

## IMPORTANT DATES

**Monday, October 7: SHTA Executive Board Meeting**

**Wednesday, October 9: Yom Kippur (schools are closed)**

**Thursday, October 10: B.O.E meeting**

**Monday, October 14: SHTA Representative Council Meeting @ Woodbury School**

# SHTA *news*

September 16, 2019

**ISSUE NO. 1**

## Message From The President

We have no choice but to be hopeful. It's why so many of us have chosen this profession. We are teachers because we believe in the power of education and we have hope for the generations of young people we educate. That hope is sometimes challenged by years like the last one. From a devastating fire, to the painful loss of a beloved colleague, a lengthy contract arbitration, and a challenge to our rights to due process, last year was the most difficult of my twenty-two years in the district and by far the most challenging my past eight years as SHTA President.

I believe we have reason to hope again this year. Dr. David Glasner is a superintendent who has become a student of this district, educating himself on the schools and community over the last five years as a jack-of-all-trades who has successfully transitioned into the Superintendency. Dr. Marla Robinson's move to Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum makes sense. Dr. Erin Herbruck is a welcome addition to upper administration as Director of Elementary Curriculum, and Mr. George Clark is a strong choice for Lomond as a caring building principal, Lomond parent, and highly regarded High School principal. At the High School, Mr. Eric Juli is proving himself to be the responsive, ever-present building leader we have needed. Mr. Jeff Grosse, our new Chief Operating Officer, has also already shown himself to be sensitive to the unique facility needs of a district with building eligible for historic registry. These are but a few of the district leaders, both new and veteran, who are part of addressing the positive changes and challenges in achieving equity, ushering in new technology and curriculum, and educating Shaker's students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We still have work to do. We need a cogent policy on due process and the correct use of administrative leave. We need to establish equity but not lose sight of the Restorative Practices needed to address the challenges that make equity such an essential consideration when it comes to difficult issues such as school discipline and suspension. We also need to make sure that the legally-binding commitments that have been made to parents and students with IEPs and 504s are not lost in the effort to contain budget spending. Likewise, class sizes have to be monitored so that the worries about declining enrollment do not become a self-fulfilling prophecy when new parents see too-large kindergarten classes and opt to take their children elsewhere. As always, there is still a mountain of work to do. But there is a sense of hope that we are headed in the right direction.

We have no choice but to be hopeful. When we look at the students in our classes we are reminded of this fact every day of every year. This year so far feels like our hope is also being supported by the leadership of

our district. We are grateful that our position as a strong collective bargaining Association can support these changes and lend both a supportive and critical lens when needed. Thankfully, we have the contract and bargaining rights that make our role instrumental to the direction of this district. It's a collective responsibility that the members of this organization highly value. We are in it for the duration.

Otherwise, it has been a typical year's beginning. I dealt with membership concerns over the summer. I spoke regularly with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner. I spoke with Director of Elementary Curriculum Dr. Erin Herbruck about hiring and Professional Development. I communicated with another association with their questions about becoming independent. I visited all building sites with SHTA Vice-President Matt Zucca. I attended the Administration meeting beginning of year. I met with the SHTA Executive Board at Legal Aid and PAC Chair Cathy Grieshop's house. I met with new teachers. I met with our new Chief Operating Officer, Jeff Grosse. I met with new High School principal Eric Juli. I updated our Facebook page, along with Publications Editor Andrew Glasier, and the Cuyahoga County Educator Summit page. I attended the August Board Meeting. I fielded questions about Emergency Room coverage appeals, along with Personal Rights and Responsibilities Chairperson Mike Sears. I worked on schedule concerns for language teachers with Head Woodbury Representative Angela Goodrum, Treasurer Bill Scanlon, and High School Head Representative James Schmidt. I asked for air quality tests in rooms where concerns have been expressed. I requested a dry wall repair at Woodbury. I sent out welcome back letter to teachers. I sent an email of support to Woodbury. I communicated with Communications' Kristen Miller on changing the May Reception Date. I met with Special Education Chair Tito Vasquez to address Special Education concerns. I spoke with Dr. Glasner about upcoming teacher advisory. I consulted on a Shaker Youth Hockey sponsorship on behalf of the SHTA. I addressed a member issue of concern at Woodbury. I attended the superintendent's transition team meeting. I will attend the 2019 State of the Schools (for CMSD) on September 26 with Matt Zucca. I will also attend the upcoming CCES steering committee and regular meetings.

I cannot believe I am beginning my ninth year as SHTA President. It continues to be some of the most important work of my life. Thank you for the honor of allowing me to lead. I will always do my best to be a steward of the contract, our rights, and the professionalism of our membership. It is a privilege to work beside you all. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns at [morris\\_j@shaker.org](mailto:morris_j@shaker.org) or at 216-295-6033.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
John L. Morris*



**SHTA PRESIDENT, DR. JOHN MORRIS, AND VICE PRESIDENT, MATT ZUCCA, AT THE SEPTEMBER REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING AT WOODBURY**

# Report's From The Executive Board

## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would like to welcome everyone back from our summer recess. I hope that you all had a safe and restful summer and that your year is off to a great start. Again, our members were key to the successful start of the school year. Our collaborative efforts help create and guide the professional development that began the school year. I applaud all your efforts.

Over the summer, I meet with the officers to plan, debrief and discuss the Association's agenda. It is an honor to serve with this team of officers. They are well informed and committed to the membership of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. It is essential that we continue to represent solidarity and a high level of professionalism that is the backbone of the SHTA.

It was a pleasure to meet and welcome the newly hired teachers and staff members along with the other Officers and district administrators. It is exciting to see the new faces as they begin their careers in Shaker Heights.

This summer, I joined Dr. Morris and district administrators on the summer building review. I was pleased to see the progress made at many of the building which included new alarm systems, security upgrades, and major brick repairs. The custodians and grounds crew have done an excellent job preparing these very old buildings for students and staff. I applaud their hard work.

As Vice President, I attend the PTO Council meetings on behalf of the Association. These meetings are held approximately bi-monthly and appear on your PTO calendar. The Council at no charge-annually provides PTO calendars. All teachers and parents are automatically members of this organization. However, we ask that you donate to the annual PTO drive. I hope that you will consider making a contribution to this important organization. I would also like to welcome the new PTO Council Co-Presidents Nicol Coxon and Kim Harris.

I am also a member of the Investments Committee, chaired by our treasurer, Bill Scanlon. Please refer to the Treasurer's report in this newsletter to review the status of our investments. As a member of the Investments Committee, I work with the other members to protect and grow the large monetary legacy of our past Association members in the form of the General Fund. We use conservative standard and guidelines to maintain the strength of the Fund.

I would like to remind SHTA Fellowship recipients that your receipts for reimbursement are due at the end of the month. Please forward this information to me at Woodbury. Please allow me 2- 3 weeks from the time of your request to receive your check. Several members have not yet submitted receipts, I hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity.

To continue the success of the beginning of the school year please seek out your building representatives if you have any concerns or questions. The SHTA is here to support its members, we are here to support you as you do your best for the students of our district.

