

LEGISLATIVE AND SCHOOL FINANCE

2014 Resolutions

CHAIR - Jane E. Simon, Cincinnati #1520
Amy Geiger, Greenon #4370
Angel Green, Cincinnati #1520
Brian Schaner, Cleveland Heights #795
Carl Wetula, Berea #1699
Chris Fischer, Toledo #250
Heather Stambaugh, Greenon #4370
Heidi Straka, Oregon #1080
Jennifer Musgrave, Cleveland Heights #795
Matt Cameron, Georgetown #4903
Shenisha Austin, (Alternate) Cleveland Heights #795
Tom Andrews, Berea #1699
Tom Frank, Cincinnati #1520
Tom Luvison, Cleveland Retired, #279-R

RECLAIMING THE PROMISE OF HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PUBLIC SERVICES

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3 WHEREAS decades of experience and evidence show that one of the most effective
4 ways to improve educational and economic outcomes for all children is to provide high-
5 quality early learning experiences that set the stage for lifetime learning in school,
6 workplace and community, and

7 WHEREAS high-quality public K-12 is an economic necessity, an anchor of democracy,
8 a moral imperative and a fundamental civil right. Without the foundation a strong
9 education provides, our other rights can never be fully realized. We believe in and stand
10 ready to fight for public education because it is the means by which we help all children
11 dream their dreams and achieve them, and

12 WHEREAS an accessible, affordable and high-quality system of public higher education
13 is critical to the health of the nation—both to ensure that students reach their fullest
14 potential, and to enable the United States to continue to develop as a just society, a
15 vibrant democracy and an engine of economic opportunity. The promise of affordable
16 higher education is under attack by those who demand and pursue austerity,
17 polarization, privatization, and

18 WHEREAS public services for strong communities are under attack by those who
19 demand and pursue austerity, polarization, privatization and de-professionalization. By
20 uniting our voices, we can reclaim the promise, and

21 WHEREAS reclaiming the promise of public education means fighting to ensure that
22 neighborhood schools are safe, welcoming places for teaching and learning—and for
23 the students, families and people who work there. Reclaiming the promise means
24 ensuring that teachers and school support staff are well-prepared, supported, have
25 small class sizes and have time to collaborate with their colleagues. Reclaiming the

26 promise means enabling educators to teach an engaging curriculum that includes art
27 and music and the sciences. Reclaiming the promise means making sure that kids have
28 access to wraparound services that meet their emotional, social and health needs. We
29 need to ensure that schools are accessible to families, and that parents are welcomed
30 and supported as partners in the education of their children, and

31 WHEREAS taken together, these actions reflect our prescription for ensuring that all
32 kids have the opportunities they need and deserve. This vision may look different
33 community by community, but it has a few common elements. Reclaiming the promise
34 will bring back the joy of teaching and learning. It's the way to make every public school
35 a place where parents want to send their kids, teachers want to teach and children want
36 to learn. It makes our public schools the center of the community and fulfills their
37 purpose as an anchor of our democracy and a propeller of our economy, and

38 WHEREAS together, we can advance the common good by insisting on support for
39 high-quality public services that benefit families, strengthen communities, create safe
40 environments, and bolster the economy, and

41 Therefore, the Ohio Federation of Teachers and its locals, working with its community
42 partners, resolve to meet the needs of all children and working families by taking the
43 following actions:

