



A Message from the President of the SHTA

A Song of Ice and Fire by George R. R. Martin is one of my favorite series of fantasy books. I even like the ill-concluded *Game of Thrones* HBO series. A group in the novels that always speaks to me is the *Night's Watch*. These are a group of exiled political leaders, religious officials, royals, and warriors who are consigned to protect Westeros from enemies on the other side of The Wall. Reading the latest [report on teacher morale in Ohio](#) has me relating our own profession to the Night's Watch.

Although we are not exiles, many of us originally pursued paths that would not have led us to the schools. We have accountants, lawyers, artists, academics, journalists, musicians, and even a politician or two among our ranks. We have chosen this profession because we want to give back to our community and our world. But just as in the novels, our numbers are dwindling due to the political and social forces outside of our control.

We protect our students from what may be coming on the other side of The Wall. It could be privatization, or segregation, ignorance, or historical whitewashing. The truth is the most inspirational teachers are the ones, like those members of the Night's Watch, that bravely face the challenges of a world that seems set against them regardless of the size of the challenge or the cost.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Tuesday, March 17, 2026
Board of Education Work Session
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- Spring Break (Schools Closed)
Monday, March 23rd - Friday, March, March 27th
- Good Friday (Schools Closed)
Friday, April 3, 2026
- Monday April 6, 2026
SHTA Executive Board – Fernway
- Monday, April 13, 2026
SHTA Representative Council - Lomond

Granted, we are equipped with our training and experience and we can walk away, unlike the Night's Watch. I would argue that our lives and community would be less for it. I still believe teaching is among the noblest of professions. I know that many among our ranks are retiring this year, and they have earned it with their tireless work and dedication. But I hope those who stay know that you are valued and appreciated by your fellow members of the SHTA.

February was busy. I spoke with superintendent Dr. David Glasner regularly. I communicated with Human Resource Director Dr. Tiffany Joseph regularly. I updated the SHTA Facebook page with Publications Editor Andrew Glasier. I communicated with Special Education Chair Tito Vazquez concerning multiple building concerns. I communicated with Ludlow Head Rep. Allison Colvin about evaluation concerns at Ludlow. I communicated with Dr. Felecia Evans on evaluation concerns. I communicated with Assistant Superintendent Jeff Grosse on a personnel issue. I communicated with SHTA Legal

Consul Brooks Boron about member issues. I attended the District Union/Administration Meeting on Tuesday, February 10th with SHTA Vice President Darlene Garrison. I visited with Lomond members after structural issue concerns along with Building Safety Chair Matt Zucca. I communicated with Fernway Head

Representative Jamie Harden about building concerns. I communicated with Matt Zucca about sick day transfer requests. I communicated with a member about an FMLA issue. I communicated with SHTA Head Representatives and Members concerning dues deduction questions. I communicated with Treasurer Donte Hayes about dues deductions. I worked with Treasurer Bill Scanlon to communicate with members regarding dues deductions. I worked with a member on a 403b concern. I communicated with Public Relations Chairperson Bob Bognar about our May reception. I communicated with Lomond Head Representative Lauren Meek about members' concerns. I communicated with the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Dr. Felecia Evans about Ludlow concerns. I communicated with Innovative Center (IC) members about an upcoming meeting. I discussed next year's proposed calendar changes with Dr. Felecia Evans and our Executive Board. I worked on a response to coverage issues at the elementary level with the SHTA Executive Board. I met with IC members on March 4th along with High School Head Rep Jessica O'Brien. I discussed upcoming SHTA Scholarships with Executive Board members. I reached out to the head representatives concerning Job Share and Reduced Time notice. I communicated with Dr. Joseph on evaluation issues at Ludlow. I communicated with SHTA Vice President Lisa Hardiman about the Night for the Red and White raffle. I communicated with SHTA Political Action Committee Co-Chairs Jessica O'Brien and Nick LaPete about upcoming issues. I attended the Night for The Red and White on March 14th.

I will always be proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with the members of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. It is my honor and privilege to be the SHTA President. I will do all I can to maintain the integrity of our Association and our profession through these difficult times. We are doing the work to make our community and world a better place for our students, regardless of what challenges may present themselves. As the members of the Night's Watch repeat "Night gathers, and now my watch begins..."

Respectfully Submitted,
John L. Morris, PhD

The SHTA is on FACEBOOK!

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

And INSTAGRAM!

<https://www.instagram.com/shtassoc/>

SHTA OFFICERS' REPORTS

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

February was a busy and productive month supporting our members and representing the SHTA. I worked with Erica Verderber, Senior Administrative Assistant, to secure a Silent Auction donation for the Night for the Red and White. Our original idea, "If Only for One Night," included a gift certificate to RED Steakhouse and an overnight stay at the AC Hotel Cleveland Beachwood. However, after RED Steakhouse closed its doors on February 28, we had to go back to the drawing board.

Our next idea, "Let's Pin It on the Stripes," included a gift certificate to Pinstripes for dinner, bowling, and bocce. Unfortunately, Pinstripes no longer sells gift certificates. With Erica's help and persistence, we secured a wonderful alternative: an overnight stay at the Inn of Chagrin along with a dinner gift certificate to JoJo's Bar. This package will surely be a highlight of the Silent Auction.

I also attended the February 3rd PTO Council meeting at the Shaker Heights Public Library and participated in the February 10th Union Leadership Meeting with members of the Central Office and officers of local unions. In addition, I have been working with retiree Chuck Candel on the Shaker Retiree Emeritus Award. I will also be attending the Night for the Red and White at the Agora Theater and Ballroom to support this wonderful community event.

Behind the scenes, I completed documents to reimburse members for their Dr. Rebecca L. Thomas Fellowship Grant and mailed checks to members. Members have been submitting their receipts for the Fellowship Grant, and I encourage all recipients to forward receipts for their professional development in order to receive reimbursement. Once a receipt is submitted, it generally takes two to three weeks to process the reimbursement.

Please remember that the **\$100 Fellowship Grant** can be used for:

- Professional workshops
- Seminars
- Professional conferences
- College coursework
- Membership fees for professional associations (*does not include SHTA*)

On a more personal note, I also had the opportunity to send a heartfelt special treat to a member to brighten their day.

Make sure to have a fabulous Spring Break! If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me at ext. 4997.

Respectfully submitted,
Darlene E. Garrison

SECRETARY'S REPORT

According to the *Old Farmer's Almanac*, the Ancient Greeks and Romans believed the “dog days” to be a time of misfortune—plagued by drought and unrest, when both animals and people were driven a little mad. Many of us might agree that February and March are the “dog days” of the school year. By this point, the holidays are long behind us, the weather has tested our patience, and the energy in the building can feel... well, a bit wild. Thankfully, there is brightness looming on the horizon in the form of a well-deserved Spring Break. Please take this time to rest, rest, and rest some more. Recharge, step away from school for a bit, and come back refreshed for the final stretch of the year.

Each year, as Secretary of the SHTA, I organize the SHTA Drawing. Members in each building purchase chances to win two tickets to *A Night for the Red & White*. This year, the event will take place at the Agora Theater and Ballroom on Saturday, March 14. The drawing was held on March 6th, and this year's winners are **Michelle Shaffer (Mercer)**, **Lynnel Donatto (High School)**, and **Megan Hartley (Lomond)**. Congratulations to our winners! I'm sure these dedicated teachers, along with other educator attendees, will enjoy a well-deserved night out filled with good food, great company, and the rare opportunity to spend an evening without grading papers or reminding anyone to stay in their seat. Have a wonderful time!

