



(Right) Teachers, administrators, parents, students and community members rally in support of public education and voice their support for Governor Strickland's budget. (Below left) CEO Eugene Sanders and CBOE President Lawrence Davis listen as CMSD parent representative Cheryl Lane addresses the crowd. (Below right) CTU President Joanne DeMarco explains how the Governor's budget mirrors the priorities of the CTU and other Ohio workers.

RALLY for Public Education, Support of Governor's Budget

Several hundred friends of public education joined in a Rally for Public Education outside the Cleveland Board of Education at 4:30 p.m. on May 24. The heat and humidity did not dampen

the spirits of the educators, families, students, administrators, community leaders, and other supporters. The crowd joined in chants and songs, and listened to various speakers who

urged support for Governor Ted Strickland's public education-friendly proposed state budget.

"We finally have a governor who we helped elect, who supports public education, and shows it in his budget priorities," said David Quolke, CTU's 2nd Vice-President and Political Action Director. "He needs to hear from those Ohioans who also support public education. And the legislators need to hear from us, too. The charter and voucher advocates are always vocal for their priorities. Our voices need to be just as loud, for our CMSD

students and all Ohio public school children."

CTU President Joanne DeMarco spoke at the rally, saying the Strickland budget mirrors the

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NCLB: Time For A Change!



Ed McElroy

AFT President Ed McElroy, representing the American Federation of Teachers, joined five of the nation's other top education groups on May 18, releasing a joint statement stating their intention to work together to push Congress for significant changes to the No Child Left Behind Act.

The joint statement emphasized that "the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is an opportunity

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END-OF-THE-YEAR PARTY!

Thursday, June 7, 3-7 p.m.
Shooters Waterfront Cafe • West Bank of the Flats

Limited free parking in the Shooters Parking Lot.

\$1.00 parking in the Power House parking lot until 5:00 p.m.

Present membership card to receive a free drink ticket.

Wear or purchase CTU shirt or hat for additional free drink ticket.

Contract Brings New Jobs

The new CTU-CMSD agreement will provide opportunities for new jobs for CTU members. The In-School Suspension Rooms, to be implemented in every school, will be staffed by paraprofessionals. These paras will receive a higher rate of pay and will receive additional training in working with the students in the ISS rooms.

Currently, CMSD and CTU are working on the posting for this position. It takes a special type of person to work in this job classification, but the ISS program, staffed by paras, has been working effectively in some CMSD schools already. The District will use the best practices from these models and other successful ISS programs in their implementation next fall.

Those who are interested in

applying for these positions should check the CMSD website regularly during the summer for information about applying. The website is www.cmsdnet.net.

Interested CTU members will be able to apply for teaching positions in the new option schools, which will also be posted online on the CMSD website. The single-gender schools, one of each on the East and West sides, will be posting for these

positions in the near future, as plans are finalized. In the 2007-8 school year, these schools will only have grades K-2, but will add an additional grade each year.

CMSD and CTU are working collaboratively to finalize plans for another option school, the Ginn Academy, a residential school for at-risk boys. Discussions are underway for a Chinese-language immersion school as well.

CTU is committed to working with CMSD leaders to develop option schools in the Cleveland District. Cleveland schools have lost thousands of students to charter schools in the past several years, costing the District millions of dollars, and the Union hundreds of members' jobs. For-profit charter schools, with only a few exceptions, are not doing nearly as well as the public schools, based on student achievement levels. And the financial accountability of some charter schools remains a state-wide embarrassment.

But the fact remains, many Cleveland parents are looking for choices and options for their children, and too many of them are turning to charter schools despite their dismal academic records. The Union and District have to work together to provide both a premier school district that will be a parents' first and best choice, and a variety of option schools that can meet the particular needs and interests of some students and families.



Mary Lou Prescott, CTU Director of Negotiations, explains parts of the new contract at the May 14 meeting for principals and building chairpersons.



N&E Chairperson Martha Wiley oversees tellers at the contract ratification vote count.



What service! Donna Reed collects ballot envelopes outside the CTU office on West 6th Street.

THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

THUMBS UP to all CTU members, students, parents and others who attended the **May 24 Rally at the Board of Education** to support public education in Ohio. It's time supporters of public education make our voices heard! Let's hope someone was listening in Columbus . . .

THUMBS DOWN to the **legislators** who want to remove the caps on charter schools in the Governor's proposed budget. A look at the data showing public schools consistently outperform charter schools, and another look at the corruption, mismanagement and unaccounted-for funds in some of these for-profit schools, and you can't help but wonder what these legislators are thinking. Let's clean up the accountability system before any further expansion of this program that has taken critical dollars away from public schools.

THUMBS UP to **CTU members** for ratifying the **new contract**. It will provide three years of labor peace, and help CMSD and CTU focus on improving teaching and learning in our schools. If state funding stays at least at current levels, there will be three years of raises, and most importantly, our exemplary health care stays intact for three more years. Kudos!

THUMBS DOWN to the **short turnaround time for AAPs** this spring. It is difficult to make thoughtful, data-based decisions about improving education in just days. However,

THUMBS UP to the **new template**, a welcome change: shorter, more to-the-point, and hopefully actually used and implemented next year. We applaud the idea of developing a few focused, doable steps to improve achievement, rather than writing grand, all-inclusive plans that sit on a shelf.

THUMBS UP to CMSD teachers **Olga Gueits**, a chemistry teacher at Lincoln-West and winner of the 2007 Shell Science Teaching Award, and **Lisa Suarez-Caraballo**, a math teacher at Luis Muñoz Marin and winner of the Cleveland State University College of Education and Human Services 2007 Distinguished Alumni Award. These teachers are examples of some of the talent, skills and professionalism CTU educators bring to the children of Cleveland. Congratulations!

THUMBS UP to **CTU members for a successful 2006-7 school year**, and your efforts to move the District into the Continuous Improvement category on the State Report Card. You have made a difference in the future of Cleveland. Enjoy your well-deserved summer break — see you in August!

Written M Null & Voi

One provision of the newly-ratified Collective Bargaining Agreement will make existing Written Mutual Agreements that are not specifically covered as part of the contract null and void.

Written Mutual Agreements (WMAs) are agreements written and signed off by the administration and Union. At the building level, they are agreed upon by the principal and building chair and/or UCC members. These WMAs remain in effect even when the leadership of either side, CMSD or CTU, changes. They are actually extensions or interpretations of the contract at that particular school.

The problem is some schools' WMAs in fact changed the contract, in effect violating certain contractual provisions.

The new CBA will make all current WMAs **that are not specifically authorized in the contract** null and void. That provision reads: "Where the UCC and the Principal/Administrator come to written mutual agreement on a topic authorized by the CBA, the



Contract Ratified



CTU members approved a new 3-year contract by a vote of 3,291 yes to 911 no. The vote took place from April 25 to May 1, and official results were finalized by the Nominations and Elections Committee on May 4. The results were tallied at the CTU office under the direction of the N&E members, Chairperson Martha Wiley, Mark Fredrick, Garrett May, Mary Moore, and Cheryl West, and Bargaining Unit Director Michael Kulcsar.

The breakdown by division was: Elementary Schools, 1821 yes, 536 no; Middle Schools, 391 yes, 120 no; High Schools, 778 yes, 175 no; Special Schools, 281 yes, 80 no. (There are 13 schools that are still classified by the CTU as middle schools although CMSD reorganized elementaries and middle schools into K-8 schools. The CTU Constitution still recognizes the three divisions of elementary, middle, and high schools, until a constitutional change is made.)

Both CTU and CMSD leaders said the contract provided for “bread-and-butter” issues such as salary raises (3% guaranteed, 3% and 3% based on state funding staying at the same levels, at least) and benefits (current health care plan but with addition of Working Spouse provision). However, both sides lauded the new contract as one that puts student achievement at its center.

CTU President Joanne DeMarco reiterated her claim that the teacher’s working conditions are the students’ learning conditions, contrary to the view that whatever the Union

wants must be against the best interests of students. Many provisions of the new contract will directly benefit CMSD students: smaller class sizes in primary grades; pre-school phased in to all K-8 schools; in-school suspension rooms as an option to out-of-school suspension; retention of Right of Removal to keep disruptive students from jeopardizing the classroom setting for others; and a commitment to work toward the elimination of the disparity gap.

