

The Voice

Rhonda Johnson, President

www.ceaohio.org

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Columbus Education Association

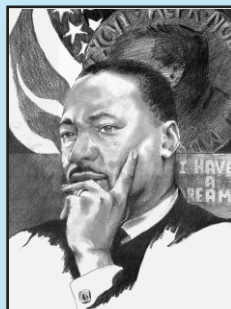
December 4, 2006

One day left to nominate for MLK awards

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.



Even if you aren't old enough to remember these words, uttered by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on Aug. 23, 1963, you have benefited in some way from their repercussions. No single person in modern U.S. history has done more to open the gateway to social justice, including in the public school system.

Join CEA for the Columbus Education Association 2007 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award Dinner. It will be held at the Hyatt Regency Columbus on Thursday, Jan. 11.

The social hour will begin at 6 p.m., and dinner will be served at 7 p.m. Reservations can be made through Minority Involvement Program (MIP) Committee members, faculty representatives and the CEA office.

Each year, we honor community members who embody the ideals of Dr. King. Today is the last day to nominate someone for our two awards: the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award and the Helen Jenkins Davis Award, named in honor of the first black teacher hired by the Columbus Public Schools.

Check www.ceaohio.org for nomination forms or drop by the CEA office.

The Helen Jenkins Davis Award is new this year. But the CEA Dr. King Humanitarian Award is the oldest of its kind in central Ohio. The list of past recipients is notable and includes, most recently, Mayor Michael Coleman, City Councilwoman Charleta B. Tavares and State Representative Joyce Beatty.

First Columbus teacher in 35 years appointed to STRS Board

STRS policy allows for current board members to nominate and vote to appoint a teacher to fill the position and remaining term of the retirement board seat vacated by Mike Billarakis.

Taiyia Hayden, a 10-year veteran of the Columbus Public Schools, was chosen on Nov. 16, 2006, to become the newest member on the retirement board. Tai teaches kindergarten at Deshler ES and serves as the CEA District 4 Governor. She is the Vice President of the Capital District, one of the ten geographic districts of the Ohio Education Association.



Ms. Hayden stated her desire to obtain the appointment to the board in saying, "I want to be actively involved in securing the best possible benefits of pensions and health care for current and future retirees. I have more than twenty years before I retire. I want something there when it is time for me to retire. I believe in educators and the education profession. I believe that we, active and retired educators, deserve to have a stable, dedicated stream of funding for health care."

No decisions made

The Facilities Master Plan Revision (FMPR) Committee, comprised of community members and school staff, including CEA President Rhonda Johnson, is currently using a revised template to look objectively at schools and programs in CPS. The FMPR Committee will make recommendations to Supt. Gene Harris in December.

Again this year, a template is being used that considers criteria including, but not limited to, capacity, enrollment trends, ability to maintain feeder patterns and academic performance.

The district schools passing the first two screens of the template and being recommended, at this time, only for further consideration include Douglas ES, Fifth Ave. ES, Linden Park ES, Medary ES, Eastmoor MS, Franklin MS, Linmoor MS, Medina MS and Monroe MS.

No decision has been made regarding any of these schools. Any of the schools listed may potentially be removed from the list and others could be added. At this early stage of the process, a variety of options will be presented and discussed by the committee.

Community forums are being planned in December. The FMPR Committee will not make recommendations to the Columbus Board of Education until Dec. 19. The Board of Education will then make a decision by the end of December or in early January.

Here's your chance

CEA officers and staff are available to visit your building at any time during the year to provide information about the Association and to answer any questions.

The *CEA Master Agreement* is thick, and we know it can be a lot to absorb. You may not realize all it has to offer. You might also be unaware of all the service CEA provides to its members.

Some of you also haven't had time to ask us about concerns and problems you may have.

Visits can be coordinated through your Senior Faculty Representative or by calling us directly at 253-4731.



Dropout crisis

The nation's public schools are in the midst of a growing dropout crisis. The National Education Association has met with national leaders and developed a 12-point plan to reduce the high-school dropout rate.

Reg Weaver, NEA president, expressed the gravity of the situation: "This is no longer about students slipping through the cracks of our educational system. Those cracks are now craters." Here are the action steps:

