

# SHTA *news*

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No. 6 • 21 March 2011

## Message From the President

Proud. That's how I feel about the members of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. For a relatively small, independent association, we have been extremely active regarding SB5. Many of us have travelled to Columbus to attend rallies and listen to testimony. Eileen Sweeney has organized the PAC of Shaker Educators (see their Facebook page) which keeps us informed of rallies and events. Many more members have made phone calls, written letters, and represented our interests. Mike Sears testified at one of the House hearings. Around half a dozen teachers were at the Solon Democratic Club presentation by NEOEA Executive Director Bill Lavezzi—there were even some Shaker retirees there. And did you see the SHTA turnout at the Strongsville rally? I am deeply grateful for every effort to represent the interests of all teachers and our future.

It has been a challenge to coordinate the numerous activities and pieces of information about SB5, particularly given the restrictions of our By-Laws. Andrew Glasier, with input from John Morris, Dave Klapholz, and me, presented a By-Laws amendment to Representative Council that would allow for the creation of an SHTA PAC. Representative Council voted to place this amendment for a vote by the membership. You can read the text of this letter in Matt Zucca's report. Passing an amendment to the By-Laws takes the approval of three-fourths of the total membership—not just those voting. We will be electing officers in May and will place the By-Law amendment vote on that ballot as well.

John Morris has organized an SHTA Facebook page to provide timely information about our Association activities. Our web page, SHTAWEBSITE.ORG, will still remain the official site for our organization and provide formal information including the contract, constitution, by-laws, and organizational structure. Also, at the Solon Democratic Club meeting, Bill Lavezzi suggested visiting the NEOEA web site to check out "Ten Things You Can Do to Save Collective Bargaining for Ohio Public Employees." The list of events is updated and there are helpful websites including [plunderbund.com](http://plunderbund.com); [sb5ohio.com](http://sb5ohio.com) and Stand Up for Ohio on Facebook.

I am not even going to try to list the many meetings I have attended in the past month. Suffice it to say, I have been diligent in representing our Association. One event that was especially meaningful to me was the Night for the Red and White since this will be the last time that I will attend as your president. Like many of you, I am looking forward to Spring Break, although you should read the Salary-Tenure report to find out how I expect to be "relaxing." Still, after this very snowy, cold, icy winter, I know we will all enjoy some time off and, hopefully, warmer weather.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Thomas, president*

# Reports from the Executive Board

## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Happy March Madness! I hope that you are looking forward to a well-deserved Spring Break. Thank you so much for your Silent Auction contributions and your attendance at the Night for The Red and White. There were more than 700 tickets sold and that is in no small part thanks to each of you.

I would like to encourage all fellowship recipients to submit receipts for reimbursement as many winners fail to claim their awards each year. If you have questions regarding this process, please feel free to contact me at 4916.

This year PTO Council has decided to give the monies set aside for teacher grants to the Shaker Schools Foundation. This account will establish a new teacher grants system. It will allow them to direct monies to teachers-as in the past- and establish an ongoing awards policy. This system will help secure some financial return on their donations and in turn, over a period of time, increase teacher gifts.

Please allow me to thank the members of the Financial Investment Committee headed by our treasurer William Scanlon. Thanks to Todd Keitlin, Darcel Arrington and Matt Zucca in helping to direct our investments to an all time high! Great job!

Also on behalf of the Association I would like to thank the members of the Negotiations Committee for their dedicated service and hard work.

Have a restful spring break!

*Respectfully submitted,  
Dollye Finney, vice president*

## PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

No report. See Mike's testimony at the end of the newsletter.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Sears, chairperson*

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Hello. The audit of our 2008-09 financial records is complete. Our accountants (Edward C. Hawkins & Co., Ltd.) reported our accounting methods to be successful on the whole with only two criticisms. The full audit is attached for your perusal.

I also met with the accountants about the compilation of our 2009-10 financial records and our tax form 990.

I have attended protests against SB5 (in Columbus and in Strongsville), along with a number of our colleagues. This is a crucial issue that we cannot ignore. It will not only lower our take home pay but it has severe consequences for our Association that has served our members so well over the years. Please continue fighting this.

