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## *A Message from the President of the SHTA*

In 1977, SHTA President Sal Fabrizio signed the paperwork that made us into the Shaker Heights Teachers Association that we know today. Six years later, in 1983, we registered with the State Employment and Relations Board as an independent union. In the intervening 50 years, our predecessors (full time in-classroom teachers like ourselves) have created a living document in our Agreement, the contract, that has sustained us as one of the best school districts to work within the state. As an independent union, we have been able to retain the finest council in Northeast Ohio. Susannah Muskovitz and now Brooks Boron represent us, as well as the Cleveland Teachers, Cleveland Firefighters, Solon Teachers, and other unions throughout the county. We have direct access to our legal team in a way that national affiliates cannot. We pay dues that are one third of our nearest affiliated districts because of our independent status. We also pay less than half of our nearest independent union.

That being said, we are in a time of transition and that has required extended representation. The Executive Board decided two years ago to double the representation at the elementary level and middle school to represent teachers moved from Woodbury. We will continue this doubling until Woodbury is complete. We have also added representation at Ludlow and expanded our Executive Board to represent DEI, Special Education, Building Safety and Sick Day Transfer (the last of which has saved our members over one hundred thousand dollars in days without pay from medical leave). In essence, we have been doing the work to represent our members more and more extensively and efficiently.

We have not had a dues increase in seven years. With the changing economy and increased representation, at the last representative council meeting, we proposed a \$30 per year increase to dues, which would take us from \$330 to \$360 per year. We know we have strong savings, due to the diligence of SHTA Treasurer Bill Scanlon. But, if the worst should happen and we had to engage in any work stoppage our coffers would be decimated by the near million dollar per month price tag of paying for COBRA Family and Individual Insurance coverage for our 470 members. That's right, the first thing districts do on a work stoppage are to pull benefits from union members. Granted, this is a worst case scenario, but part of our job as a union is to prepare for those worse cases.

All this comes down to my plea: would you please vote for this modest increase in May? It will add an additional \$3 per pay for your 10 dues payments. It's a small ask for our future security and for our continued investment in our Association that gives us all so much.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

Tuesday, April 28, 2026  
Board of Education Work Session  
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Friday, May 1, 2026  
Ludlow: Professional Learning (No School  
for PreK)

Monday May 4, 2026  
SHTA Executive Board – Fernway

Monday, May 4th to Friday, May 8th -  
Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week

Monday, May 11, 2026  
SHTA Representative Council - Onaway

Spring has sprung. It's been a busy month. I spoke with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner regularly. I communicated with Human Resources Director Dr. Tiffany Joseph regularly. I updated the SHTA Facebook page with Publications Editor Andrew Glasier. I communicated with Special Education Chair Tito Vazquez concerning multiple building concerns. I communicated with SHTA Legal Consul Brooks Boron about member issues. I communicated with Public Relations Chairperson Bob Bogнар.

I communicated with Innovative Center members. I communicated with High School Head Representative Jessica O'Brien on SHTA Scholarships. I worked with an elementary member on FMLA and evaluation concerns. I communicated with Evaluations Committee Chair Lena Paskewitz about an evaluation concern. I communicated with a secondary member concerned about leave payments along with Treasurer Bill Scanlon and Professional Rights & Responsibilities Chair Mike Sears. I communicated with

members on Voluntary Transfers. I communicated with Treasurer Donte Hayes on the buyout. I asked Publication Editor Andrew Glasier to send out a communication on the buyout with membership. I communicated with Legal Chair James Schmidt and By-Laws and Constitution Chair Tim Kalan on Association issues. I spoke with Local Professional Development Committee (LPDC) Chair Ellen Roberts about transitions in the committee. I communicated with a member about a continuing contract issue. I worked with elementary members on a grievance.

Being SHTA President is among my most significant life work. I am honored to continue the work begun by Sal Fabrizio in 1977 and I will be honored to pass the role on to the next SHTA President in the future. I am proud to be a steward of a living document in the form of our contract that grows and changes and represents our members' different needs over time. I am also proud that we are independent, although I honor our union siblings in national affiliates. I am asking you all to pass this small increase in May, so we can continue the work of maintaining our Association through these ever changing times. There is power in a union and part of our responsibility is to pass that on to the next generation.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
*John L. Morris, PhD*

***The SHTA is on FACEBOOK!***

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

***And INSTAGRAM!***

<https://www.instagram.com/shtassoc/>

# **SHTA OFFICERS' REPORTS**

## **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Over the past month, I have been actively supporting our members and handling our Association responsibilities. I finalized all invoices and payments for Night for the Red & White, ensuring a successful and well-coordinated event working with members of the Shaker Schools Foundation. I also met with an SHTA member to discuss a retirement/buyout question and provided guidance on navigating that process. Additionally, I attended the SHTA Executive Board meeting on Monday, April 6th at Mercer Elementary School, where we continued important discussions and planning. I collected receipts, submitted requisition paperwork to Treasurer Bill Scanlon, and mailed reimbursement checks to SHTA members who were awarded Fellowship Grants. I also worked one-on-one with a member to review contract language and provide clarity around voluntary transfers within the district. Lastly, I contributed an editorial piece for the upcoming May newsletter, reflecting on my fond memories of being a member of SHTA over the past 32 years and expressing my sincere gratitude to our members for embracing me in my various roles.

### **Dr. Rebecca L. Thomas Fellowship Grant Recipients**

Please remember to submit your receipts in order to receive your reimbursement of up to \$100. Once receipts are received, please allow 2–3 weeks for processing and delivery of your check. For those who have inquired about the reimbursement process, the steps are outlined below:

- Submit your receipts to me, Darlene Garrison, either by email or through school mail.
- I will complete a requisition form and forward it to our Treasurer, Bill Scanlon.
- The Treasurer will issue a reimbursement check and return it to me via the school mail system.
- Once received, I will send a second congratulatory letter along with your reimbursement check.

Please note that reimbursements will not be processed during summer vacation. The final deadline to submit receipts is the end of September 2026.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me at ext. 4997.

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

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Spring is finally springing! I hope that everyone feels rested, rejuvenated, and ready to complete the final stretch of the 2025-2026 school year.

During the months of March and April, I continue to attend SHTA Representative Council and Executive Board Meetings. During these meetings I take attendance and take minutes for the meetings. The minutes can be found at the end of SHTA newsletters each month.

This month I also participated in Mercer's Building Committee meeting. Please see members of your school's Building Committee if you have non-contractual concerns that you would like to be addressed.

As always, if you have any concerns or questions that I can help address, please feel free to contact me at 4867 or [hardiman\\_l@shaker.org](mailto:hardiman_l@shaker.org)

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
**Lisa Hardiman**

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Happy April everyone. I'm excited that next month the SHTA will be marching in the Shaker Heights Memorial Day Parade. This is the work of Nick LaPete and Jessica O'Brien, the Heads of our PAC. It's great to see younger colleagues taking on some leadership roles and bringing new ideas to the table.

