



# CRITIQUE



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## FEDERAL MEDIATOR ASSISTING

# CTU, CMSD Negotiations Continue

**Negotiating teams for the Cleveland Teachers Union and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District continue to meet after a Tentative Agreement (TA) was rejected by CTU members in a late September vote.**

November 15 was the first negotiations meeting since the passage of Issue 108, the CMSD renewal levy. The

teams have met regularly in November and December, going through all the issues that are on the table. The

teams are still using a federal mediator to facilitate the process.

Issue 108 was a rare bright spot in the election season, and very important to negotiations. "The levy was essential to the District," said President Quolke, "and a loss would have been devastating to public education in this city. Cleveland voters recognized that. It passed in every ward, a clear vote of support from the community."

Regarding the starting point for this new round of negotiations, there are no rules dictating that anything in

# DeVos: Trump's Dangerous Choice to Head Department of Education

by **Randi Weingarten**

*President, American Federation of Teachers*

**Our public schools are the means by which the United States fulfills a collective promise: to take and teach every child seeking an education. While private, religious and charter schools have a place in the educational landscape, this most democratic of promises is unique to public schools.**

Obviously, some public schools need improvement. But the vast majority remain the places where we prepare the nation's young people — rich, poor, native- and foreign-born, and of all abilities — to contribute. They are where we forge a common culture out of America's rich diversity.

Those aren't partisan statements; there's a broad consensus that public schools are a treasure to protect. That's why reauthorizing the federal education law initiated by Lyndon Johnson 50 years ago was one of the only things the last Congress and President Obama could jointly do.

And it's why President-elect Donald Trump's pick for education secretary, Michigan philanthropist and activist Betsy DeVos, is such a grave threat to what made America great in the first place. She is the most ideological, anti-public-school nominee for secretary of education since the U.S. Department of Education was created.

It's not surprising that Trump and DeVos, both billionaires who never attended or sent their children to public schools, fail to understand the importance of public education in fostering pluralism and opportunity. But it is deeply troubling.

Eighty-five percent of American children attend public schools. They

deserve leaders who will strengthen them, not destabilize or defund them.

During his campaign, Trump proposed a \$20 billion voucher plan to shift taxpayer dollars to private and religious schools. That would fulfill a decades-long crusade by DeVos, a longtime voucher proponent.

In 2000, DeVos and her husband bankrolled a multimillion-dollar ballot initiative to create school vouchers in Michigan, which voters overwhelmingly shot down. DeVos then shifted her focus to the expansion of publicly funded but privately run charter schools.

Her push — and deep pockets — have resulted in an explosion in the number of charter schools in her home state. Michigan now spends more than \$1 billion on charter schools every year. Eighty percent of the charter schools in Michigan are operated for-profit — the highest percentage in the nation. The weak regulation and lack of accountability of those schools landed Michigan [like Ohio] a spot in what's known as the Wild West of charter schools.

A yearlong investigation of two decades of charter school records by the Detroit Free Press described the



Randi Weingarten

**We** are utilizing member feedback and surveys to help formulate stronger positions on issues such as TDES and the over-testing of our students.

— *Shari Obrenski, CTU Director of Negotiations*

the rejected TA would automatically "carry over" to the new negotiations. Shari Obrenski, CTU Director of Negotiations, explained that when the TA was rejected, it meant that everything was on the table again. However, she said the CTU Team "maintains that much of what we negotiated in the TA would be our starting point, and we are utilizing member feedback and surveys to help formulate stronger positions on issues such as TDES and the over-testing of our students."

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## CTU, CMSD Negotiations Continue

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By winter break, both sides will have expressed their concerns and ideas on every issue. “We’ve discussed everything,” said Ms. Obrenski. The mediator then summarized those concerns into areas of exploration. In January, the teams intend to put together packages of proposals, “and look at all areas together, not piecemeal.”

“Both sides have expressed a desire to conclude these negotiations sooner rather than later,” said CTU President David Quolke. They hope to reach the goal of a February 2017 settlement, and have already set January meeting dates.

**W**hen the TA was rejected, it meant that everything was on the table again.

“The federal mediator has been very helpful to make our sessions productive,” added Ms. Obrenski. However, this means matching the schedules of three groups: CTU negotiators, CMSD negotiators, and the mediator. The teams have been successful in narrowing the number of issues on the table. But Ms. Obrenski explained that there

are many more issues they will be dealing with other than the limited number that were in the original TA.

“In addition to wages, which includes the para salary schedule, duration of the agreement, and healthcare,” she said, “we included issues related to TDES, student testing, assignments of our Psychologists, Corrective Action Schools, and the 200 minutes. Those are the issues our members told us were their reasons for rejecting the TA. Likewise, the District emphasized the key issues for them, such as high school schedules, subcontracting, para-professional evaluations, AAP’s, and Peer Assistance and Review. Some of these items were either addressed or set aside in the original TA, but are now open in this new round of negotiations.”

Both President Quolke and Ms. Obrenski thanked CTU members for their input, on surveys and through discussions, after the TA was rejected. “The CTU Team is using that explicit information in these current negotiations, to reach an agreement that our members will ratify,” she said. “We know everyone would like a quick resolution to negotiations. It’s one of our goals to move the process along as quickly as we can, but our number one focus is on bringing the members a Tentative Agreement that they will vote to accept.”

They reminded members that

both negotiating teams must bargain within the boundaries and limitations of the Cleveland Plan. It is state law, and must be observed by both teams. They cannot negotiate away state law. Also, another Fact-Finder option is not available. This is still considered the same negotiations cycle, and there is

was rejected.

“There are many difficult issues we need to resolve,” said Ms. Obrenski, “but our team is working diligently to address those issues for our members, using all of the feedback they have given us. We will also continue to

**B**oth negotiating teams must bargain within the boundaries and limitations of the Cleveland Plan. It is state law, and must be observed by both teams. They cannot negotiate away state law.

only one Fact-Finding per cycle. The CTU and CMSD used that option last spring.

President Quolke and Ms. Obrenski acknowledged that there was some confusion after the TA was rejected. It does not mean that CTU members are now working with no contract and no rules governing their working conditions. The 2013-2016 Collective Bargaining Agreement remains in effect until a new agreement is ratified by both sides. But any of the provisions that were in the new TA, such as the 2% raise and changes to working conditions, are not in effect, because it

update CTU members as we have new information to share, or just provide status reports so members will know how negotiations are proceeding.

“I know there is some sense of urgency to get a new CBA done and approved, but we want to get it right. It took 11 months of negotiations to get to the last TA. It’s not a speedy process, but we want to reach an agreement that we feel confident our members will support and ratify. Then we can all focus on our foremost jobs of educating Cleveland’s children, and working to improve teaching and learning in our schools.”

# THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN



**THUMBS UP** to CTU members and retirees from 279-R, led by CTU’s Director of Political Action Kurt Richards, for their incredible work on Issue 108 and on behalf of our endorsed candidates. They made over 1.6 million phone calls, and knocked on thousands of doors in northeast Ohio. We will likely need that volunteer spirit, and activism for public education and union causes, in the months ahead.



**THUMBS UP** to Meryl Johnson, retired CMSD teacher and former CTU officer, on her election to the Ohio Board of Education. She will be a much-needed teacher and union voice in Columbus! And a thank-you for her service to Roslyn Painter-Goffi, another AFT retiree and former President of the Berea Federation of Teachers, who lost her bid for reelection to the Board. Her voice will be missed.



**THUMBS UP** to members who checked their benefits during the November Open Enrollment period, including those who signed up or renewed their FSA. Taking a few minutes to do that during Open

Enrollment, and verifying that everything was correct and/or making any necessary changes, can save a lot of headaches (and dollars) later.



**THUMBS DOWN** to those building administrators who are ignoring the Student Code of Conduct and not dealing appropriately with student misbehaviors. Besides being a violation of the agreement, this allows teaching and learning for everyone else to be disrupted, and sends a terrible message to the entire school community that misbehaviors have no consequences.



**THUMBS UP** to the CTU Grievance team, led by Jillian Ahrens and Mary Moore, for updating the grievance process with more user-friendly forms, and the new online filing system at [grievances@ctu279.org](mailto:grievances@ctu279.org). These changes will help facilitate the process for both CTU members and the Grievance Team. But the most important part of the entire grievance process begins with each and every CTU member — the Union needs all CTU members to be willing to enforce the contract. If the contract is being violated,

speak up, and file a grievance. That’s where the enforcement of the CBA must begin.



**THUMBS UP** to the CTU Negotiating Team members who continue to bargain with CMSD for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement. Thumbs up also to the CTU members who responded thoughtfully and candidly to the surveys after the last Tentative Agreement was rejected. Your input is being used by both CTU and CMSD negotiators to craft a new CBA that both sides will okay.