The current financial report is attached.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Scanlon, Treasurer*

<b>FINANCIAL REPORT</b>		
	7/1/10	3/16/11
<b>COMPOSITE BALANCE</b>		
Balance 7/1/10		802,998.46
Receipts 7/1/10 to present		83,072.53
Change in Valuation 7/1/10 to present		<u>114,962.07</u>
		1,001,033.06
Expenditures 7/1/10 to present		-48,774.32
Expenditures charged to last fiscal year 2009-2010		<u>-6,488.35</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>		945,770.39
<b>BANK AND BROKER RECONCILIATIONS</b>		
<b>A. BUCKEYE STATE CREDIT UNION (BSCU) (2/28/11)</b>		
Savings accounts ( 0.50% APY)		101.30
Share draft account (0.25% APY)		66,301.28
Unposted deposits and transfers		<u>0.00</u>
		66,402.58
Less outstanding checks		<u>0.00</u>
<b>TOTAL BSCU</b>		66,402.58
<b>B. EDWARD JONES (1/28/11)</b>		
Regular Association Account	412,613.70	
Advisory Solutions Account	<u>372,266.75</u>	
		<u>784,880.45</u>
<b>C. KEY BANK (3/6/11)</b>		
Certificates of deposit		
29 mo. @ 2.15%-Matures on 9/6/11	<u>20,928.62</u>	
Total Certificates of deposit		20,928.62
Business Money Market Account (0.35% APY)		74,334.92
Unposted deposits and transfers		<u>0.00</u>
		95,263.54
Less outstanding checks		<u>-776.18</u>
<b>TOTAL KEY BANK</b>		94,487.36
<b>TOTAL</b>		945,770.39

<b>Budgeted Accounts</b>						
	7/1/10					3/16/11
<b>Account</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Debits</b>	<b>Transfers out</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Transfers in</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Accounting	<b>3000.00</b>	4,800.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-1,800.00
Compensation for officers, representatives, et al.						
President	<b>9302.00</b>	4,651.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,651.00
Vice President	<b>5581.00</b>	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
Secretary	<b>5581.00</b>	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
Treasurer	<b>5581.00</b>	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
P.R. & R. Chairperson	<b>5581.00</b>	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
Editor	<b>4653.00</b>	2,326.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,326.50
Building reps. and alternates	<b>10000.00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
Conferences and meetings	<b>2500.00</b>	1,836.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	663.83
Contingency	<b>250.00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	250.00
Fellowships and Grants	<b>4000.00</b>	683.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,316.50
Insurance	<b>5000.00</b>	4,915.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	85.00
Legal	<b>5000.00</b>	300.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,700.00
Negotiations	<b>50000.00</b>	10,438.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	39,561.47
Executive Board expenses	<b>500.00</b>	88.93	0.00	0.00	0.00	411.07
Officers' expenses	<b>500.00</b>	389.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	110.33
Payroll taxes	<b>700.00</b>	195.62	0.00	0.00	0.00	504.38
Professional day	<b>200.00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00
Publications	<b>1000.00</b>	152.98	0.00	0.00	0.00	847.02
Public Relations	<b>7000.00</b>	3,886.08	0.00	524.00	0.00	3,637.92
Social	<b>2500.00</b>	408.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,091.19
STRS(TPO contributions)	<b>9000.00</b>	<u>2,539.53</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>6,460.47</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>137429.00</b>	48,774.32	0.00	524.00	0.00	89,178.68

## SALARY TENURE COMMITTEE

Hopefully you all read the Negotiations Update that I sent on March 14<sup>th</sup>. I have reprinted it for you below. At this time, we are scheduling the mediation session. It will likely be on Wednesday, March 30<sup>th</sup>. Our team is willing to meet over spring break in order to try to reach a resolution on the outstanding issues. Check your email over break for any updates.

I want to congratulate Susannah Muskovitz of Muskovitz and Lemmerbrock for her national television appearance speaking about the importance of collective bargaining. We have benefited from her representation as our Association's attorney and her expertise was evident in the discussion of SB5. Way to go, Susannah!

Here is the reprint of the Negotiations Update

The SHTA and the Board of Education negotiating teams have agreed to meet with a federal mediator in an attempt to resolve the outstanding issues. We hope to arrange this meeting within the next two weeks.

I know there is a lot of anxiety about SB5 and the implications for our next contract if the law were to become effective before we finish with negotiations. However, our team does not want to rush into a bad agreement. At a minimum, the law would not take effect until 90 days after it is signed by the Governor (assuming there is no referendum) so we believe we have sufficient time to bargain a much better contract than what is on the table currently.

That being said, we are at a point where the position of the Board of Education on the remaining articles is completely unacceptable to us. However, we are not yet ready to declare impasse. We are hopeful that mediation will be helpful and possibly either narrow the issues or even allow the parties to reach a tentative agreement which we can present for ratification. If mediation is not effective, we will move to impasse. At that time, we will release details about the status of all items that have been discussed, including all tentative agreements, as well as the outstanding proposals from both sides.

It is my hope that you will support our decision to continue the process as we try to best serve your interests.

Thank you for your understanding.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Thomas, chairperson*

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

*Where do I begin?*

Governor Kasich unveiled his plans for a two-year budget on March 15. Calling the budget proposal "a work in progress," Kasich plans on boosting State revenues largely through privatization and deep cuts in the funding of communities and programs. Below you will find some issues of interest. Please reference this information in your communications with State Representatives.