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.

Also this month, I represented a member in a pre-disciplinary meeting along with Mercer's head representative, Eileen Sweeney. Others in attendance included Mercer's principal, Roneisha Campbell, and Special Education supervisor, Erin Dzolic.

Lastly, I have had a number of conversations with members regarding the lack of substitute coverage. This continues to be a significant concern. When substitutes are unavailable, it places additional strain on staff and takes away from the support and attention all students need—particularly some of our most vulnerable learners.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please contact me at hardiman_l@shaker.org or ext. 4867. Enjoy Spring Break!

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Hardiman

TREASURER'S REPORT

Spring break is almost here. Following that there are only nine weeks of school left for the year. For a larger number than usual of our colleagues these will be the last nine weeks as a Shaker teacher. Currently over 35 people are signed up for the buyout. The District will be undergoing a lot of change in the next year, and I am comforted by the fact that our Association is and will be guiding us through the transition.

I communicated with our accountants at Edward Hawkins & Co., Ltd., providing them information about our financials from last year. I communicated with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones representative about our investments. I communicated with SHTA President, Dr. John Morris, about the dues deductions from members' paycheck and I composed the message clarifying the payment schedule.

I also paid bills and updated our financial accounts.
 A full financial report is included here.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bill Scanlon

Balance Sheet		Profit and Loss	
Shaker Heights Teachers' Association		Shaker Heights Teachers' Association	
As of March 11, 2026		July 1, 2025-March 12, 2026	
Distribution account	Total	Distribution account	Total
Assets		Income	
Current Assets		Member Dues	145,365.00
Bank Accounts		Total for Income	\$145,365.00
Key Bank Checking	104,316.68	Investments	
Key Bank Savings	100.02	Change in Value for Key Investment	12,348.48
Total for Bank Accounts	\$104,416.70	Change in Value in Edward Jones	184,866.72
Other Current Assets		Edward Jones-Fees & Charges	-6,145.32
Edward Jones 13760-1-1	721,989.56	Interest-Savings, Short-term CD 0.16	
Edward Jones 13768-1-3	1,352,513.50	Key Bank Investments - Fees & Charges	-980.96
Key Investments	161,367.52	Total for Investments	\$190,089.08
Uncategorized Asset	0.00	Total for Income	\$335,454.08
Total for Other Current Assets		Gross Profit	\$335,454.08
\$2,235,870.58		Expenses	
Total for Current Assets	\$2,340,287.28	Operations	
Total for Assets	\$2,340,287.28	Accounting	9,169.61
Liabilities and Equity		Banking	490.27
Liabilities		Total for Accounting	\$9,659.88
Total for Liabilities		Compensation	75,478.94
Equity		Conferences & Meetings	3,425.73
Opening Balance Equity	201,324.23	Executive Board	450.00
Retained Earnings	1,920,218.04	Fellowships & Grants	3,495.13
Net Income	218,745.01	Insurance	6,434.00
Total for Equity	\$2,340,287.28	Legal	2,350.00
Total for Liabilities and Equity		Officers' Expenses	177.98
\$2,340,287.28		Payroll Taxes	1,094.34
		Publications	98.00
		Public Relations	3,000.00
		Social	478.08
		STRS (TPO Contribution)	10,566.99
		Total for Operations	\$116,709.07
		Total for Expenses	\$116,709.07
		Net Operating Income	\$218,745.01
		Net Other Income	
		Net Income	\$218,745.01

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT

In the past month, I have attended the Executive Board meeting on March 2nd and Representative Council meeting on March 9th and helped SMS Building Representative Kevin Thomas plan for hosting the meeting.

I have communicated with Assistant Superintendent of Business & Operations Jeff Grosse about a member's concerns about FMLA and worker's compensation and spoke with SHTA President Dr. John Morris and a member with concerns about their 403B account. I have answered members' questions about snow days counting as work days regarding FMLA and long term substitutes. For long term absences, the substitutes are paid for snow days and sick days and these are not returned to teachers.

I spoke with treasurer Donte Hayes about the February 16th payroll and answered questions from members about dues deductions.

I worked with a member about a possible safety grievance and scheduled a meeting with SHTA president Dr. John Morris and a member with questions about FMLA, sick leave and how they affect each pay period.

*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](#) 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.

At this point in the year, holistic observations and conferencing between educators and evaluators have occurred across the district. The area chosen for focused observations and walkthroughs is often *not* about observed ineffectiveness or inexperience, but from changes to our environment and evolving knowledge about teaching and learning in the field of education. Hopefully, we can all find enjoyment as we try something new, turn our attention to a facet of our teaching we haven't yet, or maybe look at one that needs an overhaul with wiser eyes.

As a reminder to administrative and peer evaluators, the minimum required elements for a full-cycle evaluation include:

- A holistic observation followed by a conference to discuss area(s) of focus for the year and possible paths of professional learning or changes in practice
- Two walkthroughs to observe progress and provide ongoing support
- A focused lesson observation to document current practice around identified area and provide feedback
- A Final rating based on growth observed and current practices as a whole
- Use of the OES site to complete all forms throughout the process. After an initial adjustment, I have found that inputting the observation data, determining ratings and completing the walkthrough forms in OES to be the easiest part of using the platform.
- All forms and final ratings must be completed within the OES system by May 1 for everyone participating in the Peer Evaluation Program. Failure to meet this deadline could result in exclusion from future participation. If you need assistance, please reach out to another participant or one of the coordinators for help well before May 1.

Educators with a Skilled or Accomplished final rating may have less frequent full evaluations. The rating is “carried forward” for either one year (Skilled) or two years (Accomplished). During the off-cycle year(s), one 30-minute lesson observation is required. Walkthroughs are not a requirement during off-cycle evaluation years. If you are on an off-cycle evaluation this year and have not been observed, your evaluator should be reaching out to you very soon to schedule your observation.

All educators and administrators serving as evaluators must complete an initial 3-day training, followed by an exam, to become a credential evaluator. There is a mandatory re-credentialing process every two years. Evaluators with lapsed credentials cannot be assigned as evaluators on the OES platform. Evaluators will be notified sixty days before their credential will lapse and again thirty days prior. There have been glitches with this process over the years, so it is prudent to be proactive in maintaining your credential. 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 2026-2027 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 is required when first becoming credentialed, with the aforementioned calibration exam every two years. Participants must also be on a continuing contract. Applications, as well as any updates to the process and protocols, will be sent in early spring from the Department of Human Resources. Andrew Glasier (High School), Addie Tobey (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 Representative Council meetings. I discussed many concerns of members with SHTA President Dr. John Morris. I represented multiple members in Fact Finding and Investigatory meetings. I met with Shaker Heights High School Principal Isaiah Wyatt, Associate Principal

Liz Massey and SHHS Head Representative Jessica O'Brien discussing ongoing concerns and possible remedies to the concerns. I met with a member about a student's safety plan to adequately meet the needs of the student in the classroom and the need for paraeducator support. I collaborated with Shaker Heights High School Assistant Principal Miata Hunter who created an excellent Safety Plan for a student. I communicated with Shaker Heights High School Exceptional Children Department Chairs Tana Thompson and Keesha Woodruff discussing concerns at the high school.

I would like to thank High School administrative assistant Tania Zucca for consistently supporting the Special Education Department at the high school by making sure classes are covered in the case of absences and late call off's.

I have spoken with various elementary principals regarding special education concerns in their buildings. I have discussed concerns at the elementary level with Exceptional Children Pre - K - 6 supervisor Erin Dzoric. If any member in Exceptional Children/Special Education needs to contact me please email me at vazquez_t@shaker.org or call 295-4200 and ask to be connected to Room 100.

