

The Voice

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Rhonda Johnson, President

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King Banquet Re-Cap

Excitement filled the ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Columbus during the 28th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award Dinner. More than 500 people were in attendance for the oldest event in Columbus which honors the memory of the great civil rights leader. CEA proudly sponsors this event each year.



Donna Brazile provided the dramatic keynote address for this special evening. She is a true civil rights activist and political organizer. Ms. Brazile has been involved in many national political campaigns. She is best remembered as the national manager for the Gore-Lieberman presidential campaign. Brazile made it quite clear that we still need civil rights activists because the fight for justice continues.

Of course, the highlight of the banquet is the presentation of the awards. This year's Humanitarian Award was presented to Jerry Hammond. Our honoree has had a very illustrious career highlighted by his 17 years of leadership on Columbus City Council. Hammond was at the heart of many important decisions that changed our city into the progressive one it is today.

A new award was presented this year. The Helen Jenkins Davis Award honors the memory of the first black teacher hired in Columbus and who was also a civil rights activist. The award was presented to Dorothy Gelane Wilson. She has pursued the cause of equality, teacher professionalism and human understanding throughout her career in the Columbus Public Schools. Dorothy has been a champion for all that is good in education.

It was a wonderful evening. CEA is proud of how this event raises our spirits. It comes at an important time when we need to be reminded of the real value of urban education.

Ohio Core costs

The passage of the Ohio Core legislation has changed the landscape for all students in Columbus Public Schools, beginning with the graduating class of 2014.

The number of credits students are required to accumulate to graduate from high school remains the same, but changes to the high school curriculum will force CPS to take a long, hard look at its existing staffing models and budgets. The administration must collaborate with CEA to ensure that our students meet these higher standards.

Ohio Core adds Algebra II to high school math requirements, increasing the number of courses a student must take from three to four.

And, the legislation specifically states that each science



course include lab experience. The third science class must be either chemistry, physics or advanced biology.

The cost of complying with the legislation for CPS is staggering. Simply adding Algebra II to every student's course load could require an additional 40 math teachers. With the average cost of a new teacher exceeding \$50,000 per year, complying with the math part of the legislation could cost the school district in excess of \$2 million more per year.

Laboratory facilities have not kept pace with technological advancements or the wear and tear over the years. The provision that requires laboratory experience could force the district to repair, upgrade or increase the laboratory facilities in many of the district's high schools.

The legislature has appropriated a total of \$30 million to hire and retain highly-qualified math and science teachers. Divided among Ohio's six hundred plus school districts, that still averages out to less than \$50,000 in state aid per district.

"I don't know what they expect us to do with that money," said CEA President Rhonda Johnson. "The money that the state is giving us won't even pay for one new first-year teacher. How are we supposed to implement these new standards without the needed resources?"

"It is an unfunded mandate," agreed Rep. Jim Hughes, a Republican who voted against the bill. "I am for higher standards, but I'm concerned about the financial impact this will have on the school districts whose teachers and students that I represent, and that includes Columbus Public Schools."

Post-secondary consequences

Despite making the Ohio Core mandatory for acceptance into virtually all of Ohio's public colleges and universities, the legislature created exceptions for some students.

Students with special needs who meet their graduation requirements as specified by their IEP will not be required to complete the Ohio Core to gain entry into public colleges.

Regular education students have the choice to opt-out of taking the Ohio Core but will not be able to get into ten of the 13 Ohio public colleges or universities immediately after graduation from high school. Only Shawnee State, Central State and Youngstown State Universities will accept Ohio students who have not completed the Ohio Core.

Should non-Core graduates choose to apply to any of those ten public universities or colleges later on, they must take at least ten semester hours at a post-secondary institution, such as a community college, technical school or a branch campus of a university.

Critics see the opt-out provision an opening that disproportionately affects students in urban and rural districts, where the dropout rate is higher and parents' educational and income levels are lower than those in suburban school districts.

Parents and students alike must be informed of the post-secondary consequences of not completing the Ohio Core.

Around the nation

Washington & Florida—The Seattle and Broward County school districts are looking for superintendents following the departures of Raj Manhas and Frank Till. Manhas had served in Seattle since 2003, but sweeping reforms he proposed, including a number of school closures, met strong public resistance. Till, who was hired in 1999, was fired by a 5–4 vote of the school board. *Education Week* reported the board was unhappy with a perceived lack of communication. Boards in Detroit, Minneapolis and Jefferson County, Ky., also are interviewing candidates. Concerns are growing nationally about districts' abilities to attract qualified leaders.

Pennsylvania—The Philadelphia schools face a \$75.3 million operating deficit. District CEO Paul Vallas has said he won't call for cuts of teachers, nurses, coaches, librarians or trim arts or music programs. Instead, he plans to cut 150 administrative positions paying \$100,000 or more annually. He also intends to reduce payments to the six outside managers who run 45 schools in the city.

New York—The New York City teachers union reached a tentative agreement for a new contract. The two-year pact between the city and the United Federation of Teachers provides raises totaling 7.1 percent. The increase pushes earnings at the top of the scale to more than \$100,000. The agreement was reached 11 months before the previous one expired.

