

Summer 2020

COMMUNIQUE

Publication for Members of Central OEA/NEA • Adrienne M. Bowden, President

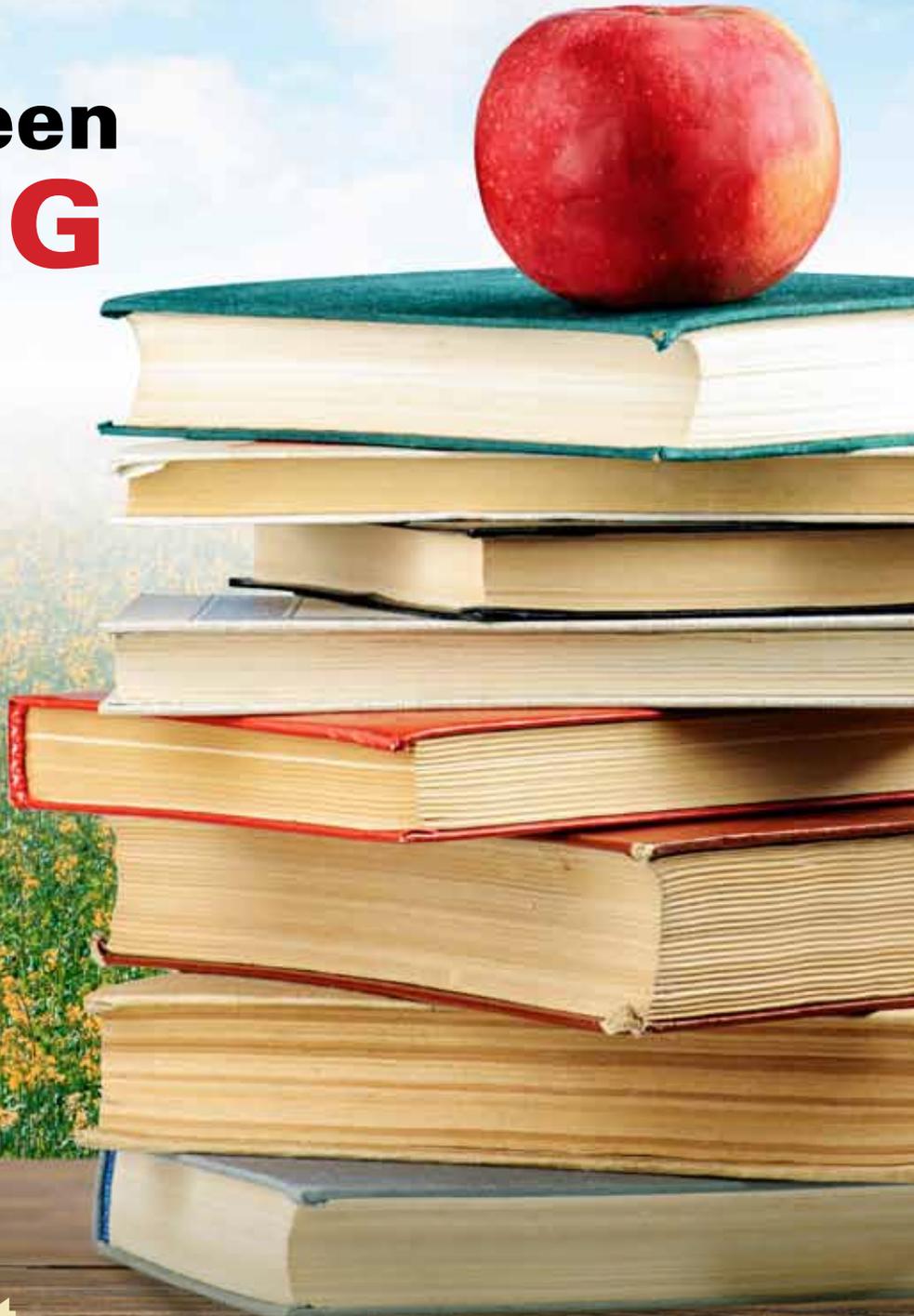


You Have Been **AMAZING**

**Member
Assistance
Program
Resources
and Services**

**Let's Make Our
Voices Heard
Loud and Clear**

**Paused But Not
Forgotten: Voucher Legislation**



You Have Been **AMAZING**

Adrienne M. Bowden (Pickerington EA), Central President & NEA Director

As we wrap up the end of this unusual school year, I want you to know you are valued and appreciated. Before this pandemic hit, many of us were not listed as essential workers, but as we have all learned, we are all very essential.

