

IMPORTANT DATES

MONDAY, February 5th: SHTA Executive Board Meeting, Woodbury

FRIDAY, February 9th: Re-Schedules Winter SHTA Happy Hour, Midnight Owl Brewery, 4:30 PM

MONDAY, February 12th: SHTA Representative Council Meeting, High School, 4:30 PM

SHTA *news*

January 29, 2024

ISSUE #4

Message from the President

What do Cedar Point, Disney World, Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse, and FirstEnergy Stadium all have in common? Besides being locations that welcome thousands of visitors made up of families and children, these venues also feature metal detectors. Do these traditional metal detectors alienate their visitors, traumatize, or otherwise compromise the experiences of families and children? I would argue they do not. In fact, I would argue that they decrease the relative anxiety that arises when congregating with large groups of people in states that are consistently passing less and less restrictive gun laws.

Yet, we continue to hold schools outside of this otherwise societal norm for public safety. Is it because we maintain a “willing suspension of disbelief” that it could not happen here? Is it because we are trapped in our own nostalgia about the way things were when we were students? I don’t think there is a conclusive answer. The problem is that limiting ourselves and our consideration of these practical safety tools because of our need to not acknowledge the very real threat of gun violence is unacceptable.

There is also a community belief that we could increase building safety and enhance student focus by having students store their cell phones in Yondr Bags (<https://www.veryondr.com/phone-locking-pouch>) when they arrive at school. I don’t disagree, but I would also add that in Akron Public Schools, where this was implemented, the schools also installed metal detectors to make students and families feel safer first (<https://www.beaconjournal.com/story/news/education/2023/02/13/akron-public-schools-to-pilot-locking-cellphone-bags-in-three-buildings/69899933007/>). Warrensville Heights City Schools (<https://www.warrensville.k12.oh.us/SafetyandEmergency.aspx>) followed the same metal detectors first/ Yondr Bags second protocol when they were implemented there (<https://www.news5cleveland.com/news/originals/schools-find-solution-to-cell-phone-distraction-in-classes>). These examples illustrate the reality that one of the primary reasons parents want their students to have their phones in school is because they want to be able to communicate with their children directly during a lock down or other emergency. Security must be relatively assured before we can ask students (and parents) to allow their phones to be stored away. I believe we can increase this assurance by adding metal detection in our schools.

Another argument against metal detectors in our schools is the cost. Canton City Schools, recently installed metal detectors for grades 7-12 (5 schools) at a cost of \$370,000 (<https://www.news5cleveland.com/news/local-news/canton-city-school-district-adding-weapons-detectors-to-several-schools>). It may seem like a high price tag, but given our recent budgetary successes, we should be more than able to handle the investment. Granted, there are training and personnel costs, but these seem more than worth it considering the children we are protecting.

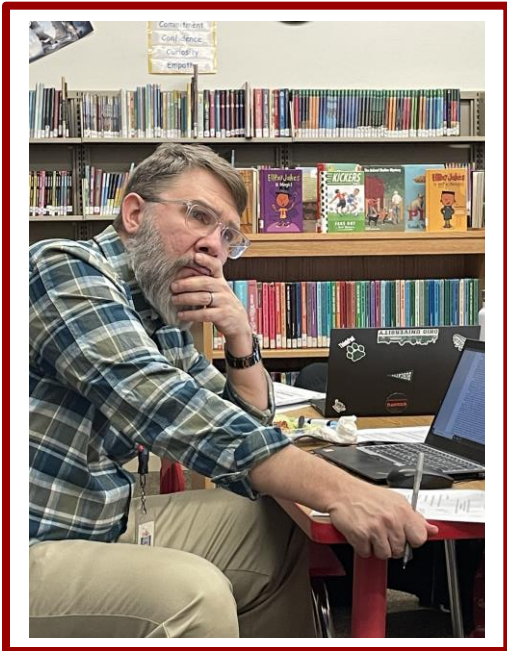
We have to see the larger picture when considering the metal detection issue. We know it is not a perfect solution. We also know it does not answer all of the security questions we have. Yet to deny the very real potential that metal detectors have for deterrence and prevention of gun violence in our schools is to suggest that the threat of this violence is somehow less than it is at Disney World, Cedar Point, or seeing a Cavs or Browns game. That is the height of irrational thinking.

It's been a busy January. I spoke weekly with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner. I spoke regularly with Personnel Director Dr. Tiffany Joseph. I updated our Facebook page with SHTA Publications Editor Andrew Glasier. I helped a member with a sick day issue. I worked with members on compensation questions. I consulted with members on a grievance issue. I met with SHTA Vice President Darlene Garrison and SHTA Secretary Lisa Hardiman along with Director of School Leadership Felicia Evans and Director of Curriculum Dr. John Moore to discuss elementary schedule concerns with SHTA Constitution and By-Law Chair Tim Kalan and Head Fernway Representative Selena Boyer. I reviewed and signed off on the ODE Synchronous Learning Calamity Day agreement along with district leadership. I worked with Special Educations Chair Tito Vazquez on member concerns. I met with the SHTA Executive Board and Administration to meet new administrators. I communicated with SHTA lawyer Susannah Muskovitz on member concerns. I discussed security issues and an asynchronous learning day with Dr. Glasner. I assisted a member with a transfer issue. I helped members with leave issues. I spoke with Woodbury Head Representative Stacey DeYoung about potential reorganization concerns. I discussed security concerns with SHTA Secretary Lisa Hardiman. Lisa spoke with Beachwood's Superintendent on their in-school officer program. I worked on a Safety Statement with the SHTA Executive Board that was shared with members, administration, the School Board, and the community at-large. I interviewed with Channel 19 News on district safety concerns with SHTA Treasurer Bill Scanlon. I attended a High School SHTA building meeting requested by a member and facilitated by High School Head Representative Jessica O'Brien.

As a negotiations update, our contract expires in December of 2024. Our negotiations team will be sitting down with the administration next fall. To inform our negotiations team of our members' needs, we will survey every member in late March so we can begin to look at results and pre-plan before the fall. I will serve as the Negotiations Chair and will update members on our progress as the process unfolds. If you have any questions or concerns about negotiations, or anything else for that matter, please reach out to me at morris_j@shaker.org or x6033.

