

IMPORTANT DATES

Monday, November 24: BOE Work Session

Wednesday November 26 to Friday November 28: Thanksgiving Recess (No classes K-12)

No SHTA Executive Board or Representative Council Meetings scheduled for December.

Tuesday, December 9: BOE Meeting, 6 PM, @ SHHS Small Auditorium.

December 22 to January 3, 2015: Winter Recess

January 5, 2015: SHTA Executive Board Meeting @ Fernway.

January 12, 2015: SHTA Representatives Meeting @ Mercer.

SHTA news

November 17, 2014

ISSUE NO. 3

Message From the President

Let me tell you about my daughter, Sophia. To say that I adore her would be an understatement. She is my mini-soul mate. If you can imagine a small version of me with two missing front teeth, long blond hair, and a penchant for wearing tutus, you are getting close to imagining Sophia. Unlike Sam, my son (who would rather climb a tree than sit in a chair), Sophia has always indicated readiness for school. From the age of two she played school with her friends. From the age of three she began writing letters and drawing, and Sophia has always loved being read to. This year as Sophia began kindergarten at Boulevard we knew she would have a wonderful experience with an outstanding teacher, which she did, until tests such as the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and MAP began to take place. Suddenly Sophia became less happy as she got off of the bus and less excited about school in the morning. She described having to sit in front of the computer, unable to ask for the teacher's help. The words that broke my heart were, "my teacher can't help me." This from a five year old at a world-class elementary school with a teacher I admire and respect. But I know it's not the school or the teacher's fault. It's our country's obsession with testing that has brought a 63-indicator assessment and computerized testing to the life and experience of my precious 5-year old child and the precious children of this district, and it has to stop.

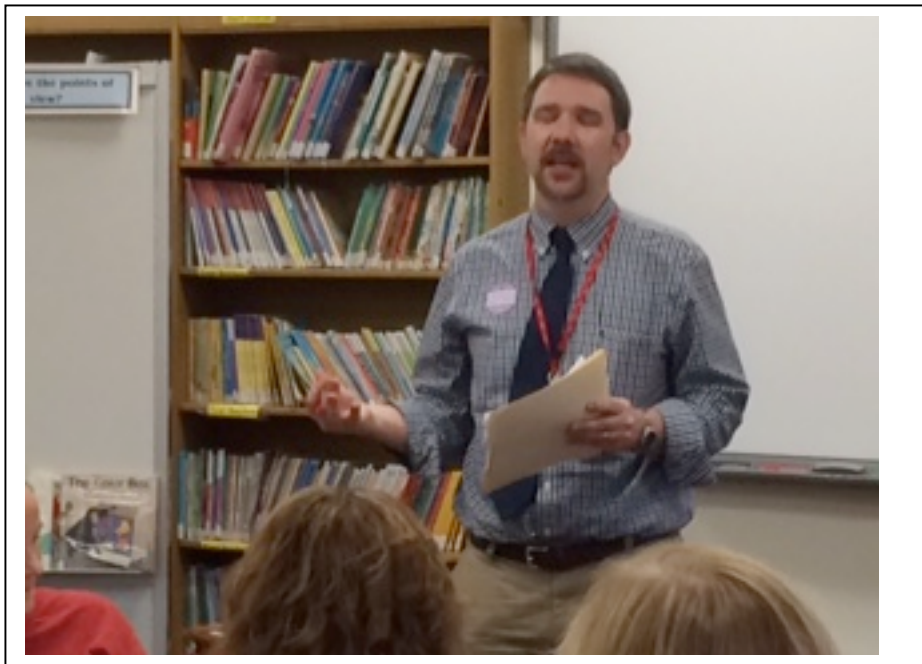
This is why I would like to commend the PTO, Shaker Teachers and Parents, and Community Members who have put their time and effort into Test Mania, the new group in Shaker that is standing up to take action against this unrelenting testing. They are writing state and federal officials, communicating strategies, and sharing news on how we can push back against this devastating national trend. I encourage you to join them on Facebook, and while you are at it, like "Shaker Heights Teachers' Association" and join "Cuyahoga County Educators' Summit." Liking and joining these groups on social media is not the antidote to the onslaught of testing mandates that seem to appear every day. However, these pages provide resources, news, events, and communication outlets that give individuals the opportunities to make a difference. I encourage you to take a few minutes to join these groups online today.

October has been a hectic month. I worked on Negotiations. I discussed English Curriculum concerns with Dr. Robinson. I worked on legal issues with Susannah Muskovitz. I addressed report card concerns with Dr. Stokes and Dr. Robinson. I consulted Dr. Hutchings on curriculum issues. I corresponded with Dr. Herbruck on Professional Day schedules. I met with the leadership team for the Cuyahoga County Educators' Union Summit. I updated the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association Facebook page. I attended our successful SHTA Happy Hour on Monday, November 3rd. I worked on Calendar Committee assignments. I clarified resident educator expectations with Steve Smith and Rich Evans. I worked on copier issues at the high school which were successfully resolved with the assistance Steve Wilkins. Finally, I met with K-4 Physical Education teachers with Dr. Robinson on

Strategic Plan alignment questions.

