

Winter 2020

COMMUNIQUE

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



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Strong Public Schools and 2020

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

Education is not usually considered a top-tier issue during presidential elections. Often education gets overshadowed by other national concerns such as national security, climate change and health care, leaving education to the state or local government. Times have changed and education is now at the forefront of the 2020 presidential election. Many of the candidates running for office are actively seeking the support of educators to help craft and support their educational agendas.

We need to elect officials who are committed to servicing all of our students, regardless of zip code. We need to ensure that our next President understands and is willing to fully fund our programs to ensure that each student has access to a great public school. We must elect a President who is committed to selecting leaders in their administration who are focused on finding and supporting quality educators to help our students succeed.

We cannot continue to have Betsy DeVos in charge of our educational system. Her lack of educational experience and knowledge of what is best for students and our schools is glaring. Her strong support for vouchers and online schooling is an attack on the foundation of the public-school system. We must have an Education Secretary who believes in and will support public education!

Most people interact with public education in some way; education crosses all segments of our society so there are many opinions on what works best for students. But we are the professional voice with experience. We are the experts that truly understand what is best for all our students, at all levels of education, pre-k to higher ed. The community trusts and values our opinion. Now is the time to ensure that education and educational issues continue to be a part of the conversation heading into 2020. And we should lead that conversation!

We must unite as educators and community members to ensure that we have strong public schools. We need to support candidates who respect educators and value our profession. Candidates who believe in treating educators as professionals, smaller class sizes, fully funding programs, and providing equitable resources to all our students.

NEA has created a website to provide members with information on the educational views of all the current Presidential candidates. On strongpublicschools.org, you can get information on the candidate views, ask candidates educational questions and take a pledge to be a public education voter. It is going to take all our voices to ensure we speak out on what is best for education.

Be an Education Advocate: What You Can Do!

Check Out & Take the Pledge!

As leaders in this movement, we all get asked, "Sure, the upcoming election is important, but what I do now?" So here are the top five things we should be asking everyone to do to help elect a pro-public education president in 2020.

1. Visit StrongPublicSchools.org
2. Sign the Strong Public Schools Pledge
3. Recruit 10 friends to sign the pledge
4. Ask a candidate a question
5. Become a delegate to the Party Convention



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The Dilemma of Teaching Religion

Janet Monseur Durr (Hilliard EA)

An interesting question that seems to perplex some educators is “How can I teach about religion without teaching religion?” Recently, I had the privilege of witnessing a teacher who did just that. Her high school students had the opportunity to listen to guest speakers describe holidays celebrated by millions of people across the world. Afterward, this teacher asked her students to synthesize what they learned into a culminating project that included elements of the students’ own traditions. As a result, students created a visual representation of their learning as they identified the commonalities and differences among Diwali, The Day of the Dead, and Halloween in a Venn diagram and paragraph form as a demonstration of their knowledge.

My colleague’s efforts reflect purposeful planning of a multicultural lesson. Her choices to include authentic voice from the respective cultural and religious communities add a layer of cultural responsiveness to the lesson. But there are a few caveats when we teach about religion or religious practices. For instance, if we invite a speaker to address our students, we must acknowledge that because there is diversity within a community, the speaker should not have or does not have the responsibility to represent an entire community. Similarly, if our objective is to leverage a student’s “Funds of Knowledge” like Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005) encourage, we may unintentionally single out a student who may not feel comfortable in explaining his/her religious beliefs, which would be counter-productive toward our efforts of inclusion and respect.

There are solutions to this dilemma, however. For example, private conversations with students that invite them to share with the class validate, personalize, and humanize diversity and allow us to help dismantle fear, which in turn, establishes trust and encourages respect in a diverse society. Regardless of whether an adult or a student is presenting the lesson, we must ensure that a lesson about religion promotes “respect for a pluralistic society” in “a neutral, objective, balanced and factual manner” as explained by the Anti-Defamation League. These parameters provide boundaries for educators to know how to teach about religion.

As we become more experienced in teaching about religion, we become more aware of the “little things” that might reflect our unintentional religious biases. For example, do the certificates we use for April Student of the Month display an Easter Bunny? Do we assume that Hanukkah holds the same importance as Christmas because Christmas is one of the most significant holidays in our family’s tradition?

Ultimately, educators can learn to teach about religion so our students are exposed to new worlds and can develop the skills of critical thinking and empathy needed to successfully navigate an increasingly diverse and complex society.

