Shaker Heights Teachers' Association

September 14, 2026, ISSUE #1

A Message from the President of the SHTA

ARTICLE I - RECOGNITION

1.01 The Board recognizes the Association as the exclusive representative for a bargaining unit of all certificated/licensed, full-time and regular part-time, salaried teachers, including but not limited to nurses, school counselors, school psychologists and speech and language pathologists, school library media specialists, International Baccalaureate coordinators, instructional coaches, student support coordinators, and student deans employed and assigned in the Shaker Heights City School District public schools…." (AGREEMENT BETWEEN The Board of Education of the Shaker Heights City School District and The Shaker Heights Teachers' Association)

To begin this year's first President's report, I would like to issue a call for solidarity. Not just because our union rights are once again in jeopardy based on this upcoming November election, but also because we need it among our members. I know that in times of political and social division, the pressure that we feel in our lives outside of work can easily slip inside our work world as well.

Primarily, our call is to educate the students of Shaker Heights City Schools. As a union of professional educators heading into our 50th year of existence, it is also to support and uplift one another while representing our collective bargaining agreement. That agreement includes all of us recognized in Article 1 above.

It's easy to lose sight of the fact that we are all stronger together. When pressures (and temperatures) rise, let's not turn on one another and lose sight of our collective goal as educators and union members. Let's not "other" the professionals in Article 1 that our agreement recognizes and that we collectively represent. The cliche "you only hurt the ones you love" rings true. We have to support one another in an ever more divisive world. If we can't support each other, who will? We receive support from our parents, our students, even our colleagues in administration, but if we turn our back on one another, we lose the solidarity that is the essence of union.

The summer and the first weeks of school have been eventful. I worked with members with legal issues over the summer. I met with SHTA Executive Board members at a meeting hosted by Secretary Chante Thomas. I met with new teachers along with Vice President Jessica O'Brien, Secretary Chante Thomas, Treasurer Bill Scanlon, Membership Chair Sharita Hill, Teacher Education Chair Kelly Grahl, and Special Education Chair Tito Vázquez. I toured construction sites in the district with Secretary Chante Thomas, Treasurer Bill Scanlon, and Special Education Chair Tito Vázquez. I asked Publications Chair Andrew Glasier to send an opening letter out to membership. I communicated with Membership Chair Sharita Hill on a membership survey. I worked with Teacher Education Chair Kelly Grahl on a "Know Your Rights" document with Executive Board and Legal input. I shared the Building Committee side letter with Executive Board members to discuss the ongoing program. I communicated with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) leader Brian Pearson about a union jobs career fair on September 12 at SEIU District 1199 in Shaker Square that we will attend. I communicated with Human Resources Director Dr. Tiffany Joseph regularly. I updated the SHTA Facebook

page with Publications Editor Andrew Glasier. I communicated with Special Education Chair Tito Vázquez regarding multiple building concerns. I communicated with SHTA Legal Counsel Brooks Boron about member issues. I communicated with Building Safety Chair and Sick Day Transfer Matt Zucca on air quality tests, Ludlow updates and building visits. I assisted a member with transfer questions. I voted along with the Executive Board to donate $500 to the Raider Run on behalf of the SHTA. I assisted a member with ADA accommodations. I communicated with the SHTA Officers regarding members with medical issues. Social Chair Enid Vazquez reached out on the SHTA's behalf. I communicated with Evaluation Committee members. I am working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the district on split class pay at the elementary level with our Legal Counsel Brooks Boron and Vice President Jessica O'Brien. I communicated with Director of Buildings, Grounds and Student Nutrition Dave Boyer and Sick Day Transfer/Building Safety Chair Matt Zucca on temperature issues at Ludlow. I communicated with members and Building Safety Chair Matt Zucca about members' heat concerns. I answered questions about planning time at the elementary level. I attended a fact finding meeting with a member.

Solidarity is a powerful concept to embrace. It is a lived experience as well as central union philosophy. My call this year is to embrace it fully. Reach out to your fellow SHTA members in all of our schools. Ask questions, collaborate, and communicate. Your SHTA Representatives, Executive Board Members, and Officers are here to help, but we all need to be part of the effort for solidarity to work.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. John Morris, President

IMPORTANT DATES

Monday, September 21, 2026
Yom Kippur
Schools and Offices Closes

Tuesday, September 22, 2026
Board of Education Work Session
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Thursday, September 24, 2026
Joint Board of Education Meeting
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Friday, October 2, 2026
LU: Professional Learning Day (No School for PreK Students) All Day

Saturday, October 3, 2026
Raider 5K
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Monday October 5, 2026
SHTA Executive Board

Monday, October 12, 2026
SHTA Representative Council - Fernway

SHTA OFFICERS' REPORTS

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome back,everyone! I will be the Vice President for the 2026-2027 school year and serve the remainder of Darlene Garrison's Vice Presidency. I am excited to take on this challenging role. As Vice President, I will represent SHTA at PTO meetings. The PTO does so much for our schools and students, and we ask that all teachers consider reaching out to the PTO, attend their events, or stop into a meeting to represent the teacher side of the PTO.

A friendly reminder to all SHTA Fellowship Grant recipients from last year that your receipts for reimbursement are due by Wednesday, September 30th. Make sure that you email your information and receipts to obrien_j@shaker.org. It will take approximately 2-3 weeks from the time I receive your documents for you to receive your reimbursement check. Please don't miss out on this opportunity. The new Becky Thomas Fellowship Grant application and information for the 2026-2027 school year will be shared with the membership on October 5th via Google Form. Since my last report, I have:

- Attended the District Leadership meeting and the summer SHTA Executive Board meeting.
- Communicated with the PTO about their meetings for the upcoming school year.
- Met with Membership & Election Chair Sharita Hill and a member to discuss their membership in the union.
- Represented a member over the summer in a fact finding.
- Attended the new staff orientation. It was wonderful to see all of the new faces joining our organization.
- Met with High School Head Representative Nick LaPete to discuss the concerns and questions of high school members.
- Met with Head Representative Nick LaPete and High School Principal Isaiah Wyatt about concerns at the beginning of the school year.
- Communicated with a member about FMLA questions.
- Worked with Membership Chairperson Sharita Hill regarding the survey about membership and contact information.

Dr. Morris and I know that it is very important for us to be available to members. We recognize that having both of us at the high school may be inconvenient for many members. Our plan is to work together to d make sure we are available to the members. If there is a need at any time for one or both of us to be available at a different building, we are asking Head Representatives to reach out to us, and we will make ourselves available to that building and their membership. I am looking forward to serving as your Vice President, and if you have any questions or need to reach out, feel free to contact me at any time at obrien_j@shaker.org.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica O'Brien (OB), Vice President

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Welcome back to the 2026-2027 academic year! My name is Chante Thomas and this is my first year serving the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association in the role of Secretary; however, it is my sixteenth year of service on the Executive Board, and I am beginning my 32nd year of teaching in Shaker Schools. I will be finishing the term of Secretary previously held by Lisa Hardiman.

I hope that you enjoyed rest and recreation this summer and are motivated to face all the excitement and challenges that the new school year is already bringing. My monthly responsibilities as Secretary include, but are not limited to, scheduling and inviting members to both Representative Council meetings and Executive Board meetings. I take the minutes and record reports for SHTA representatives, administrators, PTO representatives, officers and Executive Board members. These reports are an important part of the monthly SHTA newsletter.

I am also in charge of the SHTA drawing which takes place in February, the winner of which will receive two free tickets to the "A Night For the Red & White" fundraiser. In August, I welcomed the SHTA Executive Board for our first meeting of the year. Also in August, I had the opportunity to participate in walkthroughs of several school buildings along with Central Office administrators and members of the SHTA Executive Board. It was really nice to see the results of all the hard work of Shaker's custodial staff and other personnel. This work resulted in wonderful improvements and repairs to our buildings.

Lastly, I met with the new Membership and Elections Chair, Sharita Hill, to assist with her transition to this role. I also met with Lisa Hardiman for guidance as I prepared for the role of secretary.

You can always contact me at Mercer at (216) 295-5601 or email me at thomas_c@shaker.org if I can be of service to you.

Respectfully submitted,
Chante Thomas, Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

Welcome back to the new school year! I hope everyone had a wonderful summer and is ready to inspire our students. This is my 31st year as an SHTA member and my 21st year serving as the Treasurer.

As the SHTA Treasurer, I maintain our finances by creating a budget, paying bills, and monitoring our dues income. I oversee our investments as chairperson of the Investments Committee, which meets with our Edward Jones financial planner twice a year. I meet individually with our accountants to ensure our tax forms are up to date. I go through the process of having our accountants perform a compilation of our books each year with an audit performed every four years. I report our financial activity to the Representative Council and the members at large. I am also the treasurer for our Political Action Committee, for which I file paperwork with the State Board of Elections twice each year.

