

Sherwood Grants

Every building in OPS benefits from the generosity and focus of the Sherwood Foundation. The Sherwood Foundation, formerly known as the Susan A Buffett Foundation, is committed to improving child and family welfare through community investments in public education, human services and social justice.

There are two types of Sherwood Funds that are made available to OPS schools:

1) **Sherwood Emergency Funds** are used for student and/or family needs (such as utilities). Schools may also use these funds for field trips or other needs directly related to students and/or families. The primary purpose of the Emergency Fund account is to level the playing field for all students by providing opportunities outside the school's budget. The building principal must approve all transactions; the Omaha Schools Foundation administers these funds.

2) **Sherwood Grant Funds** are given based upon the individual needs of each building. Sherwood staff met with each building principal; principals submit grants that are approved by the appropriate supervisor. The money can only be used for the pre-approved purposes arranged in the original grant agreement (such as professional development technology, teacher pay for after school tutoring, supplies, etc.). Grants are originally donated to the Omaha Schools Foundation, but turned over immediately to the OPS grants office for coding and administration of funds. Staff can find out specific details about their Sherwood Grant Funding from their principal. Each principal has a copy of their grant application that can be shared with staff.

**Membership
Drive
Winners!**

Congratulations to the following winners of the OEA Early Membership Enrollment Drawing

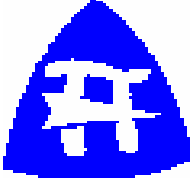
**First Prize of \$500:
Debbie Rosenberg, Skinner**

Second Prizes of one year free OEA dues:

Cynthia Ferraguti, Dundee

Christin Ones, Saratoga

Lisa Niedzwiecki, Indian Hill



OEA

Tip-Off

May 27, 2008

OEA DOES NOT FAVOR MERIT PAY!

BY MADDIE FENNELL FOR THE OEA BOARD

I know you've heard the saying, but I need you to take it to heart: **"Don't believe everything you read!"**

On Tuesday, May 6th the Omaha World Herald published an article headlined "Panel to flesh out merit pay plans for teachers". We are NOT talking about merit pay. I can only think that the World-Herald used that terminology because "merit pay" is a term that the general public thinks it understands.

Last Friday, I had conversations with three teachers who are struggling financially. One has had family emergencies that caused financial hardships. The family is behind on rent and faces utility shutoff. Another has multiple jobs and still doesn't know how he is going to afford to buy gas to get to school next year. The third has \$130,000 in student loans she is repaying.

Meanwhile, teachers are paid an average of 14.5 percent below those in the private sector with comparable degrees. Don't get me started on the misleading refrain that "teachers don't work summers." There isn't enough room in the Tip Off to debunk that ancient myth!

How do we best help the three teachers I spoke with last week, as well as the rest of us who battle with the rapidly rising cost of living? If we want more than the traditional three to five percent annual increase in teacher salaries, we must embark on a major change in both HOW we bargain and WHO starts speaking up for higher teacher salaries.

This past week I met with a leading businessman in our community. We talked about teacher salaries. His comment after I told him of our salary schedule: "A lot of people have told me that teacher salaries are OK. But now I understand that a teacher can be working, with a spouse at home with a child, and making so little that they qualify for lunch assistance. That's not right!"

We need business people, parents, PTA's, legislators and ALL teachers to be educated about the facts around teacher salaries and to become vocal advocates for increased pay. We can't just ask the public for more money, we must use our skills to TEACH them about what we do and how well we are doing it!

Over the next two years, OEA is going to put **massive** amounts of time and effort into significant improvements in teacher compensation. We are going to have new advocacy by the OEA Board; on-going updates at AR meetings; legislative initiatives; new jobs for the OEA Finance Committee; community dialogue; negotiations for a new Master Agreement; increased member training and involvement opportunities as well as a community-wide team re-searching teacher compensation.

We have talked about this effort during opening day at the Civic, in the January Tip-Offs, at AR meetings, and at OEA Board meetings. We're now entering into a research and discussion mode.

We're going into this community dialogue with three prerequisites:

- 1) Changes in compensation must be bargained, included in our Master Agreement, and voted upon by OEA members,
- 2) New dollars must be added to the salary package above traditional salary increases. We will not just rearrange current money; and
- 3) Compensation should not and cannot be based solely on student test scores.

