

# 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 29, 2010

### WHAT'S HAPPENING

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

#### **THURS, OCT. 7:**

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

⇒ JCTA Board Meeting; 4:30-7:30 p.m.

⇒ Speech Language Pathologists Caucus Meeting; 4:30-6:30 p.m.

⇒ Early Childhood Education Caucus Meeting; 5:00-6:00 p.m. **Bon Air Library**

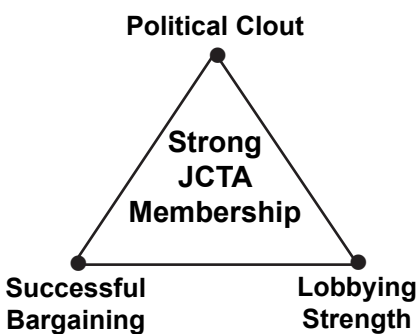
#### **MON, OCT. 11:**

⇒ Newer Teacher Training; 4:30-7:00 p.m.

### **REMINDER: SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY**

The survey on the Superintendent's contract renewal ends on September 30 at 5:00 p.m. Go to [www.jcta.org](http://www.jcta.org) today and take the survey in the members-only section.

### **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.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We have received numerous calls concerning Project Proficiency, a new high school initiative in certain 10th-grade English and math classes which is being promoted by Assistant Superintendent Joe Burks. In Project Proficiency, which targets struggling learners, teachers are supposed to "guarantee" that all of their students demonstrate "competency" on a growing number of standards, with 3 standards being added every six weeks. Competency is generally defined as scoring at least 80% on a proficiency test on these standards at the end of each 6 weeks. Teachers are supposed to continue to work with students until they are all proficient on all standards, but they are not supposed to slow down their pace on their way to the next set of standards. Unrealistic? We think so.

Prior to Project Proficiency, schools had been entering data into the CASCADE online student data management system for some time, and JCTA has not received a great deal of concern from our members about simply using the CASCADE system. In fact, when the technology works properly (which, unfortunately, doesn't seem to be the case this school year), some teachers have found this diagnostic information helpful.

In other words, using CASCADE occasionally for diagnostic purposes has not been something on which we have received much concern from our members. However, we now understand that in some high schools where Project Proficiency is being implemented, teachers feel like they are being told to use CASCADE as an electronic grade book rather than a diagnostic tool. (Based on the data teachers enter into CASCADE, the program actually calculates each student's grade.) We are also hearing of this to a lesser extent in some middle and elementary schools.

According to our contract, individual employees and supervisors can agree to use an electronic format for a grade book. Clearly this language prohibits the district from requiring teachers use an electronic grade book such as CASCADE, so we asked Assistant Superintendent for High Schools Joe Burks if teachers are being required to use this system for their grading.

*"This system, therefore, is not an electronic grade book, it is quite the opposite. It promotes formative work and assists teachers in guiding students to levels of competency rather than a passing grade."* Mr. Burks went on to say, *"What emerged was a way for the interactive screen to automatically **suggest** a six weeks grade based on teachers entering three components: a grade for student reflections of their progress, the cumulative record of diagnostic and formative work toward student competency, and the final six weeks assessment. **We found a way to do this, but since teachers are the ultimate authority on the final grade, we did not connect the system to Infinite Campus.**"*

Members have also asked us if they have to use the new diagnostic test and enter that data into CASCADE. The answer is no. In the words of Mr. Burks, "The only measure the state is interested in is the six weeks assessment score representing student progress in understanding Core Content 4.1."

If you are being asked to do more than this or to use CASCADE to calculate your grades, and you prefer not to, you need to ask your supervisor, "Am I being directed to do this?" If you are told that you are being directed to do so, please call the JCTA office at 454-3400, and we will ask Assistant Superintendent Burks to clarify to your principal that these are suggestions and not requirements.

To be clear, JCTA is not discouraging anyone from using these strategies if you find them to be helpful and beneficial to your students. We just want to protect your academic freedom to make these decisions using your professional judgment of what will help your learners succeed.

JCTA is very interested in understanding all the issues and concerns related to Project Proficiency and the use of the CASCADE system. On November 17, 2010, JCTA would like all teachers affected by Project Proficiency and/or those with concerns about the use of CASCADE to join us at the JCTA office to discuss these problems.

Thanks for all you do,

*Brent*

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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!

### Early Childhood Education Caucus Meeting

The Early Childhood Education Caucus will meet on Thursday, October 7 at 5:00 p.m. in the conference room at the **Bon Air branch of the Louisville Free Public Library** on Goldsmith Ln. This meeting is to continue discussing current issues affecting early childhood education teachers. For more information, contact UniServ Director Chanda Hornback at [chanda.hornback@jcta.org](mailto:chanda.hornback@jcta.org) or at 454-3400.

### Do and *Then* Grieve

No educator ever wants to see the word “insubordination” describing his/her behavior. To avoid that, we operate under a, “do and then grieve” policy. If your principal directs you to do something that you don’t believe is right, as long as it does not put you in any physical danger, you must do it. If your principal does this, ask him/her (preferably in writing), “Is this a directive?” If he/she says that it is, you must do it. If they say it is not, then you can feel free to let him/her know that you do not wish to participate. If it is a directive and it breaks the contract or violates your rights, call the JCTA office (454-3400) to speak with your UniServ Director and begin the grievance process.

## 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](http://www.jcta.org). For questions or forms, contact Jennifer Lawson ([jennifer.lawson@jcta.org](mailto: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.

### 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](mailto:darlene.harless@jcta.org)) to register. If you have any questions, contact UniServ Director Michelle Yeager ([michelle.yeager@jcta.org](mailto:michelle.yeager@jcta.org)).

### Mandated Teacher Binders

A couple weeks ago, we brought you information about the district pushing lesson plan formats and electronic lesson plans. Another push from the district is for required teacher binders. There is **NO** agreement between the district and JCTA that teachers should keep a binder or portfolio or anything of the kind with all lesson plans, documentation, samples of student work, etc. in them.

If you are being required to keep a data binder, format your lesson plans in a particular way or complete electronic lesson plans, contact your UniServ Director at the JCTA office (454-3400) to file a grievance.

### 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 ([mydar@jcta.org](mailto:mydar@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).