

## IMPORTANT DATES

**Wednesday, May 22:** District Recognition Reception, 3:45 PM @ SHHS Upper Cafeteria

**Thursday, May 23:** Finance & Audit Committee

**Monday, May 27:** Memorial Day (Schools Closed)

**Friday, May 31:** SHTA T-Shirt Day!

**Wednesday, June 5:** Last Day of School for Students/SHHS Commencement

**Thursday, June 6:** Close of School/Clerical Day

# SHTA *news*

May 21, 2019

**ISSUE NO. 8**

## Message From the President

This has by far been the most difficult year as SHTA President. From our devastating summer fire at Fernway, to the tragic death of a beloved colleague, to grievances, arbitrations, extended contract negotiations, and the reorganization and hiring of new leadership throughout the district. The one thing that has remained constant has been the dedication and support from my sisters and brothers in the SHTA. We have endured this year together and supported one another throughout. We have shown up at the Vigil and the board meetings, the community talk back and the interview sessions, the classroom, the playing fields, and wherever we have been needed to be there for one another. That is the essence of a union, and that is why I, and I know many others in Our Association, have survived this year.

It is my hope that we are on an upswing. We have had a favorable arbitrator's decision, a forward moving contract for our Support Teachers, a new Superintendent, and a new High School Principal. Likewise, we have seen the placement of professionals like Dr. Erin Herbruck in our central office leadership and a reorganization that will maximize the leadership we have. We wish the best for Interim Superintendent Dr. Stephen Wilkins as he moves on to a new position and Human Resources Director Dr. Lois Cavucci as she moves south to warmer climes. Dr. Wilkins response to the Fernway fire was critical for us to moving forward in re-constructing this cherished building in our elementary family. I hope for the best as we say goodbye to 2018-2019 and hello to the upcoming school year.

One of my greatest pleasures as SHTA President is to announce the recipients of Our SHTA Awards. This years' Service Awards go to Aisha M. Fraser and Jackie Conway- Scanlon. Aisha was a consistently positive force in the SHTA and on the Woodbury Representative Team for the last six years, and as a member for the past sixteen. She was always willing to help other members, and her smile and positive energy was infectious. Her absence will always leave a hole in our hearts, but we hope that her legacy and memory will inspire all of us to

step up with a smile to tackle our collective challenges and support our students and colleagues with the utmost of our abilities.

Jackie Conway-Scanlon is the second recipient of our SHTA Service Award because of the unparalleled efforts she undertook to set up and publicize a [GoFundMe for Aisha's girls](#) (you can still contribute) that has brought in upwards of \$189,000 and counting. Jackie's herculean efforts to create, maintain, publicize, and refine the GoFundMe has helped create support for Aisha's daughters that we hope lasts for years to come. It is Jackie's work that sets a standard to which we should all aspire - helping our members, and by extension their families, when faced with crisis.

The Lifetime Achievement Award will be given to Former President Sal Fabrizio for establishing the modern SHTA as we know it. Before Sal's tenure, the SHTA was primarily a social organization that included the Superintendent and provided a spring luncheon for members. Thanks to Sal and his team's tireless efforts, he was able to introduce a contract and collective bargaining to the district. Sal also commuted back and forth to Columbus and was active in establishing the STRS system. We truly stand on the shoulders of giants as members of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. We are fortunate to be able to award one of those giants with this year's Lifetime Achievement Award.

It will be my honor and pleasure to give out these awards at Our Recognition Reception on Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> from 3:45-5:30 in the HS Upper Cafeteria as we also recognize our newly tenured teachers, career milestones, and retirees. I look forward to seeing you all there.

May was a characteristically busy month. I attended HS Principal Meetings. I updated [SHTA Facebook](#) pages and [CCES Facebook](#) pages. I communicated with Interim Superintendent Dr. Stephen Wilkins. I communicated with incoming Superintendent Dr. David Glasner. I communicated with HR Director Dr. Lois Cavucci and Treasurer Bryan Christman.

I worked on Teacher renewals. I assisted on job share and reduced time issues. I worked on Special Education Issues. I talked to Dr. Erin Herbruck about the HS Principal Search. I discussed SHTA Awards with Publicity Chair Bob Bognar. I discussed a Woodbury concern with Dr. Angela Goodrum. I worked on a Special Education disciplinary issue with HS members.

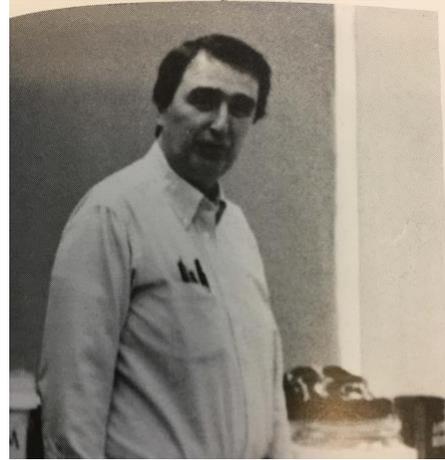
I worked on mediating teacher concerns. I assisted with teacher retirement and schedule requests. I helped with FMLA issues. I signed the Support Teacher Contract with Support Teacher Negotiations team members. I asked James Schmidt to serve as ad hoc executive board member to oversee and report on the Sick Day Transfer Special Committee. I attended the School Board Meeting on Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, I would like to publicly thank Our Officers, Executive Board, and Representative Council for their continuing commitment to Our Association. They truly are the heart and soul of the SHTA. I would like to also personally thank my teaching support system, Jessica O'Brian and Aimee Grey, HS Representatives and my teaching partners. They have been there to cover my classes when I am called out of the building, answer the

phone when I am in meetings, help me with lesson plans and materials, and generally be positive presences when I was under the most stress this year. Aimee and Jessica are also outstanding examples of what a union is about. Thank you to all our members. You are the reason I continue to do what I do. It's an honor to serve you all. It is my sincerest hope that you find the time this summer to relax, re-energize, and refocus so that when we come back together next August, we can tackle our life work together at our very best.

*Respectfully submitted,  
John Morris*

**SHTA Lifetime  
Achievement Award  
winner Sal Fabrizio  
from the 1992 *Gristmill***



## **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

It is an honor and a privilege to serve the SHTA as Vice President. As Vice President, I have the opportunity to work so many people in so many ways. I am truly humbled by the excellence of the teachers and the Association.

This has been a busy year in the office of the Vice President. As Vice President, I have represented the SHTA at PTO Council with this year's Council President Raven Perry. I will continue to work with the Council next year as they transition with new leadership.

As Vice President, I served on the Investment Committee. As a member, I assisted in monitoring our investments and making adjustment how the funds are invested to make sure they are aligned to policy guidelines. I attended meetings with the Association's financial advisor from Edward Jones. I want to express my gratitude to the Committee members; Todd Keitlin, Chante Thomas-Taylor, and Investment Committee Chairperson Bill Scanlon. It is through their oversight that our investments continue to show consistent and steady growth.

I served as the Teacher Liaison for the staff in assisting with *The Night for the Red and White*. *The Night for the Red and White* was again a huge success this year. Much of the success of this event is due to the efforts of our staff. Again, I thank you for supporting this event.