1. Mandate high school graduation or equivalency as compulsory for everyone below the age of 21.
2. Establish high school graduation centers for students 19–21 years old and provide specialized instruction and counseling to all students who need it.
3. Make sure students receive individual attention in safe schools, in smaller learning communities within large schools.
4. Expand students' graduation options through creative partnerships with community colleges in career and technical fields and with alternative schools.
5. Increase career education and workforce readiness programs in schools so that students see the connection between school and careers after graduation.
6. Act early so students do not drop out. Provide high-quality, universal preschool and full-day kindergarten, strong elementary programs and middle school programs that address causes of dropping out.
7. Involve families in students' learning at school and at home in new and creative ways so that all families—single-parent families, families in poverty, and families in minority communities—can support their children's academic achievement.
8. Monitor students' academic progress in school through a variety of measures that provide a full picture of students' learning.
9. Monitor, accurately report and work to reduce dropout rates by gathering accurate data for key student groups (such as racial, ethnic and economic), establishing benchmarks in each state for eliminating dropouts.
10. Involve the entire community in dropout prevention through family-friendly policies so that all parents and community can participate in a school's growth and development.
11. Make sure educators have the training and resources they need to prevent students from dropping out.
12. Make high school graduation a federal priority by calling on Congress and the President to invest \$10 billion over the next 10 years to support dropout prevention programs.

Across the nation

Below is recent news from other school districts across the country. Decisions in similar systems can have a direct impact on us.

Washington, D.C.—The U.S. Department of Education will award less than half the money (\$99 million) appropriated this year for teacher incentives. Secretary of Education Spellings stated that most of the proposals were inadequate. Only 16 grants were approved. The big winner was Ohio. \$20 million was awarded for a joint proposal to four of the Ohio 8 school districts. Columbus and Cincinnati will lead the way, followed by Cleveland and Toledo. Locally, the incentives are tied to an expansion of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP).

Dallas—A local art teacher won one year's back pay plus legal fees from an area school district. She had been suspended from teaching due to a complaint from a parent who said her child actually saw nude artwork during a trip to the Dallas Museum of Art. The district planned to fire the teacher but agreed to pay her and give her a positive recommendation.

Detroit—The Detroit Public Schools announced the layoff of 430 teachers on Nov. 1. This represents approximately 6 percent of the entire teaching force. They had expected a decline of 9,000 students this school year, but it ended up being about 14,000. If this number is verified, it will mean a loss of \$135 million in state aid.

Buffalo—An arbitrator has ruled against the Buffalo School System. The ruling was an order that employees be able to choose from any of several health insurance plans. The school district had unilaterally limited the choice to one plan, supposedly to save money. The Buffalo Federation of Teachers filed a grievance and prevailed because they were not consulted.

Thank you for your pledges

At the time this issue of *The Voice* went to print, more than 65 percent of our schools/units had returned their pledges to CEA for the 2006 United Way campaign.

Thank you, **Livingston ES @ Beck**; Thank you, **Maize ES**; Thank you, **Medary ES**; Thank you, **Mifflin HS**; Thank you, **Mifflin MS**; Thank you, **Monroe MS**; Thank you, **North Linden ES**; Thank you, **Northeast CC**; Thank you, **Northland HS**; Thank you, **Northtowne ES**; Thank you, **Northwest CC**; Thank you, **Oakland Park ES @ Brentnell**; Thank you, **Oakmont ES**; Thank you, **Ohio Avenue ES @ Kent**; and Thank you, **Olde Orchard ES**.

We will continue to publish additional names as envelopes are received and as space is available. Thank you for helping United Way do what works, do what matters.

Special notes

- ☐ Surf to www.ceahio.org to see a complete listing of the **MidState Educators Credit Union's Fall Specials**. Call MidState at (614) 221-9376 for more information.
- ☐ **Ask a lawyer** begins in January. *The CEA Voice*, with the Cloppert law firm, will **address legal questions of interest to CEA members**. You can submit legal questions by emailing them to cealegalquestions@cloppertlaw.com.
- ☐ On Nov. 3, **Stephanie Baumgarten** of the **CPS Gifted & Talented Department** presented *Geometry in the Round*, a hands-on differentiation workshop, at the **53rd Annual Convention of the National Association of Gifted Children**. Her presentation focused on concepts behind spherical geometry. *Well done*.
- ☐ Support the **Columbus Blue Jackets** by purchasing tickets from CEA. These excellent seats are elevated and located behind a goal. Tickets for home games are **\$50 each** for the following dates: Sunday, Dec. 10, **Ottawa (4)**; Saturday, Dec. 16, **Chicago (4)**; Friday Dec. 22, **Vancouver (4)**; Tuesday, Dec. 26, **Boston (2)**; Thursday, Dec. 28, **Detroit (4)**; and Sunday, Dec. 31, **Chesapeake (4)**.
- ☐ **Project Help Clothing Ministry** is distributing nearly new clothing, food, toys and books from **8 a.m.–2 p.m., on Dec. 16** at **Great Western Shopping Center** at the former Rhodes Furniture Building, 50 N. Wilson Road. Send a message to phcministry@aol.com or visit www.projecthelpministry.org for more information. The Project Help Clothing Ministry was **founded by** the late **Claire L. Waters**, former recipient of the CEA MLK Humanitarian Award and mother of CEA member **Sandra Waters Holley**.