



CRITIQUE



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One of the most important items in this new law is that **the federal government has taken away the mandate that student growth and test scores must be a part of a teacher's evaluation.** One large problem Ohio faces is that our state law still says that student test scores must be one-half of a teacher's evaluation. Only changing the law can change our teacher evaluation system.

A Retreat from One-Size-Fits-All

ESSA

Replacement for NCLB

by Mark Baumgartner
Director of Professional Issues

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is federal law that used to be called No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Last year, President Obama signed the reauthorization of the ESEA; it is now called Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This reauthorization is the national law regarding K-12 education. **Since NCLB was signed into law in 2002, and the most recent reauthorization was signed in 2016, this new ESSA law could determine our working conditions and our students' learning conditions for more than the next decade.**

One of the big differences from NCLB and all previous versions of the Act is that it calls for less of a centralized, one-size-fits-all federal mandate. ESSA gives each state the latitude to write its own version and submit it to the federal government for approval. So basically, **ESSA is 50 different versions, based on each individual state.**

Ohio's plan has been written and is currently in draft status, after more than eight months of public hearings and listening tours throughout the state. The last phase before submission to the federal government was a 30-day window for public comments. Then the Governor gets to review it for one final time. ODE plans to submit the final version on April 3, even

Inside the Critique

Implementing the CBA

Grievance Report..... 6
About Job Sharing..... 7

Union News

Paraprofessional News..... 10
Life-Saving CPR Class..... 10
Your \$\$\$: Credit Union, Taxes, Dues..... 11
Sign Up for Golf Outing..... 11
Suicide, Lead Poisoning in CLE..... 12-13

Education & Politics

Safe Harbor Ending..... 4
Tell Us About Testing..... 5
AFT's #Pencils4Betsy..... 7
Women's March Photos..... 8-9
News from Innovation Ohio... 12
CTU History Installment... 14-15
Pres. Quolke:
Testing & Social Justice..... 16

though it's not due until September. On February 2, 2017, the Ohio Department of Education posted Ohio's plan on its website, including a link for

■ continued on page 4

We listened to the members last fall, and we understood their apprehension about the reopener. We delivered on our promise to come back with a new agreement that addressed their concerns.

– CTU President David Quolke

[Left] Shari Obrenski, CTU Director of Negotiations, explains parts of the Tentative Agreement to Brian Bjorkland and Mya McKinney West. Executive Board members visited schools to discuss the proposed new CBA with CTU members.

[Right] Vita Radovic studies the TA prior to the ratification vote.

AGREEMENT

CTU, CMSD Reach Three-Year Pact

“Good for kids and fair for educators.” That’s how CTU President David J. Quolke described the tentative agreement between CTU and CMSD negotiators, reached on February 13, 2017. The new three-year deal addresses many of the concerns that members expressed last fall, when they narrowly voted to reject another tentative agreement.



President Quolke felt that this agreement resolves the questions and unease some CTU members had about the rejected agreement, which included a reopener on wages and health care after one year.

“I want to give a shout-out to Cleveland residents, who voted to support the levy and the schools last November,” he added. The passage of the levy provided the funding security necessary for a three-year agreement; the CBOE Treasurer must certify to the State that the District has enough funds for all three years of the proposed new contract.

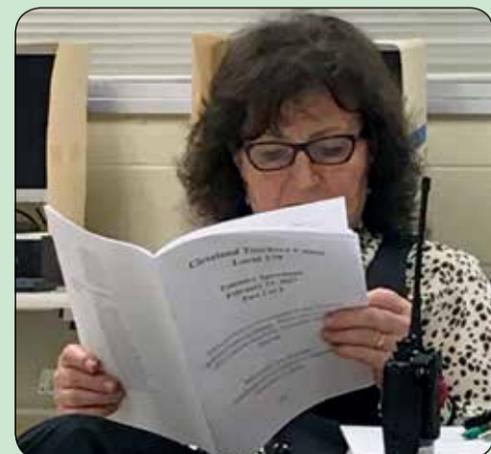
“We listened to the members last fall, and we understood their

apprehension about the reopener,” said President Quolke. “We delivered on our promise to come back with a new agreement that addressed their concerns.”

Wages

Upon ratification, all CTU members will receive raises of 2% retroactive to the beginning of the 2016-2017 school

■ continued on page 2



Editor's Note: As this issue was going to press, the CTU membership was voting on the tentative agreement discussed in this article.

AGREEMENT

CTU, CMSD Reach Three-Year Pact

■ continued from page 1

year, and 2.75% raises in each of the next two school years, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. The deal includes a new paraprofessional salary schedule, and a new salary schedule and article for sign language interpreters.

Three Voluntary Professional Development (VPD) days for paraprofessionals remain, and two VPD/Community Engagement days for teachers and related service providers were added.

Under the new CBA, movement on the salary schedule will no longer be tied to one's final effectiveness rating. All members with Developing, Effective, and Accomplished ratings will move up on the salary schedule every two years. As Shari Obrenski, CTU Director of Negotiations, explained, "This means 99.3% of CTU members will move up on the salary schedule every two years."

Differential compensation rates will be raised in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. However, non-instructional assignments over six assignments will be paid at 1/12, not 1/6, and teachers in extended-day high schools can be assigned to a seventh assignment, but with compensation.

This means 99.3% of CTU members will move up on the salary schedule every two years.

— Shari Obrenski,
CTU Director of Negotiations

Health Care

This agreement maintains first-dollar health care coverage with no deductible with three choices of providers, Aetna, Medical Mutual, and a new plan, UHChoice. The UHChoice option will be available on January 1, 2018. It was added as a replacement for the Healthspan (originally Kaiser) option, which no longer exists, and its rates will be even lower than Healthspan's rates.

There is a modest increase to office visit and prescription costs, and to the working spouse contribution. However, a voluntary Wellness Program option was added, that will keep health-care premiums at the current rates.

Wellness programs encourage people to monitor their health, detect early signs of potentially serious health problems, and work with their doctors to treat them before they escalate. CMSD's Wellness Program will be voluntary! But members with single coverage, or members and

spouses with family coverage, who choose to participate in the Wellness program before Open Enrollment (by October 31 — Open Enrollment begins November 1) will maintain health coverage at the same rate as it is this year (except for the increase to working spouse). Members who use the UHChoice health plan, and participate in the Wellness Program, will get even bigger discounts in their monthly premiums. Healthcare premiums will increase for those who opt not to participate in the Wellness Program.

The CTU is encouraging all members to participate in the Wellness Program. A program that can potentially help you and your family be healthy and stay healthy, as well as save dollars in the health care premiums that you pay, is an extremely valuable program.

Paraprofessionals

In addition to the new salary schedule, paraprofessionals will be able to substitute for other paras with compensation. The agreement defines personal needs time for all paras in all classifications. A Paraprofessional Teacher Career Track VI was added to this agreement. Also, paraprofessionals with a change in assignment will be able to "shadow" another para.

Evaluations

The agreement included various improvements to the evaluation process and classroom integrity. There have been many complaints about CMSD sending visitors into classrooms, sometimes in groups, to observe teachers and talk to students during the lesson, without identifying themselves or explaining the reason for their visit. Sometimes the visitors took pictures or videos, or went through teacher's personal areas.

The new contract will establish new guidelines for classroom visits and learning walks, to reduce their intrusiveness and disruption to instruction. It would require visitors to identify themselves and the reason for the visit, stay out of teachers' personal areas, notify teachers before any photography was taken, not talk with students without the teacher's permission, and to stay off cell phones.

[Editor's note: The fact that this had to be clarified in the CBA proves how disruptive and intrusive these classroom "visits" had become.]

Under the new CBA, counselors, coaches, RSPs, and Sign Language Interpreters can be rated Accomplished. An SLO appeal process was also established in this agreement.

While the TDES process will still include five events for classroom teachers, evaluators will be required to enter evaluator TDES feedback within 24 hours.

Working Conditions

An additional 50 minutes of the 200 minutes will be designated as teacher-directed time; 100 minutes will remain in the administrator's hands.

Two assessments were designated for elimination, but ESSA and ODE

of the contract. It reestablishes a salary schedule, and mitigates some of the problems with the evaluation system. The three-year deal, the longest the Treasurer could certify by law, will provide labor stability, so we can focus on improving teaching and learning.

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guidelines must be finalized before determining if any other assessments can be scrapped. "Reducing two tests doesn't eliminate the excessive testing that's going on, but we're going to keep working on it," President Quolke said.

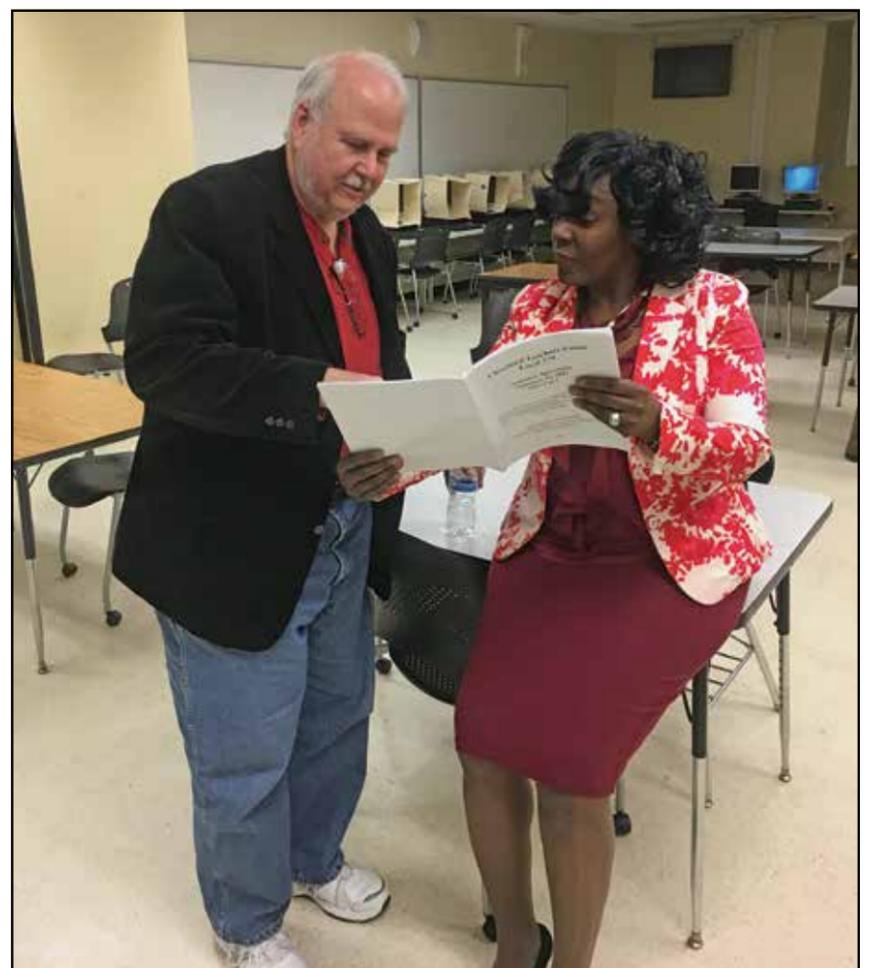
The agreement requires that new school schedules must be "vetted" prior to their implementation. The new CBA states that Encore/ESP teachers should not be split between multiple schools when it is possible, but it does allow for these positions to be split between two buildings as necessary.

Synopsis

"This is an excellent agreement," said Ms. Obrenski. "It surpasses what we see in most other northeast Ohio districts. It will increase wages and maintain benefits through the length

"As in any negotiations, neither side gets everything they want. But this agreement addresses the issues our members told us were important to them last fall."

