

The CEA Voice

Rhonda Johnson, President

www.ceaohio.org

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District approaches sanctions

Graduation and achievement rates are improving. We are making progress.

However, the school district has not met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) guidelines under federal law. The Columbus schools have been assigned District Improvement Status Year 3.

The Ohio Department of Education recently reminded our superintendent that districts in their third year of improvement status are subject to one or more of these corrective actions:

- Deferring or reducing government funds
- Implementing new research-based curriculum
- Replacing local personnel
- Replacing the local governing body with a state-appointed trustee
- Restructuring the district
- Authorizing student transfers

Representatives of Ohio Department of Education's Office of Educational Reform have met with CPS officials to begin a planning and review process. It should be complete by February and in place in the fall.

Further refinements are coming to segments of the curriculum, including implementation of a research-based reading program and development of a curriculum management system to help teachers align their lessons and assessments to the state academic content standards. The problem of providing teacher training during the school day while keeping daily classroom goals on track is also being addressed.

We are proud of the progress we have made—and there are many victories to be savored—and we know that we will make AYP. Let's keep moving forward and keep our eyes on the goal.

Losing sight of the goal: *better teachers*

Over the last two decades our nation has placed great emphasis on making sure a highly-qualified teacher is working in every classroom. Speeches by the President and by governors across the country called for reforms that would improve teaching effectiveness.

The result was a major change in all parts of the education career continuum. Action led to more focus on preparation, development of licensure programs, a rise in mentoring and professional training and an increase in the numbers of teachers seeking national certification.

We are proud that Columbus was a leader in all of these areas. Your union developed partnerships to raise standards across the board. We believe in quality.

But the potential establishment in our state and school district has retreated from this important focus area. CEA continues to push for more nationally certified teachers, but our state has reduced the support for this

program. Your union backs significant professional development, but our superintendent and board have slashed the teaching day thereby cutting training opportunities.

Our mentoring and induction programs remain strong, but this effort is not growing everywhere in the state. Joseph Aguerreber, CEO of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, recently stated, "Today, more attention is paid to credit hours, fingerprinting and criminal background checks than to the skills and knowledge it takes to be a highly qualified teacher."

Have the leaders of our state and district lost sight of what really is important?

Textbook selection committees needed

The time is almost here to review the district's reading/language arts materials at all grade levels. This includes materials that are used in the LACES program.



If you want to nominate someone to serve on the Elementary, Middle and High School Reading Language Arts Textbook Selection Committees, there's still time. Here's the procedure:

- 📖 Nominations should be sent to CEA President Rhonda Johnson no later than Friday Jan. 26.
- 📖 Nominees are elected by teachers and administrators of the schools involved in the relevant subject areas and grade levels.
- 📖 The election is conducted by the Association Building Council and the building principal.
- 📖 Not all teachers who are nominated will be selected.
- 📖 Eligible teachers should be teaching reading language arts in grades K-5, 6-8 or 9-12.

Selected teachers will make a commitment to serve from February-April.

For further information or for nomination forms, contact CEA.

Check your status online

The Ohio Department of Education now offers an electronic method for checking the status of your license and for reviewing your licensure history.

You need an ODE SAFE account and an Internet connection. Surf to: <http://www.ode.state.oh.us>. Click on the *SAFE Account Sign In* menu item at the bottom of the left side menu. Follow the onscreen prompts to initiate your account.

Once you have your account, sign in and select *ODE.CORE Educator Profile* from the applications list on the home page. You can check such items as credential history and application status.

Send a message to educator.license@ode.state.oh.us to receive more information.

Need help filing educator expenses?

Late last year, Congress extended the *educator expenses* deduction that can be claimed on the 2006 individual income tax return.

However, the Internal Revenue Service 1040 form was printed before the bill was approved. As a result, there is no specific line item in the Adjusted Gross Income section as there was on the 2005 form.

So here's what you do: The IRS is instructing educators to file Form 1040 (*not form 1040A*) to take advantage of this deduction. You may claim up to \$250 for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in 2006.

Enter the deduction on line 23, labeled **Archer MSA Deduction**.

Mark the letter **E** on the dotted line to the left of that line entry.

However, you may need to mark the letter **B** instead under these circumstances: The Archer MSA line item is designed for employees of small businesses and those who are self-employed and are deducting medical expenses. If you have a claim for both an MSA deduction and the educator deduction, the letter **B** should be written on line 23.

