

**November, 2020**

Akron Education Association  
681 North Main Street, Akron, Ohio 44310-3016  
Phone: (330) 434-2181 Fax: (330) 434-6826  
www.akronteach.org

# AEA *briefs*

THE AKRON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION IS A UNION OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS ADVOCATING FOR SHARED LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS. WE ARE COMMITTED TO USING OUR VOICES TO MAKE EDUCATING ALL CHILDREN A PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITY. OUR BELIEF IS TO PUT CHILDREN AT THE CENTER OF EDUCATION. WE ENDEAVOR TO WORK TOGETHER WITH PARENTS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS AND SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL EDUCATION.

*Dear Colleagues,*

*As we head into the holiday season, it is certainly my hope that you will all take the time to relax and enjoy your families and friends while staying safe and healthy. Our educators have been working tirelessly since last March to develop, plan and deliver high quality instruction to all of our students, and each and every one of you certainly deserve some much needed time off.*

*With the implementation of the APS Remote Plus model, I am confident that the support we are able to provide our students and families, both on-site and remotely, will only add to the student success which our 100% Remote Teaching and Learning has achieved since the beginning of this school year.*

*The Akron School Board will be meeting in December to consider how the District will move forward in January. As you know, the Restart Teams have already presented three models to the Board. These models include a 100% remote model with Remote Plus supports, a blended model and a 100% return to the classroom model. The Board will be considering all Health and Safety guidelines as well as the status of COVID within Summit County and Ohio. We will continue to update your AEA Building Representatives regarding any changes which may occur prior to the Board meeting.*

*I would again like to wish all of you and your families a safe and healthy Thanksgiving. Take care.*



**Pat**

*Pat Shipe, President  
Akron Education Association*

## REMOTE PLUS WITH SUPPORTS

The District Restart Teams have finalized plans for the implementation of specific Remote Plus Support models. The timeline for the implementation of these models is as follows;

- Week of 11/15/20—On-Site Teacher Volunteer Surveys will go out.
- Week of 11/22/20—Student/Family Surveys go out.
- PLC or Academy Teams identify on-site students. Teacher Collaboration time is utilized by grade level teams to begin planning for support time.
- 12/7/20 Buildings begin the implementation of Remote Plus Support models. (11/30 start for HS Academies)

Should you have any questions or concerns, please see your AEA Building Representative.

## UNRESTRICTED ABSENCE DAYS– 4.09.E

**Now is the time of year when you should be reviewing the use of any unrestricted days which you may have earned, and scheduling any which you may plan to use. Please review the language in 4.09.E listed below for restrictions which may apply to the use of these days.**

### **E. Unrestricted Absence**

Use of a day of unrestricted absence is prohibited on Parent-Teacher Conference Days and Open House except that a member may make use of a day of unrestricted absence on a Parent-Teacher Conference Day if the member has fulfilled his/her conference obligations by making eight (8) home visits before Parent-Teacher Conference Day and before requesting the day as a day of unrestricted absence. The use of a day of unrestricted absence is **further limited during the month of June to a maximum per day of two (2) members per building or 10% of the total building staff, whichever is greater.**

**The number of members taking unrestricted absence on any one (1) day shall not exceed fifty (50).** Unrestricted absence days are to be taken at a time **other than immediately prior to or after a scheduled holiday and/or vacation period.** To qualify for the one-hundred (100) day benefit in paragraph one (1) below, the member must first complete one (1) year of service with the Akron Public Schools.

1. For more than one hundred (100) accumulated sick days: authorization of one (1) day unrestricted absence shall be given any member with an accumulation of one hundred (100) or more sick days as of the member's first work day each school year.
2. For absence of not more than five (5) days for the previous school year: authorization of one (1) day unrestricted absence during the current school year shall be given any member whose absence was not greater than five (5) days for the previous school year.
3. One (1) Personal Day.

In lieu of the day(s) of unrestricted absence in 1, 2, and 3 above, a member may elect:

- a) Payment of \$100.00 for one earned but unused day
- b) Payment of \$300.00 for two (2) earned but unused days
- c) Payment of \$500.00 for three (3) earned but unused days

The unused days referenced in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 above will be paid automatically, prior to August 1<sup>st</sup>, to any member who is eligible and who worked any portion of the school year. **Members shall be prohibited from taking the Personal Day during the months of May and June.**

Absence for unrestricted absence, jury duty, vacation, and professional development (Modification of Worksite) shall not be counted when determining a member's eligibility for the options based on absence of no more than five (5) days in the previous school year. Extended absences for personal illness (more than twenty (20) workdays in succession) shall be counted as one (1) absence. Modification of worksite is not considered an absence.

## **TWO SCREENS FOR TEACHERS**

Recently, the District informed members who received a donated computer screen under the "Two Screens For Teachers" program that you were to supply the serial number of the screen because the Board believed that these monitors were APS property and needed to be inventoried.

The Association reached out to the donor company and was informed that the monitors were, in fact, the property of the teacher who received the donated screen. We then informed the District's Technology Department.

Please note that if you received one of these monitors it is yours to keep. However the District would like to remind you that, in keeping with past practice, they will not be servicing any equipment which is not APS property.