The members of the CTU Negotiating Team are: President David J. Quolke; Shari Obrenski, Director of Negotiations and 3rd Vice President, Senior High/Special; Tracy Radich, 1st Vice President; Kurt Richards, 2nd Vice President; Jillian Ahrens, 3rd Vice President, K-8; Mary Moore, 3rd Vice President, K-8; Michelle Rzcudlo, Secretary; Michael Kulcsar, Treasurer; Mark Baumgartner, Trustee-at-Large; Cherylane Jones-Williams, Paraprofessional Chapter Chair; Rob Weil, AFT Deputy Director of Educational Issues; Susannah Muskovitz, Legal Counsel; and Sandy McNair, Legal Counsel for Healthcare.



Michael Kulcsar, CTU Treasurer and member of the Negotiating Team, answers questions from Ida Wells about the Tentative Agreement.

DeVOSTATION



CTU Text Alerts

Stay informed with the latest CTU news and updates! A text service is available for CTU members. You can sign up — right now — to receive mobile text message alerts from AFT and CTU. You will receive updates, notices, and reminders.

If you aren't already signed up, get your phone out now! Send a text message with the word



ctu279 (lowercase, no spaces) in your message box. Send it to the phone number 69238.

AFT-CTU will never charge you for text messages, but your carrier's message and data rates may apply.



THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

 **THUMBS UP** to to the **CTU Negotiating Team**, who listened to members' concerns about the fall Tentative Agreement, and went back to the table to bring back another TA that a majority of members would support. The process has been long and grueling, but the new TA addresses — and fixes — the major drawbacks members expressed about the previous TA. At press time, the ratification vote is taking place.

 **THUMBS UP** to the **CTU Executive Board, Negotiations Team members, and Chapter Chairs** for working hard to make sure CTU members got their questions and concerns answered about the Tentative Agreement before the ratification vote.

 **THUMBS DOWN** to the **misinformation (fake news)** that gets spread around to some of our members. Please be sure to get answers from credible sources when asking important questions!

 **THUMBS UP** to the organizers of the **High School Fair** held for 8th grade CMSD students. Teachers and students reported that the event was well-organized and very informative.

 **THUMBS DOWN** to the **recent problems with implementing Workday**. From the criminal hacking of members' accounts to other difficulties with the initial rollout, there have been many issues CMSD and CTU had to resolve. While a technologically-current payroll reporting system makes sense in the 21st century, and will probably be a better option than some of the antiquated practices it replaced, it has been a less-than-smooth rollout by CMSD. Hopefully the kinks are gone, and the system will provide compensation, especially for additional work such as coverages, de-

tentions, and other extras, in a more accurate, timely fashion than before.

 **THUMBS UP** to **CTU Trustees Mark Baumgartner and Jim Wagner**. Besides their duties on the CTU Executive Board, they have been a voice for Ohio educators as the state prepares to implement its version of the new federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). They have served in two important capacities: Jim on Ohio's Education Standards Board, charged by the State Superintendent to make recommendations regarding teacher evaluation, and Mark on Ohio's Committee of Practitioners, which will also be making recommendations regarding test scores and teacher evaluation.

 **THUMBS DOWN** to the **confirmation of Betsy DeVos**, in spite of extensive protests from educators and friends of public education across the nation. In an unprecedented vote for this Cabinet nominee, the Senate vote was tied, and DeVos needed the Vice President's vote to break the tie in her favor. Public educators must be prepared and willing to keep the heat on this grossly unqualified Secretary of Education, and work together to protect the institution of public education, a cornerstone of our democracy.

 **THUMBS UP** to **Cleveland voters** who showed their faith in the schools — and recent academic progress made — by overwhelmingly supporting the levy last fall. The passage of the levy is directly related to the financial components of the TA. We don't even want to think what would be happening if the levy had failed. Clevelanders voted in support of educating Cleveland kids — thank you.

 **THUMBS UP** to **Toledo's new law that will prevent lead poisoning in at-risk children** by requiring home inspections of

rental properties. Passed last August and beginning in 2017, the law monitors lead levels in rental properties, requires home inspections, and creates an approved list of rental properties. The "lead-safe ordinance" will require most rental properties — about 55,000 units — to be inspected and deemed free from lead hazards, which can cause irreversible damage to the developing brain. The *Plain Dealer* reported that a coalition of legal rights and social justice advocates, environmental nonprofits, and academic institutions headed the grassroots effort in response to the city's high lead poisoning rate.

But  **THUMBS DOWN** to the **only city in Ohio with more cases of lead poisoning than Toledo: Cleveland**. It's time for our city leaders to act to save our youngest, most vulnerable citizens from the life-long, life-altering dangers of lead poisoning.

 **THUMBS UP** to **Jan Durkalski**, second grade teacher at Denison. She and her 60-year-old husband John, both avid runners, were out for a Sunday morning run through the woods in January. When John collapsed, with no pulse or breathing, Jan performed five minutes of CPR, then ran back to the nearest house about 1/8 of a mile away, because neither of them had their cell phones with them! She then went back to her husband, who was still unresponsive, and continued CPR until the Berea Rescue Squad arrived. Jan had just renewed her CPR certification the day before in a YMCA class, a requirement for her to coach the We Run This City running team at Denison. Kudos to Jan for her grace under pressure, and best wishes for John's continued recovery. (*Read the complete story on page ??.*)



ESSA

[Elementary and Secondary Education Act]

Under Ohio's ESSA plan, 10% of Title 1 dollars — or \$57 million based on last year's funding — may not go to Ohio districts like Cleveland, where the students need support the most, but will be given instead to districts with good grant writers and vendors.

■ continued from page 1

public comment. The public comment window was open until March 6.

One of the most important items in this new law is that the federal government has taken away the mandate that student growth and test scores must be a part of a teacher's evaluation. One large problem Ohio faces is that our state law still says that student test scores must be one-half of a teacher's evaluation. Only changing the law can change our teacher evaluation system. While everything else in Ohio's ESSA draft plan is spelled out, this section of how to evaluate teachers is **not**.

Ohio's Superintendent of Public Instruction has charged the Educator Standards Board (ESB) to make recommendations regarding teacher evaluation. Jim Wagner, who also serves as a CTU K-8 Trustee, is a member of the ESB. The state Committee of Practitioners is also making a strong recommendation regarding this issue of test scores and teacher evaluation. Mark Baumgartner, CTU Trustee-at-Large, serves on this committee. There is a total of six different members on the two committees representing the Ohio Federation of Teachers, so teacher voice is not silent on this significant issue.

One item that the federal government does mandate to the states in ESSA is that all students must be tested in English/language arts and

math once a year in grades 3-8, and once in high school. There must also be a science test once in elementary school, middle school, and high school. Once again, for this change to happen in Ohio, there must be a change in state law. Ohio law includes a lot more testing of students, so Ohio's plan calls on the ODE to work with state lawmakers to change state law regarding the amount of mandated student testing.

is another \$17 million that will be given to vendors to sell their services and "quick fixes" to district throughout the state.

To recap, under Ohio's ESSA plan, 10% of Title 1 dollars — or \$57 million based on last year's funding — may not go to Ohio districts like Cleveland, where the students need support the most, but will be given instead to districts with good grant writers and

Ohio law includes a lot more testing of students, so Ohio's plan calls on the ODE to work with state lawmakers to change state law regarding the amount of mandated student testing.

Another big issue is Title 1 money. The Ohio ESSA plan calls for 7% of Title 1 money to be distributed through a competitive process. Last year's Title 1 budget was \$570 million. **In other words, according to Ohio's current ESSA plan, almost \$40 million that is supposed to go to the places where children need support the most will now be distributed based on who can write the best grant.**

Another 3% of the Title 1 money is being held back for what the state calls "Direct Student Services." This

vendors.

Please go to the Ohio Department of Education's website and check out the full draft of the plan, along with a three-page summary and many other resources regarding the state's education plan for the foreseeable future. Please contact Mark Baumgartner if you have any questions or concerns regarding this or anything else dealing with state law and impacts to our jobs. He can be reached at mbaumgartner@ctu279.org or 216-861-7676 ext. 272.

'Safe Harbor' Ending

Ohio legislation on so-called "Safe Harbor" has been in effect for two years, but is set to expire at the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year. CTU led the push for Safe Harbor with the successful "Pause on PARCC" campaign, which meant state test results couldn't be used for students' or teacher's evaluation purposes for the past two school years.

But beginning in the fall of 2017, Value-Added results from state tests will be used for teachers' evaluations. The first step of the return of Value-Added is linking this spring, for your students who will take the OST. More details will be coming about this process. To better assist teachers in the Linkage process and using the Battelle website, TDES school teams were scheduled for refresher training on Linkage in early March.

"With Safe Harbor legislation ending after the 2016-2017 school year," said Mark Baumgartner, CTU Director of Professional Issues, "the group of students you are currently teaching in your classroom will count for 35% of your Teacher Effectiveness Rating for 2017-2018. I know I keep talking about this, but it's important — 35% of your rating is a big deal."

He explained that since Ohio State Law defines teacher evaluation using student growth measures as half of the overall Effectiveness Rating, it is very important for teachers to make their Linkage and rosters as accurate as possible. Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, the Final Effectiveness rating of teachers in a value-added grade or subject will be comprised of 50% TDES, 35% Value-Added, and 15% SLO.

If you have questions or concerns about Linkage, Value-Added, or student growth measures in general, contact Mark Baumgartner at the CTU office at 216-861-7676 ext. 272.

It's ALWAYS IPDP Time!

Make sure that you **always** have an Approved IPDP (Individual Professional Development Plan) on file. When should you write a new IPDP? As soon as you have your newly-renewed license! Do not wait until it's time to renew your license. Remember, an approved IPDP is needed **before** taking any classes or earning CEUs.

An IPDP Help Guide is available on the CTU and CMSD websites. It is the same step-by-step guide the IPDP team uses when they go to schools to help write IPDPs.

If you have questions about the IPDP process, or need your username and/or password, please contact Jim Wagner (jwagner@ctu279.org), Bonnie Hedges (bhedges@ctu279.org), or Tracy Radich (tradich@ctu279.org).

All teachers, paraprofessionals, and RSPs must have a valid license, certificate, or permit on the first day of school. The license, certificate, or permit renewal process is part of your professional responsibilities. Be sure the classes you take will count toward your license renewal. Get a new IPDP approved as soon as you renew your license, every time.

License Expiring in 2017? Renew NOW!

Tracy Radich, CTU 1st Vice President, reminded all CTU members with a license, certificate, or permit that expires in June 2017 to **renew it now!**

All renewals are completed online, and payment is made online. After applying and paying online, teachers and related service providers must submit a **sealed** transcript or CEUs, IPDP approval email, copy of current license, and copy of proof of payment from the ODE website (issued after successful completion of online application). Documentation is not accepted without the ODE proof of payment.

Fingerprinting is required by law for all employees every five years. Educators who have lived continuously in Ohio for the previous five years and have a BCI check on file will only need the FBI background check. Otherwise, you will need both BCI and FBI checks to renew.

CMSD Safety & Security provides fingerprinting at East Professional Center. Call their office at 216-838-0420 for days and times. Cost for BCI is \$22 and FBI is \$24, payable **only by money order**.

Testing Testing Testing

by Jennifer Huryn

Intervention Specialist, William Cullen Bryant

It's that time of year again, the one that all teachers and students dread — testing season! Sandwiched between winter break and the start of summer, the testing season has taken over my school and my class. We have a countdown; we preach readiness; we have accepted our “mission” to improve scores, close gaps, and push towards proficiency. Growth targets are set, scores are plotted, goals are addressed, and packets are made. But sadly, what somehow gets lost in all this madness is our students, and the emotions that come with the season.

When I announced to my class of special education students that we were starting daily test prep, a chorus of groans and refusals filled the room. But I plodded along, and we have been spending 30-50 minutes per day in full test prep mode. In the next few weeks, my students will begin testing. This year my 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders will take tests that include a national reading and math test; state reading, math, science, and social studies tests; district reading, math, science, and social studies tests; and network reading and math tests. I will administer 15 separate, required tests to my students and will slowly watch my students' attitudes towards learning and themselves change before my eyes.

