

The CEA Voice

Volume XLIV, No. 6

Columbus Education Association

September 23, 2013

An end to the rough patch

Two steps forward; three steps back: That's how the last year seemed. After years of building collaboration with CCS management, we found ourselves starting over. The administration imploded. Some days we felt like we were going back in time.

Fortunately, we can see the edge of the time warp. CEA President Rhonda Johnson told Faculty Representatives that she feels more optimistic. Issues 50 and 51 are on the horizon and our interim superintendent is already charging forward to trim our top-heavy administration. He is encouraging us to collaborate, and we are poised to transform our district.

Rhonda delivered her annual "State of the Association" address Sept. 12 to more than 200 Association FRs, emphasizing the importance of continued political action. "This coming election is critical," she said. "The health of CCS depends on it." She shared her fears if the levy failed. Those fears included takeover by the state due to fiscal emergency status, classes that grossly exceed maximum size, no art, music and physical education specialists in elementary schools and massive layoffs.

We can avoid this nightmare. "This can be a new day for schools in Columbus," Rhonda said. "How do we make that happen? We need to continue to push our education agenda." Our FRs unanimously endorsed the levy, and they join Rhonda in asking you to:

- Join Teachers for Better Schools (TBS) our political action arm.
- Stay informed and aware of political changes in our community, state and country, and vote in the November election. Don't forget: When we stand together, we prevail. We've proven it. Remember Senate Bill 5?
- Promote Issue 50, which will raise more than \$76 million annually for CCS for operating costs, technology, new facilities, recruiting and retaining the best teachers and principals and replicating high performing schools.
- Support Issue 51, which will establish an independent auditor for CCS, providing a needed check and balance on the district.

With your help, we can achieve more: A-rated schools, honest administrators, teachers who stay in CCS, successful bargaining, technology for everyone and a healthier environment for kids.

Johnson asks us: "Do we let our worst fears define us, or do we make our best hopes distinguish us as the best urban school district in the country? You decide."



**CEA President
Rhonda Johnson**

CEA endorsements

CEA has finalized its slate of endorsed candidates and issues for the Nov. 5 election. Recommendations come from Teachers for Better Schools. TBS is a separate political action committee that advocates for the benefit of teachers and students in the political arena, screening candidates and endorsing levies, bond campaigns and other school issues.



The TBS process is respected by elected officials, and it is one way you have a voice. CEA does not use any dues money to promote individual candidates. Instead, CEA members can contribute by payroll deduction to TBS.

CEA endorses the following candidates and issues in the Nov. 5 General Election:

Columbus City School District

- Issue 50:** Proposed Bond Issue & Tax Levy
- Issue 51:** Proposed Independent Auditor

Franklin County Municipal Court Judges

- Scott VanDerKarr Kristen McKinley
- James E. Green Frank Macke

Columbus City Council

- A. Troy Miller Eileen Paley
- Priscilla Tyson

Columbus City Attorney

- Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr.

Columbus City Auditor

- Hugh J. Dorrian

Columbus Board of Education

- Michael Cole Dominic Parette

Columbus City Bond Issues*

- Issue 1:** Safety & Health—to renovate and improve safety infrastructure
- Issue 2:** Recreation & Parks—to renovate and improve recreation and parks infrastructure
- Issue 3:** Public Service—for improvements in infrastructure for the Dept. of Public Service
- Issue 4:** Public Utilities—to renovate and improve storm sewers, water service and electric service

*Passage of these issues will not raise taxes.

Upper Arlington City School District

- Issue 52:** Proposed Tax Levy—Additional



VOTE FOR 50 & 51

A New Day for Columbus Schools

Issue 50 & 51: Off and running

“Putting our schools on course for excellence and greatness: That’s our goal,” said Columbus Interim Supt. Dan Good to the community as we begin to promote Issues 50 and 51.

The levy kickoff rally, held Monday, Sept. 9, at the Barnett Recreation Center on the city’s east side, featured district parents, teachers and supporters, expressing hope for the future and a spirit of collaboration between business and the school district.

The levy, which will realize \$515 million over the next three years, will allow CCS to:

- ◆ Recruit, retain and empower the best teachers and principals
- ◆ Expand high-performing schools for every neighborhood
- ◆ Make sure all students graduate ready for the future
- ◆ Expand Pre-K for all students

Issue 51 will put in place an independent auditor to ensure accountability and to eliminate waste and fraud.

