



Cleveland Teachers Union

News & Notes

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FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS

Michael Kulcsar is a huge fan of Flexible Spending Accounts and really wants everyone to think about signing up for one during open enrollment if you anticipate out-of-pocket expenses not covered by health insurance. A Flexible Spending Account is an IRS pre-tax dollar benefit covering healthcare as well as child and dependent care.

Per the CBA, there are two types of Flexible Spending Accounts. One is for un-reimbursed medical, drug, dental, or vision expenses that occur over the calendar year. In general, if you anticipate out-of-pocket expenses not covered by health care (braces, Lasik surgery, deductibles, copays) you can enroll and have pre-tax payroll deduction to cover expenses. Please see David's Q Corner on the CTU website for more detailed information on the FSA

PARAPROFESSIONAL SUBSTITUTES

We know that it is difficult getting substitutes when paraprofessionals are sick or utilizing SPL. Cherylane Jones-Williams has taken 2 different sub lists individually called every person listed as a para substitute. Many of the substitutes listed as available either do not have a good phone number or are not with the district anymore. There are a few para substitutes that are in the district, but they are already in long term positions. Cherylane has filed two grievances on behalf of all paraprofessionals to move getting more paraprofessional substitutes hired ASAP.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

This is open enrollment month. Our Open Enrollment period this year will be from Monday, November 3 – Tuesday, December 2 (so that the enrollment will not begin and end on a weekend). Pin numbers were emailed to each member on October 31. If you are currently enrolled in the medical, drug, vision, or life insurance plans are satisfied with your benefit coverage you DO NOT need to take any action. However, the CTU, strongly recommends that you go online to verify what is listed in the computer for you is accurate and to review premiums. You can access this through the

CMSD website. It is on the left under Happening Now. As of this writing (on Tuesday) you were not able to access through the link. The link has not worked, worked, and now appears to not work. District is aware of it. Seems that it works always on a district computer when they test it out. Should be up and running again anytime now. Hopefully it is already rectified. There are no changes to the benefit plans since the CBA was ratified in 2013. Kaiser is transitioning to HealthSpan, so anywhere that you see HealthSpan it is the former Kaiser.

INTERIM REPORT DISTRIBUTION

Michelle RR wants to make sure everyone has scheduled their 2 hour interim report pick-up for next week. From the Sept 3 News & Notes: During the week of November 17 each school will schedule a 2 hour Parent Teacher Conference time after school. The Principal and Chair need to plan the date for this additional 2 hour conference during the week of November 17. This is during a week that Interim Progress Reports are to be distributed. There will be 3 sessions of 2 hour after school conferences this year to equal the Wednesday off before Thanksgiving. While in the past it was 2 sessions of 3 hours each - there is no language in the CBA that ensures that it is that way, so this is a change this year to 3 sessions of 2 hours each. The last two sessions (that equal the Wednesday before Thanksgiving) will be on February 12 and April 29. On these 2 days, students will be released 2 hours early plus the additional 2 hours will create a 4 hour window for parent teacher conferences. These dates are both during the week that Interim Progress Reports are to be distributed.

SALARY & BENEFITS COMMITTEE

Salary and Benefits event will be on Tuesday, November 18 from 3:30-6:00 at BBB. The focus will be hearing from HealthSpan and Medical Mutual. There will also be financial vendors, educator friendly vendors, hand massages, and door prizes every half an hour. Please RSVP to Cindy Antonio (cantonio@ctu279.org) via e-mail. In January for CTU members who have less than 5 years of experience there will be a special financial information meeting for you about 403b and understanding your investment opportunities. In

February there will be a follow-up for all for the CTU members who are planning on retiring at the end of this school year.

TDES

Jillian Ahrens wants everyone to be reminded that if a member wants to appeal a TDES event (any event after the first unannounced walk-through) the first step is NOT a grievance. The first step is to actually appeal to your Academic Superintendent. CBA states: "...a teacher may request the intervention and/or support of the Academic Superintendent within 10 working days. The Academic Superintendent will review the evidence...The Academic Superintendent shall submit his/her response and the outcome of the appeal within ten (10) working days."

After that appeal a member does have the right to appeal the Academic Superintendent's response to the TDES Steering Committee co-chairs within ten (10) working days.

Jillian also wants to make sure that teachers add evidence in the portal if needed. Teachers may add additional evidence to create a richer and fuller record of the lesson.

All formal announced evaluations are to be completed by December 12.

THANK YOU

David Quolke, Kurt Richards, and Elisa Kazek want to send a special thank you to all of the CTU members that volunteered their time during this election season. CTU by far lead all of labor in the state of Ohio in the number of people that we had making phone calls and knocking on doors for pro-education candidates. While the outcome for our state-wide candidates was not as we hoped, Issue 4 did pass and we really worked hard to educate voters about Issue 4 and our candidates. Your work is appreciated by the CTU and especially David, Kurt, and Elisa. It was also noticed by many others across the state. Thank you volunteers!! Bring on 2016!

CONVERSATION WITH QUOLKE

President David Quolke and Common Good Ohio are hosting their first Conversation with Quolke on Saturday, November 19. All parents, guardians, educators, and community members are invited to join this discussion. Tracy Radich will also discuss what to expect from the new PARCC and Graduation

assessments all students must take and how we can help our children prepare for these high stakes tests.

The conversation will be held at Phillippi Baptist Church 11703 Corlett Avenue. Across from John Adams (on northeast side) from 10:00AM—Noon.

EARLY SEPARATION NOTICE

If you are a teacher, paraprofessional, or related service provider and are planning to retire this school year, don't forget to turn in your notice of separation by December 1, so that you do not have to go through TDES evaluation, write SLOs, etc.