Save the Dates!

We’re 150 and Celebrating

Central will be celebrating its 150th anniversary with a members family picnic at the Columbus Park of Roses on June 16 from 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. Stay tuned for registration details later in the new year.



2020 Pride Parade

Central will once again be marching in the Columbus Pride Parade on June 20. Registration will open in the new year.



Central's Historical Representation

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



For the first time in our history, Central has members serving in two of the three state Officer positions and as three NEA Directors. This is a unique opportunity for Central to have strong representation at all levels of our Association. We are proud of our member leaders, and I asked each member to share a bit about their vision for their position and the future of our Association.

From left to right: Mark Hill- OEA (Secretary Treasurer), Adrienne M Bowden (NEA Director), Scott DiMauro (OEA President)

Scott DiMauro (Worthington EA), OEA President

OEA is guided by the Strategic Priorities set by the OEA Board: supporting our locals in their capacity to be relevant to members, educating and empowering members to build support for quality public education, and building OEA as a member resource for professional issues.

We will be expanding training opportunities for presidents and other local leaders. We are engaging members around major legislative initiatives, including fixing Ohio's broken report card system, eliminating RESA, reducing the burden of standardized testing, and fighting for a constitutional school funding formula that stops diverting scarce taxpayer resources to charter schools and voucher schemes.

And we're working to expand opportunities for member-led professional development on issues that matter most to educators and students, especially as it relates to ensuring all students receive equitable, culturally relevant instruction and support. To strengthen our collective power in 2020 and beyond, we must work together to elect pro-public education candidates to office.

Mark Hill (Worthington EA), OEA Secretary-Treasurer

The OEA Secretary-Treasurer's position is relatively new in OEA's history. It was created in the 1980's in response to the fiscal emergencies that OEA experienced during that era in order to provide member oversight of the financial operations of the Association. Maintaining a membership role in fiscal oversight remains essential.

In addition to the official oversight duties, the Secretary-Treasurer must also provide support for local leaders (espe-

cially treasurers). This includes training local treasurers to adopt sound fiscal practices, rewarding locals for adopting those practices, and overseeing the Affiliate Grant program so that our locals have resources to better engage their members. The Secretary-Treasurer should act primarily as an ombudsman for local treasurers by lending them an ear and assistance when they need it.

Finally, it's vital that the OEA leadership team remains connected to its members and listens to them. Scott, Jeff and I will collectively meet with local leaders in each of the 76 UniServ councils throughout the state this year. This allows us to develop valuable relationships with members and to listen to their concerns. I've traveled many miles on Ohio's highways attending council meetings, and it's easily one of the most rewarding aspects of my work!

Dwayne Marshall (Gahanna EA), NEA Director

It is my goal to continue my work on promoting diversity issues and advocating for all. I want to take the fight directly to our Federal Legislators about the damage they have caused our noble profession.

I want legislators to know that we as educators are the experts and should guide the discussion on our profession. I want legislators to recognize and understand the harms they have inflicted on the future generation with over-testing and showing our students that it is more important to color in a bubble than to critically solve problems.

I want legislators to understand that their blindness on the way they fund schools is discriminatory at its core, for our legislators to understand there is no one-way of educating our youth.

2019 All-Area & Delegate Briefing Recap

Ty Tatman (Zane Trace EA), OEA Director

On Friday, November 8, 2019, Central held its annual Fall All-Area Dinner and Delegate Briefing at the Columbus Airport Marriot. This event not only served as a briefing for all delegates in preparation for the OEA Fall Representative Assembly in December at the Ohio Expo Center but as an opportunity to celebrate our successes thus far during this academic year and to be up-to-date as we prepare to enter 2020.

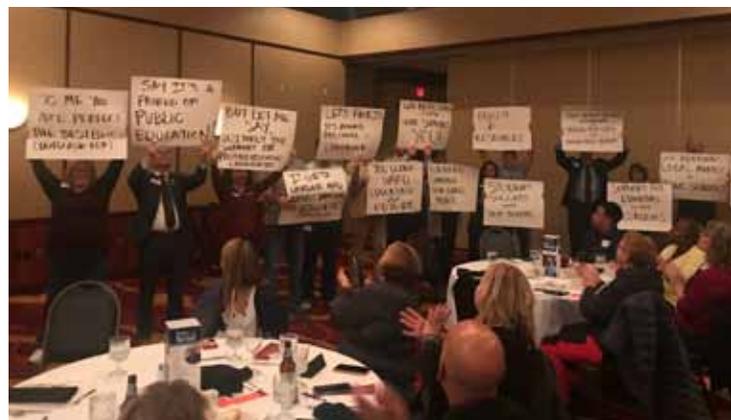
Central was proud to host 165 delegates and guests from across 51 locals to join in an evening of fellowship that began with a social reception, a breakout session for first-time delegates and a FCPE drive.

