

IMPORTANT DATES

MONDAY, May 25: Memorial Day, no classes.

FRIDAY, May 29: Close of School/Clerical Day

MONDAY, June 1: SHTA t-shirt & Goodbye to class photo day

THURSDAY, June 4: Last day of school year

SHTA *news*

May 19, 2020

ISSUE NO. 8

Message From the President

It's hard to believe how much has changed in our personal and professional lives in the last nine weeks. We have moved from in-person instruction to online teaching through dedication, incredible effort, and support from a collaborative administration and school board. We have achieved all of this while facing the most significant pandemic within the last 100 years. We have also been concerned for the safety of our students, our families, our loved ones, and ourselves. It has been a difficult balancing act. But we have been successful in adjusting to this new world for our students and our community. We have reason to celebrate our accomplishments this year even as we head into the uncertainty of next year. Rest assured that the SHTA will be a part of all the planning involved in returning in the safest, most sensitive manner to our students and members. We remain a strong Association year-round.

One of the best parts about being SHTA President is announcing the recipients of the SHTA Awards. It is my pleasure to announce that the winner of this year's Service Award (sometimes known as the President's Award) is High School Head Representative, Sick Day Transfer Committee Chairperson and Science Teacher James Schmidt.

James is a veteran teacher of 23 years, with 18 years here in the district. He has been an SHTA representative for 11 years, and Head Representative at the HS for the past 10. James has also been Salary Tenure Committee Head, Negotiations Team Member, Finance and Audit attendee (along with Past President Rebecca Thomas), and Sick Day Transfer Chairperson.

James' work as the Sick Day Transfer Chairperson is emblematic of his work with the SHTA. He has been informed, connected with administrators and members, tireless, humane, and gracious with his work on this

groundbreaking committee. James has taken the seed, that he was instrumental in planting during our last negotiations, and has grown it into a pilot program that has literally improved the lives of our members. James Schmidt has done the kind of work that his predecessors who have won this award have done in the past. He deserves a place alongside them in the history of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. I am incredibly proud to call James a colleague, a brother in union, and a friend. When you see him, either in person or virtually, please let him know how much his work has meant for all of us.

It's been a characteristically busy May in an uncharacteristic online environment. I continued my weekly talks with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner. I updated the SHTA Facebook Page with Publications Editor Andrew Glasier, as well as the Cuyahoga County Educator Summit Facebook Page. I worked on Evaluation Issues with SHTA Evaluation Committee Members Lena Paskewitz, Andrew Glasier, Addie Tobey, Tim Kalan, Deanna Clemente-Milne, and Megan Dora. I communicated with a Middle School member about the calendar. I communicated with the other Collective Bargaining Units in the district to check up on the wellbeing of their members. I attended a Zoom meeting with Finding Leaders alongside the other Collective Bargaining Unit leadership on the selection of a HR Director. I helped a member with a parent communication issue. I spoke with Vice President Matt Zucca and Secretary Darlene Garrison about elementary concerns. I spoke with Past President Rebecca Thomas after the School Board meeting. I spoke with PR&R Chairperson Mike Sears about supplemental issues. I met (socially distanced) with Treasure Bill Scanlon to sign off on Investments paperwork. I consulted with a Special Education member with a legal concern with Special Education Chairperson Tito Vazquez. I met with members of the Cuyahoga County Educators Summit via Zoom to discuss common concerns. I will work on a draft of safety recommendations for returning to school with the CCES this week. I consulted Susannah Muskovitz on legal concerns. I worked on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Chief Operating Officer Jeff Grosse on extending job share/reduced schedule deadlines.

I worked on Supplemental Contract survey concerns. I communicated with Chief Operations Officer Jeff Grosse on a Support Teacher Grievance along with Support Teacher Chairperson Michael Wells. I helped a member with a Disability concern. I spoke with Woodbury Assistant Principal Doug Myles about the Safety Committee plans for allowing members back into the building to retrieve belongings. I spoke with Secondary Curriculum Director Micki Krantz about the upcoming Professional Day schedule.

One of the hardest things about the end of this year, besides not seeing our students in person, is missing Our Annual May Recognition Reception. I will miss celebrating newly tenured teachers, milestone achievers, retirees, and award winners. Please take the time when you can to reach out to these good people. In the meantime, I would like to publicly thank Our Officers, Executive Board, and Representative Council for their continuing and extraordinary commitment to Our Association during this difficult time. I would like to also personally thank SHTA Vice President Matt Zucca, Secretary Darlene Garrison, and Treasurer Bill Scanlon. These three elected officers represent their positions and our members so well. I cannot think of three better people to serve alongside. They make my job possible. Finally, thank you to all our members. Thank you for your trust, your commitment to our students and your colleagues, and your kind words of support. I can't express what it means to me when I receive emails recognizing the work of the SHTA. You continue to be the reason I continue to do what I do as President. It's an honor to serve. I sincerely hope that you find the time this summer to relax, re-energize, and refocus so that when we come back next August, we can continue to teach our students and support one another in whatever environment we find ourselves within.

Please don't hesitate to contact me over the summer as well, especially if you are faced with uncertainty with our changing circumstances. I will be checking email and communicating with administration throughout the summer.

***Respectfully submitted,
John Morris***



**2020 SHTA Service Award winner
James Schmidt, SHHS Science
Teacher, SHTA SHHS Head
Representative, & Sick Day Committee
Chairperson.**

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This has been a busy year in the office of the Vice President. It is an honor and a privilege to serve the SHTA as Vice President. As Vice President I have the opportunity to work with so many people in many different ways. I am truly humbled by the excellence of our members and the Association.

As Vice President I have represented the SHTA at PTO Council. I will continue to work with the Council next year as they transition with new leadership.

I have worked this school year, as in years past, on the Investments Committee with Todd Keitlen, Chante Thomas-Taylor, and Investment Committee Chair Bill Scanlon. It is the responsibility of this committee to oversee and realign our investments (general fund) with Edward Jones Investments. I assisted in monitoring and adjust the funds with the other Committee members. We continue to enjoy a steady growth of our conservatively invested funds.

I served as the Teacher Liaison for the staff in assisting with *A Night for the Red and White*. *A Night for the Red and White* was again a huge success this year. Much of the success of this event is due to the efforts of our members. Again, I thank you for supporting this event.

