

CFT and CPS have signed off on Ground Rules for Collective Bargaining Process.

CFT and CPS Bargaining teams have agreed to the following Ground Rules:

Type of Negotiations: Both teams have agreed to engage in a Problem Solving Bargaining Process through its first three phases: Story (background data), Interests, and Options with a right to have individual team time on the standards (objective criteria) tests for options that are being considered. Either team can meet at any time deemed necessary with time limits. If extended team time is needed that must be communicated clearly so that one team is not left waiting on another. At the end of each meeting the teams will set an agenda for the upcoming meeting.

Official Record: Both teams will provide one person (which could rotate inside each team) to assist in making a formal record of the proceedings noting all agreed upon decisions and modifications of contract language. This language will be shared electronically (Projected & Flash Drive) and in hard copy at the conclusion of each meeting.

Rules of Engagement: Mary Ronan will serve as the Contact Person, Stacey Hill-Simmons and Paul McDole will serve as team leaders for the district administration. Sue Taylor will serve as Contact Person/Team Leader for the CFT. Each team is free to bring up any issue that it feels is important to these negotiations. Both teams may at their own choosing designate other members of their respective delegations to represent and lead their teams' interests and or positions depending on the issues being negotiated. Further, both teams will have the right to seek outside expertise on any issue they choose and bring that or those expert(s) to negotiating sessions where these issues are being discussed. Team members will keep side conversations to a minimum.

Confidentiality: Both teams reserve the right to keep their governing bodies informed of the bargaining process, ground rules, and progress. As a rule, details of bargaining conversations, exploratory ideas, and other sensitive conversations shall remain within the confines of the bargaining meetings.

Dynamics / Behaviors: It is hoped that these negotiations will be conducted in a thoroughly professional and respectful manner. If at any time individual bargaining members or teams feel that the negotiations are at a stalemate or are going badly because of individual or group dynamics that are unprincipled, either team may stop the process to address the concern or request intervention by the facilitator(s) to address the issues. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved in a professional, respectful, or principled way, either team has the right to pull away from negotiations temporarily and abrogate the agreement of confidentiality.



Sign Off – Both teams will sign off on these ground rules with the following condition: The final day to add items to be negotiated will be January 9, 2007.

Health Care Plan Stopped, Charter Cap Retained, Ohio Core Amended in Final Hours of Legislative Session



Legislators did not enact a statewide health care plan for school employees in the lame duck legislative session that ended before Winter Break. OFT staff and other allied union representatives kept close watch for the amendment to surface as legislators finalized their last-minute deals.

The amendment to enact the plan would have bypassed the work of the School Employees Health Care Board, which is still in the process of completing its work to determine how such a plan might be structured and how it would impact some 500,000 Ohioans. The board is due to make a report to the legislature by Jan. 31.

The amendment to enact the plan, which would have circumvented the work of the board, surfaced in the Senate Health Committee Tuesday associated with HB 272. The amendment was circulated during the committee hearing, but when HB 272, pertaining to health savings accounts, came up for discussion, the amendment enacting a statewide health care plan for school employees was not offered for a vote.

The lame duck legislature concluded its business and is not expected to reconvene.

Interim OFT President Kathy Young said that phone calls and letters from OFT members made an impact on the outcome

of this and other issues in the lame duck session. "Our members helped make a real difference in these efforts by making a few simple phone calls to let legislators know how we needed them to vote if and when these issues came up," she said.

Ohio Core

A compromise brought more funding and more time to prepare students to meet the higher standards set by a bill to raise graduation requirements. The final version of the Ohio Core legislation included \$30 million for teacher training, up from just \$13 million in the original bill. The requirements will go into effect later than originally planned, with the class of 2014, so there is more time for students to develop the skills they need in order to meet the higher standards.

OFT has long supported raising academic standards, but fought for the time and a plan to prepare students to meet the higher standard. OFT also fought for the resources, finances and teachers, necessary to help students meet the higher goal.

Despite objections by OFT and some legislators, the final version of the bill includes a loophole apparently geared toward Life Skills Centers, a charter high school chain run by David Brennan's White Hat Management. The bill exempts these types of charter schools from having to meet the

same standards that students in public school districts will have to meet.

The House voted 55-40 to approve the bill; the Senate approved it 21-12.

Charter schools

A vast expansion of charter schools and possible elimination of the cap were averted in the final hours of legislative dealings. A handful of veiled accountability measures, many that won't be acted upon for 5-6 years, were added. Those that include delays: After the 2008-2009 school year, charters that have been in Academic Emergency for 3 or 4 consecutive years would be closed.

"That would be another 6 six years before anything is done about those failing schools," Young said. "Why should Ohio taxpayers and the children attending those failing charter schools have to wait that long?"

Again, Brennan's chain of drop-out charter schools is exempt from the new accountability.


The legislation also now requires that if a school district has not used a building for instructional purposes for at least a year and has no plan to do so in the next three years, the building must be offered for sale to charter schools.

OFT was critical of a recent report by charter school advocates that suggested the state establish capital funding for charters to be able to acquire space for their operations.