Finally, I am wishing you a productive and fulfilling year. I am looking forward to working with you and for you. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at 295-4692.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
**Matthew Zucca**

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Welcome back!!! I hope everyone had a restful, eventful and wonderful summer vacation. My name is Darlene Garrison and I am your Secretary for the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. My responsibilities to you and our Association are to keep a record of all the decisions and discussions that are made by the Association. I take notes at both Executive Board and Representative Council meetings. It is very important that I listen carefully, understand all information being shared and accurately record notes to be included in the monthly newsletter. You can reach me at Woodbury and my direct extension is #4997. I am looking forward to the school year and working with you in the role of Secretary for SHTA.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
**Darlene E. Garrison**

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Welcome back to a new school year. A year ago, in my 2018 September newsletter report I wrote, "We must remain vigilant and focused on what's going to be best for our students. They are the reason we're all here." I believe we, as an Association, stayed true to those words this past year. It was very trying and many times felt demoralizing, but we stood strong for the Shaker Community. And we're still here doing what's right for our students. I love this place and I love our students

I am proud to serve as your treasurer. In this role, I maintain our finances by creating a budget, pay bills, and monitor our dues income. I oversee our investments as chair of the Investments Committee, that meets with our Edward Jones financial planner twice a year. I meet with our accountants to ensure our tax forms are up to date. I go through the process of having our accountants perform a compilation of our books each year with an audit performed every four years. I report our financial activity to the Representative Council and the members at large.

In May, the members of our Association approved the budget reflected by the current financial report. Also included is the summary of last year's financials (fiscal year 2018-19). If anyone has any questions about the Association's finances please give me a call at ext. 6296.

Payroll deduction for dues (\$33 per pay) will begin with the October 1<sup>st</sup> paycheck. Anyone who prefers to pay her/his \$330 dues all at once can send a check to Chante Thomas-Taylor at Woodbury School.

The Investments Committee (Todd Keitlen, Matt Zucca, Chante Thomas-Taylor, and myself) will be meeting next month with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor, to discuss our investments and whether any changes need to be made.

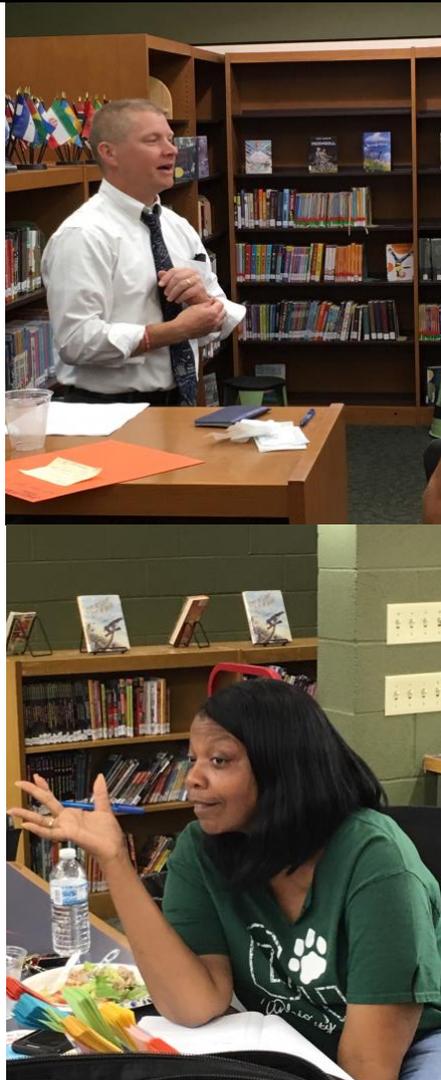
*Respectfully submitted,*  
**Bill Scanlon**

|                                       |                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Shaker Heights Teachers' Association  |                     |
| Balance Sheet Standard                | 09/04/19            |
| As of September 3, 2019               |                     |
|                                       | Sep 3, '19          |
| <b>ASSETS</b>                         |                     |
| Current Assets                        |                     |
| Checking/Savings                      |                     |
| Key Bank Aisha Trust                  | 5,840.00            |
| Key Bank (checking)                   | 39,887.09           |
| Total Checking/Savings                | 45,727.09           |
| Other Current Assets                  |                     |
| Edward Jones 13760-1-1                | 522,506.08          |
| Edward Jones 13768-1-3                | 746,677.11          |
| Total Other Current Assets            | 1,269,183.19        |
| Total Current Assets                  | 1,314,910.28        |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                   | <b>1,314,910.28</b> |
| <b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>       |                     |
| Equity                                |                     |
| Opening Balance Equity                | 53.69               |
| Retained Earnings                     | 1,316,317.08        |
| Net Income                            | -1,460.49           |
| Total Equity                          | 1,314,910.28        |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b> | <b>1,314,910.28</b> |

|                                       |                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Shaker Heights Teachers' Association  |                     |
| Balance Sheet Standard                | 09/04/19            |
| As of June 30, 2019                   |                     |
|                                       | Jun 30, '19         |
| <b>ASSETS</b>                         |                     |
| Current Assets                        |                     |
| Checking/Savings                      |                     |
| Key Bank Aisha Trust                  | 5,840.00            |
| Key Bank (checking)                   | 40,167.09           |
| Total Checking/Savings                | 46,007.09           |
| Other Current Assets                  |                     |
| Edward Jones 13760-1-1                | 521,177.11          |
| Edward Jones 13768-1-3                | 749,197.09          |
| Total Other Current Assets            | 1,270,374.20        |
| Total Current Assets                  | 1,316,381.29        |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                   | <b>1,316,381.29</b> |
| <b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>       |                     |
| Equity                                |                     |
| Opening Balance Equity                | 53.69               |
| Retained Earnings                     | 1,298,397.60        |
| Net Income                            | 17,929.99           |
| Total Equity                          | 1,316,381.29        |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b> | <b>1,316,381.29</b> |

|                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Profit and Loss Standard         |                    |
| July 1 through September 3, 2019 |                    |
|                                  | 09/04/19           |
|                                  | Jul 1 - Sep 3, '19 |
| <b>Income</b>                    |                    |
| Investments                      |                    |
| Edward Jones-Fees & Charges      | -1,209.49          |
| Change in Value in Edward Jones  | 27.04              |
| Total Investments                | -1,182.45          |
| Total Income                     | -1,182.45          |
| <b>Expense</b>                   |                    |
| Operations                       |                    |
| Conferences & Meetings           | 291.08             |
| Public Relations                 | -57.04             |
| Publications                     | 44.00              |
| Total Operations                 | 278.04             |
| Total Expense                    | 278.04             |
| Net Income                       | -1,460.49          |

**SHTA SECRETARY, DARLENE GARRISON, AND TREASURER, BILL SCANLON, AT THE SEPTEMBER REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING AT WOODBURY**



|                                    |            |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Income                             |            |
| Income                             |            |
| Member Dues                        | 134,790.00 |
| Total Income                       | 134,790.00 |
| Investments                        |            |
| Edward Jones-Fees & Charges        | -6,916.07  |
| Key Investments Income             | 57.24      |
| Change in Value for Key Investment | -39,073.41 |
| Change in Value in Edward Jones    | 117,284.28 |
| Total Investments                  | 71,352.04  |
| Other Types of Income              |            |
| Miscellaneous Revenue              | 6,745.99   |
| Other Types of Income - Other      | 5,665.23   |
| Total Other Types of Income        | 12,411.22  |
| Total Income                       | 218,553.26 |
| Expense                            |            |
| Operations                         |            |
| Aisha Fund                         | 8,614.57   |
| Fernway Fund                       | 2,615.80   |
| Accounting                         |            |
| Banking                            | -555.80    |
| Accounting - Other                 | 7,534.75   |
| Total Accounting                   | 6,978.95   |
| Compensation                       | 60,498.61  |
| Conferences & Meetings             | 3,690.66   |
| Executive Board                    | 838.29     |
| Fellowships & Grants               | 2,693.92   |
| Insurance                          | 11,363.00  |
| Legal                              | 33,770.74  |
| Negotiations                       | 43,309.07  |
| Officers' Expenses                 | 5,992.72   |
| Payroll Taxes                      | 666.96     |
| Public Relations                   | 7,796.30   |
| Publications                       | 178.00     |
| Social                             | 5,185.71   |
| STRS (TPO Contribution)            | 6,439.70   |
| Total Operations                   | 200,633.00 |
| Total Expense                      | 200,633.00 |
| Net Income                         | 17,920.26  |

# ***EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS***

## **PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT**

Welcome back to our senior staff and welcome to our newest members. I hope everyone had a restful and healthy summer break, and I am sure we are starting to feel like we never left.

