

## IMPORTANT DATES

**Thursday, October 23:** Conference Day, K-8 ONLY

**Friday, October 24:** Conference Day, K-12

**Monday, November 3:** SHTA Happy Hour @ Los Habaneros, 4:15 PM

**Tuesday, November 4:** Election Day, No School for Teachers & Students

**Monday, November 10:** SHTA Reps. Council Meeting @ Boulevard, 4:15 PM

# SHTA *news*

## October 20, 2014

**ISSUE NO. 2**

## Message From the President

To say that teachers are overwhelmed and uninspired by the recent onslaught of testing mandates would be the understatement of the year. See this issue's editorials to read how this reality is affecting all of us. However, I am here to offer a glimmer of hope. That glimmer was inspired by an article I posted on the SHTA Facebook page last month that has yet to leave my side. The article in "The Atlantic" described what the author predicts as a backlash to the corporate reform movement and its most egregious manifestation, the over-reliance and glorification of testing. I recommend reading "The Coming Revolution in Public Education" at <http://m.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/04/the-coming-revolution-in-public-education/275163/>. It gives me hope that this onslaught will soon come to an end. I am also inspired by the work of our colleagues, our PTO, and our administration in pushing for a sensible timeline for the adoption of PARCC testing as well. The more voices that we can join together to stop this over-testing trend, the better.

On a personal note, I would say that in concept I have no issue with the Common Core or even with the PARCC Tests that are meant to measure student growth. I'll also go out on a limb and say that, to me, accountability is not anathema to education. However, in the frequent conversations I have about these issues with colleagues, family, and friends I have to state that the issue is not with the tool. The issue is with how that tool is used. In the present environment these tools of accountability are used as weapons to separate children from the subjects they are learning and teachers from the content they have been trained to teach. Until this element of the corporate reform movement changes, I will be among its staunchest opponents.

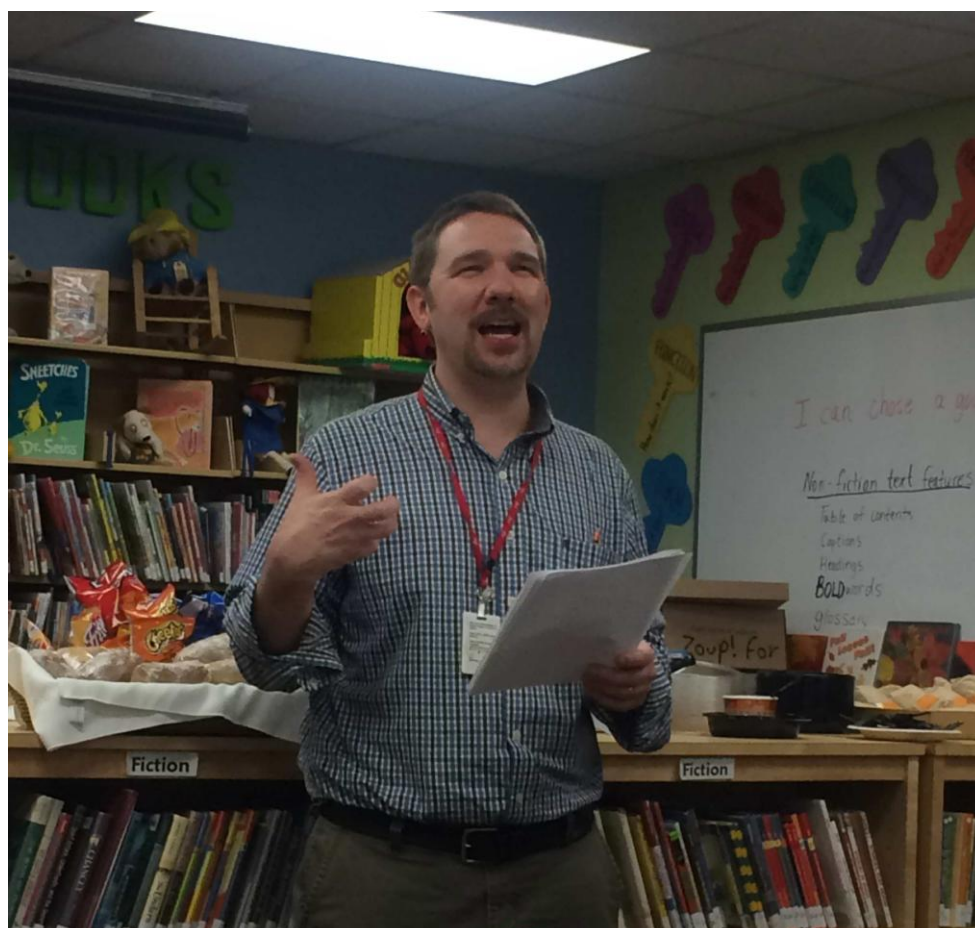
I know it's become my mantra, but the truth is "it's been a busy month." I attended the September School Board Meeting to hear from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services (FCMS) co-coordinator Mike Franzcak on Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB). I dealt with personnel issues as we transition from Personnel Director Lisa Scott to Personnel Director Rich Evans. I dealt with members' legal issues. I corresponded with Negotiations Team members to set up IBB training. I communicated with Dr. Marla Robinson concerning supplemental issues. I updated the SHTA Facebook Page. I helped clarify the Edviation misunderstanding concerning walk throughs and the video component. I attended the Innovative Center Opening with Bill Scanlon on September 29<sup>th</sup> and an Investments Presentation on October 8<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, on Monday October 13<sup>th</sup> you should have received the letter describing our decision to enter into Interest-Based Bargaining with the Administration with the guidance of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. All of us on the Negotiations Team believe this is an effort worth taking given the

respect for professionalism and high standards for education that both the SHTA and District Administration value. We also know that in the realm of public education it is somewhat of a contradiction to work so collaboratively to pass a levy and best educate our students and then have to change tactics and bargain inflexibly and separately as if both parties are adversaries. That is part of the inspiration for engaging in IBB. We have been assured that there is a “release hatch” for both parties that will allow us to return to traditional collective bargaining if necessary. However, I believe both parties are 100% committed to making negotiations work for our students, our district, Our Association, and its members.