Regardless of whether you are a classroom teacher, cook, duty aide, bus driver, librarian, or any other professional in our buildings, each of you worked hard to put in remarkable effort educating our students during this crisis. Many of you risked your health to ensure students were learning, fed, and feeling secure. It is nothing school systems have ever experienced before - and you have been AMAZING.

I know this isn't what any of us signed up for, yet we came together as an educational community and did amazing work creating effective distance learning environments, which we continue to work to improve. I know that you miss your students, your classroom communities, and the school cultures you cultivated. I know how much your students mean to you, how they become "your kids", and how much you love seeing them light up when they learn something new. Let's hope that we can safely return to seeing them again soon.

In the meantime, as we navigate through what the upcoming school year may look like, NEA has a website



where you can get information, ideas and legislation updates: educatingthroughcrisis.org. Please know that Central is also looking at ways we can best support our members and locals through this difficult time. If we can ever be of assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of the officers or staff members.

Central RA Update

Due to the health concerns and state orders from our Governor, the Central Executive Board voted to cancel our Representative Assembly in April and create a special meeting on November 6th at our All-Area Meeting. We hope that you considered becoming a delegate to help us shape the budget for the new year and elect a new Vice President for our District. We hope that we will be

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Central Assisting Locals to Promote Association Pride

Heather Tinsley (Pickerington EA President)

The Pickerington Local School District is not too proud to brag about its members. Each PEA member was given a t-shirt to support the local union using the new Central Public Relations Grant.

Staff were asked to wear their shirt and jeans the first Wednesday of each month. The very first "WEAR" was AMAZING! The solidarity of staff was right there in front of all community members to see...right there in PURPLE. Bringing union members together in a trying time such as now can go a long way in maintaining positive morale and also in helping to promote a strong and committed union. The PEA teachers SUPPORT one another and teachers in other districts as we all struggle in the day-to-day of education in 2020. Just look around the PLSD buildings on the first Wednesday of each month. Teachers truly are PLSD PROUD!

About Central's Public Relations Grant

Locals are eligible for a Central OEA/NEA's Public Relations Grant of up to \$500 once every three years. Central will fund up to 20 locals per year.

Central OEA/NEA'S Public Relations Grant is designed to provide support to locals in engaging their members with the community. Grant funds can be used for a variety of items including, but not limited to Apparel, Awards, Banners, Buttons, Fair Booth, Involvement in local charitable events, Races and Yard signs.

Summer 2020



Member Assistance Program Resources and Services

Jillian Kalb (Hilliard EA), Communications Committee chair

NEA MB has a Member Assistance Program Resources and Services page on its website www.neamb.com/pages/member-assistance-program-job-layoff-resources. Many of their benefit partners are offering special assistance to members in need who may have been affected by an involuntary layoff. Check it out.

Finding bargains is now an even bigger focus for families, so let NEA help you save money through these member discounts.

Our first money-saving opportunity is your cell phone plan. With NEA Member benefits, you can receive 15% off your monthly charge for qualified plans, plus 20% off qualified accessories. Pro tip: log in to your NEA Member benefits page, and print out all the discounts for easy reference when you shop at the store.

Have you recently added a furry friend to the family during quarantine? Save up 90% on your veterinarian cost by purchasing NEA pet insurance through PetsBest.com. Log in to your account to get a free quote and compare plan options.