In May, the members of our Association approved the 2026-27 budget for our financials. If anyone has any questions about the Association's finances, please give me a call at ext.6296. Payroll deduction for dues ($36 per pay), for those who choose that option of payment, will begin with the October 1st

paycheck. Anyone who prefers to pay her/his $360 dues all at once can send a check to Sharita Hill at the High School. The Investments Committee will be meeting next month with Brady Krebs, our Edward Jones Advisor, and with Vince Julian, our Key Bank Investments Advisor, to discuss our investments and whether any changes need to be made.

I hope all of you, my SHTA sisters and brothers, have a great year. Let's give all of our students life-long educational memories. The 2026-27 budget and current financial reports are included below.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scanlon, Treasurer

Approved Budget 2026-27	
Account	***2026-27***
Accounting	**20,000.00**
Compensation for officers,	
representatives, et al.	
President	**16,559.31**
Vice President	**7,719.84**
Secretary	**7,719.84**
Treasurer	**7,719.84**
P.R. & R. Chairperson	**7,719.84**
Editor	**7,719.84**
Building reps. and alternates	**24,000.00**
Presidential Release Time	**10,000.00**
Conferences and meetings	**4,500.00**
Fellowships and Grants	**7,000.00**
Insurance	**7,000.00**
Legal	**20,000.00**
Negotiations	**0.00**
Executive Board expenses	**1,500.00**
Officers' expenses	**1,000.00**
Payroll taxes	**1,200.00**
Publications	**4,000.00**
Public Relations	**7,000.00**
Social	**3,500.00**
STRS (TPO contributions)	**11,000.00**
General Fund	**0.00**
TOTAL	**176,858.51**

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association
Balance Sheet
As of Sep 8, 2026

Assets	Total
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
Key Bank Checking	28,626.38
Key Bank Savings	100.02
Total for Bank Accounts	$28,726.40
Other Current Assets	
Edward Jones 13760-1-1	738,641.65
Edward Jones 13768-1-3	1,408,994.19
Key Investments	164,135.26
Uncategorized Asset	$0.00
Total for Other Current Assets	$2,311,771.10
Total for Current Assets	$2,340,497.50
Total for Assets	$2,340,497.50
Liabilities and Equity	
Liabilities	
Total for Liabilities	
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	201,324.23
Retained Earnings	2,112,833.73
Net Income	26,339.54
Total for Equity	$2,340,497.50
Total for Liabilities and Equity	$2,340,497.50

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association
Profit and Loss
July 1-September 8, 2026

	Total
Income	
Investments	
Change in Value for Key Investment	-69.08
Change in Value in Edward Jones	34,759.33
Edward Jones-Fees & Charges	-1,614.29
Key Bank Investments - Fees & Charges	-272.34
Total for Investments	$32,803.62
Total for Income	$32,803.62
Gross Profit	$32,803.62
Expenses	
Operations	
Accounting	82.08
Conferences & Meetings	344.00
Executive Board	50.00
Insurance	5,384.00
Legal	555.00
Publications	49.00
Total for Operations	$6,464.08
Uncategorized Expense	$0.00
Total for Expenses	$6,464.08
Net Operating Income	$26,339.54
Net Income	$26,339.54

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT

Welcome to the 2026-27 School Year! I hope everyone had a nice summer and is off to a great start teaching and learning. My name is Mike Sears, and I teach 8th grade American History at the Middle School. This is my 28th year in the district and my 31st year in education. This is my 22nd year of involvement with SHTA, and my 17th year as the chairperson for Professional Rights and Responsibilities. This position is also called Grievance Chair. My extension at school is #4770 and e-mail sears_m@shaker.org is a great way to contact me. I enjoy working with members and, as we tell our students, "there is no such thing as a stupid question." My cell phone number is (216) 571-0447. It is a good idea to text me first and introduce yourself. I may not answer calls from numbers I do not recognize.

The paycheck from September 16th should include a step increase if you qualify for one this year. Another way to advance on the salary schedule is by reaching continuing education levels like B.A. + 15 or M.A. + 30. The Board approves these changes in November and April.

I also serve on the district's Insurance Committee, which meets quarterly. Medical Mutual of Ohio replaced Anthem as our major medical health insurance company in January 2018. Delta Dental of Ohio replaced Anthem as our dental provider on January 1, 2025. Prescription drug information from Express Scripts is included on our Medical Mutual cards. Medical Mutual of Ohio runs our flexible spending account program. Members should have cards from Medical Mutual with member services phone numbers they can call as questions arise. I also recommend creating an account at Medical Mutual, so you can keep track of both your claims and flexible spending accounts all in one location electronically. Delta Dental of Ohio will not send you an insurance card, but you can print one after you create your online account using the above link. If any member has a concern regarding health benefits, I can help point them in the right direction. However, directly contacting the service provider is often the best way to have your questions answered.

For other needs related to Human Resources, here is an updated link to their website: Human Resources. On the Shaker intranet, members can also access the Employee Assistance programs, which includes Health Advocate. Health Advocate can help you with insurance claims, billing questions, and to find network providers. Nellie Brown is the Human Resources Specialist for Benefits. Her phone extension is #6218 and her email address is brown_c@shaker.org. She is a great resource if you have any questions related to insurance.
The district policy for maternity leave is in the contract. However, new mothers decide how many sick days they want to use and if they want to take any unpaid leave through the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). If you are pregnant, please contact Nellie Brown so she can assist you with FMLA paperwork. Also, please review the Parental Leave Considerations, which can be found on the Insurance and Benefits page of the staff intranet at shaker.org. These slides were updated in April 2026, and they also include important information about caregiver leave, adoption leave, and pregnancy support leave. You may want to carbon copy both Membership/Elections Chair Sharita Hill and I when you email Nellie about Parental Leave. Sharita has agreed to help members with medical leave questions this year, and to learn more about the Professional Rights and Responsibilities position. We will reach out and make sure you have all the information needed to make the best decision for you and your family. It is your responsibility to keep the Human Resources Department informed of changes in your family status (over the summer as well as during the school year) concerning births,

adoptions, deaths, divorce, marriage, or entry into military service. If these changes are not reported within 30 days, you will not be permitted to make this change until the next open enrollment, which is usually in November. Please contact Human Resources before the 30 day deadline. This may cost you money if you miss this deadline.

Personal days are personal. No one needs to know why you are taking a personal day. You do not need to fill out a form about a personal day. You may simply enter it on Frontline. However, you are responsible for keeping track of your own personal days. If you enter a 4th or a 5th personal day, you will forfeit pay for those absences. You may not use personal days directly before or after a holiday unless you fill out the personal day request form. Both the building principal and the Human Resources Department must approve the request. Administrators consider each case on an individual basis. If you have a question about this, please contact me.

If you use more than 5 sick days in a row, a building secretary will have to enter days 6 and up into Frontline. The Human Resources Department reserves the right to ask you for a doctor's note explaining your absence beyond five days . If you use 10 sick days in a row, the Human Resources Department will send you a form about Family and Medical Leave. You may choose to continue using sick days with appropriate documentation, or you may go on an extended and unpaid leave for family or medical reasons. Please call me if you are in this situation or if you anticipate being out for an extended time.

In recent weeks, I have:

- Worked with a member, SHTA Vice President Jessica O'Brien, Human Resources Director Tiffany Joseph, and Director of Curriculum and Instruction John Moore about an administrative initiated transfer to make sure the member would have a smooth transition to their new role.
- Spoke to Treasurer Donte Hayes at the end of June about payroll and possible arbitration for a Step III grievance.
- Attended a Legal Aid committee meeting on July 1st.
- Spoken to members of the Evaluation Committee about their August meeting, and proposed changes to the rubric for principals when determining member eligibility for the peer evaluation program.
- Communicated with a member about bereavement leave.
- Met with a member and a counselor about mistakes on Powerschool regarding class schedules and student enrollment.
- Attended both the August and September Executive Board meetings.
- Met with members and a principal about sharing classroom space at the Middle School.
- Spoke to Middle School Head Building Representative Kevin Thomas and a member about challenges with the schedules for paraprofessionals.
- Collaborated with Human Resources Specialist for Benefits Nellie Brown on a revised Parental Leave Considerations slideshow for all employees.
- Met with the Supplemental Committee on September 10th.
- Met with Membership/Elections Chair Sharita Hill about helping with medical leaves of absence and shared the Parental Leave Considerations slides with her.
- The fall Insurance Committee meeting has not been scheduled yet.

The current contract is available on the district website: Collective Bargaining Agreements. I strongly recommend reading it and using it as a reference. I am also happy to help you with issues of interpretation and clarification. Best wishes for a wonderful school year!

