

CFT FIELD REP POSITION OPENING FOR 2005-06



CFT will have a vacancy in a teacher field representative position for 2005-06. Field Representatives have both contract enforcement and organization responsibilities. In regard to contract enforcement, a field representative:

- ✧ Prepares and presents CFT's case in grievance arbitration hearings, except for dismissal and termination cases which are presented by attorneys,
- ✧ Prepares and presents cases to the Alternate Grievance Panel (AGP),
- ✧ Investigates, files and pursues Unfair Labor Practice Charges with SERB,
- ✧ Handles level II grievances for members,
- ✧ Handles Level I grievances filed against the superintendent or other central office administrator,
- ✧ Advises and assists members with informal problems and com-

plaints about their working conditions.

CFT Building Representatives handle Level I grievances at the school level, with the advice of the Field Reps.

Organizationally, Field Representatives work with the Director of Organization to mobilize members to:

- ✧ Support CFT and ACPSOP Bargaining Teams during negotiations,
- ✧ Enforce the contract or oppose unsound decisions and proposals by management,
- ✧ Conduct school levy campaigns and other political action efforts.

Field Reps. also participate in training CFT BR's and other leadership development training.

CFT Field Reps. are assigned to the Federation under our Collective Bargaining Agreement and receive their salary and benefits from the

school district, which is reimbursed by CFT. Extended time is included for summer work. CFT staff remain part of STRS. The vacancy will be filed by CFT's Executive Council. Interested CFT members should send a resume to Jerri Clements at the CFT office and/or call the CFT office to obtain a job description.

Along with your resume, please provide a written statement that addresses your specific skills and qualifications, as well as your experience in problem solving and handling grievances at the school/work site level. Please include some specific examples.

Resumes and statements must be received by Jerri Clements c/o CFT office no later than: Monday, March 14, 2005. Applicant interviews will be scheduled for March 21 and March 22, 2005.

Legal Requirement to Report Knowledge or Suspicion of Child Abuse



Several recent incidents have come to CFT's attention that cause us to remind our members of an important obligation under Ohio law. Ohio Revised Code 2151.421 states that a teacher, school psychologist, school employee or other school "authority" has an obligation, if acting in an official or professional capacity, to make a report if s/he:

...knows or suspects that a child under 18 years of age or mentally retarded, developmentally disabled, or physically impaired child under 21 years of age has suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury,

disability or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the child...

Where a teacher has such knowledge or suspicion, s/he must "immediately report that knowledge or suspicion to the entity or person specified in this division." The report must be made "either by telephone or in person, and shall be followed by a written report, if requested by the receiving agency or officer."

It may be that some employees are reluctant to get involved in a dispute of this type for fear that they could be held liable for making the report if the report is ultimately proven unfounded. The statute provides that a school employee who makes a report in good faith or par-

ticipates in a proceeding resulting from the report in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability based upon her/his report or participation.

CFT/ACPSOP wanted to call this to the attention of our members to be sure that all are aware of this statute. Please always notify the principal or other administrator in writing if you have any knowledge or suspicion of child abuse. Child abuse can include sexual assault and rape by an adult or by another child. Failure to notify the appropriate official could result in disciplinary action or even legal charges.



CFT Elections



Any member interested in running for a CFT office, please take notice. As per the CFT Constitution, CFT must conduct an election this spring. **Only** members in good standing for at least one year prior to the March 9th membership are eligible to run for office and only members in good standing prior to the March 9th Membership Meeting will be eligible to vote. Fair share fee payers **are not eligible** to run for office or to participate in voting.

A committee will be formed to draft election ground rules. These ground rules will be presented to members at the March Membership Meeting for approval. If you are interested in serving on the Election Committee, please submit your name to CFT Elections Chairperson, Joyce Valerius, at the CFT Office via the pony.

Interested candidates must declare

their intent to run or be nominated for an office before the motion to close nominations is accepted at the March 9, 2005, Membership Meeting.

The following offices will be on the ballot:

• **7 Officers:**

President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Third Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Chief Labor Delegate.

• **9 Committee Chairpersons:**

Collective Bargaining, Educational Policies, Grievance, Human Rights, Legislative/Political Action, Member Services, Publications, Retirement and Social.

• **11 Area Coordinators:**

1 Area Coordinator who is an ACPSOP

member elected by members of ACPSOP

1 Area Coordinator who is a daily substitute teacher elected by daily substitute teachers.

9 Area Coordinators who are elected by CFT members who are neither ACPSOP nor daily substitutes.

• **7 OFT Executive Committee Delegates:**

1 OFT EC member who is an ACPSOP member elected by members of ACPSOP

6 OFT EC members who are CFT members elected by members of CFT

Candidates who wish to run for office above should submit their names in writing to Joyce Valerius, Elections Chairperson, CFT Office, via the pony. These must be received no later than Wednesday, March 9.