*Respectfully submitted,
John Morris*

SHTA President Dr. John Morris at the January Representative Council meeting at Mercer school



OFFICERS' REPORTS

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I hope everyone enjoyed their Winter Holiday Vacation. Our January weather afforded us two additional days and now February is knocking on our door. As we begin our second semester and with all the changes that will be taking place in our school district, please remember to take care of yourself. "Love yourself first, and everything else falls in line. You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world." (Lucille Ball)

The 32nd annual *A Night for the Red & White* will be taking place on Saturday, March 2nd. This spectacular gala is coming home to Shaker! This year's event will focus on Every Student, Every Grade, Every School. Staff members are offered two (2) discounted tickets at \$125 each. [Tickets](#) are on sale and can be purchased on the Shaker Schools Foundation [website](#).

Please consider donating to *A Night for the Red & White* silent auction. Your generous contribution to the silent auction will directly support "Every Student, Every Grade, Every School." Unique experiences offered by our staff are very popular at our auction. Can you share your interests, passions, and talents with our community by donating an opportunity or experience for our students and their families?

Examples include:

- Unique handmade items
- Bowling and pizza with the principal
- Tickets to a sporting event or lunch with a teacher
- Principal, coach, and sports announcer for a day
- Special lessons, tutoring, a round of golf, a tennis match, or a cooking class
- Museum membership or package
- Movie outing with a teacher
- A party with a small group or class
- Shopping excursion

We encourage you to be creative! Please complete the attached [Silent Auction Form](#) and return it to Erica Verderber at the Administration Building or email your contract to verderber_e@shaker.org by February 16, 2024. Or fill out the [online form](#).

Winners of the Dr. Rebecca L. Thomas Fellowship Grant, please remember to submit all receipts to me in order to receive your reimbursement. You can receive up to \$100 to use for your personal professional development. The grants may be used towards any of the following activities:

- Professional Workshops
- Seminars
- Professional Conferences
- College Course work
- Membership fees for professional associations (Does not include SHTA)

Fellowship Grants may not be used for classroom materials, supplies or special projects.

December and January have been busy months for me. I attended an Elementary Schedule Feedback meeting and will attend the third scheduled meeting next week. I met with PTO Representatives along with Principal Eric Forman and SHTA Member Erin Melaragno to develop a community service project for students to honor the values of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. I attended a "Mixer" with the SHTA Executive

Board/Administration hosted by the Central Office. I will be attending the next PTO Council meeting on Tuesday, February 27th.

Thank you so much for your continued support and if you need anything, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Welcome back and happy 2024! I continue to have the privilege and pleasure of serving the SHTA as secretary. I attend and take notes at monthly Executive Board and Representative Council meetings.

On January 16th, a letter was emailed to all SHTA members from the SHTA Executive Board. This letter specifically delineated what we see as crucial to addressing the sometimes failed methods of maintaining the safety and security of ourselves and the children who are in our charge. If you have not taken a look at this letter, please do so. 2024 is a time that more has to be done with regard to keeping us all safe. To this end, I had a conversation with the Beachwood City Schools' Superintendent. This is where my daughter attends high school and I wanted to get a clear picture on how members of the police department are utilized in their schools. It was an enlightening conversation, which made me more aware and motivated to do what we can to increase police presence in our schools.

As part of the leadership of SHTA, I attend Mercer's monthly Building Committee Meetings. They are going along nicely.

In December, I participated in a follow-up meeting with Director of School Leadership, Dr. Felecia Evans, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. John Moore, Director of Exceptional Children, Elizabeth Kimmel, SHTA President, John Morris, SHTA Vice President, Darlene Garrison, Fernway SHTA Head Representative Selena Boyer, and SHTA Policy Chair Tim Kalen. It was the second meeting to address the numerous concerns that members have regarding the PK-4 A-E schedule. Both meetings were very productive. The administrators were eager to hear the specifics of our concerns and they seem to really want to make improvements. We have a third meeting scheduled for next week so if you have any further questions or concerns that you would like discussed during this upcoming meeting, please let your head representative know or email me directly. We will be sure to share.

I enjoyed connecting with colleagues at the SHTA Executive Board/Administration mixer in the upper cafeteria of Shaker Heights High School. It was organized by Dr. Felecia Evans and Dr. John Morris. It was a very nice event!

2023-2024 is the second year that teachers in grades 2-4 are required to complete gifted hours. There have been mixed messages regarding how and when these hours may be fulfilled. I have spoken to a number of members and administrators about this and we are trying to resolve the confusion.

Thank you to all members for everything that you do!

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Hardiman

TREASURER'S REPORT

Welcome to the new year, 2024; the last year of Woodbury School as a fifth-sixth grade building. I can say this because just before sitting down to write this, the central administration came out with their official "accelerated timeline" Facilities Plan. In a few short years, there will be a middle school across the street from where I'm sitting (at my home). It's a big change, happening at a rapid pace. Part of me wants to protest how quickly this is being launched while another part says, "Let's just rip the band-aid off and get it over with." I don't know which is the best tactic but, as my better half stated, "We were able to figure out - together, in just a couple of weeks - how to teach through a computer with virtually no training. Shaker teachers can do anything when students need us."

