

The CEA Voice

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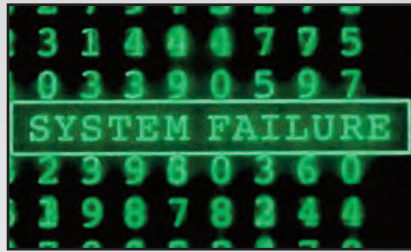
Columbus Education Association

September 3, 2013

Report card shows system failed us

On Aug. 22, ODE released school district report cards for the 2012–2013 school year, which can be found at <http://1.usa.gov/13RcQWu>.

The release of the CCS report officially closed the books on a year without compare. On the other hand, the leadership in the district and in Columbus has a plan with eyes on the future—not on the past.



No doubt all of us are disappointed with our district report card. But, we must refuse to accept these grades as the sole measure of our students' capacity to learn and our educators' capacity to teach. When we expect the very best from our students and teachers, it is our high standards that will drive the work that we must do together to be successful.

Following the release of the CCS report card, Interim Superintendent Dan Good stated, "We are not discouraged because this state report card reflects the school district's past, and we have a solid plan for the future. Our plan will capitalize on the momentum that has been generated as a result."

When Dr. Good referred to the school district's past, he invoked the memories of all the obstacles we faced last school year. The computers were slower than ever, and Infinite Campus was rolled out replete with bugs, limited features and an ineffective training program. Elementary teachers were forced to waste untold amounts of instructional time, using faulty technology to test students and themselves into tears.

Not enough teachers were hired when school started, and many students came to school with substitutes in their classrooms for weeks on end, some all year. A year-long shortage of substitutes made us doubtful we would be able to attend any off-site professional development and fearful that taking a day off sick would leave principals scrambling to find a body to cover our classes.

High-level administrators paid lip service to collaboration, and they even told building principals not to work with teachers. Furthermore, morale remained at an all-time low because of the ongoing investigation of the data scandal.

While we must acknowledge the past, we must live in the now, looking towards our future and embracing the changes that are beginning to transform our district. As change begins to manifest itself in our classrooms and schools this year, we must turn our eyes towards our new day. Use ODE's report card data as a starting point, not as something to beat up ourselves. As a district, we will not be able to change at any level if we work in silos. Only by true collaboration with our colleagues and our administrators can we focus on improving the learning of our students. Indeed, we have seen more change in the past two months than in the last few years—but change can be, and is, Good.

We stand on their shoulders

We hope you had a great Labor Day, but while you enjoyed your holiday, we also want you to know how Labor Day came about. The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, Sept. 5,



1882, in New York City. We need to remind ourselves of how tough work used to be and to honor the struggles and successes of those who organized to protect their rights and, in many cases, their lives. Unions have worked hard to protect defined work weeks, benefits and duties and to spell out how employers must treat their employees.

We take a lot for granted, but we can't afford to forget the past. Workers' rights have been under attack again because extreme politicians like Ohio's governor and legislators who know that organized labor is instrumental in addressing core economic concerns, such as income inequality, and giving working Americans a strong political voice against powerful corporate interests.

A policy brief issued last year by the Center for American Progress (<http://bit.ly/1dfLwEs>) confirms that labor unions in the United States are vital to the middle class. The report concludes that, not only are unions at the forefront in advocating for middle-class economic security, they are instrumental in providing mechanisms for average voters to participate effectively in politics, especially during critical campaign cycles. And that's not all.

"States with a greater percentage of union members," the paper explains, "have significantly higher voter turnout rates, as well as higher wages, a greater percentage of residents covered by health insurance, stronger social safety nets and a more progressive tax code."

That is why it is critical for all middle-class Americans to recognize how labor groups fight for their economic interests. And on that issue, the evidence is clear.

We give scholarships for college seniors

CEA knows that college is becoming increasingly expensive. That's why your Association has helped to make college more affordable by awarding nearly a thousand scholarships to our members' children each year since 1995. During the past 18 years, CEA has helped 817 members' children so far with support amounting to more than \$498,000. The CEA Members' Scholarship Fund will award \$1,000 grants for our members' children this year. Ten dollars of each member's dues supports this fund which is handled and disbursed by The Columbus Foundation.



Scholarships are open to members' children who are in their senior year of college. To qualify, the applicant must have at least a 2.0 GPA. Parents or guardians must have taught in the Colum-



bus School District for four years prior to the application date and must be continuous CEA or CEA-R members. The deadline to apply for scholarships is Thursday, Oct. 31, at 5 p.m. Go to <http://bit.ly/ceascholarship2013> to download an application packet. If you have questions, please call Cora Miller at 253-4731.

This is just one example of the benefits of CEA membership. Only Association members are eligible.

Know your district governor: Christine Ray

When Christine Ray and her husband, Kevin, adopted their son, Vasa, in 2011, CEA was along for the ride. Because the Association bargained for six weeks of adoption leave, the Rays were able to take the time they needed to complete the process and then help Vasa, now 3, acclimate to his new life.

"This is so huge for my family," said Ray.

As one of our new district governors, Ray is eager to inspire younger CEA members to get involved in their Association. "I would encourage them to get involved and read their contract, and get to know their building rep and their governor. And go to district meetings. Find out what's going on. You can't sit back. Your whole career depends upon it."