Every year, by the time we get to the testing season, the hard work my students and I put into our classroom has begun to pay off. The students have grown to understand why learning is important and how they can be successful in the classroom. They are proud of projects we have completed, concepts they now understand, and grades they have earned. Although they say they don't like it, homework is getting turned in, tests are being studied for, and my reluctant readers are reading out loud in class.

As a teacher, I know that many of my students are still below grade level in their independent reading, and that math facts still need to be memorized, but the growth is amazing. Parents and students believe in themselves again. But once the testing season starts, those confident and proud students begin to disappear.

Our regular routine is interrupted for weeks as I am forced to administer testing with accommodations like read aloud, scribe, small

group, and frequent breaks. While I am administering testing, the school day becomes segmented and our routine is broken. Confident learners realize just how far behind they are, despite the growth they have made, when they are given reading tests four or more grade levels above their independent reading level without any accommodations, and when tests are given that expect them to reach frustration levels — increasing in difficulty until the questions become impossible.

There is no immediate result for the majority of these assessments, no way to know how they did or if they passed, and therefore there is no tangible reward for my behaviorally-challenged students. We tell them to “try their best,” “show effort,” and “take their time.” We tell them we “are proud of them,” but in the end, we can't tell them how they did or if the goal was met, and that leads to frustration and anger on the next assessment.

As a teacher, I will learn nothing new from these 15 assessments; I will have no clearer picture of my students; and in the end, all I end up doing is watching my special students lose a bit of all that we have worked so hard for as a classroom community. I can recite my students' present levels of performance,

areas of weakness and strengths, how they learn, who they can work with, and how much growth they have shown this year. I can show work samples detailing where we started and where we are. My kids can tell anyone who will listen where they need to be, and none of this is learned from the 4-6 weeks of testing sessions we all must endure.

By the end of testing season, my kids are beaten down and left feeling defeated. And as a teacher, I can only hope I have enough time to repair the damage before school is out for summer.

Note: The Critique is accepting comments from CTU educators about what excessive testing looks like in your classroom, what learning experiences are lost due to the amount of time spent in testing, and the effect so much testing has on your students. Please send your comments, which will be considered for publication, to Christy Rorick, CTU Publications Chairperson, at crorick@ctu279.org.

GRIEVANCE REPORT

CTU Reaches Settlement on Payment for HS Assignments, 10% Penalty

CTU Grievance Co-Directors, Jillian Ahrens and Mary Moore, reported that several pending arbitrations regarding high school assignments had been settled recently for payment. The basis for the initial grievances, continuing grievances, and pending arbitrations was incorrect scheduling of high school teachers, resulting in numerous violations of the contract.

“This was simply scheduling done wrong,” said Ms. Ahrens, who explained that similar situations were highlighted months ago, in Carl Monday’s TV report called “The Million Dollar Mistake.” However, instead of putting a stop to it and ensuring the costly mistakes were not repeated, CMSD leadership allowed it to continue.

“Some administrators continued to schedule teachers incorrectly, in violation of our CBA, then refused to make corrective changes when it was brought to their attention,” added Ms. Ahrens. At John Marshall, home of three small schools, teachers at two of the schools were paid for the scheduling errors last year, and affected teachers at the third school received a total of \$328,516.11 just before the 2016 holiday season. At another high school, John F. Kennedy, grievants will soon be receiving checks totaling \$182,939.85.

“These costly errors were preventable,” reiterated Ms. Moore. “All the principals had to do was follow the contract regarding scheduling, or fix the errors when they were originally identified. But they didn’t do that. Our members’ rights were violated, and they are entitled to compensation.”

Some CTU members will also be receiving a total of about \$2,500 due to incorrect pay rates for professional development. They were paid for the PD, but at an incorrect rate.

Additionally, CMSD settled a large number of grievances regarding the 10% penalty for late payment of compensation due. The CTU had a number of grievances from across the District, all regarding the 10% late payment penalty, that were grouped together in this settlement. CMSD will pay over \$7,700 to these CTU members who were not paid in a timely manner for their work. There is another group of late-payment grievances that the Grievance Team is still processing, for which they will be working to reach a settlement soon.

“These additional payments are because CMSD didn’t or wouldn’t pay members correctly, in a timely manner, or both,” said Ms. Ahrens.

New Form, Procedure for Article 15 Grievances

All grievances that are violations of Article 15, Policy and Procedures Governing Social-Emotional Learning,

Student Discipline, and Misconduct, have a new procedure and must be submitted on a new form. The form was distributed at Delegate Assembly, and is also available on the CTU website.

Article 15 covers student assaults, menacing, student discipline, the Planning Center, Student Support Teams, Removal for Educational Intervention, classroom meetings, and other student discipline-related issues.

Under the new procedure, Step I of an Article 15 grievance (on the new form) does not go to the Principal. Instead, it is to be sent directly to the CTU at grievances@ctu279.org. The Grievance Team processes it and sends it to the Director of Labor Relations, who has five days to attempt to resolve. If a resolution is not achieved, CTU and CMSD will contact a special purpose panel per Article 15 Section 31 (c).

Before a member files a grievance on a serious assault or battery by a student, the member must first follow the steps outlined in the CBA, Article 15, Section 10. If the member does not agree with the Principal’s decision, they appeal to the Network Leader. If they do not agree with the Network Leader’s decision, then they file the grievance.

Ms. Ahrens said that several Article 15 situations and grievances have been resolved using the new process.

MD/AU Settlement Agreement Reached

Mary Moore reported that CTU reached a settlement agreement last year regarding Low Incidence (MD/AU) classroom and caseload maximum limits. The original grievance was initiated by MD/AU teachers at Tremont Montessori School, but will be applied to all MD/AU teachers. She said a copy of the settlement was sent to all Chapter Chairs.

The new limit of six was effective as of July 1, 2016. Teachers of MD/AU classes with over six students for the 2015-2016 school year will be compensated. Teachers who believe they are eligible to be paid for this class-size overage should contact Mary Moore at the CTU immediately, if they haven’t already done so.

Eligible teachers must present evidence of their class/caseload for 2015-2016. The Joint Special Education Committee (JSEC) Co-Chairs are

working with teachers to help access necessary records. “CMSD is providing eSchoolplus numbers, and comparing them with teachers’ records,” said Ms. Moore. “Then they can calculate the compensation due.”

Ms. Moore explained that teachers will also be compensated for 2016-2017 overages; the limit is six. However, principals had not yet been notified, so some were not aware of the settlement and limit. She explained that 2016-2017 overages will not be paid until July, so at this time, CTU and CMSD are first working on verifying and calculating last school year’s overages.

Former MOU Schools: ‘Wild, Wild West’

The Grievance Co-Chairs stated that the Team has been trying to reach a settlement regarding schools who formerly operated under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with working conditions that varied from those in the CBA. The MOUs had expired, but some administrators expected CTU members to continue working under the altered working conditions with no additional compensation.

Ms. Ahrens called the former MOU schools “the Wild, Wild West” version of scheduling, compensation, working conditions, etc. The Grievance Team has been in talks, trying to settle a grievance filed in August. However, they reported much difficulty, even in simply getting pertinent information from the District.

Good News, Bad News

The Grievance Co-Chairs said that Step II Grievances are being answered in a more timely fashion. However, too many of the answers have been bad ones, so the Union is considering mediation or arbitration for these.

If you have an open grievance and you want an update, both Ms. Ahrens and Ms. Moore encouraged CTU members to send an email asking about the grievance to the CTU grievance email, grievances@ctu279.org.

“The Grievance Team has been busy,” said Ms. Ahrens, “but we’re always ready to answer members’ questions. If you want an update, just ask us. We really appreciate the members who file a grievance when they feel the contract has been violated.

“I know it can sometimes be scary,” she added. “Some members worry about retaliation from administrators if they file a grievance, but enforcing the contract starts at the building level. By filing a grievance to enforce the CBA, the power of the Union — and the Collective Bargaining Agreement — stands.”

Ms. Moore agreed: “When administrators don’t follow the contract, and members don’t file a grievance, it weakens our Union. When we all work together, to insist the working conditions and protections in the CBA are followed, and file a grievance when they are not, we strengthen the CTU and the power of collective bargaining.”

Remember: Grievances Are Now Online

The Grievance Team reminded members that the CTU has updated its grievance forms. All grievances that go to the CTU should now be filed online. The email address for *grievances only* is grievances@ctu279.org.

“The online filing procedure creates a paper trail and sets the timeline for all the parties involved,” said Grievance Co-Director Mary Moore. “It’s easier, faster, and more efficient. And it’s much more secure than faxing or sending grievances through school mail.”

The grievance forms for each step were updated earlier this school year, with the instructions and timelines applicable to the various steps printed on the grievance forms. The forms are available on the CTU website, and can be completed in the online format. Principals can also add their responses online.

Even if members use a paper grievance form, they are encouraged to scan and email it, once it is completed. Initiation of Grievance forms must have the principal’s response (or note that the principal did not respond within the allotted time), and any related documents. Include this with the completed Step II Appeal form. Please scan and email them to grievances@ctu279.org, rather than sending through school mail!

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.

AFT President Calls for Action Against Secretary of Education DeVos

On Betsy DeVos' first day as Secretary of Education, she tweeted, "Day one on the job is done, now where do I find the pencils?" AFT President Randi Weingarten replied that a lack of resources in schools is not a joke, it's something many educators face every day, usually buying supplies and materials out of their own pockets.

President Weingarten dismissed the Department of Education's attempt to try to put a feel-good spin on DeVos' missteps by encouraging people to tweet why they #LoveTeaching.

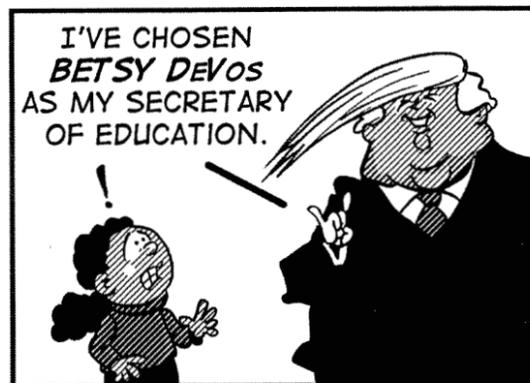
"We're not going to let them hide behind a hashtag," said the AFT President. "I'm sure DeVos found her pencils, but let's show her what we're missing in our classrooms and schools by tweeting at her with the hashtags #Pencils4Betsy and #LoveTeaching."

After only a few weeks on the job, Secretary DeVos is proving what AFT leaders and members feared: She has no respect for public schools, or the teachers and staff who work in them. She lacks the basic knowledge to run the Department of Education. And

ing to be told what they have to do."

AFT members and the Jefferson community were insulted and immediately pushed back, highlighting the successes of the school, the innovation and initiative of the educators and staff, and their own disappointment with her photo-op visit.

When the Department of Education ran a #LoveTeaching Twitter chat, DeVos was a no-show — she didn't send a single tweet or engage participants in any



Students — and the teachers and school staff who educate them — deserve a Secretary of Education who puts public education first, who listens to them, who wants to understand and address the challenges they face, and who has their back.

she is putting students' safety at risk.

President Weingarten stated that just days after her tone-deaf tweet about pencils, DeVos visited a Washington, D.C., public school, Jefferson Middle School. Afterward, she told a conservative radio host in an interview that the educators at Jefferson were in "receive mode" and that "they're wait-

way. But even without DeVos, teachers showed up. #LoveTeaching trended for nearly an hour, dominated by educators who had much to say to her.

Recently the Trump administration rescinded protections for transgender students in public schools, which had been put in place under President

Obama. DeVos was rumored to have resisted signing off on the order, but quickly fell in line when President Trump told her to drop her objections.