**TPP tax phase-out:** Despite earlier promises to refrain from cutting school funding, Kasich plans on accelerating the phase-out of TPP, tangible personal property taxes. Proposed in the 2006-2007 budget, HB 66 called for a phasing out of the TPP, taxes on the "tangible personal property of general businesses, telephone and telecommunications companies, and railroads,"

i.e., commercial inventory and machinery.<sup>1</sup> While the phase-out was to begin in 2013, Kasich proposes initiating the cuts next year. What does this mean for schools? Districts in cities with more industry will face significant cuts in revenue currently provided by the TPP tax. Cincinnati Public Schools alone would lose \$13.6 million in tax funds in 2012, and \$17.4 million in 2013.<sup>2</sup> I have yet to see the data for Cleveland, but rest assured, it will show a significant loss in funding. The goal of Kasich's measure: to give tax breaks to big businesses, and consequently, to rob school districts of the funds they so desperately need. This will, in turn, mean the need for more levies.

**More funding?** The *State Foundation Formula*, the main funding for schools, would increase by 1.4% in 2012, and by 1.3% in 2013. This sounds great until you consider that the combined loss of tax funding (see above, for starters) and federal stimulus money will cause an overall school funding decrease of 11.5% in 2012, with an additional 4.9% loss projected for 2013.<sup>3</sup>

**House Bill 69/ Senate Bill 3:** On February 16, 2011, the executive director of STRS Ohio, Michael Nehf, testified in support of HB 69, a bill that would significantly alter current public pensions. The changes proposed by STRS in January, ahead of HB 69, are largely compatible with the legislation. Of the most significant differences: teachers will gradually increase their pension contribution from the current 10% to 12.5% by 2015. In addition, to receive the full retirement benefit, members will be required to increase their years of service from the current 30 years to 35 years.<sup>4</sup> It is feared and speculated that a passage of HB 69 would mean an additional 2% contribution on top of the 12.5% proposed directly by STRS.<sup>5</sup> Finally, it is proposed that retirees will see a reduction in COLA to 2% from the current 3%.

**School vouchers:** The Kasich budget proposes doubling school vouchers for families dissatisfied with public education.

**Teacher bonus?** A generous \$50 bonus is on the table for you for every one of your students who shows *improvement* (criteria to be determined at a later date). Don't spend it all in one place.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://tax.ohio.gov/divisions/personal\\_property/PPT\\_law\\_changes\\_070303.stm](http://tax.ohio.gov/divisions/personal_property/PPT_law_changes_070303.stm)

<sup>2</sup> <http://news.cincinnati.com>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2011/03/schools\\_local\\_governments\\_take.html](http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2011/03/schools_local_governments_take.html)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.legislature.state.oh.us> (Search the analysis for HB 69)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local\\_news/stories/2011/03/16/16-kasich-pension-payments.html?sid=101&cmpid=aunews](http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2011/03/16/16-kasich-pension-payments.html?sid=101&cmpid=aunews)

*Respectfully submitted,  
Anna Hruba chairperson*

## PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

This past month I have been working on placing ads in various publications. We will have ads in the upcoming April/ May issue of the Shaker Life Magazine. We also placed ads in the Shakerite newspaper for the months of March, April and May.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Debbie Ashbaugh, chairperson*

## MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

This May, the membership will elect our 2011-2013 officers. Any member on tenure, who has been an active member for the three years immediately preceding the election, is eligible to be an officer. Each candidate for office must initiate his or her candidacy by means of a petition containing the signatures of at least five percent of the active members. Please contact me to obtain a petition. They will be available when we return from spring break and must be filed with me no later than 4 pm Friday, April 29, 2011.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Stacy Elgart, chairperson*

## POLICY COMMITTEE

This is a very exciting month over here at Policy because something is actually *happening*: all of the members will be asked to vote on an amendment to our By-Laws.

For the By-Laws to change it will take three-fourths of the membership to vote "Yes" at the elections in May.

Please take the time to get yourself up to speed on this issue so that we make the best possible decision as an Association. One ancillary benefit that I am hoping for is a renewed appreciation for our Association: we are a modest local collective that governs itself; there is no larger group of which we are a member, no one else to blame or to credit. The truth is that *You are the SHTA*.

*Respectfully submitted,  
David Klapholz, chairperson*

## SOCIAL COMMITTEE

It is time to unwind, kick-back and have some fun!!!! Please join your colleagues as we bowl winter out and strike spring in.☺ On Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at 4:30, SHTA will sponsor a fun-filled evening of bowling. We will meet at Maple Heights Bowling Lanes on Libby Road. So let the fun begin!!!