**THUMBS DOWN** to CMSD building administrators who abuse non-TDES walk-throughs. Lack of classroom integrity and frequent classroom distractions continue to be major issues for too many teachers. These repeated intrusions cause disruption to the educational process, and can hinder student success. And just a reminder from Director of Negotiations Shari Obrenski and the entire CTU Grievance Team . . . no records of these non-TDES visits are to be kept!

# GRIEVANCE REPORT

Jillian Ahrens and Mary Moore, CTU Grievance Co-Directors, reported that the CTU received 444 grievances during the calendar year 2016 (as of this printing). They said the Grievance Team is getting more responses from the administration this school year, and overall the responses have been much more timely. However, several Step III grievances are still waiting for an answer from the administration.

The new forms and on-line grievance submission process are helping to make the whole grievance process cleaner, easier, and better organized, explained Ms. Moore. The new grievances forms have a better layout, include instructions, and are labeled more clearly. The new grievance email, [grievances@ctu279.org](mailto:grievances@ctu279.org), provides one clearinghouse for all grievances. The online format helps prevent lost or misplaced paperwork, while creating a paper trail with dates and times preserved.

While grievances should be sent to the new CTU grievance email address, the Co-Directors encouraged CTU members who have questions about a grievance or a situation at their school to contact Jillian Ahrens or Mary Moore by email at [jillian.ahrens@clevelandmetroschools.org](mailto:jillian.ahrens@clevelandmetroschools.org) and [mary.moore@clevelandmetroschools.org](mailto:mary.moore@clevelandmetroschools.org).

"Members can always call us, too," added Ms. Moore. "They should never hesitate or feel bad about calling us with their questions and concerns, or to check on the status of a grievance. We usually thank them for contacting us and asking for clarification, or bringing a situation to the Union's attention."

Their number is 216-861-7676 ext. 238 (Jillian Ahrens) and ext. 253 (Mary Moore).

## Arbitration Results Mixed, In Process

The Union and District have been busy with several arbitrations, with mixed results. The CTU won a recent arbitration regarding a necessary transfer, in which the arbitrator ruled that the District did not correctly implement the rescinding of a necessary transfer.

The CTU lost the Sign Language Interpreters (SLI) arbitration. The question was, did the CTU and CMSD agree that SLIs should be on the Differentiated Compensation salary schedule? The arbitrator ruled that the parties had not agreed. Now, CTU and CMSD will have to negotiate Sign Language Interpreters salary and working conditions as part of the current negotiations process, to resolve the dispute.

The Union is in the middle of two other arbitrations regarding members who were given a teaching assignment by CMSD to which they were not supposed to be assigned. The Grievance Team is meeting on another arbitration about Instructional Coach responsibilities. They have also scheduled a mediation on non-TDES feedback, dealing with classroom visits by people within the building and classroom integrity.

CTU and CMSD are waiting for

the response to an arbitration about two members the CTU believes were wrongly chosen for necessary transfers. They are hoping for a quick January response to this issue.

A January date is set for an arbitration regarding the Student Code of Conduct. This deals with the CMSD Legal Department's creation of a power-point presentation, in which the agreed-upon procedures (in the Collective Bargaining Agreement) regarding student suspensions were changed, without negotiating these changes.

The CTU is also working on a few miscellaneous arbitrations dealing with high school assignments, pay for extra assignments, teacher discipline, and extra minutes.

## The CTU Grievance Team

The CTU Grievance Team members are: Co-Directors Jillian Ahrens and Mary Moore, 3rd Vice Presidents, K-8; Cherylane Jones-Williams, Paraprofessional Chapter Chairperson; Cheryl Neylon, Sergeant-at-Arms; Shari Obrenski, 3rd Vice President, Senior/Special; and Jim Wagner, K-8 Trustee.

By CTU Constitution, the three 3rd Vice Presidents are automatically members of the Grievance Team. The CTU President selects the other members of the team from the Executive Board members.

## The Grievance Procedure

The CBA definition of a grievance is "any matter concerning the interpretation, application, or alleged violation of any currently effective Agreement between the District and the CTU, or which alleges any employee represented by the Union has been discharged

or disciplined without just cause, or has been treated unfairly or in a discriminatory manner."

The grievance procedure is defined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement in Article 6, Problem Resolution, Grievance Procedure and Time Limits (pages 15-20 in the CBA). Both the Union and District recognize that "from time to time, problems relating to the application of the Agreement and/or the Administrative Code of the District to an individual employee or employees will arise. Many of these problems are resolved informally, by discussion, in accordance with the 'open door' policy followed by the District. A problem which cannot be resolved informally is called a grievance."

The grievance process has four steps, usually beginning at the school or building level. There are timelines attached to each step, so it is important that CTU members are familiar with the time limits, and submit paperwork within the timeframes designated in the CBA.

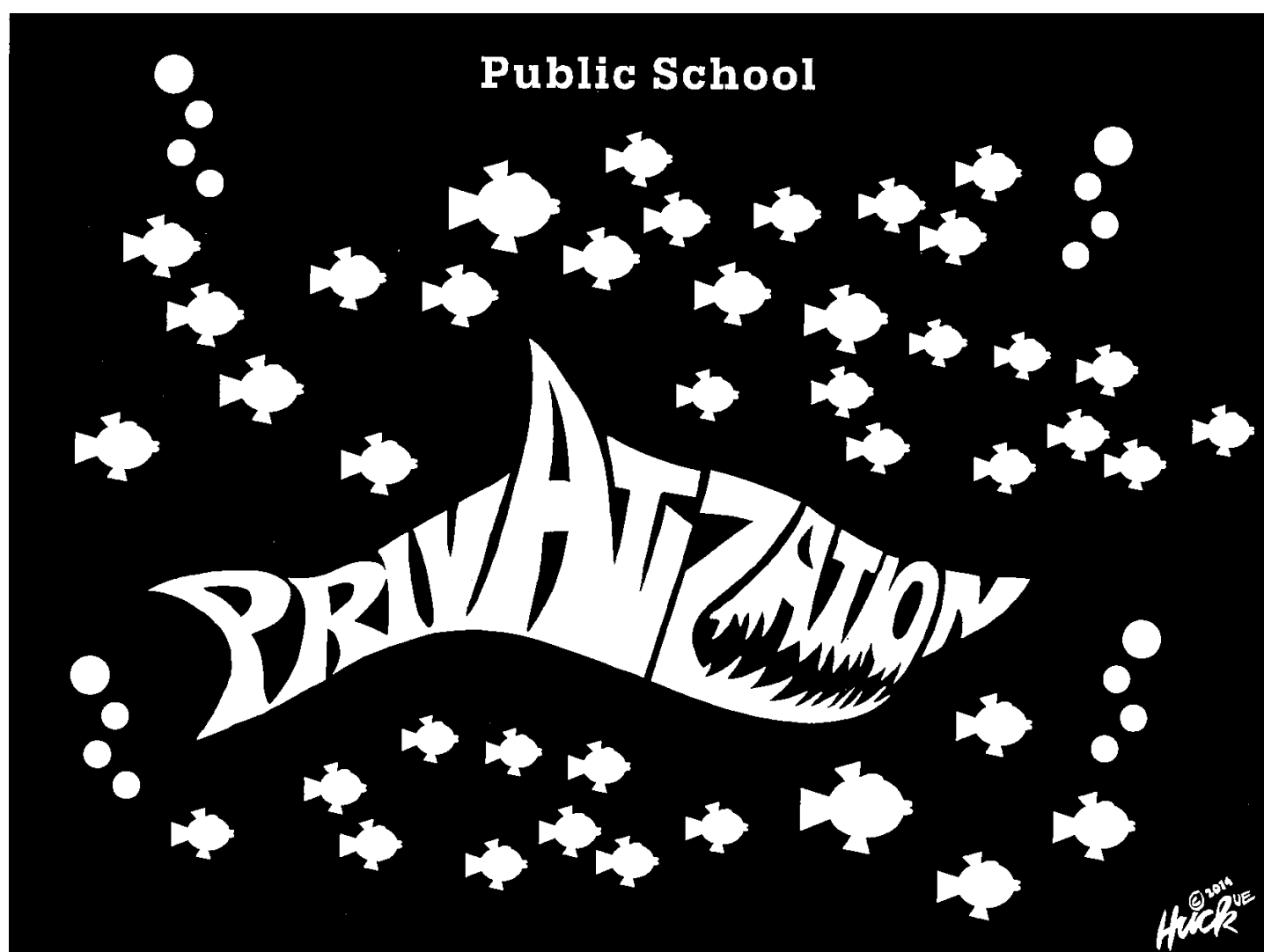
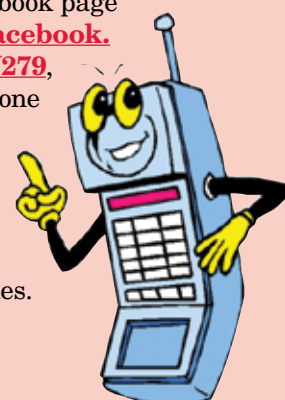
## Be Informed: CTU Text Alerts and Facebook

A text service is available for members of the CTU. You can sign up right now to receive mobile text message alerts from AFT-Cleveland Teachers Union, including updates, notices, and reminders.

