

# SHTA *news*

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No. 6, March 19, 2012

## Message From the President

On Monday February 27<sup>th</sup>, events transpired in Chardon, Ohio that were perspective building for me and many others: the tragic shootings at Chardon High School. With the loss of those young lives, we were all reminded about the tenuousness of our day-to-day routines and the need to stay vigilant and protective of our young people. Dollye Finney will discuss in her report how our Association reached out to Chardon teachers. Thank you to Dollye for her prompt, caring actions. We will continue to remember the victims of these tragic shootings and be supportive of our professional colleagues, the students, and the families of Chardon.

This month, I worked with representatives on personnel issues at both the high school and middle school. I met with Bryan Christman and Mike Sears to review concerns with the district medical plan and I discussed MYP issues with the administration. I attended the PTO discussion of *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* by Diane Ravitch with Bill Scanlon, Becky Thomas, Dave Klapholz, Joel Rathbone, Andrew Glasier and other SHTA members (both past and present) – a positive event with supportive parents and community members. Working with Barbara Wilcher-Norton and Randy Yates, I helped resolved an after- school scheduling issue at Woodbury. I discussed job share issues at secondary and elementary levels; Race to the Top issues with Dollye Finney; and the upcoming showing of *American Teacher* hosted by the SHTA and PTO, with Andrew Glasier and Eileen Sweeney spearheading the event. I responded to building concerns at the Middle School with Paul Repasy, Mike Sears, and Dr. Kreiner. Finally, I attended *the Night for the Red and White*. Each of these activities is important and I appreciate the opportunity to represent our Association.

I have been receiving emails regularly from our colleagues in Cleveland and Cleveland Heights concerning the proposed legislation surrounding the Cleveland Plan and its potentially negative ramifications throughout the county and beyond. Although the proposed Cleveland-only legislation would have potential benefits such as year round preschool and partnerships between CMSD and local agencies like the Metroparks, many of its elements are as bad, if not worse, than SB5. CMSD teachers would face the loss of seniority benefits, merit pay, gutted collective bargaining rights and an un-elected governing board (among other detrimental elements of the plan). Read about the plan at [http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2012/03/highlights\\_of\\_draft\\_legislatio.html](http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2012/03/highlights_of_draft_legislatio.html).

In a recent New York Times article, a large-scale study reported that teacher morale is at an over 20 year low ([http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/08/education/teacher-morale-sinks-survey-results-show.html?\\_r=1&emc=eta1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/08/education/teacher-morale-sinks-survey-results-show.html?_r=1&emc=eta1)). I would argue that

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corporately-driven, top-down efforts like the Cleveland Plan are among the central reasons behind this precipitous drop. If you are so moved, now is the time to write editorials in your local newspapers to defend the value of experience, the importance of collective bargaining, and the reasons why legislators should not re-introduce legislation that was soundly rejected in November. For further information on the Cleveland Plan, please consult the Innovation Ohio report: <http://innovationohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Caution-on-the-Cleveland-Plan-2.pdf>.

Feel free to email me ([morris\\_j@shaker.org](mailto:morris_j@shaker.org)) or our Publications Editor, Andrew Glasier ([glasier\\_a@shaker.org](mailto:glasier_a@shaker.org)), with your ideas or editorials. Remember, vouchers were proposed to be a Cleveland-only exception; now they reach across the state. Governor Kasich has stated multiple times that he hopes that the Cleveland Plan will be a model adopted across Ohio. Read more about this at

[http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2012/03/bad\\_teachers\\_funding\\_charter\\_s.html](http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2012/03/bad_teachers_funding_charter_s.html)

We deserve more for our students, our communities and our profession.

*Respectfully submitted,  
John L. Morris, president*

## Reports from the Executive Board

### VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Happy March Madness! I hope that you are looking forward to a well-deserved Spring Break.

*A Night for the Red and White* was held on Saturday March 10 at Landerhaven. Thank you so much for your Silent Auction contributions and your attendance. There were more than 850 tickets sold and that is in no small part thanks to each of you! I will share more information about the evening as it becomes available.

I would like to encourage all fellowship recipients to submit receipts for reimbursement as many winners fail to claim their awards each year. If you have questions regarding this process please feel free to contact me at #4916.