My name is Mike Sears and I teach 8<sup>th</sup> grade American History at the Middle School. This is my 21<sup>st</sup> year in the district and my 24<sup>th</sup> year in education. This is my 15<sup>th</sup> year of involvement with SHTA, and my 10<sup>th</sup> year as the chairperson for Professional Rights and Responsibilities. This position is also called the Grievance Chair. My extension is #4770 and e-mail ([sears\\_m@shaker.org](mailto:sears_m@shaker.org)) is a great way to contact me. I enjoy working with the members and, as we tell our students, “there is no such thing as a stupid question”.

There is a current issue that concerns me and has the potential to affect all members. There does not appear to be a clear plan for “due process” coming from the administration building when it comes to investigations of teachers and other employees. After the events of the 2018-19 school year and another investigation in the summer of 2019, I am surprised a cohesive plan has not been shared with Association leaders and other stakeholders. This is especially surprising considering the administration was found guilty of not following “due process” during grievance proceedings last spring. The Human Resources Department is the logical place for “due process” plans to be housed. Yet, we started the school year with another interim Human Resources Director. This is our 7<sup>th</sup> Human Resources Director in the last 6 years. Why should this matter to us? If one of our members faces an investigation because of a student or parent complaint, we don’t know what to expect. We don’t know who will lead the investigation. We don’t know if members will have the opportunity to present their side of the story. We don’t know if “due process” will be followed. Based on recent events, we might even predict that “due process” will not be followed. With that in mind, be careful and use your best professional judgement in all situations. For more information on a teacher’s right to “due process”, here is a link about the Supreme Court case that established that right based on the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment. The case was *Cleveland Board of Education vs. Loudermill*. <https://usedulaw.com/218-cleveland-board-of-education-v-loudermill.html>

I also serve on the district’s Insurance Committee, which meets quarterly. Medical Mutual of Ohio replaced Anthem as our major medical health insurance company in January, 2018. Anthem is still our dental provider. Prescription drug information from Express Scripts is included on our Medical Mutual cards. Medical Mutual of Ohio runs our flexible spending account program. Members should have cards from Anthem (dental only) and Medical Mutual with member services phone numbers they can call as questions arise. If any member has a concern regarding health benefits, I can help point them in the right direction. Human Resources Generalist Sarah Fish can also help you. However, directly contacting the service provider is often the best way to have your questions answered. For other needs related to Human Resources, here is an updated link to their website: <http://www.shaker.org/CurrentEmployeeInformation.aspx>

The paycheck from September 16<sup>th</sup> should include a step increase if you qualify for one this year. Another way to advance on the salary schedule is by reaching continuing education levels like B.A. + 15 or M.A. + 30. The Board approves these changes in November and April.

The district policy for maternity leave is in the contract. However, new mothers decide how many sick days they want to use and if they want to take any unpaid leave through the Family and Medical Leave Act. If you are pregnant, please contact me right away so we can look at a calendar, and I can assist you in a plan that works best for you and your family. You should be aware that notes from doctors do not always allow additional sick days to care for babies. For example, a note that discusses “failure to thrive” is an acceptable

medical reason to use a sick day, but a note that mentions “bonding with the baby” will not be approved because that is not considered a medical condition that allows for a sick day.

Paternity leave is in our contract. New fathers may use up to 10 sick days to help care for a new baby. No documentation from doctors is required for this leave. For both maternity and paternity leave, contact me before you contact the administration so you understand your rights.

It is your responsibility to keep the Human Resources Department informed of changes in your family status (over the summer as well as during the school year) concerning **births, adoptions, deaths, divorce, marriage, or entry into military service**. If these changes are not reported within **30 days** you will not be permitted to make this change until the next open enrollment, which is usually in November. **Please contact Sarah Fish at #6036 before the 30 day deadline. This may cost you money if you miss this deadline.**

Personal days are personal. No one needs to know why you are taking a personal day. You do **not** need to fill out a form about a personal day. You may simply enter it on AESOP. However, you are responsible for keeping track of your own personal days. If you enter a 4<sup>th</sup> or a 5<sup>th</sup> personal day, you will forfeit pay for those absences. You may not use personal days before or after a holiday unless you fill out the personal day request form. Both the building principal and the Human Resources Department must approve the request. Administrators consider each case on an individual basis. If you have a question about this, please contact me.

If you use more than 5 sick days in a row, a building secretary will have to enter days 6 and up into AESOP. The Human Resources Department reserves the right to ask you for a doctor’s note explaining your absence beyond one week. If you use 10 sick days in a row, the Human Resources Department will send you a form about Family and Medical Leave. You may choose to continue using sick days with appropriate documentation or you may go on an extended and unpaid leave for family or medical reasons. Please call me if you are in this situation or if you anticipate being out for an extended time.

In recent weeks, I have:

- Attended the Executive Board summer meeting in August
- Assisted members with maternity leave, bereavement leave, and insurance questions
- Helped members with supplemental committee questions
- Spoke to members about concerns with Medical Mutual not providing the same benefits as Anthem regarding both ER visits and additional charges for office visits
- Met with Sarah Fish and Erin Herbruck about the Supplemental Committee in June
- Thought a lot about “due process”

The current contract is available on our web site, <http://shtaweb.org>. I strongly recommend reading it and using it as a reference. I am also happy to help you with issues of interpretation and clarification.

Best wishes for a wonderful school year!

*Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Sears, chairperson*

## **LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

I have the responsibility to keep SHTA members up to date about the latest in legislation involving education. To that end, I have signed up for newsletters from the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the Ohio Federation of Teachers, the Association of American Educators, the Ohio Education Association, Policy Matters Ohio, and Education Week.

Although every year is an active year in education policy, this year looks like it could be especially busy. Charter schools, gun laws, and the federal election (in 14 months) are in the news. As an example, [research](#) out of the Ohio State University has shown that an increase of 1% in the enrollment in Ohio Charter schools is correlated with a 3 % *decrease* in turnout for school board elections.

If you have ideas about where I should get the latest legislative news, please let me know. I'm looking forward to a great school year.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*David Klapholz, Chairperson*

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

As Public Relations chairperson, I would like to welcome back all of our members. Over the summer many T-shirt orders came in and I was able to fulfill those orders before convocation. We still have a few short sleeves shirts remaining. Please send an email to [Bognar\\_r@shaker.org](mailto:Bognar_r@shaker.org) including your name, school and shirt size and I will send you a shirt and an invoice for payment.