Another duty I have is administering The Shaker Heights Teachers’ Association Fellowship Grants. To process your reimbursement prior to summer break, I must have your receipts by Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>. Payments will not be made over the summer break. Reimbursements will resume in the fall. Again, I would like to congratulate 2018 – 2019 winners:

**2018-2019 Fellowship Recipients**

Alison	Bradford	Boulevard	Tom	Deep	Woodbury
Tanutda	Devine	Boulevard	Stacey	DeYoung	Woodbury
Jennifer	Goulden	Boulevard	Nancy	Kippen	Woodbury
Janet	Meinhard	Boulevard	Larry	Miller	Woodbury
Ellen	Battle	Fernway	Jackie	Scanlon	Woodbury
Christine	Cachat	Fernway	Charmaine	Abrams	Middle School
Peg	Rimedio	Fernway	Kelly	Anderson	Middle School
Krystal	Allen-Jackson	Lomond	Beth	Casey	Middle School
Marci	Cohen	Lomond	Debra	Quarles	Middle School
Mary Ann	Durkalski	Lomond	David	Saluga	Middle School
Donita	Townsend	Lomond	Brian	Berger	High School
Kevin	Wagner	Lomond	Mary	Bourisseau	High School
Tracey	Gerstenberger	Mercer	Adam	Cohen	High School
Colleen	Krawczax	Mercer	Valerie	Doersen	High School
Cara	Luce	Mercer	Amy	Fogerty	High School
Ellen	Conkey	Onaway	Andrew	Glasier	High School
Cara	Motelka	Onaway	Donna	Jelen	High School
Connie	Scott	Onaway	Molly	Miles	High School
Noreen	Smyth-Morrow	Onaway	Kim	Owens	High School
Erin	Andrzejewski	Woodbury	Ellen	Roberts	High School
Lee	Appel	Woodbury	Robin	Sweigert	High School
Betsy	Brindza	Woodbury	Eileen	Willis	High School

Finally, I would like to thank John Morris again for his excellent leadership of Our Association. His tireless efforts, day in and day out, keep Our Association strong. He continues to negotiate and advocate behind the scenes with such composure, confidence, and professionalism. We are truly lucky to have him as our President. I also want to thank the Officers, the Executive Board, the Building Representatives and all the Association members. I wish all of you a restful summer.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
**Matthew Zucca**

The SHTA PAC is on  .  @

[PAC of the Shaker Heights Teachers Association](#)

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

This school year has been difficult for many of us with the passing of my dear friend, Aisha Fraser. Our SHTA membership, school district and community came together to cherish, honor and show love for such a beautiful woman. She will forever be in my heart and will be deeply missed.

*The Night for the Red & White Raffle* was a success and the SHTA was able to raise \$480 to contribute to our Silent Auction Donation. Two teachers from Lomond Elementary School won two tickets to the event held at The Hilton Downtown.

SHTA was awarded the Ohio School Public Relations Association's "Friend of Education Award" for our work on creating, holding and collaborating on the vigil honoring Aisha Fraser. I was invited to accept this award with Dr. John Morris and Mrs. Jackie Conway-Scanlon on Thursday, April 11, 2019 at the Renaissance Westerville-Polaris Hotel.

The 2018-2019 school year is coming to an end and I would like to wish everyone a restful and enjoyable summer vacation. See you next school year!

*Respectfully submitted,  
Darlene E. Garrison*

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The Investments Committee (Todd Keitlen, Matt Zucca, Chante Thomas-Taylor, and myself) met with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones financial advisor, on April 22<sup>nd</sup> to look over our investments.

Before the May Executive Board meeting, I prepared a budget for the 2019-20 fiscal year. I presented that budget to the Executive Board. The Executive Board approved the budget for presentation to the Representative Council the following week. The Representative Council discussed the budget at the May 13<sup>th</sup> meeting and voted to have the budget reflect a 5% increase to the President's salary with the other officer salaries and the Representatives' per meeting remuneration remaining the same as last year. The budget was then approved for placing on the May 20<sup>th</sup> ballot.

Some of the activities I performed while fulfilling my duties as Treasurer this year are listed below:

- I attended every Executive Board Meeting and every Representative Council Meeting throughout the year.
- I maintained our insurance through Musgrave Insurance.
- I coordinated and attended our Investment Committee meetings with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor, twice this year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring to evaluate our investments and make any changes deemed necessary.
- I met with our accountants at Edward Hawkins & Co. at various times throughout the year to submit our books for a yearly compilation, to complete the paperwork for our Form 990 tax filing, and to submit information for the issuance of W-2 forms.
- I was active in supporting our colleague who was unjustly placed on administrative leave, attending several Board of Education meetings and speaking at some.
- I helped Jackie Scanlon manage the Aisha Fraser GoFundMe account, and worked with the bank and the lawyers to connect that account to a trust fund for Aisha's daughters.
- I helped Woodbury Staff/SHTA with the logistics of Aisha's vigil.
- I attended a number of Superintendent Candidate meetings and High School Principal Candidate meetings voicing my input on the new hires.

- I worked with Bob Bognar, our Public Relations Chair to process payments for the SHTA t-shirts.
- I communicated with the District Payroll Department to pay the salaries of our six paid Officers and Committee Heads along with the relevant STRS and Medicare payments.
- I paid the SHTA Representatives their compensation for attending the meetings throughout the year.
- I prepared the 2019-20 fiscal year budget for approval by the Representative Council at the May Association meeting.
- I attended SHTA social events.
- I attended various community meetings and professional organization meetings, sometimes serving as an SHTA representative.
- I paid bills throughout the year and balanced the checkbook, reimbursing any Association expenses incurred by our members.
- I kept accurate record of our finances throughout the year, maintaining a paper record of every transaction.
- I met with and discussed Association business with the other Officers and Executive Board members throughout the year when needed.

The current financial report is included.

At this moment in our district's history I feel hopeful.

We have had a really rough year and I'm hopeful that we are beginning to climb out of the hole. I think the hiring of David Glasner was the right choice. He seems to be interested in the long-term future of our district, and he listens when people voice concerns. And at the High School we have a new principal, Eric Juli. I don't really know him yet, but he has two children in the district and I'd like to think that gives him a vested interest in seeing the school/district do well. So, as I said, I feel hopeful that we are moving in the right direction.

But I also have some major concerns. And those have to do with the district-wide decisions being made pertaining to the direct care of our children.

The Administration seems to focus on cost-cutting, at the expense of programs serving our students. They talk of cuts we need to make in our staff numbers, and how class sizes are going to grow. Educational research shows one of the biggest factors in a student's performance is her/his ability to connect with an adult. Larger class sizes make that connection more difficult for our students to achieve, because the larger the class, the less attention they get. What we as a district need is more teachers/staff who have direct contact with kids, not less. And we need smaller class sizes to enable our students to establish strong relationships with their teachers.

The Administration forecasts a declining school population - their justification for the proposed staff cuts. My fear is the larger class sizes and less attention to students' special needs will result in parents taking their kids out of Shaker City Schools and choosing other options where their children get more individual attention. I fear the Administration's forecast becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I love this place, which leaves me constantly worried about it, while at the same time eternally hopeful.

I hope everyone takes time this summer to spend with those you love. And I'll leave you with the same advice I give my students: Read a good book.

***Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Scanlon***

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association		
Profit and Loss Standard		05/17/19
July 1, 2018 through May 17, 2019		
		<u>Jul 1, '18 – May 17, '19</u>
<b>Income</b>		
Income		
Member Dues		134,970.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>134,970.00</b>
<b>Investments</b>		
Edward Jones–Fees & Charges		-5,728.68
Key Investments Income		57.24
Change in Value for Key Investm		-39,073.41
Change in Value in Edward Jones		100,297.92
<b>Total Investments</b>		<b>55,553.07</b>
<b>Other Types of Income</b>		
Miscellaneous Revenue		6,745.99
Other Types of Income – Other		5,665.23
<b>Total Other Types of Income</b>		<b>12,411.22</b>
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>202,934.29</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
Operations		
Aisha Fund		8,614.57
Fernway Fund		2,615.80
Accounting		
Banking		-550.34
Accounting – Other		7,534.75
<b>Total Accounting</b>		<b>6,984.41</b>
Compensation		34,293.41
Conferences & Meetings		3,518.28
Executive Board		838.29
Fellowships & Grants		2,161.38
Insurance		5,944.00
Legal		33,770.74
Negotiations		43,009.07
Officers' Expenses		5,992.72
Payroll Taxes		333.48
Public Relations		7,007.80
Publications		178.00
Social		917.09
STRS (TPO Contribution)		3,219.85
<b>Total Operations</b>		<b>159,398.89</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>		<b>159,398.89</b>
<b>Net Income</b>		<b>43,535.40</b>

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association  
 Balance Sheet Standard  
 As of May 17, 2019

05/17/19

May 17, '19

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings

Key Bank Aisha Trust	5,840.00
Key Investments2	45,828.11
Key Bank (checking)	35,751.13

Total Checking/Savings 87,419.24

Other Current Assets

Edward Jones 13760-1-1	512,792.73
Edward Jones 13768-1-3	741,773.94

Total Other Current Assets 1,254,566.67

Total Current Assets 1,341,985.91

TOTAL ASSETS 1,341,985.91

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Equity

Opening Balance Equity	53.69
Retained Earnings	1,298,396.82
Net Income	43,535.40

Total Equity 1,341,985.91

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 1,341,985.91



**SHTA President John Morris, SHTA Vice President Matt Zucca, SHTA Secretary Darlene Garrison and SHTA Treasurer Bill Scanlon at the May SHTA Representative Council meeting @ Onaway School.**

# ***EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS***

## **PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT**

During the 2018-19 school year, I spent time working on the following items for the Association and our members:

- Potential Reduction in Force
- ER claims not being paid
- Support for students with IEP's in general education classes at the Middle School
- Support for teachers at the Middle School regarding student behaviors
- Benefits, leaves, and sabbaticals
- Mentoring new building representatives at the Middle School
- Air quality testing
- Worker's compensation
- Support teacher contract negotiations
- Support for a grievance by a high school teacher
- AESOP times for entering absences
- Non-renewal notices
- Improving HR supports for Resident Educators
- Insurance committee efforts to streamline flexible spending accounts, support wellness initiatives, and encourage members to use Health Advocate
- Supplemental committee efforts to transfer forms to Google, create consistent policies and procedures, and clearly communicate those to all stakeholders
- Sick day transfer committee consultant

The new contract for support teachers, avoiding a reduction in force for another year, and protecting teacher's jobs who received non-renewal notices were all highlights of this school year for me. They each demonstrate that Our Association values "the dignity of work", to quote Senator Sherrod Brown. Valuing the efforts, skills, and knowledge of our colleagues carries over to the types of educational experiences we can offer our students. I am honored to serve this Association and our members.

Have a great summer!

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

## **EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

I have enjoyed another year of serving as the Evaluation Chairperson for the Association. Throughout the year, I have worked with individuals to answer questions and problem solve with issues regarding evaluation. The Evaluation Committee has also continued to work together collaboratively. We have warmly welcomed Dr. Erin Herbruck back to co-facilitating the committee with me and I look forward working with Dr. Herbruck as we prepare for another round of changes to OTEs in the 2020-2021 school year. We also welcome new members Director of Student Data & Accountability Chris Rateno and Onaway Principal Eric Forman to the committee, and look forward to new High School Principal Eric Juli joining us in the fall!

Due to the upcoming state mandated teacher evaluation changes for the 2020-21 school year, the committee has decided to continue with the current forms and protocols for the 2019-2020 school year. We realize that the District SLO SGM results are a concern for many of you and will impact evaluation cycles for some of

you. That being said, the OTES changes include drastically changing how assessments are used in the evaluation system. As we learn more about these changes next year, I will keep you informed.

If you have applied for participation in the Peer Evaluation Program for next year, your building administrator will inform you by May 24th if you have been approved. Please contact your coordinator with any questions or concerns regarding this process. Please contact Emily Rucker if you need assistance signing up for OTES training.

In order to support all evaluators heading into next year, the committee will be facilitating professional development sessions for all evaluators across the district in August. These sessions will help ensure that all evaluators are fully informed about program protocols, as well as refocus the purpose of evaluation as a tool for professional growth.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Lena Paskewitz, chairperson*

## **PAST PRESIDENTS COMMITTEE**

In addition to attending SHTA Executive Board meetings and Representative Council meetings, I attended regular meetings of the Board of Education and the Finance and Audit Committee. I also attended the Insurance Committee meetings. I assisted with financial information for the Support Teachers negotiations and served as a editor for the Newsletter.

Hopefully, I am able to provide a perspective on some of the past practices of the Association. I am delighted that President John Morris is recognizing the contributions of Past President Sal Fabrizio. In doing so, John and his team recognize the importance of building on the work of those that provided the foundation of our Association.

It is a pleasure to continue to serve the members of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Becky Thomas, chairperson*

## **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

[Education Week](#) and the [New York Times Editorial Board](#) wrote on the implications of a Supreme Court case regarding adding a question about citizenship to the 2020 census. The essential concern is that people will not be willing to be counted if they feel they are at risk by doing so, and the US Constitution does not seem to require that this question be on the census (although it was included on the census as recently as 1950). A lot is at stake, including plenty of money in aid that comes to communities based on the number of people that need it. The census forms need to be at the printer by the end of June, so you'll hear the SCOTUS decision by then.

The last 12 months have seen a lot of teacher strikes (including the 30,000 teachers of the city of Los Angeles) and Axios [reports](#) that they are likely to continue. Common themes have been: fewer standardized tests, smaller classes, and opposition to vouchers for private schools. The list does not just include school districts: sometimes entire states (West Virginia and Oklahoma) have seen walkouts. In fact, the New York Times [reports](#) that the teachers of West Virginia have walked out twice in a year. These links have information about the strikes in [Denver](#) and [Oakland](#). The Plain Dealer [reports](#) that teachers at Summit Academy, a charter school in Parma, went on strike.

One of the results of the 2018 elections is that support among elected officials for charter schools is [dropping](#).

Unions of employees that work for public entities (schools, cities, states, ...) have been under attack by the federal government, most noticeably by the US Supreme Court (in the Janus case). Even so, support for unions is rather high among voters.

It has been an honor to serve as the chair of the Legislative Committee this year for the SHTA.

*Respectfully submitted,  
David Klapholz, Chairperson*

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

As Policy Chair of our Association, I help steward SHTA's constitution and communicate its articles and by-laws to our members. This month we are voting on amendments that will add a special education committee to our executive board. I also wrote an essay focused on district administrators placing finances over students, and am currently working on a follow-up. As member of the Teacher Evaluation Committee I participated in decision-making and problem-solving activities during our periodic meetings. I continue to support or members in both my buildings and I am willing to help anyone with any problem who reaches out: [kalan\\_t@shaker.org](mailto:kalan_t@shaker.org). I would also like to remind everyone that our SHTA constitution as well as our new contract along with other goodies, can be found on [www.shtaweb.org](http://www.shtaweb.org).