Respectfully submitted,
Anastacio Tito Vázquez, Jr. M.Ed., Chairperson

POLICY COMMITTEE

As our Association's leadership ages (some more than others!), we should think about the next generation of leadership. Article VII of our constitution refers to our Executive Board and states:

The Executive Board shall consist of the officers, the immediate Past President of the Association, and the appointed Chairs of the standing committees. The President may appoint additional members to the Executive Board subject to the approval of the Representative Council.

Please consider serving as a Representative in our council, or becoming an Executive officer. Most members of the Executive Board began as Representatives. Our Association is only as strong as the people who serve it. If you are interested, reach out to me or your building representative(s).

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Kalan, Chairperson

BUILDING SAFETY & SICK DAY TRANSFER COMMITTEE

This month I continued supporting members across the district by assisting with building safety concerns and helping facilitate the Sick Day Transfer Program.

I worked with administration and the payroll department to process a Sick Day Transfer for a member enrolled in the program. As part of that process, I contacted building representatives to request donated sick days from members willing to support a colleague in need. Thank you to Onaway Building Representative Noreen Smyth-Morrow, Fernway Building Representative Jamie Harden, and Middle School Representative Kevin Thomas for coordinating these requests with their staff.

I also continued follow-up regarding building concerns at Ludlow, communicating with Head Building Representative Allison Colvin and Dave Boyer, Director of Buildings and Grounds, to ensure that member concerns remain part of the ongoing conversation.

In response to structural concerns at Lomond, I visited the building with SHTA President Dr. John Morris to support members as they navigated adjustments to learning spaces and student support relocations. The goal of the visit was to help ensure that staff needs and safety considerations were clearly communicated as these changes were implemented.

Additionally, I consulted with Dr. Morris regarding a question related to the Sick Day Transfer Program to clarify procedures and ensure members receive accurate information.

Throughout the month, I spoke with several elementary members regarding teacher coverage and staffing concerns. These conversations helped document ongoing challenges while providing members with guidance and support.

Finally, I communicated with Eileen Sweeney, Mercer Building Representative, regarding staff safety concerns raised by members.

I will continue working with building representatives and district leadership to address safety issues, support members navigating leave needs, and ensure that staff concerns are heard and addressed.

As always, please continue to share concerns related to building safety or member support. Your communication allows us to respond quickly and advocate effectively. Please feel free to contact me at (216) 295-4692 or at zucca_m@shaker.org.

**Respectfully submitted,
Matt Zucca, Chairperson**

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

As we acknowledge Women's History month, I would like to dive into the impact African American women had on the United States narrative. The impact of African American women's contributions to American history that has often been overlooked and minimized. African American women have made profound contributions across politics, science, civil rights, culture, education, and community leadership. However, their work has often been overlooked or undercredited because of both racism and sexism. Recognizing these contributions helps us better understand American history and social progress. Many African American women were central organizers and strategists in the Civil Rights Movement.

- Rosa Parks is often remembered for refusing to give up her seat on a bus in 1955, sparking the Montgomery Bus Boycott. However, she had already spent years organizing and fighting for justice before that moment.
- Ella Baker helped build grassroots movements and advised organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Her emphasis on community leadership shaped modern activism.
- Fannie Lou Hamer fought for voting rights and challenged political exclusion at the 1964 Democratic National Convention.

- Septima Poinsette Clark created “Citizenship Schools,” which helped thousands of African Americans learn to read and register to vote.

These women were architects of the movement, even when male leaders received most of the public recognition. African American women have also made groundbreaking contributions to science and technology.

- Katherine Johnson calculated flight paths for early U.S. space missions that helped send astronauts to orbit and eventually the Moon.
- Dorothy Vaughan became NASA’s first Black female supervisor and helped lead early computer programming teams.
- Mary Jackson became NASA’s first Black female engineer and worked to improve opportunities for women in STEM.
- Shirley Ann Jackson conducted research that contributed to technologies behind caller ID and fiber-optic communication.

Their stories gained wider recognition after the book and film *Hidden Figures* (2016), but for decades their achievements remained largely unrecognized.

African American women have profoundly shaped American culture.

- Maya Angelou used literature to explore identity, racism, and resilience.
- Toni Morrison wrote powerful novels like Beloved that explored the legacy of slavery.
- Zora Neale Hurston preserved Black folklore and culture during the Harlem Renaissance.
- Nina Simone used music to protest injustice and inspire change.

Their voices shaped cultural identity, social awareness, and artistic expression. African American women have also expanded political representation and civic participation.

- Shirley Chisholm became the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress and later ran for president in 1972.
- Barbara Jordan became a powerful voice for constitutional rights during the Watergate scandal.
- Kamala Harris became the first Black woman and first woman of South Asian descent to hold the office of Vice President.
- Stacey Abrams has worked to expand voter access and participation.

Recognizing their work not only corrects historical narratives but also highlights the intersectional struggles and achievements that have driven progress in the United States.

*Respectfully submitted,
Angela Goodrum*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

This month, I am covering the aggressive dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education, the continued nationwide expansion of school voucher programs, and a new Ohio House Bill that would ban student-athletes from engaging in Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) deals. Here is what you need to know about these critical legislative challenges facing our communities and the public education system:

- **U.S. Department of Education Update:** The Trump administration is escalating its efforts to dismantle the Department of Education by transferring additional key programs and responsibilities to the State Department and HHS. AFGE Local 252, the union representing agency employees, has

condemned the move as an unlawful action that displaces dedicated public servants and delegates critical educational work to departments lacking the necessary expertise. ([more info here](#))

- **Voucher Programs Continue to Expand:** States are rapidly expanding school choice initiatives, such as private school vouchers and education savings accounts. While proponents argue these programs empower families and drive improvement through competition, critics contend they divert essential resources from public schools and often lack the rigorous financial and academic accountability required of public institutions. ([more info here](#))
- **Ohio HB 661:** Ohio House Bill 661 has been introduced to ban middle and high school athletes from engaging in Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) deals, overturning the current policy that allows such compensation in the state. Proponents argue the legislation is necessary to preserve the amateur nature of school sports and prevent abusive recruiting practices, while critics contend the measure constitutes government overreach that unfairly restricts students' rights to monetize their skills outside of school hours. ([more info here](#))

Respectfully Submitted,
Matt Klodor

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The SHTA Public Relations Committee met with both the Executive Council and the Representative Council to remain informed on Association initiatives and to provide updates regarding ongoing public relations efforts. During this period, the Teacher Appreciation gift was finalized and ordered through the selected vendor to ensure timely delivery and recognition of our members' continued dedication and service to the district. Additionally, a request was submitted for awards to be presented at the upcoming annual District Recognition Reception in order to properly recognize retiring staff members and faculty who have reached significant career milestones. These efforts are intended to support member recognition and strengthen positive engagement within the Association and school community.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Bognar, Chairperson

TEACHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Greetings SHTA Members. The countdown is winding down to Spring Break! Stay strong! Before break, please submit the necessary paperwork for salary reclassification, if you are ready for this upgrade. Find that form [HERE](#). A transcript needs to accompany this form. Submissions need to be made to Stacy Poole. The deadline is two weeks before the April Board of Education meeting, which is April 1st, 2025, which means everything needs to be in and complete by March 31, 2026. If anyone is interested in Job Sharing or Reduced Time Schedule, please see the the linked form from [Stacy Poole](#), regarding this process. Find the link [HERE](#). Have a well-deserved Spring Break. As always, please contact me about any issues you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,
Wendy Lewis, Chairperson

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Shaker Heights Teacher Association in conjunction with the Shaker Heights School District will host all Shaker faculty and staff at our annual District Recognition Reception on May 14, 2026 in the high school cafeteria (3:45 p.m.). We sincerely hope you will join us as we celebrate our colleagues who are retiring, have earned twenty-five and fifteen years of service, and our newly tenured teachers.