WE NEED YOUR HELP. We need an AR from your building who will attend each AR monthly meeting, keep you informed in your building through regular communication, and share your thoughts with OEA leadership. We need members who are willing to serve on the OEA Finance Committee. We need members who are willing to serve on the Negotiations Team. We need members who are willing to recruit NEW members so that we speak as a unified profession. We need all members to talk with OEA leaders about their ideas and concerns. Nothing gets accomplished by just kibbitzing in the teachers' lounge!

As I said in January, the definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again and expect to get a different result.

To get better results—results that are reflected in our paychecks—it's time to look at teacher compensation in a new light!

Alegent Health Heart & Sole Walking Program \$10

Window shop while you get your heart rate up and rev up your metabolism. It's part of the Alegent Health Heart & Sole Walking Program, which also offers members free on-site blood pressure checks, assist with stretching and conduct free educational seminars. Members will also receive a free t-shirt, a walking tips guide and will earn incentives for reaching their goals. **To register go onsite to any of the shopping centers during the scheduled times listed below, call 1-800-ALEGENT (1-800-253-4368), or visit ALEGENT.COM.**

Westroads Mall (102nd & West Dodge Rd.) Tuesdays & Thursdays 7-10 a.m. (indoors year around)

Village Pointe (168th & West Dodge Rd.) Mondays & Wednesdays 4:30-7:30 p.m. (outdoors until Oct. 29)

Shadow Lake Towne Center (Hwy. 370 & 72nd St.) Tuesdays & Thursdays, 4:30-7:30 p.m. (outdoors until Oct. 30)



OEA Tip-Off

The OEA *Tip-Off* is a bi-monthly publication printed for members of the Omaha Education Association.

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Visit us on the web at:

www.omahaoea.org

Blue Cross/Blue Shield Health, Dental & Flexible Spending Open Enrollment

We are pleased to announce that EHA/Blue Cross Blue Shield is changing to a 4-tier enrollment structure for health insurance effective September 1, 2008. The new 4-tier health enrollment structures are:

- Employee only
- Employee and child(ren) only
- Employee and spouse only
- Employee, spouse and child(ren)

Because of this change, an open enrollment opportunity is being offered to all eligible employees this year. The **health insurance open enrollment period is May 1 through September 30, 2008, with a coverage effective date of September 1, 2008.** During this time, you can enroll in the plan without having to meet a qualifying event and you can add eligible dependents to your coverage and no "late enrollee" penalties apply. Eligible dependents include your spouse and unmarried dependent children through age 18 or through age 23 if they are a full-time student.

The premium amount will depend on which of the 4-tier enrollment structures applies to each employee. Existing, enrolled, employees will be automatically slotted into the proper tier based upon the current coverage on file with Blue Cross Blue Shield.

A Blue Cross Blue Shield enrollment form, rate sheet and 2008-2009 PPO Health Benefit Summary sheet will be sent to you by OPS.

If you choose not to add family coverage during this special open enrollment opportunity, you can not add family coverage at any future date unless you have a special, life qualifying event – marriage, divorce, birth, adoption, death or change in other family insurance.

DENTAL INSURANCE OPEN ENROLLMENT

Blue Cross Blue Shield is also changing to a 4-tier enrollment structure for the dental plan effective September 1, 2008. The **dental insurance open enrollment period is also effective May 1 through September 30, 2008, with a coverage effective date of September 1, 2008.** The new 4-tier dental enrollment structures are:

- Employee only
- Employee and child(ren) only
- Employee and spouse only
- Employee, spouse and child(ren)

During this year's open enrollment, you can add eligible dependents to your coverage and no "late enrollee" penalties apply. Eligible dependents include your spouse and unmarried dependent children through age 18 or through age 23 if they are a full-time student. Blue Cross Blue Shield offers a dental open enrollment every year in September. Please note – during any other annual, September, dental open enrollment the dental benefits are limited to routine (Coverage A) benefits for the first year following enrollment.

The premium amount will depend on which of the 4-tier enrollment structures applies to each employee. Existing, enrolled, employees

will be automatically slotted into the proper tier based upon the current coverage on file with Blue Cross Blue Shield.

A Blue Cross Blue Shield enrollment form and rate sheet will be sent to you by OPS.