On April 21st, the Investments Committee - Chante Thomas, Todd Keitlen, and I (sans Darlene Garrison) - and John Morris met with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor, to review the SHTA investment portfolio.

Looking ahead: our final Representative Council meeting of the year will be held on May 11th. At that meeting, Reps will discuss the proposed 2026–27 SHTA budget, which will then go to membership for approval. A [preliminary version](#) of the budget was distributed at the April meeting to be shared in each building. If you have feedback or concerns, please reach out to your Head Building Representative—or contact me directly at [scanlon\\_w@shaker.org](mailto:scanlon_w@shaker.org) or 216-333-2627.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
**Bill Scanlon**



# **EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS**

## **PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT**

Treasurer Donte Hayes communicated with me several times in March and April about insurance questions, the Employee Separation Plan (ESP) with Educators Preferred Corporation (EPC), and payroll questions from members. I spoke with members about the separation plan. A few members who have completed their paperwork with EPC still have not resigned or retired. If you are among this group, you have until June 30th to make your final decision. Of course, it would be helpful if you could communicate your intentions with the district as soon as possible. The Board of Education approved the plan at the April 14th meeting, so the district is moving forward with the ESP.

I met with a member, Treasurer Donte Hayes, and SHTA Treasurer Bill Scanlon regarding SHTA dues, absence and leave, payroll, and human resources. As a result of this meeting, I met with Human Resources Specialist for Benefits Nellie Brown regarding several matters. Nellie and I agreed to collaborate on an updated slideshow related to FMLA. The new slides will expand on rights related to Parental Leave to include both adoption leave and foster to adopt. Look for the new slides to be posted in May.

SHTA President John Morris, High School Head Building Representative Jessica O'Brien, and I met about voluntary transfers, involuntary transfers, and teacher licensure. Members have concerns about how staffing decisions will be made this spring after retirements and resignations. We are working with the administration to make sure the collective bargaining agreement is being followed.

Two grievance hearings are scheduled for the week of April 20th. One concerns the recent practice of teachers in the elementary schools being asked to combine classes when a substitute teacher is not available. The other involves the Teacher Evaluation Committee. Again, I am working with SHTA President John Morris and other SHTA leaders to make sure the collective bargaining agreement is being followed.

The Insurance Committee is meeting on April 30th.

***Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Sears, Chairperson***

## **EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

Greetings colleagues and friends! Thank you for the continued opportunity to serve the Association as the Evaluation Chair. In this position, I serve as co-facilitator of the Evaluation Committee with Human Resources Director, Tiffany Joseph. I also work with Andrew Glasier and Addie Tobey to coordinate the Peer Evaluation Program. All members of the committee and I are available to answer your evaluation questions and concerns. I

continue to communicate information about evaluation procedures throughout the year through this newsletter and during SHTA Representative Council Meetings.

Applications for participation in the Peer Evaluation Program for the 2026-2027 school year were sent by Stacy Poole on April 2nd. Applications will be sent to building administrators to approve or deny. Approvals will be communicated via email by May 29th. Building administrators will reach out to applicants they intend to deny for a face to face discussion to communicate reasons for denial. Please reach out to me, Addie Tobey, or Andrew Glasier with questions regarding Peer Evaluation.

Evaluators must take recertification exams every two years to maintain their status as approved evaluators. PLEASE be sure to go to the Insight Advance site and/or review your certificate to verify your evaluator status. The system will not provide an exam unless you are up for recertification. ALL newly approved peer evaluators will need to register for the three day OTES 2.0 training on STARS and pass the credentialing exam prior to September 1, 2026 in order to participate next year. The district will pay for the training. Please work with Human Resources to arrange for payment to ESC.

As a peer evaluator, I have had the pleasure of observing many teachers over the last twelve years. This spring, I visited two classrooms at Ludlow to do evaluative observations. I was delighted with the level of enthusiasm, engagement, and joy expressed by students and teachers. The teaching teams in the classrooms working harmoniously to support student learning was impressive. I always walk out of classrooms reflecting on how strategies and activities I observed could be implemented in my own classroom. This work raises the level of professionalism of our craft in a number of ways.

Here is a link to the [Evaluation Presentation](#) slides. These slides serve as a resource for both teachers and evaluators as they engage in the evaluation process. There are numerous links to videos, examples of forms, the High Quality Student Data menu, and Ohio Evaluation System (OES) support. Please use the OES site to complete all forms.

While it is the responsibility of evaluators to complete the evaluation process with educators, it is prudent for educators to understand the steps and advocate for themselves if the steps are not followed. Before the end of April, all formal observations and informal observations (walkthroughs) should take place. By May 1, final ratings should be discussed and pinned on the OES platform. If any part of this process is not occurring, please reach out to your evaluator right away. Please feel free to contact me, one of your SHTA building representatives, or any member of the Evaluation Committee, for clarification or assistance.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Lena Paskewitz, chairperson*

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Over the past month, I attended the Executive Board and Representative Council meetings. I worked with SHTA President Dr. John Morris regarding Special Education concerns. I have worked with Shaker Heights High School Head Rep. Jessica O'Brien regarding various staff concerns at the high school. I represented a member in a pre-disciplinary meeting at Lomond Elementary.

I represented multiple members in fact-finding meetings at Shaker Heights High School, Lomond Elementary and Mercer Elementary. I met with a member concerning fact finding questions and provided guidance and support. I met with a member to discuss concerns about a student's safety plan not being adequate. I represented a member in a second fact finding meeting with Mercer Principal Roneisha Campbell and Special Education Supervisor Erin Dzolic.

I discussed concerns and sought guidance with Mercer Head Rep. Eileen Sweeney. I communicated with Shaker Heights High School Principal Mr. Isaiah Wyatt and Associate Principal Liz Massey over department concerns. I worked with Shaker Heights High Head Representative Jessica O'Brien over staff concerns with attendance. I have communicated with Shaker Heights High School Exceptional Children Department Chairs Tana Thompson and Keesha Woodruff discussing concerns at the high school. I communicated with Exceptional Children 6-12 supervisor Jennifer Currie concerning paper work requirements and deadlines for Intervention Specialists Psychologists and Speech Language Pathologists district wide.

***Respectfully submitted,***  
***Anastacio Tito Vázquez, Jr. M.Ed., Chairperson***

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

Paying dues is how we support our independent Association. ARTICLE V of our constitution deals with our membership; section A reads: *Any certificated employee of the Shaker Heights City School District who is employed as a Teacher or a Support Teacher becomes a member upon payment of annual dues.* After many years of our annual dues amounting to just \$200, our Association voted in 2013 to increase those dues to \$300 in order to better protect our membership from increasingly hostile politics. Six years later in 2019 we increased these dues to \$330 in part to help us incorporate the addition of our support teachers. Seven years later we have grown larger, adding more essential representation to both our Representative Council and Executive Board. For this reason we are asking members to consider a \$30 increase to \$360, which is still considerably less than surrounding comparables and will continue to project strength and increase our bargaining power. Please consider voting for this nominal increase in dues to continue our growth and strength as an Association.