If you aren't signed up yet, get your phone out right now. Send a text message with the word `ctu279` (lowercase, no spaces) in your message box to the phone number 69238. Please note, while AFT-CTU will never charge you for text messages, your carrier's message and data rates may apply.

Active CTU members can join the official CTU Facebook group called "Official CTU 279 Members," a closed group where active members can get accurate, up-to-date information from CTU officers, share with other CTU members, and have questions and concerns addressed.

This site was set up for **only active CTU members**. The open CTU Facebook page is [www.facebook.com/CTU279](https://www.facebook.com/CTU279), which anyone can "like" and join, to receive updates on educational issues.





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# DeVos: Trump's Dangerous Choice to Head Department of Education

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consequences of this lack of oversight, transparency and accountability. A charter school in the first percentile — barely above rock-bottom among all schools — had its charter renewed. Others closed abruptly, leaving fami-

ment's Office for Civil Rights, whose mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote excellence through vigorous enforcement of civil rights.

Here, too, her background is troubling. How can DeVos protect and re-

During his campaign, Trump proposed a \$20 billion voucher plan to shift taxpayer dollars to private and religious schools. That would fulfill a decades-long crusade by DeVos, a longtime voucher proponent.

lies scrambling to find another school midyear. Nepotism, insider deals, and financial impropriety were all tragically common.

Yet last spring, the DeVos family funded efforts to defeat a bill that would have placed both Detroit's charter schools and its neighborhood public schools under the same oversight authority. The editorial page editor of the *Detroit Free Press* called the move "a filthy, moneyed kiss to the charter school industry at the expense of the kids who've been victimized by those schools' unaccountable inconsistency."

As U.S. secretary of education, DeVos would oversee many areas of importance, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable students. One example is the Education Depart-

ment's Office for Civil Rights, whose mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote excellence through vigorous enforcement of civil rights. Here, too, her background is troubling. How can DeVos protect and re-assure our LGBTQ students when her family has poured money into campaigns against marriage equality and so-called gay conversion therapy efforts? How does she do that for students of color, when she has been a prime mover of education policies that have destabilized the schools in high-poverty school districts that serve large numbers of black and brown students?

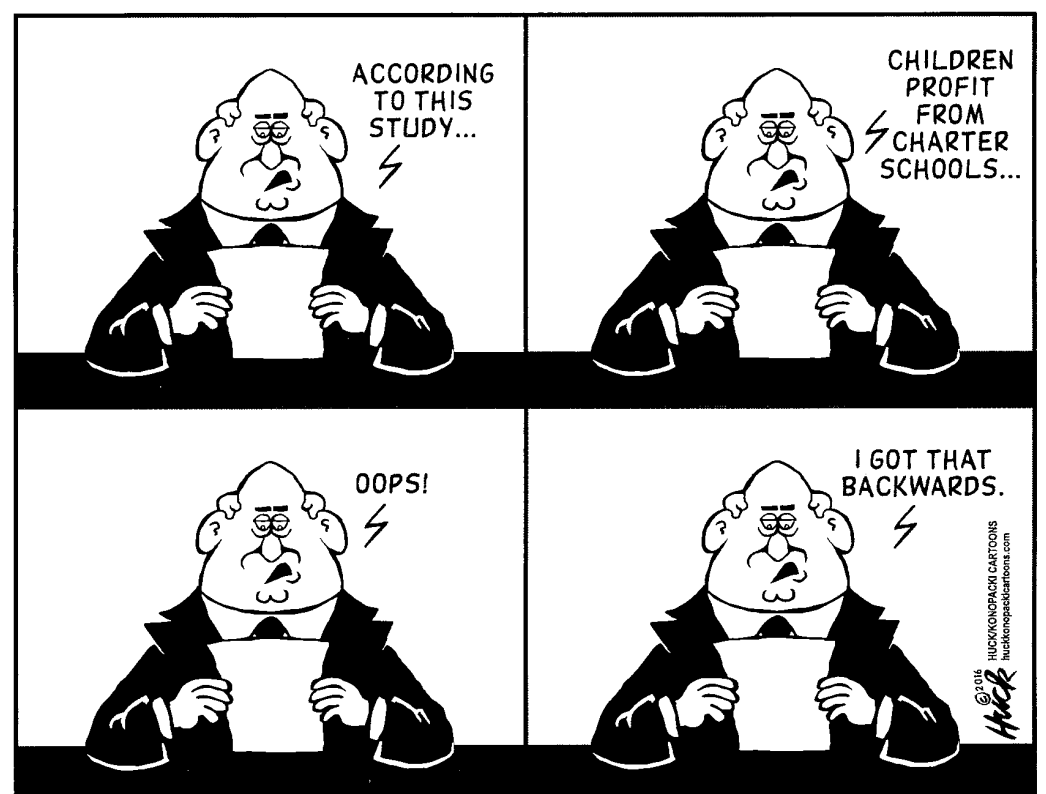
The fortune DeVos has spent to sway public policy is one of many proof points that call into question Trump's call to "drain the swamp." DeVos wrote in the Capitol Hill newspaper Roll Call that her family is the biggest contributor of soft money to the

Republican National Committee, and that she has "decided to stop taking offense at the suggestion that we are buying influence. Now, I simply concede the point

... We do expect something in return."

If confirmed as secretary of education, DeVos may achieve the biggest return on her investment to date — at a terrible and unconscionable cost to America's public schools and the students and families who rely on them.

The fortune DeVos has spent to sway public policy is one of many proof points that call into question Trump's call to "drain the swamp."



## AFT's Share My Lesson Exceeds 1 Million Users Nationwide

**Share My Lesson — the only 100 percent free, online hub for educators and parents to share and find lesson plans, professional development and resources for instruction — reached 1,000,000 registered users nationwide in December. That milestone made it the most successful open education resource site for educators, by educators, the AFT announced.**

Share My Lesson (SML), created and powered by the AFT, has more than 415,000 resources from educators around the country as well as 300 well-known curriculum providers, including PBS NewsHour Extra, iCivics and the National Science Foundation. SML resources have been downloaded more than 11 million times since the site was created in 2012.

"We launched Share My Lesson because teachers told us repeatedly they needed more support, especially finding lesson plans and materials aligned with the continued introduction of new academic standards. And SML will continue to fill the void," AFT President Randi Weingarten

said. The most popular content includes help with classroom management, lessons on math and English language arts, and classroom discussion guides on current events.

"When people have questions about how to teach about an election, particularly this recent one, we are there," added President Weingarten. "When there are new math or science standards, we are there. When there's a historic event, we are there with lessons, videos, webcasts and more. SML gives educators resources in a nonpartisan, non-evaluative way."

The site uses technology as a way for educators to connect with one another, not to replace the human element of teaching, but to better

address the needs of their students. In that way, she added, Share My Lesson is a good reflection of what the AFT is all about.

"It's in our DNA to help educators, and that starts with fighting for, finding and providing them with the tools and support they need to succeed in the classroom. Supporting our members is union work, and that's demonstrated by devoting a portion of our budget to SML."

There are other commercial content providers who have created marketplaces and other ways to monetize or profit from resources that teachers, schools, kids and parents need. Share My Lesson is unique because it will always be free to use, and will never sell ads. It's also unique because it offers web-based professional development and blogs contributed by active SML educators or curriculum designers, including many from Cleveland Teachers Union educators.

AFT is responding to what SML's 1,000,000 users said they want — not just for SML to be an instrument to upload and download lesson plans, but also to provide more classroom management materials, more professional development opportunities, and blogs to help empower educators.

"Over the next five years, we expect SML to become the destination for anyone looking for ways to support their teaching and help kids succeed," said Elena Balint, director of SML. She added that they also plan to add more resources for parents and higher education faculty and students to SML.

If you haven't registered and used Share My Lesson, try it today. Go to <https://sharemylesson.com> to get started. Make use of the wealth of information and assistance provided by AFT educators through this valuable resource.