Another duty I have is administering The Shaker Heights Teachers' Association Fellowship Grants. Congratulations again to our 2019 – 2020 Fellowship recipients:

2019-2020 Fellowship Recipients

Cathy	Grieshop	Boulevard
Juliann	Ely	Boulevard
Melissa	Becerra	Boulevard
Jennifer	Goulden	Boulevard
Wendy	McGuffin-Cawley	Fernway
Jean	Reinhold	Fernway
Megan	Konopinski	Fernway
Peg	Rimedio	Fernway
John	Filippakis	Lomond
Sarah	Workman	Lomond
Nadia	Chowdhry	Lomond
Veronica	Malone	Lomond
Laurie	Sullivan	Lomond
Krystal	Allen-Jackson	Lomond
Robyn	Feinstein	Mercer
Jane	Jowers	Mercer
Cara	Luce	Mercer
Lori	McInnerney	Mercer
Jane	Scully	Onaway
Mara	Bendersky	Onaway
Jim	Sweeney	Onaway
Cissy	Burns	Onaway
Lauren	Goodman	Woodbury
Mary Jo	Lapp	Woodbury
Shyla	Nims	Woodbury
Stephanie	Smith	Woodbury
Stacey	DeYoung	Woodbury
Daniel	DeJohn	Woodbury
Regina	Canady	Middle School
Linda	Roth	Middle School
Beth	Casey	Middle School
David	Saluga	Middle School
Brian	Berger	High School
Robin	Sweigert	High School
Ellen	Roberts	High School
Amy	Fogerty	High School
Eileen	Willis	High School
Renee	Manuel	High School
Donna	Jelen	High School
Travis	Cox	High School
Sagar	Patel	High School
Tod	Torrence	High School
Karen	DeMauro	High School
Kimberly	Ponce de Leon	High School
Mary	Coffey	High School
Kim	Owens	High School

Payments will be made over the summer break due to the early closure of the schools. Please email me you request for reimbursement. Your request should contain your receipt and your mailing address.

As we move into our Summer Break, we are challenged with many unknowns. As an Association, when faced with adversity we have always risen to the occasion and persevered. There is no question that we will persevere in this situation. As we are asked to address these challenges, please keep these things in your mind; your health, balance in your life, and our *negotiated contract*. Through this journey into the unknown, there will be one constant; the Association will be there for you to rely upon. If you have any questions or concern, please reach out.

Finally, I would like to thank SHTA President, Dr. John Morris for another year of superb leadership. His dedication to the Association is awe inspiring. His tireless efforts, day in and day out, keep our Association strong. He continues to negotiate and advocate behind the scenes with such composure, confidence, and professionalism. We are truly lucky to have him as our President. I also want to thank the Officers, the Executive Board, the Building Representatives and all Association members. I wish all of you a much-deserved restful summer.

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Zucca

SECRETARY'S REPORT

It's hard to believe that this school year is almost over. It has been very challenging for all of us having to adjust to the "New Normal".

This year, I was a participant in the Equity Leadership Training Workshops. I enjoyed all three meetings. I am looking forward to implementing all the hard work from this training. I was chosen to collaborate on the Black Teacher Task Force which will continue next school year.

A Night for the Red & White was a success and SHTA was able to raise about \$600 from our annual raffle ticket drawing. Four winners were selected, each person received two tickets to attend *A Night for the Red & White* event at the Hilton Downtown Cleveland.

The 2019-2020 school year is coming to an end and I would like to wish everyone a restful and enjoyable summer vacation. Please stay safe, healthy and remember social distancing.

I will see you next school year!

Respectfully submitted,
Darlene E. Garrison

TREASURER'S REPORT

I will start my report with a quick comment on this quarantine situation we find ourselves in. I am not enjoying this. Teaching kids through a computer screen is not why I got into this profession. I'm sick of staring at a screen all day. I've realized through this whole experience that I thrive on face-to-face contact with my students. I miss my kids - the hard-workers who stress about their grades and the class clowns who try to be entertaining. I miss them all. Despite my discomfort, I commend our District's response. I've bragged to people about how caring and understanding Shaker schools has been in this difficult time. And our teaching staff has done an incredible job pivoting to online learning. I thank my colleagues for being such professionals.

The Investments Committee (Todd Keitlen, Matt Zucca, Chante Thomas-Taylor, and myself) met virtually with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones financial advisor, on April 21st to look over our investments.

Before the May Executive Board meeting I prepared a budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year. I presented that budget to the Executive Board. The Executive Board approved the budget for presentation to the Representative Council the following week. The Representative Council discussed the budget virtually at the May 11th meeting and voted to have the budget reflect a 1% increase to the officer's salaries and a 1% increase to the Representatives' per meeting remuneration. The budget was then approved for placing on the May SHTA ballot.

Some of the activities I performed while fulfilling my duties as Treasurer this year are listed below:

- I attended every Executive Board Meeting and every Representative Council Meeting throughout the year.
- I maintained our insurance through Musgrave Insurance.
- I coordinated and attended our Investment Committee meetings with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor, twice this year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring to evaluate our investments and make any changes deemed necessary.
- I met with our accountants at Edward Hawkins & Co. at various times throughout the year to submit our books for a yearly compilation, to complete the paperwork for our Form 990 tax filing, and to submit information for the issuance of W-2 forms.
- I attended the Fall meeting of the Cuyahoga County Educators' Summit with John Morris and Cathy Greishop.
- I worked with Bob Bognar, our Public Relations Chair to process payments for the SHTA t-shirts.
- I communicated with the District Payroll Department to pay the salaries of our six paid Officers and Committee Heads along with the relevant STRS and Medicare payments.
- I paid the SHTA Representatives their compensation for attending the meetings throughout the year.
- I prepared the 2020-21 fiscal year budget for approval by the Representative Council at the May Association meeting.
- I attended SHTA social events.
- I attended various community meetings and professional organization meetings, sometimes serving as an SHTA representative.
- I paid bills throughout the year and balanced the checkbook, reimbursing any Association expenses incurred by our members.
- I kept accurate record of our finances throughout the year, maintaining a paper record of every transaction.
- I met with and discussed Association business with the other Officers and Executive Board members throughout the year when needed.

Be safe in this new world of ours, and have a great summer.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Scanlon

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association		
Profit and Loss Standard		05/14/20
July 1, 2019 through May 14, 2020		
		Jul 1, '19 – May 14, '20
Income		
Income		
Member Dues		149,718.00
Total Income		149,718.00
Investments		
Edward Jones–Fees & Charges		-6,132.83
Change in Value in Edward Jones		-38,273.84
Total Investments		-44,406.67
Other Types of Income		
Miscellaneous Revenue		2,727.48
Total Other Types of Income		2,727.48
Total Income		108,038.81
Expense		
Operations		
Fernway Fund		100.00
Accounting		
Banking		0.00
Accounting – Other		7,395.00
Total Accounting		7,395.00
Compensation		33,735.25
Conferences & Meetings		2,493.70
Executive Board		5,661.42
Fellowships & Grants		2,572.30
Insurance		525.00
Legal		5,107.58
Officers' Expenses		740.41
Payroll Taxes		338.33
Public Relations		2,413.70
Publications		213.00
Social		1,133.24
STRS (TPO Contribution)		3,266.53
Total Operations		65,695.46
Total Expense		65,695.46
Net Income		42,343.35

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association
 Balance Sheet Standard
 As of May 14, 2020

05/14,

May 14, '20

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings

Key Bank Aisha Trust 5,840

Key Bank (checking) 127,015

Total Checking/Savings 132,855

Other Current Assets

Edward Jones 13760-1-1 489,279

Edward Jones 13768-1-3 736,679

Total Other Current Assets 1,225,958

Total Current Assets 1,358,814

TOTAL ASSETS 1,358,814

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Equity

Opening Balance Equity 53

Retained Earnings 1,316,417

Net Income 42,343

Total Equity 1,358,814

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 1,358,814



SHTA President Dr. John Morris, SHTA Vice President Matt Zucca, SHTA Secretary Darlene Garrison and SHTA Treasurer Bill Scanlon working hard for our membership.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT

During the 2019-20 school year, I spent time working on the following issues and concerns for the Association and our members:

