

Random Notes

February 21, 2012

Jeff Moats, President
jeff@akronteach.org

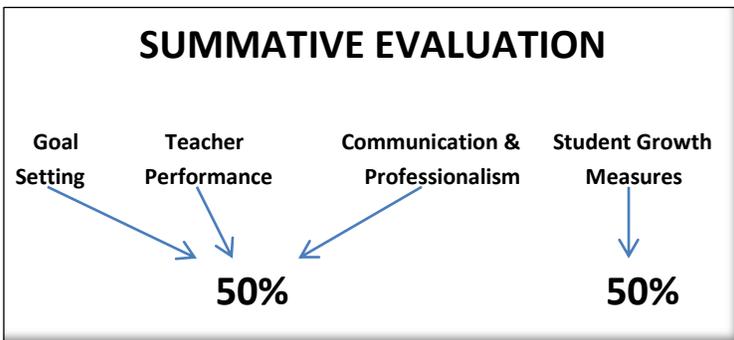
Michael Rusnak, Vice President
mike@akronteach.org

Visit our Website at www.akronteach.org

Student Growth Measures to Play Big Role in Teacher Evaluations

(The information below is up-to-date as of the time of this publication. Changes may be made to the teacher evaluation process before it is fully implemented.)

In the last edition of the *Notes*, we wrote about the seven Akron schools that are participating in the Ohio Department of Education's teacher evaluation pilot. We also provided a general overview of the state evaluation model. This article is intended to inform members of the four components of the new Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES): **Goal Setting, Teacher Performance, Communication/Professionalism, and Student Growth**. Combined, Goal Setting, Teacher Performance and Communication/Professionalism will account for 50% of a teacher's final evaluation. How much weighting each will carry within the 50% is a local decision



and has yet to be determined. The remaining 50% of the final evaluation will be based upon student growth measures, as enacted by the Ohio Legislature in House Bill 153.

Goal Setting

There are three parts to the goal-setting component of OTES. The first is a **Teacher Self-Assessment**. Through the use of a self-assessment summary tool, teachers will be expected to identify what they perceive are their strengths and weaknesses (areas for growth) under each of the seven Standards for the Teaching Profession. **Analysis of Student Data** is the second component of goal-setting. Teachers are

(Continued next column)

to develop a comprehensive academic picture of the students assigned to them by analyzing demographic data such as age ranges and school and district attendance and graduation rates. Student learning needs, academic performance, and student progress are all included in data analysis. In the final phase of the goal-setting process, teachers will identify two **SMART** (**S**pecific **M**easurable **A**ttainable **R**esults-oriented **T**ime-bound) **Goals** intended to focus and guide their instruction for the year. In theory, SMART goals serve to improve instructional practice and have a direct impact on student learning.

Teacher Performance

The State Department of Education has thus far interpreted HB 153 as requiring that all teachers (limited and continuing

(See "Teacher Evaluation" on next page)

Early Retirement Announcement Deadline Changed; Incentive Increased

AEA and the Board have agreed—on a trial basis—to move the eligibility deadline for the Early Retirement Announcement incentive from April 1 to February 28. Included in the Agreement is an increase in the incentive amount from \$500 to \$1,000. The modified rules will be in effect through the 2013-2014 school year unless they are changed by mutual agreement of the parties. The change is being made to determine if moving the deadline earlier and paying a greater incentive will help the district reach one of our Race to the Top goals, attracting and retaining the highest quality teachers. At present, only about 60% of the teachers who retire in any given year take advantage of the incentive. If that percentage can be significantly increased, the district may be better positioned to recruit new teachers, particularly in hard to staff subject areas, much earlier than it does now. Often the district hires new teachers in mid to late summer (and in some cases, after the start of the school year), after most new candidates have accepted teaching positions in other districts.

At the end of the 2013-2014 school year, the change may be

(See "Retirement Announcement," page 4)

Teacher Evaluation

(Continued from first page)

contract) be evaluated every year, and that each be observed minimally twice per year. We have questioned the Department’s position that the law requires annual evaluations of continuing contract teachers and, that if it in fact does, does it require one or two formal observations? According to DOE, the matter is under review. For our purposes here, we’ll defer to the current interpretation.