Executive Board and Representative Council will not meet in the month of December, so it is my pleasure to wish you all Happy Holidays! Please take this time to re-connect with family and loved ones and reflect on the year that has passed and the year that is to come. We have a lot of work to do as an Association, but we are fortunate to have such a strong organization with such dedicated professionals. It is still a continual honor for me to be President of the SHTA. It is a foundational part of my identity as an educator, my role as a community member, and reminds me as a parent that we have an educational organization in Shaker Heights that will never stop fighting for what is best for our students, our teachers and our community. Happy Holidays and I look forward to working with you in 2015!

*Respectfully submitted,
John Morris*



SHTA President John Morris speaks at the November Representatives meeting @ Boulevard school.

The SHTA is on



us @

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Shaker-Heights-Teachers-Association>

Reports from the Executive Board

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would like to acknowledge the recipients of the 2014- 2015 Fellowship Grants. These members have earned \$100 that they can use to promote their professional development. These fellowships may be used for any of the following, but not exclusively for:

- Workshops
- Seminars
- Professional conferences
- Course work
- Membership fees for professional associations excluding the SHTA
- *These fellowships may not be used for classroom materials, supplies, or special projects.*

The awards are intended to professionally benefit the recipients, and in turn, benefit students.

1. The applicant must be a member of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association and expect to continue teaching in the Shaker Heights City Schools.
2. The money may be used at the discretion of the recipient with the provision that the activities will benefit the professional growth of the teacher, and in turn, the students with which she/he works.
3. The entire fellowship money must be used within ten months, between November 2014 and September 30, 2015.
4. In the event the recipient is unable to use the award within the ten- month period prescribed no money will be issued.

I would like to remind you of the support the Association's members have historically given to our PTO. I ask that you consider making a contribution to the annual campaign if you have not done so already. The PTO Council has partnered with the Association on many projects over the years. The Council is also responsible for the creation and distribution of the very useful school calendar. Please send these contributions through school mail to the Administration Building to The PTO Council Treasurer or by using PayForIt.net.

I have also been working with the Shaker Schools Foundation as the Teacher Liaison for the *Night for the Red and White*. I would like to encourage each of you to make a donation to this year's Silent Auction. The items donated by Shaker staff have been the most sought after of all the auction offerings. Remember, the proceeds go back to our students. Please make your donation by **January 15, 2015**.

Again, this year, the staff will be offered a special discounted price of \$95 per ticket for up to two tickets. You will receive an invitation in your district mailbox in January with information on purchasing your ticket/s.

As a member of the Calendar Committee, I have attended the meetings to plan the next few years of school. This will be an ongoing process that will balance the needs of students, parents, and teachers.

I am also working with the negotiation team as we work on obtaining a new contract. I am extremely pleased with our team and the professionalism and thoroughness of their work. The team is extremely knowledgeable about what is best for our staff, our students, and our district. I look forward to obtaining a contract that we all will be happy with.

I attended the November 3rd SHTA social event. It was very nice to see so many members enjoying each other's companionship. I want to thank Selena Brown for putting together a wonderful social event for the Association. It was very well attended and a good time was had by all.

I wish you all a happy, safe, and restful Thanksgiving!

*Respectfully submitted,
Matthew J. Zucca*

Fellows of the SHTA: 2014-2015

Melissa	Becerra	Boulevard	Aquita	Shephard	Woodbury
Alison	Bradford	Boulevard	Chante	Thomas-Taylor	Woodbury
Stacey	Krantz	Boulevard	Mario	Clopton	Middle School
Ellen	Battle	Fernway	Debra	Quarles	Middle School
Tanutda	Devine	Lomond	Ellen	Roberts	Middle School
Lisa	Hardiman	Mercer	Linda	Roth	Middle School
Karen	Tritt	Mercer	Amanda	Ahrens	High School
Sally	Davros	Onaway	Brian	Berger	High School
Sanya	Godbold-Bell	Onaway	Laura	Daberko	High School
Tim	Kalan	Onaway	Valerie	Doersen	High School
Paula	Klausner	Onaway	Amy	Fogerty	High School
Susanne	Peterjohn	Onaway	Aimee	Grey	High School
Katie	Porta	Onaway	Susan	Isler	High School
Laura	Robbins	Onaway	David	Klapholz	High School
Noreen	Smyth-Morrow	Onaway	Cathy	Lawlor	High School
Penny	Weiss-Flynn	Onaway	Molly	Miles	High School
Sara	Yurman	Onaway	John	Moore	High School
Tom	Deep	Woodbury	Sagar	Patel	High School
Ruth	Heide	Woodbury	Bill	Scanlon	High School
Sherri	Jarvie	Woodbury	Windy	Shiner	High School

*Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Zucca*



**SHTA Vice
President Matt
Zucca at the
November
Representatives
meeting @
Boulevard school.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

I have been busy working through the Interest-Based Bargaining process as a part of the negotiations team. We are working hard for the sake of every teacher in the district to come to an agreement that will benefit everyone.

