

# ACTION

Affiliated with NEA and KEA

J E F F E R S O N   C O U N T Y   T E A C H E R S   A S S O C I A T I O N

1941 Bishop Lane, Louisville, KY 40218 ♦ 454-3400 ♦ 452-2794 (fax) ♦ www.jcta.org ♦ October 13, 2010

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

**All meetings are at the JCTA office unless otherwise specified.**

**WED, OCT. 13:**

⇒Poll Workers Training; 4:30-6:30 p.m.  
Approved Member Participants Only

**WED, OCT. 20:**

⇒Poll Workers Training; 4:30-6:30 p.m.  
Approved Member Participants Only

**THURS, OCT. 21:**

⇒Political Action Training; 4:30-7:30 p.m.

**WED, OCT. 27:**

⇒Poll Workers Training; 4:30-6:30 p.m.  
Approved Member Participants Only

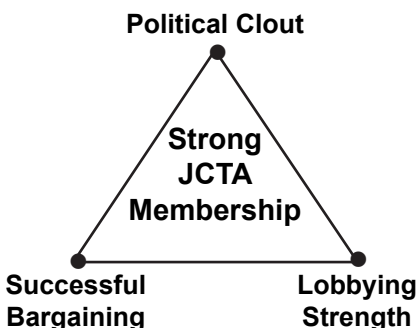
**PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCE**

A reminder that parent teacher conferences will be held this evening and tomorrow evening.

This is a voluntary work “day” for teachers. If you choose to work these evenings, please be aware that you **must** work both nights to receive your pay. Remember! The total hours of both evenings should not exceed the length of a normal work day.

JCTA is currently negotiating with the district to provide make-up times for those who fall unexpectedly ill on one of these two days, but this is NOT in affect at this time, so be sure to attend both nights to receive your pay. If you have any questions, contact your UniServ Director at the JCTA office (454-3400).

**WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT**



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I found it very troubling when I perused the Readers' Forum section of the Courier-Journal last Monday morning and discovered letters written by former members of the Association, one a former President. Both attacked the current President of JCTA and therefore the Association, and it was all because of endorsements of candidates with which they didn't agree. Who knew that politics could turn things so personal and ugly?

In my early tenure as a staff person at JCTA, I worked with Laura Kirchner in her final years as President of the Association. I do believe that during that time she always had the best interests of JCTA and its members at heart; however, I have worked with JCTA President Brent McKim a lot longer, and I know that much like Laura, he always advocates from the standpoint of what would be best for public education, its teachers and its students. That's why Laura's claims and assumptions bother me. That and I have a strong hunch from where, or rather from whom, her assertions stem.

First and foremost, there is an implication that \$200,000 of “union” money, which in most circles means “union dues” are being spent. JCTA does not spend union dues on partisan political races. Our funding for such is derived from our Political Action Committee towards which members voluntarily contribute funds. Laura knows this and to call that into question or suggest otherwise is misleading. While I do respect the fact that Laura has a “unique insight” into the politics that JCTA involves itself, Laura hasn't lobbied the current legislature nor has she dealt one-on-one with any of the current School Board members on your behalf in recent years. Laura only knows what is going on in the organization from what she hears. To say that any certain legislator or School Board member should have earned a rating as a “friendly incumbent” indicates a first-hand knowledge of our current working relationships with legislators and/or School Board members – a first-hand knowledge that she does not have. While I would love to dive into all the reasons that our Political Action Committee made certain endorsements in certain partisan and non-partisan races, I simply cannot because of the guidelines set out for our newsletter, which prohibit us from advocating for or against specific candidates for office. However, I spoke personally with Laura the week prior to her letter in the Courier-Journal and when she asked about our endorsements, I shared with her the decisions and discussions that our Political Action Committee took in deciding the endorsements, which brings me to my next point.

Brent McKim did NOT make ANY of the endorsements of political candidates – partisan or non-partisan. JCTA's Political Action Committee made those endorsements. The President doesn't even have a vote on the committee! All he can do is answer their questions with regard to how a candidate – incumbent or otherwise – has worked with JCTA. Again, for Laura to imply that Brent somehow made all the decisions is disingenuous. For someone who was with JCTA for so long and held the highest office, it baffles me that she would imply something so outlandish as she too was a part of the process at one time.

Laura also alludes to the notion that all of these decisions have been made (by Brent) to forward some personal agenda and the Superintendent's agenda. This is again a tale of tall proportions. First, the assumption of some personal agenda is very vague – you'll notice that no details were given because there aren't any. It's a red herring just thrown into the mix in the hopes of causing suspicion. And as for the Superintendent's agenda, if Brent were really concerned about placing the concerns of Dr. Berman above members, then why do we currently have a member survey connected to our JCTA website that provides members an outlet to give us the thumbs up or down on the Superintendent's impending contract renewal. We specifically asked for member guidance on this issue because whoever leads JCPS is a big deal – and Brent and I wanted to know what members were thinking. If Brent didn't care or just planned to do whatever he wanted, there would be no member survey.

Another former teacher wrote a letter as well, also attacking Brent and again placing the burden of the endorsements on his shoulders. She wanted to know why Brent “recruited” a certain candidate, why Brent did not endorse an incumbent that she felt was supportive of teachers, why Brent was “squandering money” to defeat the incumbent, and why Brent was placing the Superintendent's agenda above the needs of JCPS student and teachers. I'm pretty sure that Brent had no idea he was this powerful. While many of these questions have been answered above, and some we just can't answer via the newsletter as I explained, there are a few things that need to be addressed. First, there has been a long history of the President and Executive Director seeking out candidates for office, especially School Board. In fact, the incumbent candidate whom both Laura and the other teacher obviously support was recruited by Brent and my predecessor. The candidate whom the JCTA Political Action Committee endorsed was not recruited, but rather volunteered himself to the cause. Both Laura and this other teacher seem to take an attitude of “how dare you seek someone to run;” however, who are we to tell someone not to run? It cuts both ways. And as for “squandering money,” again, the JCTA Political Action Committee makes the decisions on just how much is spent and to whom.