As always, it is my honor to serve the members of the SHTA as President. It is also with the utmost dedication and diligence that I take on the role of Chief Negotiator in our negotiations process. I promise to represent you as the dedicated professionals that you all are. Please feel free to contact me at [morris\\_j@shaker.org](mailto:morris_j@shaker.org) or 295-6033 with any concerns.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
**John Morris**



**SHTA President John Morris speaks at the October Representatives meeting @ Fernway school.**

# Reports from the Executive Board

## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Happy fall! It is time again to apply for SHTA Fellowships. I hope that each of you has received an application from your building representatives. These awards are designed to promote professional development and can be used to attend workshops, for payment of dues to professional organizations (except the SHTA), journals or professional materials. The winners are selected via random drawing. Submission must be returned to me by November 3. Send entries to Matt Zucca, Fernway Elementary. Multiple entries will be disqualified and only members of the Association are eligible for participation. Forty recipients will be chosen and awarded \$100 each. Winners will be notified by school mail and their names published in the November newsletter. If you need an application contact your building representatives or contact me at #4692.

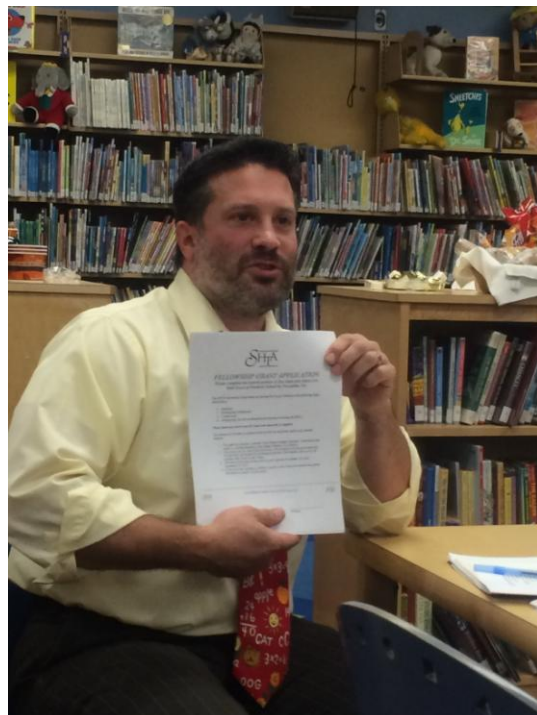
If you have not already done so I would like to encourage each of you to contribute to the PTO Council Annual Drive. I am excited to share with you the easy way to contribute to the PTO using [PayForIt.net](http://PayForIt.net). Members can use the link on the district's web page to make a credit card contribution. The Association has forged a close working relationship with PTO. The PTO annually sponsors teacher grants and participates in a number of teacher-sponsored events.

I am currently working with the *Night for The Red and White Committee*. The event is scheduled for Saturday, March 7, 2015 at 7:00 pm. The event will once again be held in the elegant Tudor Arms hotel in University Circle. It is a historic building offering stylish and sophisticated accommodations in the heart of Cleveland's East Side Cultural District. The hotel is lovely and sleek and if you would like to stay for the weekend the hotel is offering a special rate to Red and White attendees. Please consider both making a contribution to the Silent Auction and attending this event. The ticket price will be \$95 to staff.

Thank you for your continued support for your colleagues and the Association. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Matthew Zucca*

**SHTA Vice President Matt Zucca  
at the October Representatives  
meeting @ Fernway school.**



## TREASURER'S REPORT

This past month I met with the Negotiations team and the administration to begin formal negotiations. As you read in John Morris' letter we have gone through Interest-Based Bargaining training conducted by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. The negotiation process based on this training has begun.

On Tuesday, October 21<sup>st</sup> the Investments Committee (made up of myself, Matt Zucca, Chante Thomas-Taylor, and Todd Keitlen) will be meeting with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor, to discuss the Association's investments and make any necessary changes to our investment strategy.

As the paperwork element of our jobs has "exploded" (aptly described by a respected colleague), let's keep in mind what we are here for. We are here for the children of our schools. We are here to enrich their education and inspire their thinking. Let's hope everyone in the district, from the administrators to the custodians, keeps that in mind.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Scanlon*



**SHTA Treasurer Bill Scanlon  
explains our budget at the  
October Representatives meeting  
@ Fernway school.**



# EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

## PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT

In the past month, I have advised members about special education best practices, 504 plans, maternity leave, and procedures for collaborating with long-term substitutes. I have also attended an Interest-Based Bargaining training session and one Interest-Based Bargaining session with the Negotiations Team.

Please consider attending the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual pre-election day SHTA social at Los Habaneros on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. It's a great way to catch up with colleagues from across the district before Election day. We had an excellent turnout last year, and expect even more members to attend this time.

