

ACTION

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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 27, 2010

WHAT'S HAPPENING

All meetings are at the JCTA office unless otherwise specified.

WED, OCT. 27:

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

THURS, OCT. 28:

⇒ Speech Language Pathologists Caucus meeting; 4:45-6:45 p.m.

⇒ Yard Sign Blitzer Training; 5:00-7:00 p.m.
Approved Member Participants Only

THURS, NOV. 4:

⇒ New PR Training; 4:30-6:30 p.m.

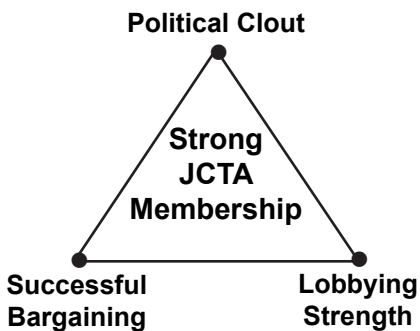
MON, NOV. 8:

⇒ ECE Caucus meeting; 4:30-5:30 p.m.

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).

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT



CONGRATS MS. NYREE CLAYTON!

Congratulations to Ms. Nyree Clayton, teacher member at Fairdale Elementary School, who was awarded one of JCTA's Teacher Appreciation Awards last week. Ms. Clayton was nominated for her outstanding efforts not just inside the classroom, but also outside in the community. She started a mentoring/tutoring program for children at Fairdale Elementary and those children in the neighborhoods of Fairdale, free of charge. Ms. Clayton will continue her commitment to this program beginning next month. She received \$500 to use in her classroom.

Congratulations Ms. Clayton!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Fix 176

Last week, Seneca High School teachers staged a rally to bring attention to the problems with KRS 160.346 or what we affectionately refer to as House Bill 176. The bill, which became law after just one unprecedented short week of legislative debate in Frankfort, was originally crafted by legislators in the hopes of procuring funds from the government touted program called Race to the Top. The bill was passed unanimously with dollar signs in the eyes of all. No one wanted to be responsible for blocking our state from receiving over \$200 million in federal funding for our public schools. Despite Kentucky's best efforts and two applications, the federal government did not grant the state's wish, and we were left with a bill that that does more harm than good. So what does HB 176 do? If a school is deemed "persistently low achieving" as either a Title I school or a non-Title I school, that school is given four (4) "intervention options" to use to "turn around" their school. The problem lies with the identification of those schools deemed to be "persistently low achieving" and with the so-called options.

Last spring, after HB 176 became law, there were ten (10) schools in the state of Kentucky identified as "persistently low achieving." The schools were split down the middle with half being Title I schools and the other half being non-Title I schools. We have it on good authority that many if not most of those schools that were identified last year would have been identified again this year, but instead, those schools that remain in the bottom 5% from the previous school year were given a pass for the current school year, and the Department of Education has moved up the list and chosen an ADDITIONAL ten (10) schools (again, split down the middle between Title I and non-Title I schools). So this new crop of schools is most likely NOT in the true bottom 5% of schools. They are more likely the bottom 10% of schools. And to add insult to injury this will happen again in the fall of 2011 when those scores are released. Instead of staying with the true bottom 5%, or even the additional schools that were identified this year, those twenty (20) schools will get a pass next fall and a NEW crop of schools will be identified. At this rate, you have to wonder when duPont Manual and Male High Schools will make the list of the lowest 5% because the top is slowly but surely becoming the bottom.

The interventions are not helpful either. School districts have their choice of four (4) equally counter-productive options including one to just close the school. Most districts out in the state have found the transformation model to be the only one that works for them because they do not have the transfer capabilities of a large urban school district like Jefferson County. The transformation model begins with the replacement of the school principal, then rank orders the teachers (according to test scores), pays them according to those test scores, then removes those teachers with low test scores. The option that Jefferson County has utilized thus far is the re-staffing model which also requires the removal of the principal and at least a restructuring (i.e., overstaffing) of at least 50% of the staff. However, Dr. Berman requested (with strong support from JCTA) and Commissioner Holliday approved the ability to "count" staff that have entered the building since 2008 toward this required 50% restaffing level. This means a school in which half the staff have been hired or transferred into the building since 2008 might not have to overstaff anyone.

