dale Whittington concerning test modules and SLOs
- Answered legal questions
- Communicated on renewal issues
- Fielded retirement questions
- Attend PLIL session on March 16th
- Attended CCES steering committee meeting
- Updated SHTA and CCES Facebook pages
- Spoke with Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings and Director of Human Resources Darlene Bushley
- Communicated with member and reps at Lomond
- Communicated with Woodbury over SLO concerns
- Answered questions concerning transfers and applications
- Worked on a calendar issue with Matt Zucca and Paula Klausner. Came to a positive resolution with the input of Onaway Principal Eric Foreman
- Assisted with IB issues at the HS
- Worked on a job share issue
- Worked on transfer and licensure issues
- Addressed student teacher/supervising teacher concerns
- Helped with a medical leave concern
- **\*Please push for levy donations**
- ANNOUNCE HEAD REPRESENTATIVE HONORARIUM
  - In acknowledgement of our head building reps efforts in representing and expanded membership and representation challenges I, with the executive boards support, have moved to award honorarium to head building reps in the following amounts:
    - Elementary Building Head Reps and ST Head Rep - \$100
    - Woodbury Head Reps - \$150
    - High School Head Rep - \$250
  - We all thank you for your continued service. Honorariums will be awarded along with meeting stipend pay during the May meeting.

***Vice President, Matt Zucca***

- Busy dispersing funds for Fellowship Grants
- Please turn in receipts for reimbursement for Fellowship Grants
- Worked with Onaway and Administration on a calendar issue
- Talked with Dale Whittington, Director of Research and Accountability – concerns about SGMs. AimsWeb was not pulled off of website properly. Still being worked on.
- Working on survey for SHTA members.

***Secretary, Darlene Garrison***

- Please make sure to check the attendance sheet. Should be accurate for next month's meeting. Checks will be dispersed.
- Executive Board and Rep. Council attendance sheets will be turned in at the end of May's meeting. Erin Herbruck, Director of Professional Learning will upload hours on My Learning Plan.
- If you have a lengthy report, can you please send me a copy via email.
- Please be sure to sign the attendance sheet before you leave each meeting.

***Treasurer, Bill Scanlon***

- Next month, we will be looking at the new budget for next fiscal year
  - Executive Board will discuss first
  - Rep. Council will look at and discuss proposed budget so that membership can vote.
  - Reps, please take the time and share proposed budget with membership.
- Next year will be a negotiating year, \$50,000 will be proposed for Negotiations.
  - Two negotiations this year, SHTA and SHTA ST.

**Executive Board Reports**

***Past President, Becky Thomas***

- Attended the usual meetings, Board of Education and Finance and Audit.
- The League of Women Voters endorsed the Levy.
- The Mayor's Task Force endorsed the Levy.
- It is important that everyone endorses the Levy.

***Teacher Education, Lisa Hardiman***

- No Report

***Support Teachers, Latina Pope***

- No Report

***Membership/Elections, Chante Thomas-Taylor***

- Petitions are available if you are interested in running for Executive Office. Petitions are due to me by the end of April.
- Elections will take place on Monday, May 22nd.

***Policy, Tim Kalan***

- No Report

***Public Relations, Bob Bognar***

- No Report

***Evaluation, Lena Paskewitz***

- The Peer Evaluation Program is expanding, year 4 ½ .
- Tenure this year, you are eligible for peer evaluation.
- Intent forms will be emailed this week, please fill out and submit to building administrator.
  - New section added to form, explanation of why is teacher being approved or denied.

### ***Legislative, Eileen Sweeney***

- There are changes with the State Budget
  - Decreases the student academic growth measure to account for 35% of an evaluation instead of 42.5-50%
  - Requires the teacher performance measure to account for 50%
- State voucher/community school tax levies
  - Expands the authority of school districts to levy property taxes for charter schools to include any school district that contains a charter school sponsored by an “exemplary” sponsor.
- Supreme Court Ruling on Special Education
  - School districts must give students with disabilities the chance to make meaningful “appropriate ambitious” progress.
- I have been working with Mike Sears, Andrew Glasier and the entire committee on finalizing the supplemental negotiations proposal.
- Attempts to pass laws preventing collective bargaining at the county/township level near Cincinnati have called tactics into question.