My responsibilities include placing ads in various publications such as *Shaker Life Magazine*, the *Shakerite* and the *Gristmill*. I also am responsible for making donations to various organizations that help to enrich the lives of our Shaker students. In addition, I purchase teacher appreciation gifts for our members that are given out during teacher appreciation week. As stated in the SHTA Constitution and By-Laws, I will continue to work at fostering mutual understanding, good will and respect between and among students, staff, community and administration.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Bob Bognar, Chairperson*

## **EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

Greetings! I hope everyone has had a great start to the 2019-2020 school year! It is my pleasure to continue serving the Association as the Evaluation Chairperson. In this role, I also co-facilitate the Evaluation Committee with Dr. Erin Herbruck. At Representative Council meetings, I will give a brief report and reminders regarding evaluation in addition to monthly newsletter reports. I am available to all educators and evaluators to consult about evaluation questions and concerns.

In anticipation of changes to the OTES system for the 2020-2021 school year, we have opted not to make any changes to forms and procedures for this year. All forms and detailed information regarding evaluation are available on the [Teacher Page](#) of the Shaker.org website. Please be sure to review this resource.

In recent weeks, I have worked with Andrew Glasier, Addie Tobey, and Dr. Erin Herbruck to design and facilitate a one hour workshop for all evaluators in the district. During this session, evaluators participated in a rubric norming and coaching activity, discussed their beliefs about the purposes of evaluation, and reviewed forms and procedures. It has been a pleasure to have all district evaluators collaborating and developing a shared understanding about evaluation goals.

I also serve as the Peer Evaluation Coordinator for the elementary buildings. Andrew Glasier coordinates for the High School and Addie Tobey coordinates for Woodbury and the Middle School. The Peer Evaluation Program continues to support collaboration and raises the level of professionalism for educators in our district. It is imperative that all participants meet the expectations of evaluation in a professional manner to maintain the integrity of the program. This includes attending required evaluator meetings, uploading forms by designated

due dates, completing forms thoroughly and professionally, and doing your best to support and encourage growth by providing meaningful feedback to your partner.

The first requirement for the year is to complete your Annual Professional Growth Plan and upload it to eTpes. Your evaluator can access your plan on eTpes for review. Unless you are on an Improvement Plan, your evaluator does not need to write the plan with you or “approve” of your plan, please remember that you may add to and change your plan through the school year. Please consider using your goals to help guide your work with your evaluator this year.

As always, all members of the Evaluation Committee are available to help you with your evaluation needs!

*Respectfully submitted,  
Lena Paskewitz, Chairperson*

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

My name is Timothy Kalan, and in addition to teaching art at Lomond and Onaway Elementary Schools, I am the SHTA policy chair. The policy chair's main concern is stewardship of the SHTA Constitution which defines our Association and provides us with the protocols that determine the structure of our operation. This document can be found at <http://www.shtaweb.org/>, along with our contract, newsletters and other interesting items. I also serve on the district's teacher evaluation committee, and run a native gardening club at both my schools. Any questions concerning our associations internal mechanisms can be directed towards me, as well as any concerning our evaluation system (or gardening!).

*Respectfully submitted,  
Tim Kalan, Chairperson*

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

Welcome back to school! My name is Selena Boyer and I am pleased to be the Social Committee Chairperson for the Association again this year! I teach first grade at Fernway (currently at Boulevard for one more year). Our first gathering is quickly approaching! We will have our Back to School SHTA Happy Hour on Friday, September 13th at Bottlehouse Brewing and Meadery located at 2050 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights.

For those of you that have never come to one of our social events---please give us a try! I guarantee that you will meet new people and have fun! If you have suggestions for me for possible events feel free to contact me. Thanks for your support! Reach me at [boyer\\_s@shaker.org](mailto:boyer_s@shaker.org)/ 216.295.6041

*Respectfully submitted,  
Selena Boyer, Chairperson*

## **TEACHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

I hope that everyone had a fun and restful summer and you're energized for the new school year. I am excited to continue serving the Association as Teacher Education Chair.

New teachers will be receiving information from me highlighting some contract language that will especially affect them, as well as a list of important dates they have to remember as the year progresses.

Keep in mind that my role with the Association is to work with new teachers, their mentors, and teachers who are not yet on a continuing contract.

I encourage all new teachers to come to SHTA's first happy hour of the year on Friday, September 13th at BottleHouse Brewery and Meadery at 2050 Lee Rd. It's a great time to meet and enjoy time with new colleagues.

Please contact me to discuss any area of your employment as you move toward a continuing contract. I can be reached by email [hardiman\\_l@shaker.org](mailto:hardiman_l@shaker.org) or by phone #4867.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Lisa Hardiman, Chairperson*

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Hello, my name is Anastacio T. (Tito) Vazquez, Jr. I have 27 total years educating in the field of Special Education, including 10 years for the Positive Education Program (PEP). I am entering year 15 as an Intervention Specialist at Shaker Heights High School. I graduated from Shaker, Class of 1987. I am married to fellow Intervention Specialist Enid T. Vazquez and father of two, (Anastacio Tito, III (Saint Ignatius Class of 2016 )& Cheyenne Elizabeth (Shaker Heights Class of 2017)

My role as Special Education Chairperson is to problem solve, remedy and support Intervention Specialist with concerns that involve their job title and requirements. I am the support wall between Shaker Administration and Special Education Teachers for the SHTA. If you have questions or concerns about Special Education, you can reach me at [vazquez\\_t@shaker.org](mailto:vazquez_t@shaker.org) or #4891. I look forward to serving you.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Tito Vazquez, Chairperson*

## **LEGAL AID COMMITTEE**

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! I am looking forward to serving you again as Legal Aid Chairperson. Please contact me if you are in need of any legal assistance or have any ideas for the PAC to take action. My classroom number is 295-4914.

Have a wonderful school year!

*Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Grieshop, Chairperson*

## **MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**

Welcome back to the 2019-2020 school year! My name is Chante Thomas. This is my fifth year serving as your SHTA Membership /Elections Chair and I am beginning my 25th year of teaching at Woodbury School. If you need me I can be reached by email at [thomas\\_c@shaker.org](mailto:thomas_c@shaker.org) or my phone extension is #5601. In addition to coordinating our elections, I am responsible for maintaining our membership directory and monitoring the collection of dues from payroll, or receiving a direct payment from the member.

**If you pay your dues by payroll deduction, SHTA dues will automatically begin with the first paycheck in October. (\$33 per pay x 10 pays = \$330) If you pay your dues by check, please submit your check for \$330 to your building representative prior to October 1st.** Membership forms only need to be completed by NEW MEMBERS, or as a current member you wish to CHANGE your form of payment and SIGN UP FOR

PAYROLL DEDUCTION. If you wish to stop payroll deduction and instead pay by check, please submit a letter to Chante Thomas at Woodbury Elementary School.

**The 2019-2020 Rep Council Elected Members are:**

**Boulevard- Angela Anderson (head rep), Jennifer Goulden (alt)**

**Onaway- Paula Klausner**

**Fernway- Victoria Goldfarb (head rep), Andee Hassell (alt)**

**Lomond- Steve Smith (head rep), Donita Townsend, Jill DiPiero (alt)**

**Mercer- Nicole Cicconetti, Cathy Richards (alt)**

**Woodbury- Angela Goodrum, (head rep), Stacey DeYoung, Lee Appel, Aquita**

**Shephard (alt)**

**Middle School- Rebekah Sharpe, (head rep), Jevette Collier, John Koppitch, Erika Pfeiffer (alt)**

**High School – James Schmidt, (head rep), Brian Berger, Aimee Grey, Jessica O’Brien, Joel Rathbone, Keith Szalay, Tod Torrence**

**SHTA ST – David Wells**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Chante Thomas-Taylor*

### **SHTA PAC REPORT**

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! I am looking forward to serving you again as SHTA PAC Chairperson

In August, I enjoyed hosting the SHTA Executive board meeting, I attended the Board of Education meeting and I continue to manage the [SHTA PAC Facebook](#) page. Please check out this page for current articles about important issues and events in education and union news around the country. I also contacted Representative Boyd’s office and asked if she would be willing to come Shaker Heights to speak about Aisha’s Law. I will share more information when it comes.