- 44 • Fighting to ensure that all children have the opportunity to attend great schools
45 that provide a safe and welcoming environment in their own neighborhood, and
46 uniting with parent groups and others to oppose mass school closings that seem
47 to target our most impoverished communities. We will stand together to oppose
48 the failed strategies of privatization, de-professionalization and profit seeking,
49 and instead stand in support of efforts to fix, rather than close, schools; work for
50 safe schools and communities by backing initiatives to reduce gun violence and
51 prevent bullying; and advocate for environmentally healthy buildings that are
52 equipped to support the integration of technology in instruction.
- 53 • Educating our constituents about the importance of engaging curriculum by
54 promoting a greater understanding of the Common Core State Standards and
55 what they mean to their children's education; mobilizing our legislators to
56 advocate for implementation of the standards in a way that is fair and fully
57 supported at the federal, state and local levels; raising awareness around the
58 obsession with high-stakes testing and test preparation and the negative effect it
59 is having both on students and on the quality of the overall curriculum..
- 60 • Advocating for investment in the teaching profession to ensure that teachers are
61 well-prepared and supported—by working for comprehensive teacher
62 development and evaluation systems that do not deny teachers their due
63 process; increased opportunities for ongoing professional development so they
64 can improve their skills; and provide fair compensation systems.
- 65 • Educating our legislators about the role of community learning center schools
66 and joining with education unions and others to increase the number of
67 community learning center schools—places that bring together wraparound
68 services to help meet the social, emotional, health and nutrition needs of
69 students and families.

- 70 • Advocating for a comprehensive, multi-provider system that ensures voluntary
71 access to high-quality, affordable early childhood education and care from birth
72 forward, so our youngest children are ready to succeed when they enter school;
73 and advocating for equitable wages for the early education workforce.
74 • Mobilizing our members to fight for federal, state and local legislation, policies
75 and funding that ensure our children have the great public schools and public
76 services they deserve.
77 • Reclaiming the promise is about ensuring that the communities' tax dollars are
78 properly invested back in their community and the resources are used
79 responsibly and safely. Reclaiming the promise is about making sure that public
80 employees are well-prepared and supported to provide their communities the
81 quality service they deserve.
82 • Ensuring that all have access to high-quality and affordable higher education.
83 Reclaiming the promise is about ensuring rigorous instruction that is student-
84 centered and faculty-driven, while supporting independent and innovative
85 research. Reclaiming the promise is about making college affordable and
86 accessible to all and relieving the burdens of those costs which have been
87 shifted onto students and families. Reclaiming the promise is about fostering
88 diverse institutions that provide a richer educational environment for all students.

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91 **IMPROVED PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY**
92 **AND VOICE IN CHARTER SCHOOLS**
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94 WHEREAS the recent rush to expand the number of charter schools in Ohio has not
95 been accompanied by a commitment to ensure that charter schools are "public schools"
96 in the fullest meaning of the term, dedicated to education for the public good and in our
97 common purposes as American citizens, and

98 WHEREAS charter schools must be "public schools" not only in name but in their
99 accountability to students, educators, families, communities and taxpayers for quality,
100 equity, transparency and professional voice, and

101 WHEREAS research has shown disturbing inconsistencies in the practice of many
102 charter schools with respect to enrolling and retaining students with disabilities, English
103 language learners, and from homeless and low- income families on the same basis as
104 regular public schools, and

105 WHEREAS existing Ohio charter school laws and regulation have resulted in lax
106 oversight and less rigorous financial and educational reporting requirements to the
107 public than regular public schools, and

108 WHEREAS according to Innovation Ohio, between 2005 and 2012 the State spent \$1.4
109 billion on charter schools that never received higher than C and performance index
110 average was lower than those for Ohio's 8 large urban districts, and

111 WHEREAS transparency, accountability and universal access continue to be resisted
112 by well-financed, anti-public education forces such as those operating several of the

113 larger charter schools whose cynical and selective funding of charter schools conceals
114 their larger purpose of privatizing public education and stripping educators of
115 professional voice and parents and communities of the information and power to assure
116 a quality education for their children, and

117 WHEREAS when educators in charter schools have demanded a voice in their
118 workplace through union representation, charter school operators and charter
119 advocates have actively worked to deny and impede educators from gaining that voice,
120 although the evidence demonstrates that far from being an impediment to learning, real
121 teacher involvement in school governance makes schools better and makes the
122 innovations more sustainable, and therefore

123 BE IT RESOLVED that the Ohio Federation of Teachers support efforts to seek
124 changes to state laws and regulations to ensure that charter schools are fully
125 transparent in their operations and directly and openly accountable to the public for
126 student performance, admissions and enrollment policies, respect and support for
127 teacher and staff voice in school policy and program, potential conflict of interest and
128 disclosure requirements, and the use of public funds in as rigorous a manner as regular
129 public schools, and

