

IMPOTANT DATES

Tuesday, February 25, 2025
Board of Education Work Session

Monday, March 3, 2025
SHTA Executive Board Meeting -
Fernway

Tuesday, March 4, 2025
Board of Education Meeting

Monday, March 10, 2024
SHTA Representative Council Meeting
– Middle School

SHTA *news*

February 18, 2025

ISSUE #5

Message from the President

I agree with the recent assessment that “January 2025 was the longest month in American History.” I can’t deny it. But here we are in February and I am still grateful for my job teaching the students of Shaker Heights and working with the professionals of the Shaker Heights Teachers’ Association. It’s been an active month and with our “Shaker Heights Teachers’ Association Educators Prepared to Protect Rights and Safety of All Students” statement, you may have noticed that we have once again veered into advocacy for political issues, as we did during the era of SB5 and the attempt to dismantle our collective bargaining rights.

There is a commonly held and understandable perception that the SHTA is an apolitical union. While we don’t use our resources to endorse or donate to individual candidates, we do engage in position statements about issues that impact educators and education policy, and we do have a Political Action Committee (PAC) that can, does, and will engage more directly. Our Constitution and By-Laws state, “No funds from the Association treasury shall be used directly for the purpose of donations to elected officials or candidates seeking office” (pg. 20). However, there is nothing in our Constitution and By-Laws (<http://www.shtaweb.org/>) that prevents us from making statements on political issues that directly impact our profession, our mission, and our community. I would argue that, given the present political environment, it’s a necessity.

Thankfully, we have a Political Action Committee (PAC), presently chaired by Eileen Sweeney and Jessica O’Brien that makes even more direct advocacy work possible. In our Constitution and By-Laws it states: *The Association will sponsor a Political Action Committee (a special committee appointed by the president) whose purpose will be to support political issues relevant to the purposes of the Association. Representative Council may direct the building representatives to solicit voluntary monetary contributions from the membership for the PAC. All contributions will be sent to the Treasurer, who will deposit these funds into an account kept specifically for this purpose, and will then forward the funds according to the directive of the PAC. No funds from the PAC treasury shall be used directly for the purpose of donations to elected officials or candidates seeking office (SHTA Constitution and By-Laws pg. 21-22)*

Again, we are in the new era of attacks on collective bargaining rights and academic freedom as we were during SB5. Our PAC will be writing letters, phoning state and federal legislators, attending rallies, and sharing information with membership. This is what a union does. If you are so moved, you are welcome to contact our SHTA Treasurer Bill Scanlon about making a donation to our PAC (Venmo QR code below). I also know that there are plans for fundraising in the near future and, by the time this newsletter is released, you will have been

updated on opportunities for opposing SB1 (<https://weareohio.com/uncategorized/sb-1-the-worst-attack-on-working-people-since-sb-5/>) that will be released within the coming week.

To contribute to SHTA PAC through Venmo or CashApp, use these QR codes and put SHTA PAC in the subject line.



January was a typically busy month. I spoke with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner regularly. I communicated with Human Resource Director Dr. Tiffany Joseph regularly. I spoke with Assistant Superintendent of Business & Operations Jeff Grosse about resource issues. I updated the SHTA Facebook page with Publications Editor Andrew Glasier. I communicated with Special Education Chair Tito Vazquez on Intervention Specialists concerns. I met with the Negotiations Team for the pre-ratification vote Q&A at the Middle School. I communicated with building Head Representatives about paycheck concerns. I communicated with Past President Dr. Becky Thomas about the passing of Former Professional Rights and Responsibilities' Chair and SHTA Legend Gary Raymont (please see the end of this newsletter for our tribute). I communicated paycheck concerns with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner, Assistant Superintendent of Learning & Teaching Dr. Felecia Evans, and Treasurer Mr. Donté Hayes. I worked on a paycheck issue with a member, along with Mercer Head Rep Eileen Sweeney and Professional Rights & Responsibilities Chair Mike Sears. I communicated with members about the upcoming contract pay increase. I also asked Publications Editor Andrew Glasier to send out emails to the membership concerning when we should see the increase. I communicated with our new SHTA lawyer, Brooks Boron, on member and negotiations issues. I worked with members on HB 8 concerns I communicated with a member about the PowerSchool data leak. I collaborated with Officers and Executive Board Members on our "Shaker Heights Teachers' Association Educators Prepared to Protect Rights and Safety of All Students" Statement. I met with Dr. Glasner and district bargaining units on issues related to the Woodbury transition. I met with SHTA Negotiations Team and Administration Negotiations Team to sign our new three-year contract agreement.

Again, I continue to be grateful for my profession and my colleagues in the SHTA and beyond. Our solidarity with our union siblings in other teachers' unions, both independent and affiliated, is vital for our survival as a collective bargaining unit. We also must look beyond our own Pre-K to 12 public school environments to the colleges and universities our students will attend. I would even encourage you to extend your sense of labor solidarity to other unions throughout our state and country and support the American Labor Movement in any ways you can. It looks like it's going to be another long four years and we have to be here for each other and reach beyond our comfort zones to protect our essential collective bargaining rights. I also encourage you all to become familiar with our latest Agreement, as well as our Constitution and By-Laws. These are also the foundations of our identity as members of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. As always, if I can be of assistance or clarify any of our position, do not hesitate to reach out to me at morris_j@shaker.org or X6033.

*Respectfully submitted,
John Morris*

The SHTA PAC is on



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

OFFICERS' REPORTS

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Winter Parent-Teacher conferences have just ended and I hope each of you had productive meetings with parents concerning our students. The school year is going by so fast, hard to believe Spring is right around the corner. This month I assisted two SHTA members with personnel issues. I communicated with Shaker Schools Foundation Senior Administrative Assistant Erica Verderber and Executive Director Holly McCormick concerning ticket sales for the Night for the Red and White 2025. The next PTO Council meeting I will be attending has been rescheduled to Wednesday, March 5th.

