

# The CEA Voice

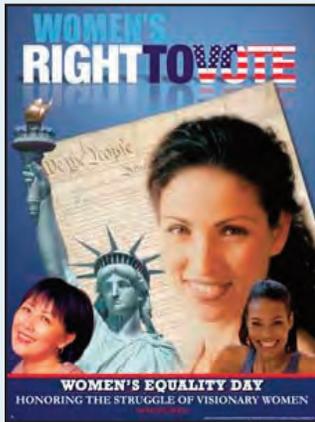
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Columbus Education Association

August 26, 2013

## It wasn't always this way

Aug. 26 is Women's Equality Day. At the behest of Rep. Bella Abzug (D-NY) in 1971, the date was selected to commemorate the 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote. It's a great opportunity to teach your students about one of the seminal struggles for civil rights, massive, peaceful movement by women that began in 1848 at the world's first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, N.Y.



On this day we commemorate the passage of the 19th Amendment, and we also call attention to women's continuing efforts toward full equality. That includes schools. In 1915, five years before they got the vote, female teachers were tightly scrutinized. They had to promise, for instance, "not to keep company with men; to be home between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. unless in attendance at a school function; not to loiter downtown in ice cream stores."

In 1965, the Utah Supreme Court upheld the right of a school board to fire a teacher because she became pregnant. For many years, teachers could be fired for joining a professional organization or labor union.

But Margaret Haley, of the Chicago Teachers Federation, sought change. She became a leading voice in national education politics. Haley promoted a more professional approach to teaching, and she fought for traditional bread-and-butter issues: pensions, salary increases and other benefits for teachers. She was the first woman to be on the agenda of the NEA Representative Assembly, speaking on "Why Teachers Should Organize." In this speech, she introduced issues that continue to be debated by teachers' unions and the public today.

## Budget watch: It's in ink

On Sunday, June 30, 2013, Governor Kasich signed House Bill 59, the \$62 billion budget bill for Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015. Prior to his signature, Kasich vetoed 22 items, including a requirement on how schools spend gifted-education funds and an exemption for charter school special-education teachers from taking examinations of content knowledge.



The good: Many other negative provisions were eliminated. For instance, we will maintain control over the salary schedule. The Ohio Board of Education will not revise operating standards this year. The state superintendent will not seize control of school districts with questionable student data reports. Two good additions: Teachers won't be held account-

able for the progress of students who are gone from school a minimum of 45 days. Charter schools now face stricter oversight and greater penalties for noncompliance.

The bad: The budget fails to restore more than \$515 million of the \$1.8 billion in direct school support cut during the last budget cycle. It expands the voucher program; and, as of 2016–17, allows parents to use them if their schools don't improve K–3 literacy at required levels. It gives charter schools \$57 million more money than in the last budget cycle.

Mixed: Money from the K–3 literacy component was shifted to provide resources for students living in poverty. Districts must use this funding to extend the school day, provide reading intervention and instructional technology and implement dropout prevention measures and several other requirements. We are unsure if districts all will have the resources to fulfill these requirements.

Go to [www.ohea.org/legislative-watch-archive](http://www.ohea.org/legislative-watch-archive) for the full summary.

## Service-learning: A garden and a future

Columbus took the spotlight this summer and showed how community engagement can change students' lives. Beechcroft HS teacher Tori Washington and her students presented in Atlanta to NEA delegates the story of their community garden,



CEA President Johnson and Beechcroft teacher Tori Washington with her students at NEA's "Raise Your Hand" day

one of many service-learning projects funded by a three-year grant in partnership with NEA, CEA and OSU. The presentation was part of the new "Raise Your Hand" campaign.

Students Rendell Buckhalter, Taryn Lewis-Smith, Chelsey Rodgers and Christian Scase took the stage. Rendell tearfully recounted how the project instilled in him a confidence he didn't know he had. "I didn't know what my purpose was in life," he said. "Was I going to go to college or not? Community is now a big aspect of my life that I need to carry on. My teacher, Ms. Washington, empowered me and helped me look past the statistics about black males not graduating. Now I get up every morning and look at success right in the eye."

The "Raise Your Hand" campaign features dynamic and respected teachers sharing ways to boost student success and achievement. NEA strongly believes that educators—not politicians or self-proclaimed "reform" experts—know what works. They are the ones to lead and act for student success.

"Our members are coming together to help lift up our good ideas, our smart policies and our successful programs and spread them to every corner of the country," says NEA President Dennis Van Roekel.

Go to <http://www.nea.org/raiseyourhand> to see videos from the event.



## Join the sick leave bank

One of the most valuable benefits of CEA membership is something you might need one day: our sick leave bank. Each year, some of us experience devastating illnesses and injuries that require long recovery periods; or, we simply have not accumulated enough sick leave if something were to happen. This is especially true for beginning teachers.

Anyone who has joined the bank by donating two sick days and then exhausts his or her own share may take a loan from the bank of up to ten days. The days you borrow can be paid back as you accrue them. The two days that you deposit when you join will be returned to you when you retire or resign from the district.

Please sign up. If you have already joined the bank, you don't need to rejoin. The deadline to join the Sick Leave Bank is Sept. 30. The donation form is available on the CCS Intranet under "Human Resources."

## No first Thursdays

We know that school schedules can be tricky. But be aware: No parent-teacher conferences or any other events that require the majority of the school staff should be scheduled after school on first Thursday of any month. This is because Association business occurs chiefly on Thursdays. We have negotiated the right for CEA representatives to take care of Association business. Please let CEA know if this bargained right is being violated.