*Respectfully submitted,  
Tim Kalan, Chairperson*

## **MEMBERSHIP & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**

This year I continue to serve SHTA by maintaining the membership directories for each of our amazing schools. I am incredibly grateful for the support of our amazing representatives who support me by providing accurate information and updates about the members at their schools. I am also serving on the finance committee. Please look out for important financial planning information in the new school year.

Lastly, I coordinate elections. This year, we will have the opportunity to reelect our amazing SHTA officers, vote on the addition of a special education committee and approve very small dues increase.

One of the most difficult parts of my job this year was removing my dear friend Aisha Fraser from the membership directory. Aisha had endless energy and so much love for her family, friends, students and colleagues. I miss her every day, and will never forget her.

As you prepare for summer recess, please be sure to take some time for yourself, for your families and those you love. Enjoy each and every precious day.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Chante Thomas-Taylor*

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

It has been an honor to serve as Public Relations Chair. I have worked to promote the Association through community advertisements, support of student programs, and teacher appreciation gifts. I have attended Executive Board and Representative Council meetings to keep membership informed about PR efforts and to take part in Association discussions.

Arrangements for advertisements in *Shaker Life Magazine* and *The Gristmill* were made. Student support was given through contributions to the Woodbury African American Female Scholars and Teacher Appreciation gifts

for members were distributed during Teacher Appreciation Week in early May. Arrangements for the President's Award and lifetime achievement award were made. I also made a second order of SHTA T-shirts and created a credit card payment option for purchases. I am proud of serving the Association as the Public Relations Chair.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
**Bob Bognar**

## **SHTA ST COMMITTEE**

At the beginning of May, the Negotiations Committee finally signed our 2018-2021 contract. Since SHTA-ST was created as a separate bargaining unit in 2015, almost half of all the Support Teachers in Shaker have either been moved over to the SHTA pay scale or been transferred into the larger bargaining unit. At long last, there are no ESL or Intervention Specialists left who do not earn the same as their SHTA colleagues.

Now, almost all of the remaining Support Teachers work either with our less-prepared elementary level students to help them past the third grade Reading Guarantee, or with our at-risk high-schoolers in the Blended Learning Lab to help them graduate. As Shaker enters a new era, we hope that the incoming administration will finally extend equitable treatment to all of Shaker's teachers. Shaker must put an end to having second-class teacher pay for those who work with our most vulnerable students.

I am a career-changer teacher, single mom, and daughter and granddaughter of union organizers. Being involved in SHTA-ST as a member of the first negotiating team in 2015, lead negotiator this past year and head representative in the intervening time has meant more to me than I can say. Standing up for all of our Support Teachers has brought me a sense of connection and effectiveness that I would never have had otherwise, after getting my teaching license and trying to raise a child and pay off student loans on a Support Teacher salary. But I don't know enough about what our Skills and BLL Support Teachers do every day to adequately represent them anymore. Michael Wells, a Skills Support Teacher who was on the negotiations team this past year and is a member of the Lomond building leadership team, is running to be the new SHTA-ST rep. I support his candidacy wholeheartedly, and although I will miss my Exec and Representative Council peeps, I know we STs are in great hands.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
**Bonnie Gordon**

## **TEACHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

At the April board meeting, 18 teachers were granted a continuing contract from the Shaker Heights Board of Education. They will be recognized at the District Recognition Reception on Wednesday May 22nd in the Shaker Heights High School cafeteria. This reception is a great opportunity to recognize various accomplishments of our colleagues, fellowship with friends old and new, as well as enjoy a delectable meal. I hope that many of you are able to attend.

The main purpose of the Teacher Education Committee is to be a liaison to help newly hired and non-tenured teachers. During this year, I answered questions from teachers to help their understanding of requirements needed to obtain a continuing contract in The Shaker Heights City School District. I continued discussions with teachers and administrators about safety and establishing and maintaining procedures when individuals enter elementary buildings. I created an information packet for new teachers. Within this information, I addressed specific parts of the SHTA contract that were especially important to new teachers and those without a continuing contract.

I feel that even though I am an experienced teacher, there are always fresh ideas to learn from newer teachers. As educators, we should never stop learning from our students and from each other. Thank you for this opportunity to work on behalf of the Association. Wishing you a smooth end-of-the-year and an enjoyable summer!

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Lisa Hardiman*

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

We have had a busy year with ups and down, made easier because by the support that we provided to one another! I am hopeful that you enjoyed fellowshiping with your colleagues at some of our events. If you have yet to join us, please consider coming next school year!

In September, we had our Back to School Happy Hour at the Boss Dog Brewery in Cleveland Heights. It was a fantastic opportunity to reconnect with friends! We had our Autumn Happy Hour at Slyman's Tavern in Beachwood in November.

We will wrap up this school year with our Annual Recognition Reception (Tea) in the High School Upper Cafeteria at 3:45 p.m. on May 22, 2019. Newly tenured, career milestones (15 and 25 years), and retirees will be honored. Our Association President will award two individuals with the SHTA Service Awards and a SHTA Lifetime Achievement Award to a former member. All employees are invited and encouraged to attend. I hope to see all of you there!

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Selena Boyer*

## **LEGAL AID COMMITTEE**

My heart aches when reflecting on the need for legal aid this year. In January, Representative Council voted to pay for the legal fees incurred while setting up the trust fund to support Aisha Fraser's children. I think of Aisha often and am proud to be a part of a community which came together to honor Aisha's life beautifully and generously gave money and support for her children. Donations can still be made to the Gofundme account which can be found at this link. <https://www.gofundme.com/aisha-fraser-fund>

I am thankful for all of the work in which council representatives and our officers do each day to help their colleagues solve problems and avoid the need for legal aid.

We all need and deserve a summer full of rest and renewal.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Cathy Grieshop*

## **The PAC of the SHTA COMMITTEE**

In this tumultuous year around the country and right here in our schools, I've tried to keep you updated on what is happening and how we can help or make change through the [PAC Facebook](#) page. This year I have encouraged people to vote through poetry and Facebook. We need to vote and speak up: send letters, march for what we believe in and communicate with others about important issues in education today.

One issue is *Aisha's Law*, which has been introduced by Ohio Representative Boyd and is waiting to be assigned a number. I am continuing to monitor this bill and will find out what we can do to assist in getting it passed into law.

I wrote a letter to the Board of Education pleading for Jody Podl and all employees to be treated fairly and respectfully. I am optimistic that this us vs them mentality is changing for the better.

I attended few board meetings including the work session for the SHTA-ST decision. I gave input on a new superintendent and high school principal.

Please follow the [SHTA PAC page on FB](#). I am open to suggestions about what our PAC could do or ways we could take action together. Teachers are marching all across the county for better funded schools and decent salaries.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Cathy Grieshop*

## **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

This has been a difficult teaching year for the district and myself. Our Association has risen to the occasion by pulling together and organizing to support each other. I am extremely lucky to work with such a fine faculty. While I have had to work harder this past years to communicate and update the Association, it has been worth it, for the graditutde members have shown.