Please save the date.... Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at 3:45 the SHTA will sponsor the Annual Spring Recognition Reception. This event will take place at Shaker Heights High School in the upper cafeteria.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Darlene Garrison, chairperson*

## LOCAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Dear Colleagues,

Did you know that you need to create a new Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) every time you receive a new teaching license from the state? It's true! State law requires educators, upon receipt of a new teaching license, to archive their old IPDPs and create new plans prior to submitting any activities. While this may sound like a lot of extra work, the steps to archive an old IPDP and create a new one are actually quite simple and take very little time.

These are the steps:

1. Log into the IPDP Management Suite using your DASL Username and Password.
2. Select "View Plan" from the menu across the top of the page.
3. Select "Start New Plan" found in the upper right-hand corner of the page and follow the prompts from there.

As always, should you encounter any problems while archiving your old plan and creating a new one, feel free to contact your LPDC representative listed below!

School	LPDC Representative	Email
Boulevard	Dorothy Grim	Grim_d@shaker.org
Fernway/Onaway	Penny Flynn	Flynn_p@shaker.org
Lomond/Mercer	Neal Robinson	Robinson_n@shaker.org
Woodbury	Eileen Sweeney	Sweeney_e@shaker.org
Middle School	Elizabeth Strickler	Strickler_e@shaker.org
High School	John O'Verko	O'Verko_j@shaker.org
High School	Robin Taylor	Taylor_r@shaker.org

*Respectfully submitted,  
Your LPDC*

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

### MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

March 14, 2011

Shaker Heights Middle School

The President, Becky Thomas, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Danny Young, principal of Shaker Heights Middle School, welcomed the SHTA representative council.

The minutes of the February meeting were unanimously approved.



ADMINISTRATION REPORT: Lisa Howell had no report.

PTO REPORT: Karen Slovikovski, PTO Council Co-president, stated that the council would be restructuring the PTO Teacher Grant. More information from the PTO is still to come.

### **OFFICERS' REPORTS:**

#### **PRESIDENT**

Becky Thomas reported that she has been very busy attending many various meetings. She attended the last Board meeting. She, along with the rest of the negotiating team, has had many meetings with the Board of Ed's negotiating team. She attended the District's Finance Committee meeting. She thanked the many members for their efforts to improve the current condition of education in Ohio. Dr. Thomas informed the rep. council about the upcoming opportunities for concerned teachers to voice their concerns. She commended the Association's lawyer on her appearance on Fox News Channel.

#### **VICE-PRESIDENT**

Dolley Finney reported that she attended the Night for the Red and White. She thanked all those members who attended. She stated that receipts for the SHTA Fellowship Grant should be turned in to her.

#### **SECRETARY**

Matt Zucca reported that he attended The Night for the Red and White. He reminded Rep. Council members to check the total meeting attended on the attendance sign in sheet.

#### **TREASURER**

Bill Scanlon discussed our current financial status. He stated the audit has been completed. He has submitted a copy of the letter from our accountants for membership review.

### **EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS**

#### **TEACHER EDUCATION**

Steve Smith has been answering evaluations and tenure questions that members have had.

#### **LEGAL AID**

Chante Thomas-Taylor had no report.

#### **LEGISLATIVE**

Anna Hruby will be reporting on the amendments made to Senate Bill 5.

#### **POLICY**

Dave Klapholz reported that he assisted with the drafting of an amendment to the By- Laws.

#### **MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS**

Stacy Elgart reported that the last payroll deduction for membership dues was March 1. Stacy stated that the Association will hold its election on Monday, May 23. Candidates for Officers for

2011- 2013 must initiate his or her candidacy by means of a petition. Stacy will make these petitions available the first week in April. The completed petition must be filed by the candidate, with Stacy, no later than Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, by 4p.m.

#### PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mike Sears was unable to attend.

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS

Debbie Ashbaugh reported that there will be an ad in the next Shaker Life magazine. She is working on the teacher appreciation gifts.

#### 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](mailto:morris_j@shaker.org). The association's Facebook page is up and running. He encourages members to visit the page and click on "like".

#### SALARY/TENURE

Becky Thomas discussed her report during Executive Session.

#### SOCIAL

Darlene Garrison stated she is working on the spring recognition reception and a bowling event in May.

#### BUILDING REPORTS

The following reps asked questions, expressed concerns, or made statements on behalf of the membership in their buildings:

The High School has been working with the administration to get the High School in compliance with Federal Department of Labor regulations regarding private space that must be provided for nursing mothers.

Woodbury reported there were some general maintenance concerns that are currently being addressed.