This month in the wake of the Chardon Schools tragedy we sent a gift of apples to each of the five elementary schools, the middle school and the high school from Sage's Market, a local Chardon apple grower. We wanted to show our support to the teaching staff during this very difficult time as our thoughts and prayers are with them..

If you have not done so I would like to encourage the members of the SHTA to contribute to the PTO annual drive.

Please allow me to thank the members of the Financial Investment Committee headed by our treasurer William Scanlon. Members Todd Keitlin, Chante Taylor-Thomas and Matt Zucca have directed our investments toward recovery. We are approaching our all time high. Great job.

Have a restful spring break!

*Respectfully submitted,  
Dollye Finney, vice president*

## TREASURER'S REPORT

I have been working with our accountants, Edward C. Hawkins & Co., Ltd., to complete the compilation of our 2010-11 financial statements and to file our tax forms (form 990).

Last month I attended the PTO sponsored book discussion about Diane Ravitch's book The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education. S.H.T.A. members made a good showing, and I felt that the parents from the community were very responsive to Ravitch's message.

I also attended *A Night for the Red & White*, where the student performances were impressive. While there I was able to peruse the teacher-donated silent auction items. They were very popular with the parents. Those items really send such a positive message to the community members. Thanks to all the teachers who sponsored those prizes.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Scanlon, Treasurer*

## FINANCIAL REPORT

	7/1/11	3/16/12
<b>COMPOSITE BALANCE</b>		
Balance 7/1/11		844,407.77
Receipts 7/1/11 to present		72,321.01
Change in Valuation 7/1/11 to present		<u>41,309.31</u>
		958,038.09
Expenditures 7/1/11 to present		-40,167.57
Expenditures charged to last fiscal year 2010-2011		<u>-3,087.50</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>914,783.02</b>
<b>BANK AND BROKER RECONCILIATIONS</b>		
<b>A. KEY BANK (3/12/12)</b>		
Certificates of deposit		
29 mo. @ 0.149%-Matures on 2/6/14	<u>21,195.88</u>	
Total Certificates of deposit		21,195.88
Business Money Market Account (0.35% APY)		88,074.55
Unposted deposits and transfers		<u>0.00</u>
		109,270.43
Less outstanding checks		<u>-5,878.89</u>
<b>TOTAL KEY BANK</b>		<b>103,391.54</b>
<b>B. EDWARD JONES (2/24/12)</b>		
Regular Association Account	427,077.53	
Advisory Solutions Account	<u>384,313.95</u>	
		<u>811,391.48</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>914,783.02</b>

## Budgeted Accounts

<u>Account</u>	7/1/11		Transfers			3/16/12
	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Debits</u>	<u>out</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Transfers in</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Accounting	<b>3500.00</b>	6,082.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-2,582.00
Compensation for officers, representatives, et al.						
President	<b>9302.00</b>	4,651.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,651.00
Vice President	<b>5581.00</b>	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
Secretary	<b>5581.00</b>	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
Treasurer	<b>5581.00</b>	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
P.R. & R. Chairperson	<b>5581.00</b>	2,790.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,790.50
Editor	<b>4653.00</b>	2,326.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,326.50
Building reps. and alternates	<b>10000.00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
Conferences and meetings	<b>2500.00</b>	1,534.63	0.00	0.00	0.00	965.37
Contingency	<b>250.00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	250.00
Fellowships and Grants	<b>4000.00</b>	699.96	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,300.04
Insurance	<b>5000.00</b>	4,915.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	85.00
Legal	<b>5000.00</b>	200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,800.00
Negotiations	<b>0.00</b>	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-50.00
Executive Board expenses	<b>500.00</b>	322.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	177.66
Officers' expenses	<b>500.00</b>	437.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	62.25
Payroll taxes	<b>550.00</b>	263.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	286.94
Publications	<b>1000.00</b>	1,410.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-410.00
Public Relations	<b>7000.00</b>	2,123.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,876.25
Social	<b>2500.00</b>	1,450.05	0.00	0.00	350.00	1,399.95
STRS(TPO contributions)	<b>5100.00</b>	<u>2,539.53</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>2,560.47</u>
TOTAL	<b>83679.00</b>	40,167.57	0.00	0.00	350.00	43,861.43

## PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

No report.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Sears, chairperson*

## SALARY TENURE COMMITTEE

No report.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Lena Paskewitz, chairperson*

## TEACHER EDUCATION

As you reach the next phase of the evaluation process, I hope that your conversations with administrators have reflected the intent stated in our contract. The evaluation process should be a positive one. Beyond the preparation, stressful hours, and anticipation, evaluations should help you reflect on your own professionalism and guide you to being the best teacher you can be. The evaluation should also provide you with the opportunities to receive input about curriculum, teaching methods, learning styles, and other personal concerns. Evaluations should focus on the strengths of you as a professional.