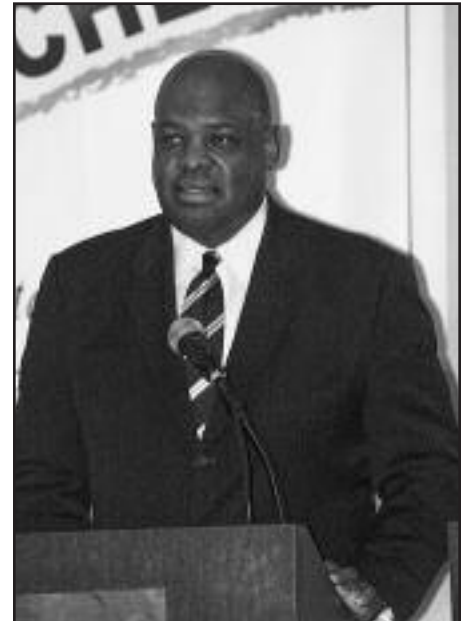
The main opposition to the contract centered around the Working Spouse provision, which requires spouses of CMSD employees who have access to health care through their own employers or their retirement systems to use their plan as the primary coverage, and CMSD’s plan as secondary coverage, or to select the District’s least expensive plan as their health care coverage. This provision is tied to the raises in the second and third years: no raise, no Working Spouse provision. And the level of medical coverage remains the same; CMSD’s coverage will pay for what the spouse’s plan

does not, up to the level of benefits of the CMSD plan. Many other school systems and other employers already have some type of Working Spouse provision, as a way to more fairly share the enormous burden of health care insurance costs.

The new agreement provides labor peace for CTU members, CMSD administration, and Cleveland families for three years. The timing of this settlement — months before the opening of the 2007-8 school year — also gives the District and Union time to effectively implement the educational initiatives.

The bargaining method used in these negotiations, Compressed Interest-Based Bargaining, forced both sides to focus on true priorities and not waste time on hundreds of “throw-away” side issues. By forcing both sides to reach consensus, the use of CIBB has the potential for better mutual implementation and enforcement of the new contract by both CTU and CMSD leaders.

CTU building chairpersons and principals met with both CMSD and CTU Negotiating Teams at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on May 14. The purpose of the meeting was to provide guidance for both Union and administrative leaders about implementing the new contract in the school buildings.



At the May 14 meeting, CEO Eugene Sanders urges CTU and CMSD leaders meeting to work together for the success of the Cleveland District and the future of Cleveland.

Negotiating Team members explained provisions of the new agreement and answered specific questions from building chairs and principals. Both CTU and CMSD leadership applauded the joint effort to work collaboratively, beginning with that meeting, to implement the agreement and work together for the continued improvement and success of the Cleveland schools.



Principals and building chairs hear explanations of the new contract from members of both Negotiating Teams.

Mutual Agreements and Unless in CBA

Principal/Administrator and the UCC shall take responsibility for supporting and implementing their respective roles in any agreed upon items. If the UCC and Principal/Administrator determine that a modification in their school’s operating procedure is needed that violates either the letter or spirit of this CBA, this modification can only be implemented following the President of the CTU and CEO of CMSD signing a Memorandum of Understanding or Written

Mutual Agreement that details the UCC’s and Principal/Administrator’s request.” (*Article 2, Section 4A*)

Beginning next school year, only the existing WMAs that are specifically mentioned in the contract will be in effect. All others will require approval by the CTU President and CMSD CEO.



Cherylane Jones-Williams, Craig Cotner and Joanne DeMarco answer questions about the contract.