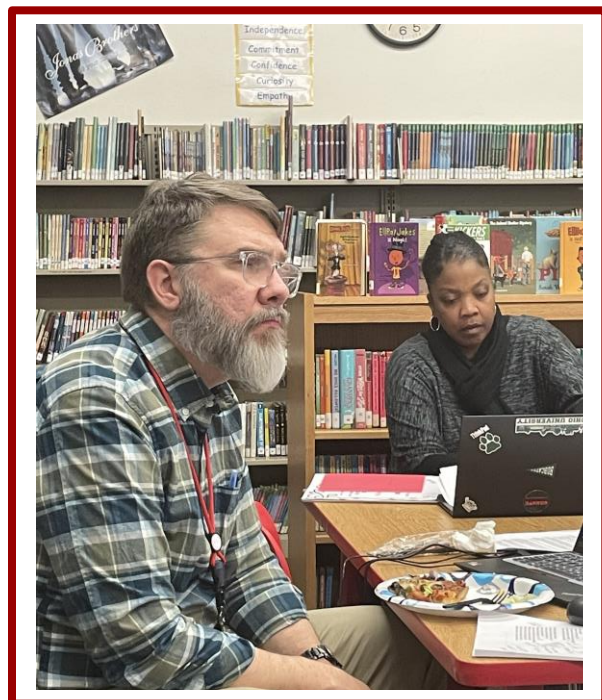
As the district is on the verge of spending a huge amount of taxpayer dollars', it makes me think about how much we spend on the IB program. I'd like to see a line-item accounting of how much the IB program costs (past, present, and future) and would like to know if the district has any data to support those expenditures. A true reflection of the program's cost must include membership fees, worldwide travel expenses for IB conferences & workshops, salaries for IB coordinators and teachers of IB-required classes, and paid professional development time for IB training/curriculum writing.

I want to make it clear who this question is directed toward. It's the central administration, and tangentially the Board of Education, who make the decisions about where we spend our district dollars (i.e. resident tax dollars). Asking this budgetary question is in no way doubting the hard work and integrity of my colleagues involved in running the IB program and teaching IB classes. I have nothing but respect and admiration for the dedication my colleagues put into what they do. I apologize if posing this question seemed to cast aspersions on any SHTA member's school role or if anyone feels attacked by it. Believing wholeheartedly in supporting all of my SHTA sisters and brothers, and doubting another member's part in taking care of our students is something I would never do or intend.

I met recently with our accountants at Hawkins & Co. and discussed our investments with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor. I have paid Association bills and written Fellowship checks. A full financial report is included below.

*Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon*

**SHTA President Dr.
John Morris &
SHTA Vice-
President Darlene
Garrison at the
January
Representative
Council meeting at
Mercer school**



Shaker Heights Teachers' Association	
Balance Sheet	
As of January 24, 2024	
	Total
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
Key Bank CD	131,590.88
Key Bank Checking	166,248.20
Total Bank Accounts	\$297,839.08
Other Current Assets	
Edward Jones 13760-1-1	607,507.54
Edward Jones 13768-1-3	1,015,207.99
Uncategorized Asset	0.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$1,622,715.53
Total Current Assets	\$1,920,554.61
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,920,554.61
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Total Liabilities	
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	65,257.02
Retained Earnings	1,685,152.46
Net Income	170,145.13
Total Equity	\$1,920,554.61
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$1,920,554.61

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association	
Profit and Loss	
July 1, 2023 - January 24, 2024	
	Total
Income	
Income	
Member Dues	139,260.00
Total Income	\$139,260.00
Investments	
Change in Value in Edward Jones	85,035.22
Edward Jones-Fees & Charges	-4,022.20
Key Bank CD Interest	1,590.88
Total Investments	\$82,603.90
Total Income	\$221,863.90
Gross Profit	\$221,863.90
Expenses	
Operations	
Accounting	194.40
Banking	0.12
Total Accounting	\$194.52
Compensation	25,000.97
Conferences & Meetings	2,434.80
Executive Board	244.94
Fellowships & Grants	2,455.00
Insurance	5,943.00
Legal	8,094.15
Officers' Expenses	25.00
Payroll Taxes	362.51
Public Relations	1,301.04
Publications	1,715.00
Social	447.70
STRS (TPO Contribution)	3,500.14
Total Operations	\$51,718.77
Total Expenses	\$51,718.77
Net Operating Income	\$170,145.13
Net Income	\$170,145.13

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT

NO REPORT

*Respectfully submitted,
Mike Sears, chairperson*

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Greeting colleagues and friends! Thank you for the continued opportunity to serve the Association as the Evaluation Chair. In this position, I serve as co-facilitator of the Evaluation Committee with Human Resources Director, Tiffany Joseph. I also work with Andrew Glasier and Addie Tobey to coordinate the Peer Evaluation Program. All members of the committee and I am available to answer your evaluation questions and concerns.

The Evaluation Committee met in December to review various protocols and address current concerns. I will continue to communicate information about evaluation procedures throughout the year through this newsletter and during SHTA Representative Council Meetings.

Here is a link to the [Evaluation OTES Overview](#) slides. These slides serve as a resource for both teachers and evaluators as they engage in the evaluation process. There are numerous links to videos, examples of forms, the High Quality Student Data menu, and Ohio Evaluation System (OES) support. Please use the OES site to complete all forms.

As the first semester comes to a close, full-cycle evaluations should be well under way. Holistic observations and post conferences are opportunities for evaluators and teachers to collaboratively identify specific growth goals for the informal observations (a.k.a. walkthroughs) and the focused observation. It is important for holistic observations and post-conferences to occur during the first semester in order for teachers to have time to effectively reach identified growth goals. Focused observations should NOT take place until feedback from the holistic observation during a post-conference is received. Off-Cycle evaluations require one 30-minute observation at any time prior to the end of April.

As always, peer evaluators are expected to follow the same protocols to complete evaluations. Peer evaluators conducting full cycle evaluations will receive \$375 and those conducting off-cycle evaluations will receive \$125. I appreciate the continued support and recognition of this program as valuable professional learning work. I truly believe that this work brings us towards alignment with other highly professional fields. Andrew Glasier (High School), Addie Tobey (Woodbury and Middle School) and I (Elementary) serve as the co-coordinators of the program. We are happy to assist you in any way we can throughout the process.

I am here to help answer teacher and evaluator questions and navigate any part of the process with you, as are all members of the committee.

