

ACTION

Affiliated with NEA and KEA

JEFFERSON COUNTY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

1941 Bishop Lane, Louisville, KY 40218 ♦ 454-3400 ♦ 452-2794 (fax) ♦ www.jcta.org ♦ October 20, 2010

WHAT'S HAPPENING

All meetings are at the JCTA office unless otherwise specified.

WED, OCT. 20:

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

WED, OCT. 27:

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

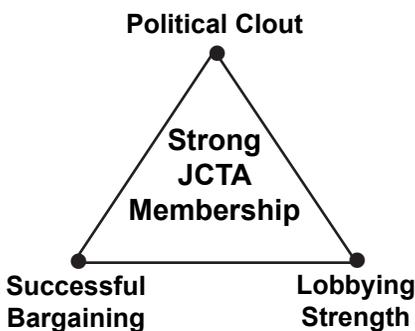
THURS, NOV. 4:

⇒ New PR Training; 4:30-6:30 p.m.

CONGRATS MR. RON CHEEKS!

Congratulations to Mr. Ron Cheeks, teacher member at Olmstead Academy North, who was the first recipient of the JCTA Teacher Appreciation award. Mr. Cheeks was nominated for his outstanding effort and tireless devotion to the classroom. He is the team leader of the 8th grade team that won the state award for best 8th grade team. He received \$500 to use in his classroom. His teammates, also members of JCTA, were each awarded \$100 to use in their classrooms and they are: Ryan Rodosky, Jeff Phelps, Danielle Watts, Shannon Brutscher, Jennifer Hornback, and Cathleen Jewell. Congratulations to all!

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT



NEW PR TRAINING

JCTA will have a New PR Training on Thursday, November 4 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. If you are a new JCTA Building Representative (PR) for your school and haven't attended a New PR Training, this is a great opportunity to learn about JCTA and the roles of a PR. To register, please email Associate Darlene Harless (Darlene.harless@jcta.org). For questions please contact UniServ Director Michelle Yeager (michelle.yeager@jcta.org).

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Just last week, I received the first report of JCTA's membership for this school year. As of this fall, we have 5,728 members. As I thought about the fact that we have well over 5,700 members out of a possible of about 6,000 full-time active teachers, I was struck by the significance of this. This was personally meaningful to me because, when I became JCTA President, following Laura Kirchner, our membership was at an all-time high of about 4,600 members, out of about the same 6,000 possible, so I am very proud of the fact that, by working together, we have all been able to grow JCTA's membership by about 1,100 members during my time as JCTA President. So I just wanted to stop and thank everyone who contributed to this amazing membership growth and for the trust and mutual support it reflects.

The fact that our membership is over 5,700 struck me as even more remarkable when I stopped to think about the fact that just last year JCTA was sued by the anti-union Right-to-Work Legal Foundation. Using a very proactive and effective legal strategy, we were able to have the Right-to-Work lawsuit thrown out of court. However, in order to do this part of our legal strategy included offering a full 45-day drop period for all members, in which we sent every member a drop form and offered them the opportunity to withdraw from JCTA. Plus, not to miss the opportunity to try to erode our membership, the so-called "professional educators" and "Christian educators" mailed three more copies of our drop form to all our members during the drop period, encouraging them to drop. Yet, after all this, our membership stands right back at over 5,700, where it was one year ago before all these attacks. What a statement about the support we have been able to build together for JCTA!

This is even more remarkable, when you consider that it was just a little over a year ago that DeeAnn Flaherty and Erin Houston began as the brand new Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director at JCTA and immediately faced this challenge. In fact, during all the time I have been involved with JCTA, I have never seen a year with as many unprecedented challenges as last year, and as your released time president, I can tell you there is no one I would have rather had by my side than our current Exec and Deputy Exec, DeeAnn and Erin. We made a remarkable team, and working with our JCTA Board of Directors, the JCTA Rep Council, and our JCTA staff, we faced all these challenges and were able to accomplish absolutely remarkable results for our members. Let me share just a few of these challenges and accomplishments with you.

In addition to clobbering the Right-to-Work Foundation, and starting this school year with over 5,700 members we also faced all the bad policies being pushed in the federal Race to the Top (RTTT) grant initiative, including merit pay, charter schools, evaluation based on test scores, weakening tenure and tying it to test scores, and much more. When the state first rolled out its RTTT application, it was full of all these bad ideas, but DeeAnn, Erin, and I engaged and made it clear that JCTA would NOT sign off on any application that included these provisions. It would not be right to discuss this topic without giving credit and thanks to Dr. Berman for standing with JCTA on these issues. He helped us fight every one of these bad provisions. And unfortunately, we have to express our disappointment that School Board chair Debbie Wesslund did not. By standing firm and not backing down, we were able to get essentially all the bad proposals removed from the state's RTTT grant application.