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Sears, chairperson

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Greeting colleagues and friends! Thank you for the continued opportunity to serve the Association as the Evaluation Chair. In this position, I serve as co-facilitator of the Evaluation Committee with Human Resources Director, Tiffany Joseph. I also work with Andrew Glasier and Addie Tobey to coordinate the Peer Evaluation Program. All members of the committee and I are available to answer your evaluation questions and concerns. I will continue to communicate information about evaluation procedures throughout the year through this newsletter and during SHTA Representative Council Meetings.

All buildings should have staff meetings to review the Evaluation OTES Overview slides by September 30. These slides serve as a resource for both teachers and evaluators as they engage in the evaluation process. There are numerous links to videos, examples of forms, the High Quality Student Data menu, and Ohio Evaluation System (OhioES) support. I have also updated the Evaluation Resource Packet with further explanation of evaluation elements.

Please complete your Annual Professional Growth Plan (PGP) in the Ohio Evaluation System (OhioES) by October 15th. The expectation is for two goals to be created this year. Teachers who have "Self-Directed" Professional Growth Plans or who are participating in the Peer Evaluation Program are not required to work with building administrators to create these plans, nor do they need to be approved by building administrators. Self-Directed goals are created and edited only by the educator. The OhioES indicates the educator's Professional Growth Plan status at the top of the PGP page. This plan should be discussed and reviewed throughout the year with your evaluator. Also, be sure to review the OhioES site and forms, as well as check your evaluation cycle and listed evaluator as soon as possible.

The effective use of High Quality Student Data (HQSD) is a part of the evaluation process. Teachers will need to:

- Choose two sources from the HQSD Instrument Menu. The Evaluation Committee will approve additional instruments as needed. Teachers who have Value-Added data must use it as ONE of their sources.
- Complete the HQSD Verification Form on the Ohio Evaluation System. The HQSD form link is on the left under the Professional Growth Plan on each teacher's evaluation overview page. Teachers should add the two measures they will use. Please input these measures as separate entries.
- Familiarize themselves with the OTES Rubric, particularly the references to use of data.
- Conference with their evaluators about their use of data.

The Peer Evaluation Program has well over 100 educators, counselors, and nurses participating across the district. It is exciting that this program continues to thrive as a unique professional learning opportunity. Peer Evaluation participants have been coded in OhioES. Please double check that you have access to your partner's evaluation so that any errors can be corrected right away.

Building principals and central administrators initiated a need for guidance regarding approval of peer evaluator applicants. The rubric was created by administration and revised with input from the evaluation committee. Moving forward, administration has agreed to collaborate with the committee when a need for revision to any

evaluation processes arises. Current peer evaluators and any teachers planning to apply to participate for the 2027-2028 school year should review the rubric closely. Peer Evaluation Decision Rubric

Peer evaluators conducting full cycle evaluations will receive $375 and those conducting off-cycle evaluations will receive $125. I appreciate the continued support and recognition of this program as valuable professional learning work. I truly believe that this work brings us towards alignment with other highly professional fields. Andrew Glasier (High School), Addie Tobey (Middle School) and I (Elementary) will continue to serve as the Co-coordinators of the program this year. We are happy to assist you in any way we can throughout the process.

As always, I am here to help answer teacher and evaluator questions and navigate any part of the process with you, as are all members of the committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Lena Paskewitz, chairperson

SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Hello, I am Anastacio Tito Vázquez, Jr., M.Ed. I teach at Shaker Heights High School as an Intervention Specialist. I have been an Intervention Specialist at SHHS for 24 years, 10 years at PEP and 1 year at CH/UH, for 34 years overall as an Intervention Specialist Educator. I am the SHTA District Chair for Special Education. I represent and support Intervention Specialists, Speech Language Pathologists, and School Psychologists across the district. I will represent you in any and all meetings with school administrators, district officials and others upon your request and or contractual agreement. If you have a question about your schedule, required student contact hours or general questions or concerns, reach out to me after speaking with your mentor teacher. My position in our Association is to collaboratively remedy and communicate concerns with Special Education District Chair Dr. Meghan Shelby, Supervisors Erin Dzolic (Pre-K - 5) and Jennifer Currie (6-12), and District administrators, along with fostering a positive relationship between administrators and staff.

This summer, I attended the SHTA Summer Executive Board meeting, toured the buildings, and attended the New Teacher Orientation with members of the Executive Board. I met with the Director of Special Education Dr. Shelby for the first of our scheduled monthly meetings. I communicated with both Special Education Supervisors Erin Dzolic (Pre-K-5) and Jennifer Currie (6-12) and provided advice and guidance to a member concerning scheduling concerns. I met with SHHS Principal Isaiah Wyatt and Associate Principal Liz Massey.

I spoke with Boulevard Building Representative Cathy Grieshop concerning staffing issues with special education students. I spoke with Mercer Building Representative Eileen Sweeney working collaboratively concerning a member's schedule concerns. I spoke with SHTA Vice President Jessica O'Brien concerning the amount of students with IEPs in various classes without an Intervention Specialist. I spoke with a member regarding concerns about SLP referrals.

Respectfully submitted,
Anastacio 'Tito' Vázquez, Jr., M.Ed., chairperson

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Welcome Back, SHTA Members! My name is Matt Zucca, and I serve as the Building Safety and Sick Day Transfer Committee Chair for the SHTA. One of my primary responsibilities is supporting members with concerns related to health and safety conditions in our school buildings. I work with building representatives and individual members to bring concerns forward to administration and collaborate on finding solutions.

I also assist members who may need to participate in the Sick Day Transfer Program (SDTP). In this role, I work with the Human Resources and Treasurer's Departments to facilitate the transfer of sick days and monitor pledged days from members. The guiding document for the program is found in our contract under Side Letter B.

Over the summer, I remained active in several areas on behalf of SHTA members. I participated in a summer Legal Aid Committee meeting and attended the summer Executive Board meeting hosted by Chante Thomas. I also discussed concerns regarding the timing of ClassWallet funding with Treasurer Donte Hayes. Once funding was confirmed, I notified the head building representatives so they could share the information with their members.

I received the air quality report following testing conducted at Ludlow Early Learning Center. The report is being reviewed as part of our ongoing attention to building health and safety concerns. I also toured Ludlow and Lomond with Sean Brown, Assistant Director of Building and Grounds, and Dave Boyer, Director of Buildings, Grounds and Student Nutrition, to gain a better understanding of building conditions and discuss areas of concern.

As we begin the new school year, I will continue working with building representatives, members, and administration to address health and safety concerns and to support members who need assistance with the Sick Day Transfer Program.

If you have a health or safety concern in your building, or if you have questions about the SDTP, please reach out to your building representative or contact me directly at zucca_m@shaker.org. I look forward to continuing this work on behalf of SHTA members throughout the school year.

Respectfully submitted,
Matt Zucca, chairperson

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Welcome back to the 2026-2027 school year!I hope you all had a relaxing and enjoyable summer! My name is Enid Vázquez, and I am pleased to be the new Social Committee Chair. This is my twenty-first year teaching at Shaker Heights High School. As the Social Committee Chair, I plan social gatherings and Happy Hour events for the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. In previous years we have started the year with a Back to School SHTA Happy Hour as well as celebrated Thanksgiving and the Winter Holidays with festive, social gatherings!

Every May, it is my pleasure to work with the district to coordinate and cater the Annual District Recognition Reception. This is an important event to celebrate our retirees, newly tenured teachers, and teachers earning fifteen and twenty-five year pins. Our SHTA President, Dr. John Morris, also awards an Association member with the President's Service Award each year. My final responsibility is hosting the Executive Board members for our monthly meetings.

For those of you who have never come to one of our social events, please give it a try! I guarantee that you will meet new people and have fun! If you have suggestions for me for possible events, feel free to contact me at vazquez_e@shaker.org. Thanks for your support!

Respectfully submitted,
Enid Vázquez, chairperson

POLICY COMMITTEE

My name is Timothy Kalan, and in addition to teaching art at Onaway & Lomond Elementary Schools, I am the SHTA Policy Chair. The Policy Chair's main concern is stewardship of the SHTA Constitution which defines our Association and provides us with the protocols that determine the structure of our operation. This document can be found at http://www.shtaweb.org/, along with our contract, newsletters and other interesting items.

I also serve on the district's Teacher Evaluation Committee, and run a Native Gardening club at Onaway through which I collaborate with the City of Shaker Heights, the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, and the Doan Brook Watershed Partnership.

I try to advocate for our membership as well as our school district at every opportunity, and try to focus on classroom-generated solutions for district-wide problem solving. Any questions concerning our Association's internal mechanisms can be directed towards me, as well as any concerning our Evaluation System and the implementation of OTES 2.0, (or ecological gardening!).