If you have more questions, visit www.irs.gov/newsroom and select the Dec. 22 article.



Nominations for the 2007 American Stars of Teaching being accepted

The Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative of the U.S. Department of Education is pleased to announce the start of the 2007 American Stars of Teaching nomination process. The program is designed to honor exemplary classroom teachers who are using innovative teaching strategies to improve student achievement and positively shape their school environments.

Everyday America's teachers extend themselves beyond their classroom doors to meet the needs of all children in their school community. Don't miss this opportunity to honor a teacher who has made an impact on her or his students, as well as the school community, by investing in the lives of those they teach and sharing success with whom they work.

Nominations for the 2007 American Stars of Teaching are currently being accepted at <http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/index.html>. The nomination process will conclude on Apr. 1 at which time a committee of teachers at the Department will review the details of each candidate and select the recipients of the 2007 American Stars of Teaching honor.

One teacher from each state and the District of Columbia will be selected as representatives of the many teachers who are making a difference in the lives of students. Officials from the U.S. Department of Education will announce the American Stars by visiting the recipients in the fall of 2007.

Want your building to be healthy? *Apply for a grant*

A healthy lifestyle encompasses the hours we spend at work. To help encourage healthier habits, Aetna, along with the Employee Wellness Committee, is offering Columbus Public Schools employees mini-grants they can use to implement wellness programs.

Funds can be used for many things: pedometers, fitness instructors, healthy foods for the staff kitchen, fitness equipment, speakers, wellness contests and incentives to encourage lifestyle changes.

Project budgets may range from \$50 to \$200, and the amounts awarded will vary from building to building.

Here are the rules and selection procedures:

- ✦ Applicants must demonstrate that at least 20 percent of the employees at their location can benefit from the project.
- ✦ Only one application may be submitted per building/unit. (Please submit five copies.)
- ✦ The deadline to apply is the first day of each month. Applications will be reviewed by a committee through May or until the grant money has been spent.
- ✦ Applicants will be notified in writing the results of the reviews by 15th day of the month in which the application was submitted.

For more information, surf to: [http://cpsnet.columbus.k12.oh.us/applications/inetdept.nsf/Department+Pages/C3C73EC85B8DDB1F8525723B006A173E/\\$File/Wellness%20Mini%20Grant.doc?OpenElement](http://cpsnet.columbus.k12.oh.us/applications/inetdept.nsf/Department+Pages/C3C73EC85B8DDB1F8525723B006A173E/$File/Wellness%20Mini%20Grant.doc?OpenElement). Or contact Pat Gates at 365-5715.

Tour the gardens, enjoy the ballet with CEA-R

CEA-R, the Association's unit of retired members, has big plans for numerous activities in the coming months.

On Jan. 24, educator Sally Kriska will talk about those "senior moments." She has been interested in brain research and has some interesting information to share about how to keep our brains healthy and active as we age. Check-in begins at 11:30 a.m. at the Florentine Restaurant, 907 W. Broad St.

On Feb. 9, take a tour of Franklin Park Conservatory and enjoy the artwork of Dale Chihuly. Have lunch in the cafe with your fellow CEA-R members. Meet at the conservatory at 1 p.m.

Those wintering in Florida will meet at Fisherman's Village in Punta Gorda on Feb. 12 to eat, then enjoy a short cruise.

And that's only the beginning. Check out the whole slate of trips and activities by visiting www.cea-retired.com.

And remember: You can be involved even after you've left the classroom. In fact, your skills, honed over many years of experience, are greatly valued, and there are myriad ways to volunteer. Retired teachers are some of the best tutors we have in our community. CEA-R members have been active with United Way fundraising, and many have been involved in OEA-R as Capital District representatives.

Membership in CEA-R costs \$10 per year or \$100 for life-time membership.

Still have questions? Call CEA-R President Judy Valentine at (614) 235-4572. To learn more about OEA-R, call 1-800-282-1500.

Special note

- ❑ **CEA spring elections:** Members who are interested in official leadership positions may declare their candidacy for open seats now through Feb. 2. The following positions are open: **Board of Governors in Districts 2, 7, 9 and 10;** and **delegates and alternates to the 2007-2008 OEA and 2007 NEA Representative Assemblies.** Campaigning for these positions will take place from Feb. 20-Mar. 5. Members will vote for candidates Mar. 6-19. The CEA Elections Committee will tabulate the votes on Mar. 20. Declaration forms are available from the CEA office.