

The Voice

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Columbus Education Association

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VOTE FOR 50 & 51



A New Day for Columbus Schools

A few minutes, a bright future

If the levy passes, we will have much to celebrate. But if it fails, we will be in real trouble. Make no mistake: Failure of this issue will mean severe cuts, swollen class sizes, underfunded resources and lack of support for academic success.

At last Tuesday's Board of Education meeting, CCS Treasurer Penny Rucker stated that \$50 million in cuts must be made for the 2014–2015 school year. This is on top of the \$15 million in cuts that had to be made for 2013–2014.

That's not all: Ever heard of Big Brother? He will be here. When a district falls into Academic Emergency and stays there, the State of Ohio can take over. This means a state-appointed academic distress commission for our schools. A lot of bad things happen when the State comes in. One of them is that our contract goes into limbo. Many provisions will be unenforceable.

But you can help us avoid this mess. It takes only a few minutes to join Club 50.51 and help the campaign. It's easy. We accept checks made payable to "Reimagine Columbus Education Committee." Or give online through PayPal on the campaign website at www.newcolumbuschools.com. Click on "Donate."

When you become part of this club, we will list your name in *The Voice*. When you donate \$50.51, you will receive a lapel pin and become a member of Club 50.51. Contribute \$100 or more and become a member of the Centurion Club. You will receive a gift and an invitation to a special event hosted by CEA President Rhonda Johnson.

You also get this once the levy passes:

- Expanded pre-school offerings for 4-year olds
- Wi-Fi and more computers (that work) in classrooms
- An innovation fund to support public-private partnerships to replicate and expand enrollment in high-performing CCS schools, as well as high-performing, not-for-profit neighborhood-based community schools
- A great plan to recruit, retain and train high-quality teachers and principals
- More student access to high-quality (A-rated or B-rated) schools across the city

The City of Columbus and the business, civic, faith-based, non-profit and labor communities are supporting us. We ask every member of CEA to join this important effort.

Thanks to the following employees who most recently contributed to the levy campaign:

Centurion Club—\$100+

Anthony Brown, Isabel Cadenel, Tim Donahue, Tracey Graham, Jill Grimm, Tracie Helmbrecht, Kassie Hurley, Michelle Mays, Mike Mundew, Joan Powers, Christy Stock and Deborah Thomas-Smith



Club 50.51—\$50.51

Kevin Arway, Traci Arway, Loren Bucek, Amy Davidson, Kathy Fedun, Ron Gillon, Martha Hilditch, Anestis Kalagidis, Patricia McSchooler, Stephanie Mills, Neda Miyashiro, Keith Morefield, Steve Schack, Dyann Taylor, John Thomas, Leslie Thorn, Tawana Thorn, Rachel Weatherington, Kathleen Welton and Donna White



Other contribution

Ross Shirley

Be a Tweety Bird

Share the excitement. Share the optimism. Get onto Facebook and Twitter and talk about the levy. Use details from your Ten-Minute Meeting. Need extra material? Ask your FR. Many of us love social media. We love to give updates. There's no shortage of stuff to Tweet here. Go to <http://bit.ly/5051Logo> to download the levy logo. Include it with your posts.



Levy debate in Clintonville

"This is what democracy looks like," were CEA President Rhonda Johnson's opening words at a debate sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Columbus last Monday evening. Her opponent in the debate, which addressed the pros and cons of Issues 50 and 51, was Jonathan Beard, CEO of the Columbus Compact. President Johnson supports the levy, and Mr. Beard opposes the levy.

In front of a standing room only crowd, debate moderator Michael Thomas called the levy a question of a bigger tax bill versus the future of Columbus City School kids. And that was the question of the night.

Citing her faith in Columbus City School teachers and research that proves urban schools can be reformed, President Johnson asked the contentious audience not to make our students wait any longer for the changes they need to be successful. Some of those changes include renovated school buildings, better technology and pre-kindergarten for 4-year olds.



Mr. Beard contended that students do not need comfortable learning environments and that kids need to learn how to “adapt and survive.” He said complaints that classrooms at Indiana Informal (the old building) are 82 degrees on hot days are just “excuses for our kids not learning.” Mr. Beard said he does not feel Pre-K is what we should be focusing on.

President Johnson named a variety of partners who are behind the levy including the school, business, faith-based, labor and civic communities. These partners have “skin in the game,” as do all voters.

Mr. Beard argued that this school board cannot be trusted and does not deserve this levy money. President Johnson told the audience that CEA has not endorsed any current school board members, and that voters can hold those politicians accountable at the ballot box in November.