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Kalan, chairperson

MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Welcome back to the 2025-2026 school year! My name is Sharita Hill. This is my first year serving as your SHTA Membership & Elections Chair, and I am beginning year 12 as a classroom teacher. I teach science at Shaker Heights High School. If you need me, I can be reached by email at hill_s@shaker.org or my phone extension is #7123.

I am responsible for maintaining our membership directory and monitoring the collection of dues from payroll, or receiving a direct payment from the member. I also coordinate the elections and membership votes. Members who select payroll deduction shall have ten (10) equal deductions starting with the first pay in October of the current school year. Members who choose to pay by check must do so in full, prior to October 1st of the current school year. Payroll deduction shall automatically continue from year to year unless the member notifies the Association and payroll office in writing, prior to October 1st of the current school year, that he or she wishes to stop payroll deductions.

Members who wish to pay by check should be sending the check to my attention before October 1st. Our membership form can be found on our website at www.shtaweb.org. Completed forms should be scanned or mailed to my attention at the High School. Any certified employee of the Shaker Heights City School District who is employed as a Teacher or a Support Teacher becomes a member upon payment of annual dues.

The 2026-2027 Representative Council Elected Members are:
Ludlow (Pre-K) - Leanne Moses-Kruluts, Allison Colvin
Boulevard - Cathy Grieshop
Fernway - Jamie Harden, Tori Rosen
Lomond - Veronica Wadsworth, Krystal Allen-Jackson
Mercer - Eileen Sweeney
Onaway - Ellen Forquer
Middle School - Kevin Thomas, Addison Pretnar, Ben Stack, Seth Ungemach
High School - Nick LaPete, Jayce Bailey, Victoria Berndt, Brad Bullard, Adam Cohen, Megan Dora, Nalin Needham, Natalie Sekicky

Respectfully submitted,
Sharita Hill, chairperson

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

I am honored to serve as the new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair for the Shaker Heights Teachers Association. As an educator, instructional leader, former administrator, and advocate for students and teachers for over twenty-eight years, I bring experience teaching in inner-city Cincinnati Public Schools, higher education, and Shaker Heights City Schools, along with years of leadership in professional learning, culturally responsive practice, and equity-centered instructional work.

Throughout my career, I have facilitated Culturally Responsive Teaching, Equity Instructional Rounds, individual coaching, and district-wide professional learning designed to help educators examine practice, strengthen instruction, and create learning environments where all students can be successful. I lean into the work of Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, Dr. Gholdy Muhammad, Zaretta Hammond, Dr. Pedro Noguera, and Dr. Liza Talusan.

As DEI Chair, my goal is to support our membership with current research, and meaningful professional learning that helps us continue integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion into our International Baccalaureate curriculum and everyday instructional practices. This work cannot, and should not, be done in isolation. It requires collaboration among colleagues, administrators, students, and families.

For me, culturally responsive and inclusive teaching is more than a mindset, and more than providing additional support. It is about being intentional, culturally responsive, inclusive, and action-oriented at the same time; in the curriculum, in the classroom, and throughout our buildings; in ways that allow every student and educator to feel seen, heard, valued, and respected as individuals.

One of my primary goals is to help us put students first while supporting one another through this important work. Together, we can move beyond good intentions toward practical actions that strengthen our classrooms, our school community, and the experiences of every student we serve.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Nicole Sherman Patterson, PhD., chairperson

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Welcome back, everyone! I hope you all had a restful summer and that the new school year is off to a strong start. As Legislative Chair, my role is to keep SHTA members updated on key federal and state education legislation. Below are a few current policy updates and items to keep on your radar:

- **Ohio SB 19 (Math Requirements):** Ohio Governor Mike DeWine has signed Senate Bill 19 into law to address declining post-pandemic math scores across the state. Starting September 23, SB19 will require new pre-K–8 teachers to pass a proficiency test before being assigned to teach math, though failing will not prevent them from being hired for other subjects. Aimed at reversing pandemic-era learning loss, the law also mandates free, high-dosage tutoring for struggling students and requires underperforming schools to submit formal improvement plans starting in 2026. Additionally, the state will establish approved lists of high-quality math materials and randomly audit 5% of schools annually for compliance. (**more info here** & **here**)

- **Ohio HB 96 (Chronic Absenteeism):** Under Ohio's updated House Bill 96, students will now be flagged for chronic absenteeism if they miss at least 10% of required school hours—roughly 18 days—regardless of whether those absences are excused or unexcused. Aimed at early intervention rather than punishment, the law requires districts to notify parents once a student misses 5% of school time, which includes accumulated tardies and early dismissals. School leaders are urging families to prioritize daily attendance and utilize district resources, emphasizing that keeping kids in class is crucial for their academic success. (**more info here**)

- **Student Screen Time Bans:** Following recent phone bans, states and major districts are now limiting classroom screen time for young students, with Iowa, Utah, Tennessee, and Alabama passing new restrictions. Proponents want to curb unnecessary digital exposure, but tech industry groups warn these rules create heavy administrative burdens. Critics and education experts also caution that simple minute caps ignore the educational quality of screen use and miss the chance to teach healthy digital habits. (**more info here**)

- **Supreme Court Watch: Displaying Religious Documents in Schools:** Civil rights advocates have asked the U.S. Supreme Court to strike down a Texas law requiring public school classrooms to display the Ten Commandments. The appeal challenges a lower court ruling that allowed the displays, with families backed by the ACLU arguing that placing religious scripture in public schools violates the First Amendment's separation of church and state. A ruling in this case would directly shape the legal future of similar proposals like Ohio's Senate Bill 34, which would require public schools to display selected founding documents—a list that includes the Ten Commandments. (**more info here**)

Respectfully Submitted,
Matt Klodor, chairperson

SHTA PAC COMMITTEE

The SHTA Political Action Committee is gearing up for a midterm election year, and is hoping to get as many SHTA members involved as possible. Flyers will go out to buildings soon to help spread interest.

Jessica O'Brien has been updating the Facebook page, so feel free to follow along with that page, and information is being gathered to inform membership of the key races that are going on in Ohio, including where SHTA members can make direct campaign contributions.

Please be on the lookout for how you can get involved, aswe are hoping to have PAC representation in each building for this year. Our strength is in our voice and how many members are using it, so please consider making this year your most politically active yet!

Respectfully submitted,
Nick LaPete & Jessica O'Brein, co-chairpersons

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

My name is Bob Bognar, and I am pleased to continue serving as the Public Relations Chair for the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. I am a sixth-grade art teacher at Shaker Heights Middle School and have been an educator for 23 years. I value the strong sense of community within Shaker Heights and appreciate the opportunity to serve our membership through my work with the SHTA.

As Public Relations Chair, my responsibilities include helping to maintain a positive and visible presence for the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association throughout the school community. This includes placing advertisements in various publications, such as *Shaker Life Magazine*, *The Shakerite*, and *The Gristmill*.

I am also responsible for coordinating donations to organizations and programs that help enrich the lives and educational experiences of Shaker students. In addition, I coordinate the purchase of Teacher Appreciation gifts for our members, which are distributed during Teacher Appreciation Week.

Since the end of the last school year, I have completed several activities in my role as Public Relations Chair:

- Attended the SHTA summer leadership meeting at Chante Thomas's house.
- Processed payments for advertisements placed during the previous school year.
- Launched the new SHTA T-shirt sale and shared the information with the Publications Chair Andrew Glasier for email distribution to our membership.
- Compiled materials and information from past Teacher Appreciation gifts and shared them with the Social Chair to use as prizes.

As stated in the SHTA Constitution and By-Laws, I will continue working to *foster mutual understanding, good will, and respect among students, staff, community members, and administration*. I look forward to continuing this work during the 2026–2027 school year and supporting our members and the Shaker Heights community.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Bognar, chairperson

NEW TEACHER COMMITTEE

Hey, SHTA. My name is Kelly Grahl, and this is my 14th year teaching,10th year teaching fourth grade at Lomond Elementary. I am the Teacher Education Committee Chairperson. My role is to keep you informed of important dates and deadlines related to your licensure, salary classification, tenure, and tuition reimbursement, as well as to support new SHTA members in the district.

Did you take classes over the summer? Save your receipts and request your transcripts for tuition reimbursement and salary reclassification. The last opportunity to submit receipts and turn in transcripts will be December 1, 2026.

I am always open and willing to support you. Email me anytime if you have questions or concerns. grahl_k@shaker.org.

An aside: Over the summer, I finished reading *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880* by W.E.B. DuBois. A quote that stuck with me relates to our work as educators in America:

> "Nations reel and stagger on their way; they make hideous mistakes; they commit frightful wrongs; they do great and beautiful things. And shall we not best guide humanity by telling the truth about all this, so far as the truth is ascertainable?"

