

SHTA *news*

No. 3 • 16 November 2009

Message From the President

Now it is up to you. The contract voting is Monday, November 23. Please participate in the process and vote. If you have questions, attend the meeting on Wednesday, November 18 at Woodbury from 4:30 until 6:00. I have received a variety of comments about the tentative agreement and I appreciate that members would share their perspectives. I look forward to meeting with you on the 18th and receiving the results of the vote on the 23rd. Please read additional comments about negotiations in the Salary-Tenure Report.

While the contract has been a top focus for me, I have also concentrated on issues related to special education software as well as different personnel issues. As I have said in the past, these personnel issues are confidential. They take time and diplomacy. I appreciate the cooperation that I receive from the Administration, particularly the liaison to SHTA Lisa Howell, Personnel Administrator. The special education software concerns are extremely important to me. We want our members to use their professional abilities on their work with students and families, not on navigating through the inconsistencies of a software program. Dollye Finney (Lomond and Boulevard) and Bonnie Hoynacke (Onaway) have been providing me with specific information about the issues and I have discussed this with several administrators. I will continue to address this issue and keep you informed.

The SHTA Social is Friday, November 20 at Jillian's on Cedar Rd. We will have designated pool tables and there will be snacks and prizes—including a GPS. Darlene Garrison (Woodbury) has organized this event so we can enjoy a relaxed evening together. I hope to see you there.

On a personal note, please join me in sending your best wishes to our past president Bill Scherer. For more than twenty-five years, Bill served as a tireless advocate for the Association. As he deals with health challenges, please keep him in your thoughts.

Finally, this is the last scheduled Newsletter until 2010. I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Thomas, president*

Reports from the Executive Board

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is amazing that the year is progressing so quickly. Join me in congratulating the SHTA Fellows 2009-2010:

Kelly Kunchik Boulevard School
Melissa Becerra Boulevard School
Tina McCauley Boulevard School
Matthew Zucca Fernway School
Renata Griffin Fernway School
Christine Cachat Fernway School
Andree Hassell Fernway School
Tanutda Devine Lomond School
Amy Hannah Mercer School
Naomi Loges Lomond/ Boulevard Schools
Martin McGuan Onaway School
Saree Leimsieder Onaway School
Bonnie Hoynacke Onaway School
Jennifer Goulden Onaway
Noreen Smythe-Morrow Onaway
Ruth Heide Woodbury
Larry Miller Woodbury
Lee Appel Woodbury
Mary Strouse Woodbury
Deanna Clemente Milne Woodbury
Linda Roth Shaker Middle School
Lillian Lichtman Shaker Middle School
Dawn Sullivan Shaker Middle School
Diane Smith Shaker Middle School
Beth Casey Shaker Middle School
Jane Troha Shaker Middle School
Cari Flox Shaker Middle School
William Moroney Shaker Middle School
Kenneth Culek Shaker High School
Alisa Warshay Shaker High School
Susan Weiner Shaker High School
James Schmidt Shaker High School
Renee Manuel Shaker High School
Travis Cox Shaker High School
Eileen Willis Shaker High School
Bernadette Thoennes Shaker High School
Andi Glickman Shaker High School
Nathanael Hsu Shaker High School
Laura Daberko Shaker High School

These members have earned \$100 that they can use to promote their professional development.

I would like to take this time to remind you of the annual PTO Council campaign. I am asking that you seriously consider making a contribution to the annual campaign if you have not yet done so. The Council is responsible for the creation and distribution of the calendar that I know so many of us use on a daily basis. Please send these contributions through school mail to the Administration Building with attention to PTO.

I also hope that by this time you have received a letter to encourage your participation in the Night for the Red and White. I hope that you will consider attending and making a contribution to the Silent Auction.

I wish you all a happy and safe Thanksgiving!