*Respectfully submitted,
Lena Paskewitz, chairperson*

SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

This past month, I attended and participated in the SHTA Executive Board meeting and Representative Council meeting. I discussed various concerns with the Director of Exceptional Children Elizabeth Kimmel in the 7th of our monthly meetings. I worked with SHTA President Dr. John Morris about Exceptional Children concerns. I provided support to various SHTA members concerning issues including but not limited to job placement, personnel issues and work options. I participated in the SHTA/Shaker Administration “Mixer”. I attended Shaker Heights High School Exceptional Children Department Meeting. I have communicated with Shaker Heights Exceptional Children Department Chairs Jessica Wilkes and Keesha Bryant over a variety of concerns in the district. I continue to work collaboratively with Shaker administrators, principals, assistant principals and Exceptional Children Supervisors K - 6 Erin Dzolic and 7 - 12 Supervisor Jennifer Currie on various issues to improve the functionality and support to the students and educators in the Exceptional Children Department in our district.

Respectfully submitted,
Anastacio “Tito” Vazquez, Jr. M.Ed. Chairperson

POLICY COMMITTEE

With the coming changes and transitions that our classrooms are going to experience regarding the school renovations in the district, I thought it would be a good time to contemplate ARTICLE III concerning the PURPOSES of our Association:

To share the educational expertise of the membership with the community, School Board and Administration to provide the best education possible for each child.

To accept responsibility for promoting and maintaining the principles of the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession.

To promote and to protect professional welfare of members by achieving professional salary schedules, satisfactory tenure policies, sound retirement systems and such other improvements will encourage professional growth, high morale and career security.

To encourage members to exercise their rights and privileges as citizens and to accept, willingly, leadership in school affairs and in the civic affairs of their community. To promote democratic members' participation in the formulations of educational policies.

To be an active participant with other educational organizations as designated by the membership in the formation of educational policies.

As we advocate for ourselves and our students, we should remember these tenets and make our voices heard.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Kalan, Chairperson

MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE.

As the Membership/Elections Chairperson, I monitor the payroll deductions to maintain an accurate count of SHTA membership. With the assistance of Shelley McDermott, our assistant treasurer, I updated our payroll sheets, deleted members who are no longer with us, changed member names, and building locations. I also coordinate elections in the spring. At this time, we have 476 members of SHTA.

The 2023-2024 Elected Representative Council Members are:

Boulevard - Cathy Grieshop, Stacy Stoller (alternate)
Onaway - Noreen Smyth-Morrow

Fernway - Selena Boyer
Lomond - Kelly Grahl, Shifa Isaacs
Mercer- Eileen Sweeney
Woodbury - Stacey DeYoung, Aquita Shepherd, Melissa Albrecht, Lee Appel
Middle School- John Koppitch, Matt Klodor, Erika Pfeiffer
High School – Jessica O’Brien, Brian Berger, Adam Cohen, Aimee Grey, Kim Roberts, Joel Rathbone, Cathy Szendry, Enid Vazquez (alternate)
Innovation Center - Linda Roth

May your dreams blossom and make you happy in many ways! Happy New Year!

Respectfully submitted,
Chante Thomas, chairperson

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

I had the opportunity to attend an Equity Advisory Action Team (E.A.A.T) meeting with Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Office Dr. Lawrence Burnley to discuss the future of the committee. Many questions were shared and possible solutions to further the work of equity within our district. I posed a question regarding a district-wide meeting with teachers of color that is similar to what was held during the Professional Learning days with our support staff; cafeteria worker, transportation, and custodial staff. As we approach changes within the district, hearing from People of Color (POC) is necessary to understand concerns that affect their workplace.

As we approach Black History Month it allows us to revisit our history. As one of my former students, with roots in Sweden shared, Black history is everyone’s history. Embrace the culture! An example piece of history is Sarah Rector, also known as Sarah Rector Campbell, an American oil magnate who was known as the “Richest Colored Girl in the World.” Campbell was born in 1902 near the all-Black town of Taft located in the eastern portion of Oklahoma. Campbell was educated at Tuskegee University. Rector’s father leased Sarah’s land in February 1911 to the Standard Oil Company. As news of Rector’s wealth spread worldwide, she began to receive requests for loans, money, and gifts, although she was only 12 years old at the time. Given her wealth, in 1913, the Oklahoma Legislature made an effort to have her declared white, allowing Rector to reap the benefits of her elevated social standing, Rector was already a millionaire by the time she had turned 18 in 1920. She owned stocks, bonds, a boarding house, businesses, and a 2,000-acre piece of prime river bottomland. At that point, she left Tuskegee and, with her entire family, moved to Kansas City, where she purchased a house on 12th Street, known as the Rector House, which is currently owned by a local nonprofit, with the intention of restoration and historical and cultural preservation.

I had the opportunity to chat with the Student Ambassadors at Woodbury School about what it means to be an Anti-Racist. In his book, *AntiRacist Baby*, Ibram X Kendi listed nine steps to producing an anti-racist child:

1. Open your eyes to all skin colors.
2. Use your words to talk about race.
3. Point at policies as the problem, not people.
4. Shout, “There’s nothing wrong with the people.”
5. Celebrate all our differences.
6. Knock down the stack of cultural blocks.
7. Confess when being a racist.
8. Grow to be an anti-racist.
9. Believe we shall overcome racism.

The young students were eager and engaged throughout my presentation. It was wonderful to see young people taking a stand.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Goodrum

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Greetings SHTA members. I attended the SHTA/Administration mixer. The SHTA Shirts are currently being printed and should be completed next week. Shirts should be distributed shortly after the printing is completed. Building head representatives will be asked to distribute shirts to the members at their buildings.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Bognar*

BUILDING SAFETY & SICK DAY TRANSFER COMMITTEE

This past month I assisted a member with Sick Day Transfer eligibility and requirements. I was in communication with Director of Human Resources Dr. Tiffany Joseph and Treasurer Shelley McDermott, regarding Sick Day Transfer procedures. I want to thank them for their guidance and assistance. I would also like to thank James Schmidt for his assistance with my various questions. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 216-295-4692 or at zucca_m@shaker.org.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Matt Zucca, Chairperson*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The Ohio Department of Education no longer exists ([article](#) by the Statehouse News Bureau); we now have the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW). This is significant because the governor of the state now has the power to completely control education policy in the Ohio. This change is being challenged in the courts. The director of the DEW is Steve Dackin; Mr. Dackin served as State School Superintendent in 2022; his tenure lasted for just 11 days because he [resigned](#) due to an ethics problem involving hiring.