This November, we will be electing two people to our Board of Education. I hope to have the SHTA host a candidate panel discussion this October. Stay tuned!

*Cathy Grieshop  
SHTA Political Action Committee Chairperson*

### **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Publications is in charge creating, editing, seeking submissions for the newsletter. I also often write editorials. On top of that, I update the SHTA website, Facebook and Twitter account.

If you know of someone who is not receiving email of the newsletter, please have him or her email me directly at [glasier\\_a@shaker.org](mailto:glasier_a@shaker.org).

If you wish to have an editorial in the newsletter, please email me directly with the email by the second Monday of the month. I hope to have editorials from each building this year!

I look forward to serving you in the coming year!

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Andrew Glasier, Chairperson*

## **SUPPORT TEACHERS COMMITTEE**

Hail and well met. I am your navigator of the scholastic support teacher seas, Michael Wells. I find myself squarely in the role of the English Language Learner Support Teacher for the finest school in all the land, Lomond.

I roam the halls in search of students who will benefit from my instructional prowess while navigating the finer intricacies of Google Translate. This is my fifth year of discovering ways to coerce my fellow teachers into retrieving their print jobs. As one might imagine, it's been arduous at best.

I am genuinely jazzed to represent all of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association Support Teachers. I have no doubt that we will do our very best to serve our students despite the inadequacies and unpredictability of the universe.

If, for whatever reason, your instructional adventuring gets hamstrung by a prickly pear of a nuisance that you just can't shake, please reach out to me.

Lastly, you should consider and act upon the opportunity to write an editorial for this fine newsletter. I am confident that you have something supremely interesting and impassioned to share with our community. Contact Andrew Glasier for specifics, but be wary of stepping on his shadow.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*D. Michael Wells*

## **SICK DAY TRANSFER COMMITTEE**

During the last negotiations, the administration and SHTA agreed to pilot a Sick Day Transfer program. I am pleased to report that we are finally about to begin that program for the 2019 – 2020 school year. Addie Tobey, Michael Wells, and I were pleased to be able to represent you in this process. I would also like to thank Bryan Christman, Dr. Erin Herbruck, Sarah Fish, and Dr. Marla Robinson for their work in representing the Administration.

The final draft of the pilot program should appear in front of the Board of Education at their September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Once the Board and the SHTA approve the MOU, all SHTA members will be sent information about eligibility and the donation process. I will also be happy to attend any SHTA building meetings to provide assistance, should the need arise. Please feel free to email me if you have any questions.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
*James Schmidt, Chairperson*

# MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

## September 3, 2019: Woodbury School

**SHTA President, John Morris** started the September 03, 2019 Rep. Council Meeting at 4:37PM.

**Mr. Danny Young, Principal of Woodbury Elementary School** welcomed SHTA membership to Woodbury. He suggested that we take a look at Woodbury's MakerSpace made possible through the I3 Grant. We had a wonderful; start to the school year. This year we started our 4-person communities which is great for kids. Our staff is doing a great job with the 1:1 Chromebook initiative, great things are happening. We are so excited about the Caring Schools Community initiative and Woodbury staff is doing a wonderful job. Thank you to Woodbury staff and Fernway staff.

**MINUTES** from the May 13th, 2019 Rep. Council meeting were approved by James Schmidt and seconded by Aimee Grey.

### Good of the Order

- **Bill Scanlon**-Cuyahoga County petition to require background checks for gun purchases.

### Administration Report

**Dr. David Glasner, Superintendent** was present for the Rep. Council Meeting.

- Thank you for all of your hard work. Great start to the new school, hearing a lot of great things.
- Great value in relationships and working together. Introduced Jeff Grosse, Chief Operating Officer. He will be attending the SHTA meetings, sharing the administration report.

### P.T.O. Report

**Nicole Cox and Kim Harris**

- The PTO is here to work with you and to support teachers. Please let us know what we can do to help.

### Officer's Report

**President, John Morris**

- Dealt with membership concerns over the summer
- Spoke regularly with David Glasner
- Spoke with Erin Herbruck about hiring and PD
- Communicated with another Association interested in becoming independent
- Visited all building sites with Matt Zucca
- Attended Administration Beginning of year meeting
- Met with Exec. Bd. at Cathy Grieshop's House
- Met with new teachers
- Met new COO - Jeff Grosse
- Met with new HS principal Eric Juli
- Updated Facebook page and CCES page
- Attended August Board Meeting
- Fielded questions about Emergency Room coverage appeal
- Worked on schedule concerns for language teachers
- Asked for air quality tests in elementary rooms with concern
- Requested drywall repair at Woodbury
- Sent out welcome back letter
- Sent email to Woodbury

- Communicated with Kristen Miller on May Reception Date
- Met with Tito Vazquez to address Special Education concerns
- Spoke with Dr. Glasner about upcoming teacher advisory
- Shaker Youth Hockey - Shaker Raider Sponsorship = Thornton Park Logo on Video Screens/Event Signage
- Addressed issue of concern at Woodbury
- Will attend superintendent's transition team meeting on 8/27
- Rob McFee (NEOEA President) -- has invited me and Matt Zucca to attend the 2019 State of the Schools (for CMSD) on September 26 at 12:00pm in the Grand Ballroom of the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel.
- Communicated with Mary Alice Conkey - NEOEA Executive Director about upcoming CCES meeting

**Officers:**

- John Morris
- Matt Zucca
- Darlene Garrison
- Bill Scanlon

Publications Andrew Glasier High School 295-6168 Glasier\_A@shaker.org

Membership Chante Thomas Woodbury 295-5601 Thomas\_C@shaker.org

|   |                   |               |          |                       |
|---|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----------------------|
| Support Teachers                                    | Michael Wells     | Lomond        |          | wells_d@shaker.org    |
| Legal Aid   | Cathleen Grieshop | Boulevard     | 295-6337 | Grieshop_C@shaker.org |
| Legislative   | David Klapholz    | High School   | 295-6126 | Klapholz_D@shaker.org |
| Membership  | Chante Thomas     | Woodbury      | 295-5601 | Thomas_C@shaker.org   |
| Policy  | Tim Kalan         | Onaway        | 295-4970 | Kalan_T@shaker.org    |
| Professional Rights And Responsibilities/Grievances | Mike Sears        | Middle School | 295-4770 | Sears_M@shaker.org    |
| Public Relations                                    | Robert Bognar     | Woodbury      | 295-4973 | Bognar_R@shaker.org   |
| Salary Tenure                                       | John Morris       | High School   | 295-6033 | Morris_J@shaker.org   |
| Social  | Selena Boyer      | Fernway       | 295-6041 | Boyer_S@shaker.org    |

|                   |                |                   |           |                        |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Special Education | Tito Vazquez   | High School       |           | vazquez_t@shaker.org   |
| Teacher Education | Lisa Hardiman  | Mercer Elementary | 295-4867  | Hardiman_L@shaker.org  |
| Past President    | Rebecca Thomas | Retired           | use email | Thomas_R@shaker.org    |
| Evaluation        | Lena Paskewitz | Fernway           | 295-4874  | Paskewitz_L@shaker.org |

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

- Attended Summer Executive Board Meeting
- Attended Building Tour with District Admin. And Dr. Morris
- Attended New teacher meeting with SHTA Officers
- Met with members at next scheduled staff meeting
- Provided support to members with questions and concerns
- Inform Building administrators of SHTA concerns and give them a chance to correct the issue/share the resolved or unresolved issue at Rep. Council meetings.
- Keep track of travel time and expenses and submit for reimbursement
- Ask for the \$200 classroom move compensation for elementary under section 13.02 Administrator-Initiated Transfer:  
*Those elementary teacher(s) who are transferred administratively or moved within the building by the administration will receive Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) for packing and unpacking material when required to do so outside of normal work hours or outside of the contract year*
- I will remind members who won a Fellowship to submit receipts for reimbursement. Money must be spent between October 2018 and September 2019.

