

The CEA Voice

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Columbus Education Association

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Rucker's report...



The Dispatch reported, via CCS Treasurer Penny Rucker, that the union has ended negotiations, and that is the reason that a 1 percent cost-of-living allowance increase has been cut from the budget for 2014–2015 school year.

She is misinformed. Neither side has ended negotiations. CEA has verified with the school board's chief negotiator that we have not ended negotiations. When negotiations end, one of two things happens: We have a new contract or we are on strike. Neither has occurred.

At the moment, we do not have meetings scheduled. This means that we will continue to work under our current contract until a new agreement is reached. All of our current teaching and learning conditions, rights, salaries and benefits are intact. We do expect to continue negotiations. We will keep you posted.

Ms. Rucker is not returning to CCS after this school year. Perhaps now we know why.

Second-chance principals

Everyone deserves a second chance, but there are some school administrators who have received so many do-overs that we have lost count. You know who they are: These are our least effective principals; they cannot manage their staffs, do not deal well with parents, are clueless about the needs of our students, don't understand what teachers really do—and who should have been handed pink slips or shifted to other positions long ago. The consequences have been serious, to the point of endangering student welfare.

If we expect to turn the corner on recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers, we need to make sure that a high-quality principal is in every building. We have some great principals. These are our true leaders. They should be emulated and encouraged. The makeup of CCS administration is like most others: one third great, one third working to be great and one third inept. It is a sad fact that some of those principals in the bottom third received two-year contracts from their benefactors last year.

It's time to stop simply renewing contracts to protect friends and political alliances. It's time for the district to take a look at this roster and take serious stock of who is not performing well. Listen to our teachers. They know.

Some teachers were expecting to get new principals this year. Many feel that CEA could make it happen. But that is not the case. CEA neither fires nor hires building administrators. If we could, many would be gone already. But we demand that CCS execs get it right for our children. There is not always another chance for them.

Vote in the May Primary

Less than one week remains for early voting in the May Primary.

Go to <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/Voters/absentee/inperson.aspx> for information on early in-person voting. For a list of county Boards of Elections and voting locations, go to <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/elections/electionofficials/boeDirectory.aspx#dir>.

May 6 Primary Election voting hours:

- 8 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday–Friday, through May 2; and
- 8 a.m.–12 p.m., Saturday, May 3

Pay plan changes

Regular contract teachers, latchkey teachers and tutors have until Aug. 29 to change pay plans for the 2014–2015 school year. Certificated employees have the option to choose:

- Plan A—twenty-one (21) pays September–June
- Plan B—twenty-six (26) pays September–August

If you are already on your desired pay plan, do not submit another form. The plan you are on remains in effect until you make a change. Pay Plan Change Forms are available at <http://bit.ly/ChangePayPlan>.

Note that one form is used for all certificated employees. Completed forms must be returned to the Payroll Office by 4 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 29.

House eliminates collective bargaining on evaluations

Act now! A powerful group of Ohio's state representatives must think a lot of you are bad teachers because they are rewriting Ohio's teacher evaluation law to put more of you on an "improvement plan." On top of that, and once again, they are eliminating your collective bargaining rights. This time they want to take your right to bargain evaluations.

Tell your representative to oppose the House Education Committee changes to SB 229. Go to <http://www.capwiz.com/nea/oh/issues/alert/?alertid=63021486&type=ST> to make your voice heard.

PD opportunity for science teachers

Only 10 seats remain in the 2014–2015 OP2: Operation Physics course at Otterbein Univ. This course helps teachers develop their understanding of physical science and provide concrete ideas that can be taken back to their classrooms to teach grades 4–9. Participants receive free tuition and five semester hours of graduate credit through Otterbein University, as well as materials and supplies that allow for immediate classroom implementation of the hands-on activities used in the course. Email wshermanheckler@otterbein.edu to request an application.



Know your Governor

Teri Mullins won't soon forget the battle to save union rights and to bring down Senate Bill 5.

"I don't think I have ever witnessed a time when people came together and were so vocal about the rights of teachers, students and other unions," she said. "Being inside the Statehouse the day that most people got locked out, then going outside to be with my building colleagues—the entire experience, although a hard battle, evoked a sense of pride in my profession."



