

# OAPSE AFSCME News

Official Publication of the Ohio Association of Public School Employees, OAPSE/AFSCME Local 4/AFL-CIO

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## Union Membership Key to Wages, Benefits, Power

Union leaders are often asked by new hires and resistant coworkers, "Why should I join? What do I get for my dues? What's in it for me?" Fair enough questions with obvious answers. OAPSE membership means clout and cash. Clout to help determine conditions on the job and cash in your pocket.

*Across Ohio, classified public school employees who are members of a union make on average \$3,906 more per year than their non-union counterparts. That's about \$325 more in pay per month.*

The 36,000 members of OAPSE know that by joining together with co-workers to form local unions, they gain strength in numbers and have a more powerful voice on the job. It would be impossible – alone – to negotiate a fair contract with an employer who has all the power. As Frederick Douglass said, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will."

But together in a union, OAPSE members negotiate strong contracts that include not only increased wages and benefits, but that also guarantee a safer workplace, a more secure retirement and improved working conditions. OAPSE members have a voice in how their jobs get done and how they are compensated to do them. That's a big deal.

And in this tough economy, job security and fair wages are a very big deal. OAPSE members feel the benefit of union membership every time they get paid. Across Ohio, classified public school employees who are members of a union make on average \$3,906 more per year than their non-union counterparts. That's about \$325 more in pay per month.

*(School Employees Retirement System)*

*"There is no doubt that union members, and specifically OAPSE members, earn significantly higher wages than*

*non-union workers in school districts, libraries, departments of disabilities, Head Start programs and community colleges. This did not happen by accident or because some employers decided they like handing out cash. It happened because workers joined together, formed unions and negotiated from positions of strength,"* said OAPSE Executive Director Joe Rugola.

Union membership has been meaningful for all public workers, who not so long ago were considered – and treated as – second class citizens. But data clearly shows that union membership is especially important for women and people of color, who significantly improve their economic standing by joining a union. This is of special interest to OAPSE members, 76 percent of whom are women and many of whom are African American.

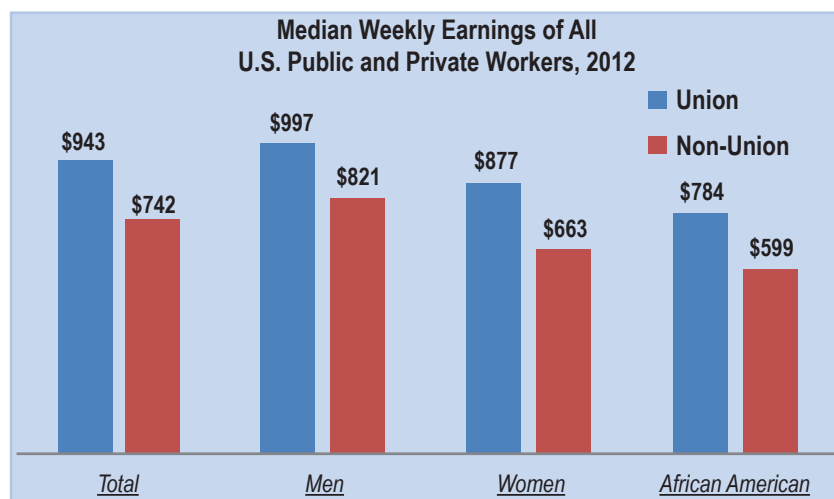
Nationally, women earn on average 77 cents for every dollar men earn. But union women earn 87 cents for each dollar pocketed by men (Kaminski), "still not acceptable, but clearly progress made because of union strength," Rugola said.

No matter what gender or race or what job classification, unionized workers across the board earn more – about \$200 more per week – than their non-union counterparts. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

"Union membership makes a difference. OAPSE members know that. They live it every day. It's why we have grown by 15,000 members in the last 25 years," said Rugola. "Numbers don't lie. And it is clear – not just to us but to those who want to destroy us – that union members earn dramatically more and have far

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## Union vs. Non-Union Wages



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The chart above shows the advantage of union membership for public and private sector workers across America.

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better benefits and working conditions than non-union workers. And workers in free bargaining states like Ohio are much better off than those in states with laws that restrict union membership, often called Right to Work states.”