- Wrote about the importance of “due process” best practices by Human Resources
- Attended all Executive Board and Representative Council meetings
- Attended and provided feedback at quarterly Insurance Committee meetings
- Assisted members with the appeals process for unpaid ER claims
- Researched air quality in the workplace and testing the district might consider
- Helped members interpret contract language about assault leave
- Spoke to members about sick day transfers
- Consulted with the Executive Board about the sick day transfer pilot program
- Served as the teacher representative on the Supplemental Committee
- Attended the State of the Schools in Cleveland presented by CEO Eric Gordon
- Attended the Board of Education candidates’ night
- Supported teachers at the Middle School regarding student behaviors
- Wrote an editorial about why student safety needs to be a higher priority
- Consulted with SHTA-ST about a possible grievance
- Helped Middle School building representatives with two grievances
- Wrote a grievance about how a safety concern was handled at the Middle School
- Attended a presentation about the Educational Choice Scholarship Program
- Researched EdChoice scholarships (vouchers) and their impact on public schools
- Wrote about how EdChoice negatively impacts public schools
- Participated in a session of the book dialogue series: *How To Be An Antiracist*
- Researched how tools like the Nurse Line and My Care Compare work
- Wrote about how Medical Mutual’s website has useful tools for members
- Addressed members questions and concerns about lockdowns
- Helped with maternity leave, paternity leave, and caregiver leave (FMLA)
- Attended *A Night for the Red and White*
- Met with the senior leadership team and union leaders about COVID-19
- Answered members questions about COVID-19 and related school policies
- Attended an emergency Executive Board meeting about school closure
- Helped the Middle School plan for extended closure
- Answered members questions about extended school closure and technology
- Spoke to Middle School members about evaluations and continuing contracts
- Worked with the Supplemental Committee to review 2019-20 contracts
- Helped facilitate a member’s smooth transition from part-time to full-time

While this is a difficult way to end a school year, we are all in this together. We will continue to teach our students, and we will be able to see them in person again someday-when it is safe. Have a great summer! Stay healthy!

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

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

I have enjoyed another year of serving as the Evaluation Chair for the Association. The committee work this year included planning for and facilitating meetings in collaboration with Crystal Patrick, ongoing communication and consultation with members regarding personal evaluations, planning for transition to OTES 2.0 and High Quality Student Data, organizing details for the Peer Evaluation Program with co-coordinators Andrew Glasier and Addie Tobey, and attending workshops and webinars to stay informed. Please read on for details about wrapping up evaluations for 2019-2020 and looking forward to the 2020-2021 school year. As stated in the last newsletter, Shaker Heights will not be transitioning to the OTES 2.0 model for next year. Our current evaluation process and protocols will remain in place for one more year.

2019-2020 Evaluations

Due to the school closures, many of us will not have completed evaluations for this year. If your lesson observations were not complete or you were on an Informal evaluation cycle, your building principal will mark your evaluation exempt due to COVID. Peer evaluators do NOT have access to marking the COVID exemption, therefore building principals will need to do this step.

If your evaluator completed your lesson observations prior to the closure, your evaluation can be completed as usual. Evaluators and teachers should meet virtually to do any post observation conferencing and summative conferencing prior to “pinning” the SGM and completing the process. Please be sure to communicate with your building principal to ensure your evaluation is not marked COVID exempt because this would cause you to have to repeat your Formal evaluation year. Peers should alert building principals asap to let them know they are finishing the process.

2020-2021 Evaluations

We will continue to use the OTES 1.0 model for the 2020-2021 school year. This will give us another year to make decisions regarding High Quality Student Data and get all evaluators trained in the OTES 2.0 model. There may be some complications with SGM data during next year due to no spring testing this year. We will keep you informed as issues arise.

Peer Evaluation

We have over 100 applicants to participate in the Peer Evaluation Program for the 2020-2021 school year. Building principals are in the process of reviewing applications to approve or deny participation. You should expect an email indicating approval by May 22. If your principal chooses to deny you participation, he/she should contact you to have a *conversation* about their reasons for denying you. Remember, the protocols state that principals should have discussed these issues with you *prior* to them denying your participation.

Peer evaluators MUST maintain their OTES 1.0 credential through this year to participate. If you receive an email from NIET to take your credentialing test, please make sure to take your test.

Even though we have elected to delay OTES 2.0 implementation, evaluators may take advantage of the online training option for OTES 2.0 Bridge Training. When face-to-face training returns, the online training will no longer be offered. If you would like to do the online module, please register asap. The flyer is linked [here](#).

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 had my monthly meeting with Director of Pupil Services Elizabeth Kimmel on April 28th. We discussed the expectations and requirements of Intervention Specialists and grading for students for this marking period.

We also discussed the clarification of the timeline for getting paperwork done for all Intervention Specialists in the Special Education Department. It was explained that the Secretary of Education (she who will not be named) had enforced a hard deadline in regards to all documents. Absolutely NO leeway.

We also spoke on the role that paraprofessionals will play in the new distance learning for our students. It was discussed that some will be doing more than others based on their need per students and teachers needs/expectations.

Finally, we discussed the importance of balancing the distribution and equity of caseloads for ALL Intervention Specialists.

I consulted with John Morris concerning a member and a discipline concern. I participated in the SHTA meeting via Google Hangout. I covered emails and phone calls about the amount of extra work that is required for Intervention Specialist due to the “New Normal”. I supported an Intervention Specialist over an issue with parent expectations.

Respectfully submitted,
Anastacio Tito Vazquez, Jr. M.Ed., chairperson

PAST PRESIDENTS COMMITTEE

Throughout the year, I have attended a variety of meetings and endeavored to represent the interests of the Shaker Heights Teachers’ Association. At the regular meetings of the Executive Board and the Representative Council, I try to provide a historical perspective and understanding of the past practices of the Association. At the meetings of the Board of Education and the Finance and Audit Committee, I serve as a presence of the Association, reporting back to the leadership team. I also attend the meetings of the Insurance Committee and serve as an editor for the Newsletter.

Since my retirement in 2011, there have been many changes in the Shaker Heights schools. Fortunately, the leadership of the SHTA has been a constant. The depth of knowledge, experience, and stability from President Dr. John Morris, Vice President Matt Zucca, Secretary Darlene Garrison, and Treasurer Bill Scanlon is the foundation for the strength of the Association.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve the members of the SHTA.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Thomas, chairperson

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

I will use my last report of the school year to review the most important legislative issues of the year: school funding, student-learning conditions, and charter schools.

The teachers in Chicago were on strike for eleven days. As a result, the teachers got what they asked for (smaller class sizes, social workers and librarians in every school, and an increase in salary).

We will soon hear the Supreme Court's ruling in *Espinoza v. Montana*, a case about using state money for religious schools.

The EdChoice Voucher Program takes money that was intended for public schools and sends it to private schools. This program has been controversial. The lawmakers in the Ohio statehouse had been considering expanding the program, but the changes have been put on hold (first due to political conflict, and then due to the Coronavirus).

U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos defended the Trump administration's cutting of funding for education.

Please complete the census; it is easy, and it matters.

It has been an honor to serve as the chair of the Legislative Committee this year for the SHTA.