Teri Mullins

Mullins has been teaching special education for 13 years, all of them at Wedgewood MS. She has advised the STEM Club the past two years. She attended Columbus schools: Duxberry Park ES, Franklin MS and East HS.

When asked what drew her to union service, she prefers to stay positive about the disagreements that often trigger CEA representation. "Let's just say that I wanted to make sure that everyone had help having their voices heard," she said.

Her involvement in CEA came through mentorship. "CEA Governor Kathy Moritz was retiring from my building. With her guidance, along with that of the late Diane Norman, who became the next District 6 Governor, I found ways to get involved. I was an OEA delegate, an alternate FR and a member of the reform panel."

Honoring Norman's memory, she ran for the vacant position in 2008. Mullins remains a member of the bargaining team and on the Reform Panel.

For her, as for so many in the Association, the battle to defeat Senate Bill 5 stood out as a symbol of union strength and solidarity. "It was a defining moment—watching people become engaged in the union, protesting downtown," she said. "I saw large groups of staff members coming together to fight for something we all believed in. It also gave me an opportunity to teach my own children the importance of my union work."

She sat with her children, 15 and 10, and her firefighter (and high school sweetheart) husband, who is a union member, too—to explain why she is so passionate about service. "I told them that there are ways to fight for what you believe in and not to believe everything you hear or read."

American students: creative thinkers

American students didn't rank at the top on an international test of 15-year-olds on problem-solving skills, according to the Huffington Post. They were in the middle of the pack, ranking just above the average of 44 countries and economies—and far behind teens in Asia.

They did outrank many countries on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)—Creative Problem Solving, ranking between top-scoring Singapore and bottom-ranked Colombia and scored 10 points better than predicted. They were particularly good at using intuition and creativity to find answers.

PISA is an international test administered in reading, math and science since 2000 by the Paris-based *Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development*. It is a computer-based, problem-solving test designed to see where our future workers rank when it comes to the "non-routine analytic" and "non-routine personal tasks" required by today's employers.

The 800 students who took the test answered questions on computers, such as mapping routes to destinations, selecting the cheapest train ticket and other tasks. The U.S. per-



formed higher than 28 countries and did particularly well on "interactive" questions, which "require students to uncover useful information by exploring the problem situation and gathering feedback on the effect of their actions," according to the test results. That means U.S. students can "tolerate doubt and uncertainty and dare to use intuitions to initiate a solution," according to the results.

U.S. students beat their estimated score by 10 points; and this, the report says, may indicate that students' learning opportunities prepare them for dealing with real-life challenges.

Honoring our retirees

Friday, May 1, is the deadline to reserve your seat at the CEA Awards & Retirement Banquet. This annual dinner honors our retirees (who attend free) and those in our education community who have best served the cause of public education. During the evening, we recognize some of our members and community supporters, including CEA Friend of Education, Outstanding Faculty Representative in each CEA district and Outstanding CEA Member. This year the dinner is Saturday, May 17, at the Hilton Columbus Downtown, 401 N. High Street, in the Bellows Ballroom. The cocktail hour will begin at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 7 p.m. The cost is \$35.

To make reservations, call CEA or see your faculty representative for a reservation card. Complete and send it to CEA, "Attention: Awards Committee," along with your check payable to the Columbus Education Association.

OHIO NEEDS A RAISE

Mayday Celebration
Thursday, May 1st
4:30-7:00 pm
Corner of State & High St.
Ohio Capitol Building

Join Central Ohio Workers* for a May Day celebration on Thursday, May 1. Rally at 4:30 p.m. and march through downtown to tell Columbus: #OhioNeedsARaise!

After the rally, meet at the Ohio Education Association building for a meal and a conversation.

*Central Ohio Workers is a coalition of community organizations, unions, people of faith, people of color, students, LGBTQ community, food justice, transportation justice and others.

Special notes

- ❑ Fee waiver applications for Autumn 2014 are due back to Northgate by Tuesday, May 6, at 5 p.m. If you have Priority I or Priority II status, include the proper documentation. Documentation is required with each fee waiver process. Your priority status will change to Priority III without proper documentation. Call Norma Oldham, Northgate (365-8993) if you have any questions.
- ❑ The following alternative interview panels have been approved: Burroughs ES/Sullivant ES, École Kenwood/Columbus Spanish Imm. Acad., Curriculum Department, and Woodcrest ES.