### ***Publications, Andrew Glasier***

- Editorial relating to testing will be a reprint
  - K-12 there are 41 standardized tests per year
  - ½ State Mandated
  - ½ District Mandated
  - Can we re-examine the issue concerning testing
- Please use full names & titles for blurbs
- Updated the Twitter and Facebook pages
- Reading contest winner: Ellen Roberts from SMS in DR! Won a \$25 gift certificate to Loganberry Books
- Wednesday at midnight blurbs are due.
- Evaluation Committee
  - Worked with Counselors concerning their evaluations
  - Worked on issues at MS
  - Evaluation Committee meeting in a few weeks

### ***Social, Selena Brown***

- District Recognition Reception is scheduled for Thursday, May 18th.
  - Shaker Heights High School Upper Cafeteria-3:45PM
  - Reps, please hang up flyers all over your buildings
  - All SHTA members are asked to wear their SHTA t-shirt to the Reception.
- Passing out flyers to be posted throughout the buildings for the reception.

### ***Legal Aid, Cathy Grieshop***

- No Report

### ***Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Mike Sears***

- Working with Middle School Reps – grievance concerning testing
  - Hearing is scheduled for April 24<sup>th</sup>
  - These changes concerning testing could help other schools
  - The changes will begin next school year

# **Building Representative Reports**

## ***Boulevard, Angela Anderson***

- No Report

## ***Fernway, Andee Hassell***

- No Report

## ***Lomond, Steve Smith***

- No Report

## ***Mercer, Nicole Cicconetti***

- No Report

## ***Onaway, Tim Kalan for Paula Klausner***

- Worked on a calendar issue
- John Morris- “Thank you Tim for participating in the discussion.”

## ***Woodbury, Angela Goodrum***

- No Report

## ***Middle School, Kathy Manning***

- Proceeding with grievance regarding testing challenges. Meeting set for April 24 at BOE.
- Technology woes. Our principal has planned to purchase 5 more cows for the building (YAY) but our Tech department will not support these devices. We need to find a way to resolve this.
- Concerns over the confidentiality of test scores being released. If these are scores that will impact a teacher's evaluation, should they be treated as confidential? Not sure which scores will be published etc.
- Our ceilings continue to leak. Cafeteria has been fitted with large sheets of plastic adhered to the ceiling to catch tiles and water before they hit a student or staff. Admin and custodians are REALLY working hard to fix the situation, but it is a large health issue.
- New assistant administrator for next year.

## ***High School, James Schmidt***

- No Report

## ***Support Teachers, Amy Kerr Thome***

- Support teachers at Woodbury school have a concern about evaluation forms. The form does not reflect the work that they are doing.
- Darlene Bushley, Director of Human Resources stated that she would be happy to do a MOU(Memorandum of Understanding) with Support Teacher evaluations.

## **Old Business**

- None

## **New Business**

- None

## **Good of the Order**

- Thank you Lomond Representatives for hosting the April Rep. Council Meeting

## **Motion for Adjournment**

- Motion made by James Schmidt and Seconded by Andrew Glasier & Mike Sears

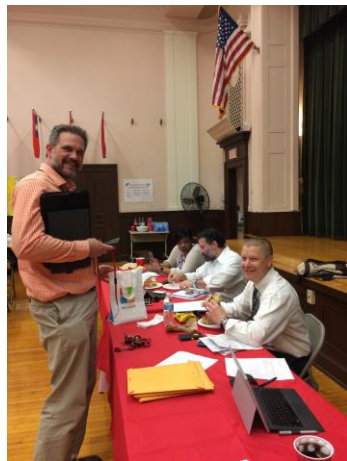
**April 10<sup>th</sup> Rep. Council meeting was adjourned at 5:33PM.**

**May Rep. Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 08th at Onaway Elementary School.**

***Respectfully submitted,***

***Darlene Garrison***

**Congratulations to Shaker Middle School Spanish Teacher Ellen Roberts for winning the SHTA Reading During Spring Recess Contest. She was given a \$25 gift certificate by President John Morris at the April meeting**



**SHTA April Representative Council Meeting @ Lomond School. Special thanks to Lomond Representatives Donita Townsend & Steve Smith for hosting the meeting.**

## **Weapons of Learning Destruction: Mandated Testing A Plea for My Students**

*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.*

A student walked into my 9th period Personal Finance class with a scowl on her face. It was the third day in a row she had to retake End of Course Exams because she had scored poorly on them last year. The testing was all done in the morning and she had been forced to miss her vocational school training that she enjoys because it was also in the morning. She looked at me and said "Why do I have to take these tests? I don't do well on tests, Mr. Glasier!" I explained that state legislatures want to make sure you are learning material. She scrunched her face, looked out the window and said "What do they know?" I laughed and changed my lesson to have students read a recent article about the state graduation requirements and testing and taught them how to write and send a letter to their state legislature concerning their views on testing.

Why do I feel like a hamster on a wheel? It's testing time again and after parents, some administrators and teachers across Ohio and especially in our district have complained about the tortuous amount of testing we have heaped on our students. We seem to be giving MORE not less tests? How many times do we make students retake End of Course Exams because they score poorly? Why do we keep torturing these poor kids?