## Know the contract: The Reform Panel

Sometimes individual schools require changes to the *Master Agreement* or to Board Policy. On these occasions, they turn to the Reform Panel to make these changes called "variances." This joint committee of administrators and CEA representatives, including the superintendent and CEA President Rhonda Johnson, meet each month to consider such requests.

Sometimes workplace variances are needed to accommodate the curriculum. At other times, some of us have ideas that we believe would improve instruction in our classroom or building. This process allows us to implement those ideas without violating or renegotiating our contract.

Here's how it works: If you have an idea that isn't provided by our *Master Agreement* or school board policy, fill out a variance form which asks you to explain the program's expected outcomes and rationale for the change. Then present your idea to the Reform Panel. Your principal must sign the form, and two-thirds of your building peers must agree to the idea. Parent involvement in some matters (such as a school schedule or a uniform policy) also is essential.

For more information on the Reform Panel, consult Article 1503 of your contract.

## Your leave begins in September

Article 702 of the *Master Agreement* provides teachers with two types of paid leave: sick and personal. Both types of leave begin to accumulate in September.

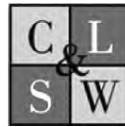
Each year, teachers earn a total of 15 sick leave days. They accumulate at the rate of 1.5 days each month from September to June. New teachers receive an advance of five of their sick leave days at the beginning of the year. Teachers also earn two personal leave days each year, and they are available for use beginning on Sept. 1.

Additionally, CEA has negotiated a number of paid holidays for our members including, but not limited to, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Spring Break and Memorial Day. In order to receive pay for those holidays, teachers must be in "paid status" before and after the holiday.

Go to <https://columbus.munisselfservice.com/> (CCS Employee Self Service website) to make sure you know your leave balance.

## You have lawyers

CEA membership provides a benefit that all of us need at one time or another: A legal services plan with reduced rates for those personal matters requiring a lawyer—such as developing an estate plan, resolving domestic matters or dealing with a traffic violation.



The Basic Plan (now known as the OEA/NEA Attorney Referral Program) is provided for every active member. When you become a member of the Association, you automatically receive, at a reduced rate, legal assistance with matters in five areas: real estate, wills and estates, domestic relations, consumer protection and traffic violations.

For a reasonable fee, payable by payroll deduction, the Comprehensive Plan provides more extensive coverage for people who need it. Included here are matters such as personal injury. The best thing is that your immediate family is eligible.

As a CEA member, you automatically receive four free half-hour meetings to discuss any legal matter, except income tax preparation. If you need more extensive legal assistance, including a document review, you can join the Comprehensive Plan and receive services at the discounted rate. A few legal services, such as help with business dealings, bankruptcy or taxes and defense in criminal matters, do not qualify for the discounted rate.

Call Cloppert, Sauter, Latanick and Washburn, the law firm administering the plan, at 461-4455 for consultations.

## Turn on, tune in

CEA President Rhonda Johnson was recently the guest on "Teacher Talk," the highly-rated Tuesday-evening Columbus Education Association radio show on WCBE-FM hosted by Sue Misiak. Among the topics discussed: the year to come with interim Superintendent Dr. Dan Good; the upcoming Columbus schools' levy request; efforts to increase public education funding, and the CCS Reading Recovery partnership with The Ohio State University.



Tune in to the show at 7 p.m. each first and third Tuesday. Rhonda's interview aired Aug. 26. If you missed "Teacher Talk," go to [www.wcbe.org/programs/teacher-talk](http://www.wcbe.org/programs/teacher-talk) to listen to the podcast.

## See you at the Fling!

Ring in the new school year with our popular annual event, the CEA Fall Fling. This year it's Friday, Sept. 20, at the Hilton Easton. Join us from 4 to 8 p.m. for great music, food and beverages. It's cheap, it's fun and it's a great way to meet your colleagues and let your hair down a little in a great venue. We love this party. You will, too!

## Special notes

- The **CEA Legislative Assembly** will meet at **4:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 12**, at the **Boathouse Restaurant** (Confluence Park). Dinner will be provided. *RSVP* to Judy Nelson at [jnelson@ceaohio.org](mailto:jnelson@ceaohio.org). Include your name and the building/unit you represent.
- The Office of Professional Learning and Licensure is **accepting applications** for individuals interested in becoming **trainers** for the district's **new teacher evaluation system**. Check your CCS email. **Applications are due by Friday, Aug. 30.**
- The **Columbus Area Writing Project's Fall Forum** will be **Saturday, Oct. 5, 8 a.m.–3:30 p.m. in Ramseyer Hall** at The Ohio State University, 29 W. Woodruff Ave. Speakers are **JoBeth Allen**, co-director of the Red Clay Writing Project and **J. Patrick Lewis**, an Ohio poet. To download a registration form, go to <http://bit.ly/19nJgKu>.

### CEA Pre-Paid Legal Services Plan OEA/NEA Attorney Referral Program

At Cloppert, Latanick, Sauter and Washburn, we have dedicated ourselves to teachers in and out of the classroom. Our experienced personal injury, divorce, dissolution, criminal, probate and real estate attorneys are available to you at moderate rates which are lower than we normally charge our private clients.

Contact us today and allow our experience to work for you.

(614) 461-4455 • [www.clopperlaw.com](http://www.clopperlaw.com)