*Respectfully submitted,
Dollye Finney, vice president*

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The month of November is considered the open enrolment month for health care coverage in the district. This means you can add, delete, and change health care companies. Any changes that you make will take effect on January, 2010. Contact Sue Garber at ex. 4318 if you have any questions.

At Representative Council this month, I shared with all the representatives' examples of how many weeks a member can be out for maternity leave. In most cases a maternity leave is usually 6 or 8 weeks. Six weeks for a regular birth and 8 weeks for a C-Section birth. No matter when the baby is born these weeks are CALENDAR WEEKS. Additional sick time may be granted only if a note is submitted from a doctor.

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is causing some confusion to our members. By the law, the district needs to notify you about FMLA. The district will notify you if you are absent for more 7 days in a row. A form will be sent to you. If you are not going to use FMLA you do nothing. FMLA is a total of 60 days (which includes sick days). FMLA relates more to workers who do not have contractual sick leave. It is unpaid leave. In most cases, our members will choose to use their sick leave and not take days without pay.

As always if you have any questions about insurances or leaves, please contact me at ext. 4259.

*Respectfully submitted,
Gary Raymont, chairperson*

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Investments Committee (Darcel Arrington, Todd Keitlen, Matt Zucca, Dollye Finney, and myself) met with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones advisor, on October 20th. After analyzing our portfolio, a small adjustment to our funds was made in order to solidify some of the recent gains we have made. Any question about specifics can be directed to any member of the Committee.

I am meeting with our accountant from Edward C. Hawkins & Co., Ltd. this month to go over our Form 990 tax filing for last fiscal year (2008-09). I will also be discussing the information needed for the required audit of last year's books.

Members' payroll deductions (for those who chose that payment option) are now being direct-deposited into our Key Bank account. I continue to use our Key Bank checking account to pay our monthly bills.

The current financial report is attached.

*Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon, Treasurer*

FINANCIAL		REPORT	
	7/1/09	11/11/09	
COMPOSITE BALANCE			
Balance 7/1/09			719,244.67
Receipts 7/1/09 to present			20,180.00
Change in Valuation 7/1/09 to present			59,389.01
			798,813.68
Expenditures 7/1/09 to present			-7,888.24
Expenditures charged to last fiscal year 2008-2009			-2,106.60
TOTAL			788,818.84
BANK AND BROKER RECONCILIATIONS			
A. BUCKEYE STATE CREDIT UNION (BSCU)			
Certificates of deposit 10/31/09			
24 mo. @ 3.0% APY-Matures on 2/02/11		42,757.71	
24 mo. @ 3.76% APY-Matures on 3/10/10		21,176.70	
Total Certificates of deposit			63,934.41
Savings accounts (0.50% APY) 10/31/09			101.30
Share draft account (0.25% APY) 10/31/09			1,925.20
Unposted deposits and transfers			0.00
			65,960.91
Less outstanding checks			-13.44
TOTAL BSCU			65,947.47
B. EDWARD JONES (10/30/09)			
Regular Association Account		349,795.37	
Advisory Solutions Account		321,205.20	
			671,000.57
C. KEY BANK (10/31/09)			
Certificates of deposit 4/30/09			
29 mo. @ 2.15%-Matures on 9/6/11		20,239.05	
15 mo. @ 1.9%-Matures on 10/17/10		14,066.56	
			34,305.61
Business Money Market Account (0.35% APY) 10/31/09			6,926.65
Unposted deposits and transfers			16,580.00
			57,812.26
Less outstanding checks			-5,941.46
TOTAL KEY BANK			51,870.80
TOTAL			788,818.84