As a long-time Central member and FCPE contributor, I feel as if the holiday shopping season has not begun until I'm bidding on items at a FCPE silent auction!

During a wonderful meal, we were treated to reports from Central's officers and began to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Central! As part of this celebration, we were happy to have members of Capital with us as they, too, were once a part of Central.

OEA President Scott DiMauro, OEA Secretary-Treasurer Mark Hill and OEA Vice President Jeff Wensing addressed the delegates. As Scott and Mark are Central products, it's always nice to have them here at home!

Legislative updates, budget updates, STRS updates and information on a new, improved Fund for Children and Public Education system to get true friends of education elected were included. All-in-all it was a great briefing and Central is ready to enter 2020.



I want to see the shutdown of for-profit charter schools because these schools are fundamentally designed to leave children behind.

So, let us take our small victories as we get them, but be persistent in pursuing the just causes of all public-school students.



From left to right: Adrienne Bowden, Sen. Sherrod Brown, Dwayne Marshall, Angela Stewart

Angela Stewart (Reynoldsburg EA), NEA director

I believe education fosters opportunities and it must be a priority for all. Public education must remain a steadfast beacon of hope and security, despite the attacks it encounters from all sides.

It can only endure if educators speak up and use their voices to drown out the misinformation and malice of those out to destroy public education.

I aspired to be an NEA Director so I could be a voice for all students and educators. I enjoy the work we all do on the NEA Board of Directors to protect the rights of public education employees - both classified and certified, as well as all the learners we serve.

Although we may have differences, the goal is always to do what is best for public education and ensure that all students have the resources and support they need regardless of their zip code. Establishing networks and building relationships throughout my association involvement have provided me with so many unforgettable opportunities, and I have loved my journey through public education.

It has been an honor to represent each of you and to serve on your behalf. If you have questions on how you can get involved, please feel free to contact me or any of the other NEA Directors.

POWER UP!

With Central OEA/NEA Professional Development

Mary Kennedy (Hilliard EA President), OEA Director

Registration is open for the Central OEA/NEA *Power Up with Professional Development* conference. The conference is set for **February 29, 2020**, at the Gahanna Lincoln High School Clark Hall. This conference is free to all Central OEA/NEA members.

Attendees can choose from seven (7) PD tracks for the day. Whether you are a teacher, bus driver, school counselor, paraprofessional, etc., you will have options that are appropriate for your professional growth.

Options include:

- **ESP Professional Growth Continuum** - An NEA-developed pathway for professional development specifically designed for ESPs.
- **A Report from the Front Lines of Trauma** - Informed Education: Resilience, the Brain and Skill-Building- Learn about different types of trauma, an overview of neuro-development, and broad approaches to implement trauma-informed practices.
- **Join the Circle: An Introduction to Restorative Practices** - Educators can use current law to address inequities in discipline. Learn and apply circle-keeping techniques to assist in building a sense of community in any setting.
- **Grassroots Advocacy: How Members Can** - Join OEA's Government Relations Team to learn how members can work to improve their profession and workplace by advocating for policy change through local and state government.
- **What to Expect When You're Teaching Gifted Kids** - Look at six profiles of gifted students and what those characteristics bring to the classroom.
- **Financial Literacy** - Understand credit and credit reports, and learn ways to protect your identity, retirement planning, budgeting, and the importance of saving.
- **ODE's revisions to the Professional Code of Conduct and OTES 2.0** - Learn about the revisions to the Professional Code of Conduct, and look at the OTES 2.0 changes.

This year we are excited to combine forces with the Diversity conference and something new, an Engagement Fair.

Please join us on February 29, 2020, and bring a colleague or two. We hope to see you at the Power Up Conference.

Registration is required and open:

www.centraloeanea.org/powerup

2020 Diversity Conference

Linna Jordan (Hilliard EA), OEA Director

This year, Central's Diversity Conference will be held in conjunction with the Power Up Conference. Both events will be held at Clark Hall in Gahanna on **February 29, 2020**. Registration will start at 8:45 am and our day will end at about 2:30 pm. The theme of our conference is Valuing Minority Voices.