***Respectfully submitted,***  
***Tim Kalan, Chairperson***

## **BUILDING SAFETY & SICK DAY TRANSFER COMMITTEE**

During the month of April, I collaborated with administration and the payroll department to successfully process Sick Day Transfer for members, ensuring timely support for those in need.

Additionally, I was informed that a structural engineer visited Ludlow to assess building-related concerns. I am currently awaiting the results of that evaluation and will provide updates as more information becomes available.

I will continue working with building representatives and district leadership to address safety issues, support members navigating leave needs, and ensure that staff concerns are heard and addressed.

As always, please continue to share concerns related to building safety or member support. Your communication allows us to respond quickly and advocate effectively. Please feel free to contact me at (216) 295-4692 or at [zucca\\_m@shaker.org](mailto:zucca_m@shaker.org).

**Respectfully submitted,  
Matt Zucca, Chairperson**

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE**

Food for thought: If the goal is to “*change the historical narrative for white people in the USA,*” it’s worth clarifying what that actually means—because history itself doesn’t change; interpretation, emphasis, and framing do. What you’re really talking about is historiography (how history is written and interpreted), not rewriting facts. Traditional U.S. history—especially older textbooks—has often centered white Americans, particularly those of European descent, as the primary drivers of progress. This narrative:

- Emphasizes founding figures like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson
- Frames expansion and industrialization as broadly positive
- Minimizes or sidelines the experiences of Native Americans, Black Americans, and other groups

In modern scholarship and education, changing the narrative usually means broadening and correcting, not replacing one group with another. This includes:

- Centering enslaved people when discussing slavery, not just political leaders
- Including Indigenous perspectives on westward expansion
- The American Revolution is not just about liberty—it also preserved slavery in some regions
- The Civil Rights Movement highlights grassroots activism, not just a few famous leaders
- Questioning “hero-only” portrayals of figures like Christopher Columbus
- Examining contradictions between ideals (freedom, equality) and reality

A more accurate narrative doesn’t erase white Americans—it:

- Places them within systems of power and privilege
- Recognizes diversity among white Americans (class, immigration status, religion)
- Examines both contributions and complicity

There’s an important difference between:

- Expanding history → adding complexity and multiple perspectives (what scholars aim to do)
- Distorting history → ignoring evidence to push an agenda

Serious historians aim for the first, not the second.

***Respectfully submitted,  
Angela Goodrum***

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

I hope everyone had a relaxing and enjoyable Spring Break! In this month's report I am highlighting reactions to Governor DeWine's State of the State address, potential shifts in local school funding, and newly debated bills concerning curriculum mandates, education access, and health regulations in the classroom.

- **Governor's State of the State Address:** In his final State of the State address, Governor DeWine praised his own record while critics noted that he ignored Ohio's ongoing child care crisis. Additionally, union and education leaders called out the governor's insincerity, pointing out that his recent budget policies have directly led to understaffed schools, overcrowded classrooms, and higher local taxes for working families. ([More info here](#))
- **School Funding Concerns:** With state politicians slashing education funding and shifting the tax burden onto homeowners, Ohio school districts are increasingly being forced to put local income taxes on the ballot just to stay afloat. With advocacy from political groups, there is a looming threat of a state amendment that could appear on the November ballot and would abolish property taxes entirely. Education advocates warn that if these extreme political campaigns to eliminate both property and income taxes succeed, it will completely decimate public education as we know it in Ohio. ([More info here](#))
- **Ohio HB 486 Update:** Having passed in the Ohio House and now in the Ohio Senate Hearing Committee, the "Charlie Kirk American Heritage Act," continues to spark debate among lawmakers and educators. The bill pushes for public school teachers to specifically highlight the "positive influences" of Christianity in history classes. While proponents claim it removes restrictions on educators, civil rights groups and the Ohio Education Association warn that it blurs the line between church and state while injecting unnecessary partisan politics into the classroom. If approved within the Senate Hearing Committee, the bill would move to the Ohio Senate for a formal vote and passed to Governor DeWine's desk if approved. ([More info here](#) & [here](#))
- **Ohio HB 561:** Currently in the house committee, Ohio lawmakers are reviewing a bill that would eliminate hepatitis B vaccine requirements for daycares and force public schools to keep unvaccinated students in classrooms even during active disease outbreaks. While supporters argue the legislation is simply about protecting "parental choice," health experts warn that rolling back these regulations threatens herd immunity. For educators and school staff, this bill raises workplace safety concerns by potentially exposing them and their most vulnerable students to preventable illnesses. ([More info here](#))
- **Issue Watch - Challenging Undocumented Students' Access to Education:** Tennessee politicians are trying to force educators to act like ICE agents by demanding they collect and report students' immigration data. Thankfully, strong pushback from teachers refusing to betray their students has successfully stalled this dangerous bill in the state Senate. Other states are closely monitoring this issue as it may eventually head to the U.S. Supreme Court. ([More info here](#))

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Matt Klodor*

## MEMBERSHIP & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The Budget/Elections vote is scheduled for Monday, May 18th. It will be electronic, unless paper ballots are requested.

A letter was emailed on April 8th asking eligible and interested SHTA members to complete a google form to be placed on the ballot for a representative position in the Rep Council. At this time we have had 8 respondents from the high school, 4 responses from the middle school, 3 from Lomond, 1 from Fernway and 1 from Onaway. Responses are requested by April 30th. Please make sure you complete the Google form or reach out to me if you have any questions. Thank you.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
*Chante Thomas*

## PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Shaker Heights Teachers Association is pleased to share that this year's Teacher Appreciation gifts have been prepared and delivered to building representatives for distribution during Teacher Appreciation Week in May, as outlined in a previously shared communication. If, during distribution, there appears to be a need for additional gifts, please reach out directly, so we can ensure all members are recognized.

These gifts are more substantial than in years past, reflecting our deep appreciation for the dedication of our members—especially those who are retiring after years of service marked by professionalism, care, and solidarity.

This effort would not have been possible without the support of several individuals. A sincere thank you to Treasurer **William Scanlon** for coordinating payment, receiving delivery of over 500 gifts at his home, and ensuring their transport to the middle school for distribution. Appreciation is also extended to **Tim Kalan** for carefully reviewing membership lists and identifying transitions from Onaway to the new Ludlow Early Childhood building and to **Chante Thomas** for securing a comprehensive and up-to-date member list from the administrative offices.

In addition, SHTA Service Awards have been ordered through Gino's Awards. A proof will be reviewed in the coming week, with final awards expected to arrive approximately one week prior to our celebration.