Let's do that. Tell the truth this year. Our students deserve it. (Also, read that book! Our lives depend on it!)

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Grahl, chairperson

LEGAL AID COMMITTEE

On Wednesday, July 1st, the members of the Legal Aid Committee met regarding the request of funds for a Step III Grievance. After discussing the matter, the committee decided unanimously not to allocate funding for this request.

As the chair of the Legal Aid Committee, it is my responsibility to convene the committee to consider requests for legal support from the SHTA as described in our constitution. Last school year, the Legal Aid Committee did not need to meet, which is a positive thing. "No report" is good news in the context of the Legal Aid Committee. It means we have not had any grievances that made it to Step III and needed to go to arbitration for resolution, nor any requests for legal support from members directly connected to their employment with the district. I am hopeful that this year will be equally uneventful and that all grievances are resolved to members' satisfaction before reaching Step III and the need for arbitration, but the Legal Aid Committee is ready to meet to provide support for our members whenever deemed necessary.

Respectfully submitted,
James Schmidt, chairperson

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Publications is in charge of creating, editing, and seeking submissions for the newsletter. I also often write editorials for the newsletter. I would like to thank Emilee Callahan, Valerie Doersen, Sarah Manary, Heather Pincoe and Trisha Romano for agreeing to edit the newsletter this year. I update our SHTA social media account on Facebook and the SHTA Instagram account. I also communicate with membership through our work email for our officers & Executive Board. Finally, I update the SHTAweb.org website, which we are currently working to redesign.

If you know of a member NOT receiving the SHTA Newsletter or email communications, please have them email me directly at glasier_a@shaker.org. If you wish to write an editorial for the newsletter, also please email me directly at glasier_a@shaker.org. Our cut off for publication is the Wednesday after the Representative Council Meeting. I hope to have an editorial from each of our school buildings throughout the year!

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Glasier, chairperson

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https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063673557291
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https://www.instagram.com/shtassoc/

MINUTES FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

SHTA President Dr. John Morris started the September 8, 2026 Representative Council Meeting at 4:30 PM. The meeting took place at Ludlow Early Learning Center. *Dr. Morris introduced* ***Superintendent David Glasner*** *and* ***Ludlow Principal Tiffany Maher*** *to the representative council.*

Superintendent David Glasner *and* ***Ludlow Principal Tiffany Maher*** greeted the members of the representative council and welcomed everyone back. They thanked the SHTA members for their attendance and wished all a good year

A motion for approval of the MINUTES from the May 14, 2026 Representative Council meeting was made by James Schmidt and seconded by Bob Bognar.

Administration Report
Director of Human Resources Dr. Tiffany Joseph was present for the SHTA Representative Council Meeting. She welcomed everyone back from the summer. She said it was good to see everyone. She explained that she hoped all were rested and rejuvenated.

PTO Report
PTO President Ms. Kristina Gobel was present for the meeting and discussed the following:

- The year started well.
- Each building's PTOs did a back to school activity at the schools.
- They are partnering with Van Aken District for a Back to School Supply Drive on September 27 from 4-8.
    - The PTO is collecting items and FACE (Shenita Siggers) will distribute them.
- The Raider 5K will be at the High School on October 3rd. Vendors will be on site from 7:30-11.
    - The PTO is asking for teacher and staff participation.

Officers' Reports

PresidentJohn Morris

- I worked with members with legal issues over the summer.
- I met with SHTA Executive Board members at a meeting hosted by Secretary Chante Thomas.
- I met with new teachers along with VP Jessica O'Brien, Secretary Chante Thomas, Treasurer Bill Scanlon, Membership Chair Sharita Hill, Teacher Education Chair Kelly Grahl, and Special Education Chair Tito Vázquez.
- I toured construction sites in the district with Secretary Chante Thomas, Treasurer Bill Scanlon, and Special Education Chair Tito Vázquez.
- I asked Publications Chair Andrew Glasier to send a year opening letter out to membership.
- I communicated with Membership Chair Sharita Hill on a membership survey.
- I worked with Teacher Education Chair Kelly Grahl on a "Know Your Rights" document with Executive Board and Legal input.
- I shared the Building Committee side letter with Executive Board members to discuss the ongoing platform.

- I communicated with SEIU leader Brian Pearson about attending a union jobs career fair on September 12 at SEIU District 1199 in Shaker Square.
- I spoke with Superintendent Dr. David Glasner regularly.
- I communicated with Human Resources Director Dr. Tiffany Joseph regularly.
- I updated the SHTA Facebook page with Publications Editor Andrew Glasier.
- I communicated with Special Education Chair Tito Vázquez concerning multiple building concerns.
- I communicated with SHTA Legal Counsel Brooks Boron about member issues.
- I communicated with Building Safety Chair and Sick Day Transfer Matt Zucca on air quality tests, Ludlow updates and building visits.
- I assisted a member with transfer questions.
- I decided with Jessica O'Brien, Chante Thomas, and Bill Scanlon on Raider 5K to contribute $500 for Logo on race shirts and website (Smaller placement than Marquee and Platinum)
    - Table at event, if desired. I shared signage with logo in Race Village. Social media, thank you with logo
    - 4 free race entries (Andrew Glasier, James Schmidt, Sharita Hill, Adam Cohen)
- I assisted a member with ADA accommodations.
- I communicated with the SHTA Officers about members with medical issues. Social Chair Enid Vazquez reached out on the SHTA's behalf.
- I communicated with Evaluation Committee members.
- I am working on an MOU with the district on split class pay at the elementary level with our legal counsel Brooks Boron.
- I communicated with Director of Buildings, Grounds and Student Nutrition Dave Boyer and Sick Day Transfer/Building Safety Chair Matt Zucca on temperature issues at Ludlow.
- I communicated with members and Building Safety Chair Matt Zucca about members' heat concerns.
- I answered questions about planning time at the elementary level.
- I attended fact finding with a member.

Vice President **Jesssica O'Brien**

- Welcomed everyone back to school.
- Informed members that I will be the Vice President this 2026-2027 school year and serve the remainder of Darlene Garrison's Vice Presidency.
    - Excited to take on this challenging role.
- As Vice President will attend PTO meetings representing SHTA.
    - The PTO does so much for our schools and students, we ask that all teachers consider reaching out to the PTO, attend their events, or stop into a meeting to represent the teacher side of the PTO.
- A friendly reminder to all SHTA Fellowship Grant recipients from last year that your receipts for reimbursement are due by Wednesday, September 30th. Make sure that you email your information and receipts to obrien_j@shaker.org. It will take approximately 2-3 weeks from the time for your reimbursement check.
- The new Becky Thomas Fellowship Grant application and information for the 2026-2027 school year will be shared with the membership on October 5th via Google Form.
- Attended the District Leadership meeting and the summer SHTA Executive board meeting.
- Communicated with the PTO about their meetings for the upcoming school year.

- Met with Membership & Election chair Sharita Hill and a member to discuss their membership in the union.
- Represented a member over the summer in a fact finding.
- Attended the new staff orientation, and it was wonderful to see all of the new faces joining our organization.
- Met with High school Head Representative Nick LaPete to discuss concerns and questions of the high school membership.
- Met with Head Rep Nick LaPete and Principal Isaiah Wyatt about concerns at the beginning of the school year.
- Communicated with a member about FMLA questions.
- Worked with Sharita Hill regarding the survey about membership and contact information.
- Dr. Morris and Jessica O'Brien know that it is very important for us to be available to members. They recognize that having both the President and the Vice President at the high school may be inconvenient for many members. The plan is to try and make sure we are available.
- Am looking forward to serving as your Vice President, and if you have any questions or need to reach out, feel free to contact me at any time.

Secretary Chante Thomas

- Hosted the summer Executive Board Meeting.
- Attended the new teacher meeting with the executive board officers.
- Participated in the building walk-throughs at Ludlow Early Learning Center and Lomond Elementary School.
- Met with Sharita Hill for transition training into her new role as membership and elections chair.
- Met with former secretary Lisa Hardiman for transition training into this new role as secretary.
- Sent out invitations to the exec board meeting on September 1st and representative council on September 8th.

Treasurer William Scanlon (absent, reports shared by Jessica O'Brien)

- Financial reports were presented.

Building Representative Reports

Boulevard - Cathy Grieshop

- Thank you to the Boulevard PTO for the welcome back lunch provided during Professional Development Days.
- We are also thankful for the popsicles they brought to school for the students and staff on the super hot day.
- Thank you to Principal Jasmine Venson for providing breakfast for the staff during the PD days. These treats are much appreciated!
- Reached out to the IT department about cell phones not being able to connect to the Wifi during the professional days and our inability to use cell phones in the building. The connection issue was rectified. Many phones still do not work well in the building. This is a safety issue.
- Reached out to MTSS Equity Coordinator Dr. Lydia Kruse and Director of Curriculum Dr. John Moore to find out more about the process of admitting early entrance kindergarteners. Dr. Kruse responded with more information about the scales used.

