

## IMPORTANT DATES

Wednesday, April 22, 2020:  
Finance & Audit Committee  
Meeting

Tuesday, April 28, 2020:  
Board of Education Work Session

# SHTA *news*

April 20, 2020

ISSUE NO. 7

## Message From the President

Right now, I am writing this report from my third story attic. I am grateful for that. I am grateful to have a job, a house, a family, food, safety, health, and health care. Many Americans unfortunately cannot say the same. Our country is in crisis as the COVID-19 Virus continues to destabilize our citizens, health care systems, and our economy. As of this date more than 40,000 Americans have lost their lives to the virus, over 10 million have lost their jobs, and more than 3.5 million have lost their healthcare. I am among the incredibly fortunate, and I am grateful for that.

I am also working with my wife Maryann on the first floor, adjusting to telecommuting to her two jobs from home. My 11-year-old is adjusting to her life as a 5<sup>th</sup> grader online with help from her excellent Woodbury team, and my 17-year-old Sam is struggling with insomnia while completing his Junior year at the high school. Sam's teachers are diligently updating him with Google Classroom assignments and Hangout appointments.

I also have a dog, a cat, and six chickens in the basement (it's a long story). I talk regularly to my mother and my nine siblings throughout the state. I too have difficulty sleeping. I am constantly checking the news. My dog has begun avoiding me because she's afraid I am going to take her on the fifth walk of the day. I am concerned for my extended family and the future. I too am adjusting to a new life teaching online. I miss my students and my colleagues (and going to Target without a homemade facemask and minor within-store panic attacks).

The reason I share all of this is because what we are going through is not normal. That's okay. This is a global pandemic. There is no right way to be or feel. We are making this up as we go along. We are all new to online teaching and we are doing our very best. We are doing our best and our students, families, administrator and communities know this.

Be kind to yourselves. Lean in during this time of online learning. But also allow yourselves and your students the opportunity to try and sometimes fail, and still try again. Nothing will be lost by this move online. We may even be able to refine the process by which we communicate with our students and families, deliver course content, and monitor and mentor our students. Be careful not to pressure yourselves in the ways you would if you were in your normal environment, because you are not. Acting in any other way will not help you or the students you have committed yourself to educate. We can do this if we continue to be humane and compassionate with ourselves, our students, and the various communities we are a part of.

This month I have realized, as I am sure many of you have, that working online often exponentially increases the amount of work you must do. This month has proven this to me. I communicated regularly with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner concerning the school closure. I sent out a letter via email to SHTA Membership. I regularly updated the [SHTA Facebook](#) Page with Publications Chairperson Andrew Glasier. I also updated the [Cuyahoga County Educator Summit Facebook](#) Page. I met online with Executive Board twice. I communicated medical concerns to HR. I worked on maternity leave issues with Personal Rights &

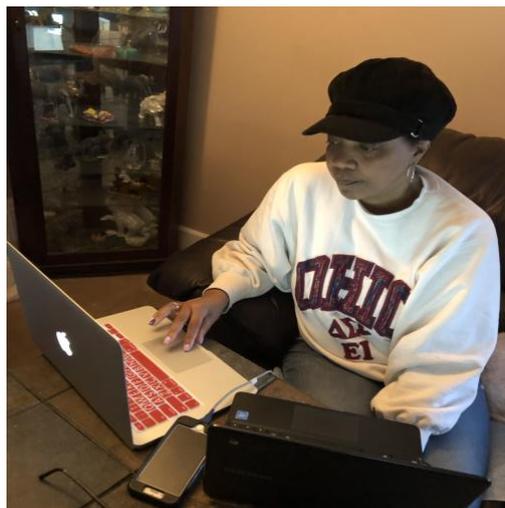
Responsibilities Chairperson Mike Sears. I worked on absence issues. I worked on evaluation issues with Teacher Evaluation Committee members Andrew Glasier, Lena Paskewitz, and Addie Tobey. I worked on a Support Teacher grievance with Support Teacher representative Michael Wells. I spoke with Assistant Superintendent Dr. Marla Robinson about personnel issues. I worked on Google Hangout and Zoom questions. I addressed privacy concerns. I spoke with Sarah Fish about medication coverage concerns. Finally, I spoke with Dr. Glasner about the very real need we have to keep schools closed until next fall at the earliest.