Ray teaches first grade at East Columbus ES. She has been there for 13 years, coming from the Bexley Schools where she taught children with autism. She loves teaching first grade. "I love the progress you can see with the kids through the year. By the end, they can school me in just about everything!" she said.

Ray began her service to CEA five years ago, first as an alternate faculty representative, then the Senior FR for her building and now the District 3 Governor. She was inspired by other governors who encouraged her to run and also by what she has seen in action. "When we had all the SB 5 rallies downtown, people on my staff went to them," she said. "They would come to my room and look at the maps I made to see who voted and where. They would write letters and make phone calls. It was truly amazing. They took half-personal days to get downtown and make some noise."

She reminds her colleagues not to take CEA membership for granted: "There are so many things our union does that unions across the country don't do."



Christine Ray

Know your Weingarten rights

Thirty years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court protected unionized workers' rights to due process during questioning by a supervisor. The case, NLRB v. J. Weingarten, has come to define what's known as your Weingarten rights. If you are asked to attend a meeting with your principal or supervisor for an unspecified reason, you should exercise these rights.

First, ask the principal or supervisor to clarify the reason for the meeting. You cannot refuse to attend a meeting called by your principal—to do so would be insubordination. But, if the meeting becomes disciplinary in nature, you are entitled to CEA representation upon your request. (Your principal does not have to tell you this.)

The choice of representative is up to you. You can request an FR from your building or a staff consultant from CEA. This is your right as a dues-paying CEA member. Your administrator should never arrange for representation on your behalf.

Once you request representation, the administrator is obligated to arrange the meeting at a time when the representative can attend. Section 404.01 of the *Master Agreement* provides members

PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS



Columbus Education Association

(614) 253-4731

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

WHEN YOU ARE CALLED TO YOUR ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

What do you do if you are asked to attend a meeting with your principal or supervisor for an unspecified reason?

1. Ask the principal/supervisor to clarify the reason for the meeting.
2. Remember that you are entitled to CEA representation. Administrators are not obligated to tell you this; but, if you request representation, the administrator must arrange the meeting at a time when your representative can be in attendance (within five school days).

We suggest representation any time the purpose of the meeting is one of the following:

- Any type of disciplinary action
- Investigation meeting
- Reprimand
- Infraction of a work rule or board policy
- Questions concerning request or use of any leave
- Allegations of abuse
- Parental, student or community complaint

with a maximum of five school days to reschedule the meeting to accommodate this representative.

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- Infraction of a work rule or board policy
- Questions concerning request or use of leave (personal or sick)
- Allegations of abuse
- Parental, student or community complaint

If you have further questions, call CEA at 253-4731.

Put the Fall Fling on your calendar

Join us on Friday, Sept. 20, from 4–8 p.m. at the Hilton Columbus at Easton, 3900 Chagrin Dr.

This is a party you don't want to miss. Gather your colleagues and friends and come to the Hilton to enjoy a wonderful evening of fun, fellowship, door prizes and great music by DJ Derek Payne. You will meet many fellow educators and find out more about the people who make Columbus schools great. You will also have a chance to meet elected officials and

candidates for office in Franklin County. CEA just welcomed hundreds of new teachers. This is your chance to let them know you are there to help. New teachers can meet their more-experienced colleagues, develop camaraderie and start lifelong friendships. As CEA President Rhonda Johnson has often told our newest colleagues: "You are joining a family."

Go to <http://bit.ly/ceaflying12> to see pictures of last year's party. Door prizes will be awarded. One lucky CEA member will win dinner with CEA President Rhonda Johnson and Vice President Phil Hayes.

Special notes

- ❑ The **CEA Legislative Assembly** will meet at **4:30 p.m.** on **Thursday, Sept. 12**, at the **Boathouse Restaurant at Confluence Park**. Dinner will be provided. *RSVP* to Judy Nelson at jnelson@ceaohio.org. Include your name and the building/unit you represent.
- ❑ The **Office of Professional Learning and Licensure** is seeking **talented educators** to provide professional learning on the **CCS Educator Evaluation process** after school and on Saturdays. Download an application form at <http://bit.ly/EvalTrainer-App2013>. Submit it to **Kristy Leigh, Northgate Center, Rt. 3** (or fax x6439) or email to kleigh10363@columbus.k12.oh.us. The deadline is 4 p.m., Friday, Sept. 6.
- ❑ The **Columbus Area Writing Project's Fall Forum** will be **Saturday, Oct. 5, 8 a.m.–3:30 p.m.** in **Ramseyer Hall** at The Ohio State University, 29 W. Woodruff Ave. Speakers are **JoBeth Allen**, co-director of the Red Clay Writing Project and **J. Patrick Lewis**, an Ohio poet. To download a registration form, go to <http://bit.ly/19nJgKu>.

CEA Pre-Paid Legal Services Plan OEA/NEA Attorney Referral Program

At Cloppert, Latanick, Sauter and Washburn, we have dedicated ourselves to teachers in and out of the classroom. Our experienced personal injury, divorce, dissolution, criminal, probate and real estate attorneys are available to you at moderate rates which are lower than we normally charge our private clients.

Contact us today and allow our experience to work for you.

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