The WMAs specifically mentioned in the contract and still recognized are:

- Attendance
- Breakfast and Lunch Programs
- Building/Handicapped Parking
- Classroom Integrity
- Copy Machines and Paper
- Detention Period
- Differential Elections
- Differential Positions
- Grade 1 Diagnostic Testing and Assessments
- K-1 Transition (Elementary)
- Looping
- Locks for Classroom Doors
- Mediation Program
- Mentoring
- Parent Teacher Conferences
- Passing Time
- Personal Item Safety
- Personnel Selection Committee
- Professional Days
- Public Address System
- Room Temperature
- Snow Removal
- Special Faculty Committees
- Special Substitutes (Teachers Assigned as)
- Teacher/Student Contact Time (Middle Grades)
- Team Time
- Voluntary Professional Development



CTU Hires New Office Manager

The CTU Executive Board welcomed Ed Wegrzynowski as the new office manager in May. He was the top choice of both the CTU screening committee and the interview committee. Ed had 25 years at the law firm of Rolf and Goffman Co., LPA. The past ten years, he was their office manager.

Ed worked at that company for the past 25 years, beginning as a messenger while in high school, becoming a paralegal, and then office manager. When the company recently looked at restructuring, he took the opportunity to join the CTU office staff. He said his goal is to bring the CTU into the 21st century technologically, while being fis-

cally responsible with dues monies.

Ed is proud of the fact that his previous company was the first law firm in the Cleveland area to have a fax machine, and under his direction, the first to go "paperless," using technology and computers. In addition to his paralegal skills, he is also a Notary Public.

Ed has been married for 17 years to "the ultimate wife" Jackie, and they have two sons, Nick, age 10, and Jeff, age 8. Ed is active in their Cub Scout activities, and his wife works part-time in the kitchen at his sons' school "so she can keep an eye on her babies." He relaxes by working in the garden.

Regarding the CTU, Ed said, "I



Ed Wegrzynowski

strongly believe in the objectives of the Union. My number one goal is to provide quality service to CTU members."

Ed is also known for being very thrifty: his prized collection is a pencil collection, with over 100 pencils from all over the world "that didn't cost me anything to collect," he added. (He asked friends, family and co-workers to bring him a pencil from anywhere in the world they traveled.) He plans to have it on display in his office at the CTU by the end of the summer.

"I have found everyone at the CTU to be extremely friendly, and very helpful," he said recently. We welcome Ed to the CTU!

The Year in Review

from Civil, Democratic and Human Rights Committee

by **Karen Dorsey**, *assistant chair*,
and **Marge Meall**

Barbara Bradley Blamo, *chairperson*

What is CDHR? CDHR is an acronym for the CTU's Civil, Democratic and Human Rights Committee. This committee looked at some of the issues that are plaguing CTU teachers. The one issue that all of our committee members decided upon was diversity as our theme. I know in my classroom, I try to explain to my children that everyone is an M-n-M. We all have different color shells on the outside but we are identical on the inside. But what is diversity? Is it cultural? Is it religious? We need to define it and come up with a plan of action on how it would be best to educate our fellow teachers along with ourselves.

As a teacher I try to look at each child as a unique individual who is shared with me and try to help them along their journey of life. I want to make an impact in a positive way with

my teaching. In order to do this, I must better understand where they are coming from.

Our first activity was held July 13, 2006 at the Maltz Museum of

Jewish Heritage, located on Richmond Road in Beachwood. Approximately 30 members from many different schools attended the tour and learned about the Cradle of Christianity and immigration to the United States. Those who attended found it quite fascinating.

The committee sponsored a Diversity Workshop at the end of October at the Orchard School of Science. Laura Handricks and Dr. Dolly Goodwin spoke to approximately 100 teachers about diversity within the classroom, including in Literature. Carole Close's Flash group educated the participants on how to be more open to cultural differences within our classrooms.

CDHR sold both the "Enjoy the City" and the original "Entertainment" books this year. We donated the proceeds to the Burn Unit at Metro Hospital in Cleveland.

In March, approximately 250 people joined the CDHR and Community Relations Committees at John Adams High School, in a joint activity for Community and Women's Awareness month. There were over 40 different types of educational booths that spanned issues such as health, finance, and community needs.

The committee provided suggestions on the internet about monthly activities to help teachers and students to become more aware of the diversity around them. For example, February is dedicated to African Americans, and September is Hispanic American month.



CDHR's goal was to educate CTU members about the diversity within our school district. We are hopeful that they were able to educate their students a little more effectively about the diversity around them.