I talked with Cleveland Teacher's Union President David Quolke and Beachwood Federation of Teachers' President Evan Lazar about schedule and evaluation comparisons. I talked with District Treasurer Bryan Christman to see if Wi-Fi fees can be used for tax deductions. (Unfortunately, they cannot.) I talked to SHTA Legal Consul Susannah Muskovitz about evaluation, personnel and liability issues. I represented a Special Education teacher in a personnel matter with Special Education Chairperson Tito Vazquez. I helped address Google Hangout safety concerns with the help of SHTA HS Representative Enid Vazquez who shared an article on controlling Hangout access. I then shared the article which was sent out to staff with recommendations from Technology Instructional Coach Lauren Priestly. I also addressed technology concerns with various members and fielded questions about a potential distance learning survey.

Finally, I am grateful for all of you in the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. You all are helping me get through this, both professionally and personally. Whether it has been through sharing resources, teaching me new technology, or sharing ridiculous memes, SHTA members have made this tumultuous time bearable. SHTA Officers, Executive Board, and Representative Council have been essential in helping us maintain our contract while supporting our membership. I would also be remiss in not mentioning our supportive administrators who have done their best to support our students, teachers, and families throughout this transition. This time has been an outstanding example of SHTA and District Leadership collaboration. I look forward to continuing our work together through this crisis and beyond.

As always, do not hesitate to email me at any time of the day or night. I will get back to you within 24 hours, or less. Let's all lean on each other though these times for the best for our students and ourselves. As I've said before, a union is a family, and we are all brothers and sisters. Please rely on us, and one another, as such.

*Respectfully submitted,  
John Morris*



**SHTA President John Morris and SHTA Secretary Darlene Garrison at the April SHTA Representative Council meeting @ Virtual Lomond School.**

## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It would be at this time that I would have hoped you all had a restful spring break. I can only assume that was not the case this year. I know that all of you, although we were on break, were preoccupied with planning and thinking about the challenges that lay ahead. As a father of two school aged children in the district, I want to thank everyone for all your tireless efforts. And I am confident that we will continue to provide meaningful experiences for the children of our district.

This past month I communicated with K-4 Building Representatives about distance learning concerns. I advised membership to take things slowly with new distance learning procedures and to seek and maintain connections with colleagues and SHTA leadership. I received a Thank You letter from Shaker Schools Foundation for the Association's donation to the Red and White's silent auction. I helped set a date for the Investment Committee to meet with SHTA's financial advisor. I discussed, with Treasurer Bill Scanlon, a new process to make Fellowship disbursements during the extended school closure.

For any members who have not submitted a request for reimbursement prior to our extended closure, please send your request to me via email. A scanned copy or photocopy of your receipt will suffice for acceptable documentation. Funds will be mailed out to the recipient through USPS with an email notification that the check was processed.

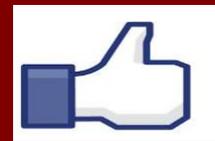
Please continue to help and support each other. If you have any questions for me feel free to contact me at [zucca\\_m@shaker.org](mailto:zucca_m@shaker.org) or at 216-849-0680.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Matthew Zucca*



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

The SHTA PAC is on



@

**PAC of the Shaker Heights Teachers  
Association**

## TREASURER'S REPORT

This quarantine is a difficult time for everyone. In a very short time we as teachers have had to learn how to make connections with our students through a computer screen, a daunting task. We are lucky when compared to the health care workers, delivery drivers, grocery store employees, and restaurant workers confronted with the possibility of contamination on a daily basis. What has made this undertaking less anxiety-producing is the help of our colleagues. I have heard our SHTA members explaining technology, sharing tips, collaborating, listening to frustrations, guiding peers, leading help-sessions, and providing moral support to each other. We are weathering this storm relatively smoothly because of our solidarity. Thank you for that.

The Investments Committee (Todd Keitlen, Matt Zucca, Chante Thomas-Taylor, and myself) is meeting with our Edward Jones advisor on Tuesday, April 21st to look over the SHTA investments.

Next month's Representative Council meeting (May 11<sup>th</sup>) is when the Reps will be discussing the 2020-21 SHTA budget and sending it to the membership for approval. A preliminary budget was distributed to the Reps at April's meeting to take back to their members for discussion. 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 ([scanlon\\_w@shaker.org](mailto:scanlon_w@shaker.org), 216 333-2627).

*Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Scanlon*



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

# ***EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS***

## **PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT**

In the last month, I assisted members with questions or concerns about returning from job sharing, maternity leaves during the extended school closure, supplemental contracts, job expectations, evaluations, tenure, and prescription drug costs. I also attended two Executive Board meetings and one Representative Council meeting. I spoke to SHTA President Dr. John Morris about the unfortunate timing of a district communication on March 16 that made some members fear they were about to lose their health insurance. The district quickly sent out an e-mail on March 19 clarifying the earlier communication.

The Supplemental Committee met on March 10<sup>th</sup> and made recommendations that were not on the Board of Education agenda for April 7. All the efforts to prepare for and implement a distance learning program simply took precedence over these proposals. Some of them might be on the agenda for the May School Board meeting. These recommendations were for new supplementals, some of which will no longer be needed for the 2019-20 school year. However, it is still the committee's position that these supplementals should be approved for the 2020-21 school year. The committee never discussed the status of supplemental contracts during an extended school closure. More than one member has asked if the school district plans to honor all signed supplemental contracts for the 2019-20 school year. John Morris spoke to central office administrators, and his understanding is that all signed supplemental contracts for the 2019-20 school year will be honored.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Sears, chairperson*

## **EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

While I typically get right down to business in these newsletter submissions, I feel like I should say something about our world turned upside down. Snow in the middle of April? This is nuts!

We have had two Evaluation Committee meetings this month to discuss the implications of the closure on evaluations and make decisions regarding OTES 2.0 implementation. The ODE has recently released guidelines for addressing complete and incomplete evaluations, and has also granted the option of delaying implementation of OTES 2.0 until the 2021-2022 school year. Please find the link to the ODE page [here](#). A memo has also been released by the district regarding how this year's evaluations will be handled. Please find a link to the memo [here](#).

The committee has also voted to delay implementation of OTES 2.0. This delay will allow us another year to complete the required Bridge Trainings, thoughtfully plan for HQSD at all levels, and allow time for "glitches" to be worked out and "tweaks" to be made before we dive in. That being said, it is still unclear how Student Growth Measures will impact evaluations for districts who choose to remain with OTES 1.0 for another year. We will continue to keep you updated as clarity comes from the state.

Please be sure to complete the Peer Evaluation Intent Form if you would like to participate next year. This is a required step every year, regardless of whether you have participated in the past or not. The Google Form was sent out on April 20 by Andrew Glasier. Due to our decision to delay OTES 2.0, evaluators will only be required to have the OTES 1.0 credential for next year. Bridge Trainings will still be required for those who plan to continue to be evaluators during the 2021-2022 school year. An online training option for this Bridge Training is being developed and is slated to be available late May/early June. As soon as this option becomes available, I will get the information to you. I strongly encourage all evaluators to take advantage of this option so that we are all set for 2.0 implementation!

Please contact me, any other Evaluation Committee member, or your SHTA representative with any questions or concerns regarding evaluation.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Lena Paskewitz, chairperson*

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

I helped a member distinguish between her job duties and the duties of another SHTA member.

I spoke to Director of Pupil Services Elizabeth Kimmel on the expectations of Intervention Specialists during the extended spring break. We discussed the clarification of the timeline per getting things done for the high school Special Education Department. We also spoke on the role that paraprofessionals will play in the new distance learning for our students.

I worked with SHTA President Dr. John Morris concerning a member's questions about the Instructional levels and about caseload concerns. With his help, I supported an Intervention Specialist over another issue. I participated in the SHTA meetings via Google Hangout.

I fielded various emails and phone calls per the amount of extra work that is required for Intervention Specialist due to the Coven-19 closure.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Anastacio Tito Vazquez, Jr. M.Ed, Chairperson*

## **PAST PRESIDENTS COMMITTEE**

I hope you are all staying safe and healthy at home with your families and loved ones. Like you, this has been challenging for me. Even though I am retired and my time has been my own for the past number of years, I still find the stay at home order very limiting. And, like many of you, my technology has not met my needs. I am adjusting to trying to stay in touch via iPhone, iPad, and computer. If nothing else, this will build my technology skills.

This month, I attended the Executive Board and Representative Council Meeting via Google Hangouts and the April meeting of the Board of Education via Zoom.