I traveled out to Aurora in October to meet with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor. The Investments Committee, made up of myself, Todd Keitlen, Chante Thomas-Taylor, and Matt Zucca discussed our Edward Jones funds.

I traveled downtown to meet with our accountants at Edward Hawkins & Co., LLC to finish the filings for our tax forms and to discuss the compilation they are completing of our 2013-2014 fiscal year. I received the final Audit report of our 2012-2013 financial statements. Our accounting practices passed the test and were declared proper. I have the complete report if anyone is interested in examining it.

I also met with an Investment Advisor with Key Bank to purchase some Investment Trusts.

The current financial report is attached.

*Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon*



SHTA Treasurer Bill Scanlon explains our budget at the November Representatives meeting @ Boulevard school.

July 2013 - Nov 2014

INCOME

Member Dues 33,810.00
Total Income 33,810.00
Investments
Change in Value for Key Investm -7,133.17
Change in Value in Edward Jones 3,360.48
Edward Jones Investment Income 5,005.65
Interest-Savings, Short-term CD 3.96
Key Bank Investment Income 226.75
Total Investments 1,463.67
Total Income 35,273.67
Expense
Operations
Accounting 7,385.00
Conferences & Meetings 840.06
Executive Board 446.27
Fellowships & Grants 775.00
Insurance 5,116.00
Legal 3,095.00
Negotiations 2,973.18
Officers' Expenses 1,802.53
Public Relations 1,396.00
Social 286.00
Total Operations 24,115.04
Total Expense 24,115.04
Net Income 11,158.63

November 2013-2014

ASSETS

Current Assets
Checking/Savings
Key Bank (checking) 28,254.11
Key Bank Investments -44.37
Key Investments² 84,985.92
Total Checking/Savings 113,195.66
Other Current Assets
Edward Jones 13760-1-1 448,257.63
Edward Jones 13768-1-3 564,500.97
Total Other Current Assets 1,012,758.60
Total Current Assets 1,125,954.26
TOTAL ASSETS 1,125,954.26
LIABILITIES & EQUITY
Equity
Opening Balance Equity -64.00
Retained Earnings 1,114,859.63
Net Income 11,158.63
Total Equity 1,125,954.26
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 1,125,954.26

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT

During the past month, I attended the SHTA Happy Hour at Los Habaneros, helped members with maternity leave, met with the negotiations team, and considered a few potential grievances with the committee. One of the issues I worked on involved the responsibilities of a member when they are out on an extended leave. The contract does not include any language about the role of the long-term substitute and there is no clear protocol for how to transition from a teacher to a substitute and back again after the leave. These situations have been handled on an individual basis with guidance from the teacher and the building principal. In some cases, the school district administration has paid for the substitute to work alongside the teacher during transition periods. I am interested in hearing from members who have experiences (either positive or negative) with extended leave. I will work with the personnel department to see if we can establish consistent guidelines so that everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities before, during, and after an extended leave.

I am also interested in hearing from members about the school calendar. Many members have expressed concerns to me about the amount of instructional time being lost with this year's calendar. Quarters at the middle school are typically 9 weeks long with at least forty days of instruction. The first quarter this year included only thirty-five days of instruction (the equivalent of 7 weeks). Days were lost to testing, professional days, conference days, orientation, and field trips. We are in the middle of a six-week stretch with only two full weeks of school. With student achievement tests early in the spring, some local school districts are starting school earlier in August in order to have more instructional days before the tests. The calendar committee is currently meeting about the 2015-16 school year schedule. Please contact John Morris, Matt Zucca, or myself with your suggestions and/or concerns related to this issue.

***Respectfully submitted,
Mike Sears, chairperson***

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Public Relations Committee has submitted a new advertisement for *Shaker Life Magazine* and sent along the contract to *Shaker Life* for the remainder of the year. We are still waiting for the price quote for the SHTA polo shirts. I am in the process designing a new advertisement for the Shaker Heights High School yearbook.

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

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Evaluation Committee met on November 12 to continue work to revise and clarify the Evaluation Rubric, as well as to discuss concerns that have been brought to the attention of committee members. As a reminder, this committee is a collaborative team consisting of teachers, building principals, and central administration staff whose overarching goal is to create an evaluation system that focuses on professional growth *and* meets mandates established by the Ohio Department of Education. This is an ongoing, arduous process due to the complexity of the task. Thank you to all who have brought your concerns, questions, and suggestions to committee members! Your input is integral to the process.