Respectfully Submitted,
Selena Boyer, Chairperson

LEGAL AID COMMITTEE

NO REPORT

Respectfully submitted,
James Schmidt, Chairperson

SHTA PAC COMMITTEE

Our SHTA Happy Hour was March 12th. If you were unable to make it, please look for more information about future Happy Hour opportunities. We are hoping to get a pulse from our members as to where they would like us to direct our collective energy.

Congress currently is considering a number of bills that would change the voter registration process. If enacted, these new guidelines may go into effect immediately. From that point forward, to either register or update your registration, you may need to provide a set of Documentary Proof of Citizenship (DPOC) papers as well as make an in-person visit to an election office. If you have not checked your voter registration please click on this link to check on your registration VoteOhio.gov.

Should you have a political cause that you'd like the SHTA PAC to get involved in please reach out to us directly!

Respectfully Submitted,
Nick LaPete & Jessica O'Brein, Co-Chairpersons

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

SHTA President, Dr. John Morris started the March, 2026 Representative Council Meeting at 4:30 PM. **The meeting took place at Shaker Heights Middle School.** *Dr. Morris introduced Shaker Heights Middle School Principal, Mr. Eric Forman,* to the Representative Council.

Principal Eric Forman welcomed the SHTA Representative Council to Shaker Heights Middle School for a second time this year. He expressed that he was glad to have everyone back. Mr. Forman stated that the connectivity of our staff drives our success. Although everyone gets busy, the more connected we all are, the better we are. He also expressed that there is a lot to celebrate as we prepare to send another group of 8th graders to the high school.

A motion for approval of the MINUTES from the February 6, 2026 Representative Council meeting was made by Andrew Glasier and seconded by Kevin Thomas.

Administration Report

Director of Human Resources, Dr. Tiffany Joseph was present for the SHTA Representative Council Meeting. Dr. Joseph wished everyone a happy March and that it was good to see everyone on this beautiful day. She said that the SHTA meetings hours have been finalized in Frontline Professional Growth and if there are any errors to let her know. She reminded everyone that Salary Reclassification forms are due two weeks prior to the April Board meeting, March 21st.

PTO Report

PTO President Ms. Christina Gopal was present for the meeting. She said that recruitment season is underway. They are looking for volunteers to participate in the PTO, especially at Ludlow where they need three people. They are planning for the Raider 5K which will take place October 3rd, 2026. They are hoping it will grow. Also, on May 14th, 15th, 16th the annual flower sale will be held. Saturday will be pick-up day.

Officers' Reports

President, John Morris

- Spoke with superintendent Dr. David Glasner regularly.
- Communicated with HR Director Dr. Tiffany Joseph regularly.
- Updated SHTA Facebook page with Publications Editor Andrew Glasier.
- Communicated with Special Education Chair Tito Vazquez concerning multiple building concerns.
- Communicated with Ludlow Head Rep. Allison Colvin about evaluation concerns at Ludlow.
- Communicated with Assistant Superintendent Dr. Felecia Evans on evaluation concerns.
- Communicated with Assistant Superintendent Jeff Grosse on a personnel issue.
- Communicated with SHTA Legal Consul Brooks Boron about member issues.
- Attended the District Union/Administration Meeting on Tuesday, February 10th with SHTA Vice President Darlene Garrison.

- Visited with Lomond members after structural issue concerns along with Building Safety Chair Matt Zucca.
- Communicated with Fernway Head Rep Jamie Harden about building concerns.
- Communicated with Sick Day Transfer Committee Chair Matt Zucca about sick day transfer requests.
- Communicated with a member about an FMLA issue.
- Communicated with Head Reps and Members concerning dues deduction questions.
- Communicated with Treasurer Donte Hayes about dues deductions.
- Worked with Treasurer Bill Scanlon to communicate with members regarding dues deductions.
- Worked with a member on a 403b concern.
- Communicated with PR Chairperson Bob Bognar about our May reception.
- Communicated with Head Rep Lauren Meek about member concerns.
- Communicated with Dr. Evans about Ludlow concerns.
- Communicated with IC members about an upcoming meeting.
- Discussed next year's proposed calendar changes with Dr. Felecia Evans and our Executive Board.
- Worked on a response to coverage issues at the elementary level with the SHTA Executive Board.
- Met with IC members on March 4th along with HS Head Rep Jessica O'Brien.
- Discussed upcoming SHTA Scholarships with Exec Bd. members.
- Reached out to head reps concerning Job Share and Reduced Time notice.
- Communicated with Dr. Joseph on evaluation issues at Ludlow.
- Communicated with SHTA Vice President Lisa Hardiman about the Night for the Red and White raffle.
- Communicated with PAC Co-Chairs Jessica O'Brien and Nick LaPete about upcoming issues.
- I will attend the Night for The Red and White on the 14th.

Vice President, Darlene Garrison

- Worked with Erica Verderber, Senior Administrative Assistant to discuss Silent Auction Donation for the Night for the Red and White:
 - If Only for One Night.
 - Start from the drawing board. RED Steakhouse closed its doors on February 28th.
 - Pinstripes no longer sells gift certificates.
 - With help for Erica Verderber - Overnight Stay to Inn of Chagrin and a dinner gift certificate to JoJo's in Chagrin.
- Attended the February 3rd PTO Council meeting at Shaker Heights Public Library.
- Attended the February 10th Union Leadership Meeting with members of Central Office and Officers of Local unions.
- Working with retiree Chuck Candel on the Shaker Retiree Emeritus Award.
- Will attend Night for the Red and White at the Agora Theater and Ballroom.
- Completed documents to reimburse members for their Dr. Rebecca L. Thomas Fellowship Grant.
- Sent a heartfelt special treat to a member.

Secretary, Lisa Hardiman

- Emailed invites for Representative Council meetings.
- Emailed invites for Executive Board Meetings.
- Took minutes at the Representative Council meeting.
- Participated in Mercer's February Building Committee Meeting.

- Spoke to members about lack of substitute teachers and splitting classes when there is no available substitute.
- Met with Mercer Principal Roneisha Campbell and Mercer Head Representative Eileen Sweeney about this issue and shared contract language.
- Created and distributed tickets for annual SHTA Drawing. Three people won two tickets to A Night For the Red & White on March 14th at the Agora Theater and Ballroom.
- Drawing took place on Friday, March 6th. Congratulations to the following members:
 - Megan Hartley (Lomond)
 - Michelle Shaffer (Mercer)
 - Lynnel Donatto (High School)

Treasurer William Scanlon

- Distributed Financial Report.
- Communicated with our accountant.
- Communicated with Brady Krebs.
- Paying bills.
- Will be attending A Night for The Red & White on March 14th.

Building Representative Reports

Boulevard-Cathy Grieshop, Heather Pincoe

- I met with some members about concerns of student behavior, discipline and safety. Principal Neal Robinson is aware of these concerns.
- I sold tickets for the Night for the Red and White.
- Many members are feeling uneasy about where they might be teaching next year. We hope that new assignments will be made with teacher input. It does not serve students and school climate to have teachers in positions in which they are uncomfortable teaching.
- Contractually, is there a deadline in which teachers will be told about next year's teaching assignment?
- In lieu of what happened at Lomond, will the rest of the buildings be inspected for any safety issues?