"As I told Secretary DeVos in our very tough conversation when she called me," said President Weingarten, "she has a responsibility to listen to kids, parents, teachers, and staff. She needs to walk in their shoes. While she doesn't seem interested in listening, we're going to do our best to educate her."

She urged educators to take a picture to illustrate the resources and supplies their school needs, and tweet it with the hashtag #Pencils4Betsy.

"Teachers don't need a lecture or a hero," President Weingarten added. "They are our everyday champions and need support and a voice on the job. By coming together to stand up for public education, we can make sure teachers are heard. Students — and the teachers and school staff who educate them — deserve a Secretary of Education who puts public education first, who listens to them, who wants to understand and address the challenges they face, and who has their back. So far, DeVos only seems interested in selling her own agenda. So we're going to have to speak up and make sure she hears us: on social media, in the schools she visits, and in the streets with protest signs.

"Let's start by showing her all the concrete things our kids need, things that teachers and parents end up providing, when they can: pens and pencils, paper, gym equipment, even toilet paper. Post pictures and notes about what your classroom or your school needs with the hashtag #Pencils4Betsy.

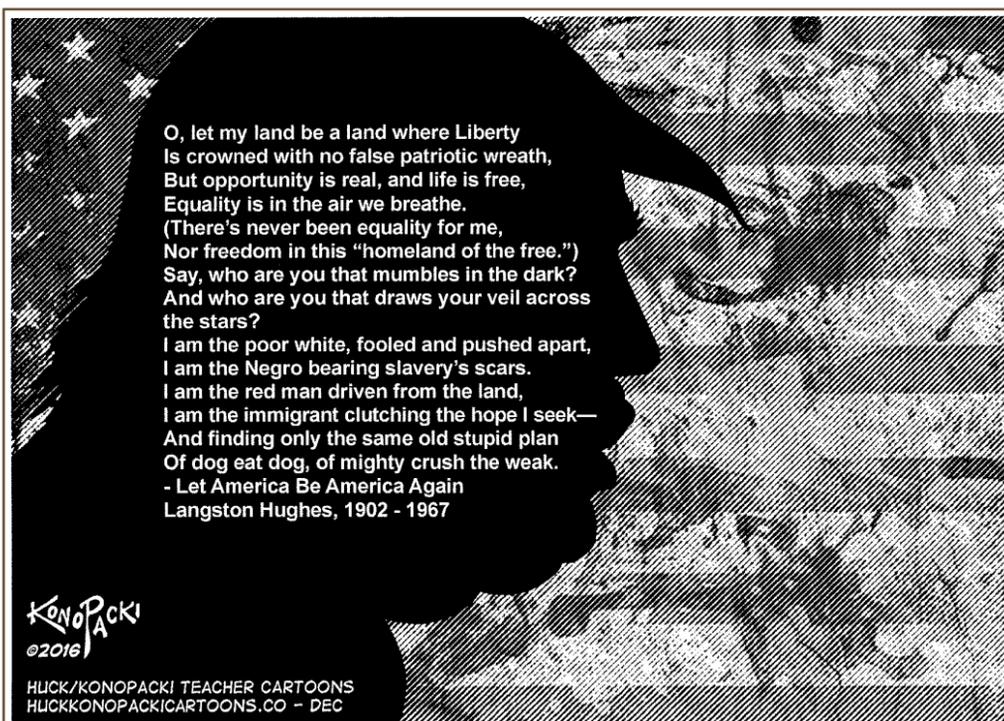
"Betsy DeVos is hell-bent on expanding charter schools, voucher programs, virtual schools and religious schools at the expense of public education, despite all the data proving those methods don't work for kids. We're going to continue to fight for students' and educators' needs to make sure everyone has access to a great public education. You can help by raising your voice. Public schools are here to stay, and we need a secretary of education who supports us."

Job Sharing Meets Specific Needs

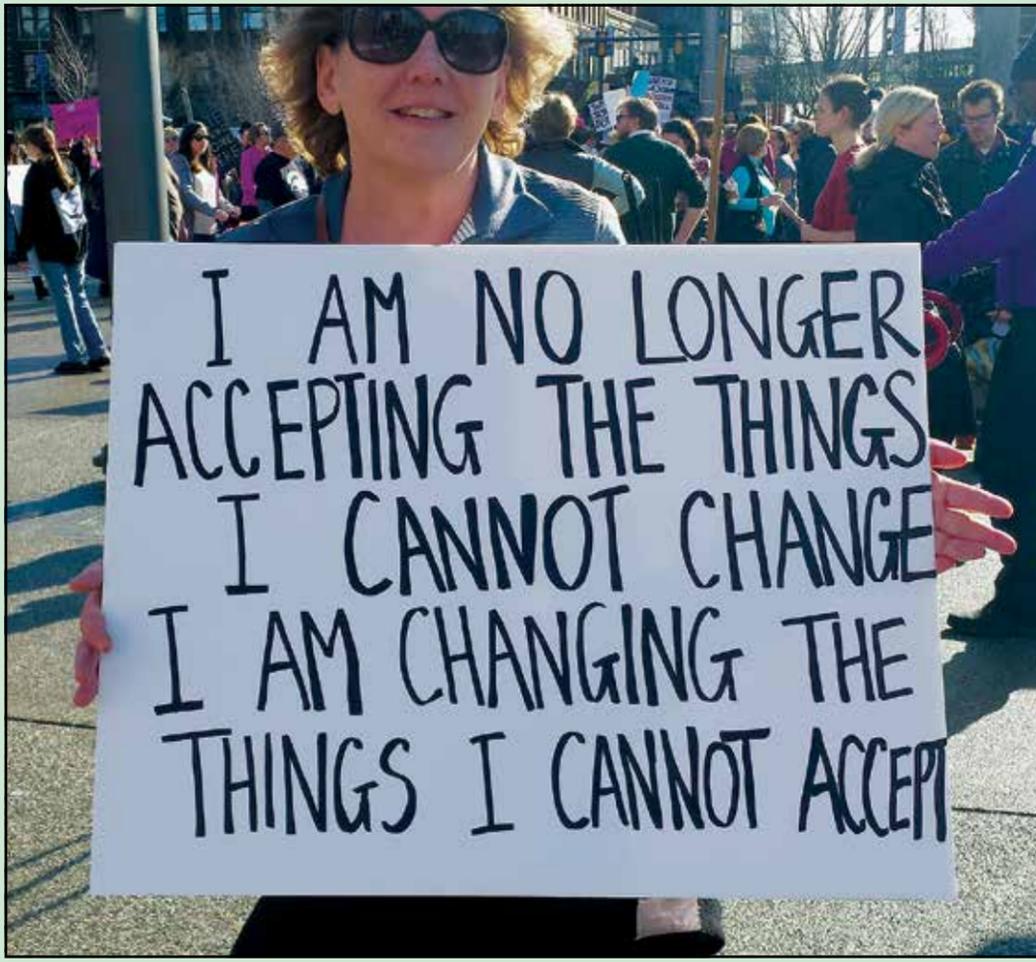
While it's not an option most CTU members use, the CBA allows two CTU members to "share" one teaching job. For educators with specific family and medical needs and constraints, it may be the answer to a perfect part-time educational job situation.

The contract requires that Job Sharing partnerships must last through one full school year, and are subject to the approval of the Principal for teaching positions, or the Chief Talent Officer or his/her designee for related service providers. All applications are due annually on the close of business on April 1 of that year to the Talent Management Department.

Cheryl Neylon, CTU Sergeant-at-Arms, will help coordinate information between members who may be interested in job sharing. For additional information about this option, contact her by email at cheryl.neylon@cleveland-metroschools.org or cneylon@ctu279.org.

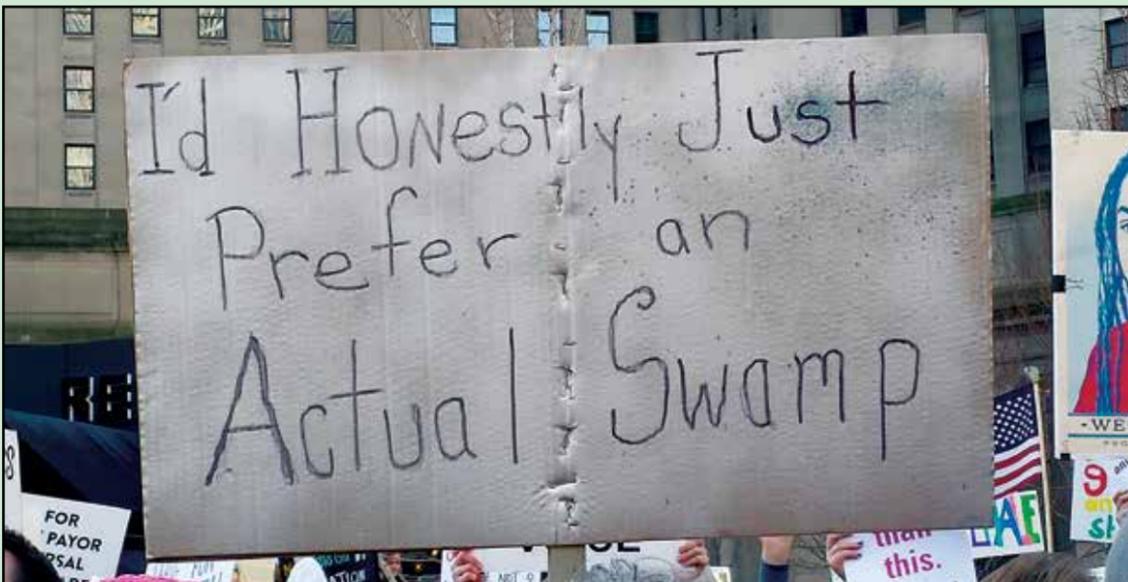


Women's March

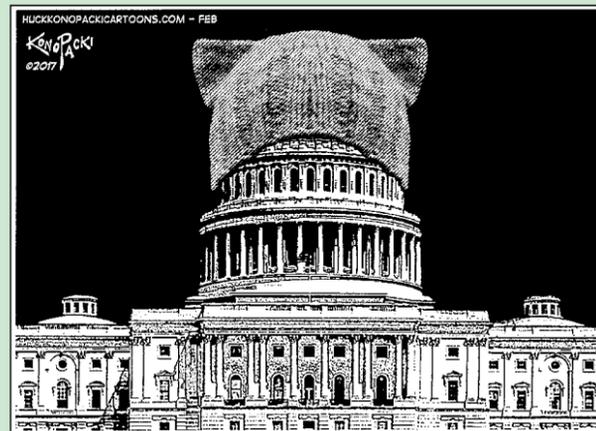


Cleveland

The Women's March, a worldwide protest, took place in over 100 countries (including Antarctica!) voiced opposition to the Trump administration's policies on immigration, health care, the environment, and human rights. It was the largest anti-Trump protest since the anti-Viet Nam War protests of the 1960s.



rights are human rights.



and D.C.

place on January 21, the day after the inauguration of President Donald Trump. Over 670 marches on all seven position to the new administration and its policies in regards to women's rights, civil rights, racial and gender equality environment, workers' rights, and other issues. The marches were reportedly the largest demonstrations since and 1970s.



CTU Member Saves Husband After Heart Attack

“The last thing Jan Durkalski thought she’d be doing the day after she was recertified for CPR was using that very same skill set to save her husband’s life,” Berea Firefighters Local #1836 posted on their Facebook site.

Jan, a second-grade teacher at Denison, needs CPR certification every two years to coach the We Run This City running team at her school. She took the CPR refresher class on Saturday, January 21, and the next day was out for a Sunday morning run in the woods with her 60-year-old husband John. The couple are regular runners, and prefer wood trails to asphalt running paths, as they are easier on the joints.