One of the concerns many of you have is about the new walkthrough format. Over the summer, the committee revised the walkthrough template for clarity and now includes examples that are better aligned to the rubric. This template also replaced the old “building scan” template formerly used by administrators to gather data about teaching practices observed in classrooms. The other major change is that the administrative walkthroughs, whether done by your evaluator or another administrator, now has teachers’ names attached and feedback is given to teachers through the Edivation 360 Program. This change was an administrative decision, which was met with a great deal of dialogue during committee meetings. We were assured that the information gathered during *informal* walkthroughs (not to be confused with formal walkthroughs) would not be used for evaluative purposes. While this assurance was passed on to you, many of you continue to have concerns about this aspect of the walkthrough process. We brought your concern to the committee and discussed it at length. The following points outline the response from administration on this issue:

- Attaching names to the walkthroughs provides opportunities to give feedback to teachers after each classroom visit. Last year, many teachers asked for feedback about what was observed in their classroom by Dr. Hutchings and other visiting administrators, as well as their building administrators. This feedback is not as readily available when teacher names are not present.
- Classroom visits are one of the responsibilities of building principals and part of their evaluations. The new format allows for more specific data about how and where principals are meeting this responsibility.
- Individual teacher walkthrough data is only accessible to the teacher and the person who completed the walkthrough. Evaluators cannot look at walkthrough data collected by other administrators.
- Administration is working towards more consistency in this process. Visits to schools across the district and other “norming” procedures are being used to help establish a shared understanding amongst administrators about how to use the walkthrough template effectively. Part of this work includes training administrators to record what is actually observed in classrooms without making assumptions or drawing conclusions about a teacher’s practice.
- Lastly, the administrative team again assured us, and all of you, that they are committed to the process as agreed upon. Only formal walkthroughs will be used to inform evaluations. Informal walkthroughs will be used to give generative feedback and gather data about trends in classroom practice observed across the district.

Please inform me, or any member of the committee, about any further questions or concerns you have about this issue.

I would also like to draw your attention to the revised rating system outlined by ODE in September. The Student Growth Measure portion and the Teacher Performance portion of evaluations will be given a numbered score. These two scores will be added and divided by two to determine the final score and rating. The other revision is that the SGM portion now has five categories rather than three. Teachers who earned an Accomplished rating last year will need to have a SGM rating in the top two tiers in order to do an informal evaluation next year. All teachers who earned a Skilled rating will have a formal evaluation next year, regardless of their SGM. Click the following link to read more information on the ODE website.

http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Evaluation-System/Ohio-s-Teacher-Evaluation-System/OTES_600-point-formula_09-17-14.pdf.aspx

This information will also be included on the Teacher Evaluation page on the Shaker.org website.

*Respectfully submitted,
Lena Paskewitz, chairperson*

PAST PRESIDENTS COMMITTEE

In October, I attended the regular meetings of the Board of Education and the Finance and Audit Committee. Due to another commitment, I did not attend the November meeting of the Board of Education; however, President John Morris did have another SHTA representative there. I continue to work on the SHTA website. I prepared a financial report for the Negotiating Team based on information from the Five-Year Forecast.

Since there will not be a December Newsletter, I want to take this opportunity to wish all of you a relaxing and safe holiday season. Working in public education is especially stressful with OTES and all of the testing mandates. Spending time with family and friends helps balance all of the pressures. You all have my best wishes for the holidays and New Year.

*Respectfully submitted,
Becky Thomas, chairperson*

POLICY COMMITTEE

This month we focus on **ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**, section B. By-Laws:

Any amendment to the By-Laws may be initiated by the Executive Board, the Representative Council, or by petition signed by at least twenty current members of the Association. Such proposed amendment must be filed in writing with the Secretary, and the Secretary must submit said amendment to all members of the Association within fifteen school days. No amendment shall be voted upon less than fifteen days after its submission to the members by the Secretary. The Representative Council shall designate whether the proposed amendment shall be voted upon at a meeting of the Association or at separate meetings of the several building groups, and it shall designate the time of voting upon said amendment.

With the passage of time come new obstacles that call for our Association's adaptability and creativity. In the coming months we will review aspects of our constitution in order to update them to better meet our new challenges

*Respectfully submitted,
Tim Kalan, Chairperson*

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

I am pleased to say that we had a very successful Autumn Happy Hour at Los Habaneros on Monday, November 3rd. More than 60 members attended this festive event! I would like to thank everyone who attended. We were fortunate to be able to give out lots of door prizes to thank people for coming, including four \$25 gift certificates to Los Habaneros, to the winners of our trivia contest. If you have any suggestions or comments please feel free to call my school extension (x6041) or email me (brown_se@shaker.org). Stay tuned for our next social event!

*Respectfully submitted,
Selena Brown, Chairperson*

MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Our Association has a total of **404** members. Here is the breakdown by building:

<u>Building</u>	<u>Members</u>
Boulevard	24
Fernway	24
Lomond	34
Mercer	29
Onaway	29
Woodbury	63
Middle School	71
High School	130

*Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Elgart, chairperson*

TEACHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Here are some important dates to keep in mind:

- Salary Reclassification – Coursework must be completed by the **November and April Board Meetings**. Requests must be submitted in time for the November and April meeting.
- Tuition Reimbursement Fund – Deadline for applications is **December 1st**.

Please remember that my role with the Association is not just to assist new teachers and their mentors. I am also available to any **non-tenured teacher** who may have any questions or concerns. I can be reached through the district e-mail (smith_st@shaker.org) or by phone at Lomond (295-6385).

*Respectfully submitted,
Steve Smith, chairperson*

LEGAL AID COMMITTEE

A member asked for an extension to the previously approved legal aid. This was discussed in new business and approved by Representative Council.

