

Random Notes

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APS To Conduct First-Ever Dependent Eligibility Audit

For the first time ever, Akron schools will conduct a health insurance dependent eligibility audit. The audit is scheduled to begin this month. The district has retained Chapman Kelly, Inc. to manage the audit. The School Employees Health Care Board (a state oversight board) has identified eligibility audits as one of their “best practices” and has mandated that all school districts conduct such audits beginning this year.

Generally speaking, eligibility audits yield a savings—significant in many cases—in health care plan expenditures. These savings are the result of removing people from the plan who shouldn’t be on it. It is not unusual to uncover individuals who remain on a plan even though they are no longer eligible. They are typically ex-spouses or children who were at one time covered as dependents but no longer meet the plan’s definition of “eligible dependent.” In most cases, they have managed to stay on the plan simply because of an oversight, but there have been cases in which the insured has purposely failed to notify the plan that a covered dependent’s status has changed.

Eligibility audits have nothing to do with reviewing plan usage, or questioning insureds about the type or number of claims they have filed for themselves and/or their dependents.

Employees will be asked to furnish information that “proves” the eligibility of their covered family members. Chapman Kelly will identify the information needed for the audit; you’ll likely be asked to furnish a marriage certificate, a birth certificate or a tax record.

An “amnesty” period is planned to allow employees to report ineligible family members who are still receiving coverage.

We urge all members to have patience with the process and to cooperate fully and quickly when asked for information during the audit. It is to our advantage that the district not spend health care dollars on those who do not qualify for coverage.

Contract Rollover a Possibility

The administration has spoken with us—and other employee groups—about the possibility of rolling over our contract for the 2009-2010 school year. While no formal request has been made to date, we expect that the administration will ask that we keep the current contract in place for a year, allowing some time for the school funding picture and the economy in general to begin clearing.

Any hopes that we had of the Governor being able to make any significant progress toward reforming school funding in the foreseeable future have evaporated completely. The day before winter recess, Governor Strickland ordered the third round of state budget cuts this fiscal year, including a mandate that the State Department of Education identify \$30 million in spending reductions. ODE’s reductions have been approved by the Budget and Management Office and fortunately did not include any reductions in foundation funding or other big ticket items such as
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Contract

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transportation. However, some subsidy and grant programs did not escape the ax, and these cuts will impact districts.

If and when we are formally asked to extend the contract, the Negotiating Team will make a recommendation to the Trustees. If the decision is to recommend an extension, the membership will have an opportunity to vote to approve or reject the recommendation.

Over \$45,000 Raised

2008 Strides Effort "Amazing"

More schools than ever participated in this year's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk and fundraiser for breast cancer research. Forty-eight buildings got involved this year, exceeding by 4 the previous high set in 2005. Several buildings joined the \$1,000 Club. Those buildings and their captains are: Administration, **Kathy McVey**; Betty Jane, **Jean Crofford**; Crosby Alternative, **Jim Perge**; Ellet, **Jo Dickey** and **Michelle Whitehurst**; Essex/King, **Char Tabata** and **Dana Shoff**; Findley, **Kathleen Shippy**; Garfield, **Diane Zupke**; Goodrich, **Charlene Panovich**; Hatton, **RaDonna Mair**; Hyre, **Deb Firtha**; Jennings, **Steve Culp**; Litchfield, **Nancy Camburn**; North, **Nicole Delahanty**, **Rich Cola** and **Suzanne Nixon**; Ritzman, **Sue Hinson** and Windemere, **Dee Williams** and **Julia Sues**.

Thanks to all for making the 2008 Walk a huge success.

New Teacher Project to Begin Surveying Members on Teacher Evaluation

We mentioned in a recent edition of the *Notes* that a well-known research group, The New Teacher Project, is conducting a national study to examine state and district policies and practices associated with the dismissal of continuing contract teachers. Ohio is one of four states included in the study (Illinois, Arkansas and Colorado are the others). Akron is joined by Toledo and Cincinnati as the only Ohio districts participating.

The centerpiece of any study about teacher dismissal practices must be an analysis of the evaluation process. In order to evaluate teacher appraisal in Akron, TNTP will survey teachers, teacher-leavers (those who left the district for a reason other than retirement) and administrators to gauge perceptions and attitudes about teacher evaluation in Akron. It is important that teachers who are asked to respond to the survey do so in a straightforward manner. Anonymity will be preserved throughout the study.

TNTP will publish its findings, conclusions and suggestions at the end of the study. AEA, which has a seat on the state-wide advisory panel, will be heavily involved throughout this initiative.

Odds and Ends

The Yanks Are Coming The dreaded **New York Yankees** are the opposition for the 28th Annual AEA Night at the Stadium. Mark your calendars now... May 29th 2009. First pitch is 7:05, pre-game picnic at 5:00. Flyers will be in the buildings in March. Order your tickets early; this one will sell out "in a New York minute."

Attention Job Sharers If you are interested in sharing a job next year but don't have a partner, check the AEA Classifieds on the Web (www.akronteach.org). If you don't find a partner there, register and perhaps someone will find you! Members wishing to job share must inform HR by March 1, and teams must be formed no later than April 1.

Secondary District Rep Elections All Secondary reps' terms on the Board of Trustees expire on July 31. An election for the positions will be held May 5 and 6. Members interested in running for a position must submit a petition to the AEA Elections Committee by the end of the month. Petitions are available from the AEA Office.

Christmas Party Pictures We have several pictures at the office of children with Santa at the AEA Christmas party. Some naughty parents forgot to pick-up the pictures. Please call if you didn't get your child's picture (434-2181).

Lost and Found A green-banded watch with a Christmas tree on the face was left at the party. Please call us if your child lost this watch.