### **Secretary, Darlene Garrison**

- Darlene welcomed the membership back to a new school year.
- Attended the New Teachers Meeting at the High School.
- Attended summer Executive Board Meeting at Cathy Grieshop's House
- When sending a longer report for the newsletter notes, please email your report to my email address. Please don't share in the Google Drive, email me please.
- Please sign in on the attendance sheet

### **Treasurer, Bill Scanlon**

- Shared his duties as Treasurer – head of investments, pays the bills, meets with accountants.
- Attended executive board meeting at Cathy Grieshop's House
- Attended the new teachers' meeting at the high school
- Attended Board of Education meeting to support Jody Podl.
- Shared the financial report with membership
  - Money listed in our account for Aisha will be transferred to the GoFundMe account
  - Profit Loss - expenses and what money is being spent

### **Executive Board Reports**

#### ***Past President, Becky Thomas-Absent***

- No Report

***Teacher Education, Lisa Hardiman***

- Working on list of names and location of all the new members.
- Attended Executive Board Meeting at Cathy Grieshop's House

***Membership/Elections, Chante Thomas-Absent (Report shared by John Morris)***

- All new members were added
- Email went out to teachers paying membership dues by check
- Payroll deduction will begin on October 01<sup>st</sup>.
- SHTA dues are now \$330. Therefore, payroll deduction will be \$33 per check for 10 pay periods.

***Policy, Tim Kalan***

- Attended Executive Board Meeting
- Answered questions dealing with evaluations

***Public Relations, Bob Bognar***

- Gave SHTA cups/mugs to new teachers
- Email sent to new teachers about purchasing a SHTA t-shirt
- Will do a new order for t-shirts in October. Will send out an email
- Trying to make sure that the t-shirts are American made

***Legislative, Dave Klapholz- Absent***

- No Report

***Publications, Andrew Glasier***

- Uploaded pictures for #shtateachersworkallyear contesting. Amy Hannah is winner chosen.
- Had new membership form added to website with new DUES amount.
- updated [SHTAweb.org](http://SHTAweb.org) with new Meeting dates, new members and changes in executive board and representative council and Presidential Award winner.
- Want to continue editorials from all buildings. Can you please spread the word.
- September editorial by Jody Podl.
- Should we work with admin/PTO to arrange to have Representative Byod come speak about Aisha's Law?
- Executive Board need blurbs Wednesday at midnight. Everyone needs to give me an intro blurb.

***Social, Selena Boyer***

- Attended Exec. Board meeting at Cathy Grieshop's house
- Planning Happy Hour scheduled for Friday, September 13th
  - Food is being catered and brought in
  - Happy Hour will take place at Bottle House Brewery
  - Please hang flyers and talk this up

***Legal Aid, Cathy Grieshop-Absent***

- No Report

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

- Attended Exec. Board meeting at Cathy Grieshop's House
- Answered questions about maternity leave
- Attended Supplemental Committee Meeting with Erin Herbruck and Sarah Fish in May.
  - This summer, we worked on a Google Form that teachers can use when wanting to start a new supplemental contract for a new group.

- Contact Sarah Fish if you have questions about benefits. She will meet with you to discuss the appeals process with Medical Mutual.
  - Documentation is very important when dealing with the appeals process
- When there is a death in the family, you will use your sick days. If you are out of sick days, you can then use bereavement days.

#### ***Evaluation, Lena Paskewitz***

- Attended Exec. Board meeting at Cathy Grieshop's House
- Attended New Teacher's Evaluation meeting
- Worked on Workshop Sessions with Addie Tobey, Andrew Glasier and Erin Herbruck

#### ***SHTA ST, Michael Wells***

- Attended new teacher orientation
- Attended the Executive Board meeting at Cathy Grieshop's House
- Welcome back to all of the Support Teachers

#### ***Special Education, Tito Vazquez***

- I met with Elizabeth Kimmel concerning the changing of APE from individual sessions to whole group sessions. This change is due to the district shifting to state and national model of how many schools deliver APE to students with disabilities.
- I met with the district APE teacher to set a schedule that does not violate his contract based on planning, lunch and hours worked. Administration has not presented an alternative schedule.
- I will be meeting with Director of Pupil Services Elizabeth Kimmel once a month BEFORE we have our SHTA meetings to discuss any situation that can be remedied BEFORE it is presented to our Union.
- I am aware of an ongoing issue with the need of paraprofessionals at the high school.
- I attended the Executive Board Meeting @ Boulevard Elementary school.
- I will be attending a meeting on Friday with Elizabeth Kimmel, Jennifer Currie, Eric Juli concerning paraprofessional needs.

#### ***Sick Day Transfer, James Schmidt***

- During the last negotiations, the administration and SHTA agreed to pilot a Sick Day Transfer program. I am pleased to report that we are finally about to begin that program for the 2019 – 2020 school year. Addie Tobey, Michael Wells, and I were pleased to be able to represent you in this process. I would also like to thank Bryan Christman, Dr. Erin Herbruck, Sarah Fish, and Dr. Marla Robinson for their work in representing the Administration. The final draft of the pilot program should appear in front of the Board of Education at their September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Once the Board and the SHTA approve the MOU, all SHTA members will be sent information about eligibility and the donation process. I will also be happy to attend any SHTA building meetings to provide assistance, should the need arise. Please feel free to email me if you have any questions.

### **Building Representative Reports**

#### ***Boulevard, Angela Anderson***

- Special thanks to the custodial staff for their hard work over the summer to get out building together.
- Skills Support Staff are wondering if the changes in the job description which states, "Writing IEPs and 504 Plans, writing lesson plans and developing assessments shall be considered teacher work, not support teacher work, etc" was done after they signed their contracts in May or before and why they were not informed of the changes. Question arose about what are their job responsibilities, seeing as there is a discrepancy between the new job description and what they actually have to do. It was noted that they are currently still doing all of the above, as most of it is necessary for their OTES Evaluation. It was also noted that programs mandated by the District (i.e. Foundations) have assessments embedded in the

curriculum, which they administer. Questions also arose regarding pay and salary, if they are still doing teacher work.

