

ACTION

Affiliated with NEA and KEA

JEFFERSON COUNTY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

1941 Bishop Lane, Louisville, KY 40218 ♦ 454-3400 ♦ 452-2794 (fax) ♦ www.jcta.org ♦ September 22, 2010

WHAT'S HAPPENING

All meetings are at the JCTA office unless otherwise specified.

WED, SEPT. 22:

⇒ Know Your Contract Training; 4:30-6:30 p.m.

THURS, SEPT. 23:

⇒ New Teacher Picnic at George Rogers Clark Park; 4:00-6:30 p.m.

SAT, SEPT. 25:

⇒ All Committee Saturday; 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

MON, SEPT. 27:

⇒ Itinerant Caucus Meeting; 4:30-6:00 p.m.

THURS, OCT. 7:

⇒ Membership Recruiter Training; 4:30-7:30 p.m.

THURS, OCT. 7:

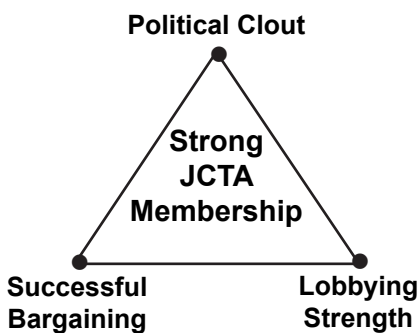
⇒ JCTA Board Meeting; 4:30-7:30 p.m.

REMINDER: SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY

JCTA still has a members-only survey about the Superintendent's contract renewal on the members-only portion of our website (www.jcta.org).

Please log on to the website, and let your voice be heard! For information about how to log in, see the Attention: New Teachers article on the back page.

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT



VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE

To be able to vote in the 2010 general election you must be registered to vote with the Jefferson County Board of Elections, located at 810 Barrett Ave. OCTOBER 4 is the deadline to register to vote; UniServ Director Bill Allison has voter registration forms at the JCTA office if you need one. Please call 454-3400 to contact Bill for a voter registration form.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

A great deal has been said in recent weeks regarding the JCPS Student Assignment Policy. There are those in the community who are obviously opposed to it, and there are those who support it. The same variety of opinions are held by our members as well, so it definitely raised our eyebrows at the JCTA office when some of our members contacted us wanting to know JCTA's "stand" on the District's policy.

Throughout my years at JCTA, long before I ever became Executive Director, I was told that there were just some fights not worth getting into. I'd bet a steak dinner to anyone that this is one of those issues on which the union should remain neutral. With so many of our members standing on either side of the issue, it does us no good to applaud the plan or to recommend it be gutted, regardless of what our personal opinions might be. Our focus must be on what is best for kids and our members.

Keeping that at the heart of the matter, I'm reminded of the JCTA Mission Statement that reads, "The Jefferson County Teachers Association, a democratically structured organization whose mission is to serve as the active voice of its members, shall PROMOTE QUALITY AND EQUITY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION; expand and protect the rights and interests of the members, and ADVOCATE HUMAN, CIVIL, AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS FOR ALL." When you read the JCTA Mission Statement on the internet, you won't see any of these words bolded; I added that to make a point. Even though I won't come out and tie JCTA's hands one way or another, I think it is important to share that we do believe the idea and thought behind the student assignment is righteous in that it falls right in line with what we believe as members of the Association. We believe that the intent of the plan is to promote quality and equity within our public school system and to ensure the human, civil and economic rights for all. So again, we do support the intent behind the plan.

I don't think that anyone in all good consciousness wants to return to the days of Plessy v. Ferguson and try to justify the absurdity of an educational experience for any child as "separate but equal." And after listening to all the speakers who spoke out about the plan during the regular and special called JCBE meetings, especially those who spoke to their experiences as a child who lived through bussing, I can't help but think some good has and will come from implementing an assignment plan that provides our students with a heterogeneous learning environment.

Keeping with what is best for kids, however, we cannot say with 100% certainty that the student assignment plan "as is" is the right plan to create a heterogeneous learning environment. There are clearly issues with the plan with which many if not the majority of the community are unhappy. We can't overlook the mistakes that have been made or ignore the suffering of parents and students. I myself listened as parent after parent went to the microphone at VanHoose to share his/her story, and I often found myself with a lump in my throat and the thought in my head, "What if it had been my daughter?"

My father, in his somewhat cynical nature, has always told me that nothing is carved in stone, except what they write in the one you're buried under. Other than that, you should always keep yourself open to new ideas and experiences. I think this is very good advice that not only our Superintendent and the members of JCBE should take, but also those parents who feel stuck right now. Brent and I have recommended to a number of JCBE members and the Superintendent that they take another look at the plan. I don't think there is any way possible to create a student assignment plan that will make everyone happy, but I can't help but think they shouldn't stop trying to improve upon the one they have.