*Respectfully submitted,
Chante Thomas-Taylor*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

In the Ohio Senate:

Senate Democratic Leader Joe Schiavoni (D-Boardman) and Rep. Ron Gerberry (D-Austintown) recently introduced companion legislation to reduce school building costs for local school districts and taxpayers. The legislation would require the state to pay set percentages of school construction costs while decreasing the cost of local school improvement levies by 12.5 percent for local property taxpayers— changes the lawmakers say will increase the fairness of school construction funding.

Specifically, the bill would cap local matching funds at 75 percent of total school improvement costs through the Classroom Facilities Assistance Program (CFAP) and set a fifty-fifty cost share between the state and local districts for construction under the Exceptional Needs Program (ENP), a funding model that prioritizes single building replacement based on student health and safety. The current funding system is based on an assessed property valuation per student.

The bill would also reduce the increased cost of local levies for some schools by reinstating the 12.5 percent state cost sharing for local school improvement levies that was eliminated in the last state budget.

State Senator Eric H. Kearney (D-Cincinnati) introduced legislation to lengthen the academic year for public and non-public chartered schools to 220 days. Ohio's current academic calendar requires 182 days of instruction or the equivalent number of hours (1,001) for grades 7-12.

Senator Kearney's legislation also increases the number of instruction hours for students attending kindergarten and elementary school. Specifically, the bill would do the following:

- Expand academic year for grades 7-12 by an additional 38 days or 209 hours.
- Increase calendar for grades 1-6 and all-day kindergarten by 190 hours.
- Lengthen regular half-day kindergarten by 95 hours.

In the Ohio House of Representatives:

State Rep. Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) introduced legislation to institute a three-year suspension of high-stakes decisions based on student test scores in measuring student growth and evaluating teacher performance. In June, the legislature voted to suspend high-stakes decisions based on test scores for the 2014-2015 school year, but schools say one year does not provide enough time for a successful transition.

The House Rules and Reference Committee voted to move a bill to replace the Common Core State Standards out of committee and up for a full house vote. The bill would replace Common Core standards with proven superior standards, and would prevent the State Board of Education from assessing student achievement based on Common Core, with the goal of restoring to teachers and classrooms a clear set of guidelines and criteria. House Bill 597 also works to protect the confidentiality of student data and returns control back to local Ohioans and their schools. House Bill 597 will now be considered for a full House vote.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eileen Sweeney

SALARY TENURE COMMITTEE

Negotiations using the IBB framework are continuing satisfactorily.

Respectfully submitted,
John Morris

The SHTA is on   us @ <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Shaker-Heights-Teachers-Association>

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

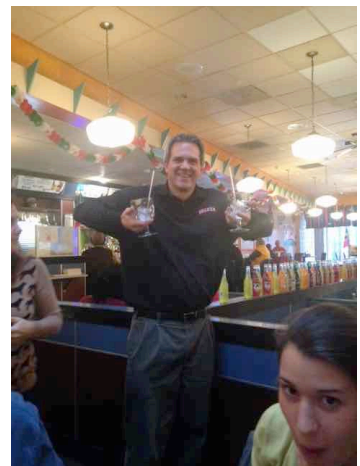
WANTED: SHTA PAC TREASURER

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

SHTA Happy Hour at Los Habeneros, November 3rd. Fun was had by all!



MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

November 10, 2014, Boulevard School

SHTA President, John Morris started the November 10th Rep. Council Meeting at 4:30PM.

Colleen Longo, Principal of Boulevard Elementary School welcomed SHTA membership to Boulevard. She mentioned that we are all off to a great start and she was happy to host our SHTA Rep. Council meeting.

MINUTES from the October 13, 2014 Rep. Council meeting – There was a motion to amend the minutes from the October 13th meeting made by Tim Kalan. Steve Smith seconded the motion. The motion to amend the minutes was passed by the majority of the membership.

Amended notes from Onaway/Lomond Building Reports to the October 13th minutes:

Discussions with building level IT-teachers concerning improvements to our problematic protocols; i.e.- IT-teachers cannot add printers, change bulbs, perform basic tasks, etc., without sending a Helpdesk request. The entire district's requests then bottleneck with only a handful of Helpdesk personnel able to all service calls.

There have also been discussions concerning a perennial issue at the K-4 level, but particularly in the early grades of kindergarten and first grade, where unidentified, or semi-identified students with moderate to severe behavior problems are unstaffed, or staffed but protocols are insufficient to deal with the disruptions and incidents. There appears to be an ad hoc approach to dealing with these issues, and often teachers struggle to optimize learning time and establish positive routines during the first few months of the school year. This is in addition to injuries occasionally suffered by teachers (or students) dealing with these students. Perhaps there is a way the district could create a system (or explicitly outline their current one) that would provide better direction in these circumstances.