“We were almost done with our run,” Jan said, “and John was ahead of me on the trail. He went around the bend, and when I rounded the corner, he was down. When I got to him, he quickly passed out, with no pulse and no breathing. I did five minutes of CPR, then ran to the nearest house and asked them to call 911. I ran back to John and restarted CPR until the Berea rescue squad arrived in about ten minutes.”

The rescuers could see Jan in the distance, about 1/8 mile into the woods, when they arrived on the scene. The squad was fully loaded with the necessary life-saving equipment, and the paramedic crew was able to resuscitate John after quickly administering Advanced Cardiac Life Support measures.

Mr. Durkalski was taken to Southwest General ER/Trauma and later transferred to University Hospital where he had open heart quadruple bypass surgery at UH on February 2. He was transferred back to Southwest General to the Acute Rehab unit nine days later. He came home one month after the heart attack, after regaining his ability to walk with only a cane for

balance, and regaining his voice and swallowing ability following intubation. He is now in the Cardiac Rehab program, and his doctor expects he will be back to jogging this summer!

Thanks to CMSD’s negotiated leave-of-absence policies, Jan was able to stay with her husband while he was hospitalized and in rehab. She is back to work now, but can use “intermittent leave” as necessary to care for her husband as he continues to recuperate.

Mrs. Durkalski was very grateful to have the District’s negotiated intermittent leave-of-absence policy available for her to use. “John needed me to be with him on the days before and after surgery, until he recovered. I learned more medical information about procedures, precautions, supplies, than I ever thought I would, even after caring for our ill, elderly parents.”

“We feel that God was certainly smiling on us,” she added. “John

retired from the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District last May. Since we run the wooded trails inside the woods, he could have gone down any weekday, while he was running alone, and no one would have found him in time. My heart, and those of our eight kids, would all be broken.”

The CTU salutes Jan Durkalski for her ability to act quickly and calmly in a frightening situation; her actions clearly saved her husband’s life. We wish John a speedy, complete recovery, and many more happy years for the couple and their family.

If this article made you think about what you could or would



do in a similar situation, take the next step now. CPR classes are available at many locations across Northeast Ohio, often for free or nominal cost. If you are interested in learning a possibly life-saving skill, sign up for a class this spring. You never know when it may help save a life, even the life of someone you love.

Paraprofessional News

Para Workshop/Luncheon May 6

Cherylane Jones-Williams, Paraprofessional Chapter Chairperson, encourages all paras to attend the Annual Paraprofessional Workshop and Luncheon, scheduled for Saturday, May 6, 2017, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at East Professional Development Center. Invitations and information will be sent to all para representatives. Anyone interested in attend-

ing should talk to their para rep for information.

Thank You to Para Presenters

Thank you to these six presenters who provided valuable training and information for paraprofessionals at Voluntary Professional Development Sessions throughout the school year:

Terrence T. Wooten: *TDES Trainer*, Domain 1A4 and 2A3; Michael G. Williams: *Connecting with Your Students’*

Families; Myras Holmes: *Ohio Transition from NCLB to ESSA*, and *Understanding the Students Today*; Mychele Taylor: *Make It-Take It Workshop*; Geraldine Hardin Washington: *Leadership*; and Ida Riley-Wells: *Bullying*.

Is Your Permit Expiring?

If your Ohio Educational Aide Permit is expiring on June 30, 2017, you should have received a detailed letter from Lori Ward, Interim Chief Talent Officer, CMSD Human Resources Department. You must have a current, valid permit issued by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) by July 1. All permit renewal applications are completed online, per ODE requirements.

ODE requires online payment by credit card. If you do not have a credit card, contact ODE directly at 877-644-6338 for other payment options. If you have any questions or concerns, send them to licensing@clevelandmetroschools.org. Additional information is also available at the state website, <http://www.ode.state.oh.us>.

You will need an updated FBI check every five years. However, if you reside continuously in Ohio, you will not need to update the BCI background check. Fingerprinting can be done at the CMSD Office of Safety & Security at East Professional Center. Check with their office at 216-838-0420 for hours and cost (money order only, made out to CMSD).

Remember, it is your professional responsibility to keep your permit up to date. Don’t jeopardize your job — take the steps to renew your permit now if it is expiring this year.

Don’t Be Fooled!

‘Pension’ Group Soliciting Money from Ohio’s Public Pension Members

Did you recently get a letter in the mail from a group called Protect Our Pension, Inc.?

The message below is from Robert Stein, STRS Board President and Retired Teacher Member, regarding the Protect Our Pension, Inc., letter and solicitation that was sent to many of Ohio’s public pension members.

The POP5 group [Protect Our Pension, Inc.] that is soliciting memberships by mail has no connection to STRS Ohio or any other pension fund.

This organization, really two guys, promises monitoring and lobbying services that are already covered by the pension systems and professional and retiree groups at the local to national levels. The group has been around for a year or so, and still does not have any staff to deliver on the promises made in brochures or on their web site.

The founder and his accomplice have made a couple mailings seeking members for this organization. He first mailed to OPERS, and claims to have

gotten a couple thousand members. Some asked for refunds and were refused. Now he has mailed to STRS members and retirees. The names and mailing addresses of public employees and retirees (except for uniformed services) are public record, so he can get them easily.

The founding documents on his web site contain a variety of clear governance errors. His constitution doesn’t really differentiate between trustees, representatives, and staff. It allows individuals to wear several hats concurrently, and the positions appear to all be directly or indirectly appointed by the organization — which is still two guys. There is no visible budget but there is apparently money.

There are several ways this can be a scam or political sandbag, and I cannot think of a way for it to be legit or effective.

— **Bob Stein**
STRS Board President



Credit Union Offers More than Basic Banking Services

Did you know that our Credit Union, The Ohio Educational Credit Union, offers a lot more than you may be aware of? In addition to checking and savings accounts and basic banking services, it offers a wide variety of mortgage loan options for both purchase and refinance.

The Mortgage Loan Specialist, Shane Hruba, has helped many CMSD employees realize their dream of home ownership, as well as refinance an existing mortgage to save money, make home improvements, or consolidate debts. Shane has over 15 years of mortgage lending experience, and works hard to ensure that Credit Union members get the best loan to meet their needs at the lowest cost possible.

Understanding the needs and challenges of educational professionals, Shane works to make himself available in the evenings and on weekends, and will take the time to answer questions and be a guiding hand throughout the loan process. Credit Union members can also apply online at www.ohecu.com. The following is a list of available options for which he would be happy to assist members:

- Purchase or Refinance Loans up to \$424,100
- Fixed Rate Mortgages
- Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARM)

- FHA Loans
- USDA Rural Housing Loans
- VA Loans
- HARP — Home Affordable Refinance Program
- First Time Home Buyer Programs with low down payment options
- Investment Property Mortgages

No Closing Cost Options are available on most programs.

Shane Hruba can be reached at the Credit Union office at 216-621-6296 ext. 3030, or 1-800-552-6328 ext. 3030, or by cell phone at 216-262-5164. His email is shruba@ohecu.com, and NMLS License is 890351.

If you're not already a member of the Credit Union, becoming one is easy. It only takes \$5.00 in a Savings account to establish membership and there is no waiting period to apply for a loan. For assistance establishing membership, visit your nearest branch today, or contact Christin Barone, Business Development Representative at 216-621-6296 ext. 3075 to arrange a school visit.

Remember, the Credit Union belongs to you, the members. Take advantage of its services and get the best financial rates available by doing your banking at your Credit Union.

Volunteer, Participate, Donate!

CTU, Custodians' Union Golf Outing Set for May 20

Mark your calendars: **Saturday, May 20, 2017** is the date for the 9th Annual Charity Golf Outing, co-sponsored by the Cleveland Teachers Union Local #279 and Cleveland Custodians Union Local #777. Last year's event raised over \$10,000 for the Tri-C and CCU Scholarship Funds.

This popular event is coordinated by Wendi Kral, CTU Membership Chairperson, Scott Artbauer of CCU, and the CTU Membership Committee, with the help of many volunteers. The location is the Bob-O-Link Golf Course in Avon. Entry fee includes 18 holes of golf with a cart, lunch and dinner, beverages, free giveaways and prizes, and a raffle.

"This event gets bigger every year," said Ms. Kral. "Even if you aren't a golfer, you can still participate. We always need volunteers to help in a variety of ways." Schools or organizations can be sponsors, and donations of prizes are welcome. All monies raised from the golf outing go to scholarships supporting CMSD graduates.

The committee anticipates this year's event will be even bigger. They hope to see all the golfers and volunteers from past years, and some new faces, too. "Remember, there are many ways to support or volunteer for the golf outing," added Ms. Kral.

If you are interested in supporting this event, contact Wendi Kral at 216-861-7676 ext. 251.

CTU Income Tax Service Available

The CTU is offering a limited income tax service for CTU members. Income taxes will be prepared at the CTU office in the Halle Building. Appointments can be made by calling the CTU office at 216-861-7676 between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Andrea Dockery-Murray, Trustee Chairperson, reported that members can still schedule tax appointments with the CTU. There is an additional tax preparer working this year.

Detailed information about the CTU Income Tax Service was sent to all members in January, explaining what they need to do to prepare for the appointment, and all forms, information, and paperwork they need to bring to expedite the appointment. The IRS mandates that all tax preparers e-file all returns. Some returns are more complex, and may require additional time and a nominal fee.

The CTU Trustees — Andrea Dockery-Murray, Mark Baumgartner, Dorothy Fair, Bonnie Hedges, and Jim Wagner — oversee the tax preparation service. They reminded CTU members who use the service that since this is a nominal cost service, the CTU and/or the tax preparers assume no liability for any income taxes owed, interest, and/or penalties.

2016 Union Dues

Michael Kulcsar, CTU Treasurer, provided the total amounts paid for union dues in the 2016 tax year for all CTU members. The following amounts should match any bargaining unit member's year-to-date total under the heading "ctu-cont sal/soc/prt/edcon" on the CMSD's December 31, 2016 payroll voucher, **providing** the member worked from January to June and August through December of 2016.

Full-Time Certified (Teachers)	\$907.80
Contract or Hourly Employees	\$700.23
Part-Time Professional Employees	\$561.48
Instructional Aides	\$712.62
Attendance Specialists	\$651.30
Educational Aides/Instructional Assistants/Community Aides....	\$555.34
Day Care Technicians	\$577.82
Certified Substitute (Teacher)	\$3.28 per day (2015-2016 school year)
	\$3.38 per day (2016-2017 school year)
Classified Substitutes (Para)	\$2.15 per day (2015-2016 school year)
	\$2.25 per day (2016-2017 school year)

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.

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



Ohio Ignores Citizens' Calls to Reduce Testing in ESSA Plan

The hallmark of the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act, formerly No Child Left Behind, was the freedom it granted states to develop their own accountability systems, among other things, explained Innovation Ohio's Stephen Dyer. For the first time in 20 years, states could reduce their reliance on student test scores for evaluations of schools, districts, and teachers.

Since ESSA was passed, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has held town hall-type meetings and conducted an online survey to get input from Ohioans. The results: Ohioans want fewer tests, a stop to changing the testing regime every year, and more state resources for educators. Only 8% of respondents thought that standardized test scores were the most important measure of student success, and about 58% felt that goal-based measures would be a better method.

But anyone following the survey and town hall results were shocked when ODE's draft plan was released, and instead of listening to constitu-

ents, they proposed to keep the same level of testing!

In a letter of protest, Akron-area superintendents wrote: "We are alarmed that the feedback gathered during these stakeholder meetings does not appear to have been included in Ohio's plan." Educators and others want ODE to adopt the minimum amount of testing required under ESSA authorization, which is reading and math testing for 3-8 grades, and science in 5-8. This would reduce the current number of 31 tests to 20, or 21 if the ACT is required.