Taft Moves to Expand Unsuccessful Voucher Program

Gov. Bob Taft's budget plan included a surprise for Ohio educators: a new tax-funded tuition voucher program. Schools, rather than entire districts, are targeted. In schools where two-thirds of the students do not meet state proficiency standards in reading and math for three consecutive years, students would be eligible for vouchers worth \$3,500 for tuition at any private school. The governor's office believes 70 schools statewide currently would be eligible, but the program would not begin until the 2006-2007 school year. Taft proposes \$9 million to fund the program in its first year, which would support vouchers for 2,600 students. Students using vouchers would be expected to make sufficient progress toward meeting proficiency standards in order to continue receiving the voucher. No details on how their progress would be measured were provided.

OFT President Tom Mooney and other educational leaders blasted the new voucher plan. "It is absolutely the wrong direction," Mooney said. "We do not want students to be stuck in schools with low achievement, but the state should invest in turning those schools around. There are

proven, research-based approaches to raising achievement. There is no evidence that vouchers will do so."

Taft began his budget plan with a general reference in his State of the State address "to new options for students stuck in persistently failing schools." Since Ohio already offers a wide choice of charter schools, OFT views Taft's proposal to create a statewide school voucher program as an admission that Ohio's current charter school program has failed.

"The governor says he has lost patience with students who are stuck in persistently failing schools. But, teachers, parents and taxpayers are losing patience with failing charter schools. Those are the schools that persistently post the lowest student achievement rates," Mooney said. "Student performance in Ohio's public schools is on the rise with urban districts showing the strongest gains. If this were really about helping kids, we would be investing in doing what works. The voucher proposal appears to be aimed instead at placating the far right wing of the governor's party."

An educationally sound rationale for

Taft's voucher proposal is hard to find, since the state's pilot voucher program has proved unsuccessful. Students participating in Cleveland's voucher program achieve at the same level as their counterparts in Cleveland's public schools. That was the verdict of neutral expert evaluators from Indiana University commissioned by the state department to study the voucher program. But, vouchers and charter schools will divert \$78 million from Cleveland city schools this year, forcing the district to lay off 1,000 teachers and 400 other staff members, which threatens to stall steady achievement gains.

Governor Taft's office believes that 19 schools in CPS would meet the criteria to be able to offer students \$3,500 scholarships to leave CPS to attend a private school. At a time when \$33 million has been drained away for CPS, creating budget reductions in our schools, Taft intends to move forward with his budget proposal that would cause further attrition of students out of CPS to private schools, without any concrete evidence that this will raise achievement levels. Pending approval of Governor Taft's budget in the Ohio General Assembly, this new voucher program would become effective in 2007.

Taxpayers Deliver Largest Levy Failure Rate in 20 Years

Voters recently delivered the highest number of school levy failures in 20 years as 62 percent of the issues on the ballot failed. The widespread financial crisis among Ohio school districts forced school boards to seek record numbers of property tax levies in the August, November and February elections. Many more districts are waiting for the May primary election, after suf-

fering defeats in November. Among the 39 school tax issues that failed Tuesday, February 8, 2005, were levies in Buckeye Local, Brookfield and Berea, all OFT locals.

Due to the loss of school levies, school districts across Ohio have eliminated nearly 4,000 teaching positions in the last year.

"Growing taxpayer resistance to passing levies, after decades of strong voter support for local schools, shows that time is running out for state lawmakers to overhaul Ohio's 19th century school funding system," said OFT President Tom Mooney.



CFT/ACPSOP Help Requested for Campaign Finance Referendum Petitions



CFT/ACPSOP has been asked to help collect signatures on a referendum petition to repeal the campaign finance "reform" law rushed through the state legislature in December. Rather than reducing the maximum limit on campaign contributions to even the playing field, politicians quadrupled the amount of money contributors can give to candidates and campaigns.

The result: wealthy donors will have even greater influence in the political process while small donors and union contributions will carry little weight.

OFT is helping the AFL-CIO and a coalition of civic organizations to collect more than 200,000 signatures to place a referendum on the November ballot to repeal the law. The required signatures must be

filed by March 31, which will block the new law until voters decide its fate in the fall. Sponsors are also considering drafting their own proposal to enact real campaign finance and electoral reform.

Eligible signers must be registered Ohio voters and must sign the petition the way their signature appears on their voter registration card. Please print the name in the same space if the signature is not clearly legible.

Ralph Jackson, Director of Organization, distributed petitions to BR's at the February Membership Meeting. Members are encouraged to support this effort. BR's are asked to return completed petitions to Ralph Jackson at the CFT Office by March 9. BR's can return these at the March Membership Meeting. Thanks!

ESP Individual Counseling Sessions Extended

ADDITIONAL individual counseling sessions have been added at Mayerson Academy on March 8, 9 & 10th from 10:00 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. (last appointment at 5:30 p.m.). To schedule an appointment call EPC at 1-800-747-1504 or schedule online at www.epcinternet.com/CPS. Keep in mind that scheduling an appointment DOES NOT obligate you to elect the severance plan. If you have already submitted your paperwork, it is not necessary to attend another counseling session.

WALK-IN APPOINTMENTS WILL BE ACCOMMODATED.

Remember, the window of opportunity to elect the plan closes on March 15, 2005.



Cincinnati Federation of Teachers Association of CPS Office Personnel

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