At the Board of Education meeting the construction projects were discussed. Some progress on Fernway's completion is delayed due to the shutdown of suppliers delivering needed materials. The construction company is working to finish what is possible and be ready once the materials are delivered. Bond projects that would have waited until the end of the school year to begin have been started including roof replacement at the high school, waterproofing at Boulevard, Middle School, Mercer, and Woodbury.

I am planning to attend the Zoom meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee on April 22.

Several friends and I share daily quotes and affirmations with each other. Here are two quotes from South African heroes Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu:

Nelson Mandela: "I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended."

Desmond Tutu: "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."

As President John Morris said in his message, the SHTA is a family and we are here to help each other especially when the next hill seems to be so high. Even as a retiree, I feel part of the extended family. Please email me via Shaker email (Thomas\_R@shaker.org) if you feel I can assist you.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Becky Thomas, chairperson*

## **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

The EdChoice Voucher Program takes money that was intended for public schools and sends it to private schools (\$4650 per elementary student, \$6000 for secondary). This program has been controversial, and while there has been a vocal opposition to it, it looked like the Ohio Legislature was going to greatly expand it earlier this year. Then came the Corona virus, and after much deliberation, the Ohio legislature decided to postpone any changes; it is the same as last year.

Because of the virus, for this school year the Ohio legislature also eliminated:

- the report cards that it issues for schools
- the testing of students at the end of the school year
- its requirements for high-school graduation (letting individual school districts make the decision)

Here is a link to Patrick O'Donnell's Plain Dealer summary of the recent Ohio Education news: [Summary](#).

If you have ideas about where I should get the latest legislative news, please let me know.

*Respectfully submitted,  
David Klapholz, Chairperson*

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

As our strange school year approaches its end, so we also come to SHTA election season. Our Association's elections are dealt with in Article IX of our constitution, which states:

*A. Nominations for Officers of the Association shall be open by petition from any member signed by at least five percent of the membership.*

*B. Nominations for Building Representatives shall be open from the floor of the building meeting, prior to a ballot being taken.*

*C. Nominations for Support Teacher Representatives shall be open to any Support Teacher member and shall be submitted to the Elections Chair prior to a ballot taken.*

*D. All ballots shall be secret.*

*E. Election to office shall be by a majority of votes cast. Election to Building Representative shall be by a majority of votes cast by members.*

*F. The term of office for officers of the Association shall be two years and of Building Representatives and Support Teacher Representatives shall be one year from July 1st until June 30th of the following calendar year.*

*Respectfully submitted,  
Tim Kalan, Chairperson*

## MEMBERSHIP & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

On Monday, May 18th we will be holding **building representative elections and voting on the 2020/2021 SHTA Proposed Budget**. If you are interested in being placed on the ballot and have been a member of SHTA for three years, you are eligible to run! **If you are currently serving as a representative, your name will be placed on the ballot unless I hear from you by May 1, 2020.** If you are interested in representing your building, please inform me by email and copy Darlene Garrison. Each school will have at least one representative for every 20 members. Our organization has 476 SHTA and SHTA ST members! Here is the breakdown by building:

Boulevard 31 total members  
Fernway 30 total members  
Lomond 41 total members  
Onaway 36 total members  
Mercer 33 total members  
Woodbury 77 total members  
Middle School 78 total members  
High School 148 total members  
District 1 member

I wish all of you the best.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Chante Thomas-Taylor*

## The PAC of the SHTA COMMITTEE

This month I updated the [SHTA PAC FaceBook](#) Page. One post on the page is from the National Education Association asking for signatures against the proposed federal education budget. The proposed budget would cut education spending by 6.1 billion dollars. Please send a message to Congress rejecting the budget through this link: [Reject the Trump/DeVos Education Budget](#)

The Network for Public Education is taking a short survey to find out about the experience of teachers, students and families during this emergency learning situation. Please take the time to fill out the [survey](#). Thank you!

A [Backpack Full of Cash](#) is a film which builds a case for public education as a basic right. The film explains how funding cuts and the privatization of schools has had a disastrous impact on public schools. You can now rent the movie to view at home for \$19.95. The rental fee helps to fight this attack on public education. [Stream movie here](#).

