

# The Voice

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## American Education Week

Nov. 16–20 is American Education Week, sponsored by the National Education Association. This year's theme is "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility." During this week, we celebrate the work we do and offer the community an opportunity to honor individuals who are making a difference in ensuring that every child receives a quality education.



The first observance was Dec. 4–10, 1921, with the NEA and American Legion as the co-sponsors. A year later, the then U.S. Office of Education joined the effort as a co-sponsor, and the PTA followed in 1938. Other co-sponsors of this annual observance are the U.S. Department of Education and national organizations including the National PTA, the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the American Association of School Administrators, the National School Boards Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the American School Counselor Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National School Public Relations Association, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

The schedule is as follows:

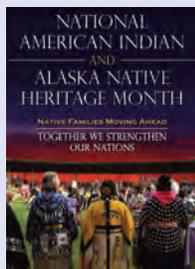
- ◆ Monday, Nov. 16: Kickoff Day
- ◆ Tuesday, Nov. 17: Parents Day
- ◆ Wednesday, Nov. 18: Education Support Professionals Day
- ◆ Thursday, Nov. 19: Educator for a Day
- ◆ Friday, Nov. 20: Substitute Educators Day

This is a great time to invite parents and community leaders for a special visit. This is also a fabulous time to answer your students' questions about what you do to get ready for the school day.

## Remembering Native American Contributions

During November we honor the contributions of the country's first residents to the establishment and growth of the United States. Native American Heritage Month began as a day set aside by the Boy Scouts to honor the "First Americans." Native Americans led a formal bid for a nationally designated observance, and various states began declaring selected days during the year for this purpose. In 1990 President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 "National American Indian Heritage Month." Here are some contributions of Native Americans:

- ◆ American natives were the first to discover Vanilla.



- ◆ Research has revealed that the Founding Fathers borrowed some of their government ideas from the Iroquois, who had been accustomed to live under a constitution maintaining the three main principles of peace, equity and justice and the "power of good minds."
- ◆ Native Americans, untouched by the influence of Europeans, preserved and performed delicate surgical procedures. They understood anatomy and the complex circulatory system and also treated fractures and dislocation of bones and made sutures with human hair to close wounds and incisions.
- ◆ Navajo code talkers helped the United States and its Allies achieve victory during World War II through use of their complex language and specially invented terminology denoting "bomber," "grenade" and "submarine."

Find sample curricula and other information at <http://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov>.

## Ohio Superintendent Will Retire

Richard Ross, 65, announced that he will step down Dec. 31 after almost two years as Ohio's public school superintendent. His announcement comes as the Ohio Department of Education continues to deal with revelations that David Hansen, who ran the charter school program, rigged school data to boost the schools' ratings. Hansen, whose wife is Gov. John Kasich's presidential campaign manager, resigned. The U.S. Department of Education has temporarily halted administration of a \$71 million Ohio charter school grant until ODE can assure that the dollars will be spent responsibly.

Ross, who retired from leadership of the Reynoldsburg School District, became Ohio Superintendent after an ethics investigation found that predecessor Stan W. Heffner, who resigned in Aug. 2012, had used his office for personal benefit. Gov. John Kasich praised efforts during Ross' tenure to improve third-grade reading achievement and expand access to career-technical education and opportunities for high school students to earn college credit. Ross told *The Columbus Dispatch* that he hopes educators and business leaders continue their work with mentorship programs introducing students to career learning opportunities.

Ross has been praised and criticized for his efforts to help address school failures. The Ohio Education Association, Youngstown Board of Education, Youngstown Education Association and other education associations recently filed a lawsuit against Ross, ODE and the State of Ohio to stop the scheduled state takeover of Youngstown City Schools.

At this time we are not sure who will replace Ross. We can only hope the Governor, as he attempts to become the next President of the United States, will appoint someone who cares about children and public education.

## Feds Clamp Down on Ohio Charters

Federal regulators halted a \$71 million charter-school grant awarded to Ohio in September in response to concerns about the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) rigging of charter-school evaluations. Now the U.S. Department of Education has told ODE that it must verify and provide:

- ❖ A report summarizing the status of seven years' worth of findings in all state-conducted charter-school audits
- ❖ A list of, and corrections to, any information in its grant application that is out-of-date, inaccurate, incomplete or misleading
- ❖ An explanation of changes to its process for reviewing charter-school authorizers and any additional systems to ensure integrity

Ohio plans to use the federal aid to provide grants of up to \$700,000 to applicants seeking to open new charter schools. Media coverage across the country has focused on the inaccuracies and questionable claims included in the state's grant application. Written by former school choice director David Hansen, it claimed that the state had no "poor-performing" charters in the 2012–2013 school year, even though one-third of them didn't meet a single standard on state report cards that year. He also omitted grades of failing online schools, boosting their ratings.

"Since awarding the grant to ODE, the department has received additional information that raises continuing concerns regarding ODE's ability to administer its...grant properly, particularly in the areas of oversight and accountability with respect to Ohio's charter schools," wrote Stefan Huh, Director of Charter School Programs for the U.S. Department of Education.

## Know Your Capital Officers: Kriston Crombie Stotik and Gerry Curran

Kriston Crombie Stotik is President of the OEA Capital District. She brings to the position 17 years of teaching and Association experience. Crombie Stotik has been working for CCS since 1998, teaching English at Centennial HS and working as a staff development specialist at Northgate Center. She now teaches English at Eastmoor Academy.

She began her CEA service as an alternative Faculty Representative in 2002. The experience inspired her. "I remember thinking that I wanted to fight for teachers, our working conditions and the needs of the teachers and students," she said. "I've always thought that we needed to emphasize the connection between our working conditions and student's learning conditions. They are one and the same."