Woodbury also asked for clarification about procedures at another building where classroom aides (not the teachers) seemed to be calling parents about their children's progress at school. Dr. Thomas will contact Dr. Stokes for more information.

Mercer reps shared that there had been concerns about how the administration communicated with teachers regarding in school student transfers. These concerns are being addressed.

#### OLD BUSINESS

None.

#### NEW BUSINESS

A motion to amend the SHTA By-Laws was made by Andrew Glasier. The motion was seconded and was followed by a discussion. After the discussion a second motion was made by Becky Thomas to propose additional language to the originally proposed By-Law change. The motion was seconded and was followed by a discussion. The council voted in favor of putting the By-Law amendment on the May ballot.

At 5:55 the representative council went into executive session. It concluded at 6:12 p.m.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

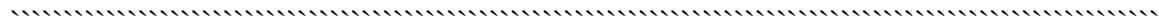
Becky thanked the Middle School reps. for hosting our meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2011 AT LOMOND.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Zucca  
Secretary



ADDITIONAL NOTIFICATION FROM THE SECRETARY

Pursuant to the SHTA By-Laws the following posting will serve as the written notice for the membership for a proposed By-Law amendment.

**CURRENT**

BY-LAW VII FINANCES

D. Political Donations/expenditures

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.

## PROPOSED

### BY-LAW VII FINANCES

#### D. Political Donations/expenditures

1. No funds from the SHTA treasury shall be used directly for the purpose of ~~political donations/expenditures~~ **donations to elected officials or candidates seeking office**. ~~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. The SHTA will sponsor a Political Action Committee (a special committee appointed by the president) whose purpose will be to support political issues relevant to the Purposes of the Association. Representative Council may direct the building representatives to solicit voluntary**

**monetary contributions from the membership for the PAC. All contributions will be sent to the Treasurer, who will deposit these funds into an account kept specifically for this purpose, and will then forward the funds according to the directive of the PAC. No funds from the PAC treasury shall be used directly for the purpose of donations to elected officials or candidates seeking office.**

**3. The PAC will submit a report in the Newsletter of their activities including a detailed financial account. Participation in and support for the PAC will be completely voluntary and no monies from SHTA dues or the general fund may be accessed for the PAC.**

4. 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,*  
Matt Zucca, secretary

## It's Time to Take the Plunge...

*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.*

...into Social Media. It's time to get a Facebook page. There, I said it. I know that we've all heard the horror stories, many of them true, of teachers who have lost their jobs due to inappropriate comments or pictures on their Facebook pages. However, I would hope that those of us who already have FB accounts can advise those who don't about what and what not to put on your page. To put it simply, common sense should rule. However, I'm not going to delve deeply into unfortunate instances of Facebook misuse. What I am going to emphasize is that

Social Media, like Facebook and Twitter (which I am less familiar with), have become integral to revolutions around the world. Likewise, these same technologies are becoming a necessity for our own political empowerment as we face an openly hostile political environment aimed at disempowering and disenfranchising teachers.

It doesn't take much of an internet search to find articles on the growing implications of Social Media and the growth of democracy. The New York Times article "Revolution, Facebook-Style" discusses the impact of Facebook and Twitter on the 18 day revolution in Egypt that moved Hosni Mubarek to step down (1). When Egypt's Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq finally exited his post, he made the announcement on Facebook instead of television (2). State department officials have stated that "social networking software like Facebook's has the potential to become a powerful pro democracy tool" (1). One of the best and most realistic comments on the impacts of Social Media on democracy comes from Wired Magazine,

If three decades of violent repression and despotic rule were kindling for the Egyptian revolution, social media was both a spark and an accelerant for the movement. Did social media like Facebook and Twitter cause the revolution? No. But these tools did speed up the process by helping to organize..., transmit their message..., and galvanize international support. (3)

We have to employ the same technology to help organize, transmit and galvanize support for the upcoming four years of struggle we will face in Ohio and as we support our fellow teachers in states such as Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, and other states where teachers' rights are being challenged and, in worse case scenarios, destroyed.

If you are worried about anonymity on Facebook, because you enjoy your relative privacy, I have a suggestion. When you go into Facebook (4) to create an account, you do not have to use your formal name. For your first name and last name, choose what you would like. The only part of your profile that must be accurate is your email address for account confirmation. Otherwise, your choice to put your picture(s) or other details about yourself are optional. Facebook can then just be a media stream that you can connect to with a certain degree of anonymity. I don't know if Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook's creator) would approve, but it can be done.

