

SHTA *news*

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Message From the President

On my way to a community breakfast on March 2nd I happened to listen to an interview on NPR. The guest was Diane Ravitch and the discussion focused on her new book, The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education. Later that evening, I printed out the transcript of the interview along with an article about Ravitch (both on npr.org—search terms Ravitch Advocate Turns Critic). Her transformation from being a fervent supporter of No Child Left Behind to being an equally fervent critic is refreshing to read and validates the concerns that many have expressed for years. The Superintendent distributed via email a Wall Street Journal Op Ed column by Dr. Ravitch. I encourage you to read the Op Ed and to go online to NPR and read the transcript and excerpt from the book. This quote (from the NPR interview) is one of many powerful insights:

There should not be an educational marketplace. There should not be competition. Schools should operate like families. The fundamental principle by which education proceeds is collaboration. Teachers are supposed to share what works; schools are supposed to get together and talk about what's succeeded for them. They're not supposed to hide their trade secrets and try to have a survival of the fittest competition with the school down the block.

Just think about that metaphor—"Schools should operate like families." Do families punish a child who struggles? Do families withhold resources when a child is in need? Do families make children compete for their well being? Hopefully, Dr. Ravitch's advocacy for change will help lead to the kinds of reforms that we all know are needed if public education is to survive.

March has been a month of meetings for me, including staff meetings at the buildings, the March meeting of the Board of Education, two community breakfasts, and the Imagine Shaker presentation. I also had the privilege of representing the SHTA at A Night for the Red and White. You can see why the president may need additional release time, an idea I presented in the last Newsletter and which will be included in the negotiations survey.

Please do your best to find ways to support the levy—either financially or with a time commitment. Phone calling will begin soon. This is the main way the levy committee has direct contact with the community and it takes many volunteers to get this done. I appreciate your efforts to help make this campaign a success.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Thomas, president*

Reports from the Executive Board

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Just a reminder: you need to keep track of your personal days throughout the school year. As you know, each year you are granted 3 personal days as per your contract. If you do not use these days, then they are turned into sick days on your July 16th paycheck. You are responsible of keeping track of these days. Your paystub shows how many days you have taken.

*Respectfully submitted,
Gary Raymond, chairperson*

SALARY TENURE COMMITTEE

The survey for the fall negotiations will not be distributed until after the Levy in May. The outcome of the Levy will impact the responses. I have not heard any feedback about the idea for release time for the next President (from the February [Newsletter](#)). If you have comments, please email me at Thomas_R at shaker.org.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Thomas, chairperson*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The Rhode Island School District is now compromising with their union after the “mass teacher” firing “inspired” by the Obama administration’s new plan to tighten accountability measures under the 2002 No Child Left Behind Law. Despite the dearth of evidence as to whether firing teachers improves troubled schools, the Central Falls School Superintendent tried to replace the entire teaching staff to qualify for a share of the \$3.5 billion in federal aid. Their AFT- affiliated Teachers’ Union is helping to revise the policy, preserving jobs while developing a “dynamic plan to... improve student achievement” (Washington Post 3/9).

Even stalwarts of accountability like Diane Ravitch, a historian of American education instrumental in developing the original curricular standards and choice-based programs, contend they led to an “accountability regime” she now repudiates. In her March 9th Wall Street Journal editorial, Ravitch claims to be disillusioned with the reform

models she and fellow members of the Fordham Foundation were so enthused by just a few years ago. Citing their failed promise, she draws attention to the punitive atmosphere in the schools generated by the current approach. Specifically she contends Obama's "Race to the Top" plan continues to disrupt communities, pressures schools to dumb down curriculum, and in general, undermines public education while short- changing students (Mark Freeman emailed us a scanned version of this editorial).

