

The CEA Voice

School calendar is official

Ohio law now requires that boards of education hold public hearings prior to adopting the school calendar. At the May 6 meeting, the CCS board adopted the school calendar as voted on by CEA members. The first day of school for teachers for the 2014–2015 school year is Monday, Aug. 18. The last day for teachers is Friday, May 29. Here are others:

First semester

Begins	Aug. 18, 2014
Professional Meeting	Aug. 18, 2014
Professional Meeting	Aug. 19, 2014
Students Report	Aug. 20, 2014
Kindergarten Orientation	Aug. 20–22, 2014
Labor Day	Sept. 1, 2014
Capital Day	Oct. 17, 2014
Parent Conference Day	Nov. 26, 2014
Thanksgiving Holiday	Nov. 27, 2014
Thanksgiving Recess	Nov. 28, 2014
Schools Close ½ hour early	Dec. 19, 2014
Winter Recess	Sat., Dec. 20, 2014–Sun., Jan. 4, 2015
School Resumes	Jan. 5, 2015
First Semester Ends	Jan. 9, 2015

Second semester

Begins	Jan. 12, 2015
Martin Luther King Day	Jan. 19, 2015
Parent Conference Day	Feb. 16, 2015
Schools close ½ hour early	Apr. 2, 2015
Spring Recess	Fri., Apr. 3–Fri., Apr. 10, 2015
School Resumes	Apr. 13, 2015
Memorial Day	May 25, 2015
Last Student Attendance Day	May 28, 2015
Records Day	May 29, 2015
Second Semester Ends	May 29, 2015

OEA RA recap

More than 80 CEA members represented you at the Ohio Education Association Representative Assembly (RA) May 9–10. The OEA RA is the top governing body of our state association comprised of more than 1,000 delegates elected by local education associations.

Delegates were visited by Democratic gubernatorial candidate Ed Fitzgerald, who spoke truth to the education situation in Ohio. “If you want kids to drop out of school,” said Fitzgerald to the assembled delegates, “I’ll tell you what you do: You underfund the schools in the first place; you demoralize their teachers; you create high-stakes testing that half of them aren’t going to pass and then you take all



Ed Fitzgerald

of the fun and the passion and the joy out of learning.” “As teachers,” he added, “your role should be to nurture student talent, instead of testing it out of existence.”

At the RA, Fitzgerald revealed his six guiding principles of education in his campaign:

- ✦ Including educators in decisions regarding education policy formulation
- ✦ Focusing more on investing in education and less on testing
- ✦ Rejecting the “race-to-the-bottom” to privatize public education
- ✦ Ending the counterproductive and unhealthy obsession with high-stakes testing
- ✦ Supporting a curriculum that addresses the development of the whole child
- ✦ Investing in early childhood education by expanding universal Pre-K

“Remember,” said Fitzgerald, “we’re only one election away from changing the course of this state.”

The Friend of Education award was given to the political blog Plunderbund. This award was accepted by editor Joe Mismas and writer and CEA member Greg Mild. Mild urged teachers to trust their tools and first-hand knowledge of education to educate legislators.



Greg Mild

“Don’t be intimidated by a legislator’s position or title,” said Mild. “The fact is, we know more about education than the legislators. Use your tools to research legislative education topics and to communicate with your colleagues, friends and neighbors to defend our profession.”

RA delegates soundly approved several new business items, including:

- ✦ Garnering support for legislation to implement a three-year suspension on all high-stakes decisions tied to student standardized test results beginning with the 2014–2015 school year
- ✦ Organizing an information campaign to raise public awareness of failing for-profit charter schools in Ohio
- ✦ Encouraging local boards of education to adopt resolutions in support of preserving the “thorough and efficient” provision of Article VI, Section 2 of the Ohio Constitution and advocating for constitutional language that strengthens the fundamental right to high-quality educational opportunities for every Ohio student

Additionally, delegates and management staff contributed an all-time record of more than \$40,000 to the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education. The Capital District/CEA contributed more than \$9,000 to the fund.

Marking a landmark: Brown v. BOE

May 17 marked the 60th anniversary of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision ending officially imposed segregation in public schools. But there is still much work to be done.