Rugola pointed to data that shows workers in free bargaining states have higher wages and are far more likely to have employer-sponsored health insurance and pensions. (*Economic Policy Institute*) The wage differences alone are stark and clearly show the benefit of having the legal right to a strong union – a union which collects dues from all members it represents. For example, public school bus drivers in Ohio make a median wage of about \$28,000, while drivers in “Right to Work” states like Oklahoma and Tennessee make about \$20,000. The same gap shows up for library technicians. In Ohio, their annual median wage is about \$29,000, while in Oklahoma they make about \$20,000 and in Tennessee, they are paid \$23,000.

*“There’s a reason corporations are pressuring governors and legislatures in places like Indiana and Michigan to pass “Right to Work” laws that let workers opt out of paying for the services the union is legally obligated to provide them. They want to weaken unions and drive us out of business so they can slash wages and benefits and put more money in their pockets. And make no mistake, Ohio is their next target,”* said State President JoAnn Johnntony.

She noted that some of the same groups that were behind the push to pass Senate Bill 5 are collecting signatures to put a “Right to Work” issue on the ballot.

*“We are referring to this as “No Rights at Work” because just like Senate Bill 5, it is a direct attack on workers and middle class Ohioans. It is designed to weaken unions and our collective voice. This is part of a national attack on workers funded by corporate CEOs who want to line their pockets by reducing the pay and benefits of workers like the ones who are part of OAPSE. Fewer good paying jobs will destroy our communities,*



*and we are not going to stand for that,”* Johnntony said.

She urged OAPSE members to frequently check the union’s website at [www.oapse.org](http://www.oapse.org) and the We Are Ohio website at [www.weareohio.com](http://www.weareohio.com) to learn about opportunities to fight the “No Rights at Work” initiative. □

## OAPSE Members Remember Sandy Hook Victims

The officers, executive board, staff and members of OAPSE extend heartfelt sympathies, thoughts and prayers to all the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, CT.

Executive Director Joe Rugola said that no words or deeds can begin to ease the pain of the children, parents, school employees or members of the community who are living through the aftermath of the December 14 assault. He noted that violence at schools happens far too often, with horrible consequences for students and school employees.

*“OAPSE members have experience with violence at work and heroic action by school employees. Many of us know the story of Pete Christopher, who was a custodian and an active member in the Wickliffe City Schools. Pete was killed on the job when he placed himself between a gunman who entered his building and a group of school children. Pete’s first response was to save those kids — the kids he served every day. And his sacrifice*



*exemplifies our members’ commitment to the children and the public we serve. He will always be remembered for his dedication and courage,”* Rugola said.

Similarly, the teachers, administrators, custodians and bus drivers who acted with such bravery at Sandy Hook will always be in our hearts, he said.

The tragedy at Newtown has

prompted a nationwide debate that goes beyond preventing violence in schools and focuses on what to do about guns in our society. Some school districts are responding by arming custodians and other school employees, but Rugola urges a thoughtful, comprehensive approach.

*“The head of the National Rifle Association has proposed what amounts to escalating an arms race in our nation’s schools. His suggestion that an armed guard in each school can effectively protect our children from disturbed gunmen brandishing semi-automatic weapons disregards the tragic facts of Newtown. As a gun owner who believes in the Second Amendment, I know we can better protect our children with common-sense gun laws and adequate funding for mental health services. It is time for Americans to pull together and demand better for our nation’s children, educators and school personnel.”* □

## Save the Date for May Conference:

The 73rd Annual OAPSE Delegate Conference will be held Thursday, Friday and Saturday – May 9 – 11, 2013 – at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Columbus.

Deadline to register with the hotel is April 24.

# Kasich Budget Will Hurt Middle Class, Education

Governor John Kasich's new two-year state budget is full of empty promises that will hurt middle class families, like those represented by OAPSE. The budget gives more handouts to the wealthy and the governor's friends in big business. And it funds education at lower levels than when Kasich took office, while drastically expanding vouchers and charter schools.

Topping the list of objections to Kasich's \$63.3 billion plan is his proposal to cut income taxes by 20 percent. The cut will mean \$4.3 billion less in revenue – less revenue for schools, libraries and local governments, which all took a huge hit in the governor's last budget.

Critics point out that the state anticipates a \$1.4 billion surplus by mid-year, and that money should be spent to strengthen schools and local communities instead of giving tax breaks to the rich. The last time Ohioans received a significant tax cut was in 2005. Contrary to the sales pitch for that cut, which touted job growth, Ohio went into a deep recession and lost hundreds of thousands of jobs.

The 2005 tax cut gave the richest Ohioans an average of \$9,500, but the average family received less than \$200. And this tax cut will have the same effect, according to Randy Weston, OAPSE director of political action and legislative affairs.