Members are encouraged to attend this year's "A Night for the Red and White" at The Agora Theater and Ballroom. Every dollar raised will go towards educating, empowering, and engaging our students! Tickets for staff members are priced at a discounted \$125 which includes: dinner, dancing, valet & 2 drink tickets. So, we hope to see you on Saturday, March 8th at 7:00 PM at The Agora Theater and Ballroom. You may purchase tickets using this link: [Staff Tickets](#). Please consider donating a unique item or experience to the Silent Auction for A Night for the Red & White. The Silent Auction is a favorite part of the event, especially when it involves unique experiences offered by staff members. These kinds of donations bring in funds and create lasting memories for students and their families. Here are a few creative ideas:

Personalized School Experiences:

- Principal/teacher/coach for a day
- Behind-the-Scenes at a School Event

Fun, Interactive Learning:

- Cooking classes/ baking sessions/crafting or DIY workshop
- Round of golf

Exclusive Social Events:

- Lunch with a teacher or staff member
- Movie night or bowling party
- Collect gift cards for a themed basket

Educational and Cultural Experiences:

- Tickets to an event
- Museum membership or family package

Please be creative! Complete the attached [Silent Auction Agreement form](#) and return it to Erica Verderber at the Administration Building or email verderber_e@shaker.org by February 21, 2025. This year's Red & White will feature an online silent auction, two raffle packages, a Student Showcase with student performances, and a K-12 art show.

Members have been submitting their receipts for the Dr. Rebecca L. Thomas Fellowship Grant. I encourage all Fellowship Grant recipients to forward receipts for their professional development to me, in order to receive your reimbursement. Once you submit your receipt, it takes 2-3 weeks to process your reimbursement.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me at ext. #4997.

Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Most of us know that although February usually only has 28 days, it is the longest month of the school year. The holidays are long gone, the snow is no longer white, we have not seen the sun in what seems like forever, the temperature refuses to climb past freezing, and ahhh the students. Well ...I'll just leave it right there.

I have spent the majority of these last few months working hard to get our Collective Bargaining Agreement passed. On Wednesday, January 22nd, it did! Our Agreement didn't just pass, it was overwhelmingly ratified by 95.6% of SHTA's voting membership! To the 378 people who voted in favor, on behalf of the entire negotiating team, THANK YOU! It was truly an honor to participate in this very challenging process.

Each month as SHTA Secretary, I email meeting invitations to the Executive Board and Representative Council. These meetings take place on the first and second Monday of each month respectively.

Prior to the vote, I participated in the discussion at Shaker Heights Middle School addressing the tentative agreement. All members were invited, but it was not very well attended. I guess that was a good sign that members were satisfied with the information that had been already shared. I also participated in a number of individual explanations and conversations about the tentative agreement. I reminded members to vote on January 22nd and the day before. I have also answered questions about the raise. People asked when they can expect to see the 2% raise in their paychecks. The answer is on March 1st, members should see the increase retroactive to the beginning of 2025.

I was also in a number of conversations with members who did not receive their paychecks on the date that it was expected. One particular member did not receive hers until 2 days after payday.

This month I participated in Mercer's Building Committee meeting. Please see members of your school's Building Committee if you have non-contractual concerns that you would like to be addressed.

Each year, I organize the SHTA Night of the Red & White Drawing. This month I distributed materials for the drawing that will take place on February 28th. There will be three winners, each awarded two tickets to A Night for the Red & White on March 8th at the Agora. All materials were given to the head representatives in each of our eight buildings. PLEASE consider purchasing a chance to attend this annual event free of charge.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please contact me at hardiman_1@shaker.org or ext. #4867.

*Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Hardiman*

TREASURER'S REPORT

Happy February everyone. On Saturday, February 8th, Eileen Sweeney and I attended a Resistance Fair at Cleveland Heights/University Heights High School. Although it lacked in direct action opportunities, a large list of organizations fighting our current U.S. President's agenda had information and fliers. The amount of people who showed up was impressive, a line stretched out the door and down the block. Being in that cafeteria was a little daunting to be honest. Where do you start? With the attempted shutting down of the Department of Education? With the ending of all DEI initiatives in Government Agencies? With the attacks and raids on

immigrants? With the threat of attacks on our collective bargaining rights here in Ohio? There's so much that I find troubling. It leaves me with an overwhelming sense of loss. If you also feel sometimes overwhelmed by it all, I will suggest you choose one issue you feel really strongly about. Choose that one issue and make it your thing, your focus. Become an expert at what different organizations are doing to fight for change. Here is a [list of 25 organizations](#) working for different social justice issues. Peruse this list and find one thing worth dedicating your efforts to.

I communicated with our accountants at Edward Hawkins & Co., Ltd. to prepare our end-of-year tax forms and to provide information about our financials from last year. They perform a Compilation on our books every year and an Audit every four years. Last year's books get a Compilation. Next year's will be Audited.

I communicated with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones representative about our investments. I paid bills and paid our Negotiation fees. A full financial report will be included in next month's report.

*Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon*



**SHTA OFFICERS AT THE
FEBRUARY
REPRESENTATIVE
COUNCIL MEETING AT
SHAKER HEIGHTS HIGH.**

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT

On Friday January 31st, members contacted me regarding their 2/1/25 paychecks. No one had received their email notifications from Payroll Supervisor Jennifer Browne. I spoke with Treasurer Donte Hays, and he assured me those notifications would be received by the end of the day. I received mine at 1:56 PM. Most employees received their direct deposits on or before Saturday February 1st, as expected. In some cases, direct deposits were not received until Monday, February 3rd. Mr. Hays and Ms. Browne have both promised that this will not happen again, as employees are expected to be paid on the 1st and 16th of each month. I am pleased to report that email notifications for the 2/16 paycheck were received on Thursday, February 13th, and many employees received their direct deposits on Friday, February 14th. Thank you to both Mr. Hayes and Ms. Browne for all their hard work making this happen.

I attended both the February Executive Board and Representative Council meetings. I spoke to a member with questions about leaves of absence and sabbatical leave. I continue to work with members transitioning back to work after FMLA. I communicated with members with questions about both maternity and paternity leave. I assisted Middle School Head building representative with reminding members to vote on January 23rd and collected paper ballots at the end of the school day. Thank you to all who voted for our new collective bargaining agreement. I met with High School Head building representative Jessica O'Brien about possible contract violations at the high school. I answered members questions about Delta Dental. The Insurance Committee is scheduled to meet on February 26th. If any members are having challenges with claims, please email me before this meeting. I will bring your concerns to the attention of the committee.

In order to register with Delta Dental, follow the directions below:

Access cards via the Member Portal (<https://www.deltadentaloh.com/#>) or you just need to tell the dentist that you have Delta Dental and they can look you up.

