

The CEA Voice

Rhonda Johnson, President

www.ceaohio.org

Volume XXXVII, No. 25

Columbus Education Association

February 26, 2007

Walk-throughs vs. observations

There still appears to be confusion surrounding what should occur during a walk-through and what constitutes an observation used for a teacher's formal evaluation.

A walk-through is a non-evaluative tool to help teachers take a look at their teaching methods and classroom procedures in a positive, reflective manner. During a walk-through, the observer notes level and types of student engagement, types of teaching practices and evidence that the curriculum objectives line up with district goals. The observer walks the walls, looking at displays of student work, teaching objectives, charts and other materials and notes any safety or health issues that may be affecting the learning climate.

A walk-through is meant to last three-to-four minutes and cannot be used for the purpose of evaluating a teacher. There is no checklist of items or judgments. The observer may develop a reflective question for the teacher, and that can be used as a conversation between the principal and the teacher. However, these reflective conversations only occur occasionally and not after every visit.

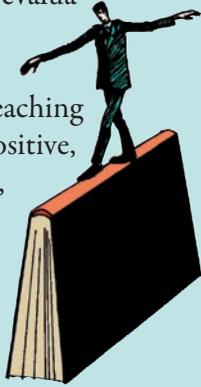
Evaluations are different. Article 401 of the *CEA Master Agreement* spells out the procedures for teacher evaluations. One important note: You may, but are not required to, request a pre-evaluation conference. (*CEA recommends that you make this request.*) The primary purpose of a pre-evaluation conference is to discuss procedural matters related to the evaluation process and to allow both the teacher and the evaluator to discuss philosophies and goals.

Administrators may conduct between one and three pre-arranged observations. They are permitted to conduct a maximum of three additional, unannounced observations. The total number of unannounced observations cannot exceed the total number of observations arranged in advance.

At least one of the classroom observations should be a minimum of 15 minutes in duration. The observations should be conducted openly with the observer visible to the teacher.

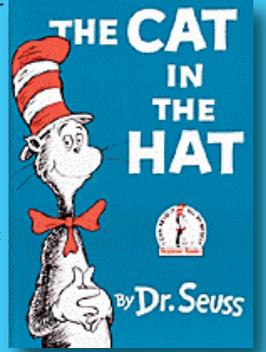
You are entitled to a copy of all written evaluations or reports, and they must be dated and signed. This does not mean that you agree with the evaluation. The teacher is also permitted to add comments to any evaluation or observation report prior to its placement in a teacher's permanent file.

Know your rights under the *CEA Master Agreement*. Contact CEA if you have a concern about your evaluation. Remember, CEA can challenge a negative review only on the basis of procedural errors. So, it is imperative that you know and understand the rules under which observations must be conducted.



CEA's Reach Out and Read campaign

CEA is proud to announce its participation in the "Reach Out and Read" Program's Community Book Drive. This pediatric literacy program is dedicated to encouraging family literacy activities in the home. The program, in conjunction with Children's Hospital, gives new, age-appropriate books to children six months to five years old during well-child visits to the pediatrician. Gently-used books for children up to 8th grade reading level are given to families at each of their visits. It is estimated that 90 percent of the children serviced through Children's Close to Home clinics are future Columbus Public Schools students.



Each member of the Columbus Education Association is being asked to donate a brand new book to the campaign. The kick-off date for CEA's campaign is Friday, Mar. 2, the National Education Association's 9th Annual *Read Across America Day* and will run through Friday, Mar. 9. The Columbus Education Association hopes to collect at least 2,500 books for this worthy cause.

More than 30 union locals in central Ohio are expected to participate in this year's campaign. We would like to show the other locals and the community that the Columbus Education Association is dedicated to working together to ensure that all children start school ready to learn.

Senior Faculty Representatives should have received packets about CEA's campaign in their buildings already. If you have not received information regarding the campaign, please contact Tracey Johnson at 253-4731, or email her at tjohnson@ceaohio.org.

Defend the contract

We are being confronted with the old blame game. Too often in our school district, the statement is made that we can't do something because of the CEA/Board Agreement. This statement is not true, and the contract is simply being used as a scapegoat.

The *Master Agreement* is a living document. It can be changed (amended) or waived (by the Reform Panel). Sometimes (rarely), it can be altered because of a change in state or federal law. No one should say that the contract is an obstacle to anything. When you hear this, it usually means that the person doesn't want to follow the contract, or doesn't know how to use it.

The contract deserves respect. The leadership of CEA and the school district have agreed and signed the document. Once signed by all parties, the contract becomes the law of the Columbus Public Schools.

Everyone is required to follow the contract, including, but not limited to, the superintendent, executive directors,

administrators, supervisors, principals and teachers.