FLEXIBLE SPENDING OPEN ENROLLMENT

To re-enroll or enroll in the Flexible Spending/Plan 125 benefit for the 2008-09 plan year, please complete the flexible spending enrollment form which will be sent to you by OPS. Re-enrollment is required each year per Internal Revenue Service regulations. The 2008-09 plan year is September 1, 2008 through August 31, 2009. Please keep in mind when you are determining your plan year amount that Omaha Public Schools requires a minimum annual election amount of \$250.00 and a maximum annual election of \$5,000.00. The annual amounts apply for both the Health Care and Dependent Care Reimbursement Accounts.

Further, more detailed, information regarding the flexible spending benefit can be reviewed at www.mypayflex.com.

FAILURE TO COMPLETE AND SUBMIT AN FSA/PLAN 125 ENROLLMENT FORM INDICATES YOU DO NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2008-09 PLAN YEAR.

WHO TO CONTACT

If you have questions regarding these benefit open enrollment opportunities, please contact one of the following Compensation & Benefit phone numbers: 557-2119, 557-2117 or 557-2110.

RETURN COMPLETED FORMS

Upon completion of your health enrollment form or Flexible Spending enrollment form, please return via school mail, or fax to 557-2167 or send by U.S. mail to 3215 Cuming St, Omaha NE 68131.

ENROLLMENT DEADLINE

In order for the Compensation & Benefit Division to process your benefit enrollment changes in a timely manner, we ask that all enrollment forms be submitted to the Compensation & Benefits office by August 1, 2008. Employees who submit an enrollment form after August 1, but prior to September 1, may not have the change processed as of September 1.

All forms will be mailed to you directly from OPS. Our office does NOT have the forms.

2008-2009 EHA/Blue Cross Blue Shield Insurance Rates For Omaha Public Schools Employees

FOR EMPLOYEES WITH LESS THAN 3 YEARS OF CONSECUTIVE FULL-TIME SERVICE:

	Employee Cost Per Month	Board Share Per Month	Total Premium Per Month
Employee only health	\$ 0.00	\$448.22	\$ 448.22
Employee plus child(ren)	\$380.99	\$448.22	\$ 829.21
Employee plus spouse	\$493.04	\$448.22	\$ 941.26
Employee, spouse & child(ren)	\$760.41	\$448.22	\$1,208.63

FOR EMPLOYEES WITH MORE THAN 3 YEARS OF CONSECUTIVE FULL-TIME SERVICE:

	Employee Cost Per Month	Board Share Per Month	Total Premium Per Month
Employee only health	\$ 0.00	\$448.22	\$ 448.22
Employee plus child(ren)	\$152.40	\$676.81	\$ 829.21
Employee plus spouse	\$197.22	\$744.04	\$ 941.26
Employee, spouse & child(ren)	\$304.16	\$904.47	\$1,208.63

Blue Preferred (P.P.O.) 80% A & B with 50% C Dental Insurance(All full-time employees)

	Employee Cost Per Month	Board Share Per Month	Total Premium Per Month
Employee only dental	\$ 0.00	\$20.70	\$20.70
Employee plus child(ren)	\$17.60	\$20.70	\$38.30
Employee plus spouse	\$22.77	\$20.70	\$43.47
Employee, spouse & child(ren)	\$35.12	\$20.70	\$55.82

NOTE: If you are married to another full-time OPS employee or half-time OPS teacher, please contact the Compensation & Benefits Office before completing your enrollment form.

Office of Latino Education and Student Support Services



The Office of Latino Education and Student Support Services provide academic support and social services at the Omaha Public Schools District to help students graduate from high school and prepare for a higher education.

The following services are provided for students and families free of charge:

- Information about programs and services available in the district and in the community.
- Adult education programs for parents.
- Assistance to help understand the educational system and graduation requirements; assistance to help reduce the number of students who are suspended or expelled from school.
- Services to prepare for college include: assistance with admission applications; career information and college/university field trips; assistance with financial aid and scholarship search; assistance with the ACT/SAT.
- Career planning and exploration through the Latina Latino Youth Conference.
- Advocacy at the state and national levels to facilitate access to higher education.
- Referral and cultural transition assistance services in areas of employment, legal consults, immigration, housing, and emergency food and shelter.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact us at (402) 561-6061.

www.latinocenterofthemidlands.org