I have formed, edited and distributed eight SHTA Newsletters to our Membership. I have also made sure that the newsletters are added to our website, [shtaweb.org](#). I have distributed our Newsletter to retired members, school board members, administration and community members. I have written several editorials and have worked with members on their own editorials for the newsletter. I have worked with our amazing editing staff, Dr. John Morris, Dr. Becky Thomas and Chris Cotton, to make sure I have dotted all my I's and crossed all my t's. I want to personally thank them for their service.

I have updated our Facebook page and Twitter account. I have sent reminders and updates to our Membership throughout the year through email.

I worked to support Aisha's service and worked with Jackie and Bill Scanlon on Aisha's funds. Her loss to her students, friends, co-workers, and family is still deeply felt.

I met with retired SHTA President Sal Fabrizio along with SHTA President Dr. John Morris and retired SHTA Treasurer Tom Patrick to learn about the history of Our Association. It is important to understand how the Association began and grew. I will be working to transcribe that interview. I was also gifted and posted on [SHTAweb.org](#) the original newsletters of the Association from the 1970-1971 school year.

I enjoy the responsibility of working for our membership. Please feel free to contact me any concerns or opinions at [glasier\\_a@shaker.org](mailto:glasier_a@shaker.org) or #6168.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Andrew Glasier*

## **SALARY-TENURE COMMITTEE**

After almost a year of negotiations and arbitration, the SHTA Support Teachers and the district finally signed the contract last Monday. The following highlights of the contract include the following:

1. An initial boost in base pay, along with the same raises as SHTA (2% per year) over the course of the contract.
2. Elimination of the freeze in Support Teacher pay during the first three years of service.
3. The following language: "Co-teaching . . . [w]riting IEPs and 504 Plans, writing lesson plans, and developing assessments shall be considered Teacher work, not Support Teacher work." While Support Teachers can still do this work, if they do, then they will be paid on the Teachers' wage scale.
4. ELL Support Teachers and Intervention Specialist Support Teachers were moved to the Teacher's Salary Schedule.

Thanks to Bonnie Gordon, our lead negotiator, for all of her outstanding work on this contract. Also, thanks go out to Jill Lasheen, Cinnamon Anderson, Michael Wells, Peg Rimedio, and Teresa Douglas for their dedication to this long and, at times, arduous process. Also thanks to our indefatigable lawyer, Susannah Muskovitz and our school budget advisor, James Schmidt, for their vital contributions as well. Finally, both Monica Triozzi and Colleen Grams played essential roles in the arbitration process. As I said in our last Representative Council Meeting, these individuals are part of the historical effort to establish the Support Teachers bargaining unit. We will be forever grateful for their efforts.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*John Morris*

## **SICK DAY TRANSFER SPECIAL COMMITTEE**

In our current contract, the language to start a pilot program for a Sick Day Transfer Program was agreed upon by the SHTA and the Administration. Side Letter A states, "The Sick Day Transfer committee will consist of an equal number of representatives appointed by the SHTA President and the Superintendent. The purpose of the committee is to establish procedures for the pilot program, including procedures for requesting a sick day transfer, determining guidelines for qualified recipients, and determining any other procedures relevant to the operation of the sick leave transfer program." Our first meeting was held on March 18th at the Administration building. Addie Tobey, David Wells, and I represented the SHTA and Dr. Erin Herbruck and Dr. Marla Robinson represented the Administration. We discussed the proposal that had originally been made about the structure of the program at our last negotiations and planned to meet again in April. I met with Bryan Christman on April 22nd to review financial and administrative questions around the Program. We met again as a group on May 2nd and were joined by Sarah Fish and Mr. Christman. We put together a conceptual framework for the Program at this time. The work of the committee is not finished, but we are close to submitting a draft to Dr. Morris and Dr. Glasner or Dr. Wilkins for approval by the School Board.

- The SHTA will be responsible for both the solicitation and the tracking of sick day donations.
- Members that are eligible for sick day donation may approach an SHTA building representative, a member of SHTA Executive Board, or another SHTA member to begin the process to ask for sick day donation.
- Eligible members will file FMLA paperwork and that will be confirmed by the Administration.

- Donations will be capped at 50 days per eligible member during the pilot program.
- SHTA members may donate up to five sick days per eligible person during the pilot program.
- Donations will be issued from Administration to eligible members at the instruction of the Sick Day Transfer Committee.
- Days will be transferred at a ratio of 2.5 donated days for 1 sick day for the eligible recipient.
- SHTA members agreeing to donate days will let the Sick Day Transfer Committee know of their intention via a form to be created that will state the member's name, building, maximum days of donation, and the recipient of the donation. (Only days that are actually transferred to the recipient will be taken from the SHTA member.)
- Any transferred sick days that are not used remain in the recipient's account.
- Sick days will be taken uniformly from all donating members as they are issued to the eligible member in 10 day increments.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
James Schmidt*



## MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING MAY 13, 2019: ONAWAY SCHOOL

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

**Eric Forman, Principal of Onaway Elementary School** welcomed Rep. Council to Onaway. He expressed that it has been a jam-packed year, very busy. There has been a lot of exciting, interesting work from teachers. Mr. Forman has a daughter in kindergarten and he has an opportunity to see things from a parent perspective. There are so many things that our district has to offer students, it's just spectacular, a wonderful experience for his daughter.

**MINUTES** from the April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Rep. Council meeting were approved, motion made by James Schmidt and seconded by Tod Torrence.

### **Administration Report**

**Dr. Terri Breeden, Dr. Lois Cavucci, and Dr. Erin Herbruck**, were present from central office.

- Dr. Breeden shared that she was elated about a lot of things happening in our school district.
- Buckeye State Credit Union has donated \$10,000 in Aisha Fraser's honor to Woodbury Elementary School to be used for 6th Grade Camp.
- Dr. Breeden shared that it takes all of us to make these events successful.
- Dr. John Morris recognized Dr. Cavucci for her time here in Shaker Heights City School District. She will be resigning in June.

### **P.T.O. Report**

- No Report- Representative was not present for meeting.

### **Officer's Report**

**President, John Morris**

- Attended HS Principal Meetings
- Updated SHTA Facebook pages and CCES Facebook pages
- Communicated with Interim Superintendent Dr. Stephen Wilkins
- Communicated with incoming Superintendent Dr. David Glasner
- Communicated with HR Director Dr. Lois Cavucci and Treasurer Bryan Christman
- Worked on Teacher renewals
- Assisted on job share and reduced time issues
- Worked on Special Education Issues
- Talked to Dr. Erin Herbruck about HS Principal Search
- Discussed SHTA Awards with Publicity Chair Bob Bognar
- Discussed a Woodbury concern with Dr. Angela Goodrum
- Worked on a Special Education disciplinary issue with HS members
- Worked on mediating teacher concerns
- Assisted with teacher retirement and schedule requests
- Helped with FMLA issues
- Signed Support Teacher Contract with Support Teacher Negotiations team
- Asked James Schmidt to serve as ad hoc executive board member to oversee and report on Sick Day Transfer Committee
- We will vote on Officers, Budget, Increase, and Special Education chair this month
- Attended School Board Meeting on Tuesday, May 14th

My pleasure to announce three recipients of SHTA Awards this year:

- The Service Award goes to
  - Jackie Conway-Scanlon for her work on Aisha's GoFundMe
  - Aisha Fraser posthumously for her work and dedication to the SHTA and the district

The Lifetime Achievement Award will be given to Former President Sal Fabrizio for establishing the modern SHTA as we know it.