Fernway-Jamie Harden, Lee Appel

- Members have stressed concerns about the current subbing situation that has led to special teachers and literacy specialists being used frequently as substitutes, along with the looming possibility that students could be split up and placed in various classes during a sub shortage. Contractual limits are understood during these concerns. It is understood that if they are asked to waive lunch or planning, they should file for the waiver of planning time with the main office.
- Consistency across buildings in regards to sub coverage is a continued concern. Members are looking for an equitable resolution that meets each building's needs, but also accounts for the missed teaching opportunities that are currently impacting many students .
- Students are losing instructional support (enrichment and intervention) time. Literacy specialists are missing time with students, many who are on RIMPS. When literacy specialists are assigned to class coverage, scheduled literacy instruction and intervention time is cancelled. This reduces the time available to provide support within the MTSS framework. The week of 2/23 data revealed that 310 minutes of scheduled literacy specialist instructional time was missed with students due to covering absences and meetings. The week of 3/2 revealed 205 missed minutes of instructional time due to covering an absence.

- Literacy specialists reported the appreciated support received by Jocelyn Dietz regarding the precious missed instructional time. It is also important to acknowledge the apparent willingness to be solution-driven, student-focused and respected team players.
- Specials teachers are also affected by sub coverage issues. They do not have consistent time with groups or clubs that include math support. Because of subbing this year FE specialists report only having two club sessions, only 50% of planned gifted math support accomplished and limited practices for community supported assemblies.
- Members report concerns about the current single-subject schedules. Solution oriented suggestions include: reviewing the single-subject schedule prior to the next school year while considering that the current schedule includes six different classes per day, each requiring different materials, setup, and preparation. On six-class days, the morning period is used to prepare materials and equipment for consecutive classes. Lunch time is then used to reorganize materials from the morning and prepare for afternoon classes. Administrative tasks such as contacting parents or completing referrals are difficult to complete within the available time.
- Overall, the current substitute coverage practices are resulting in significant loss of instructional, intervention, and enrichment time for students, while also creating scheduling and planning challenges for staff, indicating a need to review and adjust coverage and scheduling structures.
- February 10, 2026: Placed SHTA “A Night of Red and White” raffle flyers placed in each member’s mailbox.
- February 16, 2026: Email sent regarding SHTA “A Night of Red and White” raffle to members
- February 25, 2026: Sat in on a follow up meeting with a member and C. Hayward.
- March 4, 2026: Met with the Building committee: Discussed class placement procedures. Assisted with guiding a member to the proper channels regarding sick day transfer.
- March 5, 2026: Announcement made regarding SHTA “A Night of Red and White” raffle.

Lomond-Lauren Meek, Jackie Abrams, Krystal Allen-Jackson

- The staff would like to thank PTO along with Ms. Freeman and her amazing team who put together a delicious lunch for all of us celebrating Black History Month!
- Thank you to Lomond principal George Clark for being upfront and honest with staff about structural issues even including showing pictures. Thank you to Dr. Felecia Evans and our Lomond families and PTO for providing us lunch on the days when we were moving.
- On Tuesday, February 17th the staff was made aware that the building's east wing was declared unsafe by structural engineers. This meant that classrooms and office spaces needed to be vacated. On February 18th and 19th Lomond staff moved classrooms and offices with the understanding that the wing structure would be shored up. I reached out to John Morris and Matt Zucca. They came to talk with staff on February 18th and made themselves available.
- At this time, a third grade classroom moved into the Spanish teacher’s space; the Spanish teacher had to move and go back to teaching on a cart; a first grade classroom is now in what used to be the OT/Sensory space; the OT/Sensory space is now located in the locker room spaces in the gym; our K-1 intervention specialist moved out of her office to the back of a kindergarten classroom; her space is now being used for one of our student support specialists and our Spanish teacher’s office; our ELL, PBS and Bellefaire counsel are now sharing our student support specialist’s office; our fifth grade teacher moved out of her classroom to share a space with the other fifth grade teacher so that our Behavior Focused class could have a room with windows; our second grade classroom is now in the design lab without windows; our school counselor still has no space and this is causing a problem for confidential student meetings, groups and parent contact.

- I attended the District's community meeting with parents and staff to address this issue. The District is working with contractors to shore up the damaged areas starting during spring break. According to the District, structural engineers inspected the rest of the building and found no additional concerns.
- Since then, the District released information regarding the delay in opening Woodbury. Because staff are now sharing spaces and classrooms, we ask the district to move forward in ordering trailers for the 26-27 and 27-28 school years. In addition, staff is requesting clear, honest communication from the District with reports from the building safety inspectors and other professionals regarding progress on this issue.
- I have worked with a member with safety concerns in the classroom. There is an increased concern about class sizes, student needs and lack of adequate adult support. The staff is asking the District to reconsider building subs.
- I met with the Building Committee to address the late pick-up of students during lunch/recess that is impacting the teacher's 50 minute contractual lunch. We understand that this is a district-wide issue.

Mercer-Eileen Sweeney, Nicole Cicconetti

- Met with Mrs. Ronesha Campbell, Mercer School Principal, for our regularly scheduled meeting.
- Attended the Building Committee. I emailed SHTA members and communicated outcomes.
- Communicated with Mrs. Campbell, Mercer Principal, and Lisa Hardiman, SHTA Secretary, regarding the practice of splitting a class when a teacher is absent and there is no coverage. The split class is pushed into other homerooms. Blue sheets submitted were rejected.
- Collaborated with Tito Vazquez, SHTA Chairperson for Special Education, relating to a disciplinary hearing. I represented a member in the PreDisciplinary hearing along with Lisa Hardiman, SHTA Secretary.
- Spent time selling the SHTA "A Night for the Red and White" tickets.
- Communicated with Matt Zucca, SHTA Safety chairperson, to discuss on-going safety concerns. The concerns may result in a grievance.
- Emailed members forwarding the sick day transfer request on behalf of a Middle School member.
- A huge thank you to the PTO for the purchase of two microwaves for the teacher lounges.

Onaway-Noreen Smyth-Morrow, Stacey DeYoung

Building Committee this month:

- The committee attempted to problem-solve solutions for sub coverage when there is no sub available for a classroom teacher when a teacher is out. There is a flow chart that is used in the building for sub coverage. This has become a more common occurrence since we no longer have building subs. Classes were split twice as a last resort.
- We discussed the decision made by administration to move to self-contained classes for 5th grade, beginning with the 2027-28 school year, although it was discussed that this could happen in the fall '26. From what we understand, there is no planned Professional Learning provided for the teachers at the beginning of the year. Other PL will be embedded throughout the year.

Middle School—Kevin Thomas, Melissa Albrecht, Lori Billington, Addison Pretnar, Desmarie Carter

- Met regularly with building administration.
- Represented a teacher during an investigation meeting.
- Assisted with work related to the raffle.
- Continued working with Matt Zucca and teachers regarding sick day allocations for members.