Budgeted Accounts						
	7/1/09					11/11/09
Account	Budgeted	Debits	Transfers out	Credit s	Transfers in	Balance
Accounting	5500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,500.00
Compensation for officers, representatives, et al.						
President	9302.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,302.00
Vice President	5581.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,581.00
Secretary	5581.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,581.00
Treasurer	5581.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,581.00
P.R. & R. Chairperson	5581.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,581.00
Editor	4653.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,653.00
Building reps. and alternates	10000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
Conferences and meetings	2500.00	800.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,699.80
Contingency	250.00	77.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	172.68
Fellowships and Grants	4000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00
Insurance	5000.00	4,375.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	625.00
Legal	5000.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,900.00
Negotiations	50000.00	1,326.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	48,673.59
Executive Board expenses	500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00
Officers' expenses	500.00	143.31	0.00	0.00	0.00	356.69
Payroll taxes	700.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	700.00
Professional day	200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00
Publications	1000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
Public Relations	5000.00	1,066.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,934.00
Social	2500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,500.00
STRS(TPO contributions)	9000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,000.00
TOTAL	137929.00	7,888.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	130,040.76

SALARY TENURE COMMITTEE

Every contract negotiation is challenging and this one was especially so. Our team was guided by the survey responses, particularly relating to lay-offs and a short-term contract. When I accepted a leadership position, I accepted that I would represent the best interests of the entire membership before my own. I understand that the steps no longer benefit me and that improving my final average salary would be best for me. Still, being on a team and representing others means my own interests may not be met. That is the way our whole team approached this process. I appreciate the commitment and professionalism of every member of the team: Gary Raymont (Boulevard), Darlene Garrison (Woodbury), Linda Roth (Middle School), Mike Sears (Middle School), Dave Klapholz (High School), and John Morris (High School).

*Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Thomas, chairperson*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

As expected, it was a tough election cycle for Cuyahoga County schools. There were six school issues on the ballot facing an 8.5% unemployment rate, and most failed. In Parma voters rejected a levy for the fourth time, and the district needs to cut \$6 million dollars by July or the state could take over the district's finances. But in Richmond Heights, where voters had rejected six levies in a row, the school tax issue passed 52% to 48%. School districts such as Xenia, Beavercreek and numerous others in the Dayton/Central Ohio area (Green County) had much more success which educators attribute to communities that understand what schools do for students.

As communities struggle to understand the challenges faced by educational institutions, there has been much discussion about the so-called "racial achievement gap" in schools. In a recent Plain Dealer article, Patrick Welsh draws attention to this, noting superintendents often title this "the biggest civil rights issue of this generation." Welsh highlights the perspective of Glenn Hopkins, a prominent educator in Alexandria, Virginia who believes that most people "don't realize-or won't admit- that the education gap is symptomatic of a social gap." Hopkins believes that this leads schools to "naively assume" that they can come up with some program to close the gap (PD 11/11/09).

On a lighter note, a group of dynamic educators galvanized by recent electrifying Professional Development (PD) opportunities have formed a new coalition (unaffiliated with SHTA) called Teachers Responding to Unnecessary Egregiously Detailed Acronyms in Teaching (TrueDat). Keep an eye out for the t-shirts!

*Respectfully submitted,
Andi Glickman, chairperson*

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

I am pleased to report that SHTA donations were made to a few organizations. The Association donated to the Woodbury Female Scholars and Woodbury Male Scholars programs. We also made a donation to the Shaker Family Center.

*Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Ashbaugh, chairperson*

MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Members will vote on the proposed contract Monday, November 23, 2009. I will notify the members of the outcome of the election. If you know you will not be present on voting day, you may vote by proxy. Absentee ballots must be cast by proxy before 4:00 p.m. on Monday, November 23rd. You must designate another building SHTA member as a proxy voter in writing. You must sign the written proxy statement and give it to your designated voter. On Election Day, the proxy voter will produce the written/signed proxy statement and then cast your vote. You may complete this proxy voting statement or write your own. It must include your signature.

Member's Name _____ designates _____

to cast a Proxy Vote on Monday, Nov. 23, 2009.

Signature _____ Building _____

*Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Elgart, chairperson*

POLICY COMMITTEE

This month's 'Law-in-the-Limelight' is By-Law VII: Negotiation.