Like all of you, I have worked very hard to adjust to this new way of teaching by learning new programs, troubleshooting technological issues, and working closely with my first-grade team to find ways to get a quality curriculum to our students, virtually. Can you tell that I have also mastered [hyperlinks](#) in my technological growth? Please take care of yourself and your families during this stressful time.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Cathy Grieshop*

## **SHTA ST COMMITTEE**

I hope that this brief message finds you well and that you and your loved ones are healthy and safe. SHTA President Dr. John Morris and I are continuing to work towards equity for support teachers, and we are currently awaiting a response from our district's administration.

If you have any questions or qualms related to your online teaching, please reach out to me.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Michael Wells*

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

Due to our Coronavirus extended school closure, our Annual District Recognition Reception has been cancelled. President John Morris will present a SHTA member with the President's Award (for their service and dedication to the Association) virtually. Stay well!

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Selena Boyer*

## **SICK DAY TRANSFER COMMITTEE**

I clarified the requirements for eligibility for the Sick Day Transfer Program with several members.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
James Schmidt*



## MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

**SHTA President, John Morris** started the April 13th Rep. Council Meeting at 4:32P.M.

**Dr. Morris** welcomed SHTA members to our Google Hangout Meeting .

**MINUTES** from the March 09, 2020 Rep. Council meeting were accepted and approved. Motion made by Jessica O'Brien and Seconded by Michael Wells.

### **Administration Report**

**Dr. David Glasner, Superintendent was present to share a report from Central Office**

- Shared that it was great to see so many faces on Google Hangout. He thanked the membership for all the incredible work.
- The feedback across the district is very positive and thank you from the bottom of my heart.

**Crystal Patrick, Interim Human Resource Director was present to share a report from Central Office**

- She thanked the membership for all of their diligent work.
- Working on an update for evaluations.
- Thank you as a parent and a faculty member for all the work you are doing. If there is anything that you need, please let us know.

### **P.T.O. Report**

**No PTO Officer present to give report**

### **Officer's Report**

*President, John Morris*

- Communicated regularly with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner concerning school closure.
- Sent out letter via email to SHTA Membership.
- Updated SHTA Facebook Page with Publications Chair Andrew Glasier.
- Updated CCES Facebook Page.
- Met online with the Executive Board twice.
- Communicated medical concerns to HR.
- Worked on maternity leave issues with PR&R Chair Mike Sears.
- Worked on absence issues.
- Worked on evaluation issues with Teacher Evaluation Committee members Andrew Glasier, Lena Paskewitz, and Addie Tobey.
- Worked on Support Teacher grievance with Support Teacher representative Michael Wells.
- Spoke with Assistant Superintendent Dr. Marla Robinson about personnel issues.
- Worked on Google Hangout and Zoom concerns.
- Addressed privacy concerns.
- Talked to Cleveland Teachers' Union President David Quolke and Beachwood Teachers' President Evan Lazar about schedule and evaluation comparisons
- Investigated if Wi-Fi issues for tax exemption.
- Talked to SHTA Legal Counsel Susannah Muskovitz about evaluation, personnel and liability issues.
- Represented a Special Education teacher in a personnel matter with Special Education Chair Tito Vazquez.
- Addressed Google Hangout controls with help of SHTA HS Representative Enid Vazquez who shared an article on controlling Hangout access – shared with IT Director John Rizzo and sent out by Technology Instructional Coach Lauren Priestly.
- Addressed technology concerns.
- Fielded questions about a potential distance learning survey.

### ***Vice President, Matt Zucca***

- Communicated with K-4 Building Reps about distance learning.
- Discussed the new process to make Fellowship disbursements with Treasurer Bill Scanlon.
- Received Thank You letter from Shaker Schools Foundation for our donation for the Red and White silent auction.
- Discussed meeting with the Investment Committee to meet with SHTA Financial Advisor.
- Advised membership to take things slowly with new distance learning procedures.
- Advised membership to seek and maintain connection with colleagues and SHTA leadership.

### ***Secretary, Darlene Garrison***

- Shared with membership that she will be taking attendance for the April 13th Rep. Council meeting
- Talked to Woodbury Head Rep. Angela Goodrum and asked if she could reach out to members of Woodbury about distant learning.
- Attended Executive Board Meeting.

### ***Treasurer, Bill Scanlon***

- Shared budget and financial report with membership on Google Hangout.
  - Discussed the proposed budget. SHTA has been on with the money that was budgeted.
  - Saving money in Conferences and Meetings because no food is being purchased.
  - Next year, there will be a change in Negotiations - Negotiating year.
- Next month, we will vote on the budget
  - Shared history of Salaries and per meeting stipends.