Mr. Dyer added, "Instead, ODE has reasoned that keeping the same number of tests is keeping in line with the

feedback they received that told them to stop changing tests each year. The last three years, the state has required a different state test each year, thanks to legislative meddling."

The superintendents listed other concerns, including eliminating student testing as part of teacher evaluations, and investing more state resources in Pre-K education and wraparound services. But continuing Ohio's excessive high-stakes testing was the main concern about ODE's ESSA plan.

Kasich Budget's Impact on Schools

Innovation Ohio compared the effects funding levels in Governor John Kasich's proposed 2018-2019 biennial budget would have on school districts.

INNOVATION
OHIO

A NEW KIND OF POLICY THINK TANK.

Innovation Ohio is a pro-public education policy think tank. This unique organization blends progressive public policy analysis and hard-hitting research, and puts this information into the hands of policymakers, the media, and allies to help influence policy decisions and shape public opinion. They push back on extremist statehouse policies that hurt working families and take our state in the wrong direction. And working with local leaders, they work toward progressive policy solutions that improve our economy and strengthen middle-class families.

The table of district-by-district comparisons are available on the website, www.innovationohio.org. It compares funding levels from the 2010-2011 biennium, adjusted for inflation, and Kasich's proposed 2018-2019 levels. For many districts, this amounts to millions of dollars in cuts.

The full spreadsheet on the website also includes demographic comparisons based on income, ability to raise local revenue and district type, as well as funding amounts. CMSD is projected to lose \$169,784,946 in the proposed budget.

CDC Reports High CMSD Student Suicide Attempt Rate

A report issued by the Centers for Disease Control in February said more CMSD high school students are attempting suicide than in any other city in the survey. Two out of every ten CMSD high school students stated that they tried to kill themselves in 2015, according to the CDC. [Note: Being suicidal and having thoughts of suicide (ideation) is different than attempting suicide.]

CMSD has the nation's second-highest poverty rate, and about 4,000 homeless students. Some students' lives contain unimaginable stress levels, related to poverty and violence, and this results in anxiety, depression, and sometimes suicide attempts.

CMSD HumanWare Manager and School Psychologist Bill Stencil said, "It is not surprising, considering the environment in our urban setting, but it's always alarming. High areas of poverty also have the stressors that go along with it, which may lend themselves to contemplating suicide, or actually attempting." There were five Cleveland teen suicides handled by the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner from 2012 through 2016.

These statistics came from the 2015 Youth Risk Behaviors Survey, conducted by the national Centers for Disease Control. The CDC asked students in 19 cities about various behaviors, such as smoking, alcohol and drug use, diet, driving, and sexual activity. The 2015 survey was the first time the agency separated results by school districts, at CMSD's request.

The other cities in the survey, and their reported percentage of teen suicide attempts, were: Cleveland, OH: 20.7%; Duval County, FL: 18.9%; Baltimore, MD: 18.7%; Detroit MI:

16.0%; Houston, TX: 13.0%; Washington DC: 12.7%; Oakland, CA: 11.3%; Philadelphia, PA: 11.0%; Palm Beach County, FL: 10.1%; DeKalb County, GA: 9.9%; San Francisco, CA: 9.8%; Broward County, FL: 9.3%; Orange County, FL: 9.1%; San Diego, CA: 8.9%; Los Angeles, CA: 8.4%; New York City, NY: 8.3%; Boston, MA: 8.1%; Fort Worth, TX: 7.8%; and Miami-Dade County, FL: 6.4%. Cleve-

land was the only Ohio city included in the survey.

land was the only Ohio city included in the survey.

While the data may be "fuzzy and incomplete," according to a *Plain Dealer* analysis of the results, the numbers are still disturbing, presenting an alarming look at how CMSD teens — and teens in other high-poverty cities — are feeling about their lives. About 36% of Cleveland teens reported feeling severely sad or depressed, also the highest in the survey.

Similar studies have shown that people living in high-poverty areas have higher suicide rates than people in wealthier areas, likely related to the stresses of poverty. Other CDC

What Can Schools Do to Help Students in Crisis?

CMSD administrators said the District is doing a lot to mitigate the issue, and is actually setting an example for other districts, citing the HumanWare program which was established about ten years ago.

The District uses a tiered approach to tackling depression, starting with social-emotional learning in the early grades, and depression and suicide awareness education and prevention programs for students in grades 6-9. All ninth-grade students have depression and suicide prevention instruction provided by a community program focused on preventing youth suicide, LifeAct. This year a special curriculum was created for middle schools, and is currently being implemented across the district by principal request.

CMSD's Tier 1 includes the counseling services available to all students. Tier 2 is an intervention for

students struggling with depression or anxiety. Tier 3 is CMSD's rapid response and intervention for students considering suicide, comprised of about 200 first responders, including school psychologists, nurses, and counselors.

What Can Educators Do to Help Students?

Ellen Abraham, CTU Member-at-Large, Senior/Special, and a School Psychologist and Rapid Response/Crisis Services Coordinator stated, "The most important thing to do is to take all threats and comments of suicide seriously. If you think a student may be suicidal, let your administrator know, so District protocol can be followed and help provided to the student."

All crisis situations are to be called into the Rapid Response Desk where the situation is reviewed and responded to as needed. **The Rapid Response Desk number is 216-838-CARE (2273).** You can also reach out to support staff to get students the help they need.

The American Association of Suicidology lists the following possible signs of suicide: increased substance (alcohol or drug) use; hopelessness; feeling trapped; no reason for living; no sense of purpose in life; anxiety; agitation; unable to sleep or sleeping all of the time; withdrawal from friends, family and society; rage, uncontrolled anger, or seeking revenge; dramatic mood changes; acting reckless or engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking.

LEAD POISONING: Time for Cleveland to Fight Back

The lead poisoning crisis in Flint, Michigan, and its relation to the city's water supply are well known, covered extensively by the media. But did you know that there are thousands of U.S. neighborhoods where lead poisoning is worse than in Flint?

A 2016 Reuters examination of lead testing results found almost 3,000 neighborhoods across the United States with poisoning rates far higher than in Flint. While that city's problems are well known, many other neighborhoods with high lead poisoning are getting little attention or funding for corrective efforts.

According to the report, Cleveland has similar lead problems. It stated that in one area — St. Clair-Superior — nearly half of children tested in the last ten years had elevated lead levels. (The Ohio Department of Health refused to provide census tract testing data, so the news agency got the information from the CDC instead.)

U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown has been an advocate for addressing the lead poisoning problem, pressing for federal and state measures to increase testing for children and funding of lead abatement efforts. "Cleveland is my home," he said, "so it's deeply personal every time we see new numbers on lead exposure in our neighborhoods."

Toledo Fights Back, Now What About Cleveland?

One Ohio city is leading the way in combatting lead poisoning and its toxic effects. Toledo lawmakers passed a lead-safe ordinance in August, 2016 that will help prevent lead poisoning in at-risk children by requiring home inspections of rental properties.

Beginning this year, the new law monitors lead levels in rental properties, requires home inspections, and creates an approved list of rental properties. Now in Toledo, about 55,000 units must be inspected and deemed free from lead hazards before they can be legally rented.

A grassroots coalition of concerned citizens, legal rights and environmental groups, and academic institutions fought for the law in response to Toledo's high lead poisoning rate.

Only one Ohio city has a higher rate of lead poisoning than Toledo — Cleveland. Advocates such as the Rental Housing Information Network in Ohio (RHINO) and Cleveland Lead Safe are working to get Cleveland City Council to enact measures to protect Cleveland residents from the devastating, lifelong effects of lead poisoning. Pat Forrai-Gunter, CTU Nurses Chapter Chair, has been working to coordinate efforts with the CTU Executive Board and the groups working for these regulations.

"As educators, we need to be aware of the destructive effects lead poisoning can have on the children we teach," said Ms. Forrai-Gunter. "As an advocate for children, our Union will be working with local groups and lawmakers to do whatever we can to eliminate this danger in the Cleveland community. The safety and well-being of children,

and their successful education and development into productive young adults, are our priorities. Lead poisoning is a clear danger to any child's potential."

Lead Poisoning Symptoms and Causes

The Mayo Clinic states that lead poisoning can be hard to detect, because signs and symptoms usually don't appear until dangerous amounts of lead have accumulated.

into tap water. Lead solder in food cans, banned in the United States, is still used in some countries.

Sometimes lead poisoning can occur from other sources. Lead particles from leaded gasoline or paint settle on soil and can last years. Lead-contaminated soil is still a major problem around highways and in some urban settings. Some soil close to walls of older houses contains lead.

Household dust can contain lead from lead paint chips or from contaminated soil brought in from outside. Glazes found on some ceramics, china, and porcelain may contain lead that can leach into food served or stored in the pottery.

Lead is sometimes found in toys and other products produced abroad. Lead poisoning has been linked to greta and azarcon, traditional Hispanic medicines, as well as some from India, China, and other countries. Tamarind, an ingredient used in some candies made in Mexico, might contain lead. Lead is also found in bullets; time spent at firing ranges can lead to exposure.

People are exposed to lead and can bring it home on their clothes when they work in auto repair, mining, pipe fitting, battery manufacturing, painting, construction, and certain other fields.

Higher Risks of Lead Poisoning

Infants and young children are more likely to be exposed to lead than older children. They might chew paint that flakes off walls and woodwork, and their hands can be contaminated with lead dust. Young children also absorb lead more easily, and it's more harmful for them than it is for adults and older children.

Although the use of lead-based paints has been banned since the 1970s, older homes and buildings often retain remnants of this paint. People renovating an older home are at even higher risk.

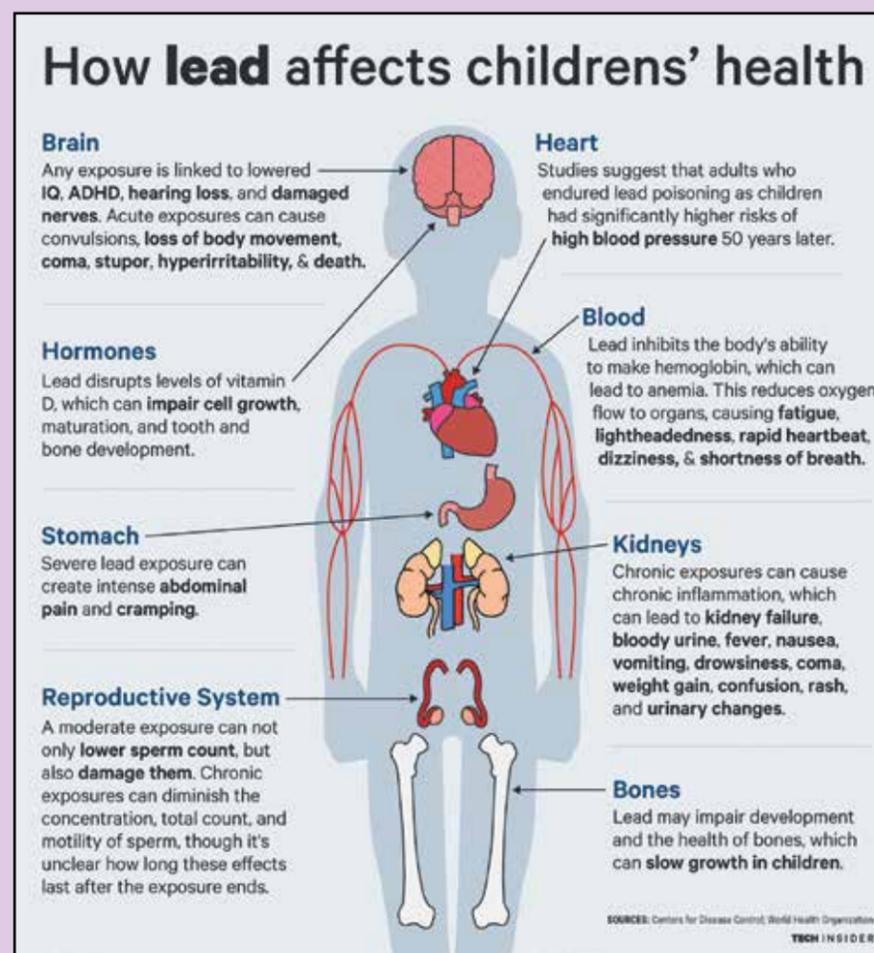
Making stained glass and some jewelry requires the use of lead solder. Refinishing old furniture might put you in contact with layers of lead paint.