If you have a Facebook page, the next steps are easy. Use the search function, select "pages" and "like" the following groups:

- Plunderbund
- Stand Up for Ohio
- Defend Ohio
- Ohio Education Association
- Ohio Federation of Teachers
- PAC of Shaker Educators
- Shaker Heights Teachers' Association

Our SHTA Facebook page has just been established (shtaweb.org is still our primary page), but the first six pages have regular updates and extensive content on what to do in order to fight legislation like SB5. Likewise, there are other pages that your colleagues may recommend as well. I would honestly say that if it wasn't for pages like Plunderbund and Stand Up for Ohio, I would have had a much harder time contacting my state senator and representative and finding out when and where public hearings and rallies were taking place. I also would have had no idea what a referendum was let alone how to take part in making one happen. This is testament to the power of the new Social Media. It's time for us to take this power into our own hands. JM

1. "Social Media's Influence on Revolution"  
<http://blogs.nationalgeographic.com/blogs/news/chiefeditor/2011/03/social-media-influence-on-revolution.html>
2. "Revolution, Facebook-Style"  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/25/magazine/25bloggers-t.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/25/magazine/25bloggers-t.html?_r=1&pagewanted)
3. "Social Media Sparked, Accelerated Egypt's Revolutionary Fire"  
<http://www.wired.com/epicenter/2011/02/egypts-revolutionary-fire/>
4. [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

### Letters to the Editor

On Monday I presented a proposed amendment to the SHTA By-Laws to allow for the association to have a Political Action Committee (PAC), funded by donations of the members. The PAC may only lobby for or against legislation inherent to our profession and NOT to candidates' campaigns

I have argued since 2003 that an association without a political voice cannot truly represent its members. As more power has been taken away from local governments and moved to Columbus and Washington our approach will only lead to a certain powerlessness to control our profession. As recent events have shown, if not for the voice of the other major unions, SB5 would have already passed through, making the association obsolete in many ways. This is not the only legislation coming from the federal and state governments that will jeopardize our profession and also a quality education for the students we care so deeply for. Every interest group has some political voice in our country; from potato chip manufacturers to senior citizens. That includes our administration and school board, whose lobbyist has worked hard with the current state administration to craft SB5. Why should our voices be silent? That is the power of union.

I ask you examine the impending amendment, be open to discussion, and feel free to contact me with concerns before we vote on amendment in May. Andrew Glasier

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At the heart of every successful society have been artists, philosophers, scientists, orators, musicians and divergent thinkers- in one word teachers. Throughout history the place reserved for education has been significant and well respected. Although history has been witness to the need for an educated populous in a democratic society here in 2011, we face a governor that would rock the Ohio education system at its foundational core. SB5 - depreciates and devalues the work of teachers, it undervalues Ohio students, and threatens to destroy the very future of the middle class in our state.

The American dream has been represented by the attainment of success through hard work and education. Make no mistake, there have been dark days in our history where men of color were denied the right to vote if they could not successfully recite the Preamble of the

Constitution, women were denied the vote because they held an inferior status, and education was divided by color of skin and socio economic factors. There have been times in our American history that qualified candidates for jobs were denied an opportunity to practice, because they were not the right color, or they were not members of specific ethnic groups, or the gender of choice. The formation of unions in this country gave voice to these underserved and underappreciated individuals. The value of having to speak in the work place with one voice- a voice of solidarity became one of the most essential roles of unions.

The collective enabled people to speak to the inequities in the work place. These inequities were insurmountable by one, but achievable by many. Union were successful in opening doors to millions of Americans to well paid employment and essential to the creation and propitiation of the middle class. The working people inspired and empowered by education built America both literally and figuratively. Our current Governor is the son of a mailman that grew up in a blue collar community. Historically, postal workers certainly benefitted from collective bargaining. His personal history is a reflection of the importance in launching future generations to higher achievement through fair and equitable salaries. Governor Kasich, as are many of us, is the product of middle class values, education, work ethics and he directly and indirectly benefitted from the process of collective bargaining.

As teachers, for years we have extolled the importance of recognizing and celebrating diversity, clear thinking and collective problem solving. Not to be ignored are the co-essential roles of public safety workers that allows for the orderly assembly and the safety needed to freely gathers and express our ideas. We stand together with the members of our society that protect and serve us -- the police officers and fire fighters. No less important to their success and livelihood is the fair compensation and collective processes that our unions and professional associations afford . They protect the society that we as teachers nurture.

So you wonder why I included issues of race and gender. I understand that as a woman, and as African American woman historically, discrepancies in pay the glass ceilings that make promotions illusive and often invisible. There is a relief and safety in fair and equitable contacts that help to maintain a blind eye. The kind of blindness that weighs in the balance of justice my appearance against my professional abilities and then focuses and rewards those abilities. This blindness promotes equal treatment of all members of a society and allows for the fair representation of all members of our society in the workplace. In a paraphrase of the words of the late Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, when an individual is judged by the content of their character as opposed to the color of their skin. Collectively bargained contracts equally represent all and force employers to look at the content of the character. Union members played a critical role in the civil rights struggles of the past and will help to shape the future.