Also at the state level, current battles in education include: (1) **reading** ([article](#) in the Plain Dealer) and (2) **school vouchers** ([article](#) in the Ohio Capitol Journal).

The Illinois legislature is making book bans illegal ([article](#) from the Illinois Library System). Under the new law, the state will only fund libraries that reject the banning of materials.

*Respectfully Submitted,
David Klapholz*

NEW TEACHER COMMITTEE

Happy New Year Everyone! Before break, I had the pleasure of attending the Mixer with SHTA and the administration. It was nice to put faces with names. A question came up in regards to tuition reimbursement and if it is retroactive to the previous years. Unfortunately, tuition reimbursement can only be submitted for the current year. Classes taken from now until December 1, 2024, are the only ones accepted. Stacy Poole is always ready to help. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have. If you are taking classes online, please be sure to contact either Stacy Poole or myself to ensure that the classes are being done through an institution that is accredited by the district. Continue to plug along. We are at the halfway point!

*Respectfully Submitted,
Wendy Lewis*

LEGAL AID COMMITTEE

NO REPORT.

*Respectfully submitted,
James Schmidt*

SHTA PAC COMMITTEE

Unfortunately, the Ohio State Legislature made a hateful choice this week overriding Governor Michael DeWine's veto of House Bill 86. HB 86 is the ban of gender-affirming care and the prevention of trans athletes from playing Ohio women's sports. Currently, trans athletes must be on hormone therapy for a year and not show any physiological advantages. This is a double whammy for these kids. More detailed information can be found in [this article](#).

We continue to update the [SHTA PAC Facebook page](#) and will update the [PAC page on SHTA.web](#).

Please let us know if you have ways for us to take action. Have a great 2024!

*Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Grieshop & Jessica O'Brien*

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Our Annual Recognition Reception will take place on Thursday, May 16th. The location will be Shaker Heights High School's Upper Cafeteria. More information will be coming soon.

SHTA will host a Happy Hour/Get Together on Friday, February 9th at 4:15PM We will meet at Midnight Owl, 20312 Chagrin Blvd., Shaker Heights, OH. Hope to see you there.



*Respectfully Submitted,
Darlene Garrison*

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

SHTA President, Dr. John Morris started the January 22, 2024 Representative Council Meeting at 4:34 PM. **The meeting took place at Mercer Elementary School.** Dr. Morris introduced *Mercer Principal, Mrs. Roneisha Campbell.*

Mercer Principal, Mrs. Roneisha Campbell welcomed the SHTA Representative council to Mercer Elementary School. She apologized for the revamped space of the library because of the book fair taking place in the auditorium. She expressed her gratitude to teachers for the fantastic job that they do to make learning a wonderful experience for our students. She also said that she enjoyed working with Mercer SHTA Head Representative Eileen Sweeney and SHTA Secretary Lisa Hardiman. She then wished the Council well.

A motion for approval of the MINUTES from the November 13, 2023 Representative Council meeting was made by James Schmidt and seconded by Eileen Sweeney.

Administration Report

Director of Human Resources, Dr. Tiffany Joseph was present for the SHTA Representative Council Meeting. She reminded everyone that deadline for submitting paperwork for job sharing for the 2024-2025 school year is **March 1st**. These should be completed and given to either Stacy Poole or to Dr. Joseph. In addition, voluntary building transfers' paperwork deadline is **March 30th**. She also called attention to the fact that Human Resources Specialist, Nellie Brown, sent out an email to employees that stated that they are conducting a re-certification audit which began **January 22, 2024**. The audit does not apply to dental insurance. She noted that if both spouses work in the district, they do not need to complete the audit, but if this is not the case, they should complete the Spousal Coordination of Benefits (COB) form. Please look for this email from Nellie Brown.

- A question was asked by SHTA Legal Aid Chair James Schmidt: If members have missed last year's deadline for tuition reimbursement, can they submit the form during this calendar year for class work that was completed last year. Dr. Joseph said that she would get back to James with an answer.

SHTA President Dr. John Morris introduced **Shaker Heights Middle School Administrative Intern, Molly Kane**. She shared her experience during a fight between students at the middle school in October, 2023. She was taken to the emergency room as a result of suffering a head injury. She spoke of the importance of having increased security and Student Resource Officers (SROs) in every Shaker school building. She noted that this is the case in Mayfield, where her own children go to school.

PTO Report

PTO Council President Brooke Bribriesco was present for the Representative Council meeting. She said that The Martin Luther King Day communication email learning guide was sent out. The PTO is planning an event for **Monday, January 29th at 7:00pm**. Reverend Nontombi Naomi Tutu, daughter of the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and herself a well-known speaker and advocate for justice, will present an engaging discussion on the theme of our MLK Day celebration: Beloved Community: Civil Rights to Human Rights. The PTO is also planning to review procedures for the next school levy. In addition, the PTO plans to change school PTO units to K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. They are also hearing feelings from staff about moving the building facilities ahead by one year. President Bribriesco called attention to the week at the high school. She expressed her gratitude for everything that teachers do. She said any high school teachers who would like to reach out to the PTO, to please do so.