Also, developing countries often have less strict rules regarding exposure to lead than developed countries. American families who adopt a child from another country might want to have the child's blood tested for lead poisoning. Immigrant and refugee children also should be tested. Lead can harm an unborn child, so pregnant women or women likely to become pregnant should be especially careful to avoid exposure to lead.

Complications

Exposure to even low levels of lead can cause damage over time, especially in children. The greatest risk is to brain development, where irreversible damage can occur. Higher levels can damage the kidneys and nervous system in both children and adults. Very high lead levels may cause seizures, unconsciousness and death.

(Sources: Reuters, The Mayo Clinic, CDC)



Signs and symptoms of lead poisoning in children include: developmental delay; learning difficulties; irritability; loss of appetite; weight loss; sluggishness and fatigue; hearing loss; seizures; eating things such as paint chips.

Although children are primarily at risk, lead poisoning is also dangerous for adults, and can include high blood pressure, joint and muscle pain, headache, difficulties with memory or concentration, mood disorders, and reproductive problems.

Causes of Lead Poisoning

Lead is a metal that occurs naturally in the earth's crust, but human activity, including mining, burning fossil fuels, and manufacturing, has made it more widespread. Lead was also once used in paint and gasoline, and is still used in batteries, solder, pipes, pottery, roofing materials and some cosmetics.

Lead-based paints for homes, children's toys, and household furniture have been banned in the United States since 1978. But lead-based paint is still on walls and woodwork in many older homes and apartments. Most lead poisoning in children results from eating chips of deteriorating lead-based paint.

Lead pipes, brass plumbing fixtures, and copper pipes soldered with lead can release lead particles



by Pamela Hummer

The “Unity Strike” of 1978 continued into its second month, affecting almost 10,000 employees of all six Cleveland Public Schools unions, and 100,000 students and their families. Schools stayed closed as picketers remained strong, despite over four weeks on strike, signing up for loans and food stamps.

The Cleveland Board of Education’s history of fiscal mismanagement was the topic in editorials and the media. The state began preparations to take over management of CPS as a “financially distressed school district” under H.B. 1285. The District was also under a federal desegregation order, with new school assignments for some students set to begin that fall.

Strikers rejected an offer on October 4 by a 3-2 margin, although about 4,000 of the 10,000 strikers did not vote. Judge Harry A. Hanna, after refusing to issue a back-to-work order three times earlier in the strike, finally ordered union members back to work. He threatened them with fines, as individuals and as unions. At the time, there was no law in Ohio protecting the rights of public employees to strike.

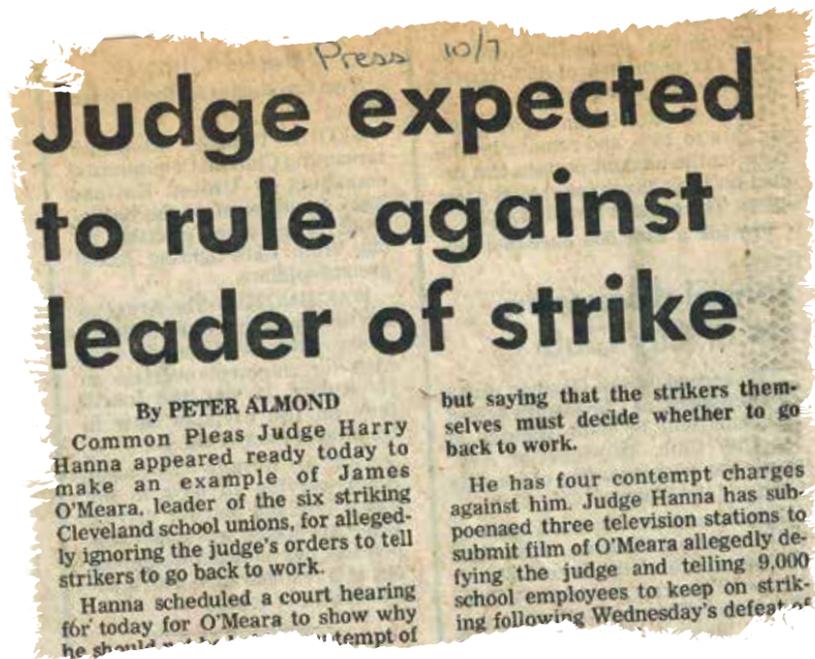
After meeting with the judge, James E. O’Meara, CTU Executive Secretary (comparable to today’s CTU President) and Unity Committee spokesperson, read a statement that said, “The order requires all employees to return to work and the unions to instruct their employees to return to work. The final decision in the action to be taken is up to each employee.” Judge Hanna had expected him to tell picketers to go back to work, and charged Mr.

crossed picket lines on Friday, October 6, including 167 teachers. Due to the low numbers, Superintendent Peter Carlin said schools would not be open on Monday as planned. Ninety-six

cordial because delicate negotiations are more likely to be successful in an atmosphere of patience,” Judge Hanna told Mr. Meara during sentencing. “I am sorry you took my patience for indecision and cordiality for weakness, for I assure you I do not lack the resolve to do my duty as I see it, and my duty is to uphold the law.

“The strike is over. It is past. This is no longer an expression of dissatisfaction with an employer, but a repudiation of the law.”

The contempt hearing lasted about seven hours, and included a trip to TV station WJKW-TV (then channel 8), where they viewed videotapes from all three of Cleveland’s television stations at the time. Judge Hanna had subpoenaed all videotapes, films, and scripts of anything Mr. O’Meara said publicly since the back-to-work order earlier that week.



O’Meara with four counts of contempt of court on October 6, with a hearing set for the next day.



A Few Scabs Cross Lines

The Plain Dealer reported that only 579 out of about 10,000 employees

school buildings were still locked or chained.



Aid to Strikers Cut Off

Union members were notified October 6 that they were no longer eligible for food stamps because the strike had been declared illegal. One union officer said many teachers felt they were being denied assistance due to political pressure by the Board and state officials, in an effort to break the strike.

Beverly Hauser, a teacher at Woodland Hills Elementary School, said, “I think it’s very unfair. A criminal can go to jail and his family will be taken care of.”



CTU Leader Found Guilty of Contempt

At the hearing on October 7, Judge Hanna found Mr. O’Meara guilty of one count of contempt. He was fined \$500, and sentenced to ten days in jail, the maximum allowed by law. The judge delayed the sentence and payment of the fine until October 10, when Mr. O’Meara was to report to a probation officer, who would determine if there were any mitigating circumstances to prevent the jail sentence from being imposed.

Judge Hanna re-read his ruling instructing the union leader to order employees back to work. “I will expect compliance with that order,” he said.

The judge ruled that there was not enough evidence available at the time to make a ruling on the other three counts of contempt, but added that subpoenas would be issued in the coming days.

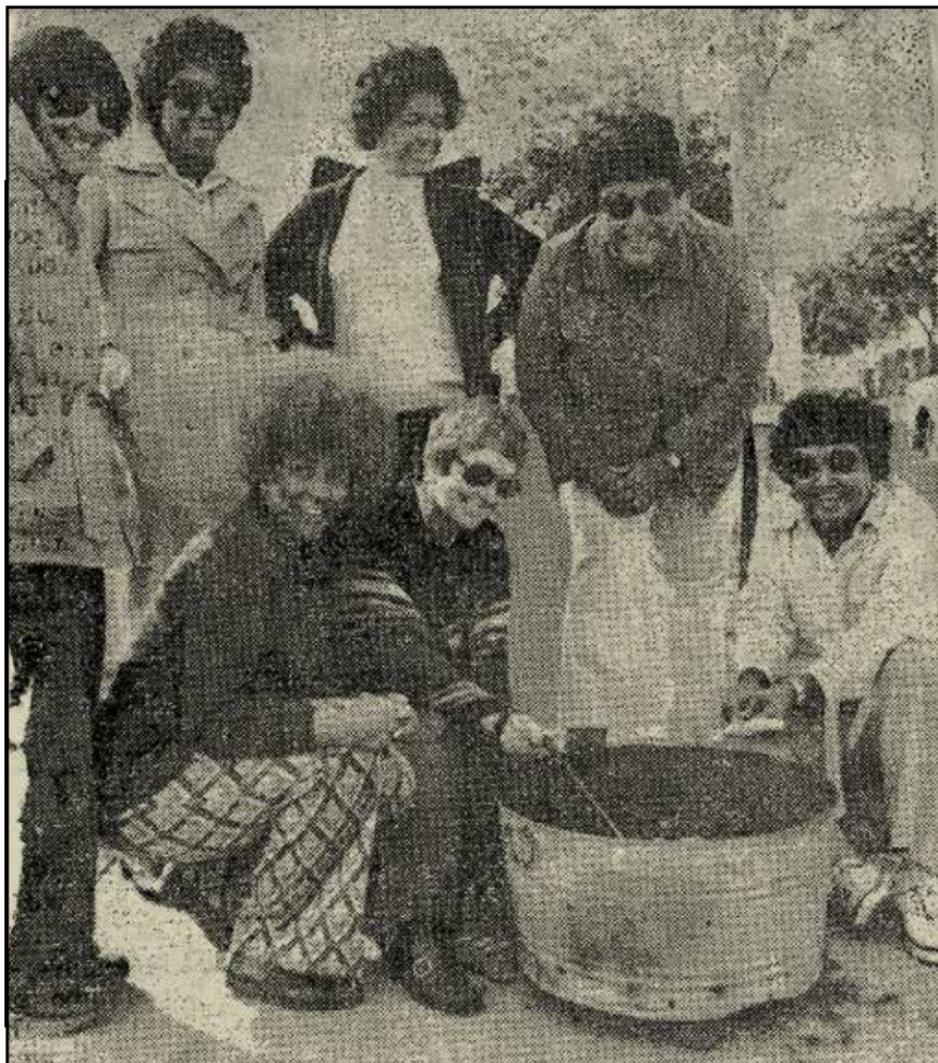
“I have tried to be patient and



Talks Continue

Later the same day, Judge Hanna ordered lawyers for the Board and the Unions’ Unity Committee to return to court on Sunday, October 8, to resume negotiations for a raise for CPS employees. He ordered all negotiators for both sides to report to his courtroom Monday morning, October 9.

CPS employees had not had a negotiated pay raise for two years. They rejected a proposal the previous week that had raises contingent on state officials changing some rules regarding state funds, and on passage of a November levy.