The rest of my report this month is dedicated to the upcoming election on November 4<sup>th</sup>. The Democratic challenger for Governor, Cuyahoga County Executive Ed Fitzgerald, trails in the polls by over twenty percentage points. His campaign has struggled to gain momentum and has had its share of missteps. However, the Democratic challenger for Secretary of State, State Senator Nina Turner, is closing in on incumbent Jon Husted. *The Plain Dealer* recently endorsed her.

[http://www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2014/10/nina\\_turner\\_for\\_ohio\\_secretary.html](http://www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2014/10/nina_turner_for_ohio_secretary.html)

Nina Turner is a friend of teachers, as she demonstrated when we fought back and overturned Senate Bill 5. Ed Fitzgerald is also a friend of teachers who supports the type of collective bargaining SHTA is participating in right now. Governor John Kasich is no friend of teachers. He signed Senate Bill 5, which took away our collective bargaining rights. He worked for Lehman Brothers during the financial crisis, which led to the decrease in our home values. He threatened to privatize STRS, which led to us paying more out of our pockets toward our retirement. He eliminated the estate tax, which led to the city of Shaker Heights increasing their income tax and taking more out of our paychecks. He cut the state and local government fund, which threatens the public services (needed by our students) across the state. He wants to eliminate the state income tax. He continues to give money to charter schools, while taking it away from traditional public schools. Remember to look at your wallet before you vote on November 4<sup>th</sup>. It's getting smaller. Ask yourself why.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Sears, chairperson*

SHTA sponsorship of the  
Shaker Heights High  
School Women's Crew.



## **PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

As Public Relations chairperson, I submitted adds in *The Shakerite* and *Shaker Life* Magazines. I am currently creating a new format for the winter *Shaker Life* issue that congratulates various scholarly achievements of Shaker Heights students. I am also creating a proposal regarding SHTA apparel. I have sought out a quote from a union print shop for Polo's and lanyards. I am also beginning the process of selecting this year's teacher appreciation gift. My long-term goal for Public Relations is to increase SHTA visibility in our schools and the greater community.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
**Bob Bognar, chairperson**

## **EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

As the fall settles in, administrative and peer evaluation cycles will begin. Many of you have already met with your evaluator to review your Annual Professional Growth Plan, have pre-observation conferences, and complete observations. Walkthroughs are also beginning across the district. In light of all of this, I'd like to take a moment to reestablish several agreed upon protocols for both teachers and evaluators.

The Evaluation Committee met in September. In addition to planning for further revisions of our Evaluation Rubric we will be making this year, we discussed the Annual Professional Growth Plans at length. We reviewed the purpose of this document, and then determined revised protocols that reflect the purpose. The Annual Professional Growth Plan (APGP) is a personal document for teachers to create goals in the areas of Teacher Performance (aligned with the rubric) and Student Achievement (with a data component). The goals teachers set for themselves and their students should reflect high expectations that the individual teacher believes are feasible, both in results and implementation. It is suggested that teachers consider the SMART goal framework when drafting their goals, although it is not required that goals be written in the SMART goal format. These goals should be shared with evaluators as part of the pre-observation conferences, although the control of the content rests with individual teachers. Furthermore, individual teachers should keep their plans in their own files. APGPs will no longer be put in personnel files. Administrators have been informed of these new protocols, and communications about APGPs with your evaluator should reflect them. Deviations from these agreed upon protocols should be communicated with your Head Building Representative or one of the Evaluation Committee members.

All teachers should have received a username and password for Edivation, the program the district will be using to track walkthrough data, communicate completed walkthroughs, and access Observation 360 videos. At this time, video suggestions will only be made by your evaluator. These suggestions will accompany the walkthrough communications. Teachers are urged to take advantage of this valuable professional development resource.

Student Growth Measures (SGM) continue to be of concern for all of us. A Student Learning Objective (SLO) team is being formed with members from various teaching levels to work on establishing SLO protocols. Many teachers continue to feel that the support for writing SLOs has been insufficient. There also continues to be concern about the alignment of SGM testing with Common Core State Standards Curriculum. As you may know, Student Growth Measures are not the focus of the Evaluation Committee. That being said, several members of the Committee and the Association continue to monitor how this portion of our evaluation is being addressed. Please continue to communicate concerns and questions with me as you have them!

*Respectfully submitted,*  
**Lena Paskewitz, chairperson**

## PAST PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In September, I attended both the Board of Education meeting and the meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee. I assisted with updating the membership information and with membership cards. And, I continued to work on migrating the SHTA website ([shtaweb.org](http://shtaweb.org)) from Cytanium as the hosting server to another server managed by Banshee Computer Consulting. The process has been a bit more complex than expected and it has taken time to coordinate the different user names, passwords, and IP addresses. I hope to have this completed in the next few weeks. Users of the website will not see any differences; however, the “behind-the-scenes” routing will link to a new server.

As I have said many times, I am glad to have this opportunity to provide support services to President John Morris, his leadership team, and the members of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Becky Thomas, chairperson*

## POLICY COMMITTEE

My responsibility as the Association's chair of policy is to deal with concerns surrounding our constitution and by-laws. Our constitution is separate from the contract with the district, and governs our operations and protocols of the Association.

**Article II** of our constitution states:

*The Association shall be governed by this Constitution, and by the By-Laws, Standing Rules and actions of the Representative Council and of the Executive Board consistent with this Constitution.*

Every member has access to our constitution, as well as our teaching contract and newsletter, online at [www.shtaweb.org](http://www.shtaweb.org).