Respectfully submitted,
David Klapholz, Chairperson

POLICY COMMITTEE

As the Policy Chair of the SHTA, my primary responsibilities concern the SHTA Constitution - not to be confused by our collectively bargained contract with the school district. Our Constitution creates the structure within which our Association operates, and provides a framework for our decision making and management of responsibilities. Every month I try to highlight pertinent sections of our Constitution and remind our members of our mission and protocols. Our Constitution, as well as our contract and newsletters can all be found at www.shtaweb.org.

I also am a participant of the Teacher Evaluation Committee, which is a teacher-administrator partnership that determines our district's policy concerning evaluations within the broader framework of the Ohio Department of Education guidelines. In this capacity, I try to educate teachers and administrators on our decisions and directives, as well as answer questions to provide clarity to our system of evaluation. This is in addition to the role all of our SHTA board members play in assisting members with problems, offering support, and answering questions. Don't hesitate to contact me with questions at kalan_t@shaker.org, and enjoy the summer in a responsibly distant manner!

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Kalan, Chairperson

MEMBERSHIP & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

This year I continue to serve SHTA by maintaining the membership directories for each of our amazing schools. I am incredibly grateful for the support of our amazing representatives who help me by providing accurate information and updates about the members at their schools. I also serve on the Investments Committee with Bill Scanlon, Matt Zucca and Todd Keitlen.

Lastly, I coordinate elections. This year, we were able to vote using a google form that was created by James Schmidt. I am so grateful for the support of all of my fellow SHTA Executive Board members. Andrew Glasier and James Schmidt stepped in to make sure our 2020-2021 Budget Vote and Representative Council Elections took place, as I was unable to carry out this duty. Special thanks to our President Dr. John Morris who recognizes our need for balance and is always there to listen and provide invaluable support when life interrupts us.

I look forward to recharging this summer and hope to see all of you in the fall. As you prepare for summer recess, please be sure to take some time for yourself, for your families and those you love. Enjoy each and every precious day.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Chante Thomas-Taylor*

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

It has been an honor to serve as Public Relations Chairperson. I have worked to promote the Association through community advertisements, support of student programs, and teacher appreciation gifts. I have attended Executive Board and Representative Council meetings to keep membership informed about PR efforts and to take part in Association discussions.

Arrangements for advertisements in *Shaker Life Magazine* and *The Gristmill* were made. Teacher Appreciation gifts for members will be distributed once we return to school. Arrangements for the President's Award were made. I am proud of serving the Association as the Public Relations Chairperson.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Bognar*

SHTA ST COMMITTEE

I have done my best to represent our collective bargaining unit throughout the year by engaging with our district administrators and union leaders in sharing our strengths, concerns, and vision. Achieving equity for all our licensed educators has been a trying task, but we are making progress towards that goal.

I have represented our bargaining unit on several committees including the superintendent teacher advisory committee, leading for equity workshops, and a variety of interview panels for administrative positions. Support teacher voices are paramount in crafting an effective and sustainable teaching environment, and I encourage all of you to continue taking active roles in the shaping of our district.

Skills and Blended Learning Lab Support teachers make up the vast majority of our bargaining unit, and it is imperative to have their representation, especially during next year's negotiation. I am confident that the candidates who are running to be representatives will be successful stewards of the contract.

Regardless of what unsolicited adventures await us on the horizon, I am confident that we will continue to work together to ensure that every child receives the best educational services required regardless of where learning is taking place.

*Respectfully Submitted,
D. Michael Wells*

TEACHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

At the May 12th school board meeting, 28 teachers were granted a continuing contract from the Shaker Heights Board of Education. Congratulations to the following newly tenured teachers: **Jeremy Abraham, Erin Andrzejewski, Liesl Beis, Lori Billington, Wanda (Lori) Burrington, Nicole Clouser, Geoffrey Cross, Katharine Davis, Rebecca Doles, Katherine Eagleton, JaiCynthia Farmer, Benjamin Glander, Abigail Goldstein, Sean Harnish, Katrina Holmes, Qun Hu-Yan, Kelly Iannone, Nicole Kerr, Xuemeng Li, Allison Lowe, Veronica Malone, Lauren Priestley, James Rodems, Karlee Sweigert, Adam Thomas, Rebekah Wadsworth, Joseph Welsch, and Bonnie Gordon.**

The main purpose of the Teacher Education Committee is to be a liaison to help newly hired and non-tenured teachers. During this year, I answered questions from teachers to help their understanding of requirements needed to obtain a continuing contract in the Shaker Heights City School District. I answered questions regarding maternity leave. I created an information packet for new teachers. Within this information, I addressed specific parts of the SHTA contract that were especially important to new teachers and those without a continuing contract.

I feel that even though I am an experienced teacher, there are always fresh ideas to learn from newer teachers. As educators, we should never stop learning from our students and from each other. Thank you for this opportunity to work on behalf of the Association. Wishing you a smooth end to this very challenging year.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Hardiman

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

We have had a busy year with ups and downs, made easier because of the support that we provided to one another! I am hopeful that you enjoyed *fellowshipping* with your colleagues at some of our events. If you have yet to join us, please consider coming out next school year!

In September, we had our Back to School SHTA Happy Hour at Bottlehouse Brewing in Cleveland Heights. It was a fantastic opportunity to reconnect with friends! We had our Holiday Happy Hour at Slyman's Tavern in Beachwood in December. We were thrilled with how many of you came to celebrate the holiday season with us!

Due to Covid 19 and our extended school closure, our Annual District Recognition Reception has been cancelled. Dr. John Morris, our Association President, will award a SHTA member with the SHTA Service Award for the 2019-2020 school year.

Have a great summer! Relax and stay safe!

Respectfully Submitted,
Selena Boyer

LEGAL AID COMMITTEE

This year has been a quiet year for the Legal Aid Committee. Thanks to the hard work of our SHTA officers and council representatives, we have avoided the need for legal aid this year. This is always a good thing. Thank you for working tirelessly and collaboratively to solve any issues which have come up in our schools this year.

I am fortunate to have had many opportunities to learn and grow professionally this year. In September, I had the chance to listen to Randi Weingarten speak about teacher evaluations with the Cleveland Teachers Union. On a crisp November day, I enjoyed going to the City Club of Cleveland, for the first time, to listen to Steven Greenhouse. Greenhouse spoke on the importance of unions in creating workplaces which treat workers with dignity. He also spoke of how unions have historically supported the growth of the middle class. I enjoyed meeting members from unions all around Northeast Ohio at the Cuyahoga County Educators Summit, in

February. The Summit discussed the EdChoice voucher program and worked on their position statement regarding EdChoice. And finally, I read and participated in discussions about the book, [How to be an Anti-Racist](#) by [Ibram X. Kendi](#). This book challenged me to look more deeply at my beliefs and biases about people and society. I highly recommend this book to anyone who has not read it.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Grieshop*

The PAC of the SHTA COMMITTEE

Public Education continues to be attacked all across the country. Through the [SHTA PAC Facebook page](#), I have posted information about these attacks and ways in which we can help fight for public education. I will carry on perusing many websites including the [Ohio Education Association](#), the [American Federation of Teachers](#), the [National Education Association](#), [Public Education Partners](#) and the [Network for Public Education](#) this summer to find the latest information and ways to take action to be shared with you.

