

AKRON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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Welcome Back: Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year. We hope you enjoyed your summer and were able to regroup and recharge for the coming year. For us, this was the busiest summer in memory. The Stimulus program, two mediations, a termination hearing, transfers and more kept things very lively throughout June, July and into August.

LPDC Relocated: The LPDC Office is now located in Room 216 at Ott/SDC. The new phone number is 330-761-3070. Jeff Moats is the consultant for the 2009/2010 school year. You can call Jeff at the number above or e-mail him at jmoats@akron.k12.oh.us

Stimulus Positions Save Jobs and Then Some: Last spring, over 50 Akron teachers were agonizing over the probability of being laid off. Thanks to an infusion of over \$20 million in federal stimulus dollars, all have been reemployed. Many were able to retain their previous assignment. The balance accepted stimulus funded positions—various intervention, coaching and professional development release subs—which are all regular full time assignments with benefits. The number of positions created with stimulus funds was so high the Board had to fill some of them with new hires.

STRS Studies Changes: The Retirement Board has been examining potential changes in retirement benefits for the last six months. Among the areas under consideration for change are changes in the percentage contribution from members and/or employers, revising the formula used to calculate a retiree's benefit, establishing a minimum retirement age (the most frequently mentioned is 60), calculating final average salary over five years instead of three, and modifying or eliminating the cost of living adjustment (COLA). Last May, the legislative oversight body for all public retirement systems in Ohio (Ohio Retirement Study Council), mandated that all retirement systems present a plan for assuring a 30-year funding period by September 9. One area of particular importance the ORSC suggested STRS take a look at is the enhancement earned for members who retire with 35 or more years (STRS is the only system in Ohio offering the enhanced

formula at 35 years. No one knows what changes will eventually be legislated or when they may take effect. Members' interests are being voiced through the Healthcare and Pension Advocates for STRS whose membership includes OFT, OEA, and the Ohio Retired Teachers Association.

8th Graders to Take ACT/Explore: Akron eighth graders will take the ACT Explore test in place of the first 9-weeks assessment. APS and a small number of suburban districts will be giving the test. ACT will score the test and provide reports to teachers. Students who take the Explore and Plan tests have been found to perform at higher levels on the ACT test. The state is moving toward replacing the OGT with the ACT.

Captains Needed: We need Strides captains in the following buildings: Case, Kenmore, Perkins, Ritzman and Stewart. This year's Walk is scheduled for **Saturday**, October 10. Walk Central is being moved from Canal Park to Lock 3.

Board OK's Purchase of Student Data System: The Board of Education approved the purchase of a new student data management system that should be up and running in a year to eighteen months. The system includes an electronic grade book, a portal for parents to view schedules, monitor grades, homework records, etc., and several other screens covering student data. Training will begin this winter for counselors and principals. The Board will consider the purchase of the "business" side of the new system at a future meeting.

Broadway In Akron: Members will again be able to take advantage of reduced price tickets prior to public sale for shows in the Broadway in Akron series at E. J. Thomas Hall. Shows this year include The Wedding Singer, The Rat Pack is Back, Jesus Christ Superstar and Avenue Q. Mannheim Steamroller will be featured in a Christmas gig on November 18, and Mandy Patinkin will appear with Patti Lupone on February 27. Members interested in purchasing tickets for any of these shows can go to www.BroadwayAcrossAmerica.com/groupsales. When asked for a password, type "AEATICKETS."

Contract Expires in June: The Collective Bargaining Agreement between AEA and the Board expires June 30. Negotiations will begin this spring for a successor Agreement. More later...