CTU/JCCA and CMSD Walks



The CTU Community Relations Committee, under the direction of Chairperson Beverly Smith and Assistant Chairperson Kim Leslie, sponsored the annual CTU/JCCA (Junior Child Care Association) Walk-a-Thon May 19 at Edgewater Park, to benefit special needs children. Bags and shirts are still available for a \$15 donation; call the CTU at 216-861-7676 ext. 242 for details.

The CMSD Physical Education Department also sponsored a "We Are Family" 3-mile fitness walk in May. The walk was for CMSD students and staff and their families. Thankfully, the weather cooperated for both walks, and everyone had a fun and healthy time!



Did You Sign?

CTU Supports Petition Drive to Amend School Funding

The Legislative Committee, under the direction of Michele Pomerantz, recently sent hundreds of signatures to Columbus as part of the "Getting It Right for Ohio's Future" constitutional amendment drive.

This effort hopes to put a school funding initiative on the ballot in November, to make the Ohio legislature correct the flawed school funding formula currently in use. (Yes, this is the same formula that has been declared unconstitutional **four times** but continues to be used to fund school districts in

Ohio — inequitably and inadequately.)

The Legislative Committee urges CTU members to check the website during the summer for political updates. Our friends in Columbus and Washington need our support as we work to make some changes in our state and nation, to support public education.

CTU Secretary Michelle Rzucidlo-Rupright and co-worker Joseph Shelton sign petitions for the "Getting It Right for Ohio's Future" constitutional amendment.



PSRPs Say . . .

'Count Me In'

Three Reports from the AFT's 30th Annual PRSP (Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel) Conference, April 19-22, Las Vegas, NV

1

by **Cherylane Jones-Williams**
Paraprofessional Chapter Chairperson

About 1,000 people attended the 30th Annual PSRP Conference in Las Vegas this year. It was wonderful to be there. All paras received a T-shirt with the theme "COUNT ME IN" on it.

Keynote Speaker Randi Weingarten, AFT vice president and United Federation of Teachers president, told us that sometimes you just have to be a troublemaker to get an important issue addressed.

Following are summaries of three workshops I attended:

■ Leaving a Union Legacy

The moderator was

- Jenna Fitzgerald of the Boston Teachers Union, Local #66 Massachusetts

The presenters were:

- Carol Kurtz, associate director, AFT Union Leadership Institute
- Nancy Morales, AFT senior national representative

This workshop was about recruiting activists and potential leaders and how it is not just about finding someone to do the work. It's about identifying and training people who will carry on the important work of the union — the work that we or those who came before us started. We have been a caretaker of that legacy, and it is part of our responsibility to find the next caretakers.

■ Collaboration in the Classroom: Paraprofessional and Teacher Teams

The moderator was:

- Becky Hespen, Education Minnesota Osseo Educations Support Professionals Local #7325

The presenter was:

- Leonard Edmonds, associate director, AFT PSRP Department
- In today's demanding and at

times chaotic school environment, classroom teachers and paraprofessionals must work collaboratively to maximize student achievement and behavioral/emotional development. This session was about providing practical tools/techniques to become an effective team member for both the teacher and paraprofessional.

■ Trends, Issues & Data on PSRPs

The moderator was:

- Cherylane Jones-Williams of the Cleveland Teachers Union, Local #279, Ohio

The presenter was:

- Dr. Marie-Louis Caravatti, associate director, AFT Research and Information Services Department

The AFT's report on trends, issues and data on PSRPs is a reworking of the popular report *It Takes A Team*. Its purpose is to pair statistics and facts with the reality of our members' work. AFT research will take this information to produce the final report and provide you with data that is helpful in the field.

Each union made a gift basket to be raffled off for a scholarship so that smaller locals could attend the convention. Local 279 para delegates and UCC members gave money to make a basket containing some para materials along with a Cavaliers Hat, Indians T-shirt, Browns playing cards, syrup from Ohio, wine from an Ohio winery and much more. A para from Chicago won our basket.

2

by **Sandra Bennett**
Para Chapter Assistant Chairperson

Leaving a Union Legacy; Communication Skills for Building Reps; Collective Bargaining for K-8; and First Friends, Best Friends: Reaching Out to New and Young Members — these workshops and the plenary sessions (moderated by Loretta Johnson, our AFT vice president) with their guest speakers were very interesting. We were welcomed on Friday by Danny Thompson, Executive Secretary/Treasurer of the Nevada AFL/CIO, and heard keynote speaker Randi Weingarten, AFT vice president and president, United Federation of Teachers, #2.