Do you have any questions about your observations or follow-up discussions? If so, please do not hesitate to call. The Association is here for you to offer support, advice, and suggestions in order for you to meet your goals. I can be reached at x6385 or [smith\\_st@shaker.org](mailto:smith_st@shaker.org).

*Respectfully submitted,  
Steve Smith, chairperson*

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

No report.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Anna Hruby chairperson*

## LEGAL AID COMMITTEE

No report.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Chante Thomas-Taylor, chairperson*

## PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

This past month I have been working on making donations to various organizations. We have made donations to the Shaker Middle School Scholars program, the Woodbury African-American Female Scholars program and the Worthing Exchange Student program. These donations were made on behalf of the SHTA because the funding directly benefits our Shaker students.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Debbie Musca, chairperson*

## MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

No report.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Stacy Elgart, chairperson*

## POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE OF SHTA

No report.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Eileen Sweeney*

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

This month's 'Law-in-the-Limelight' is **By-Law III Part E.** of our By-Laws: Duties of the Treasurer. Our Treasurer is responsible for maintaining our financial interests.

Here is the Article in full:

The Treasurer:

1. Shall be the custodian of the property and funds of the Association.
2. Shall receive all money, and shall keep careful record of all money received and disbursed, and shall submit a complete financial report of the same to the editor of the Newsletter for publication prior to the end of the school year. Other reports shall be prepared at such times as may be required by the Executive Board.
3. Investments
  - a. Shall appoint 2 members, upon approval by the Executive Board, to serve along with the Treasurer on an Investment Committee.
  - b. Shall deposit the Association's funds in the name of the Association in the financial institutions designated by the Investment Committee.
4. Shall draw money from the accounts of the Association for payment of bills properly authorized or as otherwise provided for in the By-Laws.
5. Shall, under the direction of the Executive Board, prepare and submit to the Representative Council an annual budget for its approval by the Association.
6. Shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the President and/or the Executive Board.
7. Shall arrange for an external audit every four years, or during the transition to a newly elected Treasurer, whichever comes first. An external audit is not required within one year of a previous audit. The Treasurer shall also arrange for an annual financial review of the Association account; an annual financial review is not required within a year of an external audit.
8. Shall secure bonding for all Association members and employees who handle money or other property of the Association.
9. Shall secure insurance policies necessary to protect the officers and Association against liability claims.
10. Shall make available for inspection, to any member of the Association, all books, ledgers, financial records, and financial statements of the Association.

*Respectfully submitted,  
David Klapholz, chairperson*

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

The Annual SHTA/Shaker Heights City Schools Spring Recognition Reception is scheduled for Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup>. This special event will take place at Shaker Heights High School in the upper cafeteria. We are looking forward to seeing you on Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup> at 3:45PM.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Darlene Garrison, chairperson*

## **PAST PRESIDENT**

February was a busy month for meetings. I attended the Board of Education business meeting, the Finance and Audit Committee meeting, the PTO Book Discussion, and the Board of Education work session. Then, I attended the Board of Education business meeting for March. At this time, there are no plans for a Board work session in March.

On the agenda for the March business meeting was the approval of a synthetic turf and track project at the High School. Before the meeting began, the president of the Board announced that this item was being pulled from the agenda. The Board members wanted more time to research this project. If it had been approved, the project would have begun in spring of 2012. Now, it is unlikely to begin until spring of 2013 at the earliest.

This project is of interest to SHTA. The funding plan was to use a combination of the remaining bond issue funds as well as monies from the general fund. This means that any subsequent facilities needs would also use the general fund unless an alternative was available, for example, another bond issue. Using the general fund would impact other financial decisions. The Finance and Audit Committee examined several scenarios for future levies and the Board also discussed these at their work session.

We need to stay informed of the district's finances, and I plan to continue attending the meetings of the Finance and Audit Committee for this purpose. Their next meeting is April 17.