We understand as professionals the value of having minority teachers in the classroom and the importance of minority students seeing themselves reflected in the professionals around them. We will review data that informs this philosophy as well as try to propose some ideas for what might attract more minority teachers, not just into education, but to our locals.

As our student populations become more and more diverse, we need to embrace this recruitment effort. Once we welcome these educators into our buildings, how are we showing them that we value their voices? We do this by acknowledging their needs and the possibility that their experiences may be different from those of other educators in our district.

What are we doing to support them and keep them, not only in our schools but in education?

During the morning session, we will answer these questions while reviewing issues minority teachers encounter, what districts should do to support them and what we can do as individuals to further encourage our colleagues.

The afternoon session will focus more on what Central and OEA are doing to promote minority voices. We will start with a discussion with caucuses on their role and purpose within the organization as avenues for minority voice to inform the work of OEA. Members of Ohio's New Educators will present on their work to support the newest members of our profession.

We are looking forward to a meaningful discussion with each of you on these issues.

Registration is required and open:

www.centraloeanea.org/diversity



Educator Self Care

Colleen O'Connell (Reynoldsburg EA)

Education can be all-consuming, and self-care can seem elusive when you're at your most stressed. However, burning out never leads to continued success or happiness. The second half of the school year can mean renewed hope and a clean slate. However, it can also mean exhaustion and peak stress at a time of the year that you may head into and leave work in the dark. Whether you feel like you're hitting your stride or you're still trying to gain traction, you're also likely feeling swamped with responsibility.

It's times like these it's more important than ever to remember to engage in self-care. While self-care is a hot buzz word, it's also an essential part of being a successful educator. Self-care doesn't need to be expensive or time-consuming. In fact, self-care should be less "Treat Yo Self" and more "Take Care of Yourself."

Don't forget that each day should reach a firm stopping point and that you need to sleep every night. Eat real meals, make time to move, and take time to breathe. Sometimes, you may reach a point where you do need to choose self-comfort over self-care to get yourself reset. When this happens, start by giving yourself permission to stop doing and thinking and take some time to do what most fills your tank and gives you perspective.

As you work through this part of the year, remember to take notice of how you're feeling and what you need. No matter what your brain tries to tell you, the time you make for yourself is not time taken from your students. You can't pour from an empty glass, and as your students' most important advocate in education, you're always better full.

ESP Professional Growth Continuum

Cheryl Williams (Dublin SSA President), OEA Director

Classified employees are often overlooked when school districts are planning professional development. It is difficult for them to come up with programming that will fit the needs of our varied responsibilities. We may get specific job-related training but that is where it usually ends.

Education Support Professionals (ESP) play a key role in ensuring student success, and their positive impact can be enhanced when there are clear expectations, when they are valued, and when they have opportunities for professional growth.

To help ESP reach their professional potential, NEA developed the ESP Professional Growth Continuum (PGC) with the active involvement of ESP members and other stakeholders. The PGC provides clear pathways for professional learning and growth throughout the careers of ESP.

The ESP Professional Growth Continuum (PGC) consists of eight Universal Standards within three Levels of Practice. The three Levels of Practice begin with Foundational, moving to Proficient, and working toward an Advanced/Mastery

level of professional practice. These three Levels of Practice span across all nine ESP career families with opportunities for ESP to enhance their professional standing by being a role model, mentor, and/or leader at each level.

The PGC serves as a map of how ESP can grow professionally. An individual can be proficient for one ESP Universal Standard of practice but also advanced for another. The model is fluid so that ESP can build their professional capacity in one or more standards by participating in professional learning opportunities aligned with each Level of Practice to complement on-the-job experiences and training.

Whether you work as a secretary, health care aide, bus driver, paraprofessional, custodial, maintenance, skilled trades, technology or food service there is a program for you.

Please join us at Central's Power Up Conference in February to learn more about this exciting opportunity for all ESP's. www.centraloearna.org/powerup

COMMUNIQUÉ

Winter 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

Free CEUs
Liability Protection
Improving Professional Practice

Upcoming Events

Feb. 29 Central Diversity Conference
Feb. 29 Central Power Up Conference
Apr. 17 Central RA
May 8 - 9 OEA RA