On Saturday, Nat LaCour, AFT secretary/treasurer, introduced guest speaker Richard L. Trumka, AFL/CIO Secretary/Treasurer.

I want to thank the para chapter delegates and other CTU representatives who donated money or items for the basket we made for the raffle at the conference. Funds raised from the baskets are used for scholarships to help smaller locals that cannot afford to send members to the conference. As the assistant chairperson, it was an honor to present our basket to the winner at the luncheon on Saturday.

Each time I attend the conference I learn new information which adds to the knowledge needed to be an effective leader. I've also met many people that

are in dire need of support from the AFT, and those just beginning to get collective bargaining rights. There are even locals that were started by paraprofessionals only and others where the teachers later joined them. The broad range of paras include custodians, cleaners, bus drivers, college workers, food service workers, secretaries and day care center workers.

Our own CTU chapter chairperson, Cherylane Jones-Williams, was the moderator of the workshop on Trends, Issues & Data on PSRPs. Congratulations to her as she continues to use the skills she has learned and her professionalism in working with others.

3

by **Vanessa Briggs**

Planes flew in from all around the country to Las Vegas, Nevada for another wonderful conference at the Riviera Hotel and Casino. Our conference began on Friday morning with a welcome from Jenna Fitzgerald, vice chair, AFT PSRP and Policy Council, and a conference overview from Tom Moran, Deputy Director AFT PSRP department.

An excellent workshop was Supporting Effective Reading taught by Wanda Dew, ER&D National Trainer, Baltimore Teachers Union, #340 (Maryland). This session provided us with insights and hands-on experiences relating to the components of effective reading instruction that will enable paras to support students' reading achievement. The main core was the five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension, along with the Matthew Effect.

Besides work we had a little time for fun. The real treat was Saturday night, **Solidarity** with our own **Laverne Butler**. I had the opportunity to sing in the **Solidarity Choir**, and CTU paras were also in the play **Union Collaboration**.

Paras — Is Your Permit Expiring?

by **Cherylane Jones-Williams** Paraprofessional Chapter Chair

Paraprofessionals whose educational aide permit is due to expire on June 30, 2007, must apply for a new one immediately. The cost is \$12 for a one-year permit and \$48 for a four-year permit. You may bring a check or money order to the Board of Education (5th Floor). You can download an application from the Ohio Department of Education's website. If you want to apply for your permit online, you can do that on the ODE website too, using a credit card. The ODE website is www.ode.state.oh.us.

Please remember to check the expiration date on your educational aide permit!

DeMarco: A New View of Health Care

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Federation of Teachers settled a contract last month too, **raising** class size limits in grades K-3, and agreeing to raises of 1% and 2% for the first two years, with an agreement to renegotiate for raises and benefits in the third year. (These raises fall short of the rate of inflation.)

Their monthly insurance premium will more than double: a CFT teacher earning \$55,000 a year will pay **\$101.11 a month** for the family plan, up from \$49. They will also have a working spouse provision. If CFT members' spouses can get coverage for under \$150 a month from their own employers, they will have access to the district's health care plan only as a secondary coverage.

Locally, Richmond Heights teachers had to strike for three weeks to retain their health benefits. After weeks on the picket line, and loss of those days' pay since schools were open (staffed by scabs), the teachers settled for 2% annual raises in the

new contract.

We negotiated for 41 days and were able to retain our current exemplary level of health insurance, while allowing for the Working Spouse provision (spouses who have

In addition, our Negotiating Team brought back a guaranteed 3% raise, and two more years of 3% raises tied to no decreases in school funding. The second two raises are also tied to the Working Spouse provision: no raises for CTU members, no Working Spouse provision.

ly expensive item for employers, but it is of major importance to employees as they consider employment options and conditions.