The new U.S. Office for Civil Rights data spanning the 2011–2012 school year is the first universal data collection since 2000, and this information about all 97,000 schools in the nation contains startling statistics. For instance, black preschoolers make up 18 percent of children enrolled in preschool programs in public schools, but 48 percent of children suspended more than once. Black children are more likely to be pushed out of school before they've even made it to kindergarten.

Children's unequal chances in school go well beyond discipline. Black, Latino, American Indian, and Native Alaskan students have less access to experienced teachers than white students. Black students are more than four times as likely and Latino students are twice as likely as white students to attend schools where 80 percent or fewer teachers meet certification requirements.

There are also teacher salary disparities: Nearly one in four districts with two or more high schools reports a teacher salary gap of more than \$5,000 between high schools with the highest and the lowest Black and Latino student enrollments.

You can read more at: <http://www.childrendefense.org/newsroom/child-watch-columns/child-watch-documents/the-opportunity-gap.html#sthash.qIW9CAaN.dpuf>.

But we have made strides through organized labor. In 1904, John Robert Edward Lee, director of the Academic Department at Tuskegee Institute, called on teachers in Black schools to join him in creating a national organization—the National Association of Colored Teachers, later named the American Teachers Association. As early as 1926, NEA and ATA began working together on issues of educational equity; and four decades later, ATA and NEA charted a path towards unification to create an even greater organization—the modern National Education Association.

When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that racially separate schools "are inherently unequal," racial conflict rose throughout the nation. By 1956, many school districts were using desegregation as an excuse for firing Black teachers. A number of NEA/ATA affiliates merged: Kentucky and West Virginia, the District of Columbia, Oklahoma and Delaware. The Joint Committee distributed several tools to NEA and ATA members, including a kit on inter-group relations for teachers, as well as copies of *A Study of the Status of Education of Negroes*. The Committee also urged the integration of minority members into NEA programs.

Presidents of both organizations signed a historical merger agreement in 1966. Today we celebrate our unique and distinct legacies and the strength and richness our combined energies bring to bear on the evolution of public education and the profession of teaching.



Catastrophic leave always needed

Many teachers are retiring this year. One of the best gifts they can give to a colleague is a day of pay when they are off work for catastrophic reasons. The severance pay amount for the first 100 days is about \$100. For someone who is ill, one day of donated leave translates to \$200–400 in pay and keeps health benefits intact.

To donate a day, complete a sick leave form. In the description for type of leave, write "Catastrophic Leave." Have your administrator sign the form, and return it to the Catastrophic Leave Committee at CEC in care of Terri Ellis. Your representatives on the committee are Rick Logan, Ezetta Murray and Bev Carter. Carol Wagner, who recently passed away, was a dedicated member of this committee who had served since its inception.

Qualifying event? Change your coverage

If you recently married, adopted or borne a child, experienced a spousal job-change or other qualifying event, be sure to make changes to your insurance coverage.

Members have a 30-day eligibility period to add or drop dependents and make other eligible changes to coverage. This 30-day period is calendar days, not school days. So, if you experience a qualifying event during the summer break, be sure to notify the CCS Benefits Department in a timely manner.

CEA suggests that you hand carry the appropriate documents to CEC (270 E. State St.). Here is a list of qualifying events and required documentation:

Qualifying Event	Required documentation
Marriage	Marriage certificate
Divorce	Divorce decree
Legal Separation	Court documentation
The birth of a child or children	Birth certificate(s)
Adoption or placement for adoption of a child	Adoption award letter
Your child becomes ineligible for coverage	Complete the proper form to terminate dependent coverage (available from the Benefits Department)
A court issues a Qualified Medical Child Support Order (QMCSO) requiring the plan to provide medical coverage for your dependent child	Copy of support order
Loss-of-coverage (due to a change in your spouse's employment or your spouse's eligibility for benefits)	Loss-of-coverage letter from prior insurance provider or prior employer (on their letterhead)
Dependent child gains coverage from an employer	Letter of creditable coverage from an employer

Correction: The 6th Street Annex (School Social Workers) unit was omitted from the list of attendees at the May 1 CEA Legislative Assembly that was published in the May 12, 2014, edition of *The CEA Voice*. We apologize for this error.

Special notes

- ❑ Marisa Craig's retirement celebration will be held on Thursday, May 22, from 3–5:30 p.m. at Northgate Center.