    - We are seeing a disconnect with the students who were admitted and how they function in an actual classroom.
    - Dr. Kruse is willing to continue to look at this issue for next year.
- Many teachers were frustrated with the delay in ClassWallet being funded. They shouldn't have had to float the money they spent for such a long time.
    - We hope that the funds will be available starting August 1st next year.
- Working in the oppressive heat last Wednesday was difficult and dangerous.
    - We had one teacher faint from the heat in her upstairs classroom. EMS was called.
    - Many teachers do not feel that it was safe for the staff and students to be at school in the 90+ degree heat.
- Kindergarten began the school year with a deficit in paraprofessional and kindergarten helper support. One kindergarten helper did not begin until September 1st but can only come Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. The second helper starts September 9th full time. This creates significant challenges for both students and teachers.
    - Thank you to Principal Jasmine Venson for working very hard to get us the new paras and kindergarten helpers. The kindergarten team appreciates the hard work.
    - In kindergarten, it is not equitable or sustainable to have one paraprofessional shared between two classrooms when there are six students with IEPs—five in one classroom and one in another. Three of these students are runners and clearly need one-on-one support. "Access to a paraprofessional" is not enough for many of our kindergarten students.
- Each classroom has unique student needs that require consistent, appropriate support throughout the school day. Kindergarten is a different entity than other grades, as these little ones require more support, adjusting to school.
- Adequate staffing schoolwide is essential and critical to ensure that students receive the services and attention outlined in their IEPs, while also allowing teachers to effectively support the needs of the entire classroom.
- As we continue to increase paraprofessional responsibilities and the number of students they are responsible for, we believe the District should consider increasing the pay scale in order to entice more applicants.
- A floating building substitute is missed. We spend a lot of time scrambling to get the students help they need and providing coverage for paraprofessionals when there are absences or they are at lunch or their break.
- We are asking the district to address this staffing deficit and provide equitable support for our kindergarten classrooms and all classrooms. We also wish we were able to pull from the classroom teacher substitute pool to cover paraprofessional absences.
- We understand that raising our paraprofessional salaries, providing a building sub and hiring more paraprofessionals costs money, and that the district is working hard to cut costs, but isn't this cheaper than a possible lawsuit for not fulfilling the students' needs and rights?

Fernway - *Jamie Harden, Tori Rosen*

- Thank you to FE PTO for the continuous support and the wonderful meals and treats at the start of the school year.
- Presented a brief introduction to the FE staff during PD.
- August 31, 2026: Sent an email encouraging members to participate in the Building Committee.
    - The first meeting will be scheduled for late September.

- First touch-base meeting scheduled with Fernway Principal Aderica Grier for September 9th (Jamie Harden & Tori Rosen).
- Staff continue to experience difficulty with reliable cell phone connectivity within the school building, similar to connectivity challenges reported in other buildings throughout the district.
- At the same time, staff are expected to use their phones for essential safety and communication tools, including Navigate360 and ParentSquare, making reliable connectivity an important concern for staff safety and effective parent communication.

Lomond - *Veronica Wadsworth, Krystal Allen-Jackson*

- Thank you to the PTO and Lomond Principal Charles Dorsey for providing popsicles during the heat wave on Wednesday.
- Thank you to the PTO for the meals, the treat trolley, and the support at the beginning of the school year.
- Question from staff regarding the planning period being chunked into two parts; per SHTA President Dr. John Morris, this aligns with the current collective bargaining agreement.
- Many staff members shared concerns related to the district's cooling plan during the extreme heat last week.

Mercer - *Eileen Sweeney, Nicole Cicconetti*

- The administration provided a welcome back breakfast for the staff on our first day back to the building. It was a great way to start the school year. It was much appreciated!
- The PTO provided a delicious Chipotle lunch for the staff during the professional learning days.
- Thank you also to our PTO for our very generous goody bags for teachers, which included amazon gift cards. They provided popsicles for all students and staff during the heat wave at the beginning of September. We love our PTO.
- This month I met with Mercer Principal Ronesha Campbell for our weekly meeting. We discussed the increased amount of workload on teachers, especially related to new expectations for Math Tier 1 Plus lessons.
    - Mrs. Campbell reported time during CPTs will be dedicated to planning and collaborating for these lessons.
- Mrs. Campbell is meeting with new staff members at least twice per month in order to ensure they have pertinent information and training on the scope of their roles.
- Mrs. Campbell met with Security to address concerns relating to door latches.
- Lockdown drills are coming and additional training for staff will be implemented.
- The staff meeting on September 14th will communicate our crisis response team procedures.
- Our custodians worked hard at getting our building ready for our students. The building looks beautiful. Our wonderful administrative assistants have done a tremendous job supporting staff to get the logistics ready for students. Thank you!!!
- Principal Campbell worked hard to support teachers by finding as much extra time as possible in the schedule for teachers to prepare their classrooms for students. This has not gone unnoticed. Thank you.
- I participated in the August Building Committee meeting.
- We discussed the committee norms, Spanish on a cart expectations, the temporary extension of building hours to accommodate teachers, and breakfast procedures. The meeting was positive and solutions oriented.
- Mercer is off to a great school year!

Onaway - *Ellen Forquer*

- On Wednesday, September 2, 2026 & Thursday, September 3, 2026 it was 89 degrees or hotter in the building.
- Maintenance Work - several teachers have put in for missing screens for their classroom windows - safety concern with bees entering the building, and in some instances, children could fall out of some of the windows (e.g. my office). Some screens have even fallen outside while students were outside during recess.

Middle School - *Kevin Thomas, Ben Stack, Addison Pretnar, Seth Ungemacch*

- There have been many staffing changes at the middle school since last year, including several new union members. The middle school union representatives are excited to welcome our new staff and have reached out to many of them personally, encouraging them to come to us with any questions or contractual concerns.
- I met regularly with both Middle School Principal Eric Forman and Assistant Principal George Clark, and they have been responsive to requests for information and open to suggestions during our weekly meetings.
- At our request, the principals changed the full-staff meeting that had been scheduled for the morning after Back to School Night.
- They also arranged food for staff members who needed to remain in the building between the school day and Back to School Night.
- I met with a teacher who had concerns about the schedule and the placement of students in elective classes. Building rep Seth Ungemach was able to meet with the member and address the concerns.
- I also met with Mr. Forman and Mr. Clark regarding classroom locks. Several rooms continue to have unique locks that cannot be opened without a special key.
    - Teachers assigned to those rooms now have copies of the keys; however, when those teachers are absent, there are safety concerns because substitutes and other staff may not be able to access the rooms quickly. Although the rooms can be unlocked for a substitute, the doors then have to be left either locked or unlocked, either of which could create safety concerns depending on the situation. We would like the district to reconsider having these rooms re-keyed to the ABC key so that all staff can access the spaces in an emergency.
- Building Rep Ben Stack came to me after meeting with a teacher who had concerns about job responsibilities when working with a paraprofessional. I discussed the concerns with Jen Currie and will be following up with her to seek further clarification.
- The most glaring concern this year was the heat in classrooms. We understand the constraints of the building, but would like upper administration to reconsider the guidelines used to determine when schools should be closed due to extreme temperatures.
- Several teachers reported that they nearly passed out, and my classroom temperature reached as high as 93 degrees. With humidity factored in, the heat index made the room feel closer to 110 degrees.
    - I commend the students and teachers who did their best to teach and learn under those conditions, but the situation was clearly unsafe and warrants further consideration

High School - *Nick LaPete, Jayce Bailey, Brad Bullard, Victoria Berndt,Megan Dora, Natalie Sekicky Adam Cohen, Nalin Needham*

- We'd like to start off our 26-27 school year with a big thank you to the PTO for the delicious lunch on

our first day back, as well as treating our students to donuts on their return - your generosity and work is so appreciated!