Throughout the year, I've contacted Representative Janine Boyd's office to keep up with the progress of Aisha's Law (Ohio HB 3), which has been revised and assigned to a house committee. You can read the comparison of the original bill and the substitute bill [here](#).

This past fall, I congratulated Emmit Jolly and Jeff Issacs on winning their seats on the School Board. I organized and hosted the Board of Education candidate discussion panel and I passed out election literature at the polls on Election Day.

The growth of the EdChoice Voucher program is currently on hold and hopefully will shrink in the future. I helped to organize and facilitate a postcard writing project against EdChoice along with Carole Kovach, Stacey Steggart and Bill Scanlon. Thank you to Carole, Stacey and Bill for your time! Shaker Heights teachers wrote and sent more than 150 postcards to the EdChoice house committee and to Representative Larry Householder. Awesome job! Keep speaking up!

It is my pleasure to serve you in these SHTA positions. Please contact me if you have any questions or suggestions for me. I am here for you.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Grieshop*

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

This has been a difficult teaching year for the district and myself. Our Association has risen to the occasion by pulling together and organizing to support each other. I am extremely lucky to work with such a fine faculty. While I have had to work harder this past years to communicate and update the Association, it has been worth it, for the gratitude members have shown.

I have formed, edited and distributed eight SHTA Newsletters to our Membership. I have also made sure that the newsletters are added to our website, [shtaweb.org](#). I have distributed our Newsletter to retired members, school board members, administration and community members. I have written editorials and have worked with members on their own editorials for the newsletter. I have worked with our amazing editing staff, Dr. John Morris, Dr. Becky Thomas and Chris Cotton, to make sure I have dotted all my I's and crossed all my t's. I want to personally thank them for their service.

I have updated our Facebook page and Twitter account. I have sent reminders and updates to our Membership throughout the year through email.

I enjoy the responsibility of working for our membership. Please feel free to contact me any concerns or opinions at glasier_a@shaker.org or #6168.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Andrew Glasier*

SICK DAY TRANSFER SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Our pilot program for Sick Day Transfers is now complete. In this first year, there was one SHTA member who was able to take advantage of it and receive uninterrupted pay due to the generosity of the colleagues at this member's building. At this point, we will collect all of the data from the Pilot Program and analyze it for presentation at the next contract negotiations. The Sick Day Transfer Committee would like to thank the Administration, especially Treasurer Bryan Christman, for the role they played in this process. Thanks also goes out to Addie Tobey and Michael Wells for their roles in this process. We look forward to hearing feedback from members and the Administration about this benefit and how we might continue to implement it. If you have any comments, criticisms, or suggestions, please send them to schmidt_j@shaker.org for consideration. Thank you.

*Respectfully Submitted,
James Schmidt*

The SHTA PAC is on  .  @

[PAC of the Shaker Heights Teachers Association](#)

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING MAY 11, 2020: Virtual ONAWAY SCHOOL

SHTA President, John Morris started the May 11th Rep. Council Meeting at 4:30P.M.
Dr. Morris welcomed SHTA members to our Google Hangout Meeting.

MINUTES from the April 13, 2020 Rep. Council meeting were accepted and approved. Motion made by James Schmidt and Seconded by Tim Kalan.

Administration Report

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

- Nice to see everyone and thank you so much for your work.
- Meeting with PTO Officers, strong praise for all the work that is happening in the buildings.
- Planning full steam for wrapping up this school year, there will be opportunities for staff to get into the buildings to drop things off or pick things up in a safe and healthy way.
- Planning for the summer, SELF programming will not be taking place. Working on putting together virtual programming for students.
- Staff survey will be coming out soon to collect interest and availability to help create and lead summer virtual programming.
- Waiting for guidance for the re-entry of school in the fall. Hopefully, we will have more information soon.

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

- She thanked the membership for all of their diligence and hard work. I see it as a staff member and a parent. Thank you and we appreciate you.

P.T.O. Report

No PTO Officer present to give report

Officer's Report

President, John Morris

- Communicated regularly with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner.
- Worked on evaluation issues with Lena Paskowitz, Andrew Glasier, Addie Tobey, Tim Kalan, Deanna Clemente-Milne and Megan Dora - Thanks for their work
- Updated SHTA Facebook Page with Publications Chair Andrew Glasier.
- Updated CCES Facebook Page.
- Communicated with Middle School member about the calendar-issues have been addressed by the district.
- Communicated with all other collective bargaining units in the district to make sure they are doing okay.
- Attended ZOOM meeting with Finding Leaders.
- Helped a member with a parent communication issue.
- Spoke with Vice President Matt Zucca and Secretary Darlene Garrison about elementary concerns.
- Spoke with Past President Becky Thomas after the School Board meeting to get an update on school board issues .
- Spoke with PR&R chair Mike Sears about supplemental issues.

- I met with Treasurer Bill Scanlon to sign off on investment paperwork.
- Consulted with a Special Education Member who had a legal concern with Special Education Chair Tito Vazquez.
- Met with members of CCES via ZOOM to discuss common concerns.
- I will be working on a draft of safety recommendations for re-entry into the schools for the fall with CCS this week.
- Consulted with SHTA Legal Counsel Susannah Muskovitz on legal issues.
- I worked on a MOU with Chief Operating Officer Jeff Grosse on extending job share and reduced schedule deadlines by May 8th. Those decisions should have been announced to you.
- Worked on Supplemental Contract survey concerns.
- Communicated with Chief Operating Officer Jeff Grosse on Support Teacher grievance along with Support Teacher Chair Michael Wells.
- Helped a member with a disability concern.
- Spoke with Assistant Principal Doug Myles who is on the committee that is planning the re-entry for staff members back into the building to retrieve their items for the summer.
- Spoke with Secondary Curriculum Director Micki Krantz about our Professional Day schedule at the end of the year.
- It is my pleasure to announce that the President's Service award winner is High School Head Representative and Sick Day Transfer Committee Chairperson James Schmidt.

Vice President, Matt Zucca

- Met with the Investments Committee on a virtual meeting at the end of April.
- Will continue to make Fellowship Grant disbursement through the summer vacation.
- Contacted Fellowship winners and informed them of the new process.
- Discussed concerns about the K-4 elementary report cards.
- Worked with a committee to discuss the role out of one to one devices for K-4 students.

Secretary, Darlene Garrison

- Shared attendance records for 2019-2020 Executive Board and Rep. Council Meetings.
- Shared and discussed Google Doc. for addresses of members. Payment for the 2019-2020 SHTA year will be mailed home.
- Please check the attendance record for accuracy, hours will be sent to Emily Rucker to record on My Learning Plan.

Treasurer, Bill Scanlon

- Met with the Investments Committee virtually and consulted with our Edward Jones advisor.
- I will be writing the checks for everyone's meetings.
- Talked with accountants and got the paperwork finished. They sent the financial report from the last fiscal year if anyone wants a copy.
- Shared budget last meeting and the proposed budget.
 - Financial explanation - Edward Jones over 1.2 million.
 - Budget discussion area - only changes are \$25,000 legal and we only used \$5,000. So, we will change legal from \$25,000 to \$10,000.
 - Negotiations next year, traditional to put \$50,000 in the column.

