



Cincinnati Federation of Teachers

NEWSLINER

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November 24, 2008

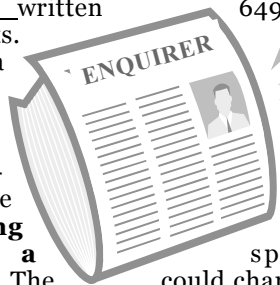
Kelly Singleton, Editor

The Cincinnati Enquirer Strikes Again

In the November 16, 2008 edition of the Sunday Enquirer, an editorial appeared under the title of **Teachers Unions Must Get Out of the Way in Fixing Schools**, written by Leonard Pitts. Leonard Pitts is a nationally syndicated columnist and Pulitzer Prize winner who authored a web site entitled **Improving DC Schools is a Test for Us All**. The difference in tone of the Enquirer article is striking and suggests the editorial position of the Enquirer, not Leonard Pitts.

Inside this Newsliner you will find two articles. A reproduction of the Pitts

Enquirer article and an article written by me as a response to the editorial that I am hoping to get printed. The Pitts article is 657 words and my response is 649 words. If the past is any indicator, the Enquirer will refuse to print the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers' response. That could change, however, if some of us urge the editorial board to print the response. If, after reading both articles, you feel that the voice of CFT should be heard on this matter, please send and email to the Enquirer requesting they print



the CFT response. The editorial page editor is David Wells and his email address is: dwells@enquirer.com. The editorial page writer is Krista Ramsey and her email address is: kramsey@enquirer.com.

Regardless of whether you agree that we should have a voice on the editorial pages of the Enquirer, I hope you find the CFT perspective on education helpful.

In Solidarity,
Tim Kraus
CFT President

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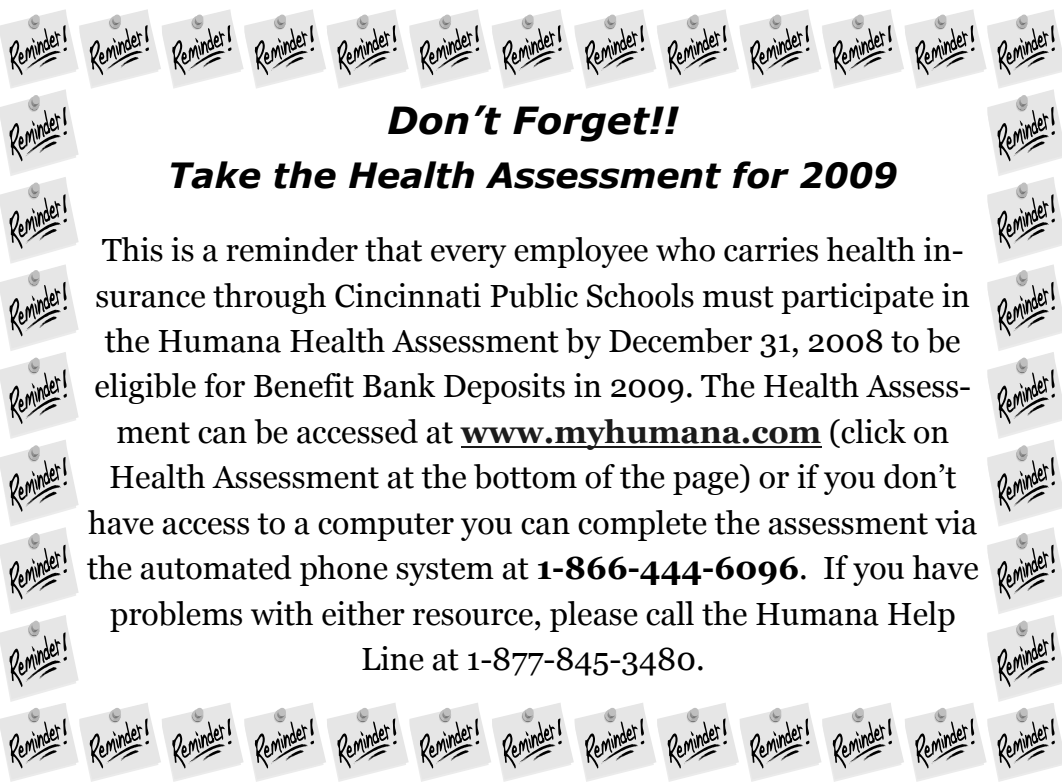
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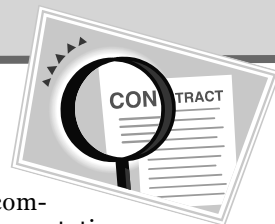
Don't Forget!!