Alex Fischer, President of the Columbus Partnership, a group of 52 Columbus businesses, told the crowd: “I am sick and tired of hearing that our kids in Columbus can’t learn and our teachers can’t teach. We know that’s not right.”

Noel Williams, President of the Columbus NAACP, recalled the heyday of support for the city schools, between the 1950s and 1970s. “Well, now is the time for such support to rise again,” she said.

Bo Chilton, President of Impact Community Action, an anti-poverty agency, pointed out, “There is no greater pathway to success than the social mobility that comes from a good quality education.”

Mayor Michael Coleman, whose education commission united business, education and community leaders to support CCS, reminded us that, “Education politics is blaming somebody else for what is your responsibility. We blame the board, the teachers, the parents, the politicians. But we need to look in the mirror and blame ourselves for the failure of our kids.”

He reminded us that education means success in life: home ownership, neighborhood safety and employment; and he declared, “We are going to educate our children to break the cycle of poverty.”

Stay tuned for more information about the campaign, and visit the website at www.newcolumbuschools.com.

Register to vote

The General Election is Tuesday, Nov. 5. We need your vote. Even though we know most of our bargaining unit members are registered to vote, we still urge you to make sure you are registered to vote. Check that both your address and your last name are current. We don’t want you to find out at the last minute that you cannot vote.

The deadline to make sure you are properly registered is Monday, Oct. 7. Go to <http://bit.ly/register2013today> to obtain a voter registration form or to check or change your voter registration address online.



Mayor Coleman and CEA Member Traci Arway at the kickoff for Issues 50 & 51

Open enrollment begins Oct. 1

Open enrollment for CCS employee benefits is Oct. 1–Nov. 1 for benefit coverage beginning Jan. 1, 2014.

All employees will be enrolling online using Employee Self Service (ESS). In order to complete the enrollment process, make sure that you are able to log on to ESS prior to Oct. 1.

Employees will be required to provide documentation verifying dependent eligibility *only* if adding new dependents to their benefit coverage.

As in previous years, employees must meet with a benefit counselor to enroll or to re-enroll for benefit coverage during the open enrollment period.

All information regarding open enrollment, including *Your 2014 Employee Benefits Enrollment Guide*, can be found at www.ccsob.us/staff.aspx. Keep reading *The CEA Voice* for updates.

Join Team CEA in Making Strides



Get your team together for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk on Sunday, Oct. 27. The three-mile walk begins at 10 a.m. at COSI, 333 W. Broad St. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

When you register online, be sure to add Columbus Education Association as your company, so we get credit for the dollars you raise. Go to www.makingstrideswalk.org/columbus to register.

We want CEA to be the top fund-raising company this year. Our goal is \$20,000. The top three fundraisers will dine at the restaurant of their choice with CEA President Rhonda Johnson and Vice President Phil Hayes. If you have questions call Ezetta Murray at CEA (253-4731).

Special notes

- ❑ **Need legal services?** You have until **Thursday, Oct. 31**, to enroll (**Sept. 30 to pay through payroll deduction**) in the comprehensive plan for \$500. To download an enrollment form, go to http://bit.ly/LegalSvcApp2013_14. **Contact Cloppert, Latanick, Sauter and Washburn at 461-4455** if you have questions.
- ❑ The open enrollment period to join the sick leave bank **closes Monday, Sept. 30**. Go to <http://bit.ly/q1hbmd> to download the application form. Send your completed application to the CCS Treasurer’s office. You will be entitled to **borrow up to ten days** if you run out of your own sick leave. **You only have to join the sick leave bank one time.**
- ❑ Attend **Capital Day on Friday, Oct. 18**, at the **Columbus Convention Center**. Featured speakers will be **Debbie Silver**, a humorist and author of *Fall Down 7 Times and Get up 8: Teaching Kids to Succeed*; and **Adolph Brown**, a master teacher, anthropologist and clinical psychologist specializing in helping educators and students succeed. Members rave about this annual event, so mark your calendar.
- ❑ Our annual **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Dinner** will be **Thursday, Jan. 16**, at the **Hilton Columbus Downtown**. We are looking for new Minority Involvement Program (MIP) committee members to help plan the event. Call CEA at 253-4731 to volunteer.

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.

(614) 461-4455 • www.clopperlaw.com