- It will be my honor and pleasure to give out these awards at Our Recognition Reception on Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> from 3:45-5:30 in the HS Upper Cafeteria as we also recognize our newly tenured teachers, career milestones, and retirees.

**Salary – Tenure:** I had great pleasure being able to sign the SHTA ST Contract.

***Vice President, Matt Zucca***

- Attended the Investment Committee meeting.
- Processing Teacher Fellowship Grants. It will be put on hold over summer vacation and will resume in August/September.
- Touched base with new membership to make sure that we can offer support with all the changes and wrapping up the school year.

***Secretary, Darlene Garrison***

- Attendance is going around, please make sure you check the number of meetings attended, write your total for the year and initial.
- Continuing to take notes for the membership.

***Treasurer, Bill Scanlon***

- Financial reports were passed out, budget we will talk about at the end.
  - Legal Fees \$33,170 this year and we are still not finished with that
  - Negotiations for SHTA ST was \$42,700
- Second sheet discussion of the budget, and compensation sheets being passed around.
- During this month met with Dr. Glasner to discuss district issues I thought he should know about.
- Paying bills and writing checks.

**Executive Board Reports**

***Past President, Becky Thomas***

- Will attend BOE meeting tomorrow and I did attend last month as well
  - Dr. Stephen Wilkins resignation is on the agenda
- The Woodbury schedule plan is on the agenda for the board meeting.
- May 23rd, I will attend the Finance and Audit meeting, we will tour

***Teacher Education, Lisa Hardiman***

- Congratulatory letters were mailed to 18 newly tenured teachers.

***Membership/Elections, Chante Thomas-Taylor***

- Next week is the budget vote and election
  - folders with signature lists, ballots are included in the envelopes for:
    - Dues increase
    - budget ratification
    - Rep council
    - Officers
    - Amendment ratification

### ***Policy, Tim Kalan***

- Helped members with evaluation issues and questions
- Wrote wording for the amendments

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

- All coffee mugs have been distributed
  - Next year will use them for new teachers and Happy Hour gifts
  - We have awards for the awards ceremony

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

- Working on an agenda
- Answering questions about SGM, next year's fears
- Meeting tomorrow- any requests, thoughts suggestions, needs we should be talking about at this meeting
- Urge people to read newsletters, information about the changes with SGM has been posted in prior newsletters

### ***Legislative, Dave Klapholz***

- Not in attendance

### ***Publications, Andrew Glasier***

- Updated FB & Twitter Pages
- Sent newsletter out to members, retired members, and administration
- Purchased and sent gift certificate to SHTA Break for Books winner, Karmi Moldovan
- Worked with retired SHTA treasure Tom Patrick to make corrections in Shakerite article about Jody Podl arbitration
- Editorial from Mercer about class sizes
- Open letter to Shakerite from Donna Jelen in editorials also
- SHHS, SHTA reps writing Welcome Letter to Eric Juli
- Class size K-4 in each building spreadsheet
- Will be sending out emails and posting about District Recognition Reception on May 22nd.
- Last SHTA T-shirt day: May 31st
- Summer SHTA contest: teachers work during the summer pictures/double bonus if in SHTA T-shirt.  
Calling it SHTA #teachersworkallsummer contest?
- May Newsletter has END OF THE YEAR blurb. All members of Board must submit by May 15th.
- SHTA file cabinet: need to look through and categorize
- Working with Evaluation Committee and Peer Evaluation coordinators to plan for end of the year and beyond!

### ***Social, Selena Brown***

- The Recognition Reception is all set for Wednesday, May 22nd. The reception will be held at Shaker Heights High School, upper cafeteria at 3:45PM.
  - Please encourage members to attend.

### ***Legal Aid, Cathy Grieshop***

- No Report for Legal Aid
- Updated PAC FaceBook Page

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

- Productive Supplemental Planning meeting with Dr. Herbruck, Dr. Cavucci and Sarah Fish
- There is a plan in place, a form is in your building for anyone looking for a supplemental contract. It has to be signed off and approved by your building principal.
- Looking to expand the committee, adding building reps.
- Job descriptions should be included so that extra duties are not added to positions already in place.
- Issues with Medical Mutual Emergency Room visits are being resolved.
  - Suggestion: make sure your doctor is correctly coding items to be covered by insurance. We have to advocate for ourselves.

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

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### ***Building Representative Reports***

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

- No Report

#### ***Fernway, Victoria Goldfarb***

- No Report

***Lomond, Steve Smith***

- No Report

***Mercer, Nicole Cicconetti***

- Substitute coverage this past month was difficult to track because of testing.
- Discussed with members how the Shared Attribution affects them.
- Discussed safety protocol at Mercer. Met with Mr. Florence about the new security measures that will be in place for next school year.
  - With safety issues, should we contact Vic Ferrell first or our building principal?
    - Principal first

***Onaway, Paula Klausner***

- Grade level things going on with team members, trying to work out some things going on.
  - John Morris, we are leaders in our buildings by this fact where we can help by meditating, we should help.

***Woodbury, Angela Goodrum***

- No Report

***Middle School, John Koppitch***

- Rebekah Sharpe and myself met with Ms. Hunter to discuss non-renewals, teachers awarded tenure and open house for next year.
- There were no non-renewals for our building. Regarding achieving tenure, it is imperative that in a teacher's last evaluation prior to the year that are to achieve tenure, the expectations should be clearly written and expressed from the evaluator to the teacher regarding their tenure status.
- Regarding open house for next year, Ms. Hunter stated that she would look into the possibility of moving it to Thursday night.

***High School, James Schmidt***

This year has been filled with some up and some downs, but I believe that we are ending on a very positive note at the High School. I want to thank Dr. Glasner for his work at the High School this year and we look forward to working with Mr. Juli in the next school year. Our members also expressed their sincere appreciation to Mr. Bognar for his wonderful Teacher Appreciation coffee cups. We also wish to thank the High School PTO who provided a wonderful lunch last week. We feel very appreciated.

- I continue to meet with Dr. Glasner weekly.
- I attended the April Finance and Audit Meeting.
- I participated in the meetings between the prospective principal candidates and the various collective bargaining units.
- I met with members of the Administration and SHTA members to resolve potential discipline issues. All issues have been resolved and settled.
- I met with a member and Administration regarding a continuing contract extension and the steps that will be taken in the upcoming semester.
- I met with Administration regarding our evaluation process and the practice of weighting certain evaluation areas more than others as well as the practice of excluding evidence presented at the post observation conference. We will continue to monitor the use of our agreed upon practices for teacher evaluations.
- I worked with Ms. Browne and Mr. Christman to resolve an issue with two members that were incorrectly paid. This issue has been resolved to the satisfaction of both members.
- I met with several other members of of the SHTA to provide guidance on various contractual issues, including early leave, Personal Day usage, and issues with student discipline.
- I celebrated the decision of the neutral arbitrator on April 22nd.