Executive Board Reports

Past President, Becky Thomas

- Attended April 22nd Finance & Audit ZOOM meeting
- I will be attending tomorrow's Board of Education Meeting.

- John Schwartz, PE teacher at the high school will be retiring after 40 years of teaching.
- Continuing Contracts will be given to 28 teachers. Support Teacher Bonnie Gordon will be receiving her Continuing Contract.
- Will attend the May Finance & Audit meeting
 - Should be an interesting meeting - Governor issued immediate cuts.

Teacher Education, Lisa Hardiman

- There will be 28 teachers recommended for Continuing Contracts at tomorrow night's Board Meeting and they will be receiving congratulatory letters.

Support Teachers, Michael Wells

- Participated in an HR panel interview session with leaders.
- Worked with John Morris on a Support Teacher Class Action Grievance that we hope to have a response to this week
- Working with a Support Teacher on clarifying a sub pay that she was not compensated for.
- Attended the latest Teacher Advisory Committee meeting.

Membership/Elections, Chante Thomas and James Schmidt

- James Schmidt will be working on elections
 - Will need names from individual buildings
- Thank you for the support - Chante Thomas

Policy, Tim Kalan

- Talking to members about the K-4 Report Cards

Public Relations, Bob Bognar

- We will be able to get the award out to James Schmidt with just a few changes.
- Teacher Appreciation gifts will be underway and we will distribute those in the fall.

Evaluation, Lena Paskewitz

- Continue to work positively and collaboratively with administration on evaluation concerns.
 - All members who have formal evaluations completed and want it to count this year, contact your principal to make sure you will not be marked with the COVID exemption.
- OTES 1.0, if you are doing peer evaluation next year, make sure that you maintain your credentials. Take your test if you get that email.
- There will be online Bridge training. You will not need it for next year but it is recommended that you take it and get it done.
- I took part in the Teacher Advisory Committee.
- Attended a webinar with ESC on evaluations.

Legislative, Dave Klapholz

- Because the state and federal legislatures have gone into hibernation due to the pandemic, the Legislative Committee has no report.

Publications, Andrew Glasier

- Congratulations to Kathleen Fleming, Beth Portner, & Keith Szalay for winning the second round of the #SHTAextendedschoolclosure2020 contest.
- Updated Facebook and Twitter accounts with excellent pictures of members working hard and missing

our students.

- Will do an end of the year SHTA T-shirt day for members to say goodbye to students.
- Sent out SHTA newsletter and posted to SHTAweb.org.
- Have 2 editorials this month, both from SHHS members.
- I need the end of the year report from the Executive Board by Wednesday.
- Peer Evaluations: have contacted HS principal Eric Juli about this year completion of a few evaluations and next years' Peer Intent forms.
- Issues: had several members contact me about the Supplemental Survey. They found it insulting.
- Suggestion: we have been dealing with many issues with administration that would not have occurred if they knew the contract better. I am suggesting a Contract Book Club for administrators this summer.

Social, Selena Brown

- No Report

Legal Aid, Cathy Grieshop

- No Report
- PAC continues to read and frequently check the network for public education (OEA, NEA, IFT sites) to see what's going on. Try to post the links on FaceBook and put links in the newsletter.

Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Mike Sears

- Supplemental survey sent out in March/April to write your job description so that in the future, the description will be with the supplemental.
- It was decided that a different survey from the supplemental committee be sent out over the summer just to see if some of the clubs and activities can be done virtually.
 - Then the Senior Leadership Team asked HR to send out another survey in May to all supplemental holders for 2019-2020 school. The survey was asking what they have been doing since March 13th to earn their supplemental pay. Collect enough information as possible so that people could get their full supplemental as long as the work was completed.
- Supplemental Committee meeting scheduled for May 22nd.
- Insurance Committee meeting on May 15th.
- Assisted members with caregiver leave and maternity leave.
- Consulted with Middle School reps. about continuing contract issue.

Special Education, Tito Vazquez

- I had my monthly meeting with Director of Pupil Services Elizabeth Kimmel on 04/28/20.
 - We discussed the expectations and requirements of I.S.'s and grading for students for this marking period.
 - We also discussed the clarification of the timeline for getting paperwork done for all Intervention Specialists and Special Education Department. It was explained that the Secretary of Education (she who will not be named) had enforced a hard deadline in regards to All documents. Absolutely NO leeway.
 - We also spoke on the role that paraprofessionals will play in the new distance learning for our students. It was discussed that some will be doing more than others based on their needs per students and teachers needs/expectations.
 - Finally, we discussed the importance of balancing the distribution and equity of caseloads for ALL Intervention Specialists.
- I consulted with John Morris concerning a member and a discipline concern.
- I participated in the SHTA meeting via Google Hangout.

- I covered emails and phone calls about the amount of extra work that is required for an Intervention Specialist due to the “New Normal”.
- I supported an Intervention Specialist over an issue with parent expectations.

Sick Day Transfer, James Schmidt

- Last report, we are at the end of the year, the pilot program will be completed. We will use the data in negotiations. Hopefully, we will see this again.

Building Representative Reports

Boulevard, Angela Anderson

- No Report
- District tech issues that we are still experiencing
 - John Morris has talked to Dr. Glasner, pilot program hopefully this summer to introduce better laptops to teachers.

Fernway, Victoria Goldfarb

- Principal Chris Hayward has been very supportive of staff.
- I have reached out to members.
- Spoke to Vice President Matt Zucca regarding a privacy matter.

Lomond, Steve Smith

- Working with admin. regarding issues related to tech and the internet, like everyone else.
- Waiting for clarification on the logistics of May 15th and May 22nd.
- Thank you to PTO, Principal George Clark and Assistant Principal Tina McCauley for the awesome Teacher Appreciation gifts.

Mercer, Nicole Cicconetti

- Emailing SHTA members on a weekly basis to check in.
- Currently assisting 2 members with maternity leave questions, and looking forward to additional assistance from Mike Sears.
- Questions/Concerns from staff about home technology for next school year; will there be upgrades to teacher computers and/or reimbursement for purchases teachers make to help ensure effective teaching and learning.

Onaway, Paula Klausner

- I have met with a SHTA member about maternity leave guidelines
- Meeting with the other nurses about how we are going to open safely in the Fall. No definite plans yet
- Met with a member about concerns with the K-4 Report Cards

Woodbury, Angela Goodrum

- No Report

Middle School, John Koppitch

- I had many conversations and email exchanges with SMS Principal Ms. Miata Hunter to ensure that all candidates that were eligible for continuing contracts achieved their tenure.
- All candidates who were eligible achieved tenure this year.
- There was some confusion about the 4th quarter grading policy and the expectations for synchronous learning during office hours. Erika and John met with Ms. Hunter for clarification.
- Questions still remain about students who are not completing work.

High School, James Schmidt

- Thank you so much for the Award John.
- I have been working with Principal Eric Juli on clarification about the grading system and the grading policy.
- Working with a member to make sure that her maternity leave ended last week and she is back at work full-time now.
- Working to make sure that the teachers who are up for their Continuing Contract receive those contracts.
- Working with Principal Eric Juli on plans for our orientation which is tentatively scheduled for the day before we go back - trying to figure that out.

Old Business

- None

New Business

- Motion to increase the rate for salaried SHTA members and the per meeting stipend for Representatives by 1%. made by Robert Bognar and seconded by Cathy Grieshop.
 - The motion passed without opposition.