Texas—The Houston school board voted to spend nearly \$300,000 to put 225 automatic defibrillators in schools throughout the system. The program will pay to train 720 employees in their use. Last year, 300 of the machines, which can restart a heart during a heart attack, were donated to the school system.

I KNOW I CAN volunteers needed

Do you believe that everyone should have the opportunity to go to college? Is giving back to the community a priority? Do you want to help Columbus children make their educational dreams come true? If the answer is yes, then you will love volunteering for I KNOW I CAN.

I KNOW I CAN is seeking volunteers who are interested in helping our community's children go to college. The volunteer positions of Senior Advisor and Early Awareness Advisor are available for the remainder of the 2006-2007 academic year.

Training is provided for both positions to familiarize you with college admissions and financial aid processes. In addition, a staff member will be assigned to you to provide ongoing guidance, training and support.

Over the past 17 years, I KNOW I CAN has served more than 49,000 students through college admissions and financial aid counseling. With a student-to-guidance counselor ratio of 330-to-1, Columbus Public Schools welcome I KNOW I CAN advisors.

If working to convert the poverty cycle into a cycle of success by helping Columbus students is exciting to you, please contact Brian Davis in the I KNOW I CAN program office at (614) 469-7044, or apply online to volunteer at www.iknowican.org.

Enjoy NEA member discounts

Need supplies? NEA members now can receive deep discounts on thousands of innovative classroom materials through a partnership with Classroom Direct, a discount education superstore based in Birmingham, Alabama.

For a limited time, members can get an additional 10

percent off the already-low prices.

NEA members also receive free shipping on most orders of any size. (An exception is orders made directly through the manufacturer.) Most can be processed within 24 hours for three-day delivery.

The new relationship enhances a package of NEA-member discounts that already exist, including for books, music, DVDs, cellular telephones and service, car rentals, magazine subscriptions, vacation tour packages and long-distance telephone service.

Members can access Classroom Direct through the NEA Member Benefits Website at www.neamb.com/discount/classroom.jsp or call 800-248-9171 and provide the discount code listed on the web page.

Special notes

❑ **CEA spring elections:** Members who are interested in official leadership positions may declare their candidacy for open seats now through Feb. 2. The following positions are open: Board of Governors in Districts 2, 7, 9 and 10; and delegates and alternates to the 2007–2008 OEA and 2007 NEA Representative Assemblies. Campaigning for these positions will take place from Feb. 20–Mar. 5. Members will vote for candidates Mar. 6–19. The CEA Elections Committee will tabulate the votes on Mar. 20. Declaration forms are available from the CEA office.

❑ **Ask A Lawyer:** The Cloppert law firm will address legal questions of interest to CEA members. You can submit your legal questions by sending an email to cealegalquestions@cloppert-law.com or call (614) 461-4455.

❑ The Ohio State University College of Education is organizing a **study tour to China, June 16–July 6**. Participants will meet Chinese people, study the education system and learn about China's culture, history, geography and economy. **Twenty applicants will be accepted** for the program. It is open to undergraduate and graduate education students and offers **one to five quarter hours of academic credit**. The exciting itinerary includes visits to many major cities, including **Shanghai, Beijing and Xian**, stops in smaller cities and villages and lectures by Chinese scholars. The price of the trip is \$4,295. For more information, contact M. Eugene Gilliom at (614) 451-1518 or genegilliom@mac.com.

❑ The **Columbus Blue Jackets have come alive** and are climbing in the league standings. CEA offers you the chance to see the action live from great seats behind the west goal at a cost of **\$50 per ticket**. **January tickets** are available for the following dates: Friday, Jan. 19, **Detroit (4)** and Saturday, Jan. 27, **Minnesota (4)**. Tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

❑ **MidState Educators Credit Union special election update:** The 2007 election ballots for board members contain an error. They are currently in the process of reprinting and re-mailing corrected ballots. An explanation cover letter to accompany the new ballots will be printed on colored paper. Corrected ballots will be mailed as soon as possible, hopefully in the next few days. All other timelines will remain the same.

❑ **Credit union special offers:** (1) **Auto loan transfer**—Transfer your auto loan to MidState Educators Credit Union and get up to 2% off your current vehicle loan rate you have at another financial institution. Apply online, in person or over the phone. Some restrictions may apply. (2) **Visa Credit Cards**—Rates start as low as 8.9% APR*. Other money saving benefits include: no annual fee, no transaction fee, no balance transfer fee, cash advances available and more. Call or apply online today. Some restrictions may apply. (3) **Certificate of Deposit Specials**—**7 Months:** 4.41% APR, 4.50% APY*; **13 Months:** 5.13% APR, 5.25% APY*; **25 Months:** 5.37% APR, 5.50% APY*; **37 Months:** 5.46% APR, 5.60% APY*.

**Annual percentage rate. Annual percentage yield. Minimum opening deposit is \$1,000. Stated rate reflects monthly compounding and assumes the interest and principal remain on deposit until maturity. Penalty assessed for early withdrawal. Rates are subject to change without notice. Quoted rates were effective as of Jan. 1, 2007.*