### ***SHTA Support Teachers, Bonnie Gordon***

- At the beginning of May, the Negotiations Committee finally signed our 2018-2021 contract. Since SHTA-ST was created as a separate bargaining unit in 2015, almost half of all the Support Teachers in Shaker have either been moved over to the SHTA pay scale or been transferred into the larger bargaining unit. At long last, there are no ESL or Intervention Specialists left who do not earn the same as their SHTA colleagues.
- Now, almost all of the remaining Support Teachers work either with our less-prepared elementary level students to help them past the third grade Reading Guarantee, or with our at-risk high-schoolers in the Blended Learning Lab to help them over the line to graduate. As Shaker enters a new era, we hope that the incoming administration will finally extend equitable treatment to all of Shaker's teachers. Shaker must put an end to having second-class teacher pay for those who work with our most vulnerable students.
- I am a career-changer teacher, single mom, and daughter and granddaughter of union organizers. Being involved in SHTA-ST as a member of the first negotiating team in 2015, lead negotiator this past year and head rep in the intervening time has meant more to me than I can say. Standing up for all of our Support Teachers has brought me a sense of connection and effectiveness that I would never have had otherwise, after getting my teaching license and trying to raise a child and pay off student loans on a Support Teacher salary. But I don't know enough about what our Skills and BLL Support Teachers do every day to adequately represent them anymore. Michael Wells, a Skills Support Teacher who was on the negotiations team this past year and is a member of the Lomond building leadership team, is running to be the new SHTA-ST rep. I support his candidacy wholeheartedly, and although I will miss my Exec and Rep Council peeps, I know we STs are in great hands.

### **Old Business - None**

### **New Business**

- Motion to increase SHTA President salary 5%, other officers, building reps, pay for meetings will be at a 0% increase.
  - Motion moved by James Schmidt and seconded by Lena Paskewitz.
- Motion by Tim Kalan to increase across the board by 2%, Seconded by Jessica O'Brien
- Motion amended by Bonnie Gordon- 5% increase for President Dr. John Morris, 0% everyone else, seconded by Tim Kalan

### **Good of the Order**

- John Morris, thanked the membership for the 5% increase.
- Thank you Jessica O'Brien and Aimee Grey for your support system.
- Thank you Onaway Reps. for hosting our May meeting and the delicious meal.

**May 13<sup>th</sup> Rep. Council meeting was adjourned at 6:14PM. Motion to adjourn meeting made by Tim Kalan and seconded by Victoria Goldfarb.**

***Respectfully submitted,  
Darlene Garrison***



SHTA Is now on  @SHTAssoc  
FOLLOW US!

**The SHTA Secretary Darlene Garrison takes notes at the Representative Council Meeting at Onaway School.**



**The SHTA April Representative Council Meeting at Onaway School.**



The SHTA PAC is on  .  @  
[PAC of the Shaker Heights Teachers Association](#)

## *Class size, more than just a number*

*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.*

In Shaker, we pride ourselves on parental and family involvement. With that said, ask a parent of a child with a learning disability if they'd rather have their child in class of 17 or 25... the answer is predictable, but should not be limited to the concrete number. Just as the saying, "Age is just a number", so is classroom size in an elementary classroom. I implore you to think deeper into the daily life of a classroom with "only 17 kids".

The debate is often our classes aren't "that big" in comparison, the numbers alone can't be the isolated contributing factor. On paper, 17:1 seems close to ideal for a classroom teacher and his/her students. But what that number on a spreadsheet doesn't tell you: it's multiple children struggling with reading and/or math, it's students needing constant small group and individual re-teaching in order to understand a single concept, it's children who struggle with emotional coping skills who need 1-on-1 interventions to find a calm place so they are ready to learn, it's students who excel academically and need an extended curriculum to reach their highest potential, it's students who also are in the ES classrooms who are mainstreaming in the general education classroom, it's students with an IEP or a 504 that need accommodations throughout the day, it's students who come to school hungry and tired and yearn for the teacher's constant attention--often leading to misbehavior and interruptions of learning, it's students who run from the classroom leaving the teacher with no immediate assistance, it's students being pulled for interventions so classroom instruction must be meticulously planned in order to ensure all students take part in lessons.

The answer when we ask, "Why aren't we doing something about this?": Cost. The number one factor limiting districts, Shaker included, on hiring more teachers and paraprofessionals to appropriately support our student population, is cost. As educators, we aren't naive to the fact that it's a considerable cost to reduce class sizes and add staff, but why aren't we discussing what it costs from the other side, when we don't reduce class sizes & provide essential support, yet keep the same high expectations for students and teachers? The long-term consequences of not reducing class sizes will have a negative impact on our children's futures (NEA President, Dennis Van Roekel). It has been proven, minority and low-income students show even greater gains when placed in small classes in the primary grades (Center for Public Education). So why not for Shaker, a district where we emphasize equity?

Administratively speaking, test scores have become the main priority, using tunnel vision, ignoring other factors necessary to help teach the whole child. A program spanning grades K-3 will produce more benefits, than a program that reaches students in only one or two of the primary grades (Center for Public Education). At the forefront, when students are placed in larger class sizes in grades Kindergarten and First, with little to no additional support for behavioral and emotional needs, combined with a lack of resources to implement a rigorous curriculum, their chance of achieving successful test scores is dramatically reduced. Imagine educators attempting to defend a dissertation without doing appropriate foundational research. Imagine a firefighter entering a home engulfed in flames, without completing his/her training courses. It wouldn't happen! So why would we expect young, growing, sensitive children to thrive at *their* highest level, without providing them with the most flourishing and appropriate environment prior to "gametime"?

Often the response to questions such as these are to argue the quality of the teachers; however, we were hired with intention and confidence by Shaker Schools, therefore the exterior factors are to be considered, **not** the credibility of the hardworking faculty you entrusted in the first place.

*Respectfully submitted by Nicole Cicconetti, 1st Grade, Mercer*

## ***An Open Letter to the Adviser and Editors of the Shakerite***

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Dear Natalie Sekicky and Students of the Shakerite Editorial Board,

There's adequacy, and there's excellence. Plenty of student news publications are perfectly adequate - decent grammar, cute stories, good enough photography, and even at times a cohesive point of view in an editorial. The Shakerite is different. Your publication transcends expectations to the point that I am at a loss to categorize it.

I'll take a stab at it through the lens of music. There are performers and musicians who are perfectly fine to listen to, and then there are those who touch your soul. There are very good, very talented, very skilled players, and then there are those whose fingers do ridiculous motions seemingly without effort while channeling something indescribably and impossibly spiritual. There are musicians, and then there are artists.

You all are artists. Your literary virtuosity would be impressive enough, but the vigor and honesty with which you attack the stories and issues at the very heart of our struggle gives me further reassurance that this generation has the skills and motivation to transform society as we know it.

Emet's investigation on Kuehnle's hiring is an epic and brutal takedown of a farcical dog-and-pony show that was years in the making. His work, in my opinion, can stand proudly beside the work of investigative journalists at top news organizations around the globe. Rarely do we see such well-researched, meticulous reporting that also manages to be riveting and fun to read (and re-read).

Mae's piece is the exposé I've been waiting for on the realities of being black at SHHS. Her beautifully crafted article is inclusive of various points of view while maintaining focus on and respect for an issue that we routinely (and naively) fail to acknowledge. Bravo.

The Editorial Board's open letter to Glasner is one of the best analyses I've ever read on the state of our District. It is positive, hopeful, unabashedly honest, and overflowing with integrity.

The decision to include an interview with Isaacs was a stroke of brilliance (well done, Astrid!), and Adonis's piece is a sweet acknowledgement of our humanity as we all struggle through this extremely messy and endlessly challenging journey...together.