It is gratifying for me to continue to work on behalf of the members of the Association. I enjoy working with John Morris and his leadership team.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Becky Thomas*

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

### **MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING March 12, 2012**

#### **Shaker Heights Middle School**

The President, John Morris, called the meeting to order at 4:25 p.m.

Danny Young, principal of Shaker Heights Middle School, welcomed the SHTA representative council.

The minutes of the February meeting were unanimously approved.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT: Lisa Howell reported that the spring evaluation for non-continuing contract went well and the spring evaluations for continuing contract were being worked on.

PTO REPORT: Tracy Williams, PTO Council co president, talked about PTO council co-sponsoring with the SHTA a viewing of the movie *American Teacher*. She thanked those who attended the Community Book Discussion. She reminded Representative council that the PTO grant application deadline was March 12.

### **OFFICERS' REPORTS:**

#### **PRESIDENT**

John Morris reported that he attended many meetings the past month. He attended *A Night for the Red and White*. He also attended the PTO Community Book Discussion. He worked on personnel issues at the High School and the Middle School. He met with Bryan Christman to discuss insurance concerns. He is working with the administration and MYP concerns with regards to limited time to plan, missed planning periods, and more collaborative planning. He was happy to report the quick response time from the administration with regards to environmental safety issues at the Middle School.

#### **VICE-PRESIDENT**

Dollye Finney reported that over 800 tickets were sold for *A Night for the Red and White*. She reminded the members that the PTO council is still accepting donations for their annual fund. She briefly discussed the "Linkage" program associated with responsibilities we have due to "Race to the Top" requirements. Ms. Finney reported that on behalf of the SHTA, she sent a gift basket from a local Chardon apple farmer to Chardon teachers expressing our condolences and support during these difficult days.

#### **SECRETARY**

Matt Zucca took attendance for the meeting. He also stated he attended *A Night for the Red and White*.

#### **TREASURER**

Bill Scanlon discussed our current financial report. He received the financial statement from the Association's accountant. He will be planning the Investments Committee meeting for the spring. He reported that he attended *A Night for the Red and White*.

### **EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS**

#### **PAST PRESIDENT**

Becky Thomas stated she will be attending the next Board Meeting and the city's Finance and Audit Committee meeting.

#### **POLICY**

Dave Klapholz had no report.

#### **TEACHER EDUCATION**

Steven Smith has been working with teachers regarding spring evaluations and tenure concerns.

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS

Debbie Musca discussed various opportunities for donations to support student activities and SHTS sponsorship.

#### PUBLICATIONS

Andrew Glaiser said that newsletter submissions are due on Wednesday. Please send them to him at [glasier\\_a@shaker.org](mailto:glasier_a@shaker.org). He also discussed the upcoming showing of the film *American Teacher* at the high school.

#### LEGAL AID

Chante Thomas-Taylor had no report.

#### LEGISLATIVE

Anna Hruby was unable to attend the meeting.

#### SOCIAL

Darlene Garrison stated she is working on the spring recognition reception, which will be May 24th.

#### MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS

Stacy Elgart stated that the last payroll deduction for Association dues was March 1. She stated election for Building Reps will be held in May.

#### SALARY/TENURE

Lena Paskewitz stated she will be attending the upcoming Evaluation Committee meeting and the Performance Compensation Committee meeting.

#### PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mike Sears was unable to attend the meeting. His report will appear in the Newsletter.

#### **BUILDING REPORTS**

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

**Boulevard** was pleased to announce that they received their IB Authorization.

**Lomond** reported that they just went through their IB Authorization visit.

**Mercer** reported that they just went through their IB Authorization visit.

**Onaway** reported that they were going to inform the building administration of the staff's concerns with slow copy machines.

**Woodbury** was pleased to have a remedy for afternoon bus duty. They have an issue with meetings occurring during planning periods.

The **Middle School** has concerns of potential health issues with certain areas of the school.

The **High School** expressed concerns about students missing school during SGORR trips.