[Source: American Federation of Teachers]

# PRIVATIZING

## When Public Schools Become Private Schools . . .

## Kids Who Need the Most, Lose the Most

**High-poverty school districts lose the most money to vouchers and charters. Public school children with the greatest needs are subsidizing private education, and it is costing them a lot.**

These are the findings of an analysis by Susie Kaeser, a writer for the *Heights Observer* based in Cleveland Heights. She is also the former director of Reaching Heights and serves on the national board of Parents for Public Schools.

Ms. Kaeser analyzed 2015-2016 school year data on public funds transferred from Cuyahoga County public school districts to voucher and charter schools that year, and then sorted the data by poverty rates of the school districts.

**CMSD** lost \$3,875 per student to vouchers and charters, for a total of \$150,158,551 in the 2015-2016 school year.

She found “plenty of data that suggests we are cheating poor children.” Districts with the lowest poverty rates lost less money to voucher and charter schools, while the opposite was true for the poorest school districts. Several Cuyahoga County districts — Cleveland, East Cleveland, Maple Heights, Euclid, Warrensville Heights — were in the highest-poverty quartile and lost over \$1,000 per child to voucher

and charter schools.

What about Cleveland schools? She found that CMSD lost \$3,875 per student to vouchers and charters, for a total of \$150,158,551 in the 2015-2016 school year. [Source: [www.heightsobserver.org](http://www.heightsobserver.org), August 1, 2016]

Ms. Kaeser called the fight against privatization of our public schools “a moral fight — a social justice fight — that will need to be won in the political arena.” She cautioned that it will take courage and organized, sustained opposition.

She was especially concerned about the effect of privatization on poor children. The numbers her analysis discovered were dramatic, and she noted three key findings.

First, every school district in Cuyahoga County is losing funds. Though they may vary widely in student demographics and total funds lost, tax dollars for education are precious, so any loss is significant to a district.

Second, the current voucher/charter system is particularly damaging to districts with high numbers of children in poverty. High-poverty school districts are losing the most money. In other words, public school children with the greatest needs, based on poverty levels, are subsidizing private education, and it’s costing them a lot.

Third, the effects of vouchers and charters depends on who lives in that district, but every district is at risk for

losing public tax dollars to privatization.

Another fact that she found particularly distressing was that the total dollars extracted from high-poverty school districts for vouchers and charters often exceeded the federal assistance to each district. In effect, Ohio’s

become even more critical after the nomination of Betsy DeVos, a huge proponent of privatizing public schools, was nominated for U.S. Secretary of Education.

To read Ms. Kaeser’s entire article and view the figures lost by each district, or to read other comments about

**In effect, Ohio’s education policy that favors privatization has, in some districts, wiped out the impact of supplemental federal funding for poor children in Cuyahoga County.**

education policy that favors privatization has, in some districts, wiped out the impact of supplemental federal funding for poor children in Cuyahoga County.

privatization of our public schools, go to [www.heightsobserver.org](http://www.heightsobserver.org) and search her column, “The Common Good.”

Ms. Kaeser urged readers to become active in the fight against privatization of our public schools. “If you believe in public schools and an even playing field, you are an ally [of public education]. Please help to end this policy scandal.” This policy issue has

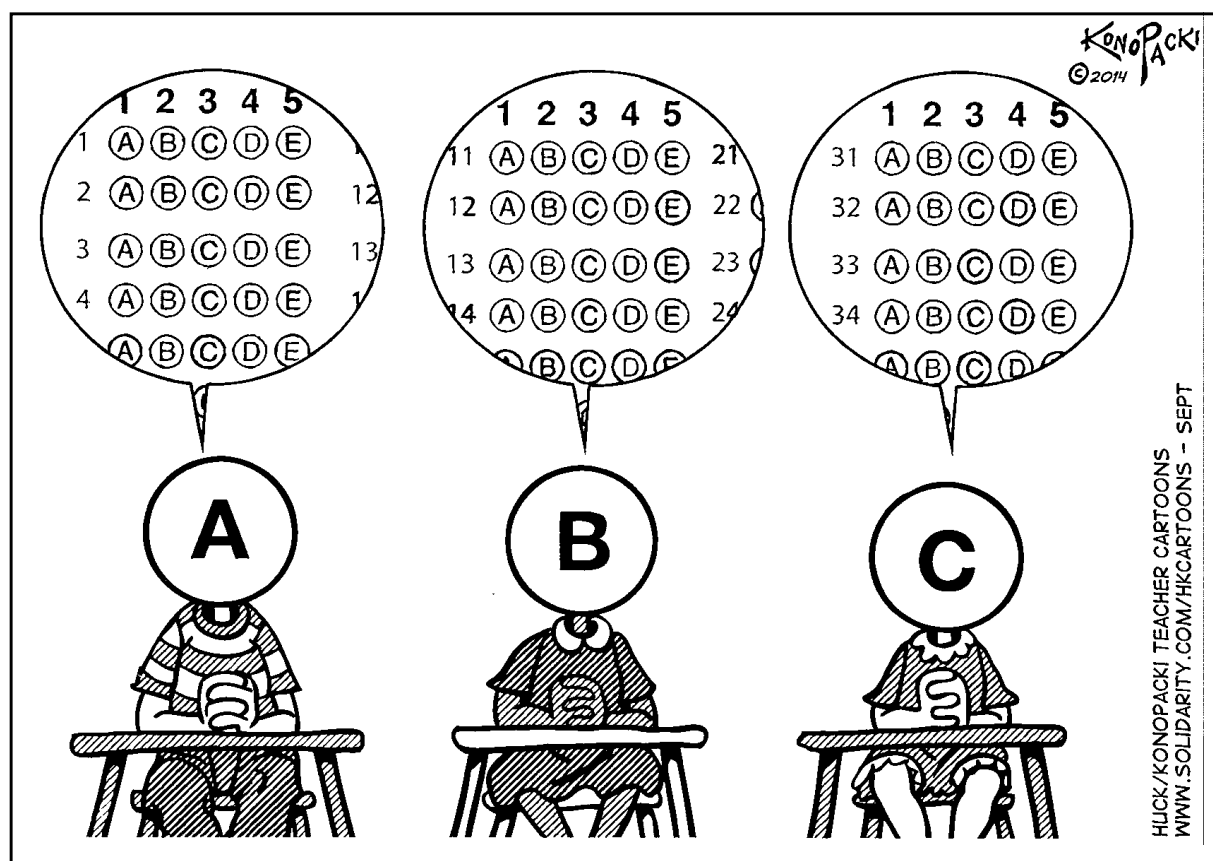
Testing  
**Testing  
Testing**  
Tell Us  
**What It Looks Like  
in YOUR Classroom!**

**The testing craze that flourished under No Child Left Behind has changed what happens in America’s classrooms. As educators, we understand that assessment has a key role in education. But we also understand first-hand the detrimental effects of excessive testing, and we can see — up close and personally — what it does to our students.**

Some states and districts have realized this, and are beginning to reduce the testing burden on students and teachers. Hopefully, the testing pendulum will start to swing back to more rational levels across the nation.

The CTU is looking for your personal stories, experiences, and insights about testing as it is currently required in your school and class, and what it means to your students. What do you and your students gain from it, and what do they lose from spending the required school time on testing?

Please send your comments about what testing looks like in your classroom, including your grade level/subject area, to the *Critique* staff at [crorick@ctu279.org](mailto:crorick@ctu279.org). We plan to reprint selected comments in future issues.







## CTU Honors Retirees

The CTU Social Committee, under the direction of Chairperson Cassandra Carter, hosted the annual Retirement Luncheon at Windows on the River on September 10, 2016. About 100 guests attended, including retiring CTU members, their families and friends, and CTU officers.

Following a cocktail hour with hors-d'oeuvres and music by the All-City Arts Jazz Alumnus, Cassandra Carter, Member-at-Large, K-8, introduced the officers and special guests. Shari Obrenski, CTU 3rd Vice President, Senior/Special, welcomed all to the luncheon. Nurses Chapter Chair Patricia Forrai-Gunter gave the invocation before lunch.

After the luncheon, Teresa Green, President of the retirees' AFT chapter, Northeastern Ohio AFT 279-R, inducted new retirees into the 279-R chapter, and encouraged them to remain life-long union members by participating in the retiree chapter. She explained that retirement security cannot be taken for granted, and explained how 279-R works to protect their hard-earned pensions and benefits.

All new retirees were presented with a gift of a picture frame, including a copy of the group's "class photo" taken that afternoon. Special recognition was given to those who had served the union as CTU Chapter Chairs during their careers: Thomas Bedell, Ora Laverne Butler, Marie Cipra, John Doerner, Barbara Herb, Anthony Kazel, Steven Mietus, and Doris Olukoya.

Congratulations and best wishes to the "Class of 2016" retirees! The CTU thanks them for their service to the children of Cleveland.