I don't mean to leave anyone out. This entire issue is a masterpiece. I remain in awe of the inspired content produced by the Shakerite and of the leadership and guidance provided by Ms. Sekicky. Our community is indebted to you for your unflinching coverage and your dogged determination to help us all get it right.

*Sincerely,*  
***Donna Jelen, Music Department Chair, Shaker Heights High School***

## ***AN OPEN LETTER TO ERIC JULI***

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Dear Mr. Juli,

As May gives way slowly to June and the clocks tick their final tocks of the year, I am reminded of the first day I entered the Shaker Heights City School District. Dr. Mark Freeman was our Superintendent and Mr. Michael Griffith was the principal of the High School. My knowledge of Shaker was cursory at best, having observed here once or twice as an undergraduate student and possessing only second-hand knowledge of the educational excellence associated with these hallowed halls. It took me less than my first day to see why the motto, "A community is known by the schools it keeps," was, is, and always will be the guiding principle for Shaker Heights. As a resident yourself, you know that value that your neighbors place on the experience that their children will have in our buildings. Whether from Boulevard, Fernway, Lomond, Mercer, or Onaway, they all arrive here at the High School.

This building is the culmination of the Shaker School Experience for every child and that is an important idea not lost on any staff member here. We value every student and the educational impact that we can have on him, her, or them. Our students come from all walks of life, possessing myriad attributes. Our job is to help them to take what they have and show them what they can become. We open doors for our students through reading and analyzing challenging literature, examining events and the causes and the perspectives that have shaped and continue to shape the world they will grow up in, and immersing them in the world of languages that they may someday speak in their countries of origin. They explore the physical and life sciences in the classroom, out in the community, and learn by doing in our maker spaces. And they learn Math. Sorry, it's hard to make math sound exciting. Yet somehow, our teachers do it. They do it every day and they do it when students aren't at their best. We all do. Our teachers, YOUR teachers, are the most dedicated group of professionals that I have encountered in 22 years of education. Some of us have been around since the Middle School was Byron, and some of us still have wet ink on our diplomas. Sure, we have master's degrees and some of us even have doctoral degrees, but what we will do for our students is what separate us from the rest. We come in early, we stay late, we constantly reflect on our craft and our practice. We plan together, learn together, and celebrate together. We innovate together. We want the best experience for every single child that walks through the doors, no matter which door they use. All of this we do to make this school, your school, OUR school, the best school that it can be. We look forward to having you join us on this journey. While it may seem appropriate to make an analogy to a principal as the captain of a ship, it is more apt to liken the job to that of the rudder. Not seen all of the time, yet essential to providing direction and stability.

We look forward to working with you to take this great place to new places of greatness. We will work with you and support you. We will expect the same in return. Be direct with us and we will be direct with you. We can provide context for you and you can provide perspective for us in return. Conflicts are opportunities for growth and reflection and successes provide us with models to improve upon. Listen to us and we will listen to you. Come into our classes to see what is happening. Ask us why we chose to do something if you don't understand why we would do it that way. We make collaborative curricular decisions based on best pedagogical practices, knowledge of our students, and after careful consideration. We don't make curricular decisions because we really like a book or because we have a worksheet for that chapter. Everything we do, we do for these students. Please keep that in mind.

My colleagues and I sincerely look forward to working with you in the future, and we wish you the best of luck in this new stage of your career.

**Sincerely,**

**The High School Representatives of The Shaker Heights Teachers' Association**

## ***Where's the Plan?***

*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.*

In last month's Newsletter, I wrote about looking at buildings and available space. I did not mean to say that absorbing the students, teachers, and staff from Fernway was easy or ideal. Many people had to make accommodations to make that happen. My focus was on the administration's commitment to cut employees without having strategies that include other options. My point was that Reduction in Force (RIF) of teachers and other staff should not be the only approach to cutting expenses. Where is the comprehensive plan for the enrollment decline or for aging facilities?

Attrition is lazy. Instead of being leaders, the administration is allowing circumstances dictate program decisions. For example, if an art teacher decides to leave, they could use that as an impetus to cut the art program. Or if a theater teacher is leaving, they diminish the theater program—something we saw last year at the high school.

Our district is better than this. Where is the plan?

Back in the 1980s Shaker faced a similar situation. The leaders at that time lived up to their responsibilities. After researching options, holding extensive discussions with numerous stakeholders, visiting other districts, and evaluating educational practices, four elementary buildings were closed and the grade level configuration was reorganized.

Everyone laments the loss of neighborhood schools yet families in the Moreland, Ludlow, Sussex, and Malvern neighborhoods made that sacrifice. There were also concerns that restructuring from K to 6 buildings to K-4 and 5-6 programming would not be successful. And remember, prior to that, the Junior High (grades 7-9) became a Middle School (grades 7-8) with grade 9 moving to the High School. The excellence of our district has continued.

These decisions were not easy but they were successfully accomplished with a well-articulated plan that demonstrated the benefits of the changes. The plan was developed over several years with multiple goals in mind including maintaining the excellence of our educational programs while maximizing the financial benefits of operating fewer school buildings.

Let me be clear. I am not recommending closing buildings or reorganizing. I am recommending that the district develop a plan that is not just eliminating staff positions based on who decides to leave in a particular year. And, as an aside, while 14 staff positions were originally proposed to be cut for 2019-2020, the central office administration is adding two new positions. At this time, I have not heard there are any staff reduction plans for next year.

Because I attend so many district meetings, I know that the administration and Board have bemoaned the declining enrollment for the past five years at least. Yet no effort has been made to actually deal with this circumstance.

So, I repeat. Our district is better than this. Where is the plan?

***Becky Thomas, Past SHTA President***

Please join us for our  
**District**  
**Recognition Reception**



***High School Upper Cafeteria***  
**May 22, 2019**  
**3:45 p.m.**

***ALL Shaker employees are invited and encouraged to attend!***

*This event is sponsored by the Shaker Heights Teacher's Association and the Shaker Heights Board of Education.*

*Contact Selena Boyer with questions ([boyer\\_s@shaker.org](mailto:boyer_s@shaker.org)).*

# MAY ELECTION ADDENDUM

May 21, 2019

Dear SHTA and SHTA ST Members,

It is my pleasure to announce the results from our May20th Election and Budget Vote.

**The 2019-2020 Budget passed receiving 303/ 307 votes. ( 98%)**

**The proposed amendments allowing for the creation of a special education committee on the executive board passed receiving 305/307 votes. (99%)**

**And, the dues increase from \$300 to \$330 also passed receiving 277/307 votes. ( 90%)**

Our SHTA Officers have been re-elected for the 2019-2021 term. Congratulations to President John Morris, Vice-President Matt Zucca, Secretary Darlene Garrison and Treasurer Bill Scanlon!

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

Boulevard- **Angela Anderson**, Jennifer Goulden, alt

Onaway- Paula Klausner

Fernway- **Victoria Goldfarb**

Lomond- **Donita Townsend**, Jill Dipiero, Steve Smith

Mercer- **Nicole Ciconetti**, Cathy Richards, alt

Woodbury- **Angela Goodrum**, Stacey DeYoung, Aquita Shephard, Lee Appel

Middle School- **Rebekah Sharpe** 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, Tito Vazquez

SHTA ST – David Wells

Again, congratulations to all of you!

*Chante Thomas*

*Membership/Elections Chairperson*