But this levy is not for the board of education; it is for the kids of Columbus City Schools.

“We are holding our students hostage while the auditor gets their work done,” said President Johnson when Mr. Beard said he wanted to wait until all investigations were complete before asking the tax payers for levy money.

President Johnson’s closed with this: “This levy is for our students and for the future of Columbus City Schools.” It’s hard to argue with that.

Written by Ft. Hayes Teacher Courtney Johnson

How are your sizes?

The Oct. 1 date for reorganization has passed, and “count week” is over. Take a look at your room. Classes should not exceed the limits set in the contract. Article 301 explains it. We amended the contract for middle school and high school teachers, changing the class load to 150 students per day. Members whose class size exceeds the limit should contact CEA immediately.

Here are the limits:

- ▷ K-3: no more than 29 students each
- ▷ 4-5: no more than 30 students each
- ▷ K & Grades 1-5: Approximately 25 pupils per classroom teacher
- ▷ Middle school: no more 35 students per class and 150 students per day
- ▷ High school: no more than 36 students per class and 150 students per day

If you have any questions about class size, call CEA Vice President Phil Hayes at 253-4731.

Health insurance: Don’t forget!

Don’t forget: Nov. 1 is the deadline to declare your enrollment for employee insurance benefits beginning Jan. 1, 2014. You must meet with a counselor and get your paperwork in order, even if you are continuing the same coverage. You also will find out about some changes. One of them: To keep insurance premiums at the 8-percent-increase cap, CCS has increased annual out-of-pocket maximums to \$600 (from \$500) for single, in-network coverage and to \$1,200 (from \$1,000) per family, in-network. Co-pays are now included in the maximum out-of-pocket costs. Pharmacy co-pays may not apply, depending on your plan.

You can schedule a time at your building to meet in person with a counselor, or you may enroll or re-enroll online with a benefits counselor. To schedule your call center appointment, you will need to complete the steps below:

- ▶ Go to www.iSelectSchedule.com
- ▶ Enter the CCS Enrollment Number: 61436
- ▶ Follow the on-screen instructions for scheduling your appointment.
- ▶ You will receive an email confirmation and reminder with the CCS enrollment phone number.

- ▶ On your appointment date and time, you will need to call the CCS enrollment phone number provided in your email.

Dependent eligibility verification is not required unless you are enrolling a new dependent on your benefit plans. In Ohio, extended dependent coverage is available for unmarried dependents up to age 28.

In order to complete your enrollment, you will need to have the birthdates and Social Security numbers of your dependents and your life insurance beneficiary.

If you are adding a new dependent, you need to contact the Benefits Department at 365-6475 before Nov. 1 to ensure that your documentation has been received.

Stop the bullying: Take the pledge

October is National Bullying Prevention Month, an annual campaign that brings educators, schools, and communities together to combat the damaging impact that bullying can have on students. With nearly one-third of students reporting being bullied in school and nearly half of adolescents and teens saying they have been bullied online, bullying has reached epidemic levels. Some studies connect bullying with suicidal thoughts.

According to a 2011 NEA survey of educators:

- ❖ Teachers and support professionals report that bullying based on a student’s weight, gender, perceived sexual orientation or disability were of concern in their school.
- ❖ Verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying in schools, followed by social/relational, physical and cyber bullying.

So take the pledge, and take steps to prevent bullying and to provide resources to those who need them. Visit www.nea.org/bullyfree. You will find, among other resources, a poster that you can hang to let your students know they are not alone.



Special notes

- ❑ **Making Strides** is an opportunity to unite as an Association to honor breast cancer survivors, raise awareness and raise money to help the American Cancer Society fight the disease. Walk with us on **Sunday, Oct. 27**. The three-mile walk begins at 10 a.m. at COSI, 333 W. Broad St. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. To register, go to www.makingstrideswalk.org/columbus. Add Columbus Education Association as your company. Call Ezetta Murray at CEA (253-4731) with your shirt size once you are registered.
- ❑ **CEA Members Scholarships** are available for your college senior. Distributed through The Columbus Foundation, this fund provides \$1,000 in tuition assistance. Only CEA members who have taught in CCS for the past four years are eligible. Your student must have at least a 2.0 GPA in order to apply. The deadline is 5 p.m., Friday, Oct. 25. To download an application, go to <http://bit.ly/ceascholarship2013>. Call Cora Miller at 253-4731 if you have questions.

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.

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