# Excellence in Teaching

## Award Winners Honored

by Christy Rorick

Ten winners of the 2016 Excellence in Teaching Award were announced on October 7, 2016. The Excellence in Teaching Award is a collaborative effort to recognize and reward Cleveland teachers. This collaboration has been in development over the past year through a partnership with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, the George Gund Foundation, and the Cleveland Teachers Union.

Although the Excellence in Teaching Award program is in its first year, it is intended to be an ongoing, annual award. Educators are rewarded on the basis of demonstrating "instructional expertise, creativity and innovation in their classrooms; who make learning engaging, vibrant and relevant for students; and whose work and accomplishments set a standard of excellence for all teachers."

CTU members and administrators received an email encouraging them to nominate colleagues who met the program's criteria for excellent teachers. A website was also available with a link for parents and community members to make nominations. A total of 255 nominations were submitted.

After the nominations period closed, the nominees were notified. Each nominee then completed an application, and also submitted a principal endorsement and a colleague endorsement. Once those were received, a team of reviewers was selected, and the reviewers read each application and endorsement. The team selected

ten award winners and 18 honorees who met the criteria.

The 2016 Excellence in Teaching Award winners and honorees were celebrated at a Gala held at the Drury Plaza Hotel on November 17, 2016. The Gala was filled with excitement and accomplishment, as each award winner received \$5,000, and each honoree received a \$250 Visa gift card.

Along with receiving the monetary award, each of the award winners committed to "sharing their practice." Sharing their practice can be done in multiple formats. Some suggestions are: posting sample lessons; writing and communicating about classroom practices; opening classrooms for observation; creating a blog; videotaping instruction; and running workshops.

### The CTU congratulates the 2016 Excellence in Teaching Award winners:

- Ms. Dora Bechtel  
(Campus International)
- Ms. Stephanie Chiariello  
(John Marshall School of Civic and Business Leadership)
- Ms. Molly Gus  
(Scranton)
- Ms. Laura Masloski  
(Nathan Hale)
- Ms. Molly Morell  
(Joseph M. Gallagher)



- Ms. Christine Richard  
(New Tech East)
- Ms. Christine Sims  
(Cleveland School of Science and Medicine)
- Mr. Spencer Small  
(John Marshall School of Information Technology)
- Ms. Bonnie Whitmer  
(Robinson G. Jones)
- Ms. Stephanie Wojtowicz  
(Mary B. Martin)

### The CTU also congratulates the 2016 Excellence in Teaching Award honorees:

- Mr. Jonathan Bubbett  
(Campus International)
- Ms. Sarah Dalrymple  
(Cleveland School of Architecture and Design)
- Ms. Jacqueline Glenn  
(H. Barbara Booker)
- Ms. Lori Hlosek  
(Sunbeam)

- Ms. Rhonda Hurst  
(Lincoln West High School)
- Ms. Kathy Kisel  
(Warner Girls Leadership Academy)
- Ms. Hallie McEntire  
(Louis Agassiz)
- Ms. Rita Mikita  
(Mc2STEM High School)
- Ms. Maryanne Nesbett  
(Nathan Hale)
- Ms. Leslie Perry-Hanley  
(Cleveland School of Architecture and Design)
- Ms. Lesley Petrie  
(Miles)
- Ms. Rebecca Pickens  
(John Marshall School of Engineering)
- Ms. Eleanor Salzbrenner  
(John F. Kennedy E3agle Academy)
- Ms. Christine Scarcella  
(John Marshall School of Civic and Business Leadership)
- Ms. Tamilselvi Sekaran  
(Cleveland Early College High School)
- Mr. Anthony Simeone  
(School of One)
- Ms. Anna Singleton  
(Warner Girls Leadership Academy)
- Ms. Cristina Stratton  
(Douglas MacArthur Girls Leadership Academy)

If you would like to read more about this award or about each of these excellent teachers, you can navigate to [TeachExcellenceAward.org](http://TeachExcellenceAward.org). You will be able to read excerpts about each of these professionals, and watch video of them in action.

## Wear Your CTU Pride!

CTU apparel is now available for sale online! The Cleveland Teachers Union apparel site at <http://www.ctu279apparel.com/> is live and taking custom orders now.

The Legislative Committee introduced samples of new clothing items at the November Delegate Assembly. Now you can order your custom union-made and union-printed gear online at <http://www.ctu279apparel.com/>. If you have any questions, contact Legislative Chairperson Elisa Kazek at [ekazek@ctu279.org](mailto:ekazek@ctu279.org).

Show your CTU pride and support other union members — check out the website today.





# STRS Planning Additional Modifications

**All teachers and related service providers who pay into the State Teachers Retirement System get regular updates from STRS. Do you read them? Regardless of how many years you have until retirement, STRS Board decisions are affecting your salary now, and will certainly affect your future retirement quality and financial security. Employee contributions to STRS have increased, phased in over the past several years to the current 14% that STRS members pay every payday. This increase resulted in a net loss for some members, who saw modest pay raises being eaten away by the STRS increases.**

Other significant STRS adjustments regarding retirement eligibility and financial benefits were enacted over the last several years, to help cut costs and increase the funding period. Both active members and retirees saw major changes that affected them and their wallets. Now it appears more changes will be coming in 2017.

## Board Reviewing Pension Fund Status, Next Steps

The October 2016 report of STRS pension fund's annual valuation and related funding data pointed to more changes, for actives and retirees. The report showed STRS Ohio's funding period — the amount of time needed to pay off the system's unfunded liability — stands at 26.6 years, and the funded ratio is 69.6%. The pension fund has a net \$2.8 billion in deferred investment losses that will be recognized over the next three years, because investment returns were below the assumed return of 7.75% during the past two fiscal years. The fund is seeing slower-than-anticipated growth in covered payroll. Also, benefit recipients (retirees) are living longer and collecting benefits for longer than expected.

The Board is working with its consultants to determine if changes to the pension fund's actuarial assumptions are necessary to reflect these economic and demographic trends. Changes to the mortality assumption (to reflect benefit recipients' longer lifespans) and the discount rate (that is also used as the investment return assumption) will increase the system's liabilities and decrease its funded ratio — not a good prospect. A change to the payroll growth assumption could also increase the funding period beyond the state of Ohio's statutory 30-year target to pay down the system's unfunded liability.

STRS Ohio created a funding scorecard to rate the pension fund's

financial strength. It used measures including the system's funding period, the funded ratio, economic considerations, and the chance of a major negative economic event. The resulting score indicates the STRS Board "should consider future plan design changes to address the funding challenges."

What does this mean? Changes in STRS are coming, probably for both active members and retirees. The Board claimed it is taking "a deliberative and thorough approach, as Board members understand that any action will impact STRS Ohio members, retirees and employers."

What is the Board considering? It has statutory authority to change the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for retirees, establish new age and service requirements, and change member contribution rates (not to exceed the current 14%). Legislation would be required to change the benefit multiplier, the number of years used in the final average salary calculation, or the matching amount in member withdrawal calculations.

The Board will continue the discussions in the months ahead. Results from the consultants' reviews will be presented in December and January, along with recommendations for changes. STRS Ohio staff will use the recommended assumptions to show how proposed changes would impact the funding scorecard.

The Board is expected to adopt new actuarial assumptions (translation: financial changes that affect actives and/or retirees) in March that will be effective July 1, 2017. STRS members can stay updated through the STRS website, newsletters and eUPDATE email news service.

## Retiree Healthcare

Healthcare is a major concern. STRS is required by law to fund pensions for its members, but is not

required to provide healthcare subsidies, although it has done that for decades. Retirees who are under age 65 (and not Medicare-eligible) count on the subsidies to help pay for their healthcare insurance. Healthcare is an issue many active members consider when deciding when to retire; the cost for a member, spouse and any dependents can be quite substantial.

In recent years, STRS has made major changes to the healthcare subsidy it provides for retirees, significantly increasing the retirees' out-of-pocket costs for healthcare. (Subsidies are available for members with 15 or more service years.) Monthly premiums for retirees have increased, as well as premiums for spouse and dependents. Co-pays, deductibles, and prescription plan costs have also increased. Vision and dental insurance are separate additional costs that require a two-year commitment.

STRS had tried to set up a 1% funding stream specifically for healthcare. This was discontinued, as actives and employers had to phase-in increases to the basic pension fund. Depending on what happens in the next four years with Medicare, Medicaid, and healthcare in general, this will likely remain a serious issue for Ohio educators, both active and retired.

## Pay Attention to STRS Decisions!

With all the demands on today's teachers, and retirement seemingly far away, it's easy to overlook what is happening at STRS right now. But these decisions will affect your and your family's retirement quality and finances. Important questions about investments and returns, fees and costs, and other financial decisions of the Board are being asked. The well-being of current retirees and protecting the future retirement security of active teachers are both important considerations.