When you go to the Member Portal, you have to register your account first, and then you can log in. After logging in, look in the upper right corner of the screen for this button.

[VIEW AND PRINT MEMBER ID CARD](#)

*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 are available to answer your evaluation questions and concerns. The 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.

All educators and administrators must complete the re-credentialing process every two years. Most educators participating in the Peer Evaluation Program will be due to take the re-credentialing exam this calendar year. Evaluators will be notified sixty days before their credential will lapse and again thirty days prior. Access the Insight Advance website <https://ohio.insightadvance.com/> to view your current certificate, use the Resource Library, and to take the Teacher Recredentialing Assessment 2.0.

Consider participation in the Peer Evaluation Program for the 2025-2026 school year! The program offers Shaker educators the unique opportunity to delve into the process with a colleague. If you have not participated in the past and would like insight about the program, reach out to a participating colleague or one of the coordinators. ***Please remember that ALL participants, new or returning, must complete the application form and be approved every year.*** A three-day training and credentialing assessment are required when first becoming credentialed, with the aforementioned calibration exam every two years. Participants must also be on a continuing contract. Applications will be sent in early spring from the Department of Human Resources. 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.

Respectfully submitted,
Lena Paskewitz, chairperson

SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Over the past month, I attended the Executive Board and the Representative Council meetings. I met with the Director of Student Services, Dr. Meghan Shelby, regarding Special Education concerns across the district. I worked with SHTA President Dr. John Morris regarding Special Education concerns. I have worked with Shaker Heights High School Head Rep. Jessica O'Brien regarding various staff concerns. Ms. O'Brien and I met with Assistant Principal Lisa Demkowicz, and Exceptional Children Department chairs Tana Thompson and Keesha Woodruff, to discuss SPED issues and solutions. I discussed fact-finding notification with a member; met with a member about a teacher's concerns about a student's safety plan not being adequate. I have counseled a member concerning a fact-finding meeting. I have communicated with Shaker Heights High School principal, Mr. Isaiah Wyatt, with a follow up over an equipment concern. I communicated with 7-12 Exceptional Children Supervisor Jennifer Curre concerning staffing issues and K-6 Supervisor Erin Dzolic over a potential workload concern. I have communicated with Shaker Heights High School Student Services Department Chairs Tana Thompson and Keesha Woodruff discussing concerns at the high school. I communicated with Director of Human Resources Dr. Tiffany Joseph regarding a potential contract concern. I work collaboratively with Shaker Heights High School Assistant Principal Ms. Patricia Rashid regarding schedule concerns for the benefit of both students and teachers. Finally, thank you to Shaker Heights High School Principal Mr. Isaiah Wyatt for taking the time to listen and act on the concerns that come up in the Exceptional Children's Department and looking to remedy those concerns.

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

POLICY COMMITTEE

Today's constitutional focus is on ARTICLE V **MEMBERSHIP**. Part A. states:

Any certificated employee of the Shaker Heights City School District who is employed as a Teacher or a Support Teacher becomes a member upon payment of annual dues.

- 1. Each member has the individual right to participate in the affairs of the Association and to attend the regularly scheduled meetings of the Representative Council.*

Only a dues paying member is entitled to these benefits. It is this support of our Association that contributes to our negotiations and our bargaining power that affords members access to the Association's support, advice, and the ability to contribute to our policy and problem-solving discussions.

*Respectfully submitted,
Tim Kalan, Chairperson*

MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Happy February! This short month is packed with so many of my favorite celebrations and holidays from Black History Month, to Mardi Gras, Valentine’s Day and President’s Day. Lastly, we finish payroll deductions for dues this month. I hope you find the time to enjoy this short month.

Thank you for your overwhelming support and participation in the contract ratification vote. The head representatives did an amazing job monitoring the schoolwide voting and encouraging members to vote. If you were absent and still voted off site, thank you. The ability to vote with google form simplifies this process and allows me to provide results in a timely manner. All of you rock. Thank you for staying engaged!

Payroll deduction for SHTA dues began with the October 1st paycheck - \$33 per pay for 10 pays. Most of our members’ payment for dues will be complete after the February 16th paycheck deduction. At this time, we have 469 members of SHTA.

The 2024-2025 Elected Representative Council Members are:

Boulevard- Cathy Grieshop, Heather Pincoe (WO)

Onaway- Noreen Smyth- Morrow, Stacey DeYoung (WO), Alison Colvin (Pre-K)

Fernway- Jamie Harden, Lee Appel (WO)

Lomond- Kelly Grahl, Lauren Meek, Sherri Jarvie (WO)

Mercer- Eileen Sweeney

Middle School- Kevin Thomas, Erika Pfeiffer, Melissa Albrecht and Marie O’Leary Stark (WO)

High School – Jessica O’Brien, Jayce Bailey, Cathay Szendrey, Enid Vazquez, Adam Cohen, Aimee Grey, Joel Rathbone, Raina Li (WO)

IC- Linda Roth

Thank you for continuing to notify me with changes in roster or membership. If I can be of assistance, do not hesitate to contact me at thomas_c@shaker.org.

*Respectfully submitted,
Chante Thomas, chairperson*

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

African American history is a vital part of our history. Today, we are encountering a push back nationally on educating our children about Black history. As a district, it is refreshing to know that we stand on principles of inclusivity even when it is not popular. Our continued efforts to ensure all are represented in the classroom is pivotal. Understanding the importance of our history and how it currently affects our African American community and their navigation daily has to be addressed.

I have noticed that the more I research, the more I learn about the intricacies of our history. Did you know the Tignon laws of the 18th century were laws that banned black women from exposing their natural hair in public? Their hairdos were obscuring the status of the white women and this threatened social stability. The law would control colored women “who dressed too elegantly...” Resembling today’s West African Gele, a tignon is a type of head-covering. It is a large piece of material wrapped or tied around the head to form a kind of turban concealing the hair. Tignons were worn by free and slave Creole women of African descent in Louisiana from 1786. Historically, their prevalence was as a result of sumptuary laws passed in 1786 under Governor Esteban Rodriguez Miró. These prescribed and enforced appropriate public dress styles for women of color in a white-dominated society. Hence, they were made as a way of regulating the appearance of black women in the U.S. During the period, when black enslavement in America was at its peak, and places like New Orleans was unique in its high population of gens de couleur libres (free people of color), black women’s beauty and features often attracted white men who approached them as suitors. This enraged white women who perceived them as competitors. Evidently, African women competed openly with white women through elegant dressing, including adorning their textured hair with gems, beads, and other accents that made them stand out from white women and possessing great beauty. (African American Archives) Today, African Americans value the importance of both inward and outward appearances because of the historical mindset.