Basically, what we did during these negotiations was take care of the most important bread-and-butter issues of our membership—salaries and health care benefits—while also focusing on academics and student achievement: lower class size in primary grades, pre-school classes in K-8 schools, in-school suspension rooms in every school, elimination of the disparity gap, and retention of Right of Removal, to name a few. Both teams understood that a teacher's working conditions truly are the students' learning conditions.

And thankfully, both teams understood the importance of quality health care. Until you need it, it may not be a priority to you. But when you or someone you love needs it, having access to quality, affordable health care is the most important thing in the world.

The reason I'm bringing up these other settlements is to illustrate how difficult it is today to retain health care coverage that was almost taken for granted in the past.

jobs or retirement plans that provide medical coverage must now get primary coverage from their own employer, and use CMSD's plan as secondary coverage), and giving the District permission to investigate and implement self-insurance in the future years (a method that would not cause any changes for the members, but could potentially save the District money in health care costs).

The reason I'm bringing up these other settlements is to illustrate how difficult it is today to retain health care coverage that was almost taken for granted in the past. Access to quality health care, and providing health care insurance to workers, have become national issues, and they are serious concerns for workers and retirees across the country. It is an extreme-

NCLB: Time for a Change!

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for a refocused national discussion about public education that offers members of Congress the opportunity to elevate this dialogue, to be bold, and to embrace not only the call for equity in American education but the demand for innovation as well."

The other groups that have signed on to the joint statement with the AFT are: American Association of School Administrators; National Association of Elementary School Principals; National Association of Secondary School Principals; National Education Association; and National School Boards Association.

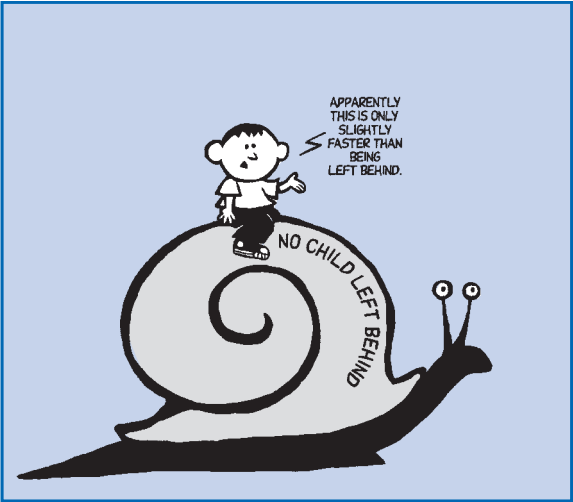
Although each organization has developed and proposed specific recommendations regarding their reauthorization priorities, they reached consensus that changes need to be made in the following critical areas: accountability; assessments;

improved assessments for English language learners and students with disabilities; school improvement; and educator quality and professional development.

Members of staff from all six organizations attended bipartisan briefings on Capitol Hill for key staff from the House Education and Labor Committee and the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. Other Capitol Hill briefings are planned for the near future.

These actions reflect the Union's ongoing commitment to inform lawmakers about the need to listen to frontline educators as they weigh changes to the law in 2007.

President McElroy also participated in a roundtable discussion on



NCLB in the U.S. Senate on May 23, with Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Committee Chairman Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), and other senators. McElroy outlined the AFT's legislative goals with the senators, and stressed the importance of making constructive changes to the law this year.