- After members shared concerns about discipline procedures and communication, building administrators scheduled presentations and discussions to clarify the process. The goal is to help both staff and administration better understand expectations and needs.
- Members continue to report concerns that the ATS room is not consistently available. When Mike Summers is absent, in meetings, or otherwise unavailable, teachers, deans, and students are negatively impacted. I have communicated to building administrators that a more reliable solution is needed.
- I also communicated with several individuals who slipped and fell on ice last week. At least four individuals were affected, and possibly more. Members are concerned because they have been repeatedly told the issue had been resolved, but conditions clearly remained unsafe. One substitute teacher who fell had to be transported to the hospital by ambulance.
- An email regarding job sharing was recently sent to staff, but none of the middle school teachers received it. It appears the email address used for the middle school may not be functioning properly. I worked with one teacher who was still allowed to apply after the deadline, but further clarification is needed on why middle school staff did not receive the message and how similar issues can be prevented in the future. There is also concern that other important emails may not have been reaching our staff.

High School--Jessica O'Brien, Nick LaPete, Jayce Bailey, Megan Dora, Adam Cohen Enid Vazquez, Sharita Hill, Joel Rathbone

- Thanks to the PTO for an amazing lunch during the parent-teacher conference day.
- Continue to meet weekly with Principal Isaiah Wyatt. Recently discussed potential staffing concerns for next year. Mr. Wyatt and I will continue to discuss this concern after he meets with district administration later this month.
- Still seeing issues with coverage and making sure we have substitutes, many members asked about having building subs brought back.
- Discussed with Assistant Principal Miata Hunter about problems with paraprofessional absence coverage. A communication will be sent out to teachers whose paraprofessionals will be moved so that teachers are aware and can communicate with administration if they need assistance.
- Provided clarification to members about evaluation questions and concerns, encouraged members to contact Evaluation Committee members Megan Dora or Andrew Glasier with any questions.
- Met with SHTA president Dr. John Morris and members about their concerns with an administrator.
- Sold tickets for the Night for the Red and White.
- Met with a member to discuss them running the SHTA scholarship program this year.
- Sent an email to members on behalf of Middle School Head Rep Kevin Thomas to ask for sick day transfer days.
- Discussed with Mr. Wyatt how we can get Common Planning Times to work for the 9th and 10th grade teachers' meeting twice a week. We agreed that the paperwork can be very simple with the date of the meeting and what was discussed in the meeting being the only things within the meeting notes. Mr. Wyatt and I agreed that CPT meetings of course are held on Mondays, but the 2nd meeting may not always meet on the same day as schedules and issues arise, but a 2nd meeting needs to occur.
- A huge thank you to the administrative team and Mr. Wyatt and their handling of the bomb threat on Wednesday March 4th.
- Shared the SHTA legacy and distinguished senior scholarships with College and Career Resources Coordinator Denise Johnson.
- Asked by a member to attend a fact finding tomorrow.

- Worked with associate principal Liz Massey, assistant principal Miata Hunter, Testing Coordinator Courtney Starr, Administrative Assistant Laurie Brem and a member on creating a Spring EOC schedule that works with our contract. It was resolved as of today.

Innovative Center--Anne Scott

- As always, thank you to the PTO for the treats they provide students.
- The IC team and I have communicated with assistant principal Katie Slifkin various times regarding program concerns, scheduling concerns, professional development concerns, culture concerns, testing concerns, technology concerns etc...
- We still have not received clear systems and structures for how to overcome some challenges we are facing. Once again, we look forward to a plan of action on how to address these concerns that are realistic to how the IC is currently functioning.
- We also recognize that some concerns have begun to be addressed. We hope to see continued attention to these areas so that the work remains consistent and ongoing.
- Part of the IC team met with John Morris and Jessica O'Brien regarding concerns.
- The IC has one intervention specialist that is with us for part of the day a couple times a week. Their time assigned to the IC has been reduced further. This is in addition to the reduction of time our social worker is present. This is further diminishing our already reduced staff.
- On 2/24, IC staff and students had no security.
- On 3/5, there was an unknown person that came down the elevator unannounced. This person went in and out of various rooms.
- When it snowed, I had to request that the emergency exit be cleared of snow. How can we get our space on the list to be taken care of when there is inclement weather so it is not a teacher's responsibility to ask for it to be cleared?
- The IC teachers' lounge was being used by non-Shaker people for a community event; teachers did not have access to this space for their planning and lunch time. Katie Slifkin was informed. She shared that she emailed and called the city.
- Provided clarification to members regarding various payroll questions.
- No IC-specific communication on the day there was no power at the main campus.
- Shared SHTA raffle ticket opportunity for the night for the red and white with IC staff.
- The IC team was told there would be a decision made about the future of our program by March 1st. No decision was shared. We have now been told that there will be a decision by spring break.
- Staff, families, and students were given a survey to share their thoughts on what the IC was, is, and could be. IC teachers were told they would have a role in creating these surveys. The role teachers had in that process was not what they thought it would look like.
- IC teachers were told that administration would be meeting in person with families and students to have further conversation and input around the future of the IC. The administration has talked with some students and families individually. The IC team feels it is important they provide the opportunity for all students and families to have a conversation in-person.
- The lack of decision making is hurting the ability for students, families, and staff to make timely, informed decisions about what next year looks like for them.
- The IC team did see the Shakerite article. Our biggest concern remains who we are and how we will be supported as opposed to where we are located.

Ludlow--Allison Colvin, Leanne Moses-Kruluts

- Over the past couple of weeks, the staff has appreciated more open communication about the building issues from interim principal Amy Brodsky. Previous policies, procedures, and drills for staff and students were not done or put in place. Since her interim, fire drills, lockdown procedures, and a crisis team have been established.
- Dr. Joseph and SHTA member Lena Paskewitz met with SHTA rep to go over the plan for teachers to start, continue, or finish their evals since there was a change in leadership.
- A member shared that there is water damage on the floor. We were told that it tested positive for moisture.
- The air quality of the room was tested for mold. The results showed low numbers compared to the outside.
- The main office and foyer is still taped off and will be closed until the end of the year.
- Dave Boyer and contractors Gilbane have been more visible and responsive with concerns.

Executive Board Reports

Evaluation-Lena Paskewitz

- Fielded calls about evaluations.
- Helped Ludlow member with evaluation.

Teacher Education-Wendy Lewis

- Helped with clarification for upcoming Salary Reclassification.
- Will attend A Night for The Red & White.

Publications—Andrew Glasier

- Had a meeting with a web designer about updating SHTAweb.org.
- Talked to another designer who is also a member, more to come.
- Updated SHTA Facebook and Instagram account.
- Sent out emails for executive board members and PAC.
- Sent out the newsletter to membership and administration and posed on the website.
- Editorial this month: Jessica Wikes, Matt Zucca, and Valerie Doersen.
- Executive board blurbs due Wednesday, March 11th by midnight.

Membership/Elections-Chante Thomas

- No Report.

Policy-Tim Kalan

- Addressing building issues and concerns.
- Attended Lomond Facilities meeting.

Public Relations-Bob Bognar

- Ordered Teacher Appreciation gift.
- Had a rewards request.
- Attended meetings.

Special Education-Tito Vazquez

- Attended the Executive Board and Representative Council meetings.
- Discussed many concerns of members with SHTA President Dr. John Morris.
- Represented multiple members in Fact Finding and Investigatory meetings.
- Met with Shaker Heights High School Principal Isaiah Wyatt, Associate Principal Liz Massey and SHHS Head Representative Jessica O'Brien discussing ongoing concerns and possible remedies to the concerns.
- Met with a member about a student's safety plan to adequately meet the needs of the student in the classroom and the need of paraeducator support.
- Collaborated with Shaker Heights High School Assistant Principal Miatta Hunter who created an excellent Safety Plan for a student.
- Communicated with Shaker Heights High School Exceptional Children Department Chairs Tana Thompson and Keesha Woodruff discussing concerns at the high school.
- I would like to thank HS administrative assistant Tania Zucca for consistently supporting the Special Education Department at the high school by making sure classes are covered in the case of absences and late call off's.
- Have spoken with various elementary principals regarding special education concerns in their buildings.
- Have discussed concerns at the elementary level with Exceptional Children Pre - K - 6 supervisor Erin Dzoric.
- If any member in Exceptional Children / Special Education needs to contact me please email me at vazquez_t@shaker.org or call 295-4200 and ask to be connected to Room 100.