## **Executive Board Reports**

### ***Past President, Becky Thomas***

- Attended the SHTA Executive Board and Representative Council Meeting.
- Attended the April meeting of the Board of Education—via Google Hangouts and Zoom.
- Planning to attend the Zoom meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee on April 22.

### ***Teacher Education, Lisa Hardiman***

- No Report

### ***Support Teachers, Michael Wells***

- Working with Dr. Morris on a Support Teacher Grievance.

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

- Working with James Schmidt to create a Google Form Ballot for elections.
- Elections will take place on the 3rd Monday in May.
- Will keep membership informed via Newsletter and will get ballots out for the May 18th vote.

### ***Policy, Tim Kalan***

- Interacting with the Teacher Evaluation Committee.
- Talking to various members about issues.
- Trying to keep my head above water.

### ***Public Relations, Bob Bognar***

- Reached out to awards company and they are closed. Delaying teacher appreciation gifts - on hold for next year.

- Dr. Morris will give the President's Award. Awards will be announced but physical gifts will be given out next school year.

***Evaluation, Lena Paskewitz***

- Andrew Glasier did a great job. We will be advocating for people to receive continuing contracts.
- We will have a meeting on Thursday, April 16th. We will get decisions out via the newsletter.

***Legislative, Dave Klapholz***

- Ohio State Legislator has put a lot of things on hold due to the virus.
  - No longer trying to expand EdChoice vouchers for this year.

***Publications, Andrew Glasier***

- Received a report about problems with Chromebooks. Brought it up at the executive board meeting and was told that administration is aware of this and looking into other things for teachers.
- Talked to former colleague Dawn Rivers who owns a Yoga Studio and she is up to having a SHTA only yoga class.
- Updating Facebook and Twitter Accounts. The winners of the Extend the School Closure Contest are Adam Thomas, Mario Clopton, Jessica Wilkes and Megan Slusar. Keep sending pictures in, I will continue posting them.
- Just got an editorial from the Middle School, thank you John and Erika for your hard work.
- Meeting with Evaluation Committee, decided to hold off a little bit until we get more information from ODE
- Meeting on Thursday, April 16th.

***Social, Selena Brown***

- District Recognition Reception is canceled for May 20th.
- Working with Chris Hayward on technology issues, material availability for teachers at Fernway and other buildings.

***Legal Aid, Cathy Grieshop***

- No Report
- ***PAC of the SHTA***
  - Updated FB Page including a survey from the Network for Public Education to find out what the experience of teachers, students and families are during this emergency learning situation.
  - Will post a link to contact legislators about the new federal education budget.
  - Will post a link so that members may rent the movie, A Backpack Full of Cash.

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

- Working with John Morris and Middle School member - those up for tenure, will they still be eligible to get it?
- Work environment and expectations were brought up at the Middle School, leaders at the Middle School created a good plan and everyone at the Middle School would agree.
- Meeting Supplemental Committee, need to review April Board Meeting Notes to see if they were approved.
  - Our meeting was postponed
- Answering questions about maternity leaves with Dr. Morris. Each maternity leave will need to be handled on an individual basis.

### ***Special Education, Tito Vazquez***

- Helped a member distinguish her job duties and the duties of another SHTA member.
- Spoke with Elizabeth Kimmel, Director of Pupil Services for our monthly meeting on various subjects
  - Expectations of Intervention Specialist during the Extended School Closure.
  - Clarification of timelines of getting paperwork done IEPs, etc...
  - Spoke about the role paraprofessionals will play in the new distance learning for our students.
- Worked with Dr. Morris concerning a member's question about instructional levels.
- Participated in SHTA Ex. Board Meeting.
- Talked to Dr. Morris about concerns at the high school.
- Fielded various emails about the amount of work during distant learning.
- Worked with Dr. Morris about a disciplinary issue of a member.

### ***Sick Day Transfer, James Schmidt***

- I clarified the requirements for eligibility for the Sick Day Transfer Program with several members.

### **Building Representative Reports**

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

- Boulevard is not having any issues that have not been resolved quickly by Mr. Neal Robinson.
- However, a huge concern that I know the District is aware of, is the delay and inconsistency in sound and freezing of screens during meetings with regards to technology.

#### ***Fernway, Victoria Goldfarb***

- No report, except emailing the membership per Matt Zucca's request about any concerns and to provide support.

