

Random Notes

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YES ON ISSUE 8

AEA has endorsed Akron Issue 8, the controversial measure that would make scholarship money available to students who reside in Akron and attend eligible Akron schools, including APS. The scholarships would be funded by proceeds from the lease, not sale, of the city's sewer system to a private company.

Before endorsing, we spoke with representatives from the city and the opposition. We were most apprehensive about how city employees would be affected by passage of 8 and whether or not safeguards existed to ensure that proceeds from the lease would be used exclusively for scholarships. A Scholarship Plan Advisory Committee whose membership included many outstanding community leaders recommended a list of protections they believed had to be a part of the Plan. Virtually all of the Committee's recommendations were adopted, including one restricting the use of proceeds to scholarships only, and one affording sewer employees the right to transfer to another city department at commensurate pay. City workers may also opt to work for the lessee. The lessee will minimally be required to honor the current contract between the workers and the city, including pay rates.

The Advisory Committee made several recommendations designed to protect Akron sewer customers. Rate increases, for example are limited to a 3.9% rolling ten year average.

While we are concerned about job security for city employees—and we believe that problem has been sufficiently addressed—we must be more concerned about the job security of the people we represent. Enrollment in APS has been trending steadily downward. Fewer students mean fewer teachers. Just a few years ago, a large number of Akron teachers were laid off. We've narrowly avoided cuts every summer since then.

Proponents often compare Issue 8 to the Kalamazoo Promise which, unlike Akron's plan, is privately funded. According to a *Wall Street Journal* report, the Kalamazoo plan has contributed to a 12% increase in the urban district's enrollment since the program began in 2005. That increase is the result of four hundred families moving into Kalamazoo over the last eighteen months. The Promise, according to the *Journal*, has turned the school district into a hot spot for real estate. One home builder reported an increase in new construction year-over year from 47 to 87 units. Finally, Kaiser Aluminum Corp. decided to build a new office and research center in Kalamazoo, one of the draws being the city's scholarship plan.

Supporters of Issue 8 envision Akron duplicating Kalamazoo's successes. No one can say with any certainty whether or not that will happen. We are certain that APS is losing students every year as families move out of the city and students open enroll to neighboring districts. Issue 8 may entice Akron families to stay, and others to move in. That prospect, and the opportunity it offers Akron school kids, compels us to urge our members to support Issue 8.

 Yes on 8

Legislative Committee Recommends Candidates, Issues

The AEA Legislative Committee recommends these candidates and issues in November's general election:

13th U.S. Congressional District

✘ **Betty Sutton**

28th District Ohio State Senator

✘ **Tom Sawyer**

41st District Ohio State Representative

✘ **Brian Williams**

42nd District Ohio State Representative

✘ **Mike Moran**

Summit County Council

✘ **Paul Colavecchio** (District 3)

✘ **Frank Comunale** (District 4)

Akron City Issue 8

✘ **Yes**

Strides Effort a Smashing Success

Without question, this year's Strides campaign was our best yet. Never have our school captains been more active and, surely, when the counting is done, we will have surpassed our previous breast cancer research fund-raising high. Hundreds of teachers, students and friends gathered at Canal Park for the Walk. We raffled more than a dozen donated prizes, raising nearly \$1,000. To date, our online fundraising alone has reached \$11,500!! We will publish the final report in a future *Notes* as soon as it becomes available.



North High captain Nicole Delahanty won a half-slab rib dinner, courtesy of Johnny Malloy's.



AEA member Ruth Sutton and Executive Assistant Mikelann Adams draw raffle prize winners.



AEA President Bill Siegfert poses with a team of walkers from Howe Rd. Best Buy. The store donated a \$75 Gift Card to the AEA Raffle

Obama vs. McCain On Education

AEA does not endorse in presidential elections. We do, however, make every effort to offer members an informed view on where the candidates stand on important education issues. Listed below are the candidates' positions on issues that we believe will have the greatest impact on teachers:

Federal Funding:

McCain: Keep federal spending at current levels. In 2005, voted against amendment intended to restore education program cuts. Voted against increasing funding for after-school programs through CLC's.

Obama: Add \$19 billion in new education spending. In 2005, voted for amendment intended to restore education program cuts. Voted for increasing funding for after-school programs through CLC's.

Charter Schools:

McCain: Supports expanding charters, including for profit charters.

Obama: Supports expanding public charters with more accountability; opposes for profit charters.

Vouchers:

McCain: Supports vouchers, including expanding Washington, D.C. voucher program federal funding from \$13 million to at least \$20 million.

Obama: Opposes vouchers.

No Child Left Behind

McCain: Keep law's emphasis, but shift the way it measures progress from group averages to individual achievement.

Obama: Believes law is good in concept but poor in design, funding and implementation.