Then there was House Bill 176, the law passed by our legislature in January to try to improve Kentucky's chances of getting RTTT funds. Through effective lobbying (again with support from Superintendent Berman but not from Board Chair Wesslund), we were able to keep charter schools out of HB 176 - by just ONE vote! So we were able to keep Kentucky as one of only 10 states remaining without charter schools. We were also able to add language to House Bill 176 requiring Education Management Organizations to follow our contract. So if a superintendent comes to JCPS and tries to do an end-run on our contract by using EMO's, our members will be protected. (Please note that HB 176 still has MAJOR flaws and JCTA and JCPS plan to jointly introduce a bill to make significant changes to the law in the upcoming legislative session.)

Closer to home, we were able extend our current contract with all its protections for an additional three years. As you may recall, the Superintendent strongly opposed anything beyond a one-year extension, but we took him on and out-manuevered him by putting together a solid block of School Board members who supported our 3-year extension in the executive sessions the Board held on the topic. We were disappointed that Chair Wesslund did not support JCTA on the extension when it mattered in closed session, only when it became clear that we had the votes to pass the extension did she vote yes in public.

Similarly, JCTA took on the Superintendent and won on the issue of salary reopeners each year. We wanted to reopen our salaries each year. Dr. Berman asked the school board to just go with the state minimum increase each year. Again, the same four School Board members stuck with us in executive session, and again we were disappointed with Chair Wesslund, who said she would support the superintendent over us. This is particularly disappointing after so many of our members stood out in the rain to support her in her last election.

Continued on back page

As a result of this reopener language, the JCTA leadership was able to negotiate a 1% pay raise, which made Jefferson County one of only two districts in Kentucky to obtain a pay raise this year, according to KEA. In fact, a number of districts lost PD days and/or paid holidays and saw their salaries actually go down!

Over the past year, DeeAnn, Erin, and I have also taken several steps to involve and empower our JCTA Board and Rep Council. For the first time, in all of our JCTA trainings, we have paired up JCTA leaders with our JCTA staff as presenters. The JCTA Board and members of the Rep Council are working on developing "job descriptions" for their bodies. JCTA Board members now join DeeAnn and I when we have dinner meetings with the Superintendent. We have blazed new ground in NEA by being one of ten locals in the country to have a cadre of members trained to deliver the NEA Diversity Training. And our "I teach" publicity campaign has won national awards and has put a positive face on our members and the work they do.

JCTA leadership has come to be recognized as an important voice in educational policy and practice issues. For example, Kentucky Commissioner of Education Terry Holliday appointed DeeAnn and me to the Effective Teachers Task Force and to the coalition designing a state-wide teacher working condition survey. Also Governor Beshear appointed JCTA Board member Karen Cash and me to his Transforming Education in Kentucky Task Force.

As DeeAnn and I get out into buildings, we understand, like every district in the country, testing seems to be taking over everyday instruction, teachers are blamed for things way beyond their control, and it seems like things just keep getting worse. But unlike the rest of the country, no teacher in JCPS has to deal with merit pay. No teacher in JCPS has to be evaluated based on test scores. No teacher in JCPS has seen their tenure weakened. No teacher's job in JCPS is threatened by the loss of students to charter schools. When you look across the nation, we see that this is truly remarkable. In spite of unprecedented challenges, our achievements over the past year have been truly remarkable, and I wanted to take this time to acknowledge just a few of the major things you and all of us at JCTA I have been able to do together. And I wanted to thank you for the trust and support you have shown DeeAnn, Erin, and I. Together we have accomplished so much, but there is much more to be done. Let's fix HB 176 with its four flawed strategies. Let's bring sanity back to the assessment of our students. Let's lead the fight to turn around our federal education policy and restore local control. Let's continue to make a difference. Together, I know we can!

Brent

Next JCTA Social Affairs Event

Come mix and mingle with other JCTA members at Incredible Daves's on Sunday, November 7. Tickets are \$5 for JCTA members and \$12 for guests. Tickets include a pizza buffet (pepperoni, sausage and cheese) and a \$5 game card. The buffet will be served in a reserved area from 5:00-6:00 p.m. Incredible Dave's, located at 9236 Westport Rd. in the Rolling Hills Plaza near the corner of Westport Rd. and Goose Creek Rd., is fun for both adults and families. Their 55,000 sq. ft. of fun and games includes: cosmic bowling, a huge climbing maze style obstacle course, giant Inflatables, sky high Euro-Bungee, cosmic bumper cars, over 50 High-Definition televisions and a X-Box and Wii Lounge. Tickets will be distributed at the JCTA office (first come, first served) starting on Wednesday, October 20. For questions about tickets, contact Associate Darlene Harless (darlene.harless@jcta.org). For general questions, contact UniServ Director, Michelle Yeager (michelle.yeager@jcta.org).

Sick Leave Bank Enrollment Ending

The JCTA Sick Leave Bank enrollment period will end on Friday, October 29, 2010. The Bank is open for enrollment to all certified staff not currently enrolled. If you have given a day since 2008, you are a member and do NOT need to re-enroll. For more information, rules and procedures go to www.jcta.org or see your PR. For questions or forms, contact Associate Jennifer Lawson (jennifer.lawson@jcta.org) at the JCTA office.

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 suits 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 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) 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) 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.