#### ***Lomond, Donita Al Amin***

- Emailed the membership per Matt Zucca's request about any concerns and to provide support.
- Mr. George Clark, has been very supportive, extremely caring and complimentary. Checking on teachers and support teachers individually.
- Principal has been working with Intervention Specialists as they have been trying to understand how to handle their caseloads.

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

- Communicated with members to check on them and will continue to do so as the closure continues.
- Issues with Chromebooks in general: volume issues, no mic issues- just general tech issues.
- Mr. Florence is aware and he asked to be kept in the loop with issues and I will continue to follow up.

#### ***Onaway, Paula Klausner***

- Have been meeting once a week as a group with Onaway staff for a virtual Friday Breakfast. I have communicated with teachers individually and everyone seems to be doing well.
- Have been working with the office staff to contact students that we have not heard from.
- Working on ETRs, 504s, and an IEP for meetings
- Question: A member going to a KRP position next year, does she pay union dues? Yes, because KRP teachers are support teachers.

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

- No Report, except what process will take place with Mr. Young leaving?
- Sent out email to members, no responses.
- Just concerns about how this year will end - nothing major.
  - John Morris - Happy to welcome Mr. Danny Young back home to SHTA.
  - National Search for 5% building principal.

### ***Middle School, John Koppitch***

- Teachers who are up for tenure this year were concerned about their status because of the distance learning. I spoke to Ms. Hunter about this issue and she assured me that they are still eligible this year to earn tenure.

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

- I continue to meet weekly with Mr. Juli to talk about SHTA related issues. He has been very supportive of our members as we transition to this new distance learning model and his leadership has been invaluable to us at the High School.
- I worked on an issue regarding synchronous learning schedules at a member's request. Another SHTA member and I co-authored a schedule that would have given teachers a schedule based on class periods, rather than subject matter. This schedule was well received by Mr. Juli, but was ultimately not approved by other members of our building leadership.
- A member who has had all of her observations for this year completed and is up for a continuing contract is concerned that she will be held over and not receive a continuing contract due to this unique situation.
- I worked with Dr. Morris to resolve technology issues as they pertain to our new distance learning model. We are confident that the district will continue to strive for equity even in the face of this pandemic.
- I worked with Dr. Morris to help clarify teacher expectations regarding virtual meetings with students and expectations that we should have for student behavior and conduct in those meetings. Any student that is not following the district norms for virtual meetings should be referred to an assistant principal.

### **Old Business**

- None

### **New Business**

- None

### **Good of the Order**

- None

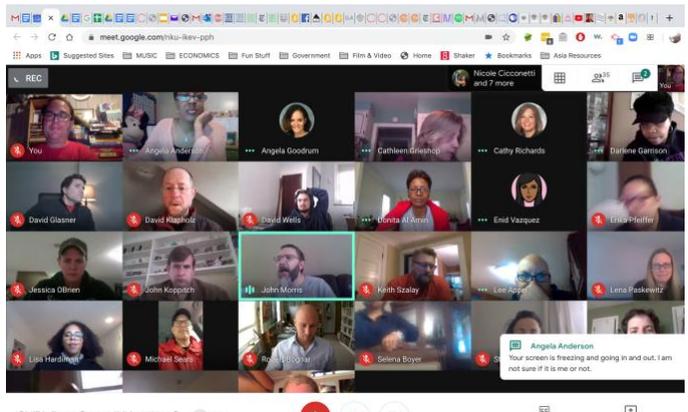
### **Motion for Adjournment**

- Motion made by Angela Goodrum and Seconded by Bob Bognar

**April 13<sup>th</sup> Rep. Council meeting was adjourned at 5:42PM.**

**May Rep. Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 11th location TBD**

***Respectfully submitted,  
Darlene Garrison***



## ***CORONA VIRUS & GROWING PAINS***

*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.*

During the recent sequence of events and our new approaches to teaching through distance learning, I think we have all had some time to perform some honest reflection. Our profession is unique in the fact that we can reflect, adjust, and fine tune. And unlike other professions, ours is one that is in constant transformation, developing new methods based on data and test performance. However, there are some constants that will never become obsolete; student accountability, respect for oneself and adults and engaging analysis of the individual's observations based on valid and objective evidence.