*Respectfully submitted,
Angela Goodrum, Chairperson*

BUILDING SAFETY & SICK DAY TRANSFER COMMITTEE

This month I answered member questions regarding the Sick Day Transfer program. I communicated with those head building reps. who have members in the Sick Day Transfer program. I worked with members of the payroll department to help with the sick day transfer process. Currently there are six active members participating in the Sick Day Transfer program. Over 430 days have been pledged thus far.

I attended the SHTA Contract informational meeting at the Middle School on Jan. 15th. I want to express my gratitude and thank the members of the Negotiations Team for their tireless efforts in producing a strong contract. If you have any questions regarding sick day transfer or building safety, please reach out to me at 216-295-4692 or zucca_m@shaker.org.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Matt Zucca, Chairperson*

NEW TEACHER COMMITTEE

Greetings everyone. Things are quiet in the world of Teacher Education in Shaker, but an entirely different circumstance for education in our Nation. As we struggle through these uncertain times, please give yourselves credit for all that you do. As always, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at: lewis_g@shaker.org. “Education is the most powerful tool you can use to change the world.”- Nelson Mandela.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Gwendolyn “Wendy” Lewis, Chairperson*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

This month I have a few updates on the new presidential administration and their actions in the field of education, as well as information on a new proposed bill in the state of Ohio. This time of the year is a transition time for both the federal and state governments, so new policies will be introduced and discussed as the year unfolds. Here are some new items you may want to be aware of:

- **New Presidential Administration Update:** In his first week back in office, President Donald Trump issued a series of executive orders and policy changes that could impact schools. His administration reversed Biden-era protections for LGBTQ+ students under Title IX, allowing a more restrictive interpretation of sex discrimination. Immigration enforcement policies were also altered, removing protections that previously limited ICE arrests on school grounds. Additionally, the administration disbanded a federal school safety advisory board, froze hiring at the Department of Education, and began rolling back diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, signaling a shift in federal education policy. ([more info here](#))
- **Immigration and Schools:** The Trump administration revoked a long-standing policy that restricted immigration enforcement at schools, allowing ICE and Border Patrol agents to conduct arrests and raids on school grounds. Critics argue this move could create a "chilling effect," discouraging undocumented families from sending their children to school due to fear of deportation. Legal experts and school leaders are urging schools to uphold students' rights under federal law, including protections established by the 1982 *Plyler v. Doe* decision, which guarantees all children access to public education regardless of immigration status. ([more info here](#))
- **Presidential Administration Education Policy Update:** President Trump signed orders to expand school choice funding and stop what he calls "radical indoctrination" in schools. One order directs federal agencies to help states use funds for private and faith-based schools. Another blocks funding for schools teaching certain equity policies. Agencies must propose plans to remove such content within 90 days. Trump also signed an order to address antisemitism on college campuses. ([more info here](#))
- **SB 1** - Ohio Sen. Jerry Cirino has reintroduced Senate Bill 1 to limit perceived liberal bias in colleges by banning faculty strikes, ending DEI training, and requiring an American history course. Supporters say it promotes intellectual diversity, while critics argue it threatens academic freedom and workers' rights. The bill has renewed support in the Ohio House, sparking protests and debate. ([more info here](#))

*Respectfully Submitted,
Matt Klodor, Chairperson*

SHTA PAC COMMITTEE

The past month, we met to discuss and develop an Action Alert surrounding the new Trump Administration's immigration policy. We hope our members will contact their senators and representatives to share their opposition to the policy. There is a lot of confusion and concern related to teacher's rights and requirements outlined in House Bill 8. We are working to help staff understand teacher and student's rights. The PAC is working on contacting other unions to collaborate on political policies that impact our students and public education. We are continuously updating our Facebook page. We hope to develop a funding stream for the PAC. Funding resources are critical to engage our colleagues to take action.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Eileen Sweeney & Jessica O'Brien, Chairpersons*

SALARY TENURE REPORT

Thank you all for voting on the contract on Wednesday, January 22nd. Our Election's Chair Chante Thomas and all of our building Head Representative were essential in making this vote happen. As Chante shared, these are the results from the 2025 Contract Ratification Vote.

The results were as follows:

95.6% (378) approve the contract

0.007% (3) abstain

0.35% (14) no

There were 395 votes cast

132- High School

93- Middle School

34- Onaway

35 - Mercer

45- Lomond

31 - Fernway

23- Boulevard

2- IC

I am again very grateful to the hard work and dedication of the negotiating team: Darlene Garrison (Middle School – Vice President), Lisa Hardiman (Mercer - Secretary), Mike Sears (Middle School - Professional Rights and Responsibilities), David Klapholz (High School), Wendy Lewis (Mercer – Teacher Education Chair), James Schmidt (High School), Matt Klodor (Middle School – Legislative Chair) and our Association attorney, Susannah Muskovitz.

Our new contract is complete and was reviewed by both the SHTA and district legal teams for accuracy. It has been vetted, and we signed the contract on February 10th. Optimally, you should see the change in your new pay rate (including your retro pay dating back to January 1) in your paycheck by March 1st. Thanks for your patience in this matter. It was essential that we made sure that every detail in the contract is correct.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. John Morris, Chairperson

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

SHTA President, Dr. John Morris started the February 10, 2025 Representative Council Meeting at PM. **The meeting took place at Shaker Heights High School.** Dr. Morris introduced *Shaker Heights High School's Interim Principal Mr. Isaiah Wyatt* to the Representative Council.

Shaker Heights High Schools Interim Principal, Isaiah Wyatt wished a good afternoon and welcomed the SHTA Representative Council to Shaker Heights High School. He introduced himself and said that at the high school we are working on being stronger together and that is made possible because of the people in the room. He emphasized that administrators are trying hard and he knows teachers are too. He ended by saying that we should all keep working together and to go easy on the notes.

A motion for approval of the MINUTES from the January 13, 2025 Representative Council meeting was made by James Schmidt and seconded by Tim Kalan.