Don't get caught with a low supply of toilet paper again. Join COSTCO through NEA and receive a \$30 Costco Cash card for new members. That is half of the standard membership cost.



“Oh! What a Grant Can Do...”

Melissa Kendralla (South-Western EA)

How Resident Educator members engaged in Leadership training through the support of a Central OEA/NEA Growth and Development Grant

On February 5, 2020, approximately 20 Central members holding a current 4-year, Resident Educator License participated in a grant session, “RESA? I Got That!” The goal of this professional development was to provide our RE teachers with leadership development opportunities and exposure to the larger OEA family.

This event was a success in growing leaders and developing membership engagement...just what was needed to apply for Central’s Growth and Development Grant.

The event was planned as an opportunity for new teachers to participate in professional conversations with each other along with local teacher leaders and the Central OEA/NEA leadership.

Participants were to learn of the opportunities for leadership in Central OEA/NEA and to question an RE Panel prepared to discuss the anticipation of the high stakes RE licensure assessment: RESA.

This event was held after the school day and included a stipend for the RE participants, dinner, door prizes, and Association goodie bags with local leaders serving as facilitators. The guest was to be Central OEA/NEA President or Vice President.

Once this was determined the ease of completing the application for the Central Growth and Development Grant was a surprise. Blocking off an entire afternoon, I was shocked at the simplicity of the forms and then further surprised when approved promptly.

The event itself was well attended, and feedback was basically, WOW! We have not been to anything geared toward our leadership development. Dinner was a great hit as well – so if you decide to plan a similar event – be sure to think of dinner. Then the realization of the size of the association and the role of Central was also important learning. Vice President Kevin Griffin spoke with the members individually, and as a group during the event, and for 30 minutes at the end of the evening. This relationship-building of our association and Central NEA/OEA in front of members is so critical for early career teachers.

Without the grant, it may not have been, or have been as impactful.

Having worked with other grants, I can testify this was an exceptionally smooth experience and offered growth to a group of teachers that are our future in the teaching profession and association. Special thanks to Kevin for participating, and to the Grant Review Committee for seeing the value in what we are doing as a local and supporting our members in such an impactful way.

Now I know what a grant can do!

As a teacher leader, I am already designing the next idea to grow leaders in my local!
You can too!



Paused But Not Forgotten: Voucher Legislation

Colleen O'Connell (Reynoldsburg EA)

EdChoice Voucher expansion was quietly slipped into the state budget last June. The EdChoice Voucher system pulls local dollars from 90% of Ohio's students in public schools to pay tuition for some students to attend private, often religious, schools. Districts who have capped funding are even forced to pay more for students to attend a religious school than they would receive to educate that student. Without changes, EdChoice eligibility based on the deeply flawed state report card was set to skyrocket on April 1st, spelling disaster for many districts' budgets.

Before the pandemic, both the House and Senate passed separate bills, HB9 (passed by the Senate) and SB89 (passed by the House). HB 9 provided temporary fixes while exacerbating aspects of EdChoice, including permanently increasing the income eligibility and leaving in place the pass-through funding that bleeds districts of local tax dollars. SB89 as passed by the house, however, put an end to any new performance-based vouchers, basing vouchers only on income, and eliminated the pass-through funding, having the state directly pay out the program. The bill would also have dissolved Academic Distress Commissions (from the state takeover law) and restored local control of the Lorain, Youngstown and East Cleveland school districts by June 30th. SB89 as passed by the house by far

would do the most good for public schools and is the clear preference of OEA members and public school advocates.

When the House and Senate convened a conference committee for hearings on the bill over 9 days, beginning on February 11th, Ohio Education Association members, OFT members, superintendents of public school districts, school board members, parents, students, and many other allies to public education who signed up in large numbers to testify fought to keep public dollars in public schools by testifying and advocating for the passage of Amended Substitute Senate Bill 89.