The first observation under OTES must be completed by January 15 and must be preceded by a pre-observation conference between the teacher and the evaluator. During the conference, the teacher’s goals, self-assessment and student data analysis will be reviewed. A post-observation conference must take place by January 25. The second observation must occur between February 10 and April 1, followed by a post-observation conference not later than April 10. Between November and April, informal observations (walkthroughs) may take place. Akron teachers are accustomed to receiving their year-end evaluation by June 1; HB 153 requires, however, that final evaluations be given to teachers not later than April 10.

The OTES prescribes a cumbersome scripting process through which the evaluator is to glean and record **evidence** from the teacher’s presentation to support and justify the performance level at which the evaluator places the teacher. An observation rubric provided by the State is intended to assist the evaluator in gathering evidence and rating the teacher. A teacher’s instructional effectiveness is measured against the first four Standards for the Teaching Profession.

Communication/Professionalism

A teacher’s rating for this category will be measured against Standards 6 and 7. ODE is making available forms on which to record evidence of collaboration and communication (Standard 6) and Professionalism/Professional Development (Standard 7) throughout the school year. Samples of parent newsletters, logs of phone calls, emails and conferences with parents, results of perception surveys, work samples produced from collaborating with colleagues, samples of materials from professional organizations, evidence of service on professional committees, and materials from workshops and seminars are all examples of items that are considered suitable for documenting performance under Communication/Professionalism. At the conference to discuss the year-end evaluation, this evidence will be taken into consideration by the evaluator to determine whether or not a teacher meets or does not meet expectations in this component of the evaluation.

(Continued next column)

Student Growth

As earlier indicated, student academic growth measures will account for 50% of a teacher’s year-end evaluation. Teachers will not be rated solely on the results of one growth measure, but on multiple measures. The only mandated growth measure in OTES is value-added data which at the present time is available only for grades four through eight in reading and math.

ODE is required by HB 153 to develop assessments to measure student growth for grade levels and subject areas for which value-added scores are unavailable. The Department is in the process of developing a menu of assessments districts will be permitted to include among the “multiple assessments” used to measure student growth. Local districts will be permitted to use assessments not on the original ODE list so long as ODE approves their use.

The Teacher Evaluation Matrix

Effective with the 2013-14 school year, teachers in Ohio will be evaluated using a rating system which includes four levels of performance: Accomplished, Proficient, Developing and Ineffective. A score of 1-4 will be awarded for a teacher’s proficiency on the professional standards. That, along with the academic growth of the teacher’s students over the course of the year (below, expected or above), will determine the performance level. The proficiency on standards rating represents an aggregate score based upon the Goal Setting, Teacher Performance, and Communication/Professionalism

		Proficiency on Standards			
		1	2	3	4
Student Growth Measures	ABOVE	Accomplished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing
	EXPECTED	Proficient	Proficient	Developing	Developing
	BELOW	Developing	Developing	Ineffective	Ineffective

discussed above. A teacher’s final performance rating is determined by applying both values to the matrix above.

Certain teachers may get to select their evaluator and/or be evaluated once every two years. We’ll talk about it in the next edition of the Notes.

Dontis Takes Over as Secondary VP

The AEA Board of Trustees has approved the appointment of **Ernie Dontis** to the position of AEA 2nd Vice President, Secondary, to fill the unexpired term of **Jim Perge**, who retired in December.



Ernie is a history department faculty member at Garfield High School. He began his career in APS in 1999 as a French teacher at Buchtel High School. Prior to that, Ernie was employed as a reporter, wire editor and sports editor at Record Publishing Company. He attended Case Western Reserve University and the University of Akron, majoring in History and French with a minor in Biology.

Ernie attended middle and high school in Athens, Greece.

Mr. Dontis is a recognized leader at Garfield High School. In addition to serving as building representative, he is a department chair. He has been selected by his peers as Teacher of the Year, and is a three-time recipient of the Shining Apple award. He volunteered countless hours in the campaign to defeat Issue 2, attending rallies and road trips to Columbus. He attended virtually every Monday night phone calling session during last fall's campaign and drafted **Jenni**, his wife of 27 years, to help with the calling.