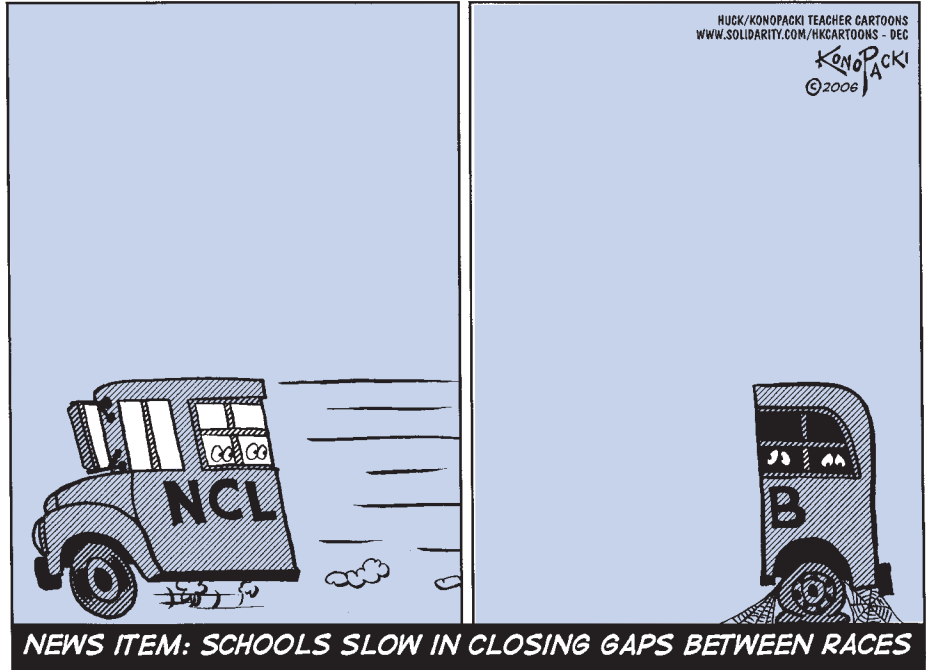
May 24 Rally

■ continued from page 1

Union's core values. These include early childhood education, closing the disparity gap, eliminating vouchers, cleaning up the graft and corruption in some of Ohio's for-profit charter schools, quality health care for every child, and leaving school employees' health care to collective bargaining. "It's in the Governor's budget," DeMarco told the cheering crowd, after each item.

The Ohio 8, the Superintendents and Union Presidents of Ohio's eight largest urban school districts, testified in Columbus on May 29 for school funding. These leaders are optimistic that Strickland and the current Ohio legislature can work together to provide more fair and consistent funding to Ohio's public school districts.

The proposed two-year budget must be passed by both the House and Senate. Both chambers can make changes to it, but the final version must be signed by the Governor.



Is Your IPDP Updated?

In her ongoing quest to keep all CTU members properly licensed and certificated, CTU's licensure guru (and 3rd Vice President, Senior High and Specials) Mary Lou Prescott reminded all members who plan to take summer classes for credit to **be sure they are part of an approved IPDP or they may not count.**

Remember, Ohio's licensure rules require that classes must be **pre-approved** as part of your IPDP plan in order for them to count towards your teaching license. Otherwise, you may be taking them for "fun and personal fulfillment," but not for credit. You can complete the IPDP online at the CMSD website.

And don't wait until the last minute to renew your license! You should have all necessary coursework (that was pre-approved on your IPDP, of course) completed well before the expiration date. CMSD cannot issue a contract to teachers without a **current** license. Don't take the chance of losing your job and seniority — keeping your license or certificate current is part of your professional responsibility.



THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY JOANNE DEMARCO

A New View of Health Care



I recently spent some time in Hillcrest Hospital—as a patient, not as a visitor--and became way too familiar with terms like EKG, MRI, ECHO, etc. Prior to this unexpected episode, I was not one to frequent the doctor's office or take regular medication. Now I must.

What did this episode cost? First-class medical care, total patient bill: \$0. Total drug bill: \$5 per monthly prescription.

I spoke to another member whose spouse had a medical emergency last month requiring a weekend in the cardiac intensive care unit (the

member referred to it as quite the “weekend spa”). Again, world-class medical care, total patient bill: \$0.

The reason I'm sharing this with you is to say how grateful I am to our Negotiating Team that we were able to retain our health care benefits in the recent contract negotiations. We have **first dollar coverage**, which translates to that \$0 patient bill, all at not more than \$30 per family per month in premiums.

Yes, we now pay \$75 for an Emergency Room visit, but not if the patient is admitted to the hos-

pital. We also pay a minimal \$15 co-pay for physician office visits. As you recall, we made these changes a few years ago, when we tweaked the health care package to help save some CTU members' jobs.

Let's take a look at some other recent Ohio school districts' settlements. The Cincinnati

■ continued on page 7

Scenes From A Rally for Public Education

Friends of public education rallied May 24 at the Cleveland Board of Education Administration Building. They urged support for Gov. Ted Strickland's proposed pro-education, pro-worker budget. (Story on page 1.)



THE CRITIQUE

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