Some major decisions can be made by the STRS Board. However, much of the decision-making power lies in the Ohio General Assembly and the laws they make governing the state's public pension systems. All STRS members need to pay attention to both.

## Be Prepared for Spring OSTs

"It's never too early to start thinking about the Ohio State Tests (OSTs) that will be happening in the spring of 2017," Mark Baumgartner, CTU Director of Educational Issues, recommended. With Safe Harbor going away next year, the results of these tests will produce a Value Added score for your students, and will also be used as 35% of a teacher's evaluation for next school year, 2017-2018.

CMSD and CTU have been working together to share tips and tools for teachers and students, beginning in November and continuing until administration of the OSTs.

You can access this information by going to <https://cleveland.schoolnet.com/> and going to the Outreach tab. In the middle of the page is "The Bulletin Board." The first item is an update on the new SLO timeline for teachers and school teams. The second item is the OST Tip #1. Each tutorial lasts about 7 ½ minutes.

OST Tip #1 deals with simply getting students familiar with the computer, how to sign in, and how to navigate the test itself. It can help ensure that the spring OSTs aren't a test of the students' computer abilities, but a true test of students' grasp of content and knowledge.

Please make use of these tips and tutorials. If you have additional questions about this, or other questions related to testing, student growth measures, or educational issues, contact Mark Baumgartner at the CTU office, 216-861-7676 ext. 272, or by email at [mbaumgartner@ctu279.org](mailto:mbaumgartner@ctu279.org).

## Special Educators and RSPs: Do You Have a Goalbook?

Tracy Radich reminded all intervention specialists and RSPs that they should have received an email from Jessica Baldwin announcing CMSD's acquisition of the Goalbook Toolkit for the 2016-2017 school year.

Goalbook is a resource used to create IEP goals and objectives, as well as UDL strategies. If an Intervention Specialist or RSP did not receive the email from Jessica Baldwin, please email Mary Moore at [mary.moore@clevelandmetroschools.org](mailto:mary.moore@clevelandmetroschools.org).

## Remember, It's Always IPDP Time!

Please remember, every educator who has a certificate or license must have an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) on file before taking any coursework or professional development for Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

Everyone should do an IPDP immediately after their license is renewed. Once approved, that is your IPDP until after your next license is issued. You do not write one before you take the coursework, and then write a second one after you have taken all of the coursework. But you do need a current, approved IPDP before taking any coursework or PD that you want to use toward your next renewal.

Jim Wagner and Bonnie Hedges are available to come to schools to help CTU members with IPDPs if there are more than four people interested in a session. Building Chairs can contact Jim at [jwagner@ctu279.org](mailto:jwagner@ctu279.org) (or if you use his CMSD email, it is James Wagner) to set up a day and time for the IPDP Session.

Jim Wagner ([jwagner@ctu279.org](mailto:jwagner@ctu279.org)), Bonnie Hedges ([bhedges@ctu279.org](mailto:bhedges@ctu279.org)), and Tracy Radich ([tradich@ctu279.org](mailto:tradich@ctu279.org)) are also available to send you your username and password, as well answer individual questions about IPDPs and the IPDP process.



# REI, Discipline Referral Forms: Part of CBA

Removal for Educational Intervention (REI) Forms were sent to all Chapter Chairs from Jillian Ahrens, Grievance Committee Co-Director. These forms are to be shared with all CTU members. REI forms can be used if a student is consistently or flagrantly disruptive or disrespectful, or for one of the other listed offenses on the form (*See Article 15, Section 5 of the CBA*).

The CTU Grievance Team pointed out that **every school has the right to use REI**. If you have any questions about REI, please contact Jillian Ahrens at [jahrens@ctu279.org](mailto:jahrens@ctu279.org).

The office disciplinary referral form is another bargained form that can be found on page 160 of the CBA.

**Schools cannot and should not have other forms developed at the school level.**

The official referral form is a document with the offenses on the back side of the referral. Official forms were resent to all Chairs by Jillian Ahrens in November. Each referral that is written should have an administrator's response that goes back to the referring teacher per Article 15, Section 4, C. All CTU members have a right to know the discipline that was issued from the appropriate administrator. The form provides feedback and a record of the disciplinary action that was taken.

The CTU has bargained for the rights of REI and referrals, to help

both educators and students by limiting classroom disruptions and working to provide safe, conducive learning environments. Please be sure your

school is following the contract in making available and using the approved forms.

## New Grievance Forms Online

Mary Moore, Grievance Committee Co-Director, reminded CTU members that new grievance forms are available on the CTU website. A slight change was made to the wording at the bottom of the new Step I Grievance form in November. New forms were sent to all Chapter Chairpersons, and were posted on the CTU website.

The new forms have an improved layout complete with instructions, and include the email address that should be used to submit all forms: [grievances@ctu279.org](mailto:grievances@ctu279.org).

## Have You Logged On Yet?



workday IS OFFICIALLY HERE

**Workday officially opened in CMSD on December 17, 2016. Workday is the management system that CMSD is now using for all Payroll, Human Resources, and Finance functions. All CTU members were encouraged to log into Workday on December 19, and verify that the following information was correct in the system: name; banking or pay card information; work place and position; sick day balance; and other personal information. If you have not already done this, please do it today.**

"The District does have a right to move from the pretty archaic system that they had been using, and utilize current technology," said 1st Vice President Tracy Radich. "That is definitely a Management Right." But she reiterated that CTU members **do not** need to log in, check in and out, on a daily basis. "CTU members **do not** check in and check out each day. CTU members **do not** need to log in each day to Workday. But all their additional work that is done at the school level, that requires additional compensation, must be entered into the Workday system for payment to be issued."

While some employees in other unions and at-will employees were told that they must check-in and check-out every day in Workday, that is not CTU. CTU members will log-in every two weeks to verify if the information is correct (for example, if you called in sick, for professional development, or special privilege leave, etc, if it was auto-filled correctly), and indicate that you worked on the days that you were present. Ms. Radich explained that you will

click one day for the amount of time that you worked, and after you do that one time, you can automatically use Autofill in the subsequent weeks. "I called it cut and paste at an earlier meeting," she added, "but the proper terminology is Autofill on Workday."

And even if a member makes a mistake, or forgets, or the computer crashes, or whatever happens, **they will still receive their base pay**. "You are going to get paid your money for working. Period. Pay is not going to be withheld. If you work, you will be paid. Period."

In addition to verifying their payroll every two weeks and auto-filling their days, the other major interaction CTU members will have with Workday is entering class coverages, additional PD that is outside of normal school hours, detention periods, etc. If it is extra work for which you are to be paid, then it must be entered into the Workday system.

The only exceptions to this that CTU is currently aware of are over-ages. They are still scheduled to be done as they have been in past years, but this could change.

A major benefit of Workday is that when you enter the things that you have done for extra pay, and they are verified by school secretary and principal, then you will be paid on that paycheck. You will know what "extras" you are going to be compensated for in your paycheck.

"If you are at a school that has had any problems or issues with getting paid for work that you have done, this should make things much better for you," said Ms. Radich. "If you have ever had to file a grievance to get paid for your work because someone had not yet turned in the payroll that they had to write by hand, this should make things much better for you."

And what happens if the secretary or principal does not approve it? The member is supposed to get an email immediately, so that it can be fixed before payroll is submitted. Will it work perfectly right off the bat? CTU hopes for the best, but being realistic, is prepared to work with members and CMSD to work out any problems.

The 1st Vice President acknowledged some members' angst about using this technology, and being responsible for entering the items for which they are to be compensated. However, the hope is that in the end, CTU members being in charge of their own paychecks will be an advantage. Ms. Radich referred to two past moves to technology that she originally vocally opposed —

inputting grades on the computer, and doing IPDPs on the computer — believing then that it was more work for CTU members to do it via computer. But those were changes that in the long run were better for CTU members.

Other perks that the Workday system will bring are immediate access to W-2 tax forms instead of waiting for them in the mail; changing or adding direct deposit banking information online; changing your address; viewing sick day balance; and requesting Leaves of Absence through the Workday system. Also, the Open Position List will be available through Workday. It can be updated instantly, and members will be able to filter it as they choose.

Be sure to keep your December 16 pay stub. Use it to verify the number of sick and personal days that were transferred into Workday. The December 16 and December 30 paychecks will be issued under the old payroll practices. The January 13, 2017 paycheck will be the first paycheck issued using the new Workday system, and paystubs will be available online through Workday.

CTU and CMSD will be meeting regularly to resolve any Workday issues, and if there is a concern or issue that affects multiple members, CTU will share that information with everyone.