After the HB 176 turmoil clears leaving teachers feeling completely demoralized and students feeling like failures and parents left with too many questions and not enough answers, the school is rewarded with a large sum of money. While the money is definitely appealing, the steps to get there are not.

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The reality is that HB 176 was an attempt to get federal dollars. We're not getting the federal dollars, so we need to stop worrying about pleasing Arne Duncan and start worrying about what is best for Kentucky. HB 176 gets in the way of school improvement because it is too prescriptive and leaves little or no room for local control. They want schools to be innovative but only as the bill sees fit. And I think we've learned over the years that one size does NOT fit all in education. Just to emphasize how ludicrous the effects of HB 176 really are, look at Fern Creek High School. The staff that was in place for the 2008-2009 school year saw a drop in their scores. That placed them as one of the identified non-Title I schools in the inaugural round of HB 176. That same staff that HB 176 deemed not capable to "turn around" their school DID JUST THAT AND RAISED THEIR TEST SCORES! But it didn't matter. By the time that information was shared with the public a few weeks back, 50% of that staff had already been "re-staffed." Is this really what is best for our students?

Our schools need support, not punishment and blame. And that's where you come in. We are inviting you to a JCTA Rally on Wednesday, November 10, 2010 at 5:00 p.m., and our purpose is to FIX House Bill 176. We'll be rallying at Fern Creek High School, and we need you to come out and support your colleagues – the ones that have already experienced the chaos of HB 176, the ones that likely will, and those who still face uncertainty even further down the road. Remember, "When they came for the man down the street, I said nothing. When they came for the man across the street, I said nothing. When they came for the man next door, I said nothing. When they came for me, I had no one left to speak for me." Do not believe that you are immune from this because you are not. Do not believe that the teachers that have been re-staffed because of this mess are bad because they are not. Do believe, however, that public education is under attack, and that if we don't stick together and stand up for each other, eventually they will come for us and there will be only silence.

I hope to see you at the rally on November 10, 2010 at 5:00 p.m. at Fern Creek High School. And I sincerely appreciate all that each and every one of you do to better our public schools.



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).

Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Kentucky

Governor Beshear wants to hear from you about what you need to be effective and successful in the classroom. The TELL Kentucky Survey will give JCTA members and teachers all over the Commonwealth the opportunity to inform the Governor about their working conditions. The survey is completely anonymous and will be available March 1st through March 26th of 2011.

To learn more about TELL Kentucky or the survey visit the TELL Kentucky website at www.tellkentucky.org.

Lighthouse Community Center

The Lighthouse Community Center, located at 5312 Shepherdsville Rd., is looking for a person to oversee their computer lab. This position is responsible for ensuring the effective use of the computer lab in the education of children, K-8, in the after-school program and during summer programming. This includes diagnosing issues for non-functioning computers and the creation of individual lesson plans for students. The hours are approx. 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., Mon. through Thurs. each day that JCPS is in session. Summers as needed during a 4-week programming session. The pay is \$10/hr for anyone with a college degree and \$8/hr for anyone without a college degree (i.e. college student).

Anyone interested should apply by sending their resume to Al Kirkpatrick at alakirk@gmail.com or calling at 245-7160.

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.

ECE Caucus Meeting

The ECE (Exceptional Child Education) Caucus will meet at the JCTA office on Monday, November 8 at 4:30 p.m. The Caucus will elect a Chair, Co-Chair and Secretary and discuss issues relating to ECE teachers. For more information, contact UniServ Director Michelle Yeager (michelle.yeager@jcta.org).

Voting Instructions for KEA Delegates

Voting will begin for the KEA Delegates at 6:00 a.m. on **October 29, 2010** and end on **November 5, 2010** at 5:00 p.m.

To vote, log in to www.jcta.org using your username and password. Your user name is your first initial and last name (i.e. jdoe), and your password is the last four numbers of your social security number. If you have any questions, please contact UniServ Director James Hughley (james.hughley@jcta.org).