

The CEA Voice

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Teaching & Learning Conference 2015—Be inspired

This March, CEA/NEA, Project ASPIRE and CCS supported 28 teachers to attend the Teaching & Learning Conference in Washington, D.C. sponsored by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The teachers are currently working toward certification with district mentors and are funded this year through the generous support of these organizations.

Ron Thorpe, President and CEO of NBPTS, stated the conference was “designed to bring the K–12 profession together for a single purpose: to explore how we as professionals can take greater responsibility for the future we want for our students and ourselves.” The theme was “Where Knowledge Meets Inspiration,” and keynote speakers and panelists delivered inspiring messages of leadership, courage and service. Speakers included NEA President Lily Eskelsen, Martin Luther King III, documentary filmmaker Ken Burns, Wes Moore, Dr. Pedro Noguera and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Breakout sessions offered topics around Equity, Leadership, Legislation and Policy, Curriculum, Global Awareness, Technology and Innovation.

Here is what some CEA Members had to say about their experience:

“I was most impressed with the ‘Big Ideas,’ I heard at the conference and the policy issues that are affecting education today.”—Daria Denoia, PAR

“I want to thank both NEA and CEA for this wonderful opportunity. I gained so much valuable information to becoming a better teacher.”—Jessica L. Rouse, Sullivant ES

“It was very informative and reassuring that we are headed in the right direction. Thanks for always being supportive.”—Tiffany Brandt, Woodward Park MS

“Many, many thanks for providing me and so many other educators the opportunity to attend the NBCT Conference on Teaching and Learning. CCS teachers heard inspirational stories, attended thought-provoking sessions and enjoyed a time of fellowship with like-minded colleagues.”—Kristy Leigh, PAR

Through our NEA Foundation Grant, CEA is pleased to have provided this amazing opportunity for our members to learn together and be inspired to take the lead in our schools and district.

CEA seeks next cohort of teacher leaders

The National Education Association, along with the Center for Teaching Quality and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, is taking applications to join its Teacher Leadership Initiative (TLI).

The national program, which began last year with 150 participants, will help guide the next generation of teachers to become leaders in the profession with the knowledge, skills and core values to meet the demands of the teaching profession in the 21st Century. Members of the first TLI cohort have defined the project’s foundational competencies and are developing relevant experiences and supports. The goal is to activate at least 1,000 teachers to be leaders able to guide policy makers.

The focus is on three pathways toward true professional expertise: association involvement, instructional excellence and policy leadership. Components include such items as reflective

practice, personal and interpersonal effectiveness, continuing education and technological facility, with guidance from coaches, peers and partnership with the community.

In March, thirty-two Columbus teachers, already part of the project, met to discuss social justice and its impact on their own lives and those of their students.

If you are interested in growing as a teacher leader and advancing the work of the Association, CEA is seeking members to join our new cohort. Project participants will receive a stipend and CEUs. You can apply online at <http://bit.ly/2015-16NEATLcor>. For more information, contact Dorothy Wilson at CEA at 253-4731. The deadline for consideration for the 2015–16 cohort is Apr. 20.

Senate Passes Bill Aimed at De-Regulation, Testing

(As published in the *OEA Legislative Watch*)

Recently, the Ohio Senate passed Senate Bill 3 by a vote of 24–9. The bill, sponsored by Senate President Keith Faber (R-Celina) and Senator Cliff Hite (R-Findlay), included a number of provisions aimed at reducing the amount of testing time and lifting regulations on districts that meet certain performance metrics. While OEA supports some provisions of the bill, it is opposed to others.

The Senate Education Committee adopted an amendment to the bill which OEA strongly supports—a reduction to the student growth measure in the alternative framework to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). Under the bill, the student growth measure in the OTES alternative framework would be set at 35 percent (rather than 42.5 percent), and the teacher performance percentage would be set at 50 percent (rather than 42.5 percent). The bill would also allow the use of multiple measures to fill the remaining 15 percent in the alternative framework.

In the area of testing, the bill would set a cap on the time spent on tests required by the state and districts at two percent of the school year and a cap of one percent on test preparation. Districts could exceed the caps with the passage of a resolution by the local school board after at least one public hearing. The bill would eliminate the fall administration of the third-grade reading test as well as mandatory diagnostic tests on math and writing in grades 1–3.

The bill would exempt school districts which meet certain criteria from a number of regulations. School districts would qualify if they received at least 85 percent of the possible points on the performance index, received an “A” on district report card performance indicators and had a graduation rate of at least 93 percent (four-year cohort) and 95 percent (five-year cohort). Approximately 125 districts currently meet these qualifications. Those districts would be exempt from the following regulations:

- ❖ Teacher qualification requirements of the third-grade reading guarantee
- ❖ Mentoring component of the resident educator program (provided there is a local approach to train and support new teachers)
- ❖ Any standard by the state board of education on class size
- ❖ Requirement for teachers to be licensed in grade level they are teaching (unless required by federal law)

Qualifying districts would also be permitted to employ non-licensed teachers, provided they are “otherwise qualified based on experience” as determined by the district, the school board approves the employment and they pass a criminal background check.

OEA is opposed to a number of these “de-regulation” provisions. While there is merit in identifying regulations that may be unnecessarily burdensome, it is important to draw clear distinctions between “regulations” and measures put in place to protect students and help ensure success. Every student deserves a well-prepared teacher. Licensure sets an entry-level threshold. There are multiple ways in which a teaching license may be obtained including alternative licensure programs. Allowing certain districts to circumvent these standards is unwarranted. Likewise, OEA opposes waiving regulations that limit class size. Smaller class sizes allow teachers to give students more individual attention and differentiate instruction to meet their needs.