Administration Report

Dr. Robinson was present for the Rep. Council Meeting

- She expressed that our district is fortunate to have a P.T.O. that works so hard to push the issue of students having to take so many assessments. She did state that teachers should be mindful of comments made about testing. You don't want your comments taken out of context.
- Dr. Hutchings is at a conference in Columbus and was not able to attend the meeting tonight.
- MYP applications are in and the district received a "Yes" on everything except one issue with assessment. We will work on that. Expecting our IB MYP visit in late spring.
- Dr. Robinson talked about College Credit Plus – children can take college courses. The district is mandated to offer and pay for these courses. This will start next school year with a push for secondary students. College Credit Plus can be a positive program.
- The State Superintendent will be at Shaker Heights High School on Thursday, November 13th. He chose our High School to announce the state AP scores.
- November 11th is the District Health Fair. Please stop by from 11-1.
- Central office is aware of the substitute issues and they are working on it. They are doing all they can to find substitute teachers.

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

- The P.T.O. has organized a group of volunteers willing to write letters about all the assessments students are mandated to take. Over 200 letters have been written.
- The P.T.O. has created a Facebook Page titled [Test Mania](#). Over 500 people have signed up for this page. Check it out.
- We have great contacts with other districts. The more voices we have the greater the impact.

Officer's Report

President, John Morris

- Had a discussion concerning the English Curriculum with Dr. Robinson.
- Discussed Report Card issues with Dr. Robinson and Dr. Stokes.
- Talked with Dr. Herbruck concerning Professional Day schedules.
- Met with Cuyahoga County Educators' Union Summit on November 6th.
- Updated the SHTA Facebook page with CCES legislation information.
- Attended the Happy Hour on November 03rd at Los Habaneros.
- Worked with Calendar Committee Assignments.
- Working with K-4 Strategic Plan alignment.
- Talked about copier concerns in the district with Steve Wilkins.
- Worked on legal issues with Susannah Muskovitz.
- Attended IBB meetings for negotiations.
- Consulted with Dr. Hutchings on curriculum issues.
- Clarified resident educator expectations with Steve Smith and Rich Evans.

Vice President, Matt Zucca

- Attended IBB meetings for negotiations.
- Attended the Happy Hour on November 3rd and announced the 2014-2015 Fellowship Grant winners. The official list of winners will be in the newsletter.
- Worked on legal issues with Susannah Muskovitz.
- Worked with the Calendar Committee.
- Worked with Dr. Stokes on Report Card issues. Progress Book was opened on October 13 and then it was closed. Math indicators were changed.

Secretary, Darlene Garrison

- Attended the Happy Hour at Los Habaneros..
- If you have extended reports please email the reports to be included in the notes. The reports are needed before Wednesday at midnight.

Treasurer, Bill Scanlon

- Passed out latest financial report.
- Attended IBB meetings for negotiations.
- Attended Happy Hour at Los Habaneros on November 03rd.
- Attended many meetings this past month.
- Met with accountant to square away last year's balances.
- W-9 forms must be filled out to get paid for meetings. Please fill out and return today.

Executive Board Reports

Past President, Becky Thomas

- Attended the October Board Meeting and October Finance & Audit Meeting.
- Worked on SHTA website.
- ***District is planning a facility assessment possibly for a bond issue to fix repairs to our school buildings. Please voice your concerns with building issues for a bond issue.***

Teacher Education, Steve Smith

- Worked with a member about Resident Educator. If you have any Resident Educator questions, please see Steve Smith.

Membership/Elections, Stacy Elgart

- Passed out updated membership lists. Currently, there are 404 SHTA members.

Policy, Tim Kalan

- Dealt with minor building issues.
- Attended Happy Hour at Los Habaneros on November 03rd.

Public Relations, Bob Bognar

- Worked on new ad for Shaker Life Magazine.
- Completed new contract with Shaker Life Magazine.
- More information about SHTA Polo shirts coming soon.

Legislative, Eileen Sweeney

- Spoke of current legislation in both the Ohio House and Senate. See Legislative Committee blurb for details.

Publications, Andrew Glasier

- Wednesday at midnight all submissions are due for the newsletter.
- The Shaker Heights High School's Faculty Senate & Aimee Grey's letter to their state representatives will be used for the editorial in the newsletter.

Social, Selena Brown

- Thank you for attending a very successful Autumn Happy Hour on Monday, November 3rd at Los Habaneros. Four \$25 gift cards were awarded to members who won the trivia games.

Legal Aid, Chante Thomas-Taylor

- Attended an Investment Meeting with Bill Scanlon and Todd Keitlen
- Attended the Happy Hour at Los Habaneros on November 3rd.
- Received a request for legal aid, will follow-up during New Business.

Salary Tenure, John Morris

- Negotiations using the IBB framework are continuing satisfactorily.

Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Mike Sears

- A question was brought up... Upon returning from Maternity Leave, what responsibilities does a member have? Is there transition time that a member and their substitute teacher will have once they return to school?
- There is nothing in the contract that states the answers to these questions. It has been done on a case-by-case basis.
- A survey will be created to ask members about maternity leave and their transition period.
- Attended Happy Hour at Los Habaneros on November 3rd.
- Attended IBB meetings concerning negotiations.

Evaluation, Lena Paskewitz

- Attended meetings to work on rubrics.
- Dealt with evaluation issues via email.
- Evaluation meeting this Wednesday. Any concerns dealing with evaluations, please email members on the evaluation committee.
- On November 17, ODE will share a new numbering system for the final rating score on OTES evaluations. It will be available on the ODE website and I will attach a link in the newsletter.