*"Basically, this budget shifts the tax burden so that OAPSE members, the middle class and seniors will pay more while millionaires and corporations will pay less. When a public employee has his wages frozen or a retiree is living on a fixed income, an increase in the sales tax — \$3 billion total — like the one Kasich wants is a big increase,"* said Weston. He noted that the proposed sales tax expansion would shift the tax burden from millionaires to people who watch cable television, buy a house, buy movie tickets or wash their clothes at a coin laundry.

OAPSE is among those questioning the priorities of the budget, which has been embraced by Grover Norquist, head of the group that has pledged to *"reduce government to the size that it can be drowned in a bath tub."*

The governor says he is increasing funding for education, but he has cut the overall amount going to public schools.

*"Public schools are receiving \$340 million less in state funding than when John Kasich became governor. How does*

*that strengthen our schools and our communities? And he is stealing money — \$25.5 million — from the lottery fund to pay for a huge expansion of the voucher program. Under his plan, up to 45 percent of Ohio's 1.8 million public school children will be eligible for vouchers so they can attend private or charter schools. He wants to privatize education in this state, including every public education job,"* Weston said.

The budget comes on the heels of Kasich's "education reform" plan, which the administration now admits is not about "adequacy" but is intended to redistribute wealth across the state.

*"This is a complete reversal of the 1997 DeRolph decision at the Ohio Supreme Court that mandated that we find a way to constitutionally fund our schools so that every child in Ohio received an adequate education. Kasich is thumbing his nose at the law and is showing that his top priority is moving tax dollars to private companies to educate our children."*

Meanwhile, the governor has not released data that shows how tax dollars will be divided among local school districts as part of his \$15.1 billion education plan.

*"The governor's office says the data is still being worked on. But it seems that a plan should be based on data, and that data shouldn't just be made up after the fact to support your plan,"* Weston said.

The Kasich budget is cutting the local government fund by another \$200 million and is slashing money to local health departments by 65 percent. Health departments use the funds for breast and cervical cancer screenings, prenatal care and vaccinations for the needy.

*"The governor is cutting local government funds and hurting children and poor families, and then limiting the ability for libraries and other local government entities to put levies on the ballot, stripping them of their local control. That's not just foolish. It's mean-spirited and probably illegal,"* Weston said.

Of course, he noted, the budget document contains very few details about exactly how it will be implemented. That data will come in hearings in the Ohio House of Representatives and Ohio Senate over the next few months.

*"What is very telling is that Kasich is spending \$7.5 billion more in this budget than the last, and he still is not restoring the massive cuts he made to schools and local governments. That says a lot about his priorities."*

*"The fact is that conservative Republicans control the legislature with super majorities. We will work with our coalition partners to make sure the voices of OAPSE members and all Ohio workers are heard. And we will fight all the way to the budget deadline of June 30,"* Weston said. □

## Kasich Budget: Empty Promises

- ✓ Gives huge tax breaks to Ohio's wealthiest families and business owners
- ✓ Expands the sales tax by \$3 billion so that middle class families pay a higher percentage of their wages for goods and services than do the rich
- ✓ Drains the state's \$1.4 billion rainy day fund – money which should be used to strengthen education and local communities
- ✓ Keeps education funding \$340 million less than when Kasich took office in 2010
- ✓ Greatly expands the school voucher program so that up to 45 percent of Ohio's 1.8 million school children could qualify
- ✓ Moves public tax dollars to private companies to educate Ohio's children
- ✓ Cuts local government funds by \$200 million and local health departments by 65 percent
- ✓ Limits the ability of local governments to put levies on the ballot
- ✓ Calls for a move from school days to school hours



# OAPSE Says Ohio Schools Are Not for Sale

**A**s local school districts across Ohio are faced with funding cuts—more than \$1.3 billion statewide—and pressure to cut expenses, OAPSE local union leaders are working to make sure school boards and superintendents do not turn to privatization of public services as a solution.

In the coming weeks and months, local union leaders will deliver “Ohio Schools: Not for Sale” to elected leaders and administrators in Ohio’s schools. The brief fact sheet and supporting documentation they will discuss provides an overview of why privatization of public school services is bad business.

*“We want to make it clear that privatization negatively impacts taxpayers, workers and communities. It is not a long-term solution to budget cuts imposed by Governor Kasich and the legislature. In fact, privatization leads to*

*increased costs, reduced accountability and voters who are less likely to support local school levies,”* said OAPSE Associate Director Gary Martin.