Officers' Reports

President, John Morris

- Spoke weekly with Superintendent David Glasner.
- Spoke regularly with Human Resource Director Dr. Tiffany Joseph.
- Updated Facebook page with SHTA Publications Editor Andrew Glasier.
- Helped a member with a sick day issue.
- Worked with members on compensation questions.
- Consulted with members on a grievance issue.
- Met with SHTA Vice President Darlene Garrison and SHTA Secretary Lisa Hardiman along with Director of School Leadership Felicia Evans and Director of Curriculum Dr. John Moore to discuss elementary schedule concerns with SHTA Constitution and By-Law Chair Tim Kalan and Head Fernway Representative Selena Boyer.
- Reviewed and signed off on ODE Synchronous Learning Calamity Day agreement along with district leadership.
- Worked with Special Educations Chair Tito Vazquez on member concerns.
- Met with Executive Board and Administration to meet new administrators.
- Communicated with SHTA lawyer Susannah Muskovitz on member concerns.
- Discussed security issues and asynchronous learning day with Dr. Glasner.
- Assisted a member with a transfer issue.
- Helped members with leave issues.
- Spoke with Woodbury Head Rep Stacey DeYoung about move concerns.
- Sent a position statement on safety.
- Discussed security concerns with SHTA Secretary Lisa Hardiman. Lisa spoke with Beachwood's Superintendent on their school resource officer program.
- Interviewed with Channel 19 News on district safety concerns with SHTA Treasurer Bill Scanlon.
- Attended High School SHTA building requested by a member and facilitated by HS Head Representative Jessica O'Brien.

Vice President, Darlene Garrison

- On December 11th, attended Elementary Schedule Feedback meeting with Members from Central Office and SHTA members.
- Worked with SSF Senior Administrative Assistant, Erica Verderber and SSF Executive Director, Holly Coughlin to create a letter to the staff explaining the Silent Auction for A Night for the Red & White.
 - SHTA Publications Chair, Andrew Glasier sent the letter out to the membership on December 15th.
- Completed paperwork to process reimbursements for the Dr. Rebecca L. Thomas Fellowship Grant.
 - Sent reimbursement checks to members who submitted receipts.
- Had a meeting with PTO representatives, Principal Eric Forman and SHTA Member Erin Melaragno to discuss possible ideas for Woodbury MLK Jr. Service-Project.
- Attended Mixer with the Central Office and SHTA Executive Board.
- On January 18th, I met with Principal Eric Forman and SHTA Rep. Stacy DeYoung to discuss any issues or concerns pertaining to Woodbury.
- Next PTO meeting is scheduled for February 27th.

Secretary, Lisa Hardiman

- Sent out invitations for SHTA meetings
- Took notes at SHTA Executive Board meetings and SHTA Representative Council Meetings

- Attended the SHTA/Administration mixer organized by Director of School Leadership Dr. Felecia Evans and SHTA President Dr. John Morris. It was a very nice event!
- Attended a second A-E schedule concerns meeting with Dr. Felecia Evans, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. John Moore, Dr. John Morris, Fernway Head Representative Selena Boyer, SHTA Policy Chair Tim Kalan, SHTA Vice President Darlene Garrison, and Director of Exceptional Children Elizabeth Kimmel.
- Participated in Mercer's Building Committee Meeting.
- Talked to members regarding mixed messages regarding the required gifted hours that teachers in grades 2-4 have to fulfill.
- Gave input on the letter to members about school safety.
- Spoke to Superintendent of Beachwood City Schools to gather more information on how police officers are utilized in their schools.

Treasurer William Scanlon

- Attended the Shaker Heights Administration/SHTA Executive Board Mixer.
- Spoke to accountant and discussed financial books for last fiscal year and tax form.
- Distributed financial report.

Building Representative Reports

Boulevard—Cathy Grieshop

- We are concerned about Literacy Specialists being used for testing. The students who have RIMPS are not able to get the interventions that they need. Some members are wondering if we really need to give the MAP and other tests 3 times a year. We have suggested to Principal Neal Robinson about hiring retired teachers to help during the assessment window.
- We have continued concerns about the difficulty in hiring Paraprofessionals and believe that if their pay was more enticing, we would keep more good people.
- Thank you to the Boulevard PTO for a delicious breakfast in December and thank you to Principal Neal Robinson for delicious lunches in December and January.

Fernway-Selena Boyer

- Attended meeting about schedule concerns with SHTA leadership and administration on December 11th
- Thank you to Building Leaders for great breakfast
- Thank you to PTO for fantastic lunch
- Listening to questions and concerns by members

Lomond-Kelly Grahl

- Lomond teachers continue to be dissatisfied with the district's seeming inability to adequately and coherently defend or at least present the *actual* merits of the current A-E schedule (not theoretical, but actual material benefits of this schedule as it unfolds every day in the elementary setting). Given this, we are also confused about the district's rumored plan to continue with the A-E schedule in the 2024-2025 school year despite the deluge of issues presented by each school building across multiple meetings throughout the summer and this school year so far. In simple terms, we ask the district this: Make it make sense.

Mercer-Eileen Sweeney

- Expressed appreciation for building administrators and front office personnel for the gifts and food in December.
- Thank you to Mercer's PTO.
- Agree with Lomond Head Representative, Kelly Grahl's report concerning A-E schedule.

Onaway—Noreen Smyth-Morrow

- Staff is still looking for clarification regarding proper protocols involving when students can be touched as well as guidelines for situational procedures and whether something is a behavior issue or not. Also, there is still a need for CPI training
- PreK is wrestling with structural issues that are stressing the efficacy of the program. As a program largely (and successfully) created by the staff, there is fear that the district's version of support is not satisfactory, and has caused a number of long-term staff to leave the program. I believe the staff is looking for clear guidelines, positive assistance/leadership, and a structure that supports the high-level 5-star program the district expects, as opposed to a day-care model. This will require better staffing and a much better form of communication.
- Special education models have left many with a feeling of confusion and lack of support. Decisions appear not to be motivated by facts-on-the-ground, but by some other obscure calculus. This has left vulnerable students and classrooms without proper support, and seems to directly contradict the very mission we have spent so much time discussing. The bottom line is that PREk-4 have not gotten direct answers to pertinent questions leaving staff on an island. Communication needs to improve.

Woodbury—Stacey DeYoung

- During the months of December and January, I met weekly with Principal Eric Forman. As of last week, two meetings per month are to include Darlene Garrison. This will assist in an awareness of needs for members in both grade levels.
- In December, I worked with members who had not received payment for work done during the summer and into the fall.
- Several members have shared that security personnel are not available when needed.
- I met with a member and administration to discuss an incident with another staff member.
- I worked with members concerning students fighting, and consequences (or lack thereof) for behavior.
- Since our return to school after Winter Break, I have met or assisted many members with concerns around the changes occurring in our district, especially the closing of Woodbury and the movement of the members to other buildings.
- Several questions have been asked by members since the announcement:
 - When will members find out about their new assignment?
 - Will there be teacher layoffs?
 - Will there be enough time during the school year for planning, packing, moving and communication?
 - Within the “transition teams”, is the teacher voice represented?