A thoughtful treatment of the debates underlying the NCLB accountability issue was published in the New York Times Magazine March 7 called "Building a Better Teacher." Emphasizing that merit-pay efforts and other experimental models have "thin records of reliably improving student learning," journalist Elizabeth Green traces research focused on qualities of "good" teachers, and to what extent classroom management contributes to good instruction. Green presents a subject-free taxonomy developed by Educator Doug Lemov, as well as more content-focused tools and models. She concludes that attempts to "fix" the educational system must improve, rather than replace, the existing teaching corps since there is not enough money to attract and maintain what schools chancellor Michelle Rhee in Washington D.C. refers to as "a different caliber of person." Figuring out what "makes teachers great" seems to be the key; Bill Gates is funding a \$335 million project to identify and support effective teaching practices. Perhaps we can "hope" this yields the right model to "change" education...in my opinion, the Obama plan is not the answer.

*Respectfully submitted,
Andi Glickman, chairperson*

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Investments Committee (Darcel Arrington, Todd Keitlen, Matt Zucca, Dollye Finney, and myself) met in February to discuss our investments.

I met with our accountant from Edward C. Hawkins & Co., Ltd. in February to go over our Form 990 tax filing for last fiscal year (2008-09), and to work on our audit of last year's books. The audit process is not yet complete.

The current financial report is attached.

*Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon, treasurer*

Budgeted Accounts						
	7/1/09					3/8/10
<u>Account</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Debits</u>	<u>Transfers out</u>	<u>Credit s</u>	<u>Transfers in</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Accounting	5500.00	63.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,437.00
Compensation for officers, representatives, et al.						
President	9302.00	4,651.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,651.00
Vice President	5581.00	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
Secretary	5581.00	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
Treasurer	5581.00	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
P.R. & R. Chairperson	5581.00	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
Editor	4653.00	2,326.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,326.50
Building reps. and alternates	10000.00	70.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,930.00
Conferences and meetings	2500.00	1,070.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,429.81
Contingency	250.00	77.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	172.68
Fellowships and Grants	4000.00	240.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,760.00
Insurance	5000.00	4,375.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	625.00
Legal	5000.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,900.00
Negotiations	50000.00	7,116.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	42,883.59
Executive Board expenses	500.00	123.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	376.54
Officers' expenses	500.00	159.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	340.94
Payroll taxes	700.00	209.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	490.45
Professional day	200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00
Publications	1000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
Public Relations	5000.00	4,846.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	153.72
Social	2500.00	340.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,160.00
STRS(TPO contributions)	9000.00	3,309.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,690.47
TOTAL	137929.00	40,239.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	97,689.70

FINANCIAL		REPORT	
	7/1/09	3/8/10	
COMPOSITE BALANCE			
Balance 7/1/09			719,244.67
Receipts 7/1/09 to present			76,900.00
Change in Valuation 7/1/09 to present			<u>88,674.69</u>
			884,819.36
Expenditures 7/1/09 to present			-40,239.30
Expenditures charged to last fiscal year 2008-2009			<u>-2,106.60</u>
TOTAL			842,473.46
BANK AND BROKER RECONCILIATIONS			
A. BUCKEYE STATE CREDIT UNION (BSCU)			
Certificates of deposit 2/28/10			
	24 mo. @ 3.0% APY-Matures on 2/02/11	43,081.03	
	24 mo. @ 3.76% APY-Matures on 3/12/10	<u>21,373.67</u>	
	Total Certificates of deposit		64,454.70
	Savings accounts (0.50% APY) 2/28/10		101.30
	Share draft account (0.25% APY) 2/28/10		386.76
	Unposted deposits and transfers		<u>0.00</u>
			64,942.76
	Less outstanding checks		<u>-3,644.27</u>
TOTAL BSCU			61,298.49
B. EDWARD JONES (2/26/10)			
	Regular Association Account	364,013.77	
	Advisory Solutions Account	<u>331,577.33</u>	
			<u>695,591.10</u>
C. KEY BANK			
Certificates of deposit 2/28/10			
	29 mo. @ 2.15%-Matures on 9/6/11	20,401.34	
	15 mo. @ 1.9%-Matures on 10/17/10	14,156.05	
			34,557.39
	Business Money Market Account (0.35% APY) 2/28/10		51,487.20
	Unposted deposits and transfers		<u>0.00</u>
			86,044.59
	Less outstanding checks		<u>-460.72</u>
TOTAL KEY BANK			85,583.87
TOTAL			842,473.46

POLICY COMMITTEE

This month's 'Law-in-the-Limelight' is **By-Law II C**: Election of Building Representatives.