Contracts help to alleviate unfair discrimination. Concepts like merit pay open the door to absolute favoritism, racism, genderism, ageism, and discrimination based on beliefs and cultural values. It silences the voices of descent that have in so many cases shaped the fabric of American policies and laws. It assumes that teachers that serve the neediest populations may never achieve the level of financial success of those that are afforded the gift of teaching more affluent and able students. It separates the special education students' teachers from those that work with the gifted populations. Funny as it may seem the ironic and upsetting part of this dichotomy is that the gifted student and the cognitively delayed student both fall within the umbrella of exceptional education. Which teacher deserves merit pay?? Based on what criteria?

Would we ever consider rewarding our politicians with merit pay? What would that criteria look like? Popularity? Fiscal responsibility? The educational test scores of the students within the state? The number of businesses recruited? I guess Gov Kasich would say politicians are judged on merit as they can be ousted or reelected. I guess we now know what we must do. We must stand up and be counted and make our collective voices heard in the defeat of SB5.

We respect our communities too much, we respect our students **too** much and we respect Ohio too much to let this become the law of Ohio. SHTA members stand up and be counted.

Respectfully Submitted Dollye Finney – proud teacher and member of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association.

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Amended Substitute Senate Bill 5  
Testimony before the Ohio  
House Commerce & Labor Committee

Good morning Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

Thank you Chairman Uecker, Vice Chairman Young, and Representatives Adams, Antonio, Blair, Blessing, Coley, Hagan, McKenney, Murray, Ramos, Roegner, Szollosi, Wachtmann, and Yuko for the opportunity to testify against Senate Bill 5 this morning.

My name is Mike Sears. I am from University Heights on the east side of Cleveland. I teach 7<sup>th</sup> graders World History at Shaker Heights Middle School. I am here today representing the Concerned Shaker Heights Educators. I also serve as the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee Chair for the Shaker Heights Teachers Association, and am currently serving on our Negotiations team working on a new labor contract.

I am also here as a parent of a kindergartener named Noah, who learned how to read this year thanks to his wonderful teachers at Canterbury Elementary School in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school district.

This is my 3<sup>rd</sup> trip to the State House in the past month. Prior to the introduction of Senate Bill 5, I visited the State House twice in forty years. This legislation demands my attention because of the damage it would do to children and families **all across Ohio**.

I was here on March 2<sup>nd</sup> for the Insurance, Commerce, and Labor committee meeting and listened to the full Senate debate for three hours before they passed SB 5 over to you by one vote.

Several things struck me that day. First, when Senate President Niehaus replaced committee members in order to get the bill to the Senate floor, the process seemed anti-democratic.

7<sup>th</sup> graders **all across Ohio** learn about ancient Greece, Athenian democracy, and the difference between direct and representative democracy. When students asked their social studies teachers about this particular vote, all we could tell them was that sometimes we have a dictatorship posing as a democracy.

Second, six Republican senators from **all across Ohio** voted against SB 5, even after it was amended. Senator Gillmor spoke about how long she has known House Speaker Batchelder, and how she believed he would change the bill to make it better for children. She also spoke out against the bill at a town hall meeting the day after she voted for it. Has this committee received any proposals from Speaker Batchelder that make this bill better for children?



Senator Grendell spoke out against the bill because it takes away police officers' rights to bargain for bulletproof vests **all across Ohio**. He claimed the bill changed "collective bargaining" to "collective begging" since the final say after mediation goes to a city council or a school board, not to a third party arbitrator.

Senator Seitz suggested two thoughtful amendments that were rejected by the bill's sponsor. One would have allowed for a third party arbitrator to make the final decision in a dispute between labor and management; provided that the third party is a neutral elected official, such as each county's court of common pleas. Do the 88 common pleas courts **all across Ohio** really want to be involved in every dispute between labor and management?

Senator Seitz's other proposed amendment would have protected teachers from being laid off if they had 20 years or more of service. His logic was sound. In the private sector, an employee can take their 401K contributions with them to their next job. In education, a laid off teacher will struggle to find another job and won't be able to collect their retirement, even though they paid in to STRS for many years. Teachers are not eligible for social security benefits. Even if this amendment had passed, there would still be no way to stop school districts **all across Ohio** from laying off a teacher in his or her 17<sup>th</sup> year just to save money by hiring a new teacher. Age discrimination lawsuits will cost the state a substantial amount of money if SB 5 becomes a law.