Ernie lives in Akron. He and Jenni have one daughter, **Emma**, a Firestone High grad and class valedictorian. Emma attends the College of Wooster and is majoring in biology with a math minor. Among Ernie's hobbies are stamp collecting, photography, reading, and golfing (we emphasize "hobby" on this one!). He is a long-time basketball referee. We are fortunate to have Ernie Dontis among the ranks of teacher leaders in AEA.

New-look Negotiations?

With negotiations looming just ahead, we can't help but be somewhat apprehensive over the direction contract talks may take. For the first time in 15 years, a span covering six relatively peaceful settlements, negotiations will be without the services of mediator **Rob Stein**, a name that should be familiar to veteran members. Stein was hired in 1996 by a group of Akron businessmen who became weary of the contentious negotiations between AEA and the Board, particularly during the 1980's and early nineties. Both parties were open to Stein's involvement; his marching orders were simple: keep the parties focused on the issues and moving forward, and minimize the bitterness and the public venom-spewing that had for years characterized negotiations.

The role Stein played was unique in the state of Ohio. Each round, he at first met with both parties to establish ground rules, and then attended **every** negotiating session as a facilitator. Stein brought to the process a strategy called **Interest Based Bargaining (IBB)**. IBB (or **Win-Win Bargaining**) is an alternative to traditional positional bargaining and involves a process of joint problem-solving. It offers both sides more flexibility than traditional bargaining by not locking them into pre-determined issues and positions. It requires both parties to identify the interests that underlie their issues and positions. **In other words, it requires both parties to be accountable for their proposals and to negotiate in good faith.** Most importantly, IBB assumes that negotiation can enhance the relationship between labor and

(See "Negotiations" next page)

Despite Tight Economy, Teachers and Kids Raise Over \$39K for Strides Event

Tight money? What tight money? The numbers are in from last October's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk and Akron teachers and their students came through again in a BIG way. Using any number of creative (and sometimes hilarious) fund-raising strategies, our group managed to raise a whopping \$39,363 to assist research in finding a cure for the disease. Incredibly, in the seven years AEA has participated in the campaign as a Flagship sponsor, we have raised in excess of a quarter million dollars—\$226,677 to be exact. For certain, this would not have been possible without the generous contribution of time and ingenuity by the lifeblood of the campaign, our building level team captains. We salute and congratulate each of them for the great work: **Ann Griffith**  **Heather Nehlsen**  **Carol Caughron**  **Debbie Brink**  **Kathy Rodgers**  **Jeanne Crofford**  **Laura Jatich**  **Sandi Wells**  **Patty McCluskey**  **Lisa Feist**  **Kathleen Shippy**  **Ann Gruska**  **Marianne Pramuka**  **Helena Glass**  **Sharon Frounfelker**  **Radonna Mair**  **Barb Vitale**  **Patty Gonzalez**  **Chris Mathews**  **Lisa O'Rourke**  **Maureen Brown**  **Sue Shreve**  **Ranay Hatherill**  **Kathy Robbins**  **Stephanie Baugh**  **Tami Semelsberger**  **Diane Ely**  **Sherry Fogarty**  **Lorri Schur**  **Cleo Clifford**  **Dan Bartel**  **Kim Joseph**  **Chris Bloom**  **Beth Cook**  **Joan Smart**  **Julia Sues**  **Dee Williams**  **Ilene Zackaroff**  **Reggie Warner**  **Tracy Ebner**  **Susanne Grywalski**  **Peggy Dougherty**  **Carmel Oberdorfer**  **Rich Cola**  **Nicole Delahanty**  **Alisa Gross-Dann**  **Deb Firtha**  **Melissa Hileman**  **Steve Culp**  **Lynn Fickes**  **Kara Cauffield**  **Ernie Sigler**  **Donna Kopcsik**  **Morgan Greene**  **Katie Beals**  **Laura DiLoretti**  **Becky Mise**  **Barb Dawson**  **Stacey Ambrose**  **Darlene Hensley**  **Kathy McVey**  **Jim Perge**  **Mary Carter Berry** .