He noted that in Ohio, schools that provide in-house bus transportation with board-owned equipment and board employees pay significantly less per student - \$400 - than schools who hire private contractors.

*“Another huge problem is that contracting out services leads to a lack of local control, and that leads to poor service and dangerous conditions. The examples are endless: late buses, tardy students, bus inspection problems. We’ve all heard the stories about private drivers who drove drunk or with syringes of cocaine on their buses. That is simply unacceptable. But it’s what you risk when you privatize,”* Martin said.

Another big concern is what privat-

ization does to workers and local communities. Privatization shifts resources from public workers to corporations who are in business to make a profit. It leads to layoffs and disrupts lives.

*“And the bottom line is that when you take away good-paying jobs from public employees and hire people making minimum wage and no benefits, you hurt the tax base and the community. Privatization is just bad business all the way around.”*

OAPSE members are working with employers across the state to save money while continuing to provide excellent and efficient public services. For help in talking to your employer about the “Ohio Schools: Not for Sale” initiative, contact your local president or call your field office. □

## OAPSE Wins Elections for SERS Board Seats



**Barbra Phillips**  
**SERS Active Member**

**S**trong leadership on the Ohio School Employees Retirement System (SERS) will continue with the election of three OAPSE candidates to that body.

The OAPSE Executive Board supported Barbra (Barb) Phillips for reelection to an active employee seat and Mary Ann Howell for reelection to the retiree seat. In addition, the board backed Debra Basham for an active employee spot. They were the only candidates to qualify for the ballot in the SERS elec-



**Mary Ann Howell**  
**SERS Retiree Member**

tion process, so no election will be held. They will be sworn in this summer.

Phillips works for the Ashland City Schools as a bus driver for disabled students. She is president of OAPSE Local 233, President of the Ashland/Wayne/Holmes Central Labor Council AFL-CIO, and Executive Board member of Northeast Area Labor Federation AFL-CIO.

Howell retired in July 2004 after more than 26 years as an account clerk in



**Debra Basham**  
**SERS Active Member**

the Treasurer’s Office of the Columbus City Schools. She served on the OAPSE State Executive Board for 14 years, was a member of the Budget and Finance Committee for 8 years, and is a member of AFSCME Chapter 1184, composed of Ohio public employee retirees.

Basham is an OAPSE Executive Board alternate from Northwest Central District. She is a bus driver for Bath Local Schools and serves as vice president of Local 357. □

## Candidates for State Officers Election Slated for Ballots

Three officers will be elected to serve the Union during the 2013-2017 term. OAPSE members will choose a State President, State Vice President and a State Secretary.

Debra Basham, Chairperson of the OAPSE State Nominating Committee, announced that the committee has authorized one candidate for State President, four candidates for State Vice President, and one candidate for State Secretary. The names of the six candidates will be officially placed on the secret ballot mailed to all members in good standing at his or her last known address no later than the week of March 15, 2013. All voted ballots shall be returned postmarked by, or time-stamped at, the OAPSE/AFSCME State Office **no later than 4:30 p.m. on April 15, 2013.**

The candidate receiving the greatest number of votes for a particular office shall be declared the winner. A majority of the votes cast for any office shall not be required to elect. In the event of a tie for the greatest number of votes for a particular office, the candidate having the greatest continuous period of membership at the time of the election shall be declared the winner. If the tie is not broken in that manner, a flip of a coin shall determine the winner.

If there is only one candidate for an office, that individual may be declared elected without the need to incur the expense of a secret ballot mail election.

The results of the election shall be announced before or at the Annual Delegate Conference so that the elected officers can be installed during the Annual Delegate Conference.

Winners of the elections for all offices shall be installed at the close of the Annual Delegate Conference in May.

The following are brief outlines of the OAPSE background of candidates for the State Offices. All candidates were responsible for submitting their information and photographs. Remarks made by each candidate, if submitted, appear in italics.

### For State President



**JoAnn Johnntony**

A member for 31 consecutive years, JoAnn Johnntony is completing her 16th year as State President. She previously served as State Vice President (3 years), Northeast District President (3 years), Northeast District Vice President (1 year) and President of Local 425 (13 years). Johnntony is a head custodian in the Girard City Schools.