Crombie Stotik then became a Senior FR, and in 2010 won election to the OEA Board of Directors. She has been Capital District President since 2014. Kriston also has served on the LPDC since 2007 and has led the committee since 2014. She is also a member of the CEA Constitution and Bylaws and Social and Economic Justice Committees. "With my background in Professional Learning, I felt that I had much to offer. Capital functions as the professional development wing of our Association," she said.

The fight against SB 5 is for her an emblem of what it means to be in an association. "We need to remain vigilant and ready for action as an organization," she said. "Teachers' associations are the only thing standing between strong public schools for our nation's children and their exploitation for profit."

Gerry Curran is Vice President of the Capital District. "I was attracted to CEA right from the beginning of my teaching career," he said. "I have always been a student of American history and clearly understand the importance that the labor movement has played in making our country great and prosperous."

Curran was a special education teacher, and is now in his 22nd year with CCS. He has taught at Beechcroft and Independence HS, Champion MS and Burroughs ES. He currently serves as a Peer Assistance & Review (PAR) Consulting Teacher. Curran has served for three years on the OEA Legislative Committee and on the State Council of the OEA's political action arm, the Fund for Children and Public



Kriston Crombie Stotik



Gerry Curran

Education.

It was after the defeat of Senate Bill 5 that he ran for a Capital District office. The mammoth effort by unions across the state to block the union-busting legislation left a deep impression.

"As we all enjoyed the thrill of that victory, I realized it would be just the first step as anti-union forces would stop at nothing to turn back the clock to the semi-feudal conditions teachers experienced in the past. With the coming and going of SB 5, I understood how vital our Association is, not only to our livelihood, but also to our dignity."

## FRs: Thank You

We thank our Faculty Representatives for attending the FR workshop. You are all serving a very important role within the Association. You are the voice of our members. The workshops are a great opportunity to grow in your knowledge and skill as you help CEA members understand and protect their negotiated rights. You are also advocates for improving the quality of teaching. We are delighted to help you further develop your skills at problem-solving, mobilizing and advocating on behalf of CEA. The FRs learned about Peer Assistance and Review (PAR), The Reform Panel, How to Represent Members and were given the opportunity to have their questions answered by the CEA staff.

We can't do it without you and appreciate all in attendance. The following buildings/units attended the workshop:

Alpine ES, Art, Avondale ES, Beechcroft HS, Berwick PreK–8, Briggs HS, Broadleigh ES, CAHS, Cassady ES, Cedarwood ES, Centennial HS, Clinton ES, Colerain ES, Columbus Africentric EC SS, Columbus City Prep. School for Boys, Columbus City Prep. School for Girls, Columbus Downtown HS, Columbus Global Acad. 6–12@Brookhaven, Columbus North International HS 7–12, Columbus Scioto 6–12, Columbus Spanish Imm. K–6, Como ES, East HS, Easthaven ES, École Kenwood K–6 @ Northgate, Fairmoor ES, Fairwood K–6, Forest Park ES, Ft. Hayes Arts & Academic HS, Ft. Hayes CC, Guidance Counselors, Hilltonia MS, Hubbard Mastery School PreK–6, Hudson Comm. Ed. Center, Hudson St. Warehouse, Huy ES/A.G. Bell Program, Indianola Informal K–8, Innis ES, Johnson Park MS, Leawood ES, Lincoln Park K–6, Lindbergh ES, Linden STEM Acad. PreK–6, Marion-Franklin HS, Medina MS, Mifflin HS, Moler K–6, Music, Northland HS, Northtowne ES, Nurses, Oakmont ES, Olde Orchard ES, OT/PT, PAR, Parkmoor ES, Parsons K–6, Psychologists, Salem ES, Scottwood ES, Sherwood MS, South HS 7–12, South Mifflin STEM Acad. PreK–6, Special Ed. Coordinators, St. Vincent, Starling K–8, Sullivant ES, Trevitt ES, Watkins ES, Wedgewood MS, Weinland Park ES, West Broad ES, West HS, West Mound ES, Westmoor MS, Whetstone HS, Woodcrest ES, Woodward Park MS and Yorktown MS.

## Special Notes

- ❑ **Thank you for pledging a contribution to United Way of Central Ohio.** Your gift helps our families access vital services, including health care and job training. United Way also supports preschool education for Columbus children and many other programs that help our students succeed in life. We received envelopes from the following schools/units since the publication of last week's *Voice* publication: CEC, Arts Impact MS, Berwick PreK–8, Cassady ES, Columbus Downtown HS, Como ES, Cranbrook ES, Eastmoor Acad. HS, École Kenwood K–6 @ Northgate, Fairmoor ES, Fairwood K–6, Leawood ES, Linmoor Ed. Ctr., Moler K–6, Parkmoor ES, Parsons K–6, South Mifflin STEM Acad. PreK–6, St. Vincent, Starling K–8, Sullivant ES, Valleyview ES and Weinland Park ES.
- ❑ **The Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Dinner** is set for **Thursday, Jan. 14**, at the **Hyatt Regency Columbus**. During the evening we honor the memory of Dr. King, and we also present awards to individuals who exemplify the spirit of his work. This event is always well attended so make sure you purchase your tickets early. Tickets are \$30 each with tables of eight at \$240. Contact CEA to reserve a seat. **Martin Luther King III will be the keynote speaker.**
- ❑ **The November and December CEA Social and Economic Justice Committee meetings have been cancelled due to the holidays.** We will resume meeting the fourth Tuesday in January.