With many off for Presidents' Day, testimony the week of February 17th kicked off with "A Day On for Public Education" packing the room with educators wearing red, testifying, or supporting fellow educators testifying in favor of SB89. Many voucher advocates were also in attendance. Several Central OEA/NEA educators testified or turned out on the 17th and throughout the week, including Colleen O'Connell (Reynoldsburg EA), Joe Sorenson (Reynoldsburg EA), Steven Yeager (Heath EA), Molly Wassmuth (Westerville EA), Amber Clark (Southwestern City EA), and OEA President Scott DiMauro

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Central members Colleen O'Connell (Reynoldsburg EA) and Steven Yeager (Heath EA) testifying on voucher legislation

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(Worthington EA). Testimony went many hours over the scheduled time each day, including lasting into the early hours of the morning some nights.

At the end of the week, despite the strong outpouring from public school advocates, the Senate failed to move towards the House-passed plan, still leaving the House and Senate at an impasse, intensifying the need for the governor to act in support of children and public schools. Members mailed in paper copies of their testimony, many called and emailed, and OEA worked with a coalition of public school parents and students, educators and support staff, administrators and school boards to plan a March 18th Rally for Public Schools. However, amidst public health concerns, the Rally was announced as going virtual and was eventually postponed.

The emergency coronavirus legislation passed by the Ohio legislature on March 25th essentially pressed pause on the issue of voucher expansion, freezing the list of voucher-eligible schools and prohibiting the awarding of first-time EdChoice voucher recipients based on performance eligibility. While currently at a stalemate as the state and the nation wrestle with how to proceed in the public health crisis, the truth that vouchers cost kids remains. The fight is not over, and educators again will once again turn out and speak up for our students and schools.

You Have Been Amazing Continued from page 2

Central's 150th anniversary at that time. In consideration of the health of our members, we also decided to cancel our 150th picnic celebration in the park.

I want to end on a good news note. While we were not able to host our annual Representative Assembly, the Central Board was still able to review and select our first Vivian Brown Education Scholarship for College Students Award winner. I am happy to announce that the inaugural scholarship winner is Kaitlin Hartman, daughter of Tami Hartman from Eastland EA, who is attending Ohio University studying Music Education with an emphasis in choral. Kaitlin is projected to graduate in 2023. We wish Kaitlin the best in her academic endeavors!

Let's Make Our Voices Heard Loud and Clear

Scott DiMauro (Worthington EA) OEA President

The COVID pandemic has put a spotlight on deep inequities in educational opportunities for our students and in far too many cases, has made them worse. Students across Ohio and around the country need strong public schools now more than ever.

That's why Governor Mike DeWine's recent announcement of \$465 million in K-12 and higher education budget cuts, plus additional cuts to Medicaid in the middle of a public health crisis, cut like a knife. We need more resources to support the needs of our students and protect the health and safety of our members, but our state and schools are facing a revenue crisis at the worst possible time.

For all the talk of reopening our economy, we know that to go back to work, parents are depending on safe schools for their children.

I'm incredibly proud of my fellow OEA members who are doing so much to support our students through this extraordinary time of uncertainty and change, and I'm confident we will use the power of our collective voices, 122,000 strong, to fight for the schools our students deserve at the state and local level.

But that's not going to be enough. We need Congress to act – NOW – to provide desperately needed relief to make sure we don't lose a generation of kids. Only the federal government is in a position to take the kind of decisive action needed to protect America's educators and students.

Let's make our voices heard loud and clear. Contact your House members and Senators! Call on your local school board to pass a resolution! Congress needs to pass the HEROES Act, and they need to do it now! Tell your friends and family. Go to www.nea.org/covidaction TODAY.

We're in this together!

Treasurer's workshop, Presidents and Building Rep Training

The 2020 Treasurer's workshops, President's Training and Building Rep training will be delivered virtually this year. The Education Advocate Leader training will also be delivered to members virtually.

June 15, 2020

- **President's Training**
9 - 11:30 a.m.
- **Treasurer's Workshop for New Treasurers**
1 - 2:30 p.m.
- **Treasurer's Workshop for Experienced Treasurers**
2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

You are welcome to attend any or all of these sessions.