Building Representative Reports

Boulevard, Jennifer Goulden

- Substitute Problem:
 - 10/17
 - No PM Library sub (3 teachers affected)
 - No Music sub all day (2 teachers affected)
 - No PE sub all day (6 teachers affected)
 - 10/21
 - No sub for 3rd grade teacher (KRP teacher subbed)
 - No sub for 1st grade teacher (ELL teacher subbed)
 - 10/28
 - No sub all day for absent Specials teacher (5 teachers affected)
 - 10/30
 - No sub all day for absent Specials teacher (3 teachers affected)
 - 11/5
 - No sub all day for absent Specials teacher (1 teacher affected)
 - 11/6
 - No Music sub all day (3 teachers affected)
 - No Art sub all day (5 teachers affected)
 - 11/7
 - No Music sub all day (2 teachers affected)
 - No Art sub all day (1 teacher affected)

IN SUMMARY:

1. 31 missed specials between 10/17 and 11/7 (13 school days), which translates into 31 missed planning periods for teachers.
2. 1 day where ELL and KRP classes did not occur because those teachers were pulled to sub in regular ed. classrooms
3. IB Common Planning Time (CPT) being impacted as CPT is planned around Specials. If there are no Specials, then teachers are unable to meet.
4. At the Elementary level, this means that teachers remain in the room with their students. Compensation is provided to teachers who miss out on their planning periods but teachers want their planning periods, not the money.

- Internet outages: Teachers unable to teach lessons as planned. Never know when it's going to go down. enVision online so many teachers can't access lessons.

Fernway, Annie Haney

- Technology concerns and frustrations. Very difficult to teach with such unreliable technology.

Lomond, Donita Townsend

- Complaints about Internet outages.
- Problems with ProgressBook opening and closing, there were teachers who were affected by this issue.
- Lomond students participated in an Artist-in-Residence project featuring Sarah Costic, which produced 'snowflake' mandalas that will be part of a display outside of the Eton Collection this holiday season. The inspiration for the display was to bring awareness to Autism, and the project will be unveiled on November 23rd.

Mercer, Lisa Hardiman

- Question concerning calendar committee and evening conferences. Will we be having evening conferences this year? It was discussed but evening conferences are not in the contract yet. Cannot happen until it is in the contract.
- On the calendar, there are two consecutive days designated for conference in spring, is this correct? It will be looked into.

Onaway, Jim Sweeney

- A teacher missed their scheduled art time (no substitute), but was told because they also had Mandarin that day, they could not be compensated for that lost planning time. Is mandarin considered a special on par with PE, Art, Music, Library, etc...? Mandarin is only 30 minutes, and takes place in the teacher's room, which is problematic if that is considered the primary 'planning time'. If it is, does this mean teachers should be compensated for time when a Mandarin teacher is absent?
- On a related subject, substitutes (or lack thereof) continue to be a problem in the building. On these all-too-frequent days, there is a mad scramble in the front office to shuffle staff and provide teachers with their planning periods. Positions are often creatively filled by pulling our reading skills tutor or other certified staff from regular duties. Consequently, students who are at risk of failing reading (the so-called Reading Guarantee kids) will not receive their intensive reading instruction. Many of our tried & true substitutes, including our own Shaker Teacher Emeritus have to:
 1. Attend a 3-hour, \$50 training program.
 2. Provide references. (I don't recall if these were letters of reference, but keep in mind she was once employed in this district.)
 3. Provide college transcripts.Hopefully there is a way we can mitigate this issue moving forward.
- Technology issues, emails not coming through.
- On conference days, the Internet was down and parents were completely shocked.

Woodbury, Lee Appel

- Issues with substitute teachers or lack of substitute teachers.
- Still dealing with technology issues.

Middle School, Paul Repasy

- No Report

High School, James Schmidt

- The lack of substitutes is still an issue. We have requests daily asking for spot coverage.
- I have had several teachers bring the issue of a teacher's name being attached to an informal walkthrough. Our understanding of the process was that these were to be anonymous. There is a concern that this is no longer the case.
- We have an ongoing issue with evaluation that has come up for a third time. Evidence presented at the Post-Conference is being ignored and not included in evaluation summaries.
- We still have no ISS person. This is causing serious problems with how disciplinary issues are being handled because administrators are reluctant to give OSS to students

Old Business

- None

New Business

- Paul Repasy made a motion to approve up to \$5000 for legal aid. Same situation from October's legal aid motion. Members name and nature of the situation cannot be disclosed. It is confidential. Lena Paskewitz seconded the motion. The Legal Aid Committee has met and discussed the issue for legal aid.
- Has the money already provided for this situation been used? Yes, it has.
- Is there ever a limit to how much a member can receive? No, there is no limit.
- Motion was then moved to a vote and it was approved.

Good of the Order

- We are desperately in need of a PAC chairperson for just one year. If there is a member who would be interested in filling this position, it would be greatly appreciated.
- Thank you Boulevard for hosting our November Representatives Council meeting.
- Again, thank you Selena Brown for such a well planned Autumn Happy Hour.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Bill Scanlon, seconded by Bob Bognar.