Administration Report

Director of Human Resources, Dr. Tiffany Joseph was present for the SHTA Representative Council Meeting. She reminded everyone that time sharing and reduced time requests are due by March 1st. Also, Voluntary Transfer requests are due March 30th.

Officers' Reports

President, John Morris

- Spoke with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner regularly.
- Communicated with HR Director Dr. Tiffany Joseph regularly.
- Spoke with Assistant Superintendent of Business & Operations Jeff Grosse about resource issues.
- Updated the SHTA Facebook page with Publications Editor Andrew Glasier.
- Communicated with Special Education Chair Tito Vazquez on IS concerns.
- Met with the Negotiations Team for the pre-ratification vote Q&A at the Middle School.
- Communicated with building Head Representatives about paycheck concerns.
- Communicated with Past President Dr. Becky Thomas about the passing of Former Professional Rights and Responsibilities' Chair and SHTA Legend Gary Raymont.
- Communicated paycheck concerns with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner, Assistant Superintendent of Learning & Teaching Dr. Felecia Evans, and Treasurer Mr. Donté Hayes.
- Worked on a paycheck issue with a member, along with Mercer Head Rep Eileen Sweeney and PR&R Chair Mike Sears.
- Communicated with members about the upcoming contract pay increase.
- Asked Publications Editor Andrew Glasier to send out emails to the membership concerning when we should see the salary increase.
- Communicated with our new SHTA lawyer, Brooks Boron, on member and negotiations issues.
- Worked with members on HB 8 concerns and I communicated with a member about the PowerSchool data leak.
- Collaborated with Officers and Executive Board Members on our "Shaker Heights Teachers Association Educators Prepared to Protect Rights and Safety of All Students" Statement.
- Met with Dr. Glasner and district bargaining units on issues related to the Woodbury transition.
- Met with SHTA Negotiations Team and Administration Negotiations Team to sign our contract agreement.

Salary-Tenure

- Thank you all for voting on the contract on Wednesday, January 22nd. Our Election's Chair Chante Thomas and all of our building Head Representatives were essential in making this vote happen. As Chante shared, these are the results from the 2025 Contract Ratification Vote.
- The results were as follows:
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 - 2- IC
- I am again very grateful to the hard work and dedication of the negotiating team: Darlene Garrison (Middle School – Vice President), Lisa Hardiman (Mercer - Secretary), Mike Sears (Middle School - Professional Rights and Responsibilities), David Klapholz (High School), Wendy Lewis (Mercer – Teacher Education Chair), James Schmidt (High School- Legal Aid), Matt Klodor (Middle School – Legislative Chair) and our Association attorney, Susannah Muskovitz.
- Our new contract is complete and is being reviewed by both the SHTA and district legal teams for accuracy. It has been vetted, and we signed the contract on February 10th. Optimally, you should see the change in your new pay rate (including your retro pay dating back to January 1) in your paycheck by March 1st. Thanks for your patience in this matter. It was essential that we make sure that every detail is the contract is correct.

Vice President, Darlene Garrison

- Processed paperwork for Fellowship Grant reimbursements.
 - Mailed checks to members
- Assisted two members with a personnel issue.
- Attended the signing of the Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Communicated with Shaker Schools Foundation Senior Administrative Assistant Erica Verderber and Executive Director Holly McCormick concerning ticket sales for the Night for the Red and White.
 - Thinking of ideas for the SHTA donation to the Silent Auction
 - Three winners will be selected, each receiving two staff member tickets (\$125 each).
 - Reduced staff tickets can be purchased for \$125 online or through four payroll deductions. (Payroll deduction will be in March and April.) Staff can buy up to 2 tickets. Includes dinner, dancing, valet, and 2 drink tickets.
- Will attend the February 18th PTO Council meeting.

Secretary, Lisa Hardiman

- Emailed invites for Representative Council meetings
- Emailed invites for Executive Board Meetings
- Along with the rest of the negotiating team, I participated in the discussion about the contract at the middle school
- Participated in numerous explanations and discussions about the contract
- Reminded members to vote on the contracts

- Talked to members who did not have their paycheck deposited in their bank account when expected
- Answered questions about when members see their raises in their paychecks
- Participated in Mercer's Building Committee Meeting
- Prepared, distributed, and explained materials for the annual SHTA Drawing. Drawing will take place on February 28th. There will be 3 winners chosen who will receive two tickets each for A Night for the Red & White. This event will take place March 8th at The Agora Ballroom.

Treasurer William Scanlon

- Spoke with accountants and have to get forms back to them
- Communicated with Secretary Lisa Hardiman regarding the SHTA Drawing-if a member pays by Venmo, ask the head representative for the link. Then email me with your **Name, SHTA Raffle, and Building.**

Building Representative Reports

Boulevard-Cathy Grieshop, Heather Pincoe (WO)

- We are thankful for the Friday snacks the Boulevard PTO provided.
- Attended the Building committee meeting
- Assisted with sick day donations for a staff member.
- Reminded members to vote on election day.

Fernway-Jamie Harden, Lee Appel (WO)

- January 14, 2025 Sent an email encouraging members to attend the Negotiation team meeting held at the Middle School on 1/15/25.
- January 15, 2025 attended Negotiation team meeting
- January 15, 2025 sent email to members about Legacy Scholarship
- January 16, 2025 Building Committee meeting: The Issue about the cleanliness of the building (along with other issues) was further discussed during the Building Committee meeting because the issue is more related to Building Committee concerns.
- January 23, 2025 An email was sent to all members reminding them to vote on the Contract Ratification along with the ballot link in the morning. We (Jamie and Lee) visited every member who was present to remind them to vote and answer any questions during the day. An announcement was also made over the PA system to remind members to vote an hour before the polls closed.
- January 24, 2025 A member contacted me concerned about the difficulty of locating the new insurance cards. I followed up with the member on 1/27/25 and an email was forwarded to Mr. Sears and Mr. Morris regarding the concern.

Lomond-Kelly Grahl, Sherri Jarvie (WO)

- Question: when payday falls on a weekend, money has always been available. Is it going to continue this way?
 - John Morris' response: he relayed information from the Treasurer that the district is not obligated to give paycheck in advance. He knows our concerns and will continue the conversation about this issue

Mercer-Eileen Sweeney

- Met with interim principal Mrs. Carmen Chung for the monthly SHTA and administration meeting.
 - Several doors were not operating appropriately causing safety concerns.
 - The floors of the building are very slick. We requested additional rugs to ensure staff and student safety.
 - The parking lot is not being plowed before staff arrival time. This created safety concerns.