*Respectfully submitted,  
Tim Kalan, Chairperson*

## SOCIAL COMMITTEE

We are looking forward to seeing you at our Annual Autumn Happy Hour!!! On Monday, November 3, we will be meeting at local Mexican restaurant, Los Habaneros (Van Aken Plaza) at 4:15 p.m. The next day is Election Day, with schools being closed. We will socialize, eat, and toast to another fabulous school year!

If you have any suggestions or comments please feel free to call my school extension (x6041) or email me ([brown\\_se@shaker.org](mailto:brown_se@shaker.org)).

*Respectfully submitted,  
Selena Brown, Chairperson*

## MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Payroll deduction for SHTA dues began with the October 1<sup>st</sup> paycheck - \$30 per pay for 10 pays. For those who paid by check, thank you for your payment. Or, if you have not yet done so, please submit your check for \$300 to your building representative. Membership cards will be distributed this week.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Stacy Elgart, chairperson*

## TEACHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Please remember that my role with the Association is not just to assist new teachers and their mentors. Please contact me with any questions you may have as you move towards a continuing contract within our district. I can be reached through the e-mail ([smith\\_st@shaker.org](mailto:smith_st@shaker.org)) or at Lomond (295-6385).

*Respectfully submitted,  
Steve Smith, chairperson*

## LEGAL AID COMMITTEE

The Legal Aid Committee received a formal request for aid. Our committee members met to discuss the request. This was addressed at the October Representative Council meeting. Details regarding any request from a member are private and confidential. The request was approved and affirmed by a vote at the October Representative Council meeting.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Chante Thomas-Taylor*

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Election Day is around the corner. Educating our students is the most important investment we can make in our future. This November, we need to elect leaders who will make public education a priority. The November 4th General Election will include candidates for U.S. Congress, Governor, and statewide offices, the Ohio House and Senate, County Executive, judicial seats, and issues. To avoid lines on Election Day, and to allow extra time to study the ballot, all registered voters may **Vote by Mail**. Vote by Mail ballot applications are available at the Board of Elections website: [www.443VOTE.com](http://www.443VOTE.com), by calling the Board of Elections at 216-443-VOTE (8683), and at all public libraries. The registration deadline was October 6<sup>th</sup>. It is important for all voters to be prepared to cast their ballots. Sample ballots are available on the Board of Elections website: [www.443vote.com](http://www.443vote.com).

**Election Day voting:** The Polls Open at 6:30 a.m. and Close at 7:30 p.m.

Bring proper identification when voting: a current and valid photo identification card, driver's license or state issued identification card. (Other forms of identification are acceptable as well.)

The Ohio Education Association has published an excellent Voter's guide. I recommend this resource for you to use to inform you of the issues and the candidates that are up for election this November. We need to elect lawmakers who will serve the best interest of our students. In 2014, we must vote for our students and for public education. This November, we must remember who stood with us in the fight against SB5, who opposed us, who supports public education, and who does not.

The Ohio Education Association 2014 Voter's Guide is available at: [www.ohea.org/](http://www.ohea.org/)

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Eileen Sweeney*



## **SALARY TENURE COMMITTEE**

The Negotiations Team (Dave Klapholz, Bill Scanlon, Mike Sears, Eileen Sweeney, Wendy Vaughn, Matt Zucca, and myself) met with District Administrators at the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services (FCMS) Center on Friday October 3<sup>rd</sup> for a 9-4:30 training session with Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services (FCMS) mediator and instructor Mike Franczak. We came to an agreement on Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB) as a means to negotiate our contract. I worked on joint letter from the district and the Association that came out on Monday, October 13th.

*Respectfully submitted,  
John Morris*



### **WANTED: SHTA PAC TREASURER**

**Seeking a politically minded Association dedicated person to oversee the duties of Treasurer.**

**DUTIES INCLUDE: Bi-Annual reporting to the B.O.E. & keeping abreast of state election laws. Time commitment is approximately a couple hours/month  
Interested? Contact Eileen Sweeney at:  
[pacshed@gmail.com](mailto:pacshed@gmail.com)**

### **WANTED: SHTA PAC MEMBERS**

**Seeking Association dedicated people to participate and represent the SHTA politically.**

**Committee members will develop political positions on issues impacting the SHTA and organize political actions. Time commitment is approximately a couple hours/month  
Interested? Contact Eileen Sweeney at:  
[pacshed@gmail.com](mailto:pacshed@gmail.com)**

# MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

**October 13, 2014, Fernway School**

**SHTA President, John Morris** started the October 13, 2014 Rep. Council Meeting at 4:30PM.

**Chris Hayward, Principal of Fernway Elementary School** welcomed SHTA membership to Fernway. He thanked the teachers of Shaker Heights for such a great start and especially the Fernway staff for being so flexible. Tour Your Schools Day was okay at Fernway. They welcomed about 15 families. The parents had very nice compliments about the district and staff members.

**MINUTES** from the September 08, 2014 Rep. Council meeting were approved by William Scanlon and seconded by Chante Thomas-Taylor.

## **Administration Report**

**Dr. Hutchings** was present for the Representative Council Meeting

- He expressed that he was very excited about using the Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB) for the upcoming negotiations. We are working as partners and collaborating together.
- A letter was sent to the state and senators about the assessments that students are taking. Dr. Hutchings received a letter from a senator. She wants to make sure that the state stays on the forefront.
- Dr. Hutchings has been visiting schools and he wants to make sure that everyone knows that a lot of weight is not being put on assessments as it relates to the evaluation process. The assessments are important and we have to go through formalities, following the rules in order to maintain state funding.
- Please remember that OTEs is a professional learning tool. It allows teachers to grow, create dialogue about curriculum and instruction and it ensures that every child receives an expert teacher.
- An administrative audit of district mandated testing will be on going this year.