Times change, and so do the demands of the job. But one thing that should never change is the primary objective of education: to educate. We are not babysitters, mental health professionals, trauma specialists, referees, or bodyguards. Unfortunately, all of these are roles we now find ourselves expected to fulfill in our classrooms on top of the conventional obligations of academic growth and development. At the same time, we are cautioned that respect is not something that we can demand or expect simply by virtue of being the adults in the room, the highly educated and experienced professionals here to help. No, we must earn that respect through relationship-building first; after all, if our students don't like us, we cannot possibly expect them to accept our instruction, our feedback, or our discipline. To be sure, we cannot begin to approach this profession without a willingness to own our portion of it. But the suggestion that any and all student action is a direct result of what the teacher does is unfair, ineffective, and inaccurate, to say nothing of the fact that it creates an unsustainable cascade of devolving behavior.

Students who are taught that authority figures are only to be respected if those figures have earned it do not understand the concept of authority at all. While academics absolutely make up the bulk of our obligation to our kids, life skills are a vital component. Young people feel insecure without clear boundaries and expectations, but they feel equally insecure when expectations are stated yet not enforced. The only way growth can occur is if some measure of demand is placed. We cannot build muscles without exercise, and we cannot build academic skill without effort. Appropriate boundaries set a framework within which students can explore, learn, and grow while protracted coddling through unlimited retakes and elimination of reasonable deadlines promotes the belief in "never too late" and "nothing is final." Giving credit for no work, as with the banning of zeroes, devalues honest effort and sends the message that everything is optional. Student choice has its merits, but the choice of whether or not to actually do assigned work should not be part of it. By permitting and promoting crutch after crutch, we are quite deliberately setting these students up to fail when we suddenly rip the crutches away on the first day of 9th grade. Most tragically, we are throwing these kids to the proverbial lions just at the moment when social promotion ends and required academic credit begins.

Over the past decade or so, as discipline and consequences gave way to restorative circles and relationship-building, appropriate behavior has gradually become as "optional" as homework assignments and projects. Students act out with impunity, often hijacking entire classrooms in the process. The rights of an entire class to learn are increasingly set aside in favor of protecting the rights of one or two students to act out as they wish. Adults in the building are routinely told "Stop talking to me," and "I don't have to listen to you" by children. Students abuse technology and equipment, they put hands on their peers, they openly defy building-wide norms, and even verbally dress down their teachers without any meaningful consequence. As teachers, we always ask students politely to fulfill an expectation or complete a task; currently, there is about a 50% chance that the expectation will be fulfilled. We always try to design lessons so that there is something in the curriculum that is connected to their lives, and we try to provide choices of items to work on during the class, treating students like young adults. We never thought that we would be at the point of literally begging students

to do what is asked. Fights become a regular occurrence, staff members are physically injured, and classmates are left feeling unsafe. If expectations need to be clearly communicated to students, when exactly do we intend to clearly communicate that these behaviors will not be tolerated?

Without accountability, there is no respect; with no respect, the effective process of true analytical engagement is broken. Respect starts with self-respect, which leads to respecting other students and adults. Also with self-respect comes individual accountability, which is a lifelong skill. When you are accepting late work with no penalty, giving 45% for a missing assignment, and unlimited re-takes on assessments, you are creating certain expectations for the future. If these accommodations are not the norm in future secondary institutions, then we are not properly preparing students for their future endeavors. The burden of this knowledge is what keeps teachers up at night.

When the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of educators is routinely jeopardized, the cost is high. Instruction suffers, structures and procedures erode, and when things become unbearable these much-needed professionals walk away. How many good people must be lost before the need for change is acknowledged? And how do we explain this to those eager education students? Could any of us comfortably look one of them in the eye and give them an honest description of the daily realities? We know that many of them would run for the hills. Many of us would have too, had we known the truth about what we would be forced to tolerate. Sugar-coating and censoring the truth is not an ethical way to bring new professionals into the fold, and dispensing platitudes is not an effective way to retain experienced ones. Most importantly, forcing our students to live under the tyranny of the “tier 3 and 4” behavior problems is neither ethical nor effective in developing them into confident, competent lifelong learners. We cannot deny that we are on an unsustainable course, and our community is watching. We must make the right choice, and soon.

*-Respectfully submitted, Erika Pfeiffer and John Koppitch*

**Erika Pfeiffer and John Koppitch are both Shaker Middle School English Teachers**

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