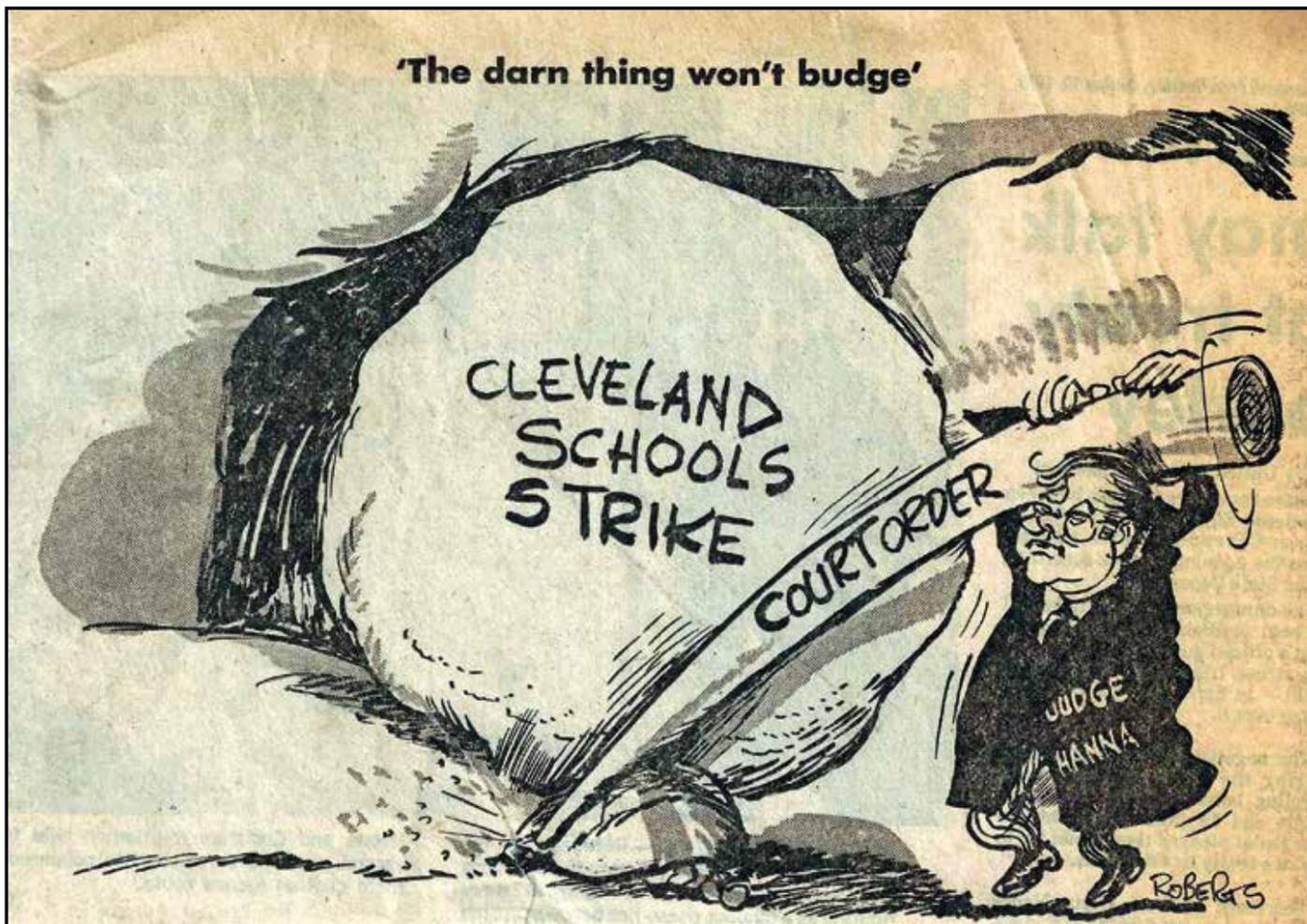


COOKS ON THE PICKET LINE — Striking Cleveland teachers at Adlai Stevenson Elementary School cook their way through picket duty. Kneeling are Janet King (left), Mary Quinlan and Carolyn Wynne. Behind them are Jo Borchers (left), Emma Burdette, Billie Brown and Judy Black. Stevenson is at 3928 JoAnn Drive on the Southeast Side. (Press photo by Tim Culek)



CTU PRESIDENT JAMES O’MEARA (Plain Dealer photo by Diana McNeese)

8 Unity Strike Gets Ugly



and the Board continued, with Judge Hanna mediating. News media reported that the judge looked “grim and angry at times.” No breakthrough was obvious.

The *Cleveland Press* stated: “The next few days are likely to measure just how determined the employees are to continue the strike until they win what they feel is an adequate, guaranteed raise, how determined the School Board is to get employees and pupils back to school, and how determined [Judge] Hanna is to enforce his back-to-work order.”

The Monday morning turnout of employees was supposed to be a harbinger of how soon CPS officials could reasonably expect to reopen schools for students. With only an estimated 5% of employees crossing picket lines and scabbing, the strikers looked very determined.



Employees Express Frustrations

“Evident in teacher comments is a chilling distrust stemming from the way they have been treated for more than a year. And there’s a cool, suspicious mood about the agreement that was thrust before them . . . less than an hour before they were to vote.”

That’s how *Cleveland Press* Education Editor Bud Weidenthal described teachers’ moods on the picket lines. He described schools not having a regular supply of toilet paper, or a full-time custodian, as concerns, but said the grievances and frustrations of union members went much deeper.

The defeated ratification vote was handled badly, and union members were not well informed before the hasty vote. East High’s Leroy Wesby explained, “It’s all ‘if’ money. We can’t go back [to work] on that basis.”

Another teacher on the picket line said, “That toilet paper situation is no joke either. I’ve heard it from teachers everywhere. We went for weeks without it at East. It’s a little thing, but it epitomizes what we have been through. We’re the victims of mismanagement.”

Another picketer added, “We haven’t forgotten those payless paydays in the middle of last year. Staying out now, we hope, will guarantee that there will be no repetition of last year.”

The strike continued.

Next: What Will It Take to Settle the Six-Week Strike?



State Funds in Jeopardy

CBOE President John E. Gallagher, Jr., asked state officials to give CPS an extension on certifying student attendance, done during the first two weeks of October. Attendance figures determined the amount of state funding for school districts. The deadline was October 15, but Mr. Gallagher explained that even if the strike ended that week, parents may keep their children home for the first few days, and that would hurt CPS attendance figures.

About \$30 million in state aid was at stake, and Mr. Gallagher questioned whether there would be enough money to keep the schools open past December if the District lost those state funds.

On a positive note, state officials had agreed on October 6 to consider easing restrictions on the District’s \$20.7 million loan. They would consider allowing state funds to be used for pay raises, but only if a new contract was ratified by employees first.

The union, however, wanted the State Controlling Board to change the restrictions before they voted on a new contract. That issue was a major factor in the defeat of the contract offer the previous week.



Deep Cuts Made to School Programs

The *Cleveland Press* reported, “When the Cleveland school staff strike is settled, returning employees and students will find buildings dirtier and shabbier.”

The paper listed cuts to parochial school services provided by CPS, elimination of the school garden program, and cuts in vocational education. Numerous long-time supervisors who led major programs like radio station WBOE, music and visual arts programs, and guidance were reassigned to classrooms. Attendance office personnel was “slashed.” The Supplementary Education Center and Adult Education Center were already closed earlier. And Desegregation Chief Charles W. Leftwich lost his personal driver and some of his public relations staff.

The cuts included layoffs of 637 non-teaching employees. The restrictions were necessary when Cleveland got a \$20.7 million loan from the state, a financial necessity to keep the District operating until January 1979. But the reductions could only be made in positions and areas not required by state law or educational standards. According to the *Press*, those hit hardest by the layoffs were the trades, which included painters, plumbers, carpenters, and bricklayers. They reported that over 60 laborers who do unskilled maintenance work, and a dozen window washers, got pink slips effective October 9.



Back to School Order Defied – Again

On Monday, October 9, striking union members demonstrated their resolve. Only a few scabs went to work. Most strikers reportedly stayed home or reported for picket duty, even though they were under a court order to return

to work, and their Union leader was facing time in jail.

Negotiations between the Unions



A striker shouts his opinion during a rally outside Lincoln-West High School, 3202 West 30th St. (Plain Dealer photo by Charles Harris)



THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY DAVID J. QUOLKE

Test Scores and Social Justice

As this issue goes to print, CTU members are voting on a new three-year Tentative Agreement after 15 months of negotiations. **A huge thanks goes out to Cleveland voters who approved the school levy renewal last fall.** This allowed CTU and CMSD negotiators to go back and fill in the salary and healthcare numbers that were left as reopeners in the earlier fall TA. If approved, the new contract will bring economic, healthcare, and labor security to CTU and CMSD for the next two-and-a-half years. But as public educators and Union workers, we are entering uncharted territory on a federal level, and continue to face budget and legislative attacks on a state level.

The new President and administration are in place in Washington, though they lead without a majority of voter support, only an electoral college win, and growing indications of Russian interference tainting that victory. Republican majorities in the House and Senate plan possibly devastating overhauls of vital agencies, programs, and social safety nets that protect some of our most vulnerable citizens, including many of our students and their families.

Ohio's state government continues to be one-party super-majority rule

A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members.

— Mahatma Gandhi

by Republicans in all branches, with no checks and balances, thanks to shamelessly gerrymandered redistricting after the 2010 census.

Labor leaders worry about roll-backs to important laws and regulations that protect workers and collective bargaining, which would

further exacerbate America's growing economic inequality and decimate the middle class.

Betsy DeVos, a wealthy supporter of privatizing public schools, with no personal experience whatsoever with America's public school system, has been sworn in as U.S. Secretary of Education in spite of huge protests from parents and educators across the country. But only after the Vice President stepped in with a tie-breaker vote to approve the grossly-unqualified candidate — a move unheard of until now for approval of that Cabinet position.

Congress has replaced No Child Left Behind with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which allows for states' variations in implementation, and reduces the federal testing mandate and its ties to evaluations. But what Ohio does with that opportunity remains to be seen. Ohio parents voiced their opinions in town hall meetings and surveys, and overwhelmingly agreed with educators: they want fewer tests, a halt to changing the testing regime every year, and more resources for educators. Only 8% think standardized test scores are the most important measure of student success, while about 58% feel goal-based measures are a better method.

Will Ohio lawmakers listen to their constituents? As they prepared to finalize Ohio's ESSA plan, including any changes to state-mandated testing, the CDC news about CMSD students' attempted suicide rate was breaking.

Measuring Student Success

What is the measure of student success? As educators, we understand the need for testing and assessment. It guides our instruction, and the work we do with our students. But if it's not tempered with an understanding of issues that adversely affect achievement, issues that are — for the most part — out of the control of students, educators, and schools, then those assessments may not be fair or valid or representational of the student or the teacher.

Many past studies have shown that the best indicator of how well a student will do on those standardized tests is the economic level of that student's zip code. Poverty affects students; CMSD was ranked as having the second highest rate of student poverty in the nation. (A Stanford University study last year showed the Cleveland and Detroit school districts as having the two greatest socioeconomic challenges of big city districts in America.)

About 4,000 CMSD students and



level, every educator can and should continue to improve their craft. I know each teacher wants to do the best job they can for their students.

But looking at the overwhelming social justice issues that most of our students — and the educators working



their families are homeless. Homelessness, with its corresponding issues of attendance, mobility, and simply having supplies and a safe place to study and do homework and even sleep, can affect student testing success.

Minorities, immigrants, non-English speaking students, and students with disabilities face various obstacles that other students do not. Some districts have few students in these subgroups. CMSD has high numbers of all these subgroups of students.

CMSD announced in February that eight of the 13 original Investment Schools, despite re-staffing and bringing in so-called “experts” and new programs, still need more “intensive” work, but none will be closed. Thankfully, these schools will continue to receive wrap-around social service support from partnerships with United Way of Greater Cleveland and other local non-profits, and the existing staff we be on the design teams for each school.

Let's be clear — I believe all students can learn and succeed. I'm a special education teacher, and I know every child wants to learn and be successful. And no matter their skill

with them — deal with every day is so-boring. Legislators and policy makers at all levels must face these issues and acknowledge that they affect students' success, then implement policies and programs to address them. You cannot test away these issues. **I have always said that our educators are the professional advocates for children. As a union, we cannot separate our educational issues from the economic issues or the social justice issues we and our kids face.**

The current political climate in America reminds me of the Mahatma Ghandi quote: “A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members.” Union educators will need to be a voice for students, for their families, for public education, and for working people, in the months ahead. We will need to fight for laws and policies that help, not hurt.

Test scores have a place in education, but our students and their teachers are much more than test scores. That's a lesson we may need to teach.

In union,
David

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