Membership Recruiters Sought

Are you a dedicated JCTA member? Do you possess the power of persuasion? JCTA is seeking membership recruiters to help us continue our growth. If you are interested, email Associate Staff Jennifer Lawson (jennifer.lawson@jcta.org). Recruiters will be paid for attending training on October 7 and for each member they recruit. For more information, contact UniServ Director Sandy Harris (sandy.harris@jcta.org) at the JCTA office--454-3400.

Attention: Teachers New to the District!

Teachers new to JCPS and JCTA can now log on to our website (www.jcta.org). Your username is your first initial and last name (i.e. jdoe), and your password is the last four digits of your social security number.

Log in today and check out the members-only portion of our website!

Itinerant Caucus Meeting

The Itinerant Caucus will meet on Monday, September 27 at 4:30 p.m. at the JCTA office. This meeting is to elect a caucus chair and discuss current issues affecting itinerant teachers. For more information, contact UniServ Director Liesa Daly at liesa.daly@jcta.org or at 454-3400.

Board Vacancies

The JCTA Board currently has the following vacancies:

Region 1, Elementary Seat B
Region 3, Elementary Seat A
Region 3, Secondary Seat A
Region 4, At-Large

To see what region your school is in, go to our website (www.jcta.org), click on "who we are," then click on Board of Directors. At the top of this page is a list of the schools in each region.

If you are interested in one of these seats, please contact JCTA President Brent McKim by email at brent.mckim@jcta.org by October 1, 2010.

Newer Teacher Training

JCTA will hold a training session for teachers who have taught for less than five years in JCPS on Monday, October 11 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the JCTA office. Topics will include: "Whatchu Talkin' About?" (what it means to be non-tenured), "Out of Control" (classroom management), "I Heard Her Say It" (documentation), "It's Driving Me Crazy" (personal stress relief), "I Love My Teacher" (student-teacher-parent relationships) and "Friend Requests" (the invasion of social networking sites).

Space is limited to 25 JCTA members, and dinner will be provided. Contact Associate staff Darlene Harless (darlene.harless@jcta.org) to register. If you have any questions, contact UniServ Director Michelle Yeager (michelle.yeager@jcta.org).

Health Care Plan Changes Expected

If you read *ACTION* last spring, you know that the state legislature took action to balance the state budget on the backs of teachers by imposing a \$300 million dollar cut to the state group health care plan. Consequently, you can expect benefits to decrease and premiums to increase in order to accommodate the \$300 million dollar cut.

JCTA is particularly disappointed in House Speaker Protem Larry Clark for his role in instigating these devastating cuts. We've come to expect this sort of thing from Senate President David Williams, but not from the House Leadership.

We would, however, like to express appreciation to Governor Beshear for vetoing language in the state budget that would have called for a \$500 deductible for a single plan and a \$1500 deductible for families. These deductibles were supported by Representative Clark.

JCTA has been working with the Beshear administration to try to find the least harmful ways to manage these enormous cuts that Representative Clark and our legislature enacted in the state budget. However, we cannot expect a \$300 million dollar cut over two years to be easy. This will unavoidably cause our members great pain. We rallied on Frankfort in the spring to oppose the cuts, and we will continue to fight for the restoration of those funds. Also, you should be on the lookout for an email from the state with information about the new health care plan year and health insurance options.

Sick Leave Bank Enrollment

The JCTA Sick Leave Bank will begin enrollment for new teachers and for teachers who have not donated a day in the past on Tuesday, September 28. Enrollment will end on Friday, October 29.

If you would like more information about the Sick Leave Bank or would like to read about the new procedures and guidelines, you may do so online at www.jcta.org. For questions or forms, contact Jennifer Lawson (jennifer.lawson@jcta.org) at the JCTA office. Look for the enrollment forms and guidelines in the September 29 Pony Mail.

Last year, the Sick Leave Bank Committee found that the Bank could no longer be sustained under the previous rules and guidelines, so necessary adjustments were made in order to protect the soundness of the Bank. First and foremost, we must reiterate that the Bank was NEVER intended to provide "day for day" compensation to applicants. The purpose of the Bank is to provide assistance to a member in need of compensation during a catastrophic illness or following a catastrophic accident that requires extensive absence from work. It is not and cannot be used to cover ordinary maternity leave absences, days missed for colds, etc. The Sick Leave Bank Committee will NOT grant 100% of the requested days indicated on the Sick Leave Bank application.

The Bank has also limited the number of days that can be granted to a member to twenty (20) days per school year. The Committee has discretion to grant more days to a member in a given school year for extenuating circumstances. While we understand that some members may have multiple issues that arise over the years, the Bank has also set a limit of fifty (50) days as the number of days that can be granted to any member in a 5-year period. Finally, any member submitting an application to the Sick Leave Bank MUST include a statement from a licensed medical physician that clearly spells out the member's illness or situation.

Over the years, the usage of the JCTA Sick Leave Bank has increased exponentially, and we feel a strong obligation to maintain its viability. We are confident that the changes made will go a long way in helping us to accomplish our goal.