### For State Vice President



**Bonnie L. Grantz**

A member for 19 consecutive years, Bonnie Grantz is currently serving her first term of office as secretary of Local 194. She previously served as State Executive Board Alternate from Northeast District (2 years), District Vice President (3 years) and President of Local 194 (10 years). Grantz is a secretary in the Austintown Local Schools. *"My participation in elections and/or caucuses that pertain to our members and other working families; elected and appointed positions that I have held and currently hold; most important, my belief in the work of this union qualifies me to run for State Vice President."*



**James Haller**

A member for 23 consecutive years, James Haller currently serves as State Executive Board Member from Northwest Central District (8 years) and Vice President of the Northwest Central Labor Council (6 years). He previously served as Northwest Central District Vice President (6 years) and President of Local 137 (16 years). Haller is a custodian in the Lima City Schools. *"I have spent over 18 years serving OAPSE members as a Local Officer, District Officer, and Executive Board Member. My experience in negotiating contracts, fighting for worker's rights, and my dedication to staying informed on the politics affecting OAPSE members are all assets for the position of State Vice President."*



**Davida Russell**

A member for 30 consecutive years, Davida Russell currently serves as State Vice President (6 years), Northeast District President and President of Local 744 (18 years). She previously served as State Executive Board Member and Alternate, Northeast District Vice President and Treasurer of Local 744 (4 years). Russell is a bus driver for the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities. *"I, Davida Russell, as the current State Vice President for the past 6 years, have demonstrated my ability to carry out the duties outlined in the OAPSE State Constitution pertaining to this office. I have brought continuous dignity, respect statewide, awareness and credence to this position."*



**Timothy R. Warren**

A member for 33 consecutive years, Tim Warren currently serves as Vice President of Southeast District (2 years), Chair of the State Judicial Panel and Recording Secretary of the Southeast Ohio AFL-CIO Central Labor Council. He previously served as President of Local 400 (20 years) and Vice President (6 years). Warren is a bus driver in the Nelsonville-York City Schools. *"My dedication to OAPSE since 1980 qualifies me to be state vice-president. For 33 years, my skills as an advocate for the membership have been unsurpassed, by serving as my local's President, Negotiator, and Grievance Chairperson. Most recently, I have diligently worked to solve disputes statewide as chairman of the Judicial Panel."*



## For State Secretary



### Sandra Wheeler

A member for 29 consecutive years, Sandra Wheeler currently serves as State Secretary (22 years), President of Northwest Central District (24 years) and President of Local 306 (26 years). She previously served as State Executive Board Alternate (1 year). Wheeler is a secretary in the Lima City Schools.

## Scholarship Committee Set to Help Even More Deserving Students

As the new chair of the OAPSE/AFSCME Memorial Scholarship Committee, Stephanie Wiley said the group is pleased to announce it is again awarding a minimum of 10 \$2,500 scholarships to give financial assistance to deserving students.

*"The committee members are very excited about some new initiatives that we hope will strengthen the scholarship program and provide even more money to even more dedicated, hard-working students across the state," Wiley said.*

She noted that the committee is urging union members to solicit donations in their communities and to *"get creative about raising additional funds for the scholarship pot. We all know how important a quality education is for our children to reach their full potential. With college getting more expensive all the time, we want to do everything we can to help as many of our qualified students as possible."*

Eligibility requirements and applications are posted on the OAPSE website at [www.oapse.org](http://www.oapse.org). Applications and supporting documentation must be received by the OAPSE State Office by March 1. Winners will be announced by May 1. □



Scholarship Committee Chair Stephanie Wiley accepts a check from OAPSE Executive Director Joe Rugola and Veda Rugola. The Rugolas are regular contributors to the OAPSE Memorial Scholarship Fund, and Wiley and the committee are working to expand the number of contributors and the amount of scholarships.



*I would like to thank you, the membership of this great union, for allowing me to continue to serve all of you for the next 4 years as your President of OAPSE, and I will always be grateful to you for giving me that privilege over these 28 years. "God Bless Each and Every One of You."*

### JoAnn Johntony, President



### James Haller

**I am the State Executive Board Member representing the Northwest Central District. I would be honored to be your State Vice-President as we battle Privatization, Right-to-Work, and Politicians who want to cut Our Jobs, Wages & Benefits, and Retirement Security.**

**Let's Keep OAPSE Strong!!**



Re-Elect **Davida Russell**

## **OAPSE State Vice President**

**I've Been There With You**

Davida Russell the State Vice President, Northeast District President & President OAPSE Local 744/AFL-CIO since 1994, while working as a bus driver for CCB/DD. I am very dedicated to working people; I have been in the forefront of organizing, educating, training, and increasing political awareness among workers. I've been there with you as we fought against SB 5. I've been there with you as we fought voter suppression, and I will be there with you for all the fights ahead! As your State Vice President I actively fight for you! 36,000 OAPSE members on issues that affect us every day. Serving as Vice President of the Ohio AFL-CIO, Executive Vice President of the North Coast Area Labor Federation and Vice President/Trustee of the North Shore AFL-CIO to make sure OAPSE's voice is heard, I am asking for your vote to continue the fight with you.