House Bill 69 has been sponsored by Representative Wachtmann and is currently under consideration by the Health and Aging committee. It is designed to help maintain public employee retirement systems like STRS. I personally support most of the changes proposed by HB 69, including one where teachers would contribute 12.5 % of their salary to STRS. This is an increase from the current 10 %, and amounts to a 2.5 % pay cut for teachers. Yet, it is necessary to keep STRS as a viable option for years to come. HB 69 is reasonable, fair, and balanced. It is the opposite of SB 5, which changes too many things too quickly without regard for the consequences.

Another provision in HB 69 would require teachers **all across Ohio** to work until the age of 60. If someone graduated from college and started a teaching job at the age of 22, they would be required to work for 38 years in order to collect a full retirement. Unfortunately, SB 5 forces school districts to lay off teachers before they reach the finish line. In a fiscal crisis, teachers with 23 years, 27 years, 32 years, 34 years, or 36 years of experience will be the first to receive pink slips. These are teachers who have taken care of the community's kids for many years, often at the expense of spending time with their own children (hold up cube). Now, we're saying we're not going to take care of them. Really? If they can only receive a small percentage of what they paid in to STRS, then how are they going to support themselves and their families? Are they going to get a job at Wal Mart or Home Depot?

**All across Ohio**, there are many families where both parents are teachers. I happen to be from one of those families. My wife is a library media specialist at two elementary schools. We met dancing in the library more than 10 years ago. We worked hard to save money for a house, setting aside \$25,000 during our first two years of marriage. We bought our house in 2005 at the height of the market before it collapsed. It is now worth \$25,000 less than when we bought it. We have lost all our equity. The housing market collapse had nothing to do with teachers, police officers, fire fighters, or other public employees. The housing market collapse, **all across Ohio**, had to do with bankers, overzealous mortgage officers, and government deregulation.

Our house has 3 bedrooms and 1½ bathrooms. We expected to be able to live in it at least until our children were grown. Our son Noah is 6, our daughter Mabry will be 4 on March

26, and my wife Kristen is expecting another boy on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Here is a picture of my family. If Senate Bill 5 becomes the law, families like mine will be forced to move away. Think about the families and children, **all across Ohio**, who will be pushed out of their homes if you vote for this bill. There was a time in America when the Republican party platform included a large section on family values.

The sponsor of Senate Bill 5, Senator Jones, said during a committee meeting that school districts would still take care of their teachers, even without collective bargaining. I can tell you today that that is simply not true. In the atmosphere created by SB 5's introduction, many school districts, **all across Ohio**, are already seizing this opportunity to cut teacher salaries and benefits drastically. Some teacher's associations felt threatened by the harshness of SB 5, and agreed to terms that are not good for teachers or kids. Five states currently forbid collective bargaining for educators: South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Texas, and Virginia. Their national rank in ACT scores is 50<sup>th</sup>, 49<sup>th</sup>, 48<sup>th</sup>, 47<sup>th</sup>, and 44<sup>th</sup>. Do Ohioans really want their state government to participate in this race to the bottom?

Much of Senate Bill 5 involves the state interfering with local concerns. The best example of this is the mandated payment of 15 % of one's health insurance premium. **All across Ohio**, unions understand the economic times we are facing and are willing to negotiate reasonable health care plans and premiums. Last week, the Cleveland City Council adopted a resolution against SB 5. It is their opinion that the best way to find affordable and manageable health care for employees is through the collective bargaining process. Working with unions is more beneficial to the employer, the employee, and the community. There was a time in America when the Republican party platform included ideas about less government and local control.

One of my students asked me recently, "If our country is in such an education crisis, and we are trying to improve education, then why is the government coming out with bills that give teachers less rights?" I didn't have an answer for him.

The Senate sent this hastily and ill-conceived piece of legislation to your committee. You must protect children and families **all across Ohio**. Vote against Senate Bill 5. Mike Sears.

### Important Dates

Friday, March 25 4:00 p.m.	SPRING BREAK BEGINS
Monday, April 4	Classes resume
Monday, April 4	SHTA Executive Board at Woodbury
Monday, April 11	SHTA Representative Council at Lomond Overview of the budget process
Tuesday, April 13	Board of Education Meeting at Lomond
Friday, April 22	Good Friday No School
MAY 2 to MAY 6	TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

Monday, May 2 SHTA Executive Board at Woodbury

Friday, May 6 SHTA Social--Bowling At Maple Heights Lanes.

Monday, May 9 SHTA Representative Council at Onaway

Tuesday, May 10 Board of Education Meeting at Admin.Bldg.

Monday, May 23 SHTA Elections—Officers, Representatives, Budget,  
and By-Law

[The election to office shall be determined by secret ballot on Monday during the last full week of May. By-Laws, page 5]

Mark your calendars—May 26, 2011  
District Recognition Reception at the High School Cafeteria 3:45 p.m.

Monday, May 30 Memorial Day No School