Take the Health Assessment for 2009

This is a reminder that every employee who carries health insurance through Cincinnati Public Schools must participate in the Humana Health Assessment by December 31, 2008 to be eligible for Benefit Bank Deposits in 2009. The Health Assessment can be accessed at www.myhumana.com (click on Health Assessment at the bottom of the page) or if you don't have access to a computer you can complete the assessment via the automated phone system at **1-866-444-6096**. If you have problems with either resource, please call the Humana Help Line at 1-877-845-3480.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
★ The next CFT/ ★
★ ACPSOP member- ★
★ ship meeting will ★
★ be held on Jan ★
★ 14, 2009 @ 5:00 ★
★ p.m. at the Thom ★
★ Moore Building ★
★ (Laborer's Hall) ★
★ located at: ★
★ 3457 Montgomery ★
★ Rd. ★
★ BR briefing is ★
★ held before the ★
★ membership ★
★ meeting. ★
★★★★★★★★★★★★★★





Section 400: Student Discipline (pp.51-54).

Many calls have been coming into the CFT office concerning student discipline and assaults. Section 400 of the CBA covers all aspects of student life including discipline (part 1), teacher assaults (part 2) and pupil adjustment (part 3). Please review these sections to make sure that not only the students rights are protected but the teachers as well. For this issue of the Newsliner, we will focus on Teacher assaults.

According to the CBA, "A student who physically assaults a teacher, who is performing a duty in the line of employment, including extracurricular activities, shall be immediately suspended, and a recommendation for expulsion shall be made to the Superintendent by the building /unit adminis-

trator. The teacher suffering the assault shall submit written facts of the incident to the building/unit administrator and Federation Building representative."

Too often in these situations, we're finding that incident reports are not being filed. Remember, if you don't report it, assaults on staff will continue.

Part 2a (lines 37-42) further states that "In the case of an assault on a teacher by a student, the Superintendent's designated hearing officer shall conduct the expulsion hearing and shall make recommendations to the Superintendent. The teacher shall be notified of the date, time, and place of the hearing. To the extent permitted by law, a student who the principal has recommended for expulsion may not returned to school prior to the hearing. The hearing shall be conducted within 10 days of the student's suspension."

The CFT leadership cannot stress enough, the importance of completing the documentation necessary to complete the process. We should also be mindful that Substitute teachers are members too, and don't often have the knowledge of the students or the building to be informed and they need your support.

The CFT Field Representatives urge all members to report ALL assaults to the CFT office immediately so that we can monitor compliance issues related to this section. See the Administrator in your building for incident reports and contact your BR for Assault Forms or download them at <http://www.cft-aft.org/forms.html> and fax to 513-961-0629.

Improving D.C. Schools A Test for Us All (the Title on Leonard Pitts' Web Site) Teachers Unions Must Get Out of the Way in Fixing Schools

(The Title the Enquirer created for the article)

So it seems there's this new couple coming to town (the husband just got a job with the government). Now they are scouting schools for their children, and people are wondering whether they're going to go public or private. Some observers would like Michelle and Barack Obama to send their daughters to public schools. Doing so, they say, would be a powerful statement of faith in public education. All that notwithstanding, I expect the Obamas, like many parents of means, will choose private schools.

Can we be honest here? I mean, brutally honest? D.C. public schools are not good enough for the Obama kids. Not because they are D.C. public schools, but because they are urban public schools. I'm not doubting the dedication of public school teachers. And yes, there are exceptional public schools -- but the exceptions prove the rule. Public schools, particularly in urban areas, are largely failing our children.

Which brings me to Michelle Rhee. You might not know the name yet, but I'm betting you soon will. She is the Washington, D.C., schools chief who has drawn national attention for an audacious attempt to remake some of the nation's worst schools. Among the changes she has instituted, or is attempting to institute, is a cash reward for students who meet certain

benchmarks of performance and attendance. She also wants to make it easier to fire teachers who do not perform; under her plan, educators would give up tenure protections for a merit plan that would allow the best of them -- i.e., those whose students actually learn something -- to earn upwards of \$100,000 a year.

Rhee's proposals track closely with some of what I found last year when I wrote a series of columns on "What Works" to improve education for at-risk young people. Many educators told me that high on their wish list would be the ability to reward good teachers and fire bad ones. You'd think it would be a no-brainer that people who don't perform get the axe and those who do get raises. Isn't that the way it works in most nonunionized professions? But the teachers union apparently exists in some alternate universe where everyone is rewarded equally regardless of the quality of their work. So it has fought Rhee with bitter tenacity, seeking to block her at every step.

Meanwhile, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, only 48 percent of D.C. eighth graders had attained basic reading skills in 2007, "basic" being a term denoting "partial mastery" of necessary knowledge and skills. Only 12 percent were rated proficient readers. The corre-

sponding numbers in math: 34 and 8. Those statistics, dismal as they are, represent an improvement over previous years. And D.C. is hardly unique.

All of us, then, have a stake in the success of Michelle Rhee's experiment. All of us should be yelling for the teachers union to get out of the way. We need to know if what she proposes will work. And if it does not, we need to determine what will. We need, in other words, an urgency we seem to lack.

Too many of us, I think, have made peace with the idea that public schools don't work, have come to regard it as normal that they crank out poorly educated kids, have come to accept that certain children in certain places are ineducable. But I saw the falsity of that with my own eyes while traveling the country for "What Works," saw some of the nation's best students in some of its most dire places. The failure here, then, is not the students', but ours, a failure of will and imagination. We need to reassess the things we take for granted. We need to decide that our children deserve better. And we need to ask a simple question: If public schools are not good enough for the president's kids, what makes us think they are good enough for ours?