Many battles have been fought and won to build the contract we have today. We should all be committed to defend, enforce and follow it.

211 Training is a must

Article 211 of the *CEA Master Agreement* stipulates that a vacancy may be filled only through an interview and selection process that utilizes a specially-trained faculty team.

These interview teams must be set up at each school and participants trained in procedures. Because some procedures have changed and now are electronic, training for all principals and senior faculty representatives who serve is especially important.

Senior Faculty Representatives, as leaders of your site's interview team, you will be responsible for sharing the information you receive with the other members of your team.

Please note: **Those who do not attend the Article 211 training this year risk invalidating the interview process at their sites.**

The training is important for a second reason: district-wide departments and offices—unlike school sites—will not have access to the new electronic filing system. Each session will cover the following material:

- Update of Article 211 policies and procedures
- Creating interview teams
- Legal issues related to school-site interviewing
- Identifying topics and creating appropriate interview questions
- Demonstration of the new Electronic Form Filing System (school-site locations only)

Senior Faculty Representatives should have already received information directing them to training at Northgate Center. Please contact Dean Fowls at Northgate Center at dfowls@columbus.k12.oh.us or 365-5039 with any questions or concerns.

Read Across America with your kids

To help teachers with ideas for this essential annual event, NEA is making available a toolkit through its website, www.nea.org. It includes activity suggestions, resources, poetry and tips for media coverage.

Here are some simple tips for conducting an event:

- 📖 Consult your principal and obtain approvals. If your principal hasn't heard of the program, refer him or her to the website.
- 📖 Look at your school's calendar and choose a date to celebrate. You don't have to choose the official NEA date.
- 📖 Read NEA's copyright and licensing agreements. Some of the material was written by Dr. Seuss and is owned by Dr. Seuss Enterprises.
- 📖 Consult with your school librarian. It's likely that he or she is already familiar with *Read Across America* and may have ideas to offer.
- 📖 Ask other teachers if they are making plans. Consider coordinating your efforts for a school-wide event.
- 📖 Invite guest readers to come to your class on Mar. 2 to read to your students. By far, this is the most popular activity.

ular activity.

- 📖 Get some hats! Everyone wants the famous *Cat in the Hat* hat, available at a discount from our "cat-a-log," or make your own from red and white construction paper.
- 📖 Make certificates of participation for your students. You can download a pre-designed certificate from our *materials* area, plus other fun things.
- 📖 Send information home to parents, along with parent reading tips.
- 📖 Let the world know about your plans by posting your pledge on the NEA website along with others from Ohio.

If you have questions, contact Michele Prater at OEA at (614) 227-3014 or praterm@ohea.org.

Special notes

- ❑ **Retiring in the near future?**—Make sure you qualify for *super severance*. You must give the Human Resources Department **written notification of your intent to retire by Mar. 1** when the effective date of retirement is from May 31 to Oct. 31 inclusive. Call CEA with questions at 253-4731.
- ❑ CEA and the Columbus Board of Education have agreed that if it becomes necessary to make up calamity days beyond those provided under statute, **such makeup days will be added to the end of the current school calendar in June or to end of the last quarter for year round schools.**
- ❑ **Data Training Days** were **cancelled** this month due to inclement weather. The sessions are being **rescheduled for the fall.**
- ❑ The **Teacher Advancement Program (TAP)** is opening a pool for master teacher positions for the upcoming school year. To be eligible to apply, a teacher must have taught successfully in CPS for a minimum of five years with evidence of student achievement gains in his or her current position and have an area of expertise in English language arts, math and/or science. Applicants must be able to demonstrate excellent written and oral communication skills and to work cooperatively and effectively with staff. A good knowledge of classroom management and instructional student learning strategies is a must. **Watch for the postings.** If you have any questions, please contact Edna Thomas at 365-8816.
- ❑ **Campaigning for CEA leadership positions is Feb. 20–Mar. 5.** Please check out your colleagues' campaign materials they have sent to your building/unit. Voting for candidates will take place March 6–19. The CEA Elections Committee will **tabulate** the votes on Mar. 20.
- ❑ The **Blue Jackets** season is drawing to a close. You can purchase tickets on a first-come, first-served basis for the following games: **Wednesday, Mar. 7, Los Angeles (4); Friday, Mar. 9, Dallas (4); Tuesday, Mar. 20, Chicago (4); Sunday, Mar. 25, St. Louis (4); and Thursday, Mar. 29, Anaheim (4).** Call CEA at 253-4731 for tickets.



Request for CEA Scholarship Application Form

Name of member making request: _____

Send application to (CPS address): _____

A completed scholarship application, along with a transcript and two letters of reference, must be returned to the CEA office by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 4, 2007.