As we approach Teacher Appreciation Week, we extend our gratitude to all members for the work you do each day for students and the community. It is an honor to stand alongside such dedicated and compassionate professionals.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
*Bob Bognar, Chairperson*

## TEACHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Greetings everyone! This is a busy time of year with evaluations, tenure requests, and licensure renewals. If your license is expiring this June and you have a two/four-year Resident Educator License, you will either need to apply for an extension or apply for the 5-year Professional Educator license. Please check with your RESA

mentor if you have any questions about which is appropriate for where you are in the process. Lauren Rollins is the person who handles the mentors and the RESA program for Shaker. She can be reached at [rollins\\_l@shaker.org](mailto:rollins_l@shaker.org). Should anyone have any questions regarding evaluations, please feel free to contact me or [Lena Paskewitz](#) or [Andrew Glasier](#), as they are our Union liaisons for the OTES process. The finish line is in sight! Stay strong everyone !

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Wendy Lewis, Chairperson*

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

Our annual District Recognition Reception is right around the corner, and we are excited to celebrate with our colleagues! We will honor Shaker faculty and staff on Thursday, May 15th at 3:45 p.m. in the Upper Cafeteria at the High School. Employees who are retiring, earned tenure, or have completed 15 or 25 years of service will be recognized by the district. This event is sponsored by the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association and the Shaker Heights Board of Education. We are pleased to offer a full meal and desserts for the occasion. We look forward to seeing you there!

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Selena Boyer, Chairperson*

## **LEGAL AID COMMITTEE**

NO REPORT

*Respectfully submitted,  
James Schmidt, Chairperson*

## **SHTA PAC COMMITTEE**

**Thank you to everyone who attended our PAC Happy Hour in March!**

At this meeting we had many helpful discussions and ideas to move forward to engage our community, our SHTA membership, and to add to state-wide causes that critically need our help.

**Join our cause!**

The PAC is open to ALL MEMBERS of SHTA, but we are hoping to add **TWO REPRESENTATIVES from EACH BUILDING to not only help spread the word on causes, but also to MAKE YOUR BUILDING'S VOICE HEARD!**

**NEXT PAC HAPPY HOUR:  
THURSDAY MAY 21st  
4:15 pm  
ACADEMY TAVERN  
12800 Larchmere Blvd.**

### **March with Us!**

**THIS MEMORIAL DAY 2026 we will be putting together a coalition to MARCH IN THE SHAKER MEMORIAL DAY PARADE on May 25, 2026.** We will be passing out candy to the parade goers, as well as advocating for STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS. We welcome as many SHTA members to join us as possible, so come on board! Fill out this form to join us: [March with SHTA on Memorial Day](#)

### **Volunteer with Us!**

As you know, there is a heated election for Ohio Governor between Dr. Amy Acton and her well-funded billionaire opponent Vivek Ramaswamy. As public educators, endorsing a candidate could not be any clearer. **The SHTA PAC will endorse Dr. Amy Acton for OH Governor 2026,** and we are planning to invite SHTA members to volunteer on her campaign. This will be discussed at our May Happy Hour, and we hope you'll join us.

### **Get out the VOTE!**

With a Professional Day on Election Day 2026, the PAC will be working on advocating with the administration to make sure all members are equipped with the time to do our most important democratic responsibility: **VOTE.** It is also an opportunity to access time and membership to be able to volunteer at the polls or to knock on doors and make sure that voices are heard and ballots are cast. Stay tuned for more Election Day info to come.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Nick LaPete & Jessica O'Brein, Co-Chairpersons*

**The SHTA PAC is on FACEBOOK!**

**HYPERLINK**

**"<https://www.facebook.com/groups/218943172136501/>"  
**[PAC of the Shaker Heights Teachers Association](#)****

### **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

We have contracted with Aquita Sheppard to create a new website for SHTA. The new website will be hosted on WIX and will be faster and easier to navigate, with more information. Look for it in the new school year.

If you are interested in editing the SHTA Newsletter for the 2026-2027 school year, please contact me at [glasier\\_a@shaker.org](mailto:glasier_a@shaker.org). The editors work on eight volumes during a weekend.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Andrew Glasier, Chairperson*

## **MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING**

**SHTA President, Dr. John Morris** started the April 13, 2026 Representative Council Meeting at 4:30 PM. **The meeting took place at Lomond Elementary School.** *Dr. Morris introduced Lomond Assistant Principal, Douglas Myles* to the Representative Council.

**Lomond Assistant Principal, Douglas Myles** welcomed the SHTA Representative Council to Lomond Elementary School and said he was glad they were there. He explained that Lomond Principal, George Clark, had a prior commitment. He thanked everyone for their work. He said that they have had a professional development experience with Lydia Kruse regarding referrals. He announced that Lomond has reached PBIS Gold status and this will help Tier I and Tier II students. He also said that Lomond is preparing for IB Self Study next year and that the students shined when performing the play, *Aladdin*. He thanked the teachers and support staff who helped with this production. He closed by wishing the Representative Council all the best.

**A motion for approval of the MINUTES** from the March 9, 2026 Representative Council meeting was made by Jessica O'Brien and seconded by Lee Appel.

### **Administration Report**

**Director of Human Resources, Dr. Tiffany Joseph** was present for the SHTA Representative Council Meeting. She had a few reminders: The deadline for Peer Evaluation forms was this past Friday, April 10th. Continuing contracts results are beginning to be shared with Human Resources and staff will receive a letter informing them of the decision on May 1st. Salary notices for next year are coming out.

### **PTO Report**

**PTO President Ms. Kristina Gobel** was not present for the meeting but shared the following update: The Shaker Heights High School PTO Flower Sale will be held on May 14 (delivery) and May 16 (pick-up). This has been a Shaker tradition for over 60 years and is the primary fundraiser for the SHHS PTO. Shaker staff who purchase from the sale can pick up their order immediately after school on Friday, May 15, if desired. More information will be communicated directly to the staff who purchase from the sale. The Ludlow PTO will hold its first meeting on Monday, May 11. The Ludlow PTO will start with \$3,500, which is their share from the inaugural Raider 5K. All of the PTOs are busy planning events for Teacher Appreciation Week in May. Recruitment for 26-27 PTO positions are underway at each school. The date for the 2026 Raider Run 5K is Saturday, October 3. More details will follow! Please reach out if you have questions. I look forward to attending in May.

### **Officers' Reports**

#### **President, John Morris**

- I spoke with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner regularly.
- I communicated with Human Resources Director Dr. Tiffany Joseph regularly.
- I updated the SHTA Facebook page with Publications Editor Andrew Glasier.
- I communicated with Special Education Chair Tito Vazquez concerning multiple building concerns.

