

Random Notes

October 24, 2011

Jeff Moats, President
jeff@akronteach.org

Michael Rusnak, Vice President
mike@akronteach.org

681 North Main Street, Akron, OH 44310 • Phone 330.434.2181 • Fax 330.434.6826

Undecideds are Crucial to Victory

Issue 2: Ours to Win or Lose November 8th

As we head into the final two weeks leading up to Election Day, one thing is certain: the fate of Issue 2 is firmly in the hands of public employees. Since last April, there have been four polls of Ohio voters on the subject.* Here are the specifics of each poll:

Date Taken	Pollster	% For Repeal	% Against Repeal	% Undecided	# Polled
April 6-7	Wenzel Strategies	51%	38%	11%	1,264
May 10-16	Quinnipiac	54%	36%	10%	1,379
July 12-18	Quinnipiac	56%	32%	12%	1,659
September 20-25	Quinnipiac	51%	38%	11%	1,301

*A fifth poll completed October 13th-16th was conducted by PPP (Public Policy Polling). PPP found that 36% of the 581 voters it polled favor Issue 2, while 56% oppose and 8% are uncertain. Quinnipiac and Wenzel are independent polling companies. PPP is a Democratic polling concern and, for that reason, we did not include their results in the table.

It is tempting to look at these results and panic over the drop of 5 percentage points in the latest poll from our high water mark of 56% for repeal. Don't. Instead, look at the percentage of voters who say they are undecided. The range has remained consistent and very narrow.

As is the case in many elections, the undecideds will play a **huge** role in the fate of Issue 2. We should take comfort in the knowledge that the percentage of voters who oppose repeal has been somewhat stagnant. In the latest poll, support for that position is no greater than it was a week after Kasich signed the bill. However, we should avoid complacency at all costs. We should be doing everything humanly possible to win our share—or more—of the undecideds. We may not be able to match Building a Better Ohio's media spending. But they do not have people power, and we do. They cannot possibly match our potential to reach voters through phone calls and personal contact. And that is where the battle for the undecideds takes place.

We Are Ohio is canvassing neighborhoods every weekend and manning call centers throughout the week. We have been notifying our volunteers of canvassing locations weekly and feedback from We Are Ohio has been positive—our members are showing up. AEA has hosted a call center every Monday since early September and will continue doing so through Election Eve. We have been at capacity the last three Mondays. Our supply of over one thousand "No on 2" yard signs was snapped up within a week and they have cropped up in neighborhoods throughout Summit County. Our magnetic bumper stickers are moving out just as quickly. Notwithstanding the commendable efforts of our members thus far, now is the time to redouble our efforts, particularly on the weekend canvasses, to lock up victory on November 8!

Let's all do our part to convince the undecideds of what we know: Issue 2 is bad for Ohio.

HB 136 Underscores the Dangers of an Uninformed, Apathetic Electorate

In their quest to completely destroy Ohio's public education system, a majority of House Republicans are pushing legislation that, if passed, will divert unprecedented sums of state funding from public schools to private and parochial schools, and could result in smaller districts losing all of their state aid. The statewide voucher proposal strikes at the very heart of the state's system of a free public education to all students. It makes a mockery of the state's obligation to provide "a thorough and efficient system of public education," transforming taxpayer dollars intended to support that system into a windfall to underwrite private benefits for a few at the expense of the overwhelming majority of students who attend public schools. The bill expands voucher privileges to students in all school districts, regardless of the district's academic rating. Vouchers would be available to students in

(Please see "HB 136" on back)

Trustees Endorse Two for School Board

The AEA Board of Trustees has endorsed two candidates for election to the Akron School Board. Incumbent **Rev. Curtis Walker** and write-in candidate **Patrick Bravo** deserve election. Walker is the senior member of the Board, having first been elected in 2000. His continued service will benefit what will become an even younger (experience-wise) Board after the election.

Bravo, 34, is one of five eligible write-in candidates. He is a Deputy Director in the county Community and Economic Develop-

(Please see "Two Endorsed" on back)

HB 136

(Continued from front page)

the state's highest performing schools. Families whose income does not exceed \$95,000 are eligible for the plan. Students already attending private and parochial schools will become eligible for taxpayer dollars, and their parents can sock away subsidies they don't use in a college tuition fund.