Good of the Order

- President John Morris - Thank you everyone for being present and active. Thank you for being supportive to our families & students during this challenging time. Congratulations again to James Schmidt being awarded the President's Service Award.

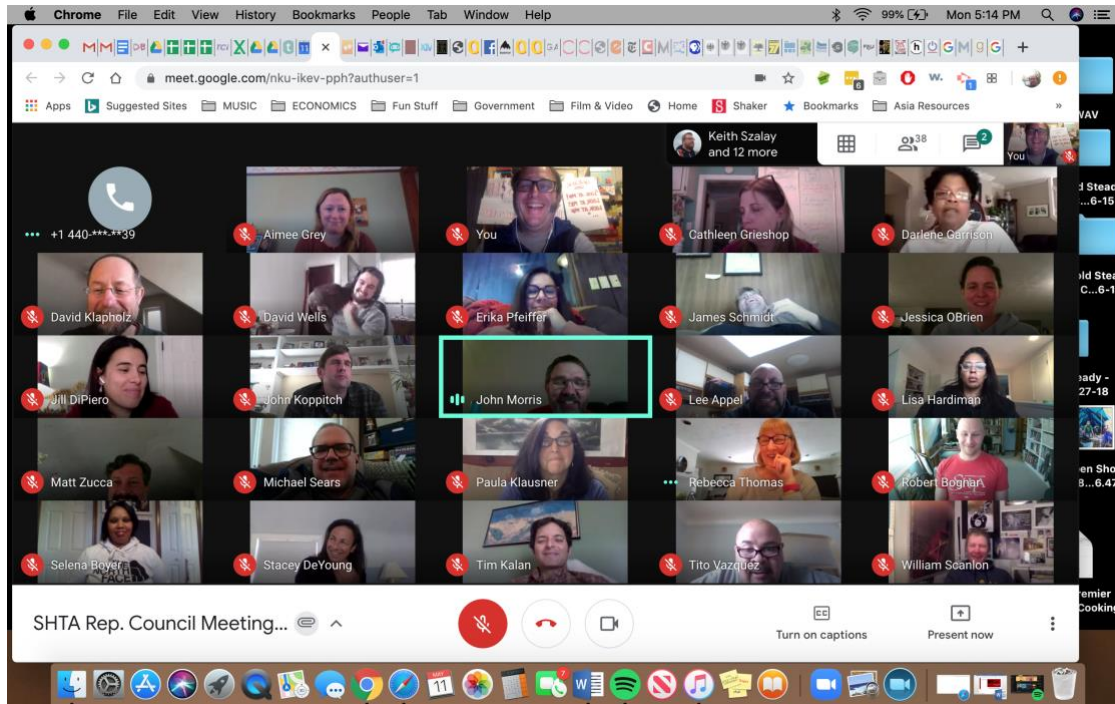
Motion for Adjournment

- Motion made by James Schmidt and Seconded by Bob Bognar

May 11th Rep. Council meeting was adjourned at 6:09PM.

***Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison***

SHTA Is now on  @SHTAssoc
FOLLOW US!



The SHTA April Representative Council Meeting at Virtual Onaway School.

The SHTA PAC is on  .  @
PAC of the Shaker Heights Teachers Association

A MEMORIAL TO MY MENTOR, BAIRD WEIHE

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.

Losing someone in the time of the coronavirus means the absence of friends during mourning. In other times, there are friends to share talks and remembrances; to sit together at the memorial; to see all of the others walk in who shared your admiration and enjoyed a comradeship with the one now gone forever.

Bair Wiehe was my mentor. I was fresh out of graduate school, so young that I was known by first name by many current students. I was repeatedly mistaken as a student no matter how many old lady pieces I purchased at Talbots and TJMaxx with every bit of paycheck not needed for loan payments. In 1996, I had a lot of learning to do about good teaching.

I really needed Baird as my mentor, and though I learned daily at lunch how to be a better educator than I had been the day before, he made me feel like his equal. We shared stories about our parents like buddies, even though he was just a few months older than my own mother. We made fun of our simple lunches; our daily sandwiches and his ever-present apple juice box.

But mostly, Baird was my mentor. He taught that patience and creativity and empathy can coincide in the most effective teacher. He taught that I could be myself in the classroom and be a stronger communicator because of being vulnerable. Baird taught this by listening, sharing, and being all of those things. He walked the walk.

He was the ultimate teacher leader, team player and daring innovator. Baird brought girls soccer to Shaker because, as he said to me, "I had already helped the boys out and the girls just needed to have a chance to get started." He worked as a team of 3 with Mrs. McGovern and Mr. McIntyre for over two decades supporting the start of one of the country's most innovative and most copied programs from Shaker: MAC Scholars. Why? Because Baird saw a need and filled it. He supported his colleagues to make Shaker a better place for students who simply needed the chance; who simply needed his support.

Baird cared deeply about engaging all of his students to take opportunities to learn with curiosity. There are simple things that he did (simple only if you could be as daring as Baird): he would ask students to give him 3 images or ideas, and return the next day with an original country song based on that image and SING the song to his entire class. He would assign his sociology students to observe WWF matches and take notes on the actions of the crowd. He reinvigorated the senior project program. And then there was country capitalism.

Country Capitalism is NUTS, and the most fun teaching and learning EVER. Basically, for a month or longer, each student either runs a business or serves as a member of government on a newly settled island nation. Every Friday, taxes and interest payments are due. The other 4 days, businesses compete for government contracts, buy and sell materials to build houses, roads and whatever else the class decides to do. Random audits could be common by government officials, and grades depend on keeping up a basic ledger and making a profit.

Ultimately, the class was organized chaos. The key was the quiet, teacherly moments. The coaching. The Baird touch.

Students learned how to pay taxes (or, as more than one class shared, how to keep two sets of books!), and how the government could make either a positive or a negative difference. Some governments built nuclear weapons to threaten other classes simultaneously engaged in Country Capitalism. Some governments built lots of houses

and hospitals. These classes tended to fare better when Baird unleashed the inevitable hurricane or catastrophe to test the new country's ability to adapt to new circumstances.

The craziest part about Country Capitalism, which Baird had created in the late 1970s or early 1980s, is that he taught others how to lead it, too, in the late 1990s and early 21st Century. We ran Country Capitalism after spring break in U.S. Government, after the State Tests were completed and seniors needed something different in order to stay engaged--to even, honestly, find a reason to show up to class. Every lunch for weeks ahead of time the teachers discussed with Baird the mechanics of bookkeeping and the best way to teach its methodology. We discussed the best ways to motivate students to both compete and cooperate to be successful. We learned how to be great teachers. And every year, the students named Country Capitalism one of their best high school learning experiences.

Since Baird retired, the things he created & co-created live on in new ways: Shaker Soccer for both genders stays strong; the MAC Scholars program, for boys and girls, is now in 4 buildings in Shaker and many schools around the country; some of us still teach Country Capitalism. Even more, Baird's students and the teachers he also educated, including one of his beloved sons, know that being the best teacher is an achievable goal. Like Baird, a teacher can create a strong team, foster innovation and stay ever engaged in the creation of opportunities for each and every student.