Kraus Response:—Teachers Unions Are Leaders in Education Reform

When it comes to education it seems that everyone is an expert, but very few of these “experts” who manage to get a public forum for their opinions have ever taught a day in a public school. In addition to this one-sided conversation it seems these “educational experts” always have simplistic solutions for what is a complex issue. The current solution (“Teachers unions must get out of the way in fixing schools” Nov. 16) is that we must end union power and teacher tenure in order to increase student achievement. This denies a progressive role of unions in American education.

Here in Cincinnati and in many cities the teachers union is a leader for education reform and an advocate for social justice for the families who rely on public schools. The Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (CFT) has long promoted teacher quality as a cornerstone of reform. That is why the CFT helped to create one of the most rigorous teacher evaluation systems in the country and one of the most professional teaching staffs in Ohio. Because of CFT initiatives, Cincinnati has more National Board certified teachers than any other district in the state, a lead teacher program with differentiated pay, and a structure of internal transfers that honors training, experience, and individual qualifications ahead of seniority. The union teachers of Cincinnati advocated and bargained for a stronger community voice through Local School Deci-

sion Making Committees and Instructional Leadership Teams in each of our schools. Contrary to the “experts” this teachers union has led the way on educational reform. This accounts, in large measure, for Cincinnati Public Schools consistent performance as the highest achieving urban district in the state. The CFT recognizes that unions have a responsibility to professionalize teaching and we take that responsibility seriously.

As we look to the future the CFT is promoting greater teacher leadership, responsibility, and accountability. We are making educational history in our schools through innovative partnerships like the new STEM High School which brings the CFT together with the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Public Schools, Strive, and a series of Fortune 500 business partners to serve some of the poorest high school students in the city. We are pushing for a more collaborative district-wide culture that recognizes the need for labor and management to move forward together to boost student achievement.

We are open to challenging conventional thinking. What would happen if we broke the barriers between labor and management by having teachers and building administrators share their teaching loads and administrative duties? What if we empowered parents and community organizations to be a daily presence in our classrooms and school buildings? What if active parents helped us reach parents whose students are

struggling the most? What if middle class parents allowed us to double or triple the resources going to poor children? We are constantly looking for ways to reach the most challenging students, but we cannot do this alone, however. Instead of being armchair critics we need Cincinnati to join us in these challenges.

It is only our lack of community imagination, not the teachers union, that holds us back in educating our children for the 21st century. Great schools make a great community, but it is equally true that a great community makes great schools. We must all share in the responsibility to end the grinding poverty under which the vast majority of Cincinnati’s school children live. We must all recognize that our schools and teachers cannot, by themselves, solve every social malady preventing our children from succeeding academically. Until we recognize that our schools are only a reflection of the very best and the very worst aspects of our community we cannot build the kind of school system that truly leaves no child behind. We have lots of work to do, so instead of pointing fingers, let’s roll up our sleeves, and work together to improve our schools.

Tim Kraus is President of the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers. He represents the 2500 teachers and clerical workers in Cincinnati Public Schools.

Educators Invited to Apply for ING Unsung Heroes Program

The **ING** Unsung Heroes program helps K-12 educators and their schools fund innovative classroom projects.

Each year, the program selects 100 educators to receive grants of \$2,000 each to help fund their innovative class projects. At least one award will be granted in each of the 50 United States, provided one or more qualified applications are received from each state. Three of these educators are chosen to receive the top awards of an additional \$5,000, \$10,000, and \$25,000.

All K-12 education professionals are eligible. Specifically, these individuals must be employed by an accredited K-12 public or private school located in the United States, and be full-time educators, teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, or classified staff with effective projects that improve student learning.

Visit the ING Web site to download the program application.
[www.ing-usa.com/us/aboutING/CorporateCitizenship/
Education/INGUnsungHeroes](http://www.ing-usa.com/us/aboutING/CorporateCitizenship/Education/INGUnsungHeroes)

CFT Ed Policies Committee Looking for Committee Members

“The Educational Policies Committee shall develop and propose resolutions and positions on curriculum, teaching methods, and related issues.” CFT Constitution

CFT Committee Chairpersons, Amy Tischer (Mt. Airy) and Jennifer Ray (Hughes Center) would like any CFT member interested in serving on the Ed Policies Committee to submit their name to Lesley-Ann Gracey via email: Lgracey@cft-aft.org



Keeping In Touch With Our Members

CFT is attempting to gather home and school email addresses in an effort to establish a more efficient communication process with our members, while being ecologically and fiscally responsible. Please fill out the section below and indicate a **home** email address in the space provided below, and send it to the CFT Office via the pony. You may also list your CPS email address on the secondary email address line. CFT respects your privacy and will **NOT** provide this information to anyone outside of the Federation.

Name _____

School _____

Primary HOME email address

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Secondary School email address

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

@cps-k12.org

***Know a member who received special recognition or
accomplished something spectacular? Let us know and we
will feature them in the Newliner!***

***Email us at: cft@cft-aft.org,
subject line: Special Recognition***

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