

PRESIDENTIAL UPDATE

CLEVELAND TEACHERS UNION #279

DAVID J. QUOLKE, PRESIDENT

A Message from the President

On behalf of the Cleveland Teachers Union I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year and hope each of you had time to rest and relax over the break. It is hard to believe that we are nearly half way through another school year. Clearly, the past 12 months proved to be the most challenging months we have ever faced as a union.

Nationally, we watched Congress' inability to pass President Obama's Jobs Bill; statewide we watched the Governor and the Ohio General Assembly attack unions, working families, and teachers (SB 5, HB 153...the budget bill, or HB 136...another voucher bill); and on a local level, we saw a school board transform a 2 year, \$23 million surplus, in May into a \$13 million deficit in August.

The year 2011 ended with the members of the Cleveland Teachers Union voting to approve the Federal Mediator's recommendation, making that recommendation our contract for the rest of this school year. Our Yes vote saved several programs that were crucial to our students; including pre-school, high school transportation, student activities, and sports. For the second year in a row our members passed a contract that illustrated their concern for the welfare of the student's of CMSD.

I believe that this was a fair contract. I have heard from many members sharing their anger and frustration. But I have also heard from members who were thrilled to not lose their students, believed the contract was fair, and were relieved to not have to think of a fact finders report or the possibility of a strike. I have also received an outpouring of thank yous from parents whose children would have been affected by the cuts, students who would have lost opportunities for scholarships, students who have said that they would no longer be able to make the several mile trek to their high school without transportation. I have heard from community leaders and elected officials. The message from all is clear and consistent: Thank you teachers and paraprofessionals. Thank you nurses, psychologists, speech language pathologists, therapists, and sign language interpreters. Thank you all.

Our new year will undoubtedly present many challenges. Local revenues continue to decline, the anti-public education Ohio General Assembly continues to be in power, and Washington DC has turned into bipartisan, political gridlock with the Republican-led House opposing almost every initiative around jobs creation. We can all wish that there was no economic crisis and that the district had an influx of revenue. But wishing can not make it happen and doesn't make it go away.

In this New Year we must remember the solidarity we showed when we defeated Issue 2 and then approved a contract to save those things that improve the lives of our students.

In Union,

David

DIANE RAVITCH VISITS CLEVELAND

The Cleveland Teachers Union is proud to sponsor a conversation with Diane Ravitch, the author of "The Death and Life of the Great American School System—How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education". She is a Professor of Education, a historian of education, and has written extensively on the subject of public education. On Thursday, February 2 Ms. Ravitch will speak to members of the Cleveland Teachers Union. This conversation will be at Pilgrim United Church of Christ at 6PM. Please see the CTU website www.ctu-279.org for more details.

Q-Tips

- **Don't forget to take all necessary steps to renew your license. If your license expires in 2012, make sure you renew ASAP. Once you receive your new license, make sure that you do a new IPDP. Everyone must have an approved IPDP on file.**
- **Continuing Contract Applications are due to Human Resources by 4:30PM on March 1. Please see the CTU website, CMSD website, or your school secretary for a list of basic requirements (to see if you are eligible) and an application.**
- **Follow us on the Cleveland Teachers Union FaceBook page .**
- **Make it a habit to check your CMSD email and the CTU website (www.ctu-279.org) regularly for important updates. Don't be caught out of the loop.**

CHANGES TO CBA

As a result of the approval of the Federal Mediator's Recommendation, a few changes will be implemented over the next month that will have an impact on all members and all buildings. Increased healthcare rates were reflected in the January 6 paycheck. We all will be compensated for 3 1/2 less days. This is calculated at your daily rate and will be divided equally among the 15 remaining pay periods beginning on January 20. The Professional Day that is already on the school calendar for February 17 (the Friday of President's weekend) will NOT be a work day. This will make a 4 day weekend. The last Thursday of school (this year June 7) has been eliminated. The final day for CTU members will be June 6.

Voluntary Professional Days are still in effect. Each member is eligible to earn 3 VP Days per year. The first day was Friday, August 19 - the other 2 days can be earned over the course of the school year. If you attended the voluntary day in August and earn your 2 during the school year, that means that the loss of paid days in the school year is only one half of a day.

Effective at the end of the first semester, the following positions will be eliminated: Subject Area Specialists, ESP Liaisons, Special Education Liaisons, Department Chair/Heads, WAVE, and Team Leaders. Principals will be asked to notify members, in person, that these assignments are ending. After January 20, those members that are currently serving in these roles, will stop doing all work that is associated with these positions. The agreement calls for these positions to be eliminated for the remainder of this school year and for next year also. However, just like with the other differentials, the Board does have the ability/right to reinstate a differential if funding does become available. Unfortunately, responsibility for many of these duties that still need to be completed will fall on the principal. There is still work that needs to be done (which is why these positions exist), however, that work will now have to fall to the administration.

It is important to note that there will still be Core Team Meetings each week in K-8 schools. Although the Team Leader was eliminated, the time designated by our contract was not eliminated. Core Teams still have important information to discuss with one another, however, the additional duties that the Core Team Leader took on (as outlined on pg. 123 of the CBA) will no longer be performed by that member of the team and if necessary will need to be fulfilled by an administrator.

As a result of this approved agreement, it is the intention of the District to re-instate all of the differentials that were eliminated in October. These include such things as spring sports, student activities, and testing coordinators. Principals will be receiving an email and will be asked to help notify members that their position has been reinstated.

VISION CARE

In May, United Healthcare bought out and then quickly closed the Spectara locations in Ohio. Members were mailed new booklets and actually given more choices of locations under the new company. We are still under contract—so there are absolutely NO CHANGES TO THE TYPE AND LEVEL OF COVERAGE.

Some of the new doctors in this United Healthcare network are a little overwhelmed by what our plan covers and are trying to charge higher amounts for some types of glasses and frames. If you find yourself at an approved vision location that tries to charge an amount that is not in line with what is on page 255 of the CBA, please call Michael Kulcsar at 861-7676 ext. 224.

If you need a new booklet of approved United Healthcare vision locations, please email Michael at mkulcsar@ctu279.org. Include your name and school. He will send you a booklet via school mail.

NEGOTIATIONS 2012

On January 9, the CTU was notified that CMSD did officially notify SERB of their intention to enter into contract negotiations for the 2012-2013 school year. This re-opener is for wages. This was required to be done by January 15. Dates to actually begin the next round of negotiations have not been set.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

January 30 - Grades due at 7:30 am (unless principal and Chapter Chair agree on an earlier day and time).

February 8 - Early Release Day

February 17 - No school for students. No school for CTU members

February 20 - No school. Presidents' Day

February 27 - Interims due at 7:30 am (unless principal and Chapter Chair agree on an earlier day and time).

March 6 - Election Primary

March 7 - Early Release Day

March 12 - March 25 OGT grades 10-12

"All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.