Our own By-Laws have some things to say about how our Association handles itself in the final stages of negotiating with the school district. Among other things, this By-Law describes a minimum time period between when the members are notified of a proposal and the vote on that proposal. Also, as members we are ensured the opportunity to meet with the negotiating team before we vote.

Here is the Article in full:

BY-LAW VIII NEGOTIATION

A. Any proposed contract or change in the existing contract presented by the SHTA Negotiating Team for a vote of the membership must be filed in writing with the Secretary and then submitted to all members of the Association within fifteen school days after the filing.

B. No proposed contract or changes in the existing contract shall be voted upon less than seven calendar days after submission to the membership.

C. The Negotiating Team will make itself available to discuss the proposed contract or changes in the existing contract at the district and/or local building level during the seven day pre-election period.

*Respectfully submitted,
David Klapholz, chairperson*

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Need some time to relax and unwind???? Friday, November 20th is the big event. The SHTA Fall Happy Hour at Jillian's 4:00PM. Please come to socialize, eat and have fun. Remember, this year, we have some very special prizes to give away. See you there!!!

*Respectfully submitted,
Darlene Garrison, chairperson*

SECRETARY'S REPORT

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

November 9, 2009
Boulevard School

The President, Rebecca Thomas, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Gary Ramont welcomed the SHTA representative council on behalf of Colleen Longo, principal of Boulevard School.

The minutes of the October meeting were approved.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT: Lisa Howell had no report.

PTO REPORT: Pat Kilroy and Eileen McKeon, PTO Council Co-president were unable to attend.

OFFICERS' REPORTS:**PRESIDENT**

Dr. Thomas stated that she has dealt with some personnel issues and has had productive discussions with the administration resolving them.

Dr. Thomas also worked on the K-4 Progress Book report card problem.

Becky reminded council that members are always welcomed to talk with other association members on issues that may come up at the building level.

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dollye Finney announced that the winners of the SHTA fellowships will have their names published in this month's newsletter.

Ms. Finney has talked with the PTO regarding possibly restructuring the PTO Grant system.

She is also working on the upcoming Night for the Red and White event.

SECRETARY

Matt Zucca took attendance.

TREASURER

Bill Scanlon presented and discussed our current financial report. Bill attended the meeting with our financial planner and the SHTA's Investment Committee. He will be meeting with our accountant to begin the auditing process of the Associations accounts.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS**TEACHER EDUCATION**

Steve Smith had no report.

LEGAL AID

Mike Sears had no report.

MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS

Stacy Elgart reported that we have 423 members. She provided lists of paid Association members to building reps. and passed out Association membership cards.

LEGISLATIVE

Andi Glickman will publish election results in the newsletter.

POLICY

Dave Klapholz reported that the new website will have the SHTA Constitution and By-Laws in a PDF format.

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Gary Raymont stated that he had been meeting with the administration regarding prorating days members take for a leave. He also discussed how to interpret and calculate days taken off for medical leave.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Debbie Ashbaugh announced the Association's donation to the Woodbury scholars program. She reported that she is submitted an ad for the *Gristmill*.

PUBLICATIONS

John Morris said that items for the newsletter need to be sent to him by midnight on Wednesday at morris_j@shaker.org.

SOCIAL

Darlene Garrison supplied flyers to building reps for our social event scheduled for Friday, November 20 at Jillian's in Cleveland Heights. The membership is invited for socializing, food, pool, fun, and door prizes! She encourages all to come.

SALARY/TENURE

Rebecca Thomas gave her report during Executive Session.

BUILDING REPORTS

The following reps asked questions, expressed concerns, or made statements on behalf of the membership in their buildings:

Mercer expressed a concern about the increasing amount of personal time needed to complete clerical work.

Corrected January 11, 2010

The High School Faculty appreciated the opportunity to respond to the Professional Development day through SurveyMonkey. We hope that our honest responses were read by the administration, so that they could be reflected upon appropriately.