**P.T.O. Report** – Mr. Isaacs was present to give the P.T.O. report.

- The P.T.O. is organizing parents to begin letter writing concerning all of the assessments that students are required to take. They would like to have any input for the letters because of the concern about testing.
- The P.T.O. would like to create a Parent Staffed Center of some sort to help parents understand resources that are available to them.
- Please make donations to the P.T.O. Any donation is greatly appreciated. You can make donations to the P.T.O. directly on [payforit.net](http://payforit.net)

## **Officer's Report**

**President, John Morris**

- Attended the September 2014 School Board Meeting.
- Dealt with personnel issues.
- Dealt with legal issues for 2 members.
- Talked with Marla Robinson about supplemental contract issues.
- Updated the SHTA *Facebook* page.
- Dealt with issues regarding the Walkthrough videos. Not being filmed.
- Attended the Innovative Center opening on September 29, 2014 with William Scanlon.
- Attended Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB) training on September 23 from 9:00-4:30.
- Sent members a letter explaining Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB). Please be sure to read it. Information will be jointly distributed regarding negotiations from John Morris and Superintendent.

### **Vice President, Matt Zucca**

- Appreciates the message from the superintendent about not a lot of emphasis is being placed on the assessments. It is just frustrating that we are losing time with our students because of all of the assessments.
- Attended kick-off meeting for the *Night for the Red and White*. The foundation encourages staff to participate in some way with the *Night for the Red and White*.
- Attended Interest-Based Bargaining training.
- Discussion with Bernice Stokes and Dale Whittington regarding testing and testing schedules.
- Attended the P.T.O. council meeting. Encouraging members to support the P.T.O. council. You can make donations on the website using [payforit.net](http://payforit.net).
- Information regarding the new fellowship grants will be coming out this week. The deadline for submission of grant applications is November 03<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Secretary, Darlene Garrison**

- Shared thank you notes from Rebecca Thomas, Aisha Fraser-Mason, Tim Kalan and Steve Smith.
- Please be sure to sign the attendance sheet.

### **Treasurer, Bill Scanlon**

- Had meeting with Edward Jones advisor to look over books to see if there are changes to be made.
- Will be attending Finance and Investment meeting this month.
- Treasurer reports will be given out during Representatives Council meetings, every other month.

## **Executive Board Reports**

### **Past President, Becky Thomas**

- Thanked SHTA for the fruit she received after her surgical procedure.
- Attended the September Finance and Audit meeting.
- Attended the September Board of Education Meeting.
- Working on SHTA website with consultant.
- Worked with Stacy Elgart on membership cards.

### **Teacher Education, Steve Smith**

- Sent letter to new teachers.

### **Membership/Elections, Stacy Elgart**

- Passed out updated membership lists and cards to head building reps.

### **Policy, Tim Kalan**

- Attended OTES committee meeting.
- Worked on amending bylaws to add Evaluation Committee to the Executive Board.

### **Public Relations, Bob Bognar**

- Not present, John Morris gave report.
- Working on placing SHTA ads in the Shaker Life Magazine, the Shakerite and the high school yearbook.

### **Legislative, Eileen Sweeney**

- Participated in the Interest-Based Bargaining training.
- Monitoring any changes to the laws.

- Concerned about the amount of testing taking place.

### **Publications, Andrew Glasier**

- Wednesday at midnight all submissions are due for the newsletter.

### **Social, Selena Brown**

- SHTA Happy Hour will be on Monday, November 03<sup>rd</sup> at Los Habaneros. No school on Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, Election Day. Passed out flyers to head building representatives to place throughout buildings.

### **Legal Aid, Chante Thomas-Taylor**

- Formal request made for legal aid. Details are confidential and personal.

### **Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Mike Sears**

- Report will be submitted in the October Newsletter.

### **Evaluation, Lena Paskewitz**

- Please remember that Annual Professional Growth Plans are personal documents. You are to create your own personal goals that you can reach. It is a working document so it can be changed throughout the school year.
- Your growth plan is housed with you, not in a personnel file. Make sure that your goals are measurable. Consider using the SMART format for writing goals but you don't have to.

## **Building Representative Reports**

### **Boulevard, Jennifer Goulden – No Report**

### **Fernway, Annie Haney**

- Teachers are concerned with the new math curriculum *enVisions* because there was no training. Teachers are teaching with fidelity and lining up with MAP and there are concerns.
- Regarding the testing situation, there were 18 different times that the librarian had to go to the classroom of students. It has been about one month that the computers in the library have been used for assessments.
- Kindergarten students are taking the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and there are 168 points of measurement. This is quite a bit on top of all the other assessments. Teachers are feeling frustrated that they are not getting release time to upload the scores.
- Special Education Teachers are concerned with SLOs and no guidance but being held accountable with the same expectations.

### **Lomond, Donita Townsend**

- Lack of substitutes, even with the new system.
- First grade teachers being trained to launch the Daily 5 in October.
- Attended *enVision* training in October.
- Asked to provide math coaches with questions for them to create a 1<sup>st</sup> trimester assessment when *enVision* already has one.
- Math coach cycles run two weeks and require a meeting, observation, debrief, co-planning, co-teaching/modeling, and another debrief—when are all these supposed to occur???
- Blocked out of certain IB resources on the internet that we had access to in previous years.