- Issue with Mold in the Art room that is currently in the process of being worked on. Not sure of the process timeline and what that is going to be. One of the recommendations from the EA Group was to deep clean the room and remove items with mold on them. Custodial staff is supposed to do the deep cleaning. Concern arose about the training of custodial staff being able to effectively remove the mold from the room. Concern that mold spores will travel when cleaning and that may cause a bigger issue. Teaching staff that work in the room have an allergy to at least one of the stronger strands of mold found in the room. Although accommodations have been made for specials, the staff would like to make sure that this issue is resolved quickly and effectively. Question for the District - Can the District bring in a group of experts to remove mold and do deep cleaning in the room? To be continued!
- Kindergarten has very high numbers and are on trend to receive more students, which will place us at even higher numbers. Although, we are thankful for aides at the beginning of the year, we are in need of aides for the entire year to assist with the behaviors, ongoing assessment, small group and the growing number of incoming 4 year olds due to the cut off, etc. Can the District provide full-time support for all Kindergarten classrooms?

#### *Fernway, Victoria Goldfarb*

- Thank you and we appreciate the custodial staff at Woodbury, Onaway and Boulevard. We appreciate all the support, kindness and help from the staff at all three buildings.
- Principals, thank you so much for the new dismissal system.
- The mold at Onaway, those concerns are being resolved and thank you.

#### *Lomond, Steve Smith*

- Thank you to our custodial staff for getting our building together this summer.
- Great meeting with Mr. Clark and Lomond is off to a great start.

#### *Mercer, Cathy Richards*

- Great start to the school year and the custodial staff is amazing, thank you.
- Lack of planning time was given to us during the 4-day Professional Development at the start of the year. Big challenge for everyone, we had no grade level planning time.
  - Dr. John Morris stated that conversations are happening, pushing for more time next year.
  - **Comment from a staff member, different school-** Problem with the ice cream social before the start of school. Some of us have family obligations and if you don't come, it makes you look bad when your whole team is present.
    - You are volunteering your time. If you are unable to attend, then you are just not available.

#### *Onaway, Tim Kalan*

- Spring Open House for K-4 buildings is scheduled for the same night in all buildings, May 14th. Art teachers have to decorate all buildings with art work. It was easier for art teachers to decorate when Open House was staggered on different days. Open House on the same day will be a problem for art teachers.

#### *Woodbury, Angela Goodrum*

- No Report

***Middle School, Rebekah Sharpe***

- Met with Miata Hunter regarding lunch duty. She and admin. team are still in support of us eliminating this responsibility, but have been told to continue. Teachers have been going and being compliant, still not happy.
- There are class size issues in foreign language. Mr. Harlow is working on schedule to even out numbers in languages. In addition, it brings up the larger issue of student's schedules changing mid-year if and when they pass the reading exam and are no longer required to take Reading Workshop.
- Clarified new sign-out/coverage procedures for personal business. If we take time in AESOP the school will find coverage and pay that person. If we do not take time, we are responsible for finding our own coverage and whoever we find will NOT be paid.
- Last year John Koppitch and I suggested that admin. provide dinner for teachers on Curriculum Night. The admin team provided us with a beautiful meal from Panera prior to the start of curriculum night. Teachers were very appreciative.

***High School, James Schmidt***

- Nice start to the school year. Mr. Eric Juli provided the staff with s'mores and soda pops. Everything is going well, just a few small issues that we are working on.
  - Teachers traveling from Woodbury to High School
  - Ongoing Special Ed. staffing concerns but administration has been responsive

**Old Business** - None

**New Business** – None

**Good of the Order**

- John Morris thanked the Woodbury Reps. for hosting the first Rep. Council Meeting.
- Next Rep. Council Meeting: Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup> hosted by Fernway Reps. at Woodbury Elementary School.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by James Schmidt and seconded by Angela Goodrum.  
Meeting adjourned at 6:19PM.

***Respectfully submitted,***  
***Darlene Garrison, Secretary***

## Shaker Needs to be Better

*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.*

Midway through the summer, my family, my doctor, and I realized that I was not going to be able to return to work for this school year. While I feel much better, I have not been able to get to a space where I would feel comfortable returning to work. I miss the students, the teaching, and my colleagues daily, but I am also relieved to be able to take the time I need to get myself back to being me (for better or worse).

John Morris asked me to share the remarks I made at the BOE meeting on August 13<sup>th</sup>. They are below.

Before you read them (or if you choose not to), here are a few thoughts:

- I am so grateful to each and every one of you who have, in your own ways, been supportive of me. And I have to repeat myself and single out John Morris, who is now my brother from another mother (I am his needy sister). If any of you have questions or concerns about what happened that I can answer, I am happy to do so. I was silenced for a long time, and I don't want you to feel like you cannot talk to me about this. I'd also much rather have you hear it from me. You can reach me through my Shaker email.
- It is now day 328 (who knew that math was so useful). I have not had a face to face conversation with any administrator or member of the BOE except for a quick meeting on July 16<sup>th</sup> with Dr. Glasner and Mr. Juli and several conversations with Lisa Cremer. I received three brief emails after I made my statement to the board. Jeff Isaacs invited me to talk and then never followed up to make a date.
- I worry every single day about the students and families who were involved in this situation. I hope against hope that the administration has made an effort to work with them so that they can process what happened and feel comfortable at school.
- I am not naïve and know that there are some people who feel that I am "playing the victim," so to speak. I can't change your minds, but I can perhaps answer questions that you may have about what happened so that you have a more fully informed opinion. You can reach me through my Shaker email.
- MOST IMPORTANTLY, I don't want my story to be the story this year. I am not sharing my statement or welcoming questions and conversation because I want to keep this debacle alive; I am doing so because I believe that the path to being better begins with reflecting on our weaknesses as well as bolstering our strengths.

### What If

Good evening. 307 days have passed since I was removed from the high school.

I want to publicly thank Dr. Glasner and Mr. Juli. On July 16th, 280 days after I was placed on administrative leave, they invited me to have a conversation. They are the only administrators who have done so. I'd also like to publicly thank Lisa Cremer, who, without compromising her position as a board member, has acted with kindness and decency throughout this ordeal.

Instead of preparing to welcome students to room 118, I am spending my time coming to terms with the knowledge that I will never get back the life I led prior to October 10<sup>th</sup> of last year.

How strangely fitting that we are in the room where it happened – the room where I lost my voice. On October 12<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Robinson sat across this table from me and threatened to put me up for insubordination if I spoke to anyone about the accusations against me. Then on November 5<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Breeden and Eric Johnson from Walter Haverfield strolled into the conference room, shared how "refreshing" it was now that I was gone from the high

school, declared that no discussion was necessary because evidence that I never had a chance to respond to from students whose names I was not told proved that I was guilty of violating Board Policy JFCF Harassment/Bullying.

Nevertheless, I am standing here in this room to share some thoughts with you, which will extend beyond the three-minute limit. While I hope that you'll actually listen to what I have to say, I am well aware that I have no control over what others think, say, or do.

According to the lawyers who represent Shaker, being placed on administrative leave, denied due process, and disciplined without just cause have no connection to my medical leave. In their eyes, it was pretty cut and dry – they sent a letter on November 6<sup>th</sup> that stated that my review was complete and I should report to work. They have argued forcefully that I simply chose not to return.

It turns out that I had no choice in the matter, and I still don't. The truth is that your actions, both collectively and individually, have gutted me. As leaders, your job is to solve problems, not make them; to treat people with respect and compassion, not contempt and cruelty; to be honest and straightforward, not intentionally misleading; to value and support teachers and students and parents, not pit them against each other; to resolve conflicts, not exacerbate them; to evaluate evidence by asking hard questions and listening to all parties, not by accepting information as truth without seeking to understand context; to build and improve, not destroy and punish; to be careful and thoughtful in your use of "administrative discretion," not harsh and reactionary; to adhere to the Collective Bargaining Agreement and Board Policies, not to flagrantly disregard them.