# THE CLEVELAND TEACHERS UNION — A HISTORY

## Part Five of a Series: 1978 Unity Strike Continues

by Pamela Hummer

**Almost 10,000 Cleveland Public Schools employees struck on the first day of school, September 7, 1978, leaving 100,000 students out of school. Called the “Unity Strike,” it included non-administrative employees in all six unions in the District.**

After a few scattered, chaotic, and mostly for-show attempts to open schools, officials faced reality and announced that schools would remain closed. The strike lockout had been immensely effective. Only about 200 employees — mostly principals and a few scabs — had been able to get in the buildings.



### Chaos and Anger

The District was in a state of chaos, facing a desegregation order, the ongoing strike by all CPS unions, a plan to close 19 schools, layoffs of many employees, and severe ongoing financial problems. The State Controlling Board had approved a \$20.7 million loan that would keep the District solvent through December 1978. It came with strings: the Board had to make cuts to help balance the budget, requiring \$5 million in cuts for 1978 and again in 1979; they had to have a plan to pay back the loan; and it could not be used for raises to settle the strike.

The CBOE had twice requested a back-to-work order be issued for the strikers, but instead Common Pleas Judge Harry A. Hanna rejected their requests, and ordered both sides back to negotiate.

Parents were angry, frustrated and confused. Most supported the teachers and other employees, and conceded that they deserved a raise, since CPS teachers were the lowest-paid in the county at that time. The only other choices for students were private or parochial schools — there were no voucher or charter school options available then.

Letters-to-the-editor columns printed both supportive and damning letters, and some questioned the state's



**WEST SIDE** — It was picketing as usual this morning at West Technical High School, 2201 W. 93rd St., as striking teachers resumed their posts on the picket line. As at other schools, no teachers attempted to cross the line. The school was dark when The Press visited and apparently administrators were unable to enter the building. *Terry Tomsic, Cleveland Press.*

role in not adequately funding education, especially in poor urban districts.

Strikers felt the walkout was necessary. Some of the reasons they gave for striking were to make a living wage, to regain their self-esteem, and to make the public care about educating children as much as they do. Teachers spoke about state officials not putting a priority on education, and voters wanting more services without wanting to pay for them.



### Financial Problems Continue, Strikers Get Aid

On September 11, Cleveland school officials were ordered to present a balanced operating budget to the state by October 9, or face an unprecedented takeover by the Ohio Department of Education, as a “financially distressed school district” under House Bill 1285. This bill allowed the state to take over a school district that had to borrow money to keep operating. The State School Superintendent or their designee would become the chief operator in charge of the district.

Friday, September 15, would have been the first payday of the school year. Instead, striking employees began signing up for food stamps, with the aid of

County Welfare Department workers. The CTU Strike Welfare Committee, under Coordinator Joanne DeMarco, had arranged for CTU members to get limited loans through the credit union, food stamps, and medical help. The United Labor Agency helped to provide emergency assistance, and mediate

keep working to find ways to give the employees raises. The Unions' Unity Committee and CBOE negotiators finally reached a tentative agreement in October.

Highlights of the agreement were: a pay raise of 8% or 40 cents an hour, whichever was greater, that would go into effect the moment strikers went back to work; 6% additional pay raise effective 30 days after successful passage of a November 7 school levy; a \$2 deductible prescription drug and vision care program fully funded by CBOE for all employees; and full pay (Worker's Compensation supplemented by CBOE) for any employee injured as a result of an assault on the job, with no loss of sick time.

On October 4, striking union members voted to reject the proposal by a 3-2 margin — 3,276 against and 2,165 for. About 4,000 of the 10,000 strikers did not vote. Three of the six unions involved in the strike rejected the offer; two others accepted it, and one ended in a tie. The CTU voted to reject it, 2,832 against and 1,764 for. The head custodians' union overwhelmingly rejected it, and the assistant custodians also turned it down. The laborers' union, and the union representing clerks, cafeteria and library aides, and cleaners approved ratification by close margins. The window-washers' union had a tie vote.

The unions that approved ratification were in the lower pay scales, and may have looked more favorably on the possible raises, explained one of their members.

Strikers felt that too much was “if” money: if the raises would be approved by the Controlling Board, if the levy passed. The strikers wanted guarantees. “They made an offer they thought we couldn't refuse,” said a Patrick Henry Junior High teacher, “but we did.”

“When we get that guaranteed contract, then we'll go back to work,” said a teacher at Margaret Spellacy.



### Judge Issues Back-to-Work Order to Strikers . . .

The day after striking employees rejected the offer, Judge Harry A. Hanna finally ordered them back to work. He threatened them with fines, as individuals and as unions, if they did not go back to work. At that time, there was no law protecting the rights of public employees in Ohio to exercise their collective bargaining rights and strike; this was uncharted legal territory that Cleveland strikers were entering.

James O'Meara, CTU Executive Sec-

between creditors and teachers who couldn't pay their bills. Some had to borrow from family and friends.



### Mismanagement Comes Home to Roost

Union representatives met with Governor James Rhodes on September 21, asking him to persuade the Controlling Board to ease restrictions, to no avail. On September 25, 27-year-old CBOE member John Gallagher was elected Board President, replacing Arnold Pinckney who had unexpectedly and suddenly resigned ten days earlier.

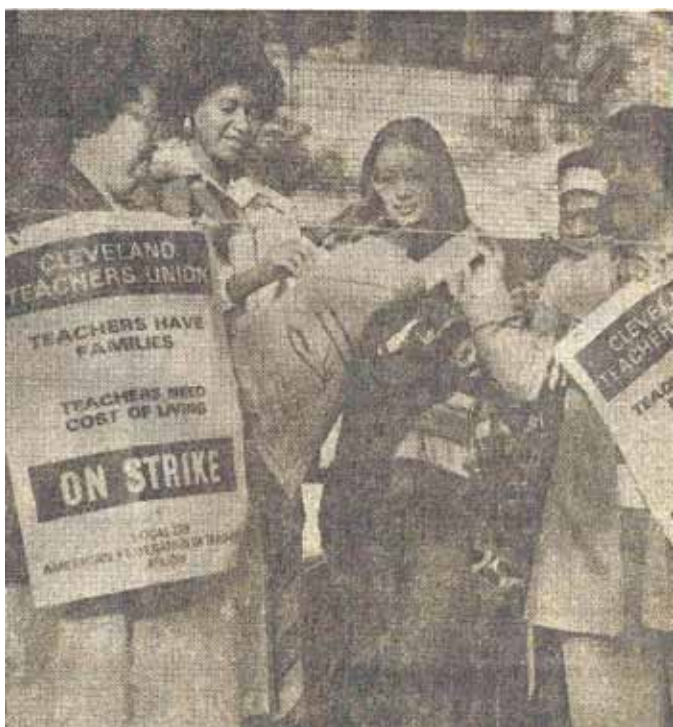
The next day, the CBOE announced that the strike would continue for at least two more weeks, because it would take them that long to finish a budget and get it approved by the state. They also said up to 1,000 non-teaching employees — mostly food service and educational aides — would be laid off that school year, some programs would be cut, and administrators would be put into classrooms to balance the budget.

Newspapers reported on September 30 that “years of fiscal mismanagement [by Cleveland Public Schools] came home to roost.” Striking CPS employees had gone without any pay for the month of September, with no clear end to the strike in sight.



### CBOE Sends Deal to Strikers, Who Reject It

Three times during the strike, the District had asked Common Pleas Judge Harry A. Hanna to issue a back-to-work order. Instead, he denied their requests and ordered both sides to



**VOTING ON SCHOOL STRIKE** — Teachers at Marion Seltzer School, 1468 W. 98th St., voted on the picket line today on whether to end their four-week strike against the Cleveland schools. Non-teaching employees also cast ballots today. *Bernie Noble, Cleveland Press.*



# into October; Judge's Back-to-Work Order Defied



**EAST SIDE** — Striking teachers at Margaret Spellacy Junior High School, 655 East 162nd St., seem to have good cheer on the picket line despite chilly weather today and the continuation of a strike now four weeks old. The teachers said Common Pleas Judge Harry Hanna's back-to-work order hurt rather than helped the situation. *Harry Noblew, Cleveland Press.*

retary (comparable to today's position of CTU President) and spokesperson for the Unity Committee, announced: "We feel our members have spoken. The strike is still on, and pickets will be on duty as usual."

After a private discussion with attorneys from both sides, Judge Hanna issued a stern warning to support his back-to-work order, reiterating that employees will be subject to fines if they "persist" in striking. He did not specify the amount of the fines, and said he did not expect "teachers to be hauled off to jail." He did say, however, that it would be "a very simple thing" to collect fines on employees by withholding the money from their paychecks whenever they went back to work. "If you press for an economic advantage, it will be self-defeating," he warned.