- I also would like to welcome back my fellow Rep Council members Megan Dora, Jayce Bailey, and Adam Cohen and to welcome the new Representatives to the Council: Brad Bullard, Natalie Sekicky, Vic Berndt, and Nalin Needham.
    - I believe SHHS has a strong team of council members and look forward to working with them. I also would like to thank the members of our Building Committee in advance for their work throughout the year.
- I met with Principal Isaiah Wyatt weekly, and would like to thank outgoing Head Building Rep Jessica O'Brien for attending the first meetings alongside me to help my transition into the role.
- We collaborated on a number of long-term subs needed for the 26-27 school year and all have been secured. I supported Principal Wyatt and a member with their class schedule options in a co-teaching scenario that was resolved satisfactorily.
- We addressed member concerns with our new grading policy and how PowerSchool is playing a part in those concerns, with a resolution hopefully being reached in collaboration with Data Systems and the Teaching & Learning Team.
- We are currently resolving an issue regarding the grading of one subject area in the building and hope to get ultimate clarity from the Teaching and Learning Team soon.
- I brought members' concerns for new attendance emails that are being sent to staff in an effort to collect attendance data earlier in each period throughout the day, which was clarified to accurately send "Bridge Period" calls to families following 2nd and 9th periods, and it will be explained further by attendance AP Mrs. Rashid in the future.
- I clarified for a member processes for student support.
- We discussed the rollout of the new Doorman app and member concerns over its efficacy and the effort needed to continuously track student use throughout the day with assurance that the data collected by Doorman will be used to refine our processes and hone in on student use of the app.
- I brought student safety concerns in a specific class to administration on behalf of a department head.
- I advocated for an adjustment to current processes for 504 re-evaluation to support a member, which is being looked into with central administration.
- I followed up with a teacher with a student issue that has been successfully resolved through restorative practices.
- We collaborated on choosing SHTA members to serve on the Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Group, and I advocated for further training on the new SMART boards that have been installed across the building. We are currently working on a schedule to accommodate more of the school for the SSF Hall of Fame Assembly, and I advocated to the administration to circulate school-wide assemblies and drills throughout the school day to not interfere with the same classes consistently.
- Members should never hesitate to ask our team for support, so please direct any questions or concerns to the Rep Team within your Department or directly to lapete_n@shaker.org.
- Cheers to a successful 2026-2027.

Ludlow - *Leanne Moses-Kruluts, Allison Colvin*

- Ludlow staff has welcomed new principal Tiffani Maher to Shaker.
- Principal Maher has stated her intentions to work with staff to establish procedures in the building and compliance with preschool regulations. She has also stated her intention to work with SHTA to address issues in the building.

- An emergency situation caused the September meeting with SHTA reps to be postponed; we are working to reschedule this meeting.
- Plans are to establish a new building committee for the current school year with interested staff members.
- Thank you to PTO for a much appreciated snack bar for teachers in the lounges.
- Thank you to Principal Maher for breakfast and the Shaker Foundation for lunch on one of the PD days.
- Building and grounds staff have visited the building multiple times in the past month. A new air quality report was provided to staff in August by Dave Boyer, noting the reopening of the main office and testing completed this summer.
- Building reps will inquire about the schedule for air quality checks during the school year, floor repairs, and other building concerns to share with staff.
- Work completed in the gym to repair a leak in the roof during PD days. Strong odor was reported by multiple staff members. Admin spoke with repair workers and the gym was aired out after work hours and doors remained closed during work hours, which helped.

Executive Board Reports

Evaluation - *Lena Paskewitz*

- Thank you for the continued opportunity to serve the Association as the Evaluation Chair. In this position, I serve as co-facilitator of the Evaluation Committee with Human Resources Director, Tiffany Joseph.
- I also work with Andrew Glasier, and Addie Tobey to coordinate the Peer Evaluation Program.
- All members of the committee and I are available to answer your evaluation questions and concerns.
- I will continue to communicate information about evaluation procedures throughout the year through this newsletter and during SHTA Representative Council Meetings.
- All buildings should have staff meetings to review the Evaluation OTES Overview slides by September 30.
- These slides serve as a resource for both teachers and evaluators as they engage in the evaluation process. There are numerous links to videos, examples of forms, the High Quality Student Data menu, and Ohio Evaluation System (OhioES) support. I have also updated the Evaluation Resource Packet with further explanation of evaluation elements.
- Please complete your Annual Professional Growth Plan (PGP) in the Ohio Evaluation System (OhioES) by October 15th.
    - The expectation is for two goals to be created this year. Teachers who have "Self-Directed" Professional Growth Plans or who are participating in the Peer Evaluation Program are not required to work with building administrators to create these plans, nor do they need to be approved by building administrators. Self-Directed goals are created and edited only by the educator.
- The OhioES indicates the educator's Professional Growth Plan status at the top of the PGP page. This plan should be discussed and reviewed throughout the year with your evaluator. Also, be sure to review the OhioES site and forms, as well as check your evaluation cycle and listed evaluator asap.
- The effective use of High Quality Student Data (HQSD) is a part of the evaluation process. Teachers will need to:

- Choose two sources from the HQSD Instrument Menu. The Evaluation Committee will approve additional instruments, as needed. Teachers who have Value-Added data must use it as ONE of their sources.
    - Complete the HQSD Verification Form on the Ohio Evaluation System. The HQSD form link is on the left under the Professional Growth Plan on each teacher's evaluation overview page. Teachers should add the two measures they will use. Please input these measures as separate entries.
- Familiarize themselves with the OTES Rubric, particularly the references to use of data.
- Conference with their evaluators about their use of data.
- The Peer Evaluation Program has well over 100 educators, counselors, and nurses participating across the district. It is exciting that this program continues to thrive as a unique professional learning opportunity. Peer Evaluation participants have been coded in OhioES. Please double check that you have access to your partner's evaluation so that any errors can be corrected right away.
- Building principals and central administrators initiated a need for guidance regarding approval of peer evaluator applicants. The rubric was created by administration and revised with input from the evaluation committee. Moving forward, administration has agreed to collaborate with the committee when a need for revision to any evaluation processes arises. Current peer evaluators and any teachers planning to apply to participate for the 2027-2028 school year should review the rubric closely. Peer Evaluation Decision Rubric
- Peer evaluators conducting full cycle evaluations will receive $375 and those conducting off-cycle evaluations will receive $125. I appreciate the continued support and recognition of this program as valuable professional learning work.
- I truly believe that this work brings us towards alignment with other highly professional fields. Andrew Glasier, Addie Tobey (Woodbury and Middle School) and I (Elementary) will continue to serve as the Co-coordinators of the program this year.
- We are happy to assist you in any way we can throughout the process.

Publications - *Andrew Glasier*

- Attended Executive Board summer meeting .
- Updated SHTA Facebook & Instagram account.
- Edited with SHTA Vice President Jessica O'Brien and sent out the SHTA president's opening letter.
- Aquita Sheppard is working on our website.
- Editorial: Admin as substitutes.
- Sent email about SHTA T-shirts day for Labor Day. With Bob Bognar's email about purchasing SHTA gear.
- Placing our historical documents in more stable plastic tubs.
- Peer evaluation: finished pairing and dealt with other issues. High School Principal Isiah Wyatt should have the pairings on OTES by Friday.

Teacher Education *- Kelly Grahl*

- Attended an excellent summer executive board meeting at Chante Thomas' house.
- Assisted in presenting SHTA to new Shaker teachers during new hire orientation.
- Worked on putting together a "Know Your Rights" document for members across buildings.
- Emailed with Stacy Poole re: tuition reimbursement and transcripts.

- Met with Lomond Building head rep Veronica Wadsworth about the building committee and introduction to members.

Policy - *Tim Kalan*

- I attended teacher evaluation meetings as well as helping conduct building staff meetings where OTES items were being discussed.

Public Relations - *Bob Bognar*

- As PR Chair, I attended the summer leadership meeting at Chante's house.
- Processed payments for last year's ads.
- Launched the new t-shirt sale and shared it with the publications chair for distribution,
- Compiled past teacher appreciation gift materials for the social chair to use as prizes.

Special Education -*Tito Vázquez*

- Attended the SHTA Summer executive board meeting, toured the sites, and new teacher orientation with members of the executive board.
- Met with the Director of Special Education Dr. Shelby for the 1st of our scheduled monthly meetings.
- Communicated with both Special Education Supervisors Erin Dzolic (Pre K - 5) & Jennifer Currie (6-12).
- Provided advice and guidance to a member concerning scheduling concerns.
- Met with SHHS Principal Isaiah Wyatt and Associate Principal Liz Massey.
- Spoke with Boulevard Building Representative Cathy Grieshop concerning staffing issues with special education students.
- Spoke with Mercer Building Representative Eileen Sweeney working collaboratively concerning a member and his schedule concerns.
- Discussed with SHTA Vice President Jessica O'Brien the amount of students with IEPs in various classes without an Intervention Specialist.
- Spoke with a member with concerns about SLP referrals.

About my position:

- Who: Anastacio Tito Vázquez, Jr., M.Ed.
- Where: Shaker Heights High School as an Intervention Specialist 9-12.
- I have been an Intervention Specialist. This begins year 24 @ SHHS, 10 years @ PEP and 1 year at CHUH. Thirty-four years overall as an Intervention Specialist Educator.
- My role with the association is: I am the SHTA District Chair for Special Education. I represent and support Intervention Specialists, Speech Language Pathologists, and School Psychologists across the district. I will represent you in any and all meetings with school administrators, district officials and others upon your request and or contractual agreement.
- If you have a question about your schedule, required student contact hours or general questions or concerns, I am who you can reach out to after speaking with your mentor teacher.
- My position in our Union is to collaboratively remedy and communicate concerns with Special Education District Chair Dr. Meghan Shelby, Supervisors Erin Dzolic (Pre-K - 6) and Jennifer Currie (7-12), and District administrators, and to foster a positive relationship between administrators and staff, which should support all having a positive and productive school year for students and staff.