- The staff wants access to the building during long breaks to prepare for student's return to class.
- I met with Mrs. Chung to follow up on the issues. The doors were fixed and more rugs were added to high-traffic areas in the building.
- I met with most members to answer any questions or concerns they had about the collective bargaining agreement. I emailed all staff on the day of the vote to remind them to vote. I walked around the building to personally remind staff.
- I emailed all SHTA members to alert them of the payroll issues. I continue to support a staff member who did not receive her pay until February 3rd. I sat in on a phone call with the member and Jennifer Browne to understand why the pay was late. This caused many of our members undue stress and anxiety. This situation is unacceptable.
- We attended the contract Q&A event at the middle school.
- Completed the SB1 opposition letter and called various representatives.
- Mercer staff appreciates the PTO for providing breakfast on Friday, February 7th!
- Big shout out to Chante Thomas for organizing the CBA vote! Thank you for creating a smooth voting process and communicating with building representatives throughout the day to support us

Onaway-Noreen Smyth-Morrow, Stacey DeYoung (WO), Alison Colvin (Pre-K)

- Onaway principal Dora Bechtel is doing the job of two principals
- Members are helping to support

Middle School—Kevin Thomas, Melissa Albrecht (WO), Marie O'leary Stark (WO)

- In order to promote and answer questions about the vote, sick day transfers and SHTA scholarship, I was able to talk to the full staff at our PD day.
- Met weekly with building administrators on a variety of topics. Icy sidewalks and parking lots have been a major concern. Middle School Principal Mr. Eric Forman has talked to the custodial staff and is continuing to try to make sure the grounds are safe for both students and staff.
- Administration has been open to making adjustments to our schools TBT process in order to make the process more user friendly. The conversations with both administrators continue to be respectful and constructive.
- Met several times with a member about a fact-finding meeting and Erika Pfeiffer attended the meeting as a representative. I met with Erika both before and after the meeting to discuss the situation and potential next steps.
- Matt Klodor attended a fact-finding meeting for a different member of the staff. I met with Matt afterwards to discuss that situation and whether or not any next steps were necessary.
- Met with Darlene Garrison to discuss a 3rd member who met with the admin for fact-finding. 3 different staff members.
- The walkways to the portable classrooms are still an issue. We were told that covering the walkways to prevent issues with snow, ice and rain were "cost prohibitive". I made the suggestion that the middle school shop class could use it as an opportunity for a class project, however the district has concerns about liability.
- I'm happy to report that Tracey Warren received enough sick day donations to get her to her retirement date. I want to thank Matt Zucca for keeping us up to date with the progress as well as that building reps who shared the information and especially anyone who donated.
- Now working on behalf of Cassidy Powers who will be out for several weeks due to an upcoming surgery. I have made the first request to my building and will be making a second request this week. If more days are needed, I will reach out to the other building reps so see if we can get her the days she needs

High School—Jessica O'Brien, Raina Li (WO)

- Held in person voting for the new contract thank you to everyone that was a part of the negotiation team for your hard work.

- Met with interim principal Isaiah Wyatt and Sean Brown Assistant Director of Buildings and Grounds to discuss heating issues in a particular classroom. Mr. Brown confirmed that the repair will be made this Thursday and Friday. We also discussed the continued water leak in the Writing Center room.
- Spoke with Rights and Responsibilities Chair Mike Sears over questions about grievance clarification
- Met with Assistant Principal Lisa Demkowicz, Exceptional Children Department chairs, and SHTA Exceptional Children's Chair Tito Vazquez to discuss issues and solutions
- Discussed fact-finding notification with a member
- Met with a member and Mr. Vazquez about a teacher's concerns about a student's safety plan not being adequate
- Met with interim principal Isaiah Wyatt to discuss:
 - class coverage forms
 - challenges and successes of the new weapons detection system.
 - worked out a teacher's schedule and proposed alternative answers to the assignment which has been resolved.
 - Confirmed that a teacher's medical accommodation is being met.
- Emailed building reps to request sick days for art teacher Matt Deibel.
- Spoke with Sick Day transfer chair Matt Zucca about a member.
- A thank you to Mr. Wyatt as he is jumping into this very difficult role and doing a great job of working with SHTA to create solutions to concerns.

Innovative Center--Linda Roth

- With Quarter 3 IC enrollment now closed, 47% of the IC student population is classified as Exceptional Children. The IC team hopes to continue having conversations regarding the return of an all-day, in-house intervention specialist for the upcoming school year.
- Thanks to interim AP Anne Scott, our three new 24-25 staff members received keys to the internal IC doors on 2-4-2025.

Executive Board Reports

Publications—Andrew Glasier

- Updated Facebook page with the news of Gary Raymont's passing.
- Updated email list adding new members. If you hear of a member NOT getting the newsletter next week, have them email me directly.
- Sent emails out to membership from officers concerning negotiated contract, and PAC.
- Editorial this month will be by Natalie Sekicky
- Updated the January SHTA Newsletter with contract elections results and reposted to SHTAweb.org.

Evaluation-Lena Paskewitz

- Peer evaluators will get an email from if you are due for a re-evaluation. They will get a 60 day warning. Another email will come at 30 days with a link to Inside Advance. Don't let the certification lapse!
- If you are on a full cycle this year, please let me know if you have not yet had an observation.

