

The CEA Voice

Rhonda Johnson, President

Volume XXXVII

Columbus Education Association

www.ceahio.org

May 8, 2007



nea
National Education Association
Improving Public Schools for All Children

Special Edition National Teacher Day Great Teachers Make Great Public Schools

Thank you from the CEA President

Dear Colleagues:

We celebrate National Teacher Day on May 8 this year to honor you and to recognize the lasting contributions you make in all of our lives. The single most important factor in student success is you.



Rhonda Johnson

Each one of us can name a special teacher who made a difference in our lives. For me, that teacher was my grandmother who taught for nearly 40 years in a rural school in segregated Alabama. In spite of the many barriers her students faced, she had very high expectations for all of them, and they held her in high regard. She instilled the values of strength and dignity with which I lead today. She saw crisis and conflict as an opportunity for positive change.

On behalf of the CEA Board of Governors and the CEA staff, I want to thank you for your dedication to the teaching profession and to the children of Columbus Public Schools. You make a difference everyday throughout the year to improve the quality of life for all members of the Columbus community.

I am proud of you; and I am proud to be the president of an organization that represents more than 4,000 of the most competent, caring teachers in the nation.

In solidarity,

Rhonda R. Johnson

Mayor proclaims National Teacher Day



Mayor Coleman



Office of the Mayor
City of Columbus
Ohio

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the Mayor of the City of Columbus, Ohio has the duty to honor occasions of outstanding significance; and

WHEREAS, teachers make public schools great; and

WHEREAS, teachers work to open student's minds to ideas, knowledge and dreams; and

WHEREAS, teachers keep American democracy alive by laying the foundation for good citizenship; and

WHEREAS, teachers fill many roles, as listeners, explorers, role models, motivators and mentors; and

WHEREAS, teachers continue to influence us long after our school days are only memories; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Michael B. Coleman, Mayor of the City of Columbus, Ohio, do hereby proclaim May 8, 2007 as:

National Teacher Day

in Columbus, and urge all members of our community to join in recognition of this significant occasion.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the Mayor of the City of Columbus, Ohio, to be hereunto affixed this 8th day of May, 2007.



Michael B. Coleman
Mayor

Reg's Ten Commandments for public education

by Reg Weaver, President, National Education Association

Commandment Number One: Thou shalt not claim that a single piece of legislation can solve all of the problems facing public education—especially when it's underfunded by billions of dollars. We educators aren't stupid. We know the difference between real school reform and a law that's actually punishing and weakening public schools across the country, while claiming to do the opposite!

(See **Ten Commandments** Page 2)



Reg Weaver

Governor Strickland reminds us why we teach

(Excerpts from Gov. Ted Strickland's speech at the KnowledgeWorks Leadership Institute, Apr. 27, 2007.)

"As we seek improvement, let us start by acknowledging something every educator knows—that education must truly be a system."

"Because a primary school teacher does not start from scratch, she builds from a student's pre-school experience. A secondary school teacher does not start from scratch, he builds from a student's primary school experience. A college professor does not start from scratch, she



Ted Strickland

builds from a student's secondary school experience. And the future of our children is built not just in the years after they graduate, but in the years before, in every one of those classrooms."

"I thank you for what you do for Ohio's young people, for Ohio's future. And I hope that every day in your work you take a moment to remember you can never tell where your influence stops."

"Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher."

—Japanese proverb

Teacher quality counts

The *number one* asset of the Columbus Public Schools is the teaching staff. Over the years, the quality of the classroom teacher has continuously improved. This is the direct result of a designed strategy to attract and retain the best possible individuals. Working together, the union and the administration understood that if you had the best teachers, you would get the best results. The classroom is the front line of the school district.

The improvement started as the local salaries became more competitive. A complete benefits package added to the attraction of our school district. The fine, well-supported professional development program added to the allure of teaching in Columbus. While many urban school districts suffered from a lack of applicants, Columbus had thousands of education graduates pursuing the vacancies in our local system. There is no question that top salaries, solid benefits and the opportunities to advance professionally are the foundation of a great teaching force.

