



CLEVELAND TEACHERS UNION

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Quolke's Corner

Open Enrollment, School of Science and Medicine Settlement, and Negotiations Update

I want to thank every CTU member for the incredible work you do each and every day. I find it pretty amazing and think the general public would find it pretty amazing as well if they knew the constant administrative road blocks we face seemingly every day. The excessive amount of testing CMSD and the Ohio Department of Education mandates that cuts into critical instructional time. The endless disruptions to your classroom instruction by administrators under the guise of "Learning Walks" rifling through desks, typing away on iPads, flipping through lesson plan books, and generally having no regard for classroom integrity. The punitive measures we are seeing at some of the CMSD "Investments Schools," such as 6-page weekly lesson plans upon which staff get no feedback, or eliminating planning time in favor of Professional Development that is little more than teacher detention. Through it all, our CTU members continue to deliver on the promise of public education in every classroom across the city.

Unfortunately, when it comes to dishing out accolades, CMSD, ODE, legislators and policy makers point to the "Cleveland Plan" as the reason for any CMSD success, and downplay the incredible work our CTU members are doing on the front lines to move our children forward. When CMSD is one of only three urban districts to show gains on all four parts of the NAEP test, it ISN'T the Cleveland Plan that produced those results--it IS our members. I think we all know, after years of massive layoffs, closing schools, shuffling educators around, and declining enrollment, the voters supported Issue 107 to provide the stability our schools deserved and our educators needed to produce results. And our members didn't let the community down. Yes, we still have a long way to go and there are enormous challenges in front of us, but first and foremost each and every one of our CTU members deserves a big shout out and THANK YOU for everything you have done!!!

There are a couple of other important updates.

NOVEMBER IS OPEN ENROLLMENT MONTH. Everyone should have received an email from CMSD with your personal pin number for Open Enrollment. You can access the benefits enrollment system now through November 30, 2015. Remember, if you are making changes to your current enrollment, please be sure to press the "Submit" button. The "Submit" button will result in your selection(s) being recorded and will display your confirmation number. Print your confirmation number for your records. You can access your benefits through the link provided, or through the Open Enrollment Portal on the district's main web page. If you have questions, email them directly to benefits@clevelandmetroschools.org. Even if you're not making changes, I urge you to log on and review your benefits. Some benefits need to be updated and submitted annually, such as FSA accounts and Dependent Care Accounts. Additionally, if you are one of the few who actually opt-out of our health care, you must log on and submit that request. Michael Kulcsar (ext. 224) is our point person at the CTU if you have questions.

John Hay School of Science and Medicine Arbitration Settlement. On October 23, 2015, CTU and CMSD signed a settlement agreement regarding compensation owed to CTU members when Principal Ed Weber scheduled the majority of staff additional block assignments during the 2014-15 school year, and then continued to do this into this school year. This was a particularly frustrating grievance on a number of levels. First, Mr. Weber has been the principal at Science and Medicine for a number of years, is very familiar with block scheduling (1 block period equals 2 assignments) and has created schedules following the CBA up until last year. Additionally, CTU had an earlier grievance sustained at Max Hayes on almost the exact same issue. In both cases, the staff and UCC at those campuses tried to resolve the scheduling problems without filing grievances. As is too often the case, the district pushed the Science and Medicine grievance to arbitration before settling at the last minute. The cost in back pay to the district was \$390,000+ for Science and Medicine on top of a similar amount at Max Hayes. We are in the process of resolving similar scheduling violations at the three new John Marshall schools. Shari Obrenski (ext. 270), 3rd VP for Senior High and Special Schools, has e-mailed the settlement agreement to all Chapter Chairpersons and asked them to contact her if there are similar issues at their schools.

NEGOTIATIONS 2015-16. Negotiations on a new Collective Bargaining Agreement officially got underway on October 28th. While we have identified a limited number of days for the month of November, beginning in December we anticipate meeting three days a week through March 24th. We will be working with mediators from the FMCS (Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services) in an attempt to reach a tentative agreement. However, given the magnitude of the issues both sides will be attempting to address, this is going to be an extremely difficult and brutal negotiations. Our CTU team consists of Shari Obrenski, Director of Negotiations, Jillian Ahrens, Mark Baumgartner, Cherylane Jones-Williams, Michael Kulcsar, Mary Moore, Tracy Radich, Kurt Richards, Michelle Rupright, our legal Counsel Susannah Muskovitz and Sandy McNair, and myself. Additionally, Rob Weil, Director of Educational Issues, will be our point person from the American Federation of Teachers. The District's team consists of CEO Eric Gordon, Wayne Belock, Victoria Brian, Lora Cover, Christine Fowler-Mack, Mike Hanna, Sue Hastings, Sara Kidner, Gerard Leslie, Valentina Moxon, John Scanlon, and Julie Shepherd.

I have been involved in all but three of our contract negotiations and re-openers since the 1988 strike. I remember Superintendent Al Tutela's Career Ladder and the anger of our members that led up to that strike. I remember the strike votes of 1993 and around the clock negotiations before settling at 4:30a.m. on a Sunday morning. I remember the state takeover in 1996, and the district calling in Vance Security goon squads to arm our schools in the event of a strike.

Our CBA of 2013 came with a lot of promises from our CEO and our appointed Board of Education. From TDES to Differentiated Compensation to the 200 minutes, far too many of those promises have gone unfulfilled. It is our goal to reclaim those promises, and bring you back a contract that will help create schools where we can teach and help our kids, and where our kids and families want to be. Watch your personal e-mail over the upcoming weeks and months for more surveys to give us your input and guidance. You know what they say, "A penny for your thoughts..." Speaking of pennies, save every one you can. This could take a while.

In union,

David