Teacher Education-Wendy Lewis

- Attended Negotiations meeting at the Middle School

Policy-Tim Kalan

- Talked to people about the contract
- Looked at contract language

Public Relations-Bob Bognar

- No Report

Special Education-Tito Vazquez

- Attended the executive board and representative council meetings;
- Met with the Director of Student Services, Dr. Meghan Shelby, regarding Special Education concerns across the district.
- Worked with SHTA President Dr. John Morris, regarding Special Education concerns.
- Worked with Shaker Heights High School Head Rep. Jessica O'Brien regarding various staff concerns. Ms. O'Brien and I met with Assistant Principal Lisa Demkowicz, Exceptional Children Department chairs Tana Thompson and Keesha Woodruff, to discuss SPED issues and solutions.
- Discussed fact-finding notification with a member; met with a member about a teacher's concerns about a student's safety plan not being adequate.
- Counseled a member concerning a fact-finding meeting.
- Communicated with Shaker Heights High School interim principal Mr. Isaiah Wyatt with a follow up over an equipment concern.
- Communicated with 7-12 Exceptional Children Supervisor Jennifer Curre concerning staffing issues and K-6 Supervisor Erin Dzolic over a potential workload concern.
- Communicated with Shaker Heights High School Student Services Department Chairs Tana Thompson and Keesha Woodruff discussing concerns at the high school.
- Communicated with the Director of Human Resources Dr. Tiffany Joseph regarding a potential contract concern.
- Work collaboratively with Shaker Heights High School Assistant Principal Ms. Patricia Rashid regarding schedule concerns for the benefit of both students and teachers.
- Finally, thank you to Shaker Heights High School interim Principal Mr. Isaiah Wyatt for taking the time to listen and act on the concerns that come up in the Exceptional Children's Department and looking to remedy those concerns.

Legal Aid-James Schmidt

- No Report for Legal Aid
- Working on contract language
- Attended Contract meeting at the middle school
- Helped two members with understanding SB8

Legislative-Matthew Kloder

- Update on new presidential administration's policies
- New congressional and state sessions have begun
- New proposed bill in Ohio, SB1

Building Safety and Sick Day Transfer-Matthew Zucca

- Fielded questions regarding the Sick Day Transfer program.
- Communicated with those head building reps. who have members in the Sick Day Transfer program.
- Worked with members of the payroll department to help with the sick day transfer process.
- Currently there are six active members participating in the Sick Day Transfer program. Over 430 days have been pledged thus far.
- Attended the informational SHTA Contract meeting at the Middle School on Jan. 15th. Thank you to the members of the Negotiations Team for their tireless efforts to produce a strong contract.

Social-Selena Boyer

- No Report

Professional Rights and Responsibilities-Mike Sears

- Attended both the Executive Board and Representative Council meetings in February
- Spoke to a member with questions about leaves of absence and sabbatical leave
- Continue to work with members with questions about transitioning back to work after FMLA
- Spoke to High School Head building representative Jessica O'Brien about possible contract violations at the high school
- Answered members questions about Delta Dental
- Helped Middle School Head building representative Kevin Thomas remind members to vote on January 23 and collected paper ballots at the end of the school day
- The Insurance Committee is scheduled to meet on 2/26/25.

PAC (at-large)-Eileen Sweeney and Jessica O'Brien

- The past month, we met to discuss and develop an Action Alert surrounding the new Trump Administration's immigration policy. We hope our members will contact their senators and representatives to share their opposition to the policy.
- There is a lot of confusion and concern related to teacher's rights and requirements outlined in House Bill 8. We are working to help staff understand teachers' and students' rights. The PAC is working on contacting other unions to collaborate on political policies that impact our students and public education.
- We are continuously updating our Facebook page.
- We hope to develop a funding stream for the PAC. Funding resources are critical to engage our colleagues to take action.
- Attended the Resistance Fair at CHUH High School on February 8th. The event was well attended. It provided attendees with opportunities to engage with organizations on various issues.
- We sent an Action Alert on February 10th asking our members to contact their representatives and express their opposition to HB 1.

Old Business-None

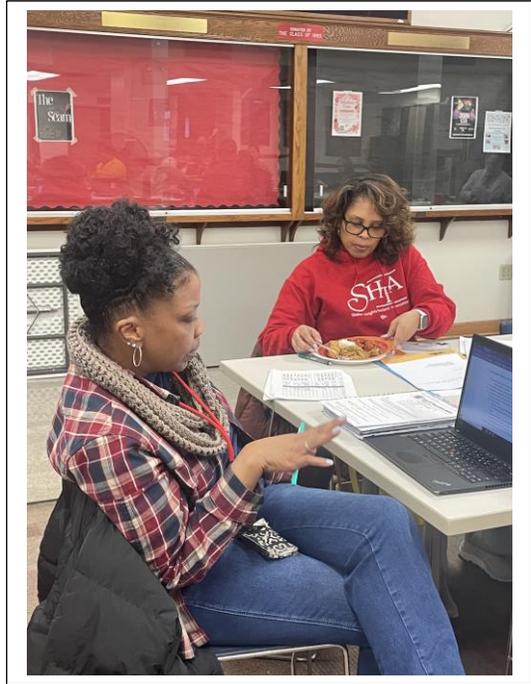
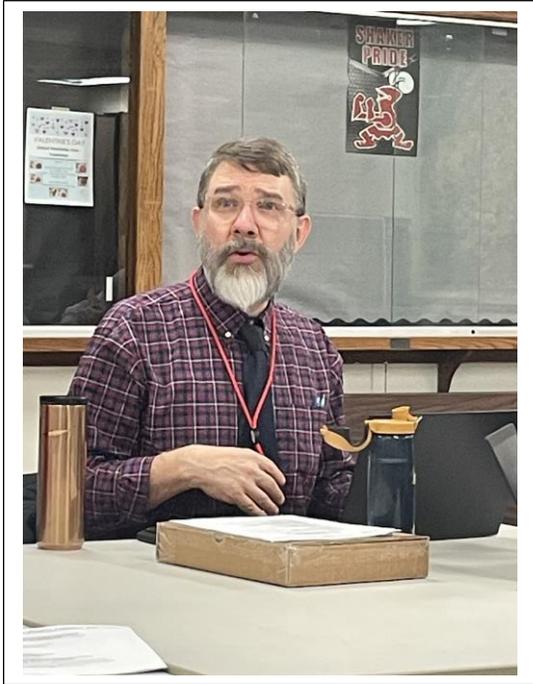
New Business-None

Good of the Order-

- President Dr. John Morris thanked Jessica, Aimee, and Enid for the incredible dinner.
- A motion for adjournment was made by James Schmidt and seconded by Andrew Glasier.

Meeting adjourned at 5:24

***Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Hardiman***



The February SHTA Representative Council Meeting held at Shaker Heights High included the signing of our new three-year contract!



A TRIBUTE TO GARY RAYMONT

I'd like to honor my mentor and predecessor Gary Raymont, who passed away on January 22, 2025. "Gary enjoyed a distinguished 35-year career as an educator with the Shaker Heights City Schools. His dedication to shaping young minds left an indelible impact on his colleagues, students, and the community."

