

# SHTA *news*

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No. 5 • 16 February 2010

## Message From the President

At their Feb. 9 meeting the Board of Education unanimously voted to place a 9.9 mil operating levy on the May 2010 ballot. You do not need me to tell you how important this levy is...but I will. Passing this levy is essential to continuing the excellence of the Shaker schools—and that includes maintaining the quality of the teaching staff and attracting the best new teachers.

Each of you needs to make a commitment to helping pass this levy. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Contribute to the Levy campaign.
  - Your job and future depend on the financial support of the Shaker Heights voters. The SHTA will be asking you to make a contribution to an Association Fund for the Levy (see the Policy Report from Dave Klapholz on By-Law VII).
  - You should also make an individual donation to the Levy Campaign. Often names of supporters are printed in the newspaper and on campaign literature. We need to show both SHTA and individual support.
- Volunteer for Levy activities—phoning voters, attending meetings, serving on committees. If you are interested in volunteering, let me know and I will help you connect with the Levy leadership.
- Show your support for our schools and the community.
  - Attend a community event in support of your students.
  - Focus on the strengths of our schools. Communicate student successes with families.
  - Deal with problems and concerns as needed but remember many issues take time to resolve—sometimes a frustrating amount of time. I know you will maintain your professional discretion when discussing your concerns.

The campaign for this Levy will be very different from the one just four years ago. More voters are voting early. I have been told that 50% of the voters in Shaker submitted early ballots in the November 08 election. Calling voters the week before the election may be less important than featuring the positive accomplishments of our schools.

On another topic, I have been involved with several members who were coping with highly stressful events in their lives. Our district provides access to a free employee assistance program—Assist Now. I have included a flyer with information about their services, which are available 24/7. I know this information has been shared with all employees but it is easy to file things away that you don't need at that time. I hope this reminder will benefit you should you find yourself dealing with home/family/work problems.

When I talk to people about being involved in the leadership of SHTA, many of them are interested but feel the time commitment is problematic. I know there are days when I feel that way, too. So, I have asked Representative Council to investigate having release time for the next President of the Association (not me since I will be retired). This would involve new contract language as well as establishing specific guidelines for the use of the time. Financing for the time would also need to be considered. Cari Flox, Paul Repasy, and Matt Zucca are gathering information which will be shared at the March meeting. They are looking at how other districts approach this; for example, Cleveland Heights-University Heights has time for both their President and First Vice President (although they are a larger bargaining unit and affiliated with AFT).

I will keep all of you informed of this discussion and, if Representative Council decides to proceed with the idea, it will be included in the membership survey for the fall negotiations. Your input will be a key factor in any final decision. If you have questions, please contact me directly via email. (Remember, it is Thomas\_R at Shaker .org—some people think of B for Becky, but my official email is R for Rebecca). I am being absolutely transparent in my discussion of this idea—and it is just an idea! Please share your thoughts on this with me. Or wait for more information from the discussion at Representative Council in March.

As I mentioned earlier, being in a leadership position for the SHTA can be time-consuming and stressful. It is also very gratifying when members share their appreciation for the assistance they have received. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your president.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Thomas, president*

## Reports from the Executive Board

### VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Night for the Red and White is fast approaching and a number of you have committed contributions to the Silent Auction. If you have not done so, the contribution forms are available on the Shaker Heights City Schools home page and open the Shaker Schools Foundation link. SHTA is offering a membership to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, 4 passes to [Zoombezi Bay Waterpark](#) (a water park located next to the Zoo), a Shell Gas card and a gift certificate to Marriot Hotels. This membership entitles the winner to half price or in some cases free admissions to most of the zoos in the United States. Thank you so much for your support.

I hope that you are considering sharing this evening with other supporters of the Shaker Heights City Schools on Saturday March 13, 2010. The Red and White Committee is again offering a special staff ticket price of \$90.00 per person. If you have additional questions or concerns please contact me at 4916. The Event will be held at Landerhaven and it promises to be a great evening. Please join us.