*Continued on back page*

So where is this attack really coming from? In my opinion, and I am sad to say, it most likely rests at the feet of the former JCTA Executive Director Steve Neal. Steve and Brent had a falling out several weeks ago after Steve tried unsuccessfully to insist on being included in the JCTA Political Action Committee's meeting. He chose to be quoted in a blog making claims about Brent, then turned around and fired off a lengthy email to the JCTA Board of Directors that pretty much blasted Brent and accused him of the same things that were lauded in the Courier-Journal in last week's letters. If that wasn't bad enough, Steve actually sent that particular piece to others outside the Association as well, including the Courier-Journal. Mind you, Steve could have gone to Brent about whatever his concerns were and agreed to disagree, but Steve choose the very public way of letting Brent, whom he worked with for 8 years as President, know that he was unhappy.

Steve claims that his actions are to right the wrongs and to "help" the Association. Well, all I can see is how he has attempted to weaken our Association, and again, all because he didn't agree with the candidates that the JCTA Political Action Committee endorsed. Like Laura, he has a unique insight into the politics that JCTA involves itself, but he no longer lobbies for the Association nor does he work with the School Board members in the capacity that Brent and I do. While he clearly maintains the relationships he has built over the years, that is entirely different than dealing with the day in and day out workings of the Association and trying to decide what or who will best serve it.

I would have hoped that this "family squabble" could have stayed within the family, but that just wasn't to be. I did not write this to cause any friction, although I'm sure it will. I did not write this to call Laura or Steve bad people, because they are not. I wrote this because I could no longer remain silent while my President, the President of JCTA, is continually bashed with half-truths, out-right falsehoods, and purposeful misdirection. I have no problem with Laura or Steve, or anyone for that matter taking a different view or supporting a different candidate, but there's a wrong way and a right way to do it. Debate the issues. Talk about why you like a candidate. Don't bash the President and the union you helped to build and seek its demise and disruption over an election. And definitely don't claim to be doing it for the good of the Association, because it's not and it actually hurts the organization. Anyone with the years of union experience that Steve and Laura have should be able to recognize the difference.

Laura wrote that she was shocked, frustrated, angered and greatly disappointed in the beginning of her letter. After all of this nonsense, I know exactly how she feels.

Thanks for all you do, and thanks for supporting JCTA.



## Political Action Training

JCTA will hold a training session on political action for any interested member on Thursday, October 21 at the JCTA office from 4:30-7:30 p.m. The training will cover how to lobby, how to mobilize people and the importance of electing pro-education candidates. Dinner will be provided.

Reservations are limited to the first 30 members who sign up. Contact Associate staff Darlene Harless ([darlene.harless@jcta.org](mailto:darlene.harless@jcta.org) or 454-3400) to register.

If you have any questions about the training, contact UniServ Director Bill Allison ([bill.allison@jcta.org](mailto:bill.allison@jcta.org) or 454-3400).

## KY Employee's Health Plan Open Enrollment

The Kentucky Employee's Health Plan (KEHP) annual open enrollment period began October 12 and will continue through October 24, 2010.

During Open Enrollment, employees may add, change, or cancel their insurance plans. **Enrollment for health insurance is mandatory**, which means that all employees must either choose a new health plan or waive coverage. **FAILURE TO RE-ENROLL WILL RESULT IN LOSS OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE BEGINNING ON SAT., JAN. 1, 2011.**

All active planholders will be required to use the "KEHP Benefits Analyzer" prior to completing enrollment. The Benefits Analyzer is a computerized program that takes into account the last 18 months of claims information (if available) and other information provided by the planholder to recommend a plan that best suit's the individual's needs. The recommendation made by the Benefits Analyzer is not binding, and after completing the Analyzer process, participants may choose any plan they wish.

## Nominations for KEA Delegate Assembly Now Being Accepted

The KEA Delegate Assembly will be held Wednesday, April 6 through Friday, April 8, 2010 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel here in Louisville. The deadline for filing nominations is Wednesday, October 20 at 5:00 p.m. Candidates may also submit a resume (50 word limit), which will be distributed to all members. The deadline for resume submissions is also on Wednesday, October 20 at 5:00 p.m. Resumes will be sent to buildings and will be viewable in the members-only section of our website on October 28. **There will be no paper ballots for this year's elections.** Electronic voting will begin at 6:00 a.m. on Friday, October 29, 2010 and end on Friday, November 5, 2010 at 5:00 p.m. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact UniServ Director Sandy Harris ([sandy.harris@jcta.org](mailto:sandy.harris@jcta.org)) at the JCTA office. Instructions for electronic voting will be sent in the October 20 *ACTION* and will be viewable on our website ([www.jcta.org](http://www.jcta.org)) beginning October 20, 2010.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Soc. Sec.# \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate for \_\_\_\_\_ KEA Ethnic Minority Delegate \_\_\_\_\_ At-Large Delegate

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_

Signature for Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

*Applications and resumes MUST be received in the JCTA office by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 20, 2010.*

**NO EXCEPTIONS!**