- I communicated with SHTA Legal Consul Brooks Boron about member issues.
- I communicated with Public Relations Chairperson Bob Bognar.
- I communicated with Innovative Center members.
- I communicated with High School Head Representative Jessica O'Brien on SHTA Scholarships.
- I worked with an elementary member on FMLA and evaluation concerns.
- I communicated with Evaluations Committee Chair Lena Paskewitz about an evaluation concern.
- I communicated with a secondary member concerned about leave payments along with Treasurer Bill Scanlon and Professional Rights & Responsibilities Chair Mike Sears.
- I communicated with members on Voluntary Transfers.
- I communicated with Treasurer Donte Hayes on the buyout.
- I asked Publication Editor Andrew Glasier to send out a communication on the buyout with membership.
- I communicated with Legal Chair James Schmidt on By-Laws and Policy Chair Tim Kalan on association issues
- I communicated with Membership Chair Chante Thomas concerning association issues.
- I spoke with Local Professional Development Committee (LPDC) Chair Ellen Roberts about transitions in the committee
- I communicated with a member about a continuing contract issue

***Vice President, Darlene Garrison***

- Finalized all invoices and payments for the Night for the Red & White.
- Met with a SHTA member to discuss a retirement/buyout question/concern
- Attended SHTA Executive Board meeting on Monday, April 6th at Mercer Elementary School.
- Collected receipts, sent requisition paperwork to Treasurer Bill Scanlon and mailed reimbursements checks to SHTA members who were awarded SHTA Fellowship Grants.
- Went over contract with a member to help them better understand voluntary transfers in the district.
- Wrote an editorial for the May newsletter.

***Secretary, Lisa Hardiman***

- Sent out invitations for Representative Council and Executive board meetings
- Attended both meetings
- Took the minutes of the Representative Council meeting
- Participated in Mercer's Building Committee meeting in March

***Treasurer William Scanlon***

- Communicated with accountants to get financials from last year
- Delivered Teacher Appreciation gifts
- Passed out next year's budget sheet for representatives to look over prior to the vote next month
  - Highlighted increases
  - Asked for questions

## Building Representative Reports

### ***Boulevard-Cathy Grieshop, Heather Pincoe***

- There will be a significant amount of changes next year. I spoke with Principal Neal Robinson about teachers feeling anxious about these changes. He hopes to have more information soon.
- The 5th grade team feels that they were not told about the final decision of moving 5th grade to self-contained classrooms soon enough. The rationale for this decision has not been shared with them.
- While making placement decisions, teachers want administration to understand that we are more than just our teaching licenses. We have experience which is worth more than just our licensure. We invest a lot into the grade we teach by learning curriculum, creating slides, training, buying books and games, etc. for the grade levels we are teaching. Switching grade levels is a lot more complicated than many think.
- I spoke with Principal Neal Robinson regarding follow-up communication after referrals are submitted. He agreed to do his best to increase communication following referrals. We discussed that referrals are different from documentation log entries, which do not require administrative follow up.
- We are feeling the lack of a building substitute. Literacy specialists are called to substitute too often. Mr. Robinson suggests that in order to help reduce this issue, teachers enter their absences as soon as they become known.
- Thank you to the PTO for providing teachers bagels and coffee for Professional Day and the gift cards for the Read-A-Thon.

### ***Fernway-Jamie Harden, Lee Appel***

- March 13, 2026 Emailed Sick Day transfer request to FE membership
- April 1, 2026 Provided Legacy Scholarship applications to members in Lounge
- April 6, 2026 Supported member during follow up meeting with principal Chris Hayward
- April 7, 2026 Supported member during pre-conference meeting
  - Forwarded election email to all members
- April 13, 2026 Next Building Committee meeting scheduled for 4-27-26
- April 14, 2026 Touch base meeting scheduled with Chris Hayward

### ***Lomond-Lauren Meek, Jackie Abrams, Krystal Allen-Jackson***

- Thank you to all staff who participated in the professional day on April 6th.
- This month I met with the building committee to address concerns regarding spaces for small group testing. I met with principal George Clark and he shared the results of an air quality test that was done per member concerns. All results showed normal levels.
- Supported members with evaluations and attended an observation and post conference.
- Supported members with FMLA
- Getting sub coverage still remains an issue.

### ***Mercer-Eileen Sweeney, Nicole Cicconetti***

- Met with Mrs. Campbell, Mercer School Principal, for our regularly scheduled meeting and attended the Building Committee. The committee discussed cleanliness concerns. I requested staff be given time to complete Public Works training. This request was denied. I emailed SHTA members and communicated outcomes.
- Discussed staff assignments in the 2026-2027 school year. Mrs. Campbell stated staff will be notified before we leave for Summer break.

- Collaborated with Tito Vazquez, SHTA Chairperson for Special Education, relating to a disciplinary hearing.
- There is a concern regarding the increase in the amount of clerical work related to PowerSchool documentation. Staff are expected to document parent contact, student behaviors, and meetings in log entries. It is not uncommon for staff to log multiple entries in one day. There is not enough time in the day to accomplish all of our duties.
- There is a frustration that staff were not adequately trained in Educlimber. The MTSS process is opaque to staff. If staff enter a request for assistance or a referral, it often takes months to implement any intervention. It is very unclear who are the staff designated to address concerns.
- Thank you to the PTO for the snack cart provided for the staff.

***Onaway-Noreen Smyth-Morrow, Stacey DeYoung***

- Recruited for head representatives for next year
- Sub coverage is getting worse because of testing

***Middle School—Kevin Thomas, Melissa Albrecht, Lori Billington, Addison Pretnar Desmarie Carter***

- Met regularly with administration to discuss a variety of issues.
- Met with counselors to review expectations for professional development sessions.
- Represented a union member during a disciplinary investigation.
- Met with a counselor to address questions regarding their role in discipline and safety planning.
- Met with administration to address concerns about communication, particularly related to discipline. Middle School principal Eric Forman suggested meeting with teams to clarify the components of an administrative threat assessment. Administrators are planning to meet with teams over the next few weeks to explain the process. In the meantime, teachers with concerns are encouraged to speak directly with their administrator. In many cases, consequences have been implemented that teachers were unaware of, while in other instances, administrators were not aware of certain issues.

***High School--Jessica O'Brien, Nick LaPete, Jayce Bailey, Megan Dora, Adam Cohen Enid Vazquez, Sharita Hill, Joel Rathbone***

- Spoke with Principal Isaiah Wyatt weekly.
  - Discussed staffing concerns, Voluntary and Involuntary transfers, and getting a sub/help for the IB DP program while our coordinator is out.
- Spoke with Director of Curriculum and Instruction John Moore about the necessity of having him in the high school building once or twice a week as to use his extensive IB knowledge and experience while our DP coordinator is currently out. Dr. Moore expressed he would be happy to help however Mr. Wyatt would need him to.
- Spoke with members about concerns with room 115 that was consistently at 85 degrees or higher.
- Communicated with Assistant Director of Buildings and Grounds Sean Brown to discuss a plan for not only room 115, but also other rooms in the building that are having problems and are controlled by the same roof unit.
- Spoke with Rights and Responsibilities chair Mike Sears to discuss licensure concerns and staffing questions.
- Worked with Exceptional Children Chair Tito Vazquez to discuss staffing concerns.