[www.reelectdavidarussell.webs.com](http://www.reelectdavidarussell.webs.com)

### **Accomplishments:**

- Served nationally on President Clinton's Women's Round Table of Greater Cleveland
- Represented public employees in Sao Paulo, Brazil
- Selected as One of The Most Influential Black Women, by Who's Who in Cleveland Magazine
- Vice Chair of the Cuyahoga County Charter Review Commission
- Governor's appointee, Board of Commission of Ohio, MR/DD Futures Study Committee
- Authored The Birth of a Union: the Legacy of Noridean McDonald

### **Education:**

- Bachelor's in Labor Studies and Union Leadership/Administration from the National Labor College
- Graduate of Cleveland State Labor-Management Relations Certificate Program
- Graduate of Leadership Cleveland program
- Ohio Department of Education License, Aide Permit HQ Paraprofessional

## **Vote Bonnie Grantz OAPSE State Vice President**



**Reliable  
Dedicated  
Determined  
Hard Working**

**A Vice-President  
Working for Your Future**

## ***Elect Tim Warren***

**FOR OAPSE STATE VICE-PRESIDENT**

***"I will listen to ALL members' concerns"***

- 33 Year OAPSE Member
- Over 20 years as Local President
- Southeast District Vice-President
- OAPSE State Judicial Committee Chairman
- Southeast Ohio AFL-CIO CLC Recording Secretary
- Dedicated Union Activist



***Big enough to listen, small enough to care!***

***Please send in your ballot!***



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## OAPSE Fights Columbus Schools Takeover

**O**APSE is leading a coalition in Central Ohio to stop any attempt at a corporate takeover of Columbus City Schools. OAPSE represents more than 3,000 members in 11 local unions in the school district. Their work is under review by the Columbus Education Commission, whose members were appointed by Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman. The Commission has indicated it will exercise broad authority, *"a position that is not acceptable to those of us who believe in the Democratic process of electing our school board members to run our schools,"* said OAPSE Executive Director Joe Rugola.

*"We strongly believe that the foundation of a strong public education rests in local control of our school districts, a system in which elected school board members are directly accountable to parents and the community,"* Rugola said. *"We are not going to sit by while politicians and corporations plot to take over our public schools just so they can line their pockets with taxpayer dollars and demonize our members in the process. And be-*

*lieve me, while the focus is currently on Columbus City Schools, districts in urban centers such as Toledo, Cincinnati, Akron and Youngstown are targets as well."*

The Ohio AFL-CIO Executive Board joined the battle by unanimously supporting a resolution that strongly opposes "any effort to seize control of our public schools and strip elected school board members of their duties and responsibilities to our children and the public at large."

Rugola noted that across the country, private takeovers of our system of public education have been disastrous for children and communities. Ohio's labor movement is now on record that working families will not support such a plan at any school in Ohio.

OAPSE will continue to work with leaders and members in Columbus City Schools and across Ohio to keep corporate hands off our public schools. The Commission is scheduled to finish its work in late April. □

## Midview Passes Levy

**T**he 120 members of Local 186 at Midview Local Schools in Lorain County are celebrating a levy victory after years of defeat. By a margin of 62-38 percent, voters approved the district's first new money levy in 19 years.

Defeat would have resulted in the loss of 53 jobs, including 25 OAPSE members, 20 teachers and three administrators.

*"Voters here had rejected 14 levies since 1993. This victory was only possible because of OAPSE and our PEOPLE program,"* said Local 186 President Marsha Minney. She noted that OAPSE assisted the levy campaign with polling, message development and phone banking that helped turn out supporters to the polls. *"All of that was possible because of the dollars we raise through PEOPLE, our union's political action committee,"* said Minney, who added that Local 186 will begin a drive to sign up more members to participate in the program.

For more information about PEOPLE, contact your OAPSE field office. □

### OAPSE News

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