Legal Aid-James Schmidt

- No Report.

Legislative-Matthew Klodor

- **Dismantling the Department of Education:** The administration is moving Department of Education programs to other agencies, which the union warns will hurt public services and displace staff.
- **School Voucher Expansion:** States are rapidly expanding private school vouchers, which critics say drains vital funding from public schools and lacks proper oversight.
- **Ohio HB 661 (NIL Ban):** A new Ohio bill aims to ban middle and high school athletes from earning money from their own name and image, raising concerns about government overreach.

Social- Selena Boyer

- Working on District reception which is May 14th.
- Will be creating flyers so please make sure they go up and hopefully a lot of people will come.

Building Safety and Sick Day Transfer-Matthew Zucca

- Collaborated with administration and the payroll department to process a Sick Day Transfer for a member in need.
- Contacted Onaway Building Representative Noreen Smyth-Morrow to request donated sick days for a member enrolled in the Sick Day Transfer Program.
- Reached out to Fernway Building Representative Jamie Harden to request donated sick days for a member enrolled in the Sick Day Transfer Program.
- Continued follow-up regarding Ludlow building concerns with Head Building Representative Allison Colvin and Dave Boyer, Director of Buildings and Grounds.

- Visited Lomond with SHTA President Dr. John Morris to support members as they navigated learning space and child support re-locations while responding to building structural concerns.
- Consulted with Dr. Morris regarding a question related to the Sick Day Transfer Program.
- Held discussions with several elementary members regarding teacher coverage and staffing concerns.
- Communicated with Eileen Sweeney, Mercer Building Representative, regarding staff safety concerns.

Personal Rights and Responsibilities-Michael Sears

- Spoke with assistant superintendent Jeff Grosse about a member's concerns about FMLA and worker's compensation.
- Spoke with John Morris and a member with concerns about their 403B account.
- Answered members questions about snow days counting as work days regarding FMLA and long term substitutes.
- Helped SMS Building Representative Kevin Thomas plan for hosting Representative Council.
- Spoke with treasurer Donte Hayes about the February 16th payroll.
- Answered questions from members about dues deductions.
- Worked with a member about a possible safety grievance.
- Scheduled a meeting with John Morris and a member with questions about FMLA, sick leave and how they affect each pay period.

PAC (At-large)-Jessica O'Brien and Nick LaPete

- Sent out information about happy hour.
- Sent out information about voter registration check; Trying to prepare rolls so that there is no discrepancy.

Old Business-None

New Business-None

Good of the Order-

- Treasurer Bill Scanlon reminded everyone about the Staff vs. Student basketball game this Thursday at the high school. Then everyone can go to the PAC happy hour.

Motion for adjournment was made by Bob Bognar and seconded by Desmarie Carter. The meeting adjourned at 5:55pm.

***Respectfully submitted,
Lisa M. Hardiman***

SHTA March Representative Council meeting at Shaker Heights Middle School



DELEVELING

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 *The Shakerite* did its in-depth coverage on the deleveling process, the headline was “We did it the wrong way.” Boy did we.

Much has been said about the haphazard nature with which deleveling was implemented, but as we always do, we adjusted on the fly and have been doing the best we can ever since.

What hasn't been talked about as much is how truly inequitable our form of detracking is, and the secret behind-the-scenes leveling that is happening at the high school anyway.

For the record, I have had experience teaching a huge variety of classes at the high school, from senior electives and journalism to every level of 9th grade we offered. When I first heard we were doing away with tracking, I immediately hoped we would go to an all-slash model (as in, Core-slash-Honors). This is when students are taking the same course for different credit. I taught both 11th and 12th grade classes this way. We would read the same core texts, but with different supplemental materials; we would do the same essay assignments, but with different rubrics; we would all be part of the same conversations and same classroom community. Rarely did students realize who was in which level, and students who struggled early on with the honors workload could change to core level with no stigma, and those excelling at core could change to honors level relatively risk-free. Changing levels didn't disrupt the schedule, so it was much easier for students to find where they fit - they didn't even have to change their seat in the classroom.

From 2021 onward my classes were basically pre-pandemic honors classes in makeup. Last year I had something like 12 students identified as gifted out of a class of 16. While I'm never going to complain about having a room full of bright students to teach, I could see my colleagues struggling with caseloads of the opposite: classes brimming with high-needs children and simply not enough time or resources to deal with it all. My students often got through more content and produced more writing at a higher level than others, but it wasn't because I'm just that good of a teacher - I was simply teaching an honors class. I still had some students with IEPs and 504s in my classes, and students who would put their head down every day, or some with chronic attendance issues, but I could triage these students, notice their needs early, and help them because they weren't the majority.

And this year, I have gotten to experience this imbalance first hand, and it's the first time I've had a co-teacher. I have three sections of 9th grade, two of which are co-taught. My first period currently consists of 18 students; out of these 14 have IEPs or 504s, three are identified as gifted, two have behavior that leads them to be suspended most of the time and several have “checked out” of school and attempt to sleep through class every day. This is not deleveling, this is not inclusion: this is a special education class with a few typical peers thrown in. My other co-taught class has a similar makeup, while my non-co-taught section is almost a mirror image: three IEP/504s, 7 gifted students, and two with behavior challenges. This is the secret tracking: packing all the high-needs students into a few sections.

It is true that I have a co-teacher for support (though we have no common planning time). But it is also true that the ratio is still way off. At the start of the year I had ONE student whose IEP specified that he needed a co-teacher, and he was in my NON-co-taught section (he was moved, but not for many weeks).

Right now, we have invisible tracking. On paper, my students in all three sections are doing the same work, reading the same curriculum, and meeting the same standards. But I have students who are drowning and could benefit from a modified curriculum, while others are bored, with well over 100% in the class with very little effort. I have one student who has never scored above the 1st percentile on any standardized test he's ever taken; however, we are told that IEPs cannot have "modified curriculum" in them, only accommodations (which, since these are legal terms, is a distinction with a big difference).

While I've been seeing this play out in 9th grade English for years, it's not unique to us. This imbalance is a disservice to all the students involved, no matter what their transcript says.

If several accident victims go to an ER, the nurses triage them and prioritize those with the highest needs. But if that same ER gets flooded with a hundred people bleeding out at once, it doesn't matter how good the doctors are, most of them won't make it. This is what we've done with our highest-needs students in this process, and it's not benefiting anyone.

"We did it the wrong way." It's time we admit it, and do better.

Valerie Doersen

Shaker Heights High Language and Literature Teacher

Elementary Students Deserve More Than the Minimum

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I am writing in support of our elementary students, their families, and the teachers who serve them. I also write on behalf of elementary single-subject educators — Art, Physical Education, Music, Library, Spanish, and Literacy Specialists — some of whom have raised concerns only to feel unheard or dismissed. Some have even been told they should feel fortunate simply to have a job.

To be clear, the issues being raised are not contractual violations. What we are witnessing instead is something quieter but just as concerning: a gradual erosion of elementary single-subject programs through adherence to contractual minimums. Over time, these decisions accumulate, and the result is a diminished educational experience for our youngest learners.