### **Mercer, Lisa Hardiman – No Report**

### **Onaway Paula Klausner**



- Supplemental Contract issues were ironed out quickly.
- IT representatives, everything in district goes to the kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade protocol. Teachers are hesitant to bring attention to it.

### **Woodbury, Amy Santos**

- Things have improved dealing with personnel issues.
- Still dealing with technology issues, IT, who's dropping the ball??

### **Middle School, Paul Repasy**

While last time, it was reported that the massive building rearrangement that occurred over the summer had many overall positive effects for our eight teaching teams, it has raised some problems and concerns for our non-team departments, world languages and cycle. These concerns break down as follows:

- The rearrangement involved three teaching spaces that needed to be heavily modified: Rooms 38, 316, and 326. Room 38, in particular, is a new world language room. While we have been monitoring the progress of these rooms from the start of the school year, teachers are reporting that certain items, such as white boards and bulletin boards are still missing from the rooms. Though it has been reported in the Principal's Notes that the remaining SmartBoards are scheduled for installation soon, my intention is to schedule a time with Mr. Glasner, and possibly Ms. Hunter who has been involved in the room rearrangement process from the beginning, and tour those spaces and discuss some of these remaining needs.
- Related to this issue is the speed at which computers log on and off during the 8 – 3 school day. This has become an issue, for departments like world languages that travel between different rooms throughout the day. It is taking a considerable amount of time logging off the teacher from the previous period and then logging on the new teacher for the upcoming period, especially in Room 38, where a multitude of teachers are scheduled in and out all day long. While this is not a new issue, and possibly not an issue unique to just our building, it is our intention to follow up with administration and the tech department to see if there is a way teachers can access materials more quickly that would otherwise require them to be logged on to their profile to do so.
- Cycle teachers whose classes consist of exclusively computer-based curriculum have endured the brunt of mandatory student testing since being largely computer-based this year. Many teachers have been displaced from their rooms for several days on end, significantly hampering their ability to teach their regular curriculum. This is also related to the room rearrangement that occurred over the summer, and the district's decision to keep open hard-wired computer labs that were originally slated to become classroom spaces, and their decision to not attempt to teach cycle classes and complete district testing on laptops using the Wi-Fi, a decision that was probably the correct one to make at the time, but not without unintended consequences. We have met specifically with the administration regarding this issue, and they have assured us that they are exploring several measures to minimize this problem in the future, and we will continue to keep this dialogue open as each additional round of testing occurs in the building.
- There is a significant lack of substitute teachers in our building. The new privatized substitute system does not seem to have solved this issue in our building. While it is true that teachers voluntarily cover classes for compensation, and know that they are well within their rights to refuse those coverages, my concern is that teachers have been asked to take coverages on a fairly regular basis, and more so the effect it would have on the building if they began refusing coverages because of needing the time to prepare for class and instruction.
- Finally, I would be remiss to end such a lengthy building report without saying, in all sincerity and honesty, that our new building administration has created a complete "open-door" policy in terms of

meeting with myself and any building reps as needed to discuss and brainstorm the issues reported above. We, as reps, will continue to work with our administration to seek resolutions to any problems that arise in our building.

### **High School, James Schmidt through Brian Berger**

- Security guards are issuing detentions using their handheld devices that students are not serving because the ESD monitor is not aware that they have been issued. There is still some concern as to how this information will be disseminated to the ESD monitor, but until it is, students that get a detention from a security guard for behavior in the hallway are not tracked and do not show up to their ESD.
- Several members had an issue with the fact that we had four different schedules last week, including an assembly, our Tuesday Schedule, our advisory schedule and the regular schedule. Principal Mike Griffith says that every effort to minimize classroom instruction time while still providing unique learning opportunities (listening to the House Jacks) for students will be made.
- Met to discuss an ongoing issue with two teachers who have not been receiving pay for additional duties. Read your contract before you sign it and make sure that you have everything in writing before you agree to it.
- We have an enormous issue with how substitutes are being handled due to the new system. We have many periods left open due to a lack of subs in the building. Security cannot be used to cover the class because a “certificated person” must be in the room with students. (According to Mike Griffith, this could be as little as a PAL license.) Classroom teachers, in many cases arranged by the department chairperson, are serving as the substitute which takes away our planning time. In some cases, PE classes are being combined and one teacher is covering two classes worth of students. In some very rare cases, classes have been left unattended. Mike Griffith has asked for two full time building substitutes to help deal with this problem but the Central Administration has not responded to his request.
- We have no In-School-Suspension person, which is exacerbating the problem with the ESD skippers and is caused by the other issue that all students have a certificated person in the room for supervision.