June 16, 2020

- **Building Rep Training**
9 - 11 a.m.
- **Education Advocate Leader Training**
1 - 2:30 p.m.

Politically active members can sign up to become Education Advocate Leaders. Details of this program including how to apply can be found on our website here: www.centraloecnea.org/for-members/latest-info-for-members/97-become-an-education-advocate-leader

Registration is required for all these sessions on the Central website.

To register:

- 1** Log in (or create an account first if you do not already have one) to Central's website.
- 2** Scroll down the list of events and select the session you are interested in registering for, from the list of events.
- 3** Select "Going" from the drop-down menu. That's it.

We will send out the Zoom conference information to all registered attendees a few days before the sessions begin. Please log on to zoom using your first and last name so we can take attendance to issue CEU's and give your local credit for your participation.

Become an Education Advocate Leader

Education Advocate Leaders (EALs) are members! They strengthen their local associations legislative and political grassroots capacity year-round, by engaging fellow members around legislative and political campaigns.

Each local can have up to three Education Advocate Leaders one to represent primary, intermediate, and secondary educators or one to represent the different classifications in a classified local, SCOPE or Higher Ed. Central OEA/NEA will provide a \$100 stipend to each local Education Advocate Leader.

To become an Education Advocate Leader, apply online:

www.centraleoanea.org/eal

A list of criteria for receiving the Education Advocate Leader stipend follows.

Mandatory Criteria:

- Communicate with your local/colleagues on education issues
- Contribute to the OEA Fund for Children and Public Education
- Recruit at least 10 colleagues to receive Central ACE's emails and send their addresses to russell@jointhefuture.org
- Attend an Education Advocate Leader training session
Strongly Recommended:
- Play an active role in local election activities
- Attend at least 1 OEA phone bank or canvass
- Like and Share Central Social Media Content Stipends are paid in December to Education Advocate Leaders who have completed all the mandatory requirements.

Education Advocate Leader training details: We will have a virtual training on June 16, 2020 via Zoom.

Register for a training by logging in to your Central account, where you will be taken to a list of events, then select "Going" on the Education Advocate Leader Training event.

Topics covered will include:

- Communication & Involvement (sign up colleagues to ACE's list, disseminating info to your local)
- How to deliver an effective message
- 10 Reasons to belong to OEA
- Cyber lobbying, and engaging Central, OEA, NEA Social Media
- Understanding what FCPE is & is not
- Statehouse lobbying
- EAL Stipend Criteria
- Campaign 2020
- NEA Strong Public Schools

To apply to become an Education Advocate Leader apply online: www.centraleoanea.org/eal

Sign Up for Central's Advocate for Children and Education (ACEs) Emails

Interested in education policy and how you can stay informed? Want to know how to get involved? Sign up to receive our ACEs list at www.centraleoanea.org/ace

Elected officials enact policies that affect our students, our schools and the daily lives of educators. Decisions regarding school funding, services, curriculum standards, licensure, class sizes and teacher evaluation are all made by elected officials. As Ohio's legislators consider policies that affect public education, they must hear from educators—the true experts on education issues. As teachers, faculty and education support professionals, OEA members should get

involved in these decisions and make their voices heard.



By signing up you will be able to learn more and act on current issues affecting public education.

We promise we won't spam you, but instead, we will always try to make sure our emails are relevant and timely. You can unsubscribe at any time.

www.centraleoanea.org/ace

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Summer 2020



THANK YOU

FOR BEING A MEMBER OF
Central OEA/NEA

You are the true expert in education!

You deserve a voice
in how best to educate our students.

We are here to support you.

Adrienne & Kevin,
Central Leadership



Association Benefits

Contract protections during uncertain times
Policy advocacy at the state
and federal levels

Upcoming Events

- June 15 Presidents Training
- June 15 Treasurer's Workshop for New Treasurers
- June 15 Treasurer's Workshop for Experienced Treasurers
- June 16 Building Rep Training
- June 16 Education Advocate Leader training