The SHTA Teacher Fellowships recipients are still encouraged to submit receipt documentation to collect reimbursement. This money can be used to enhance your professional development. I look forward to hearing from the Fellows.

I continue to enjoy working with the SHTA leadership and membership. I am continually impressed by your accomplishments, as so many of our constituents perused graduate and postgraduate course work as reflected in the tuition reimbursement statistics. Congratulations!

*Respectfully submitted,  
Dollye Finney, vice president*

## PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The district's insurance committee will be meeting on February 16<sup>th</sup>. At the March Rep. Council meeting I will share the information that we obtain. Representatives from the various unions will be in attendance.

When you receive emails from the administration building, please do not ignore them. Information is being sent to you that you need to know. Sue Garber's last email was regarding new Anthem Insurance cards. I hope you read it. Please use these new insurance cards and discard your old cards.

Our prescription company Next RX has been bought out by Express Scripts. I will keep everyone informed as this process continues. Keep your present prescription card.

Article 20.06 of our teacher's contract talks about Physical Injury Leave. The article lists the exact procedures that should be followed, including immediately notifying your supervisor and providing a written report of the incident preferably within twenty-four hours. You should also fill out an accident report with the school nurse and contact your Association. The age of the student should not deter you from documenting an assault. A physical assault may occur with a regular education student or with a special education student. The child could be 3 years old, 13 years old or 18 years old. An attack is an attack. No matter how old the child is, procedures need to be followed. Depending on the severity of the assault, you may also contact the police department. For your own safety a report needs to be processed. The district is responsible to provide a safe environment for both students and employees. Please contact Becky Thomas or me, Gary Raymont, if you have any questions.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Gary Raymont, chairperson*

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The Investments Committee (Darcel Arrington, Todd Keitlen, Matt Zucca, Dollye Finney, and myself) will be meeting toward the end of the month to discuss our investments.

The members of the Negotiations Committee were compensated for their time and effort in achieving a one-year agreement with the Board of Education. The payment, \$1000 for the lead negotiator and \$750 for each team member, was less than what is normally given during a 3-year contract negotiation.

I met with our accountant from Edward C. Hawkins & Co., Ltd. this month to finalize our audit of last year's books.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Scanlon, treasurer*

## SALARY TENURE COMMITTEE

As we prepare to negotiate again in the fall of 2010, we will be asking you to complete a survey to provide guidance to the Negotiating Team. Are there specific questions/issues that you would like on this survey? Please email them to me (Thomas\_R at Shaker.org).

The new contract language is being incorporated into the contract document. When the changes are input and approved, we will sign the contract and it will be distributed—probably electronically with paper copies available as requested.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Thomas, chairperson*

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

While President Obama is asking for \$1.35 billion dollars for education to "Race to the Top" this proposal is still quite vague and therefore difficult to assess. Here in Ohio, Governor Strickland announced as part of his State of the State Address that Ohio has been honored as having "the most innovative education system in the country." Since Strickland commended the strong leadership, common sense and creative thinking of our state's educators, it is worthwhile looking at the American Federation of Teacher's Presidential speech. Randi Weingarten, AFT President, outlined a comprehensive education reform plan in January that is available at <http://oh.aft.org> (you can read it or watch/listen on line). Calling it imperative to move public education from an old industrial model, Weingarten laid out a new approach to teacher evaluation addressing the need for a fair and efficient due process system. The AFT is prepared to work with any district willing to work within these parameters and has spearheaded an effort to develop an efficient protocol for handling allegations of teacher misconduct to help allay concerns about the "so-called bad teacher refrain."