## **ELEMENTARY SUPPLY ALLOWANCE**

During the immediate past contract negotiations, the Board proposed changing the elementary supply allowance to a stipend for all eligible teachers. Their argument was the amount of the supply allowance would be raised from \$150 to \$170 and the additional \$20 would cover taxes which would be assessed on the stipend. AEA did not agree to this proposal. The AEA Team was concerned that the additional \$20 would not cover the withholding on this amount. The Board took this proposal to Fact-Finding and the Arbitrator recommended the change in contract language.

As it turns out, the Association's concern was warranted. After the first stipend was issued not only taking deductions for Medicare, federal, state and local taxes, but also STRS withholding, the Payroll Department acknowledged that the STRS withholding was in error and reissued the stipend. However, the reissue still deducted Medicare, federal, state and local taxes. After those withholdings, teachers were left with \$119.93 instead of the \$150 supply allowance they had received under the old contract language. Under this new Board language, \$119.93 was left for supplies out of the \$170 given to teachers. As it turned out, \$50.07 was given to the government instead of being used toward supplies for our students. Doesn't seem to make much sense or benefit our students, does it?

In addition, the Board then past a resolution at their 10/26/20 meeting which authorized an additional one-time payment of up to \$30.00 to each elementary staff member receiving the teacher allowance stipend. The idea was that this amount would bring the final stipend total closer to the original \$150.00.

The challenge we are now left with is the resolution also states, *"For future years, the District and Union leadership need to meet and agree upon a method to resolve the required tax issue on this stipend."* The Association believes that the solution might very well be reviewing the initial objections which AEA expressed in negotiations and returning to the previous protocol for disbursement of this supply allowance. We will update you regarding future solutions to this problem.

## **TEACHER COLLABORATION TIME**

Teacher collaboration time was developed by the District Restart Teams to be utilized by teacher teams for planning and collaboration.

Teacher collaboration time is not to be encumbered by Administrators or utilized for staff meetings, PD, departmental meetings, etc.

With Remote Plus Support models being rolled out, it is of particular importance that this collaborative time be honored to give teacher teams time, within their workday, to develop, collaborate, and plan.

If this teacher collaboration time is being utilized within your building for something other than what it was intended for, please see your AEA Building Representative or contact this office.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS IN CLASSROOMS**

The recent request by administrators for staff to remove all personal items from classrooms appears to be in error. While building principals will be working with staff to correct any fire code violations, or remove any items which will impede social distancing requirements such as bean bag chairs, oversized seating, etc., you are not required to remove all personal items.

Should your building administration contact you regarding any fire code violations within your classroom, please work to get them corrected and in compliance as soon as possible.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please see your AEA Building Representative.

### 3.18 STAFF AND OTHER MEETINGS

Section 3.18 of the Agreement reads, in part, *“Meetings on the first work day of the school year shall be scheduled so that each member has the equivalent of one-half day to prepare his/her classroom for the opening day of school.*

**Attendance at meetings other than those specified in this section shall be voluntary.”**

Meetings which require attendance are;

- Once a month after school Tuesday staff meetings as outlined in 3.18.A.
- Annual Open House and fall and spring Parent-Teacher Conference Days (Thursday (5:30-8:30) or Friday (9:00 a.m.-12:00).
- Inservice meetings.
- Departmental, Grade Level or Special Subject Meetings as defined in 3.18.D.
- Records Day as defined in 3.18.E.

As stated above, all other meetings are voluntary. Recently, there has been an increased number of building meetings scheduled which are being labeled “required.” Should you have specific questions or concerns regarding this language, please see your AEA Building Representative or contact this office.

### HEALTH BENEFITS ENROLLMENT PERIOD

For the 2020/2021 school year, all those members already enrolled in the district Wellness Program or Paladina will automatically be re-enrolled in their respective program and will not be required to participate in the annual screening process.

**It is important to note, however, ALL benefit eligible employees MUST log into the district on-line enrollment portal and complete the benefit enrollment process. Even if you intend to keep your benefits the same for next year, you need to log in and confirm your demographic information and benefit selections. The deadline for the completion of this enrollment is November 20th.**

Please refer back to the email which the Benefits Department sent to all employees on 10/27/20 for directions on completing this process. Should you have any questions, please contact the Benefits office at 330-761-2937 for more information.

### NEW APS STAFF MEMBERS

One of the challenges we face during this time of social distancing and remote teaching is, not only staying connected with our students, but also keeping a connection with our colleagues. This connection is even more of a struggle for staff who are new to a building.

We would like to encourage all of you to reach out to any new staff member and make sure that they are feeling welcome and a part of your building teams. We are sure that the gesture would be appreciated.

### 3.37— ADMINISTRATIVE PROMOTION/PLACEMENT, ASSIGNMENT OF GRADES

Please be advised, even during 100% Remote Teaching and Learning, members are responsible for assigning grades. *“No grade may be arbitrarily changed.”* In addition, the teacher of record is responsible for assigning the final grade. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this language, please see your AEA Building Representative or contact this office.

#### **3.37 Administrative Promotion/Placement; Assignment of Grades**

In the event a student is placed in or promoted to the next grade in opposition to a member’s professional judgment and recommendation, a written record of the placement or promotion shall be made with a copy provided to the member and also placed in the student’s permanent record file.

Members are responsible for assigning student grades. No grade may be arbitrarily changed. If the issue of a proper grade is raised, members are expected to produce adequate records to justify a grade given.