Middle School—John Koppitch

- The SHTA team met with Principal Mr. Thomas Flood regarding the schedule for next year, proposals were shared and feedback was welcomed.
- I met with Mr. Flood regarding teachers who are eligible for tenure this year.
- There were questions and concerns from teachers regarding their room placements and assignments for next year, with the sixth-grade students and staff coming to the Middle School.
- (Erika Pfeiffer) I met with Mr. Flood and the Building Committee, and we came to an agreement on the return of *Be There, Be Ready* and hall sweeps. The system started immediately and has been effective thus far.

High School—Jessica O'Brien

- Worked with a member on extending their FMLA, and discussed with Principal Mr. Eric Juli a long-term sub replacement.
- Filed a grievance on behalf of a member and the grievance was resolved within a week.
- Worked with SHTA President Dr. John Morris and two members on a potential grievance.
- Attended a fact-finding meeting with a member and high school Associate Principal James Dubsky.
- Attended mixer between SHTA Executive Board and administrators

- Met with the scheduling committee, with Curriculum & Instruction Director Dr. John Moore and Director of Leadership Dr. Felicia Evans over concerns for next year's schedule at the high school.
- Attended a fact-finding meeting with a member and Chief Strategic Priorities Office Dr. Marla Robinson.
- Attended a fact-finding meeting with a member and Assistant Principal Katie Slifkin and Associate Principal James Dubsy.
- Answered questions for members on contact hours, and waiver of planning time
- Met with Dr. Morris about concerns for next year's high school schedule.
- Met in multiple meetings with Mr. Juli, concerning committees and members concerning the issues on Jan 11th.
- Meet with a member about safety procedures that are not in place for some of our handicap students.
- Held a meeting on 1/18 of the High School SHTA to discuss members safety concerns.
- Discussed with members about filling out a waiver of planning time if helping in the cafeteria or opening up the classroom to allow students to eat lunch.

Innovative Center--Linda Roth

- Thank you to the PTO for catering a delicious lunch on the January PD day.
- Assistant Principal Isaiah Wyatt is working with the central administration to ensure the IC has coverage when our security guard is absent.
- The IC is eagerly awaiting a date for Superintendent Dr. David Glasner to visit the IC as part of his building tour and conversations about the long-term facilities plan.

Executive Board Reports

Publications—Andrew Glasier

- Created and edited and sent the SHTA newsletter.
- Sent newsletter to administrators & community.
- Sent out numerous emails for various Officers & SHTA PAC.
- I attended the SHTA/administration mixer.
- Editorial: Open Letter to the B.O.E.
- Along with SHTA Treasurer Bill Scanlon, I found and saved old SHTA Archives and placed them at home for now.
- Blurb due by Wednesday, January 24th by midnight.
- Representatives, if you hear of a member in your building who is not receiving the newsletter or other email communications, please have them email me directly.
- Evaluations: worked with a member along with Megan Dora on evaluation issues.
- Evaluation Committee meeting: had many issues to work on, and administrators only have 3 members, 2 that were there. I explained the process and have been asked to codify the process.

Evaluation - Lena Paskewitz

- Teachers should make sure the evaluation process is closed at the end of the year. Do not assume the administrator is pinning.
- Sending out intent forms for peer evaluations.
- First round of evaluations should be winding up.

Teacher Education-Wendy Lewis

- Attended SHTA/Administration mixer.
- Participated in the Building Committee Meeting at Woodbury. Principal Eric Foreman opened the floor for questions.
- Met with a member about graduate school credits.

Membership/Elections-Chante Thomas

- Attended SHTA/Administration mixer and it was a really nice event.
- Participated in Woodbury Building Committee Meeting which was informative.

Policy-Tim Kalan

- Attended SHTA/Administration mixer.
- Attended Teacher Evaluation meeting.
- Helped Head Representative [Noreen Smyth-Morrow](#) with personnel issues.
- Attended the meeting with SHTA leadership and administration regarding A-E schedule.

Public Relations-Bob Bognar

- Attended SHTA/Administration mixer.
- Hoping shirts will be printed by end of next week so hopefully every person who ordered a shirt should get one soon.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion-Angela Goodrum

- Attended an Equity Advisory Action Team (E.A.A.T) meeting with Dr. Burnley to discuss the future of the committee. As we approach changes within the district, hearing from People of Color (POC) is necessary to understand concerns that affect their workplace.
- As we approach Black History Month it allows us to revisit our history. As a former student with roots in Sweden shared, *Black history is everyone's history. Embrace the culture!*
- Chatted with the Student Ambassadors at Woodbury School about what it means to be an Anti-Racist. I utilize the book *AntiRacist Baby* by Ibram X. Kendi. It was wonderful to see young people taking a stand.

Special Education-Tito Vazquez

- Attended and participated in the SHTA Executive Board meeting and Representative Council meeting.
- Discussed various concerns with the Director of Exceptional Children Elizabeth Kimmel in the 7th of our monthly meetings.
- Worked with SHTA President Dr. John Morris over Exceptional Children concerns.
- Provided support to various SHTA members concerning issues including but not limited to job placement, personnel issues and work options.
- Participated in the SHTA/Shaker Administration "Mixer".
- Attended Shaker Heights High School Exceptional Children Department Meeting.
- Have communicated with Shaker Heights Exceptional Children Department Chairs Jessica Wilkes and Keesha Bryant over a variety of concerns in the district.
- Continue to work collaboratively with Shaker administrators, principals, assistant principals and Exceptional Children Supervisors K - 6 Erin Dzolic and 7 - 12 Supervisor Jennifer Currie on various issues to improve the functionality and support to the students and educators in the Exceptional Children Department in our district.