Membership - *Sharita Hill*

- Met with VP Jessica O'Brien and a member to discuss their membership in the union and concerns.
- Met with secretary Chante Thomas to discuss taking over Membership and elections roles. Observed data collection of election day.
- Attended new staff orientation and collected membership interest forms.
- Worked on creating a google form and spreadsheet for membership data collection, shared form with John Morris, Jessica O'Brien, and Andrew Glasier for approval.
    - Form went out to staff Aug 21.
- As of 9/8/26 only 254 members have submitted forms.
- Attended SHTA summer executive board hosted by Chante Thomas.
- Talked to high school head building rep Nick LaPete about clarification on student intoxication concerns and formal protocols.
- Attended Sept 1st executive board meeting at SHHS.
- Spoke with the executive board about assisting with the role of helping members understand FMLA procedures.

Legal Aid - *James Schmidt*

- Met in the summer for a member issue.

Legislative *- Matt Kloder*

- **Ohio SB 19 (Math Requirements):** Signed over the summer mandating free tutoring for struggling students, state-approved materials, and mandatory school improvement plans starting in 2026.
- **Ohio HB 96 (Chronic Absenteeism):** Classifies chronic absenteeism as missing 10%+ of school hours including excused absences, tardies, and early dismissals.
- **Classroom Screen Time Limits:** Multiple states and large districts are capping elementary classroom screen time, sparking debate.
- **SCOTUS Religious Display Case:** Civil rights groups have appealed a Texas law to the U.S. Supreme Court over mandatory Ten Commandments classroom displays.

Building Safety and Sick Day Transfer *- Matthew Zucca*

- Participated in a Legal Aid Committee meeting in the summer.
- Attended summer Executive Board meeting hosted by Chante Thomas.
- Discussed ClassWallet funding concerns with Treasurer Dante Hayes.
- Sent notification to head building reps that ClassWallet was funded.
- Received Ludlow air quality report with testing completed by Eurofins Built Environment Testing East.
- Toured Ludlow and Lomond with Sean Brown, Assistant Director of Building and Grounds, and Dave Boyer, Director of Building Grounds and Student Nutrition.

Social - *Enid Vazquez*

- Attended summer Executive Board meeting at Chante's house.
- Sent gift cards to members throughout the district.
- Reached out to prior Social Committee Chair Selena Boyer and Darlene Garrison.
- Working on the 1st SHTA Happy Hour (waiting to hear back from the location. Head Reps; I will send flyer through interoffice mail).
- Attended September Executive Board meeting.

Professional Rights and Responsibilities - *Mike Sears*

- Spoke to Treasurer Donte Hayes at the end of June about payroll and possible arbitration for a step III grievance.
- Attended a Legal Aid committee meeting on July 1st.
- Spoke to members of the Evaluation Committee about their August meeting, and proposed changes to the rubric for principals when determining member eligibility for the peer evaluation program.
- Communicated with a member about bereavement leave.
- Met with a member and a counselor about mistakes on PowerSchool regarding class schedules and student enrollment.
- Attended both the August and September Executive Board meetings.
- Met with members and a principal about sharing classroom space at the Middle School.
- Spoke to Middle School Head Building Representative Kevin Thomas and a member about challenges with the schedules for paraprofessionals.
- Collaborated with Human Resources Specialist for Benefits Nellie Brown on a revised Parental Leave Considerations slideshow for all employees.
- The next Supplemental Committee meeting is on September 10th.
- A fall Insurance Committee meeting has not been scheduled yet.

PAC (At-large) - *Jessica O'Brien and Nick LaPete*

- The SHTA Political Action Committee is gearing up for a midterm election year and are hoping to get as many SHTA members involved as possible. Flyers will go out to buildings soon to help spread interest.
- Jessica O'Brien has been updating the Facebook page, so feel free to follow along with that page, and information is being gathered to inform membership of the key races that are going on in Ohio, including where SHTA members can make direct campaign contributions.
- Please be on the lookout for how you can get involved, and we are hoping to have PAC representation in each building for this year - our strength is in our voice and how many members are using it, so please consider making this year your most politically active yet!

Old Business

- Building Committee will meet as needed.

New Business

- None

Good of the Order

- John Morris thanked the Ludlow School representatives for the phenomenal spread.
- John Morris thanked all the members.

Motion for adjournment was made by Bob Bognar and seconded by Cathy Grieshop.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Chante Thomas, SHTA Secretary

Get Administrators into the Classroom

This newsletter is a publication of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association, an independent organization of professional educators in the Shaker Heights City School District. Signed editorials represent the opinion of the author(s) and may or may not reflect the thinking of other officers or members of the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association. Members and friends of the Association are invited and encouraged to express their opinions or share information via this newsletter.

In the first three weeks of classes this school year, I've had the following surprises to adapt to: a building implemented grading policy that was released at 3:52 PM the day before classes started and a new SmartBoard installed without any guidance on how to use it or even plug it in. I spent a week in a third floor classroom while the heat dome made it feel 99 degrees. I've changed seating charts more times than I can count to account for an ever-changing roster, and revamped lessons to accommodate a WiFi outage and not being able to use that new SmartBoard. I say this knowing this is the truth for most of us. Teaching is a job of dealing with whatever is thrown at us, especially since we can rarely trust the systems to be implemented correctly in a way that makes sense for teachers in the classroom. While I believe directives are created with good intent, the processes and systems designed to carry out these mandates often fall flat.

It was at this same time that I learned the El Paso Independent School District Board of Education (El Paso, Texas) now requires salaried central office employees to work as classroom substitute teachers for eight days during the school year; four each semester. All salaried central office employees, including the superintendent, work as substitute teachers for eight days during the school year! Employees receive no extra pay beyond their regular salaries. The purpose of this policy change is two fold. First, the Board is trying to reduce the costs of substitute teachers for the district. There are 255 salaried employees in central administration, and if each substitute teaches eight days a year, that could save the district millions of dollars. More importantly, the leadership wants central office decision makers to experience the daily life of the teachers in their district and to understand how their decisions affect the classroom and schools they supervise. They also want central office employees to better understand the challenges that teachers face on a regular basis. This policy is only being implemented for the 2026-2027 school year and will be reevaluated at the end of the school year. From the news videos I have watched of the program, it seems to be a great success according to members of the administration who are substituting.

Why couldn't we implement this idea in Shaker? Last year's cost cutting mission across the district means that we have fewer teachers in fewer positions while more continues to be placed on our plate. It is time for the central office employees, and I will even say all administrators in the district, to cover classes throughout the year not only to save the district money but also to understand how their policies align to the practice of teachers. As administration moves farther and farther away from the classroom, their understanding of the daily workings of teachers and their classroom environments become distant memories. And, no, popping in for five minutes during the heat dome is not enough. Administrators need to take attendance, implement a lesson in a classroom, deal with tardiness, classrooms with no air conditioning in 90 degree days, technology that can, and will, fail at any moment, interruptions throughout the class, using programs that are difficult and not user friendly, and the list goes on. The idea is to build empathy by central administrators for how difficult the teaching profession is, while also saving the district significant money. It seems like our Board of Education needs to be forward thinking on this one.

I can hear the counterarguments now: administrators do not have enough time, their schedule is too dense to be able to carve out time for substitute teaching, and they have a million other demands to answer to. Yet I would counter that if these are part of their arguments, then they really need to get in a classroom to see the time management skills expected of teachers: pulled from planning time to cover a class, join a 504 meeting, answer the phone from the office to account for a student, etc. All of these happen more often than they think. I often find half my colleagues eating while grading, planning, or even in meetings, because we have such a limited amount of time during the school day to complete half the tasks we are assigned. It is time for administrators to better understand these demands on us and then to collaborate with us about how best to create systems that reduce these work loads, allowing us to spend more time actually planning and teaching.

Teaching is a great profession, one that I feel lucky to be a part of. Yet the job is slowly transforming into one that is impossible to complete because of the demands placed on us. By requiring administrators to substitute eight days during the school year, their empathy towards the profession will hopefully adjust their thinking about what should be required and how to best assist the teachers in their classrooms.

AG









The SHTA September 2026 Representative Council meeting at Ludlow Early Learning Center. Thank you to Ludlow SHTA Representatives Leanne Moses and Allison Colvin for hosting.