A special "Thank you " to Deb Firtha  (Hyre) and Laura Jatich  (Betty Jane) for serving as district-wide co-captains and to **Mikelann Adams**  (AEA) who essentially ran the administrative side of the campaign, from assisting building captains to handling communications to bookkeeping whenever necessary.

Negotiations...

(Continued from page 3)

management, and that bargaining decisions mutually reached and based on objective criteria obviates the need for either side to rely on power or leverage to win its position. No one can dispute (at least we think not) that labor and management in APS enjoyed unprecedented collaboration at the table under Stein's watch. Perhaps a *Beacon Journal* editorial in May of 1996 said it best, "Akron should heartily applaud the maturity that has been so evident in the approach of Rob Stein whose behind-the-scenes contributions have defined a standard of labor negotiations that will serve the schools and city well." The cooperation Stein nourished at the table spread to relationships outside of negotiations.

Stein will not be at the table this year. Near the conclusion of the last contract talks, Board negotiators awkwardly, abruptly and unceremoniously dismissed him. Stein's absence rests squarely on the shoulders of Superintendent **David James**. We were not given an explanation for the move, and for that matter, neither was Stein. As we published after the last ratification, there was some in-house whining at 70 North Broadway that Stein had become too "union friendly." Given our settlements over time, that excuse is a cheap shot at best. As to the Board's strategic purpose in dumping Stein, it remains to be seen if they wish to revert to the old hardball way of doing business. We would prefer to continue IBB; however, we are prepared for the alternative.

X

Frank Comunale

Frank Comunale is the incumbent District 4 representative on Summit County Council. District 4 encompasses much of Akron and a small part of Cuyahoga Falls. Comunale is being challenged in the March Democratic primary. Historically, we have rarely endorsed candidates for County Council. However, as we've said often over the past year, SB5 changed "historically."

Frank Comunale was "in the trenches" during the campaign to defeat Issue 2. Specifically, he repeatedly attended the phone bank hosted by AEA, contributing his share of the thousands of phone calls made by members. He also treated callers to homemade lasagna. He was busy on several other fronts as well.

Comunale has also been an ardent supporter of the Akron Public Schools, taking every speaking opportunity to tout the last several school operating levies. His generosity doesn't stop there. He is the former President of the Akron-Summit County Library Board of Trustees and is involved in numerous civic and philanthropic organizations.

Frank deserves your support in the March 6th primary.

Retirement Announcement

(Continued from first page)

made permanent—through mutual agreement—and become part of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. If the district and AEA do not mutually agree to the change, the old deadline (April 1) and incentive (\$500) will be reinstated. Central to any decision to make the change permanent will be the extent to which early retirement announcements increase, and how the increase impacts staffing for the following school year.

Remember, those wishing to take advantage of the incentive must notify Human Resources in writing by February 28 of their **intent** to retire between the last work day in May and June 30, and then actually **retire** between those dates.

Pretty For Pink

The American Cancer Society is looking for clean, gently-used formal dresses appropriate for high school proms. AEA will accept donations of clean dresses, jewelry and other accessories until February 24th, 2012. All donations will be sold on March 10 and 11 at Westgate Plaza, 1700 W. Market Street, #71 from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. Dresses will start at \$20. Proceeds from sales will benefit the 2011 Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Campaign. Members may drop off contributions at the AEA Office.

Board of Trustees Openings

Four district seats on the AEA Board of Trustees are currently open. They are: **Ellet Elementary, Kenmore Elementary, and North Secondary and Elementary**. Members interested in serving on the Board must submit a petition with at least five valid member signatures. Petitions are available at the AEA office. Just stop by or give us a call. Trustees meet once every month through the school year and are responsible for setting policy for the organization.

OOPS!

In the last edition of the Notes we published the names of members who helped make phone calls to defeat Issue 2. As we predicted, we overlooked some callers. Our apologies to ☎**Deb Gironda** ☎**Barb Tesniarz** and ☎**Ron Koly!**

Mark Your Calendar!!!

31st Annual AEA Night at the Stadium



VS



Friday, June 1, 7:05 PM at the Jake