The main components of the AFT teacher development and evaluation proposal are (1) Basic Professional teaching standards (2) Standards for assessing teachers'

practice (based on *multiple* measures), (3) Implementation Benchmarks and (4) Support for teachers. This framework has been developed by union leaders with input from some of American's top teaching evaluation experts. To help nurture strong labor-management collaboration, Weingarten is striving to create forums to bring the major players together to "create a path to a stronger public education system that is defined by excellence, fairness, shared responsibility, and mutual trust. Because Weingarten's cooperative efforts have led to positive changes in places like New Haven, CT, St. Paul, MN, and Detroit, it is disconcerting to hear her specifically challenge Eugene Sanders to work in a more collaborative spirit as he rolls out his controversial reorganization plan in Cleveland. Hopefully Obama's plan will not place undue burden on Shaker's labor management relations.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Andi Glickman, chairperson*

## POLICY COMMITTEE

This month's 'Law-in-the-Limelight' is **By-Law VII** (Finances), Section **D.** (Political Donations / Expenditures).

Did you know that the SHTA restricts itself from using its funds to support political issues? This includes the levy campaign. However, for "local school funding," the SHTA can make it easy for individual members to voluntarily donate to the levy campaign, under the name of SHTA.

Here is the passage in full:

1. No funds from the SHTA treasury shall be used either directly or indirectly for the purpose of political donations/expenditures. Political donations/expenditures would include, but not necessarily be limited to, donations to elected officials or candidates seeking Federal, State or local offices, as well as donations/expenditures that would be made for the purpose of influencing legislation at Federal, State, or local levels.
2. In support of local school funding issues and in the absence of a functioning political action committee, Representative Council may direct the building representatives to solicit voluntary monetary contributions from the membership. All contributions will be sent to the Treasurer, who will deposit these funds into an account kept specifically for this purpose and this account shall not contain any other funds that constitute the S.H.T.A. treasury. Upon the direction of Representative Council, the Treasurer will forward these funds in the name of the Association to the committee supporting the passage of the issue. Any such donation from the Association shall be made using only the monetary contributions obtained from the members as outlined above.

*Respectfully submitted,  
David Klapholz, chairperson*

## PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

This past month I have been working on finalizing the details for the Associations Teacher Appreciation Week gift. In addition we have been reviewing a proposal from another organization for a donation.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Debbie Ashbaugh, chairperson*

## SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Annual SHTA District Recognition Tea is schedule for Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup>. The event will be held at Shaker Heights High School in the cafeteria.

I am looking into the planning of a spring SHTA Happy Hour. Information about the Happy Hour will be coming soon.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Darlene Garrison, chairperson*

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

### MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING February 8, 2010

Shaker Middle School

The President, Becky Thomas, called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

There were no Middle School administrators available at the start of the meeting to address the Rep. Council.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT: Lisa Howell had no report.

PTO REPORT: There was no representative from the PTO to give a report.

### **OFFICERS' REPORTS:**

#### **PRESIDENT**

Becky Thomas stated that she has attended many meetings over the past month, including the Board of Education and Instructional Administrative Council meetings this month. She will be attending the next Board of Education meeting in February. She discussed the possibilities of an upcoming levy. She reminded the members of the *Assist Now* program offered to all Shaker employees.

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

Dollye Finney encouraged members to attend *A Night for the Red and White*. She talked about the family oriented silent auction donation the Association will be making. Ms. Finney commented on the positive response the teachers received from the parents present at the last PTO Council meeting regarding the new contract.

**SECRETARY**

Matt Zucca conducted the drawing for the SHTA's *A Night for the Red and White* drawing. The Three winners were Jason Bednar of Woodbury, Karen Madeja of Woodbury, and Gretchen Hess of Lomond. The drawing earned over \$400, which will be used to defray the cost of our silent auction donation.

**TREASURER**

Bill Scanlon discussed our current financial status.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS****TEACHER EDUCATION**

Steve Smith is working with new teachers and upcoming important dates.

**LEGAL AID**

Dr. Thomas stated there was not report from Mike Sears, who was unable to attend the meeting.

**LEGISLATIVE**

Andi Glickman was unable to attend the meeting.

**POLICY**

Dave Klapholz informed the members of the Association's By-Law guidelines on making political donations.

**MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS**

Stacy Elgart reported that our membership now totals 425 with a new member from Mercer.

**PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Gary Raymont reminded members of the importance of reading memos coming from the Administration Building. He reviewed the procedures that teachers should take if they are assaulted by a student. If anyone has question about the procedure they should contact him.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Debbie Ashbaugh reported that she is working on the Teacher Appreciation gift.

**PUBLICATIONS**

John Morris asked that items for the February newsletter be received by midnight the Wednesday after the Rep. Council meeting. They should be submitted to him through email at [morris\\_j@shaker.org](mailto:morris_j@shaker.org).

**SALARY/TENURE**

Becky Thomas asked reps. to e-mail her concerns members might have that could be addressed on the next negotiation survey.

**SOCIAL**

Darlene Garrison stated she is working on the spring recognition reception and a spring social event.

**BUILDING REPORTS**

There were no building reports

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

At 5:11 the representative council went into executive session. It concluded at 5:30 p.m.

**FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Becky thanked the Middle School reps. for hosting our meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2010 AT  
MERCER SCHOOL.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Matthew Zucca, secretary*



## Editorial: Stay Positive and Get Involved

*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.*

In "The Message from the President", Becky lays out explicitly how and why teachers should support the May levy. Like all organizations that support a ballot issue, the Shaker Heights Levy Committee needs our financial and physical support. That is why I strongly advocate donating to the SHTA Levy Contribution, as well as following up with personal contributions and involvement.

It's one thing to donate money to the levy fund as an individual. However, the statement we can make as an organization collectively could go even further towards expressing our solidarity and support. That is why I strongly endorse our use of the By-Law that David Klapholz elaborates on in his Policy column to make this collective SHTA donation. I also strongly advocate making phone calls, talking to parents and community members and staying positive about programs in our district.

Supporting this levy is the most important thing we can do, outside of effectively teaching and nurturing our students, to maintain the programs and the school district to which we have dedicated our professional lives. Let's also dedicate some of our money and time towards making the passage of this levy a reality. Our professional lives depend on it. JM

### **Letters to the Editor**

*Note: These letters are in response to last week's editorial on the issue of allowing out-of-district teachers reduced tuition to send their students to Shaker Schools.*

Thank you so much for taking up this battle and not giving up! As a parent of 5 children, it was primordial for me to teach in the district my children attend: I turned a job offer where they told me I would have to pay full tuition if my kids were to attend. I have also experienced for the past 10 years I have taught at Shaker how having my kids at Shaker made me both a better teacher and a better parent, giving me full understanding of what is at stake for our students/children and what parents/teachers have to face and commit to for the success of the school.

I truly hope the powers-to-be listen to your message and see how such a plan would greatly benefit Shaker; it would also be one more way to incite great teachers to come in our district.

Suzanne Gyurgyik  
French Teacher  
High School

I just read your letter to the editor and I want you to know I support your proposal to have teachers' children in our district. All the reasons you cite in your letter I back! I am a Shaker resident (Shaker grad, too) and parent of 3 children (2 graduated, 1 a junior at the high school). I believe it would benefit the teachers (all the teachers), students and our community to have that as a benefit to our teachers. Even the 50% tuition would make sense to many teacher/parents to bring their children to our schools. That may make up for the "financial sacrifice" you talk about in the letter.

Penny Flynn  
Second Grade Teacher  
Onaway School

### **Important Dates**

<b>Monday, March 1</b>	Executive Board—Woodbury
<b>Friday, March 5</b>	Professional/Clerical Day Grades K to 6—No School
<b>Monday, March 8</b>	Representative Council—Mercer
<b>Tuesday, March 9</b>	Board of Education Meeting—Onaway
<b>Saturday, March 13</b>	A Night for the Red and White at Landerhaven
<b>Friday, March 19</b>	Conference Day Grades K to 8
<b>Friday, March 26</b>	4:00 p.m. Spring Recess Begins
<b>Tuesday, April 6</b>	Return from Spring Recess—Executive Board—Woodbury
<b>Monday, April 12</b>	Representative Council--Lomond



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- ⇒ workplace problems
- ⇒ emotional problems
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- ⇒ gambling issues
- ⇒ sexual harassment
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- ⇒ legal issues

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