An amendment was also added to the bill that provides all schools with the option of either using the third and fourth years of the resident educator program and performance-based assessment or use OTEs in years three and four to assess each participant’s progression.

The bill will now proceed to the Ohio House of Representatives. However, the state budget bill (HB 64) currently contains a number of provisions similar to those in SB 3. How the issues will evolve and what legislation will be the vehicle for such changes remains to be seen.

Honoring our retirees

This year’s CEA 39th Awards & Retirement Banquet is slated for Saturday, May 16, at the Hilton Columbus Downtown, 401 N. High Street. Join us for the social hour at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m. Every year we honor our colleagues who have served our community during their careers. We thank you for your service to the district but more importantly to our students. It is because of your hard work that our students can reach their full potential. We look forward to honoring you at this year’s event.

During the event CEA will also award five scholarships to children of our members and present these awards: Innovator in Education, Outstanding Faculty Representatives, Outstanding Member, Friend of Education and Distinguished Service.

If you are retiring, there is no cost. We are limiting retirees to one guest each, due to the large retiring class and limited space. Your reservation card, together with the information sheet you received in the mail, should have been returned to the CEA office. Once CEA has determined the number of seats still available, retirees will receive notification regarding purchasing additional seats on a first-come basis.

We are looking forward to seeing you on May 16.

Charter school bill sent to Senate

(As published in the *OEA Legislative Watch*)

The Ohio House of Representatives passed House Bill 2 (R-Roegner/Dovilla) by a vote of 70–25 on Thursday, Mar. 26, 2015. The bill now goes to the Ohio Senate, where Senator Lehner is expected to offer a bill that will contain additional reform measures. Six House Democrats voted for the charter reform package, which one of them characterized as “moving in the right direction” and urged the Senate to make further improvements to the bill.

Overall, House Bill 2 has a range of positive proposals that can serve as a foundation for more comprehensive charter school reform that protects and benefits both students and taxpayers.

Among the positive provisions in House Bill 2 are greater oversight, accountability and transparency of charter school sponsors. Poor performing sponsors will be shut down and efforts to avoid closing a failing school by hopping to another sponsor would become more difficult. This could help accelerate the closure of failing charter schools. However, potential loopholes still exist and more work still needs to be done in this area.

Advances were also made in making additional information publicly available on ODE’s website, and requiring public records training for charter school sponsors, governing boards and school

operators. These provisions can be strengthened, but they bring us closer to ensuring that charter schools are subject to the same public records laws and financial transparency standards as any other public entity.

Of particular concern, the bill does not include expanded financial reporting requirements for school operators, who often receive up to 97 percent of a charter school’s funds with minimal disclosure of how the funds are spent. The proposal for additional operator disclosure was not included in the bill despite support from Auditor of State Dave Yost (R), bill co-sponsor Kristina Reogner (R-Hudson) and House Democrats. The lack of sufficient operator disclosure requirements is a major shortcoming of the bill.

OEA remains an “Interested Party” on House Bill 2 and will continue to advocate for a variety of improvements to the bill as it moves to the Ohio Senate. As the bill receives further consideration, another of OEA’s goals will be to establish a means of funding charter schools that does not penalize local public schools.

Retiring? We’ve got a group for you!

CEA-R is here to “provide retired teachers of the Columbus City Schools with activities, experiences and knowledge that will keep them aware of what is happening in the community, around Ohio, in the legislature, with the Columbus Education Association and with Columbus City Schools.”

There is always something to do with CEA-R. The group has trips, tours and activities galore, and you can find out more about them at www.cea-retired.com. You also can visit the group’s Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Columbus-Education-Association-Retired/235853463122932>.

Here are a couple of activities coming up:

- ◆ Westerville Wine Walk, April 16, two groups: 9 a.m.–2 p.m. and 10:30 a.m.–3 p.m., featuring a panini lunch at the Wyandotte Winery and tour of the Anti-Saloon League Museum
- ◆ Lighthouses of the Mid-Atlantic, Oct. 5–11 featuring an Inner Harbor cruise, guided tour of Baltimore, Sevenfoot Knoll Lighthouse, Fell’s Point, Little Italy and the Mount Vernon Place Historic District and a Maryland crab feast

Hayden reelected to STRS

Tai Hayden has won reelection to the STRS Board. Hayden has served on the board as a representative of active teachers since 2006. She has taught in CCS for 19 years. In addition to her duties as a teacher, Tai has served on the OEA Board of Directors and served in various leadership positions, including CEA’s District 7 Governor and the past Capital District President.

Congratulations, Tai on your reelection.

Special notes

- ❑ You could receive a **Teachers’ Dream Grant: \$500-\$5,000** for innovative projects focusing on academic enrichment, increasing student achievement, closing the achievement gap, improving school/community relations and improving the classroom learning climate. Submit your request online by **Apr. 17, 4 p.m.** Call **Andrea Richardson** at **365-5733** for more information.
- ❑ **Apr. 17 at 5 p.m.** is the **deadline** for **CEA Scholarship Applications**. **Eligible high school seniors** have proven cumulative grade-point averages (GPA) of 2.5, are children or grandchildren of CEA or CEA-R members and full-time students while enrolled in college. Awards include the \$1,500 Christa McAuliffe Scholarship; the \$1,000 CEA General Scholarship; the Grossman Memorial Scholarship; the Rhonda Johnson Scholarship Fund and a one-year scholarship awarded by CEA-R. Visit <http://bit.ly/2015ScholGuidlines> to download an application or call the CEA office at 253-4731.
- ❑ **Article 211 calendar dates:** Apr. 13–16, **Round 2 interviews;** Apr. 29–30, **Job Fairs** (Hudson Distribution Center Library).
- ❑ The following schools/units have **approved alternate panels:** Devonshire ES; Eastgate ES; Northtowne ES and Special Education Coordinators.