Sick of Being Called At Home? By Joyce Hooks, CFT Field Representative

It has come to CFT's attention that some administrators are attempting to implement a new sick leave policy that is contrary to the district's past practice. For years, the administration has respected a teacher's right to their privacy at home and has only telephoned them in emergency situations. However, teachers are reporting that they have received intrusive phone calls at their homes by administration while on sick leave. Certain administrators, upon telephone contact with the teacher, have requested teachers who have used as few as 1 day of sick leave to submit a doctor's statement before or upon returning to work. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that a 24 hour virus, suffering from a backache, migraine headache, upset stomach, or other minor illnesses are illnesses which may impede an individual's ability to perform their duties, but may not warrant the attention of a physician. It is simply ridiculous to request teachers who have been absent a few days and do not have a history of excessive sick leave usage to submit a doctor's statement prior to or upon returning to work. Often, it takes several days, if not weeks, to schedule an appointment and visit the doctor. Therefore, such action imposed by the administration will force many teachers on longer sick leaves or force teachers to come to school when they are ill. Both scenarios are not in the best interest of the teacher, children, or community. Also, requiring teachers to visit their doctor or an alternate doctor to get a statement justifying their illness is a poor usage of

taxpayer dollars and will not result in the lowering of the district's health care cost.



In some instances teachers have been reprimanded for not answering their phone while out on sick leave. Doesn't the administration understand that not responding to a phone call doesn't signify that the teacher is not ill? The teacher may have gone out to pick up medication, may be convalescing at a relative's home, may have turned their phone ringer off, or simply doesn't want to be bothered while trying to recuperate. Furthermore, the contract allows for sick leave usage for the care of an immediate family member that is ill and needs assistance. Will teachers now be required to provide administration with the phone numbers of all their immediate family members? Doesn't the family member have the right to a private phone number and privacy in their home?

Section 230 of the contract clearly governs the conditions and procedures for sick leave usage. The contract specifies the following:

When a principal has concerns about the frequent absences of a teacher, the principal should confer with the teacher to determine whether the district can assist the teacher with any problems that may be causing or con-

tributing to the teacher's absences.

*A teacher who has used 10 or more sick leave days during a school year may be required to provide a medical explanation or a physician statement justifying the absence. **Otherwise,** the teacher may be required to visit EAP.*

*If a principal has **reasonable suspicion** that a teacher is abusing sick leave, the principal may require the teacher to present evidence to justify sick leave usage or may give the teacher a written warning which **shall include reasons for the suspicion.** The teacher may choose to present evidence that the sick leave usage is legitimate to EAP or a similar service. If the principal is not satisfied with the evidence, the principal may refer the matter to the Director of HR.*

*If the Director of HR has **reasonable suspicion** that the teacher is abusing sick leave, the teacher may be required to visit EAP or be examined by a Board designated physician.*

You should note that any consultation with or services provided by EAP is confidential between the teacher and the EAP counselor. Please contact your CFT Field Representative if your contractual rights are being violated or if you are directed to provide your medical records/ information to your principal or the Director of Human Resources.

Early Retirement Notification Date Set: February 1, 2007

The early retirement notification date has been set. CFT-represented employees should notify the Board no later than February 1, 2007, in order to "receive an additional five days pay at the daily rate added to sick leave conversion in addition to their normal entitlement" (Section 700.4.s., p.76). Notification should be made by completing the blue "Separation from Service" form, available in school offices, HR and in the CFT/ACPSOP office.

The budget and staffing schedule for 2007-08, including the Transfer Round dates, has not yet been set, due to the transition in the CPS Treasurer's Office. By contract, the Federation President and the Human Resources Director will establish a committee annually to set budget and staffing time line dates. This has not yet been done. We will, of course, notify you once the time lines have been

Online Newsletter Highlights Ohio High School Program Models

The Ohio Department of Education has published a new online newsletter, *The Spotlight*, which highlights articles from the schools participating in the Ohio High School Program Models. The program models are frameworks that help educators design innovative curricula that lead to strong learning experiences for all. They set the stage for rigorous high school experiences that promote challenging courses that are engaging, inspiring and relevant to the real world.

Program models in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies demonstrate ways to organize high school instruction to improve teaching and enhance student learning. To view the newsletter, click here <<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx>>, then select *Ohio High School Program Models* at the bottom of the page.

Classifieds

FOR
SALE

VACATION FOR SALE

Hawaii Vacation Week June 16-23, 2007

Visit the Big Island, 5 star resort, Fairfield Hawai'i at Kona Hawaiian Resort.

2 bedroom/bath, deluxe kitchen, washer/dryer. New Resort, designed to recreate '30's charming island ambience.

Visit live volcano, etc.. \$1,150. Call Susan Fischer at 513-688-1550.



FOR SALE



Coin paid washer/dryer. Roper brand. Two months old. \$900 for set. Will deliver call Mrs. Robinson if interested at 513-470-4828 or 513-674-9285

To advertise in the classified section of the CFT Newsliner simply send your copy to cft@cft-aft.org with CLASSIFIED AD FOR NEWSLINER in the subject line, or fax your copy to 513-961-0629. Please do not list a school number or email address for contact information. All classified ads are subject to editing for space.



Advance Your Career – Obtain Your Master's Degree in Special Education, Early Childhood, or Adolescent and Young Adult (Math or Science)

COLLEGE OF
MOUNT
ST. JOSEPH

The College of Mount St. Joseph **announces** Open House Information Sessions for the Teacher Education Apprenticeship Master's (TEAM) Program. The dates and time are:

- Saturday, February 17, 9:00 AM in the Seton Center Corona Room
- Tuesday, February 20, 6:00 PM in the Seton Center Corona Room

The following areas will be presented:

- Intervention Specialist (TEAM MSE) **Special Education, Grades K-12**
- Inclusive Early Childhood (TEAM IEC) **Grades Pre-K-3**
- Adolescent and Young Adult (TEAM AYA) **Math or Science, Grades 7-12**

You may register for the Open House of your choice at www.msj.edu, or you may call the Education Department TEAM Office at 513-244-1645.

Cincinnati Federation of Teachers Association of CPS Office Personnel

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