At 5:00 p.m. the SHTA representative council went into executive session.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

John Morris thanked the Middle School for hosting the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY, April 9, 2012 at Lomond.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
**Matt Zucca, secretary**

## **The Unintended Consequences of State-Mandated Testing or This Makes No Sense**

*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 I write this, a good number of my 11<sup>th</sup> grade Economics students have taken the Ohio Graduation Test in Reading for the third time. Twice before, they have failed to perform on the test that state officials say is a basic indicator of the 10<sup>th</sup> grader's ability to read and comprehend. I have worked with struggling readers most of my career. Each student's story is unique. However, many come with common histories of abuse, neglect or both. Our classroom houses three teachers to help these students: an English teacher, a Special Education teacher and myself. Along with a reading teacher, we work and plan to help our students meet academic goals and, hopefully, graduate. The Humanities/TEAM program in the high school is unique but based on a program created in Boston Public schools to help students who lack academic skills. Our program has morphed and changed as the students' needs have changed. Many of these changes

resulted from powerful teacher-led proposals with administrative backing. We have created a program while not always successful, has helped countless students improve their reading abilities and prepare for life beyond high school. We have graduated a group of students that often dropped out. The program has attracted dedicated teachers with a need to help the helpless. I am very proud of being part of this cohort. I am even more proud of the accomplishments of our students. Yet none of that will count when it comes to state-mandated accountability and testing.

The accountability that the state has mandated and that corporate school reformers have demanded has been subverted. The tests clearly do not test what they were intended to test. They are used in ways they were never designed for. As a result, they have little or no validity. Originally they were designed to promote equality; no matter where you lived or learned all must be able to pass this test. Schools would focus on specific standards to teach and the gap between differing groups would begin to narrow. State standards and testing would result in clearer expectations for what should be taught in schools and parents could gauge how their daughter or son was doing compared to other schools; they could compare their school to those surrounding them and to schools across state.

Unfortunately what has happened is much more corrosive to public education. School districts with any diversity, a relatively small number in the state, are penalized for that diversity because they must constantly bring all sub-groups higher on the tests every year. Over time, what makes us proud in Shaker, a greatly diverse community hurts our reputation as academic titans in the community. School districts with considerable transiency because of the number of rental properties are also penalized. If a student moves into a district today, she/he must take the test and the scores will be counted on their new district's "report card." The use of the school district report cards is more often to help real estate agents promote specific districts based on their test scores than to help students. As teachers, we do not receive the test data until well into the summer, and when we do, we calibrate how to help the student pass the test, not to become a democratic citizen. Teachers must cover a seemingly huge amount of curriculum, even if her/his class is not entirely ready for that material. Every class is different; different intellectual curiosity, different needs, different academic backgrounds. Yet, every year, we must start at standard 1 and move through the course. Teachers' areas of interest and expertise are downplayed as we must hurry along to state-mandated curriculum. Most distressing, however, is we must "teach to the test" for students and the district to be seen as successful. Spending three weeks of valuable curriculum time on test prep is a norm in my class of struggling readers. They feel discouraged, tired and angry that they can't seem to pass the tests. So do I.

What the tests really show is a student's socioeconomic level. Every year when the test results are released, schools with a higher percentage of students who receive free or reduced lunch do worse than those with a smaller percentage. The dirty little secret about the test is that it exposes that the poverty rate for children is over 23% in the United States. As an educator I find this statistic unconscionable. Yet few have looked at trying to decrease poverty for children, providing more services and training for parents in poverty, or using schools in high poverty areas as centers for social work. If you want students to learn, allow them to feel safe and secure in their environment. Educators learned this in any basic education classes but politicians fail to hear the call.

I have visited a school in the Republic of Korea, a country that is test crazy. Once a year, Korea nearly stops in order for young 18- and 19-year-old students to take a test that will determine their future choices. The strain is agonizing, as students study up to sixteen hours a day. The teen suicide rate is extremely high. Every student I talked to wished to go to a more American model of education that allows for greater flexibility. Instead, we are heading in their direction. Why can't we learn from the mistakes of others?

*AG*

### **Important Dates**

<b>March 26-March 30</b>	SPRING RECESS
<b>Monday, April 2</b>	Classes Resume Executive Board Meeting @ Woodbury
<b>Friday, April 6</b>	Good Friday, Schools Closed
<b>Monday, April 9</b>	Representative Council Meeting @ Lomond
<b>Tuesday, April 10</b>	Board of Education Meeting, Lomond @ 6:00 P.M.
<b>Mark your calendar:</b>	
<b>Thursday, May 10</b>	Screening of <i>American Teacher</i> @ SHHS Large Auditorium
<b>Thursday, May 24</b>	District Recognition Reception High School Cafeteria @ 3:45 P.M.