Though Baird is gone, he is always in my teaching, and the hearts of so many.
[For a song, here's one from Norah Jones. This doesn't feel right without music.](#)

Sarah Davis
Individual and Societies Teacher
Bridges Director

ON IMPROVISATION

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.

Hello, Dear Colleagues! As we work toward closing out this most unusual year, as we do our best to prepare our current students for their future teachers and our current teachers for their future students, as we try to help things feel as "normal" as possible in the face of incredible abnormalities, I've been reflecting on the (often misunderstood) skill of improvisation.

Improvisation is reliably included in music education standards but is sometimes brushed aside as less important than the "real" standards - something we get to if we have time, or once the actual work is done, or maybe if the student is interested in jazz. We tend to be (perhaps like other subjects and disciplines) focused on ensuring that our students can *comply* first, and maybe *create* later.

Composing, improvising, creating - these are often positioned as rewards for students who are diligent about learning the basics with responsible attention to detail. We have this sort of unspoken hierarchy of values - they have to know how to play what's given to them, according to set standards, before we can let 'em loose. It's understandable. Who wants to hear the work of a violinist, or a writer, or a scientist who hasn't mastered the basics? How could that work be of value to anybody?

But as we all know, children learn through play, and the heart of play is improvisation. I don't have to remind any of us of the absolutely enormous amount of critically important brain development that occurs as very young kids play and experiment without limits or expectations. As kids get older, we as teachers (and in some cases, parents), shoulder the responsibility of balancing play with structured learning. Structure and play. Kids need to have both, as do adults. It's sometimes hard to get the balance right, but I think we can all agree that work is more fun when it includes play. A spoonful of sugar, if you will.

Which brings me back to improvisation. It is a common misconception that improvisation is merely making stuff up, just doing whatever comes into your head and hoping for the best, all play and no structure. In fact, the best improvisers, the absolute masters, are and always have been hard-core virtuosos who know their instrument, their discipline, their craft in ways that most people would struggle to even comprehend. Charlie Parker practicing his saxophone for 15 hours a day. Mozart being able to play entire symphonies back on just one hearing. The people who can improvise, pivot, and create on the fly are often the MOST experienced, the MOST disciplined, the MOST adept. And it's a transferable idea. If you take what life gives you and make the best of it, if you act and think fast under unforeseen circumstances, if you envision possibilities for yourself that defy boundaries, you are improvising, and you are admirable.

As teachers, we improvise every day. I know that all of us are planners to some degree (my degree being probably a good bit chillier than most), but we are also improvisers. If we were lucky, we learned early in our training that a lesson plan is not legally binding and that you need to be able to roll with whatever happens in the moment. I would go further and say that it is helpful to skew *towards* being in the moment rather than in the lesson plan. I feel like that's where the absolute best stuff happens, but that's admittedly my bias. I'm sure many, many people do better with more structure. Regardless, we as educators are improvisers, and our recent body of work, in which we shifted rapidly to virtual learning while navigating a sea of ever-changing circumstances, has proven that we're awfully good ones. This does not surprise me in the least. The expertise and high professional standards held by our Shaker faculty and staff has always been one of my favorite things about working here. I regularly find something new to admire about my colleagues at Shaker, and it's a pleasure.

One of the important aspects of improvisation is the ability to not only pivot and think on your feet, but to accept new realities without judgement. Improv actors practice moving stories ahead through unexpected twists and turns by saying "Yes, AND." As we proceed through the uncertainties that await us about the end of the year, the summer, the fall, the future in general, we make it harder on ourselves (and on our educational partners) by saying "But." While we will undoubtedly continue to have tough discussions about how best to offer instruction and what to prioritize, and although we may fret when lessons and standards and traditions that were formerly considered indispensable and sacred are unceremoniously tossed aside, we must be willing to accept that things will be different. I find it helpful to frame any anxieties, or frustrations, or uncertainties, or questions I may have by beginning with "Yes, and" rather than "But." The difference in tone and possibility is striking.

Student: I couldn't do any work this week.

Teacher: But if you don't do it, you'll fail and/or not graduate.

But all of the other students were able to do it.

But if you had managed your time better, you wouldn't be in this mess.

But you haven't done anything all year, so I can't give you any leeway now.

versus

Student: I couldn't do any work this week.
Teacher: Yes, and we will work together to make up what you missed.
Yes, and we can find a solution going forward.
Yes, and I can exclude/reduce/modify the previous expectations in a way that will allow you to still show your learning.
Yes, and you really need to learn this content. Let's see what we can do to get you on track.

School District: Due to the ongoing and changing nature of this pandemic, we may not know until August what the plan is for teaching and learning this Fall.
Teacher: But that's bull****. I can't possibly do my job without advance notice.
But it's not possible to prepare without ample time given for planning.
But I've planned my whole semester already. All of my work will go to waste.

versus

School District: Due to the ongoing and changing nature of this pandemic, we may not know until August what the plan is for teaching and learning this Fall.
Teacher: Yes, and we will support students in their learning no matter what. Yes, and luckily I had a couple of months in the Spring to try out lots of new and innovative digital tools for teaching and learning.
Yes, and I am so excited, as always, for the surprises, challenges, joys, and triumphs of a new school year.
Yes, and WE GOT THIS.

None of us (teachers, administrators, politicians) know what will happen with school in the Fall. As usual, we will improvise, and we will continue to delight our community and ourselves with our ingenuity and flexibility. YES, it would be great to know exactly what is going to happen, AND we must expect the unexpected and give serious thought to what our desert-island standards really are. If it turns out that we are only able to teach a handful of things/concepts/skills/big ideas in the first semester, what should they be? What cool and innovative strategies and tools might we use to deliver this content? How will we reach the kids who are the hardest to reach? And really, how is any of this different from what we do every day?

YES, it is frustrating as professionals to endure so many uncertainties and changes and delays and inconveniences...

AND I am confident that no group is more capable of improvising over these rapid and unpredictable changes, brilliantly and with breathtaking virtuosity, than our Shaker team.

Stay safe, everyone. Miss you all!

Donna Jelen
Music Department Chair
Orchestra Director
Shaker Heights High School

MAY ELECTION ADDENDUM

May 18, 2020

Dear SHTA and SHTA ST Members,

It is my pleasure to announce the results from our Virtual May 19th Election and Budget Vote.

Again, congratulations to all of you!

The 2020-2021 Budget passed receiving 211/ 213 votes. (99%)

The 2020-2021 Rep Council Elected Members are:

Boulevard- **Jennifer Goulden**, Angela Anderson alt

Fernway- **Victoria Goldfarb**, Andree Hassell alt

Lomond- **Donita Townsend**, Jill Dipiero, Steve Smith alt

Mercer- **Nicole Ciconetti**, Cathy Richards alt

Onaway- **Paula Klausner**

Woodbury- **Angela Goodrum**, Stacey DeYoung, Aquita Shephard, Lee Appel alt

Middle School- **John Koppitch**, Erika Pfeiffer, Jevette Collier

High School- **James Schmidt**, Brian Berger, Aimee Grey, Jessica O'Brien, Keith Szalay, Tod Torrence, Enid Vazquez, Joel Rathbone alt

SHTA-ST – **Margaret Rimedio**

Again, congratulations to all of you!

Chante Thomas

Membership/Elections Chairperson