Legal Aid-James Schmidt

- No Report

Legislative-Dave Klapholz

- The Ohio Department of Education no longer exists (article by the Statehouse NewsBureau); we now have the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW). The significance of this is that the governor of the state now has the power to completely control education policy in the state.
- Also at the state level, current battles in education at the state level include: (1) reading (article in the Plain Dealer) and (2) school vouchers (article in the Ohio Capital Journal).

- The Illinois legislature is making book bans illegal (article from the Illinois Library System). Under the new law, the state will only fund libraries that reject the banning of materials.

Social-Darlene Garrison

- December 14th, met with Human Resources Specialist, Nellie Brown to discuss and create the agenda for the Annual Recognition Reception.
 - Completed application for the permit to use the Upper Cafeteria for the Recognition Reception.
 - Talked to AVI representative about menu for reception, will meet with Mark Jacobs at a later date.
- December 15th, met with Retired Teacher, Chuck Candel to discuss the Shaker Heights Retired Teachers’ Emeritus Award and added Mr. Candel to the agenda.
 - Talked to Human Resources Specialist, Nellie Brown about the Emeritus award and confirmed adding Mr. Candel to the agenda.
- Visited Midnight Owl to chat with owner Jeff about hosting a SHTA Happy Hour/Get Together on Friday, January 19th.
 - Created a flier for the event and Andrew Glasier shared it with the membership.
 - Event was canceled due to inclement weather and snow day.
 - Happy Hour rescheduled for Friday, February 9th at 4:15PM, same venue, new flier created and shared with the membership.

Building Safety and Sick Day Transfer-Matthew Zucca

- Assisted a member with Sick Day Transfer eligibility and requirements.
- Communicated with Tiffany Joseph, Director of Human Resources, and Shelley McDermott, Treasurer, regarding Sick Day Transfer procedures.
- Worked with James Schmidt with Sick Day Transfer questions.

PAC (at large)-Cathy Grishop and Jessica O’Brien

- HB 58 Transgender Rights Bill-passed in the Ohio House of Representatives and Senate but Governor vetoed it. Override of veto passed in the House and in the Senate.
- Updated tab on SHTA web page

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Old Business-None

New Business-None

Good of the Order-

- President Dr. John Morris thanked Mercer head representative for the pizza

Motion for adjournment was made by James Schmidt. It was seconded by Robert Bognar.

Meeting adjourned at 5:52 pm.

***Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Hardiman***

SHTA January Representative Council Meeting at Mercer School



An Open Letter to the B.O.E. concerning the Future of Woodbury

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.

Dear Board Members,

As a 23-year Woodbury teacher and Mercer parent, I'm invested in our schools' success. While the district does remarkable work, the district decision-making processes need improvement. Decisions by central administration often feel rushed without thoroughly consulting faculty/staff affected the most. I urge broader consultation to foster open dialogue.

Key issues and potential solutions concerning the closing of Woodbury School & central administration decisions making:

- 1. Fifth Grade Academic Programming:**
 - Accelerating IB PYP alignment is unrealistic for adequate teacher preparation. More gradual implementation and support are needed.
 - Solutions include prioritizing teacher collaboration, adjusting district expectations for PYP implementation, and appointing a PYP transition coordinator.
- 2. Communication Issues:**
 - Transparency is crucial and lacking in many areas. Clarify the stakeholder input process and increase openness about decision-making.
- 3. District Created Working Groups:**
 - Appreciate the initiative but they lack transparency. Solutions include releasing member rosters and providing regular updates.
 - Develop opportunities for stakeholder input.
- 4. Supporting Fifth Grade Teacher Transitions:**
 - Propose practical measures like early school year closure for relocation preparation.
 - Ensure all K - 8 teachers have early access to new classroom spaces. Hire extra custodial staff if needed.
 - Prioritize extra August 2024 classroom prep time over other district workshops so teachers can orient to new spaces and cultures.
- 5. Student Social-Emotional Needs:**
 - Focus on students' emotional well-being through focus groups and additional counselor support. Be proactive instead of reactive.
- 6. Teacher Staffing and Resource Needs for Detracting:**
 - Teachers need more support staff to effectively implement de-tracked classrooms.
 - **Detracted Classrooms require:**
 - More co-teachers, specialists, assistants for small groups and targeted instruction and smaller class sizes.

- More counselors and social workers to handle student mental health and behavioral needs.
 - The **restructuring of the district is a perfect opportunity to hire/relocate additional staff** to support the important work of meeting the needs of students in various levels of our classrooms.
7. **Continuing Excellence in Arts, Language & Music Education:**
- Involve specialized teachers in transition planning and address current staffing shortages. Many of our single-subject teachers are stretched thin. We must take active steps to preserve Shaker's legacy of excellence in the arts.
8. **Staff Feedback Surveys:**
- Implement regular (bi-yearly), anonymous staff surveys to guide decision-making and policy proposals. Or better yet, come talk to us.
9. **Consider Accelerating the Plan:**
- Accelerating the construction timeline raises reasonable questions about ensuring student and staff stability. Before significantly speeding up plans without expansive input, all stakeholders should work together and be heard.
10. **Woodbury's Current State:**
- Conduct anonymous surveys to understand staff perspectives on the transition and to get specific feedback.
 - As it stands many teachers (veterans and nontenured staff) are reluctant to share their honest opinions except under the umbrella of anonymity. This is another issue.

I'm very excited about our new facilities upgrades and developmentally appropriate K-5 and 6-8 buildings. With proper training, I know that I could do an excellent job for my students, no matter where I'm placed. However, I'm worried that compressed timelines could mean underprepared implementation of new academic models.

Beautiful new structures are meaningless without excellence inside them as well. Rushing this transition without adequate teacher and staff training and support jeopardizes instructional quality and student outcomes.

A collaborative approach involving diverse voices is essential for a successful transition. Open and transparent dialogue is key, not only for me as a Shaker Heights teacher but also for my daughter as a student.

Sincerely,
Aquita Shepherd
Woodbury Elementary School (2001 -?)

This letter was edited for length.