Meeting adjourned at 6:01PM

*Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison*





SHTA October Representatives Council Meeting @ Boulevard school. Special thanks to Boulevard Representative Jennifer Goulden for hosting the meeting.

Letters to Our State Representatives

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.

Honorable Mary Rose Oakar
Rep Barbara Boyd
Sen Shirley Smith
Sen Peggy Lehner

Rep Gerald Stebelton
Governor John Kasich
Dr. Richard Ross

As professional educators, we are firmly committed to our school district's mission to nurture, educate, and graduate students who are civic-minded and prepared to make ethical decisions; who are confident, competent communicators, skillful in problem solving, capable of creative thinking; who have a career motivation and a knowledge of our global and multicultural society. In order to achieve our goals, we recognize that we must not only build meaningful relationships with our students but also develop and implement rigorous and focused curriculum that challenges students to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for them to obtain these learning goals.

However, this powerful education takes time. We need class time to provide instruction, to scaffold learning experiences, to engage our students in the process, to offer feedback so they can learn from mistakes, and to challenge them to grow. We also recognize the need to assess our students to ensure that they are, indeed, acquiring the tools they need. In partnership with the Common Core State Standards, we are dedicated to authentic and meaningful forms of assessment in which students demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

For these reasons, we are writing to voice our concerns about the current testing schedule for students in our high school. First, having end-of-course assessments begin as early as March cuts into the amount of time that students have to actually acquire the skills and knowledge they need to perform well on the tests. Second, the sheer length of many of them is not only overwhelming but once again, eliminates time that can be spent actually teaching and learning. Our students will spend large portions of their days testing rather than learning. Third, with so much time being allocated to testing, teachers have already begun eliminating units and novels and activities from their syllabi for the simple reason that we are losing so many days of instruction to testing.

Quite simply, it is contradictory to assume that students will be able to meet the increased expectations that are driving the new assessments when one of the consequences of the testing is significantly reduced contact time in the classroom. For these reasons, we feel that the current design of the tests is not in the best interests of our students.

On behalf of our entire faculty, one that cares deeply about the growth and development of our students, we hope that you will reconsider the length and timing of the assessments so that we can all be sure that what we are doing actually serves the children with whom we are working.

Sincerely,

***Shaker Heights High School Faculty Senate
Shaker Heights High School Department Chairs***

Honorable Mary Rose Oakar
Rep Barbara Boyd
Sen Shirley Smith
Sen Peggy Lehner

Rep Gerald Stebelton
Governor John Kasich
Dr. Richard Ross

I am a professional educator in my 15th year of teaching and I am writing to you today to voice my concerns about the current testing schedule for students in our high school. Let me begin by sharing with you the specific lessons that I, personally, have had to cut due to testing of my sophomore English students in the first quarter of our school year:

1) I had to cancel an end-of-unit, whole-class sharing of individual written reflections, during which students would have shared with each other about the amazing, specific discoveries they made about their own family histories during a class field trip to the Western Reserve Historical Society. They also had reflected on the connections they had made between these discoveries, their Summer Reading novel, *Kindred* by Octavia E. Butler, and the foundational documents studied in U.S. History during our "Roots" unit. This lesson would have been a great opportunity to build community in our classroom and to inspire metacognition about the learning objectives of the unit. Here is the specific Common Core standard that was *not* addressed that day:

(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.)

2) I had to cancel a whole-class discussion on a section of a memoir we just read titled *The Glass Castle*, by Jeannette Walls. This work was specifically chosen to address Common Core demands for more nonfiction in the English Language Arts curriculum. To quote the Introduction to the Common Core Standards: "Fulfilling the Standards for 6-12 ELA requires much greater attention to a specific category of informational text—literary nonfiction—than has been traditional."

3) I had to cancel a writing activity within the same unit that asked students to practice argumentation by integrating both text support and the addressing of counterclaims, another task specified by Common Core learning standards. Here is the exact learning standard, which I have yet to find a way to wiggle in elsewhere: (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.B Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.)

4) I had to postpone by several weeks a lesson on effectively integrating quotations and using internal citations in research, which resulted in a noticeably weaker product for my students' first quarter research product. Due to this postponement, my students missed out on my instruction that would have helped them tackle this Common Core standard: (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.)

Powerful education takes time. I need class time to provide instruction, to scaffold learning experiences, to engage my students in the process, to offer feedback so they can learn from mistakes, and to challenge them to grow. I also recognize the need to assess my students to ensure that they are, indeed, acquiring the tools they need. In partnership with the Common Core State Standards, I am dedicated to authentic and meaningful forms of assessment in which students demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

Quite simply, it is contradictory to assume that students will be able to meet the increased expectations that are driving the new assessments when one of the consequences of the testing is significantly reduced contact time in the classroom. For these reasons, I feel that the current design of the tests is not in the best interests of my students.

I care deeply about the growth and development of my students, and hope that you will reconsider the length and timing of the assessments. Let's be sure that what we are doing actually serves the children with whom we are working.

Sincerely,

Aimee L. Grey
English teacher
Shaker Heights High School