This line in his obituary stands out to me because I was fortunate enough to be one of his colleagues and he made a tremendous impact on me, both personally and professionally.

One of the first times I met Gary to discuss a possible grievance, he corrected me when I referred to a child care center as a day care center. He said, "they are caring for your children, not your days." I knew then how important his work as a kindergarten teacher was to him. He told me any grievance I filed would be more powerful with my signature on it above his signature. I was seeking reimbursement for a personal day because of an "act of God" (the power was out one morning at my children's child care center). The decision by the school district was that I could have come to work that day. It did not qualify as an "act of God" because there wasn't a tree across my driveway forcing me to stay home. While I didn't like that ruling then (and I still don't like it now), Gary explained why this wasn't worth taking to step III (arbitration). He said that taking a personal day in that situation was the right thing to do, and that was why we had personal days. I asked him why he helped me file a grievance, and he said he thought going through the process would be good for me. He later told me he needed to make sure I could file a grievance before he recruited me to take over Professional Rights and Responsibilities when he retired. "You seemed like you had half a brain, but I had to know you wouldn't be afraid to file a grievance," he told me.

Gary had a festive retirement party at Quicken Loans Arena, where he worked as an usher. Jim Chones even spoke about Gary that night. During the party's many speeches, Gary called me up to thank me for taking over as the SHTA Grievance Chair and presented me with four painter's hats. Each hat was labeled with different roles he knew I had, and many of the roles were ones he also assumed during his career. SHTA, Department Chair, Husband/Father, and Teacher were written on the colorful hats with a black sharpie. He had a sense of his influence on others, and wanted to continue to inspire and educate even after he retired. He told me to always remember what role I was working in within and outside of the school district. He said to start every email related to SHTA like this, "I am writing in my role as SHTA Grievance Chair...", which I still do. I spoke to him several times a year when I first accepted his former role. I still use his template for my September newsletter report to kick off each school year.

While I hadn't seen Gary for several years, I will miss him forever!

Mike Sears

Middle School Social Studies Teacher

Chair of SHTA Professional Rights & Responsibilities Committee

[Gary Raymont Obituary](#)



Stay United, Not Divided

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.

When we cross the finish line on June 5, I will have completed 31 years of teaching journalism to teenagers, 28 of them here at Shaker.

You can see my youthful, brown-haired pixie cut in my antique ID, which I still swipe every day to enter the large auditorium lobby doors. It's become scarred, yellowed and cracked over the decades, and that school photo has long been indicative of my path to mortality. So, naturally, I've made a jokey tool of it by waving it at Shakerite editors who use commas before "and" in a simple series, or who, increasingly, write "highschool."

"See this picture?" I say, pointing to my ID. "See my hair?" pointing to my head. "This strand just turned gray because you keep _____." By senior year, editors know that it's OK to laugh when I perform this routine.

Last month, my ID became a more sober accessory. While attending the SHTA contract meeting at the middle school, I fiddled with it as members expressed concern about the negotiated salary increases, which are obviously insufficient to meet the scary reality of persisting inflation. I admit that the critique of the contract that had been bubbling in the weeks before the meeting had befuddled me and even, when I was having a bad day, annoyed me. I had been too busy to think about why.

So, at the meeting, I made a point of listening carefully and thinking. Contemplating my ancient mugshot and distressed badge helped me stay quiet and understand the anxiety and frustration expressed by some colleagues in the auditorium — and by some colleagues to me in the weeks leading up to the vote. My ID bluntly reminded me that I am old — older than most of us — and that I had thus expected much less of these contract negotiations, precisely because of inflation and because I can't remember the last time the district put an operating levy on the ballot. Everything costs more and more these days: our family groceries and the district's food services; our cars' oil changes and the district's bus repairs; our paper towels and the district's copy paper.

Under these circumstances, I had prepared myself for a salary freeze.

As an old teacher, I remember contracts under which we endured freezes and anemic increases. And times were not existentially challenging then, as they are now. I'm deeply impressed by and grateful to our negotiating team for fighting hard and prevailing in the preservation of teachers' jobs and achieving three consecutive years of salary increases at this time of unprecedented uncertainty and fear.

As I listened during the meeting, I also thought about how much has changed for the worse in this country over the last 10 years, and how much the pace of such changes has increased in the last few months. It's impossible not to feel distraught and powerless to affect change in the government or the economy; we can't crash cabinet meetings or legislative committees or DOGE wood-chipper sessions. We don't have the governor on speed dial. At the same time, we teachers have become, for some, the face of government institutions since Covid. We are the only government employees many people can actually see, speak to or yell at, and since 2020, we have

experienced unprecedented abuse from people who are angry or afraid about so many things that have nothing to do with us; we're just the available targets.

I wondered during the contract meeting whether we might be starting to treat one another similarly. We're increasingly anxious, angry and exhausted about so many things outside of our control. Our jobs continue to intensify, and our resources – from uninterrupted planning time to library space to dry erase boards – grow more and more scarce. Under these circumstances, we can become the convenient, accessible targets for one another's stress.

We resent teaching six classes while other teachers have five. We snap at colleagues for failing to return supplies to the department office. We yell at colleagues for parking too close to us.

Back when my hair matched my ID photo, we didn't resent, snap or yell. At least not as often as we do today. And we didn't contemplate taking a negotiated contract to arbitration. I'm old enough to know that we're not as kind, generous or unified as we used to be.

But, all three of those examples, if you think about them for a minute, are the result of institutional decisions, not individual teacher actions. The schedule is inequitable, but we didn't create it. There aren't enough supplies to go around, but we didn't limit them. The parking lots are not monitored for student cars, so we have to park illegally. These institutional decisions exacerbate our anxiety, anger and exhaustion, and we release those feelings on one another because we can't direct them at the people who made them.

So many powers that be are determined to divide us today because it's easier to control people who are too anxious, angry and exhausted to resist. Leaders at every level sow division, intentionally or not, through policies and practices. We must not allow those seeds to take root and flourish. As an Association, we must wield our solidarity as a defense against the increasingly organized and vigorous efforts to undermine unity.

We're all on the same team, y'all. Our IDs prove it.

Natalie Sekicky
Shaker Heights High Journalism Teacher