- Multiple members have asked questions about evaluations and their observer not discussing a 2nd area of focus with them. Mr. Wyatt said he would have a refresh with all of the administrators.
- Answered questions from a member about evaluations.
- Spoke with SHTA President Dr. John Morris about concerns and the SHTA scholarships.
- Asked Communications chair Andrew Glasier to send out an email about the SHTA scholarship.
- Spoke with Associate Principal Liz Massey about concerns with the EOC schedule and clarification of conferences on the early release days. Ms. Massey communicated with all staff the expectation for those days.
- Spoke with a member about filling out the FMX system.
- Got clarification from Director of Buildings, Grounds and Student Nutrition Dave Boyer about the FMX system.

### ***Innovative Center--Anne Scott***

- As always, thank you to the PTO for their support of our staff and students!
- Met with Katie Slifkin numerous times.
- The IC had 11 people in the space. Not all were people we assumed to be city workers.
  - 3/10- two people (unannounced)
  - 3/16- two people (unannounced)
  - 3/17- one person (unannounced)
  - 3/31- one person (unannounced)
  - 4/7- two people (walked in and out of all rooms in the space and took pictures) After they had come and gone, administration told us that people would be coming
  - 4/8- one person (unannounced) in the middle of state testing
  - 4/9- two police officers came (unannounced, but introduced themselves, stated why they were present, and asked for a good time to return given state testing was taking place).
- On 3/13 the power went out at the IC while students were present. This also showed us that emergency systems in our space do not work (emergency lights, emergency exit signs etc.). We were unable to reach administration for support in a timely manner. At this time, we are unaware of any fixes to the emergency systems.
- On 3/16, the IC had security for less than 3 hours.
- On 3/17, the IC had no security
- On 3/30, teachers lounge was being used by non-Shaker people
- IC teachers were told that the IC would be closing at the end of the school year, and teachers would be moved to main campus traditional classrooms.

### ***Ludlow--Allison Colvin, Leanne Moses-Kruluts***

- Ludlow would like to thank the Shaker Schools Foundation for providing gross motor equipment for the children. They are unpacked and being used especially on rainy days.
- We are still awaiting updates on the areas of the building that continue to show signs of distress and moisture. We sent pictures to Mr. Boyer about the areas of concern where cracks are getting bigger (over time) in the walls/bricks. They are on the sides of the archways over both stairwells. They go from the lower level to the upper level. The location of the cracks and extent are extremely concerning especially since they are getting bigger. We are still waiting for updates about moisture levels in the floor and wall found in a lower classroom that was evident prior to reconstruction. Some staff still have not received air purifiers. No updates have been given.

- SHTA member [Lena Paskewitz](#), and HR Director Dr. Tiffany Joseph worked with staff in order to fulfill required staff observations.
- Principal Amy Brodsky has been working with families to get a PTO established at Ludlow. It is in the beginning stages and they plan to have their first meeting soon.

## **Executive Board Reports**

### ***Evaluation-Lena Paskewitz***

#### **Peer Evaluation Rubric for Administrators**

- That was proposed last year and will be adopted for use by building administrators to guide them in approving and denying applicants to participate in the program. This rubric was brought to the committee in the spring of 2025. The committee reminded the administration that, according to the side letter, changes to the evaluation process must be discussed and voted on by the committee prior to implementation. Therefore, the rubric was not adopted for use during the 2025-2026 school year.
- The committee requested time during 2025-2026 school year Professional Learning days to review the Peer Evaluation program and protocols to make any necessary revisions, including work to adopt a rubric for administrators. This request was denied. On February 13, Peer Evaluation Co-Coordinator and Evaluation Committee co-chair, Lena Paskewitz, communicated the need to address changes to the Peer Evaluation process prior to the intent forms going out to members. No response to this part of the email was given, although other items in the email were, which indicated it was received and read.
- Peer Evaluation Intent forms were due from teachers on April 10. On April 12, committee members received an invitation to a meeting. Lena Paskewitz was informed that the administration intends to put the rubric in place, without a vote by the committee.
- The teacher members of the evaluation committee are not opposed to program revisions or clarifying the approval process by using a rubric. We simply want the collaborative process that the side letter calls for to be honored.

### ***Publications—Andrew Glasier***

- Met with a web designer about updating [SHTAweb.org](#). SHTA member Aquita Shepherd. Discussing price and proposal.
- Updated SHTA Facebook and Instagram accounts
- Sent out emails for Executive Board members and PAC
- Sent out newsletter for membership and administration and posted on website
- Editorial this month will be from Lauren Priestly
- Executive Board blurbs due by April 15th by midnight
- Working to recruit people to run for Representative Council
- I reminded membership that Peer Evaluation Intent forms were due April 10th.

### ***Membership/Elections-Chante Thomas***

- The Budget/Elections vote is scheduled for Monday, May 18th. It will be electronic, unless paper ballots are requested.
- A letter was emailed on April 8th asking eligible and interested SHTA members to complete a Google form to have their names placed on the ballot for a representative position in the rep council.

- At this time: 8 respondents from the high school, 4 responses from the middle school, 3 from Lomond, 1 from Fernway and 1 from Onaway.
- Responses are requested by April 30th. Please make sure you complete the Google form or reach out to me if you have any questions.

### ***Policy-Tim Kalan***

- Recruiting representatives
- Looking over possibilities for dues increase
- Advocating for Single Subject teachers

### ***Public Relations-Bob Bognar***

- Passed out Teacher Appreciation gifts to head representatives-every box was labeled
- Thank you to Treasurer Bill Scanlon for having the gifts delivered to his house
- Thank you to Membership Chair Chante Thomas for getting the list of names of the members to me for distribution
- Ordered newly designed plaques for SHTA Service Award

### ***Special Education-Tito Vazquez***

- Attended the executive board and general body meetings
- Worked with SHTA President Dr. John Morris regarding Special Education concerns
- Worked with Shaker Heights High School Head Rep. Jessica O'Brien regarding various staff concerns at the high school
- Represented a member in a pre-disciplinary meeting at Lomond Elementary
- Represented multiple members in fact-finding meetings at Shaker Heights High School, Lomond Elementary School and Mercer Elementary School
- Met with a member concerning fact finding questions and provided guidance and support
- Met with a member to discuss concerns about a student's safety plan not being adequate
- Represented a member in a second Fact Finding meeting with Mercer Principal Roneisha Campbell and Special Education Supervisor Erin Dzolic
- Discussed concerns and sought guidance with Mercer Head Rep. Eileen Sweeney
- Communicated with Shaker Heights High School Principal Mr. Isaiah Wyatt and Associate Principal Liz Massey over department concerns
- Worked with Shaker Heights High School Head Representative Jessica O'Brien over staff concerns with attendance
- Communicated with Shaker Heights High School Exceptional Children Department Chairs Tana Thompson and Keesha Woodruff discussing concerns at the high school
- Communicated with Exceptional Children 6-12 supervisor Jennifer Currie concerning paper work requirements and deadlines for Intervention Specialists district wide

### ***Legislative-Matthew Kloder***

- **State Leadership & School Funding:** Governor DeWine's recent budget policies and political push to abolish property taxes threaten to decimate public school funding.
- **Ohio HB 486 (Curriculum):** This advancing bill raises concerns over blurring the line between church and state by pushing educators to specifically teach the "positive influences" of Christianity.
- **Ohio HB 561 (Health & Safety):** This proposed House bill raises serious workplace safety and herd immunity concerns by rolling back student vaccine requirements even during active disease outbreaks.