Research shows little or no difference in performance between voucher and public school students. The proponents of the voucher plan would like you to believe that only greedy teacher union leaders and their members oppose the bill. In fact, the largest lobbying coalition ever in public education politics opposes the bill and has warned of its devastating effects on public school funding. The coalition includes the Ohio Federation of Teachers, the Ohio Education Association, the Ohio Association of School Business Officials, the Ohio PTA (P as in Parent), the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, the Ohio School Boards Association, the Ohio School Psychologists Association and the Alliance for High Quality Education. Try getting that diverse group to agree on any other issue having to do with public schooling!

Voters elected John Kasich and those who subscribe to his legislative platform. His administration intends to "sell Ohio," and not in a positive sense. Education is at the top of the for sale list. As more public funds are diverted to private education, the same people who are underwriting that cost will be asked to pass local levies to replace lost revenue. Doesn't make much economic sense for taxpayers to support two systems of education, one private and one public. Through ignorance and apathy, voters have elected policy makers who will have us doing just that.

Strides Tradition Continues in 2011

A tradition is defined as a time-honored practice. That's pretty much what AEA's sponsorship of the annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk in Akron has become. For the sixth consecutive year, AEA members, including numerous breast cancer survivors, gathered a week ago Sunday at Akron University's athletic field house to help



Walkers (from left), Dee Williams, Survivor Char Tabata, AEA VP Ranay Hatherill, Patty Gonzalez, Lisa Feist and Roberta Petrasek pause for a photo op for the cover of Vogue Magazine.



AEA Treasurer Janell Brown, Executive Assistant Mikelann Adams and Strides Co-Captain Laura Jatich hosted the AEA tent at the event.

Two Endorsed

(Continued from front page)

ment Department. He is active in several Democratic organizations and serves as the president of Summit County Young Democrats.

The ballot for Akron's school board race will include the names of Walker and the other candidate who filed a timely petition, as well as three blank lines for write-in candidates. **To vote for a write-in, you must include the candidate's name on one of the blank lines AND darken the bubble appearing to the left of the line.** Your vote will not be counted unless both are done.

Group to "Focus" on Classroom Workloads, Impact on Instruction

Visit any Akron school and there's a real possibility you may walk away thinking, "This place is in full meltdown." What might give you that impression is the frantic pace at which people are going about their business, in some cases with looks of frustration, perhaps desperation, on their faces. This year is unprecedented in terms of the magnitude of pleas from teachers (and some principals) to do something about everything they are being asked/told to do at the expense of instructional time.

Just how prevalent this sentiment is across the district and between buildings will be one issue examined by a focus group of teachers and administrators the Association intends to host within the next several weeks. A **focus group** is a form of research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a specific topic. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members. The group is led by a facilitator who poses the questions and leads the discussion. We have asked **Larry Vuillemin** to facilitate our focus group. Larry has extensive experience in this area through his work at Heart to Heart Communications.

What appears to be causing the unsettled environment in some (frankly, we don't know how many) buildings is the convergence of several new district initiatives with older ones. Lesson and unit design, PLC's, 100 Book Challenge, and Instructional Rounds are the most frequently mentioned. Aggravating the situation is the likelihood that some of the above, lesson design in particular, are being "rolled out" differently among buildings.

It is our hope that through the use of a focus group, circumstances identified as needing attention will be addressed or resolved in a timely and efficient manner. Members will be informed of the group's work and any action that may follow.

Strides

raise awareness about breast cancer and funds to support research. The AEA Raffle, a tradition within the tradition, generated \$813 in tickets sales. All raffle prizes were donated, so all proceeds went to the cause. Kudos to **Kelly Goodpasture** who donated several pieces of fine jewelry, to **Betty Jane CLC** for their wonderful "Think Pink" basket, to **AEA** for the LCD television and Circle K and Giant Eagle gift cards and to the **Cancer Society** for the Boyd's Bear basket and Strides Apparel basket. We will recognize the outstanding work of our building captains and report on the total amount of funds raised in the next **Random Notes**.