This is the time to consider running for "Building Rep." This modest commitment is so crucial to how our Association operates. On Representative Council you will represent the teachers of your building, and when important issues come up you will have a voice in the direction that our Association takes. Rather than thinking of the SHTA as something that a few other people are running, you'll see that SHTA really is just *us*, using our best judgment to cope with our issues. There are 8 meetings per year, and each comes with a stipend and a light meal.

Here is part of the Article:

Before the end of the current school year and not earlier than the 2nd of May, each building shall elect its representative(s)

*Respectfully submitted,
David Klapholz, chairperson*

MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

I thought it interesting to note that out of the association's 425 members, 122 support our schools by maintaining residency in Shaker Heights! Thank You!

*Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Elgart, chairperson*

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

This past month we received a thank you letter from the advisors of the middle school scholars program thanking us for our recent donation. In addition we received another request for a donation and we are in the middle of getting further information from that group. We also placed an ad in the Shakerite newspaper for the month of March.

*Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Ashbaugh, chairperson*

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The SHTA/Shaker Heights Schools Spring Tea is scheduled for Thursday, May 27th. This special event will take place at Shaker Heights High School in the upper cafeteria.

A Spring Happy Hour is planned for Friday, April 23rd, please read the attached flyer for details.

*Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison, chairperson*

SECRETARY'S REPORT

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

March 8, 2010

Mercer Elementary School

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

Lindsay Florence welcomed the SHTA representative council to Mercer School.

The minutes of the February meeting were unanimously approved.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT: Lisa Howell spring evaluations were running smoothly.

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 meeting and building meeting about the upcoming levy. She encouraged the members to become active in supporting the levy and the levy campaign. Dr. Thomas continues to work on the development of the association's website.

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dollye Finney encouraged members to attend *A Night for the Red and White*. She reminded members to submit receipts for Fellowship Grants and to take advantage of the PTO Council teacher grants.

SECRETARY

Matt Zucca took attendance and asked members to verify number of meetings attended.

TREASURER

Bill Scanlon discussed our current financial status. He met with the Finance Committee to discuss investment options. He continues to work with the accountants on the auditing process.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Debbie Ashbaugh reported that she will be making a donation to the girl's crew team which will allow the association naming rights to one of the team's boats. She read aloud a letter received from the Shaker Heights Middle School Scholars, thanking the

Association for our donation to them. She has ordered the Teacher Appreciation gifts and will distribute them to the Head Building Reps. at the next meeting.

PUBLICATIONS

John Morris asked that items for the March 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.

SALARY/TENURE

Becky Thomas has been working on resolving contract details. She stated that next year's contract negotiating survey won't be addressed until after the results the May Levy.

SOCIAL

Darlene Garrison stated the spring recognition reception will be at the High School on May 27th. She is putting together a bowling night for a spring social event.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Steve Smith is working with new teachers and the spring evaluations.

LEGAL AID

Mike Sears had no report.

LEGISLATIVE

Andi Glickman was unable to attend the meeting.

POLICY

Dave Klapholz distributed SHTA Levy contribution forms to Head Building Reps to then be distributed to the members.

MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS

Stacy Elgart reported that of the 425 association members, 122 of them are Shaker residents.

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Gary Raymont was unable to attend the meeting

BUILDING REPORTS

There were no building reports

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Cari Flox made a motion, which was seconded by Darcel Arrington. It was stated as follows:

I hereby move to authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for the website development of the SHTA from Publications.

There was a discussion and a vote. The motion was unanimously approved.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Becky thanked the Mercer reps. for hosting our meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 12, 2010 AT LOMOND SCHOOL.

*Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Zucca, secretary*

Editorial: Why Give

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.

Teachers give every day. We give our time, our efforts, our thoughts and our lives to a profession that we love. Sometimes it feels as if there is no end to the ways in which we willingly give of ourselves. One day, maybe after retirement, we can stop giving as much or at least begin giving in different ways. However, as the May Levy approaches, we need to dig deeper and give from our pockets as well as through our actions.

At the risk of belaboring the point, the Levy Campaign needs and deserves our financial support. This group of Shaker residents and school supporters put their time and money into ensuring that we pass levies. This year the Levy Campaign has launched two major new initiatives that deserve our support. During a time in which over 50% of voters cast ballots *before* the last general election, the Levy Campaign has made an effort to reach voters early by launching the revamped website www.forshakerschools.org and a Facebook page which presents information supporting the levy as well as providing volunteer opportunities and an on-line donation site. Secondly, the Levy Campaign has contracted a well-respected consultant firm in order to reach voters early and effectively. Linda Lalley, campaign director explains,

We hired a consultant this time around because there have been many changes since the last levy in 2006. The rapid growth in the Internet and social media has significantly changed the way people receive information, and the old levy website did not provide the functionality to take advantage of it. Also, 2010 is the

first time we will vote on a levy under no-fault absentee voting, commonly called early voting. The popularity of early voting in Shaker Heights has changed the way we have to conduct campaigns. After delaying the levy a year beyond what was originally planned, we knew we *had* to pass it this year despite the fragile economy to avoid deep cuts that would damage our educational capacity. Given all these factors, we recognized we needed professional expertise.

These efforts are expensive and, by law, unfunded by our school district budget.

I know that we did not receive a raise this year. However, it would be incredibly short-sighted to use this as a rationale not to donate. We know that considerable numbers of our community members are experiencing economic difficulties and they are still voting for the levy. We also know that our professional colleagues in Local 200 and OAPSE are also making donations. To say that not donating because we did not receive a raise would be akin to “biting off one’s nose to spite one’s face” would be an understatement.

Another issue worthy of addressing is why, as the SHTA, we haven’t made a donation from the general fund. The answer to this question lies in our By-Laws. We cannot make any political donations from our general funds. As someone who once attempted to resuscitate the political action committee of the SHTA, I know that a PAC does not represent the desire of the Association. The independently funded efforts that have been made to place envelopes in your mailboxes represent our only avenue as an Association to make a donation. The message we can send with our donations to the Levy Campaign and the community is a considerable one. Similarly, we would do well to publicly and personally endorse the levy by contributing to the Levy Committee with our individual donations made independent of the SHTA donation. I know it may be a lot to ask, but the benefits of levy passage are undeniable.

How much are our jobs worth to us? How much would we give to maintain the programs we love? How much is it worth to give our colleagues job security? These questions are up to us as an Association and as individuals to answer. All I know is that donating your time, efforts and money to the Levy Campaign is a strong way to ensure that the answers to these questions are the ones you want. And the envelope has already been placed in your mailbox. JM

Important Dates

Monday, March 15	Imagine Shaker Presentation, 7-9 p.m. High School
Friday, March 19	Conference Day Grades K to 8
Friday, March 26	4:00 p.m. Spring Recess Begins
Tuesday, April 6 Woodbury	Return from Spring Recess—Executive Board—
Monday, April 12	Representative Council—Lomond
Tuesday, April 13	Board of Education Meeting--Lomond
Friday, April 23	SHTA Spring Social

It's Time to Have Some Fun!!!

Hope you can "SPARE" the time to
"STRIKE" up some fun at the
SHTA Spring Happy Hour.
Friday, April 23rd
4:30 P.M.



Maple Heights Lanes
15809 Libby Road
Maple Heights, Ohio

Located between Lee Road and Broadway Avenue

There will be snacks and drinks before you “SPLIT”!

So, don't “STRIKE-OUT”, see you there!!!!