Additionally, the Peer Assistance & Review Program has provided a great form of transition so that new teachers can succeed. Too many times, teachers are left to survive on their own. This is why many school districts have a high turnover of staff.

We are proud of the teachers in the Columbus Public Schools. More than 99 percent are highly qualified according to state and federal standards.

In direct comparison with the other urban school districts, Columbus is far ahead. Each year many of our staff members are honored by their colleagues across the city, state and nation as outstanding examples of the profession. Finally, you will find within our teaching ranks one of the largest contingent of National Board Certified Teachers.

The teachers of Columbus are the best. What more could anyone hope for anywhere? We are proud of you and proud to be Columbus teachers.

"Teachers, I believe, are the most responsible and important members of society because their professional efforts affect the fate of the earth."

—Helen Caldicott, author and peace activist

History of National Teacher Day

The origins of National Teacher Day are murky. Around 1944, Arkansas teacher Mattye Whyte Woodridge began corresponding with political and education leaders about the need for a national day to honor teachers. Woodridge wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt, who in 1953 persuaded the 81st Congress to proclaim a National Teacher Day.

NEA, along with its Kansas and Indiana state affiliates and the Dodge City (Kan.) local, lobbied Congress to create a national day celebrating teachers. Congress declared March 7, 1980, as National Teacher Day for that year only.

NEA and its affiliates continued to observe National Teacher Day on the first Tuesday in March until 1985, when the National PTA established Teacher Appreciation Week as the first full week of May. The NEA Representative Assembly then voted to make the Tuesday of that week National Teacher Day. Celebrated on the Tuesday of the first full week of May, the actual date varies each year.

"Teachers teach because they care. Teaching young people is what they do best. It requires long hours, patience, and care."

—Horace Mann

Ten Commandments

From page 1

Commandment Number Two: Thou shalt not determine a student's entire future based on one set of one-size-fits-all tests! There is a whole range of education techniques, innovations, and measurements that should be used together to make sure that each child can read, write, think critically, and be productive. We teachers know them — and thou shalt use them!

Commandment Number Three: Thou shalt not establish a set of standards without input from the teachers who are actually going to have to teach them! Or without giving them the help and the resources they need to meet them! Or without aligning them with the curriculum!

Commandment Number Four: Thou shalt not claim that children are America's top priority when 20 percent of our nation's children are born into poverty, 15 percent have no health insurance, and eight children are killed by gunfire every single day.

Commandment Number Five: Thou shalt not spend more money on prisons than on schools. The more great public schools we have, the fewer prisons we'll need. Educate, so that we don't have to incarcerate.

Commandment Number Six: Thou shalt not kid thyself that paying teachers and support staff a measly salary is in any way going to attract and retain the kind of folks we want working with our kids. Thou shalt support current and future teachers and support staff — not insult them.

Commandment Number Seven: Thou shalt honor education support professionals — the people who drive the buses, clean the hallways, serve the lunches, counsel the students, take the attendance, nurse the injured, assist in the classrooms, and run our nation's schools with dignity and dedication and grace. ESP stands for "extraordinarily spectacular people" — don't you ever forget it.

Commandment Number Eight: Thou shalt honor thy teachers, too, not bash them — especially when thou hast never walked a day in our shoes yourself. Thou shalt not claim that anybody can teach just because they have a pulse and a bachelor's degree.

Commandment Number Nine: Thou shalt recognize that in order for a child to be well-educated and a school to succeed, everybody has got to be involved. Communities can't just send their kids off to kindergarten, then come back 12 years later and find a bunch of Einsteins! Public schools require just that—the public!

Commandment Number Ten: Thou shalt remember that our public schools are critical for homeland security. A free, safe, and democratic society requires a well-educated population. Public schools must not be demonized, privatized, or voucherized. Public schools must not be sold to the highest bidder. Instead, we've got to invest in them.