### **Old Business - None**

### **New Business**

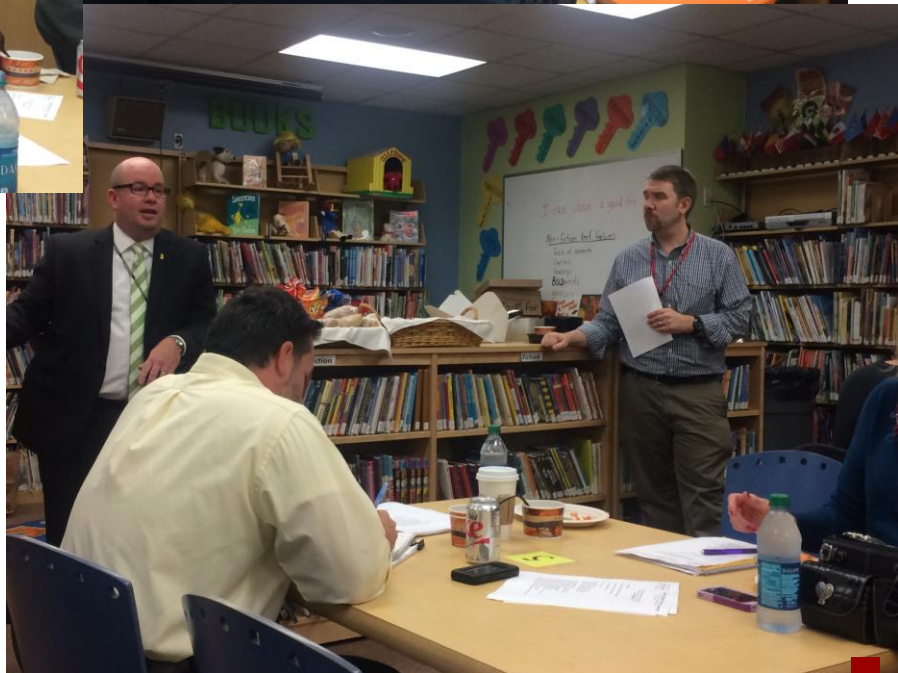
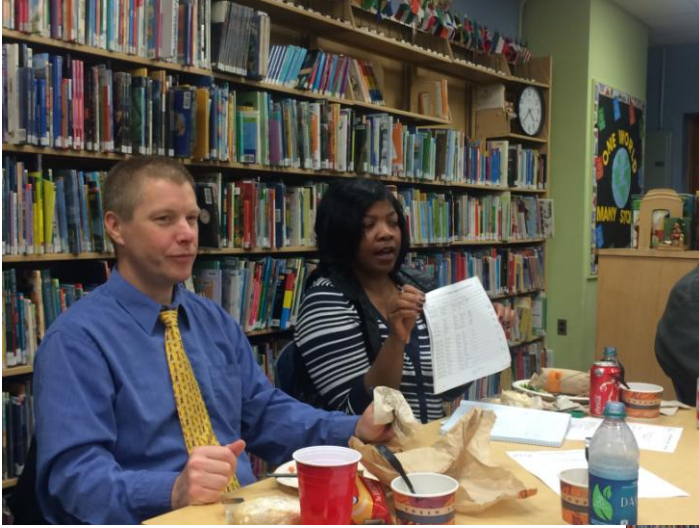
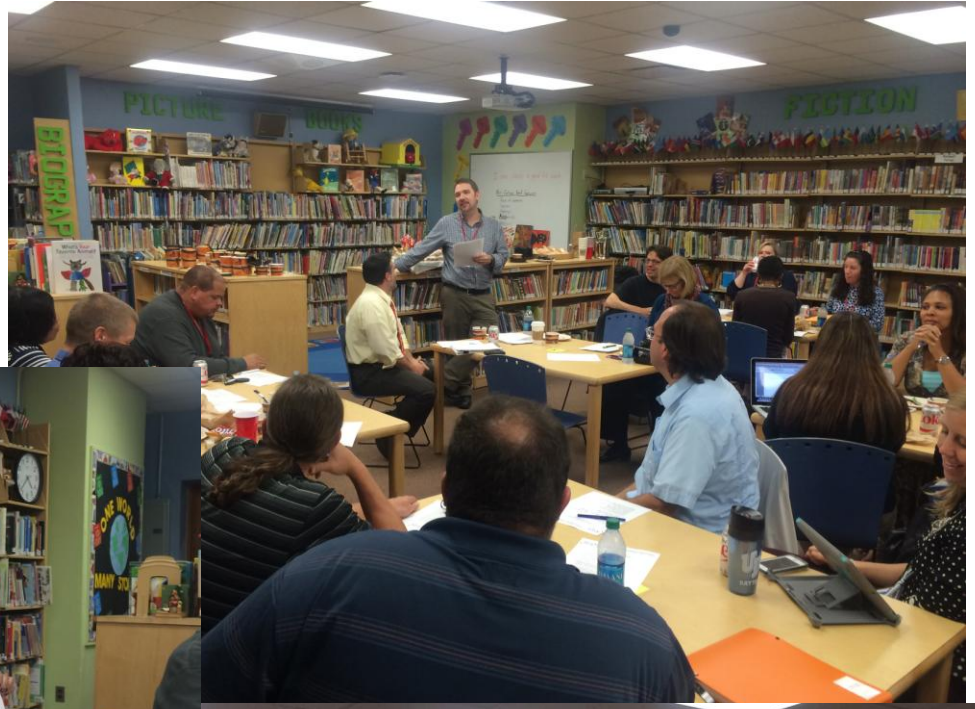
- Paul Repasy made a motion to approve \$5000 for legal aid and Lena Paskewitz seconded the motion. Member’s name and need for legal aid is confidential and cannot be discussed.
- John Morris made a motion to call a vote. Motion passes and member gets legal aid.

### **Good of the Order – None**

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Andrew Glasier, seconded by Tod Torrence.