I hate to say it, but you didn't do your jobs, and I have paid dearly – with my physical and emotional wellbeing, my personal and professional reputation, and my dwindling stash of sick days.

So many of my thoughts regarding this debacle begin with two words: "**What if.**" Here's an easy one. Board Policy states: "When a written complaint is received, the principal or other supervisor schedules a conference with the complainant, the person criticized and, if advisable, the department chairman or other personnel who, in the opinion of either the supervisor or the person criticized, could contribute to a resolution of the problem."

**What if** you had played by the rules and arranged that conference? We would have sat around a table together – maybe even the one in this room - and discussed what happened, why it happened, and how to work together to avoid further misunderstandings on all sides. During this productive and positive meeting, we would have realized that when all is said and done, we actually share many fundamental beliefs about relationships, learning, expectations, and equity. We would have modeled how to handle a difficult situation by being respectful to and learning from each other. We would have demonstrated that it is possible to find common ground and resolve conflict.

Instead, less than five hours after you received the initial complaint on October 4<sup>th</sup>, you opened two investigations against me. When I was removed from the school 6 days later, I certainly had not had a conference; in fact, I had no idea that a complaint had been made. The implications of administrative leave are serious; they suggest that the employee removed from the classroom has broken a law or is a menace to children. Lest you think that I'm exaggerating, a parent of one of my students sent the following message: "I figured you were under investigation for something horrendous like sexual assault." There was no discussion, there was no listening, there was no learning, and there was no resolution. There is no explanation that will ever justify the path you chose to take and the destruction that followed.

When the arbitrator ruled on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, he actually listened. As irony would have it, he determined that you are the ones who violated board policy and I am the one who did not. You denied me my rights, and you turned out to be wrong. It took 195 days, but when justice was meted out, I was both exonerated and vindicated.

It would seem that my story has a happy ending, but it doesn't.

We teach our children and our students that when you make a mistake, you need to own up to it. **What if** the district had the wherewithal to do the same thing? Dr. Robinson would have made it clear at the community meeting on November 8th that I had been cleared of discrimination. Instead she allowed teachers to become the scapegoats for all of the racial tensions at the high school, standing and applauding for extra emphasis. Meanwhile, Dr. Breeden sent letters to six families on November 7<sup>th</sup> informing them of my guilt. One mom posted the following on social media: "The teacher was formally reprimanded for bullying and harassment and we parents have the letter to prove this matter has been resolved." Dr. Breeden would have sent a follow up letter explaining that the findings of the binding arbitration supersede her original letter. Today, however, 113 days after the ruling, these families have still not received corrected information. It was incumbent on you to set the record straight. The truth matters.

Furthermore, I think that we can all agree that cultivating strong relationships is essential to the success of any institution, especially a school district. It is not a hidden story that the time between October 4<sup>th</sup> and April 22<sup>nd</sup> strained my relationship with the administration and the school board. Being shunned can have that effect. **What if** you had chosen to repair our relationship by actually communicating with me? Perhaps Jeff Isaacs or Dr. Wilkins or Dr. Robinson could have approached me on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and said, "Jody, it's been a difficult time, and you're in our thoughts. You may not be able to talk right now, but we'll be here when you're ready, and we look forward to having you back in the classroom." Not that it should matter, but rest assured that there are no legal repercussions to the utterance of any of these civilized and appropriate sentiments.

Perhaps the first 194 days, you felt obligated to keep your distance, but it is now 113 days after the ruling, and the only administrators or board members who have spoken to me are Dr. Glasner, Mr. Juli, and Lisa Cremer. In fact, just last week, Dr. Robinson did an end around and sent John Morris an email asking him to get information from me. Last I checked, John Morris' job doesn't include being my personal handler. In it, Dr. Robinson also wrote that if I didn't want to email her, I could email someone else. There are so many things I could say about that comment, but my parents, who are right here with me, taught me better. And I hope to God that I have taught my own children, and your children too, many of whom I've taught, better. I hate to state the obvious, but you just can't solve a problem or restore a relationship by running away.

Last - I don't want to say most importantly because all of this is important – the onus is on you to make sure what happened to me doesn't happen to anyone else. **What if** you had decided to lead with integrity and commit to fixing what's broken? You would have started by making a statement to the public that goes something like this:

The arbitrator ruled, and we understand that his decision is binding. Our investigation was flawed with respect to process and findings. Now it's time for all of us to heal and support each other. Our priority is to re-establish your trust in us, and this is how we're going to do it. First, we're going to have a facilitator lead a meeting with the administration, the teacher, and the students involved so that we can reflect on what happened and begin to repair the harm that's been done; then, we're going to review our procedures for putting teachers on administrative leave and take another look at how we conduct investigations. We also need to review our policy on bullying/harassment and make sure that administrators, teachers, students, and parents clearly understand what constitutes bullying. Next, we administrators need training in conflict resolution. Finally, we're going to do what it takes to work through some of the issues that have burst to the surface regarding equity and academic expectations so that we can move forward together. We'll provide you with updates every step of the way. While

we regret that this happened, we're going to learn and grow from the experience. We're ready to roll up our sleeves and lean in – hard.

I gotta say that if I had seen something like that, even I would have given you a standing ovation. You wouldn't have to figure out how to move forward because we'd already be ahead. Instead, the only statement that you made was: "We are aware of the decision and look forward to moving forward." That is all. You basically said nothing and you did nothing. Rather than taking any truly corrective measures, you've set your sights on moving forward by hosting back to school barbecues and pretending that all is well. 307 days in, and we're stuck in place, going nowhere.

We do have some new faces in leadership positions, which can't be bad. But please don't be naïve enough to think that these challenges will disappear simply because we've changed personnel. Dr. Glasner and Mr. Juli, you are like new homeowners. You've moved into this house and inherited its glories as well as its flaws. You can choose to paint over the water stain on the ceiling, and it may look good, but it will only hide the core problem. Or you can choose to be proactive and strategic in caring for your home and investing in upgrades that will retain or even increase its value. Maybe, to extend the metaphor, you'll consider hiring a contractor who can help facilitate this type of renovation. I am sure that our community would rather spend its tax dollars on projects that improve our district than on lawyers who break it. Work together to make a plan that is focused and intentional, one that will strengthen our foundation through meaningful conversations and truly thoughtful actions that are not just cosmetic. Please do your jobs, and be the leaders that we need.

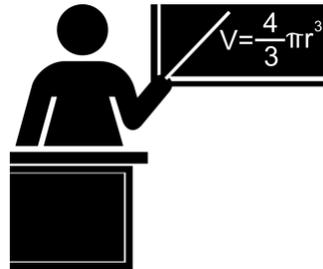
I can't quite describe how sad I am to say that I'm not able return to work. I am still trying to regain my bearings and quite honestly, nothing has happened in the last 307 days to make me believe that I would be safe or supported were I to walk back into the classroom. **I need to get better, and Shaker needs to be better.**

*Jody Podl,  
English Teacher, Shaker Heights High  
Shaker Heights Resident  
Shaker Heights Parent  
Shaker Heights High Alumni*

You are invited to our



# BACK TO SCHOOL HAPPY HOUR!



**BottleHouse Brewery and Meadery  
2050 Lee Rd., Cleveland Heights**

**Friday, September 13th  
4:15 p.m.**