130 BE IT RESOLVED that the OFT demand that all schools—charter schools as well as
131 district public schools—be held to the same standards of accountability and
132 transparency with regard to student progress and achievement, budget, funding and the
133 influence of corporate and private interests and entities, and

134 BE IT RESOLVED that the OFT accelerate our support of parental and community
135 efforts to advocate for transparency and accountability in charter schools, help affiliates
136 build capacity with respect to charter school responsiveness and accountability, and
137 assist charter school teachers and support personnel collectively to organize for
138 professional voice and quality education and to allow charter school staff to join existing
139 union locals, rather than being forced to form their own small affiliates.

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142 **COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS**

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144 WHEREAS schools are community institutions as well as centers of learning, and while
145 education alone cannot eradicate poverty, schools can help to coordinate the supports
146 and services their students and families need to thrive, and

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148 WHEREAS Cincinnati Public Schools began the process of creating community learning
149 centers in 2000 and whereby they are the first school district to have taken the concept
150 using public schools as hubs, bringing together many partners to offer a range of
151 supports and opportunities to children, youth, families and communities to multiple
152 school buildings, and

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154 WHEREAS Cincinnati worked with parents, teachers, support staff, principals and the
155 business and human service community partnership to achieve these results: Children
156 are ready to enter school; students attend school consistently; students are actively

157 involved in learning and their community; families are increasingly involved with their
158 children's education; schools are engaged with families and communities; students
159 succeed academically; students are healthy - physically, socially, and emotionally;
160 students live and learn in a safe, supportive, and stable environment, and communities
161 are desirable places to live, and
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163 WHEREAS Cincinnati Public Schools has been Ohio's highest ranked urban school
164 district in recent years, and
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166 WHEREAS the model of providing school based health, mental health, vision,
167 recreational, and tutoring services can help educators do what they do best and the
168 community to do what it does best: which is to meet basic human needs that would
169 support a child's ability to learn, and
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171 WHEREAS making schools the hub for the community makes it a hub for neighborhood
172 economic development as well, and
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174 WHEREAS all the school reforms that focus on teachers and curriculum will fail to
175 succeed if they don't address the issue of poverty, and
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177 WHEREAS all schools rural, suburban, and urban school can benefit from shared
178 services co-located at school. However, low-performing schools could benefit from
179 community learning centers the most, and
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181 WHEREAS the Five Essential Principles of community learning center schools are as
182 follows:
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184 1. Community learning center schools have a strong academic curriculum. The school
185 and community work together to ensure that students have a strong and rigorous
186 curriculum that will further student success. The goal of the strategic partnership is the
187 academic success of every child. These partnerships are driven by parents, teachers,
188 administrators, school staff, business and non-profits.
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190 2. Community learning center schools are a set of coordinated and purposeful
191 partnerships with the school district that integrate services for students, their families
192 and the community with the common goal of ensuring student success and building
193 strong communities. Many schools offer afterschool tutoring or a series of unconnected
194 programs. Their programs are too often unrelated, disconnected from any academic
195 mission and necessary rigorous curriculum, and lack the support built through
196 partnerships that engender sustainability. A full-service community learning center
197 school provides integrated programs and experiences that enrich learning as well as
198 meet the needs of students and the community.
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200 3. Community learning center schools provide more than one type of service to students
201 and the community. These may include:
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- 203 • academic services like tutoring, community-based learning and other
204 enrichment activities;

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- medical services like primary, vision, dental and nutritional services and mental health services like counseling and psychiatrists; and
- a variety of social services.

4. Community learning center schools are based on a comprehensive and strategic plan agreed to in writing (e.g., contracts, memoranda of agreement and memoranda of understanding) between the partner organization(s), including the providers and funders, and the school. Oversight of the school site(s) requires written agreements to avoid problems of governance and operation of community learning center schools. Written agreements also provide planning and a process for creating community learning center school models that can be taken to scale with buy-in by all stakeholders, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the OFT supports legislation that will facilitate the expansion of community learning centers in Ohio.