Meeting adjourned at 6:08PM

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Darlene Garrison, Secretary*



**SHTA October Representatives Council Meeting @ Fernway school. Special thanks to Fernway Representative Annie Haney for hosting the meeting.**



## *My Nightmare*

*This newsletter is a publication of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association, an independent organization of professional educators in the Shaker Heights City School District. Signed editorials represent the opinion of the author(s) and may or may not reflect the thinking of other officers or members of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. Members and friends of the Association are invited and encouraged to express their opinions or share information via this newsletter.*

I had a nightmare about school recently, so vivid and frightening, I woke up crying. I didn't forget my lesson plan or teach my class in my underwear. Instead, I dreamed that the school had invested in essay-grading software, and it was woefully inadequate for giving meaningful feedback to improve student writing. I had to sit back and watch as poor pedagogy, a lack of respect for my expertise and professionalism, and a dedication to "reform" using technology and all things shiny and new destroyed what I love about my job. It was frightening because it's all too close to reality.

Let us take a moment to examine the mad math of misguided reform and the increasing attacks on public education. This year, my 9<sup>th</sup> graders will spend more than twelve hours in required testing, of which only their final exams have any connection to their actual classes. Those are hours that could have been spent on instruction. Our tenth graders got locked in a room last week for eight hours for a test that matters not a whit to anyone; we didn't even let them leave for lunch for fear they'd refuse to return (and who could blame them?). Kindergarteners have spent weeks testing at the start of their first year of school. The message? School is a place where you sit in front of a computer, click buttons, and always try to find the "right" answer. So much for play, or wonder, or curiosity, or experimentation.

We're told that class size doesn't matter – that a "good" teacher can teach 50 as well as 20. Well, there's math for that too. I teach a writing class, where the best, most impactful instruction occurs

one-on-one (and really, isn't that true for all of us?). In my dream world, the class would have 15 students, letting me have a whopping three minutes per day with each of them, long enough to peruse their current piece and offer some real feedback. In real life, I'm happy with 22, leaving me two minutes and fifteen seconds. The class sometimes has 28, for one minute and forty-five seconds. Imagine 35? One minute and twenty-four seconds. And 50? One minute per student per day. We're told that relationships are the most important factor for student learning. Who among us can cultivate relationships in one minute per day?

This story repeats across the state and country of course. In Reynoldsburg, teachers turned down a pay raise to strike, because what they really want are better conditions – for them and their students. They know what we know: money can't buy time, for neither our students nor our families.

We're bombarded with new initiatives, which mostly aim to fix what no one seems to think is really broken. How many hours have we spent on MYP planners and "I can" statements and unpacking and realigning and SLOing? Sure, checking the boxes to mark which standards will be covered in a lesson might only take 10 minutes a day, but that's 10 minutes not planning, grading, meeting with students or calling parents. And you know what? The lesson was aligned all along, with or without the boxes checked.

The hoops we jump through keep multiplying, and they're all there only to "prove" what we already know: we're doing a good job. Not that anyone would realize it to listen to the meetings we have to sit through. Let's teach English teachers how to read the verbs in the standards. Let's make sure the teachers know how to write a test question. Let's not trust their professional judgment or content expertise; we have to measure instead to see if kids are learning, even if the measurement tools and systems are asinine.

We keep getting told that we "have" to do these things. There are building scans and state report cards and Race to the Top and IB. I was ashamed and embarrassed to pass out my SLO test this year, apologizing to the students for taking four days of their life this year to spend on a test that is, in my opinion, developmentally inappropriate and which has no bearing on their grade, no connection to our class, and as far as I am concerned,



no validity. Our esteemed superintendent visited the school recently, and said, wouldn't it be nice if we could use teacher-created tests that aligned with the class? We tried; they were thrown out, and a mandated test was handed down from on high. I can't opt not to give this SLO because it would impact my teacher quality rating. He also said that we couldn't really encourage parents to opt out of the state-mandated tests, because those zeros would impact our state rating.

You know what I say?

Let them.

I care more about my students than I do my OTES rating. I care more about my students than our state report card. Like those in Reynoldsburg, I care more about my students than I do my paycheck.

I humbly ask politicians and the state and our administration: get out of our way. Just let me teach.

**Valerie Doersen**  
**English Teacher, SHHS**

- Valerie Doersen

**Opportunity Costs: the benefits you could have received by taking an alternative action.**

My Class schedule from Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> to Friday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

**Wednesday:** give students Student Learning Objectives Pre-Test. No curriculum taught.

**Thursday:** Rosh Hashanah. No school

**Friday:** Regular schedule. Taught curriculum.

**Monday:** Regular schedule. Taught curriculum

**Tuesday:** TBT schedule: Classes shortened to 40 minutes from 50 minutes. Aspire test. 1/3 of 10<sup>th</sup> graders given computerized testing all day.

**Wednesday:** Aspire test. 1/3 of 10<sup>th</sup> graders given computerized testing all day.

**Thursday:** Aspire test. 1/3 of 10<sup>th</sup> graders given computerized testing all day.

**Friday:** PSAT testing. Classes shortened to 30 minutes from 50 minutes.

**Monday:** Regular schedule. Taught curriculum

**Tuesday:** TBT schedule: Classes shortened to 40 minutes from 50 minutes.

**Wednesday:** Assembly schedule: Classes shortened to 40 minutes from 50 minutes

**Thursday:** Advisory schedule: Classes shortened to 40 minutes from 50 minutes

**Friday:** Regular schedule. Taught curriculum

160 minutes of class instruction lost in the past two weeks (excluding the holiday).

50% of my evaluation is still based on students' testing on Government content standards.

What are the opportunity costs to this schedule?

**AG**



The SHTA is on



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## Los Habaneros

# Authentic Mexican Restaurant!

20255 Van Aken Blvd.

Monday, November 3, 2014

4:15 p.m.