This year the tests seem to have multiplied, like a fungus on a moist day. Testing started in early March and will continue throughout May and at the high school continues with final exams to the very end of the school year.

My colleagues in the English department have lost multiple teaching class time to bubble in information for the ACT test we are now giving on top of the PSAT & EOC's tests of which there are seven, two more than the Ohio Graduation Tests that are being phased out. In grades 3 through 8, students take two state tests, one in English and one in Mathematics plus another test in either Science or Social Studies depending on the school year as required by the State of Ohio. On top of that students in grades 3 through 8 are also given the Measures for Academic Progress (MAP) test to measure that can be used to track students' progress in English/language arts and mathematics as required by the district administration. The MAP test is typically given three times per year in each grade and administration wants to use the test in 9th grade, adding another test to the high school load. This is especially concerning since the State of Ohio tests already test these items. In Grades 5 through 8, students are also given the Collaborative Assessment Project (CAP) test, which retests students in the Sciences and Social Studies. The CAP test is also a requirement of district requirement. Grades K through 2 are not immune to the testing madness. They must take the AIMSweb tests for early literacy and number sense, a district mandate. Kindergartners also take the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment a State of Ohio requirement. In all, students in Shaker Heights City Schools will take at least 41 standardized tests in grades k through 12, not including Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate tests.

### ***41 standardized tests***

The last time I wrote about the number of standardized tests in our schools we had 24 total.

So what occurs with all this data that follows the student through their youth? The truth is inconsistent and alarming. As Cathy O’Neal discusses in her book *Weapons of Math Destruction* the mass collection of data was suppose to lead to greater fairness. With data we could truly gauge what a student knows and needs. Decisions are made by algorithms not biased humans. The truth is that we have over tested students with “opaque, unregulated and uncontestable” (O’Neal, 7) models that harm those most in need. My struggling readers are tested over and over again on tests I wouldn’t submit to my own child. The process for passing is a trade secret that is kept from parents, teachers and administrators. The questions are poorly written and in many cases inappropriate. The grading of many of them takes so long, even though they are done online, that by the time teachers, counselors and parents get the data it has become obsolete. While a few of the district mandated tests do provide data that guides instruction, much is needless, and I would argue detrimental to our students. My students HATE being at school. Attendance is dropping in the past months as we tortured our students with testing. When they are in class, their focus is scattered. They are grumpy, tired and angry. I have brought in a mindfulness trainer to help students release their tension and learn how to relax. I know of at least one student whose parents are looking to private schools partially because of the massive standardized testing their child is being forced to take.

I write this as a plea for my students; please stop standardized testing. Allow my students the time to learn new material. Allow me to assess them using alternative methods, so they can show their knowledge without over relying on testing, in which they fail. Allow my colleagues and I the professional courtesy to say which testing provides the most important data for our students to better understand their needs. Allow me to do my job.  
***JUST LET ME TEACH!***

**AG**

SOURCES:

*Weapons of Math Destruction* by Cathy O’Neal

<http://www.shaker.org/testingmain.aspx>

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Testing/Ohios-State-Test-in-ELA-Math-Science-SocialStudies>

The SHTA is on



us @

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





# **District Service Recognition Reception**

**Thursday, May 18, 2017**

**3:45 p.m.**

**High School Upper Cafeteria**

***DON'T FORGET TO WEAR YOUR  
SHTA SHIRT!***



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





## *Shaker Schools Foundation News for SHTA*

### **A Little History**

The Shaker Schools Foundation celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> birthday on November 18, 2016! The first foundation in the state of Ohio to support a public school system, it was established by a group of visionary Shaker residents who believed that our community would make financial contributions to benefit the District's students. Time has proven them absolutely right, and we are indebted to our many donors who continue to express their appreciation of the work YOU do through gifts to the Foundation.

### **Your Foundation at Work**

In the past month, the Shaker Schools Foundation has provided breakfast for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade IB students' retreat; purchased souvenirs for the Woodbury Band to give to a visiting sixth grade band from Toronto (the joint group is photographed below left); contributed to a scholarship for a Middle School student to participate in the Washington DC trip; and supported a master class by the Emmett Cohen Trio for High School jazz musicians (who jammed with our saxophones and drummer).



### **You Can Help**

The Foundation thanks faculty members who already support the Foundation through Charity Choice payroll deductions or outright gifts. You can make a tax-deductible contribution at any time by sending us a check or visiting [shaker.org/foundation.aspx](http://shaker.org/foundation.aspx). Thank you!

Wishing you a happy spring!