- **National Issue Watch (Immigration):** A stalled Tennessee bill attempts to force teachers to act as immigration enforcement by collecting and reporting undocumented students' data.

#### ***Social- Selena Boyer***

- District reception is May 14th at Shaker Heights High School in the upper cafeteria
- Passed out flyers to head representatives to post in their buildings

#### ***Building Safety and Sick Day Transfer-Matthew Zucca***

- Collaborated with administration and the payroll department to process a Sick Day Transfer for members.
- Was informed that a structural engineer visited Ludlow to assess building concerns and am currently awaiting the results.

#### ***Personal Rights and Responsibilities-Michael Sears***

- Communicated with Treasurer Donte Hayes about insurance questions, the Employee Separation Plan (ESP) with Educators Preferred Corporation (EPC), and payroll questions from members
- Met with a member, Treasurer Donte Hayes, and SHTA Treasurer Bill Scanlon regarding SHTA dues, absence and leave, payroll, and human resources
- Spoke to members with questions about the Employee Separation Plan (ESP) with Educators Preferred Corporation (EPC)
- Met with Human Resources Specialist for Benefits Nellie Brown regarding several HR matters
- Communicated with SHTA President John Morris and High School Head Building Representative Jessica O'Brien about transfers and teacher licensure
- The Insurance Committee is meeting on April 30th

#### ***PAC (At-large)-Jessica O'Brien and Nick LaPete***

- SHTA is marching in a constituency in the 2026 Memorial Day Parade to build support for public schools. We will be looking for volunteers throughout April and May.
- The SHTA PAC will be endorsing Dr. Amy Acton for Governor of Ohio as early as June, as she is the clear candidate for a strong public education system, which her Republican opponent, Vivek Ramaswamy, is clearly attempting to dismantle at both the K-12 and higher education levels. The PAC will work with Treasurer Bill Scanlon to possibly make a donation to her campaign on the SHTA PAC's behalf.
- As Election Day 2026 approaches, the PAC will be working with the district to get time in our Professional Development Day to vote and to possibly volunteer to get our colleagues, students and community members to vote. We also will be aiming to collaborate with our sibling Union organizations in the district to combine our political efforts
- We spoke at the meeting about expanding the scope of the PAC with the aim of adding two PAC members from each building to help engage and spread the word of PAC efforts across district SHTA membership. This could help make our efforts more connected and give more members a political voice.

#### **Old Business-None**

## **New Business**

- Policy Chair Tim Kalan made a motion to place on the May ballot a proposed increase in SHTA dues from \$330 to \$360 per year.
- High School Representative Adam Cohen asked for clarification regarding the reason for the increase. PAC Chair Nick LaPete added that members may ask what the union does when told of the possible dues increase. Several members contributed responses to this point.
- Tim Kalan explained that the proposed increase amounts to approximately \$3.00 per paycheck. He also noted that dues were \$200 for many years, later increased to \$300, and then to the current \$330. He stated that raising dues to \$360 would help support COBRA insurance in the event of a work stoppage.
- Treasurer Bill Scanlon noted that costs, including food, have increased significantly. He explained that while the organization typically spends less than it takes in during non-negotiation years, expenses exceed income during negotiation years. He emphasized that smaller, incremental increases are preferable to larger increases over time.
- Boulevard Head Representative asked about total membership. President John Morris responded that SHTA currently has 470 members. He also noted that the removal of Interest-Based Bargaining for the next round of negotiations creates uncertainty and could lead to increased costs. Additionally, he stated that one month of COBRA insurance coverage would cost approximately \$1,000,000.
- The motion passed to bring the proposed increase to the membership by placing it on the May ballot for a vote.
- Finally, PAC Chair Nick LaPete stated SHTA would participate in the Shaker Heights Memorial Day Parade and asked who might be interested in marching.

**Good of the Order-** President John Morris thanked the Lomond representatives for the food.

Motion for adjournment was made by Matt Zucca and seconded by Andrew Glasier. The meeting adjourned at 6:04 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Lisa M. Hardiman*



*SHTA April Representative Council meeting at Lomond School*

## *The Adult Learner Profile: Are We Practicing the IB Principles We Expect of Our Students?*

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*My intent in writing this is to foster a culture of collective bravery within our union. It is a call to action: we cannot build a strong union on a foundation of silence or selective empathy. To truly advocate for one another, we must have the courage to hold ourselves to the same standards we set for our students every day.*

Posters in our classrooms and hallways in Shaker Heights display the IB Learner Profile. As educators, we explicitly teach our students to be **Principled**, **Caring**, **Open-minded**, and good **Communicators**. We teach that words have weight, that empathy is a requirement, and that a community is only as strong as our collective commitment to the dignity of every member.

But as I look at our current professional climate, specifically among union members and in SHTA communications, I have to ask: **When did we decide these values only apply to the children we teach?**

### **The “Invisible” Value**

Over the last 9 years that I've been employed with the district, the narrative seems to be that only some roles are “essential” while others are “fat” to be cut. Yes, those exact words were used to describe my role, to my face, while I was heavily pregnant, by a male union leader in front of a group of teachers. This isn't just an insult to my work; it is a fundamental misunderstanding of our collective professional ecosystem. What is often forgotten is that every person in a position like mine was previously a successful classroom teacher with evidence of leadership capabilities and specific role strengths.

Instructional coaches, IB coordinators, gifted specialists, SEL supports, etc. aren't just “extras.” We are the support system designed to lighten the load for classroom teachers, from curriculum adoption and implementation to data analysis and lesson planning. When we bash these roles in newsletters or whisper about their “cushy” nature in the hallways, we aren't being **Reflective**; we are being divisive and devaluing the very people who exist to support the classroom teacher's heavy lift.

When we allow professional meetings to devolve into shouting (or worse, when we sit in silence while a colleague is verbally targeted and humiliated in a room full of peers), we aren't just failing that individual. We are failing the **Principled** and **Communicator** attributes that define our district's IB mission.

### **A Culture of Casual Hostility**

However, this isn't just about support roles. This unhealthy climate has seeped into the way we

treat each other across the board. It can be seen in the sharp, dismissive way some colleagues speak to one another in the hallways or the lack of grace shown between classroom teachers during high-stress periods. Perhaps most pervasive is the daily influx of professional email complaints wrapped in unnecessary, aggressive language. When our digital communication becomes a vehicle for hostility rather than a tool for resolution, we create an environment of constant defensiveness. Whether it's a digital jab, a peer-to-peer disagreement in a CPT, or a targeted comment in a shared space, we have allowed silos and personal differences to erode the solidarity a union requires.

### **The Problem of the Silent Witness**

Even more alarming than the direct insults is the lack of **peer accountability**.

