Dear Sisters and Brothers,

If you haven’t heard the term “Academic Surge,” yet, you soon will. The “Surge” is the District’s $2 million response to improve failing scores for the next state report card. Under Ohio law, three years of consecutive “Fs” would trigger a state takeover. A CEO would be appointed who has the power to bring in charters, cancel contracts and privatize services. CEA applauds the District’s well-intended efforts to improve scores and avoid a possible state takeover. However, we are mindful that any plan should be more than a knee-jerk reaction to a poorly-designed report card whose sole purpose is to punish urban school districts.

The District must realize that no matter how intensive or well-intentioned any short-term “academic surge” is, a truly successful plan must address tsunami-like district-wide conditions that have left our members demoralized, stressed, fearful and feeling under appreciated. CEA knows you have done your very best in every situation regardless of the many obstacles that stand in our way. We are education professionals and we should be treated as such. However, this feels like another “required opportunity.”

Our members’ teaching conditions are our students’ learning conditions. They have as much to do with low scores as any state report card component. Our students deserve the right to be taught by our members in a warm, safe, dry and clean classroom. Investing in solutions that improve the teaching conditions of our members will also improve staff morale.

Research shows that the greatest influence on student success is the quality of their teacher. But the more than 4,000 caring, competent and highly-qualified members of the Columbus Education Association can’t do it all by themselves. Our members need the support of their building administrators, especially when it comes to student discipline. Our members have never shied away from a tough situation, however, the overabundance of testing, the excessive amount of paperwork and the increased workload of covering for absent colleagues without a substitute has left our members exhausted.

Over the past five months, the Board of Education and the Columbus Education Association have worked together. We appreciate the resolution the Board passed on collective bargaining. We appreciate the increased collaboration with the District and look forward to continued progress on the issues that matter to both students and teachers.

What our members don’t need is lip service and more pressure. We have a long way to go and a short time to get there. While CEA would like to see an “academic surge” occur, we want to see a successful process implemented that is ongoing and sustainable. CEA will continue to advocate for what our members and our students need. Stay tuned...

John Coneglio, President
Columbus Education Association

HB 318: Discipline Changes

One of the last pieces of legislation the Ohio General Assembly approved before adjourning for the summer recess was House Bill 318. It was originally introduced in 2017 with the purpose of establishing qualification and training guidelines for School Resource Officers. In June, the Senate Education Committee amended HB 318 to include provisions from an unrelated and separate Senate bill. The bill was signed into law by Ohio’s governor and took effect on Nov. 2, 2018.

House Bill 318 classifies out-of-school suspensions and expulsions in grades PreK–3 into one of three categories:

Category 1: A serious and specific offense for which suspension or expulsion is required by law (e.g., bringing a firearm to school) or permitted by law (e.g., possessing a firearm).

Category 2: An offense not listed in Category 1 but for which the school district or school determined suspension was necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student, the student’s fellow classmates, or the classroom staff or teachers.

Category 3: A “minor offense” that neither belongs in Category 1 or Category 2.

Beginning in 2021–2022, school districts are prohibited to suspend or expel students in grades PreK–3 for minor offenses (Category 3). This prohibition is phased-in with required reductions in Category 3 suspensions beginning in the 2019–2020 school year. The District has not yet defined the offenses in PreK–3 that would trigger a state takeover. A CEO would be appointed by law (e.g., possessing a firearm).

Under the Ohio Revised Code, administrators and teachers can institute an emergency removal for students whose presence “poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process.”
to three days pending the emergency removal hearing. As a result of HB 318, the emergency removal process has changed. Changes to the process include:

- PreK–3 students can be removed for the remainder of the school day without a hearing, however they must return to school the next day.
- PreK–3 students cannot receive an emergency removal and an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion unless the student’s offense is a Category 1 or Category 2 infraction.
- Emergency removal hearings for any student PreK–12 are required to be held the next school day.

Keep reading the The CEA Voice for important HB 318-related updates.

**Discipline Plan Update**

The CEA Master Agreement specifies that your administrator, in consultation with the ABC, must create a discipline plan and put it in writing. The discipline plan establishes procedures for the administration of all forms of discipline within the school, including procedures related to suspension and recommendation for discipline. Failure to have a plan in place is subject to a grievance at Step 2 against the principal.

We thank the following schools that are in compliance with Article 208.03 of the CEA Master Agreement:

- Berwick PreK–8, Burroughs ES, Cedarwood ES, Columbus Africentric EC SS, Columbus Downtown HS, Columbus Gifted Academy, Columbus Spanish Imm.
- K–6, École Kenwood K–6, Fairmoor ES, Hubbard Mastery ES, Huy ES/A.G. Bell Program, Johnson Park MS, Marion-Franklin HS, Moler K–6, Ridgeview MS, Salem ES, Siebert K–6, South HS 7–12, Stewart ES, Westmoor MS and Woodward ES.

For more information, please consult with your Senior Faculty Representative.

**Thank You Phone Bankers**

Your Association would like to thank the following members who spent time volunteering at a CEA-sponsored phone bank in October calling other CEA and OEA members about the importance of voting for friends of public education:

- John Coneligio (CEA Office), Michelle Coneligio (Clinton ES), Carla Davis (Forest Park ES), Joseph Decker (Mifflin MS), Angel Dyer-Sanchez (Salem ES),
- Phil Hayes (CEA Office), Courtney Johnson (Pt. Hayes Arts & Academic HS), Jeannette Johnson (Berwick K–8), Lisa R. Johnson (Hamilton STEM ES), Rebecca McGrath-Hinkle (Columbus Downtown HS),
- Cynthia Price (Mifflin HS), J. Sanchez (Northland HS), Taraja Shephard-Allen (School Counselors) and Dorothy Wilson (CEA-R).

**Retirement Seminar**

The Capital District will be hosting their fourth annual retirement seminar for members who are nearing retirement on Tuesday, Dec. 11, on the seventh floor of the STRS Building (275 E. Broad St.). Registration will begin at 3:30 p.m. and a light meal will be available at 4 p.m. Free parking is available in the STRS garage. Presenters at this seminar include representatives from STRS and the Capital District.

This event is limited to the first 80 respondents who respond. To RSVP,