"We have a critical situation," he stated. "We have been patient in letting collective bargaining proceed. But we're at the point in time [Average Daily Membership or ADM Week, that determines state funding] when we must open schools . . . I hope you return for the sake of the children and the order of the community."



## ... Who Defy the Court Order

The striking employees did return to their buildings October 5, but only to form picket lines. Teachers, paras, clerks, custodians, and laborers, regardless of how they voted on the proposal, did not cross picket lines despite the judge's order.

An East Side teacher who voted to accept the package and return to work was on the picket line with her colleagues. "I'm not going to cross a picket line of people I work with. I have to look ahead to the day we do go back to work."

"We're ready to go back to work if they stop all that 'iffy' stuff," said a John Hay High School picketer. "And another thing, we didn't like the way they ramrodded the vote. The judge said, 'Take it or leave it.'" Strikers chose to leave it — and returned in force to the picket lines.

Picketing was reportedly peaceful, as administrators or the few others who tried to enter parking lots were turned back when picketers blocked the way.



## Judge Charges CTU Leader With Contempt

On October 6, Judge Hanna charged CTU's James O'Meara with contempt of court for failing to order striking union members back to work. Mr. O'Meara pleaded not guilty, and a hearing was set for October 7.

Judge Hanna alleged that Mr. O'Meara failed to obey two court orders to send strikers back to work, influenced employees to disobey the back-to-work order, and participated in an illegal strike.

According to *Plain Dealer* reports,

after his original statement following the vote (that the strike was still on), Mr. O'Meara apparently added insult to injury when he read a statement the next day repeating that the strike was still on. Judge Hanna had expected him to comply with his order, and tell the strikers to go back to work. Instead, Mr. O'Meara read a statement: "The order requires all employees to return to work, and the unions to instruct their employees to return to work. The final decision in the action to be taken is up to each employee."

When asked by reporters to clarify his statement, the unions' lawyer pulled Mr. O'Meara aside and advised him not to make any more comments. As reporters followed him down the hallway outside Judge Hanna's chambers, Mr. O'Meara turned and a blew a kiss.

The strike continued into its second month.

*Next: Union Leader Faces Jail, Strike Remains Unsettled, Strikers Remain Resolved*



**Picketing** Cleveland school employees at East Tech High. *Plain Dealer* October 10, 1978

## THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY DAVID J. QUOLKE

## 2016: The Epilogue

■ continued from page 12

learned is that CTU members are resilient in a struggle, and formidable when we stand together.

We will have a lot of work to do in 2017, as public educators, CTU members, and American citizens who believe in a fair and just nation. Your Union will likely be calling on you to be active and vocal, as we work to protect public education in our communities and the nation, and protect the rights of every student to be safe

and successful in our schools.

Rest and rejuvenate during the winter break, and enjoy the beautiful holiday season. Get ready for a busy 2017. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

*In union,  
David*

*"Reflect upon your personal blessings — of which every man has many — not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some."*

— CHARLES DICKENS, A CHRISTMAS CAROL AND OTHER WRITINGS



**JUDICIAL ACTION** — Common Pleas Judge Harry Hanna reads from his order telling striking Cleveland school employees to go back to work today or face fines. After three previous denials of back-to-work orders, Hanna acted today after the employees turned down a contract proposal by a 3-to-2 margin. *Herman Seid, Cleveland Press.*





# THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY DAVID J. QUOLKE

## 2016: The Epilogue

*"Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."*

— SØREN KIERKEGAARD

As 2016 comes to a close, it's a fitting time to reflect on the tumultuous year behind us, and make our plans for 2017.

### Election 2016

The first and most serious issue is the disappointing result of the November 2016 elections. Donald Trump was certainly not our Union's choice for President. Serious questions about his character, temperament, policies, judgment, choices for appointments and cabinet offices, and future governing decisions, still exist. In fact, they have only been magnified as he forms his team.

How do we, as public educators and union members, move forward? I think that first, we don't dwell on the loss. We must be vigilant and ready to act, and hold the new President accountable for the positive things

**I**t's time to make sure we strive for a 'more perfect union,' and insist on that from our new leadership.

he promised: creating jobs, fixing NAFTA, improving the lot of all Americans, not only the richest few. And when his actions and reality don't match his rhetoric, we must call him on the carpet.

You were probably as appalled as I was during the campaign at the

racial, homophobic, islamophobic, misogynistic comments we heard. As Americans, we must now be watchful to ensure that others in our society are not marginalized, treated unfairly, or with prejudice because of their skin color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or other reasons. It's time to make sure we strive for a "more perfect union," and insist on that from our new leadership.

### Anti-Public Education Billionaire to Lead Department of Education?

As public educators, the most disturbing news was the nomination of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. AFT leaders consider her the most ideological, anti-public-school nominee for secretary of education since the U.S. Department of Education was created. Her nomination, and the ideology it represents, poses a grave threat to our public schools.

AFT President Randi Weingarten warned that DeVos wants to make the fight about giving some parents an option of a charter or a voucher or private education; her chief focus has been the privatization of public schools. However, the facts prove that over the last 25 years, neither charters nor vouchers have worked as the "miracle cure" for public education. Most do no better, and some do even worse than their neighborhood public schools.

The real issue, President Weingarten explained, is the future of America's public schools, and the students and families who rely on them. Public schools serve more than 85% of young people from every background. Public education is where we forge a common culture out of America's rich diversity. Americans agree that public schools are a treasure to protect, and Betsy DeVos is a clear threat to that treasure.

President Weingarten recently wrote an op-ed [reprinted on page 1 of this issue] outlining DeVos's horrible record, in both Michigan and nationally, in supporting anti-public educa-

tion, anti-student and anti-teacher efforts, and being a chief architect for privatization and profiting off of students. There's lots of evidence that proves she's deeply unqualified for the job. America's students deserve leaders who will strengthen public schools, not destabilize or defund them.

Americans who value public education must understand just how dangerous this nominee will be for America's public schools. Please share the information with your families, friends, and community.

### Issue 108 Passes—Thank You!

One of the few bright spots in the election was the overwhelming passage of Issue 108, the renewal of the four-year CMSD levy. The levy passed in all Cleveland wards, showing significant support for the schools from Cleveland voters. The overall passage rate was 68%-32%, a substantial margin.

Thank you to the Cleveland voters, and to those who worked on the levy effort, including many active and retired CTU members. Your hard work ensured success for this important levy, which will provide critical funding for our students. At a time when future state and federal programs and funding are uncertain, this levy is even more significant, and will help provide stability to the District, and resources to our students.

### Meryl Johnson, State BOE Member

Congratulations to Meryl Johnson, newly-elected member of the Ohio Board of Education. Meryl is a retired teacher with 40 years of experience in CMSD schools, and decades of service as a CTU officer. She is a strong advocate for public education, teachers and students, the community, and labor. Her voice as a union teacher on the Board is important.

Unfortunately, incumbent Board Member Roslyn Painter-Goffi, another retired union educator and past President of the Berea Federation of Teachers, lost her bid for re-election. It is unfortunate that the State Board of Education has so few actual educator voices on the governing board that makes vital decisions about public education in our state, decisions that affect students' and educators' success. We appreciate Roslyn's past service, and look forward to Meryl's voice on the Board.



### Negotiations Continue

Negotiations are continuing, after the rejection of the Tentative Agreement in September. The teams have met regularly in November and December, and have set dates for January. A federal mediator is helping to facilitate the process.

The CTU Negotiating Team has studied the survey results submitted by the membership regarding the last TA, and hope to resolve key issues through current negotiations. The plan is to reach another Tentative Agreement by February, for CTU members and the CBOE members to vote on.

I believe there is still a lot of misinformation around negotiations. First, we are not working without a contract. The rejection of the TA means the 2013-2016 CBA remains in effect, and we are working under those provisions. Any changes to the CBA that were proposed in the Tentative Agreement, including the 2% raise and other working condition changes, are not in effect, because the TA was rejected.

Using the Fact-Finder process again is not an option, since this is still considered the same negotiations cycle. We already used the Fact-Finder option last spring. It cannot be used again in the same negotiations cycle.

Also, both CTU and CMSD negotiators must negotiate within the parameters of Ohio law, which for Cleveland schools, means the Cleveland Plan. Negotiations can mitigate some situations, but we still must follow state law, which is the Corrective Action Plan or HB 525, the Cleveland Plan. We cannot negotiate the law away.

Thank you to the members who responded thoughtfully to our surveys. We have studied the results, shared them with the District's team, and are using the information as we proceed with negotiations. Both teams are hoping for a successful outcome early in 2017.

### Looking Ahead to 2017

Each year since I became CTU President, there have been several "never-before" situations that we faced as Union members and public educators — some extremely tough and challenging issues. One thing I have

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