We have sat in professional meetings and watched colleagues be pointed at and shouted at in front of large groups of peers. We have seen educators (including select union leadership) remain silent while a member is publicly berated or humiliated. We have read newsletters with passive-aggressive information about our own members, and we have read building complaints where colleagues are wrongly identified by role with no follow-up apology.

When we witness this behavior and say absolutely nothing, we are not being neutral. We are failing to be **Principled**. If a student in your classroom shouted at a peer while you stood by and watched, would you consider that a successful learning environment or healthy conflict resolution? Why, then, do we accept it from ourselves?

### **A Call to Professionalism**

Our union is supposed to be a shield for all members, not just those with the loudest voices and veteran status. We speak often of equity in Shaker Heights, but equity begins with how we treat the person sitting next to us. We cannot effectively fight for better contracts or better working conditions if we are too busy dehumanizing our own union members.

I am calling on every member, and especially our union leadership, to recommit to the IB attributes we represent:

- Communicators: Let's address conflict directly and professionally, not through anonymous jabs in the newsletter or shouting and humiliation.
- Caring: Let's remember that every educator is a human being, a professional, and a fellow union member.
- Principled: Let's find the courage to speak up when we see a colleague being mistreated by a peer.

We have high standards of behavior from our students because we want them to be good humans. Let's start expecting the same from our union members.

*Lauren Priestley, Ed.D.*

**District Technology Integration Coach**

## *You Can't Get There From Here*

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We are losing control of the high school halls. There was a brawl on April 16th, just another reminder about how the lack of consequences for students' insubordination has led to an era of near lawlessness for some groups of students. Many students walk down the hall on their cell phones, other groups of students hang out in the halls all day, walking laps around the building with impunity. Students come to my class with tardy slips that state "66 tardies, 0 consequences," if they come at all. Others get their tardy slips and never come to class. While this is a small group of students, their numbers are growing, and I am fearful for their well-being, as well as the other students who are, by and large, attending class, *playing school* and doing what they are supposed to do.

Extreme student behavior has been growing for years with a noticeable jump after the pandemic, especially as fights began being recorded on cell phones and making the rounds on social media. While I did not witness it, I was told that the April 16th brawl was well recorded by students on their cell phones and should be circulating on TikTok as we speak. The security staff in our building has been working valiantly to keep the peace and direct students to their classes. The principals and teachers have also worked to create programs and worked with these students individually to help them be successful. Yet in these extreme cases, the hall walkers, who often get into these fights, fail to comply, and blatantly disregard the rules of the school when they occur, and continue to not engage in the programs meant for them.

As an adult in the building, the worst part is the constant disrespect by these students when you ask them to clear the hall, put their phones away, or simply go to class. I have lost count of the amount of times I have been told to "fuck off" by a student as other students around them laugh. It is draining for all the adults in the building to encounter this day after day.

Our last principal once said that if we made our classes more interesting, then students would want to be in our classes instead of the hallways. But I have come to the conclusion that those students who roam our halls, fail all their classes and just socialize all day, do not see themselves as students. For a multitude of reasons, they have given up on the education system and are now wasting their precious time. I tell my freshmen at the beginning of the year that they have four short years to build the skills for their adult life to move forward. These students have fallen so far behind often in basic skills like reading, writing and math. The online credit recovery programs that they often use to graduate do not provide any of these skills. If they only use the recovery program, they will be lacking these skills possibly for the rest of their lives, but they cannot see that. Even when I engage with the nomadic students about this, they often do not respond. We need to find them a path out of the halls and into a job. Some way that they can contribute and find a path forward.

In the discussion at the last April 14th Board of Education meeting, the board members all spoke of finding a space for students to feel connected to their education. Curriculum and Instruction director Dr. John Moore spoke at that Board meeting about how he had thought the International Baccalaureate program would be part of that engagement model for these students. The reality is that it just has not.

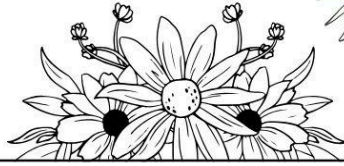
During this Board of Education meeting, assistant superintendent Dr. Felicia Evans spoke about the “Cheesecake Factory Menu” of opportunities we have for our students. We offer advanced placement classes, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, Raider Academy, engineering classes, so many levels of World Languages, a journalism program, the Writing Center, more arts classes than I can paint, theater arts, many, many interesting electives (although they have shrunk greatly in recent years), and so much more. There are more choices offered here than at many small liberal arts colleges. Many of these programs were started by teachers working together with administration to create spaces for students to thrive, find their place in the school and connect to the adults in the building. Students have told me “I would not have been here if it were not for the (fill in the blank) program.” These opportunities allowing us to reach a variety of students with a variety of interests has been part of the Shaker tradition since I first worked here.

Yet, we have lost or scaled back on the programs that re-engaged struggling students and provided them with smaller group instruction and adult connections in the building. The Innovation Center was one of those programs, but we also used to have the Bridges program (unrelated to the current Bridges, created by Sarah Davis and Joe Konopinski to scaffold the learning and skills of minority students entering their first advanced and AP courses). This Bridges program paired rising 9th-grade students who had been flagged as academically struggling by their 8th grade counselor with teachers of four core classes. These teachers had four classes of 9th graders along with common planning time to discuss curriculum and students’ needs. It was a success. The data showed a higher level of achievement throughout their four years in high school and, most importantly, a high level of graduation. Because they had dedicated teachers who worked as a team to help students make connections to the school and their own education, students found success.

We also used to provide the Humanities (later TEAM) program for struggling readers, in which students who were assessed by the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test and identified as several reading levels below grade level, were put with a team of English, Social Studies, Reading, and later Intervention Specialists to improve their reading and academics. Students often improved two to three grade levels in their tested reading ability by the end of the first year, and even moved out of the program to take grade-level classes. The program had a high graduation rate; despite many of the students in the program testing significantly below grade level when they entered the 9th grade.

These programs and so many others were created by teachers and supported by administration to help reach some of the toughest and neediest students. Most of those programs are gone for a multitude of reasons, including costs, issues of scheduling, I.E.P. issues, etc... but they were successful. Even in this time of financial hardships for the district, we need to sit down and collaborate to create a new way to reach these students before they lose their education and their future.

**AG**



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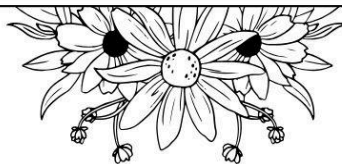
PLEASE JOIN US  
*Shaker Heights*  
*District Recognition Reception*

High School Cafeteria

May 14<sup>th</sup>,

3:45 p.m.

Sponsored by the Shaker Heights Teacher's Association  
and the Shaker Heights School Board



Contact Selena Boyer  
([boyer\\_s@shaker.org](mailto:boyer_s@shaker.org)) or  
Nellie Brown  
([brown\\_c@shaker.org](mailto:brown_c@shaker.org))  
with questions.