Woodbury had a concern about computer login issues.

Middle School is dealing with district and building initiative interfering with members' lunch breaks.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

At 5:25 p.m. the SHTA representative council went into executive session.

The regular meeting resumed at 6:00 p.m.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

The negotiating team was thanked for their hard work and efforts.

Becky thanked Kevin Hill, and Dollye Finney for hosting our meeting and Dee Arrington for her help with the set up.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Zucca, secretary

Editorial: The Fallacy of “Hidden Raises”

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.

As the child of two former social workers and union organizers, I am familiar with the cycle of criticism that public sector workers often experience during their careers. When the economy is good, they are looked down upon by certain members of society as “settling for less” When the economy sours, they are targeted by the same citizens as maintaining their “cushy” status at the expense of taxpayers. Now, as teachers and public sector employees, we find ourselves during one of the worst economic downturns in recent history. Guess where the naysayers have focused their attention?

In a recent oft-cited article from the Columbus Dispatch, “Teacher salaries raising eyebrows” http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2009/08/15/teacher_pay.html, staff writers Jim Siegel and Catherine Candisky exploit the most recent target of teacher detractors, longevity pay. As the argument goes, teacher salaries are fueled by “hidden raises” that go beyond base pay and are reflected in our pay steps. Therefore, these steps should be radically reduced or eliminated in order to keep costs down. Sadly, the idea is not a new one. Economic woes have just again brought it to the surface with new intensity.

The problem with cutting pay steps is obvious. Teachers have been historically willing to take limited and sometimes zero raises to their base pay as long as benefits and salary steps remain in place. These two realities counterbalance the fact that we are public sector employees and our salaries are based on taxpayer dollars that are often limited during times of economic hardship. Similarly, we are willing to forgo the idea that we live in a society that explicitly values us as much as doctors or lawyers without compensating us in the same way. In a profession where 50% of us leave in the first five years and approximately 40% of those who leave later do so because of compensation issues, cutting into our step system is unconscionable.

In the same article Thomas Ash of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators is quoted as stating, "Is somebody going to tell me that a teacher is better after 11 years than after five? I've never seen any research to prove that," as a rationale for cutting pay steps after the first 11 years and beyond. I would inform Mr. Ash that the state of Ohio has mandated that Ohio teachers have their master's degree within twelve years of teaching and continue to earn six credits of graduate work every five years to maintain their licensure. Mr. Ash might want to take his argument up with the ODE and begin a fund to re-compensate those teachers who have followed the state law and paid out of their own and their district's finances to do so.

Our pay scale is in place to encourage one thing: longevity. In a perfect world, and one that the majority of public seems to advocate in survey after survey, teachers would be paid as much as doctors or lawyers. However, we know we don't live in that world. The pay scale just promises that eventually, if we put our time and effort in to improving our craft and dedicating ourselves to being continually educated licensed professionals, we will eventually earn a salary that reflects our effort. On both sides of the ledger, as teachers at the beginning of careers and teachers nearing retirement, we need to stay conscious of an issue that could jeopardize our profession and keep our best students from one day becoming teachers. JM

Important Dates

Mon. Nov. 16

- Conference Day, K-8

Wed. Nov. 18

- SHTA Membership Meeting with Salary-Tenure Committee
Woodbury Auditorium 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Fri. Nov. 20

- SHTA Social at Jillian's – Fun and Prizes

Mon. Nov. 23

- Vote on Tentative Agreements

Wed. Nov. 25

- Thanksgiving Recess Begins

Mon. Nov. 30

- Classes Resume

Mon. Dec. 7

- Executive Board at Woodbury (if needed)

Tues. Dec. 8

- Board of Education Meeting at Middle School

Fri. Dec. 18

- Winter Recess Begins

Mon. Jan. 4, 2010

- Classes Resume
- Executive Board at Woodbury

Mon. Jan. 11

- SHTA Representative Council at High School