Elementary school is where children begin forming their academic identities. It is where many first discover confidence through creativity, movement, and exploration. For some students, success in art, music, or physical education is what first helps them feel connected to school. When access to these experiences shrinks, the educational experience itself becomes narrower.

Within the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP), these subjects are not extras. They are core components of a child's development, alongside literacy and mathematics. In Shaker Heights, these programs have long been a point of pride and an important part of the district's reputation for educating the whole child.

For generations, families have chosen to live in Shaker Heights in part because of the district's reputation for offering rich elementary programming that values the arts, movement, and exploration alongside academics.

Yet the structure supporting these programs has steadily weakened.

Consider Physical Education. In just two years, staffing has been reduced from eight teachers to five. Instructional time has shifted from 90 minutes twice per week to just 50 minutes once per week. A schedule that once spread instruction across five days is now compressed into three. At the same time, the role of the specialist teacher has expanded beyond instruction to include club supervision and, increasingly, building-level substitute coverage. A department that benefited from more than two decades of leadership now has none.

Next year, elementary librarians will also be asked to maintain their programs without the support of the long-standing Library Technician position that assisted with daily operations.

When specialist teachers are routinely pulled to serve as substitutes, instruction in those subject areas becomes unpredictable. Lessons are cancelled. Units lose continuity. Programs lose momentum. Students quickly begin to see these subjects as optional because structurally they are treated that way.

The practice of using Literacy Specialists to cover classroom absences is also deeply problematic. Literacy Specialists provide targeted Tier 2 intervention for students who require additional academic support. When they are reassigned to cover classrooms, those daily intervention sessions are disrupted or cancelled entirely. This interrupts the consistency that struggling students depend on, and in many cases parents are not informed that these critical support services have been missed.

The impact on students is real.

Reduced instructional time means fewer opportunities for creative expression, physical movement, collaboration, and skill development. Clubs meet inconsistently. Performances and productions suffer from limited rehearsal time. Enrichment and intervention opportunities disappear. Students lose the experiences that often spark confidence and identity early in life.

Many of these opportunities cannot simply be made up later. A rehearsal missed two weeks before a musical directly affects the quality of the performance and the confidence of the students involved. When the art club meets only three times all year, when enrichment groups cannot launch, or when gifted math sessions are repeatedly cancelled, students lose opportunities that were meant to enhance their education.

Another question deserves consideration: would the broader community support elementary specialists serving weekly as building-level substitutes? Teachers hired to provide specialized instruction are increasingly being

redirected to fill coverage gaps — a decision that may meet contractual guidelines but raises important questions about priorities.

The current scheduling model also creates significant challenges. Specialist teachers often teach up to six distinct classes each day, six different grade levels each requiring different materials, setup, instructional progressions, assessment, and preparation. Planning time is frequently absorbed by transitions and logistical setup. Lunch becomes transition time. Professional responsibilities must be managed while students are still in the room.

Schedules that appear efficient on paper do not always function effectively in practice. When structures designed for efficiency begin to limit instruction, it is reasonable for the community to expect those structures to be revisited.

This conversation is not about assigning blame. It is about recognizing that the current approach is limiting opportunities for students and placing increasing strain on programs that families value deeply.

When interventions are missed, enrichment groups cannot launch, art clubs meet only three times, gifted math sessions are cancelled more than half the time, and musical productions rehearse once before opening night, it becomes clear that the system is no longer delivering the experiences students deserve.

Families choose and support schools not only for academic outcomes, but for the richness of the experiences their children receive. The arts, physical education, enrichment programs, and library learning are often where curiosity grows and confidence takes hold.

If we believe in educating the whole child, our structures must reflect that belief.

Parents should ask a simple question: **Are our students receiving the same opportunities that once defined this district?**

If the answer is increasingly no, then it is time for the community and the school board to examine how these decisions are shaping the daily experiences of children in our schools.

Our students deserve consistent access to the programs that inspire them.

The question for our community is simple: **Are we willing to protect the experiences that once made our schools exceptional?**

Matt Zucca

2nd Grade Teacher, Fernway School

Shaker Parent

FIXING WHAT IS BROKEN

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.

I need to start this by telling you a little bit about myself- not to brag or anything, but explain me as a person. I was a straight A student, the one who never studied and still aced the test. (Although as I type this I am thinking that if my school had AP/IB/DP/Honors classes, that previous statement might have been different. Those were never an option for me at my tiny rural high school). I was the kind of kid who did everything that was asked of them, overachieved at times, and strived to not let anyone down. This is just who I am- a person who does what is asked of them and completes it all on time. I am not perfect, I make mistakes, but ultimately, I do all the things I am asked to do.

When I started here, there were a lot of things I had to do as part of my job description. Teaching is a demanding job and we have a lot of roles and responsibilities that we need to do in order to be successful teachers. I spent a lot of time and effort doing my job and doing it well. As the years progressed, more things got added to my plate but none of the original things were taken away. As the frustration and anxiety grew within me, I took it all and placed it in a glass bottle deep down inside of me, plastered a smile on my face, and did the new thing I was asked to do. Pretty soon, the plate that is my job became a whole tray of plates, cups, glasses, and the glass bottle kept getting fuller and fuller with all of the feelings of anxiety and frustration, now mixing in with feelings of anger, resentment, and overwhelmedness. My original plate remained there, but all the other things just added to the buffet. Things like additional initiatives that we were required to do, additional duties or requests that seemed a little more than requests, all the new testing requirements, more progress to monitor, more paperwork to complete, IB, CPTs and PLCs and a bunch of other initials, although seemed small on their own, caused my glass bottle to swell with hidden feelings that were shoved to the side because I didn't have time to deal with them. The bottle swelled and the smile stayed plastered on and the additional things continued to get completed on time.

As you can probably predict, the glass bottle recently cracked and exploded. It was a tiny thing that caused it to explode but when it did, all those feelings came out in force. Unfortunately they came out during a twenty minute break during the standardized testing which was not the most opportune time, but that was what happened. I won't go into detail but I was a bit of a mess- the plastered smile was gone and the tears came along with the anxiety, frustration, anger, overwhelmedness, and a little bit of self-hate and embarrassment mixed in as well. This was not the perfect me that my colleagues were supposed to see but it was what they got in that moment. They offered to have someone else finishing testing for me, but the person I am wouldn't allow that to happen. I had to finish what I had started because that is what I do. I do what is asked of me.

So I spent my twenty minute break putting the glass bottle back together again. And to those who saw me in that moment (you know who you are) I am forever grateful for the support you offered me during that moment. You took the time to add me to your plate and I cannot thank you enough for that. Once the glass bottle of hidden feelings was back together, I continued on with my day (but without the fake smile plastered to my face).

Through all of this, I realized that even though I pieced myself back together, there is a part of the glass bottle that is missing- lost like that last puzzle piece you can't find. The glass bottle is almost intact but it is still broken. A piece of me as a teacher is still broken. How do we fix this? I don't have an answer or solution to this question. I know that we are supposed to be solution oriented and come to the table with ways to fix the problem, but I don't have the answer. Maybe that is the part of me that is missing now- lost in a sea of anxiety and overwhelmedness about the enormity of what teachers are asked to do everyday. I am pretty sure I am not the only one who hides their emotion in a glass bottle deep down so we can get through all the things we have been asked to do. I imagine at some point, if it hasn't already, their bottles will break too and some more puzzle pieces will be lost for them as well. So I ask for them and for me because I don't have the answer- "How do we fix what's broken?"

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