



# *The Spearhead*

*A Newsletter for the Jefferson  
Federation of Teachers*

Spring 2017

Volume 3, Number 3

## **Ever Thankful**

David Shearouse, TJ VP

As many of you may have heard, I recently missed ten weeks of teaching due to a bout with an unexpected illness known as Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS), specifically the Miller-Fisher variant of the disorder. Essentially, GBS occurs when one's immune system, over-stimulated by the flu or another respiratory infection, attacks one's nervous system, causing one's nerves to fray and resulting in the loss of vision, fine motor skills, and gross motor skills, amid several other frightening symptoms. Thankfully, the doctors caught my case early, and after three weeks in the hospital, including ten days in ICU and ten days in rehab, I was allowed to continue my recovery at home.

During my recovery at home, I couldn't help but be thankful not only for my recovery but for the protections and benefits afforded to me because of my job and my union. First, the costs for my hospitalization and rehabilitation easily topped \$150,000, but because of my union-negotiated health benefits, my costs were \$0. Second, because of my participation in my union's sick bank, I received full pay for the duration of my illness, resulting in no financial hardship incurred by my family. Additionally, due to the union-negotiated \$1,000 per month "income protection" benefit, I received additional income during my illness to pay for unexpected costs such as co-pays and medical equipment necessary for my recovery. Lastly, because of my union, my job was protected in my absence, allowing me to focus on my recovery and take the necessary steps towards returning to work as soon as possible.

Now that I have returned to work, I'm able to look back at my illness in retrospect and gain a new appreciation for life and what I do on a daily basis. I think it's easy for all of us to take what we do for granted, perhaps allowing us to become dragged down by the trivial drama caused by our co-workers, parents, and/or students. However, in the grand scheme of our careers and lives, these dallies in drama are usually short-lived and should not take away from why we chose to become teachers in the first place. At the end of the day, we teach in a great district with great schools and a great union that has negotiated for us great benefits, and for that, we should be ever thankful.

## Spring News

Scheduled Two Hour Delays for Professional Development: One of Dr. Michael Ghilani’s first proposals to the union upon taking office as the district’s new superintendent was to suggest regular two-hour delays for professional development throughout the school year. The JFT Executive Council unanimously approved Dr. Ghilani’s proposal, and the two hour delays have been scheduled next year for October 23 and December 11, 2017 and February 5 and March 19, 2018. Please note that this proposal is for the 2017-2018 school year only and will be reviewed before being continued for ensuing school years.

Revised Parent/Teacher Conference Days/Hours: Another of Dr. Ghilani’s proposals to the union involved altering the usual two days before Thanksgiving reserved for Parent/Teacher conferences. Usually, the Tuesday before Thanksgiving consisted of a full day of school for students followed by evening Parent/Teacher conferences from 6:00-9:00 PM and Wednesday from 9:00 AM- 12:00 PM. Under Dr. Ghilani’s proposal, the Tuesday before Thanksgiving would consist of a half-day for students (early dismissal) followed by afternoon and evening Parent/Teacher conferences on Tuesday ONLY; the district would be closed on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. The JFT Executive Council also unanimously approved this proposal, and this proposal is also for the 2017-2018 school year only and will be reviewed before being continued for ensuing school years.

## Contract Knowledge

Per the Contract, did you know:

Section 10, E., Income Protection (Page 59): Each employee shall be provided with a group Income Protection Insurance policy with benefits commencing on the first day of disability due to accident and the 15<sup>th</sup> day of disability due to sickness as follows: \$1,000 per month.

### Upcoming Dates

Tuesday, April 25, 2017-  
General Membership Meeting at Middle School

Friday, June 2, 2017- Steak Fry

Tuesday, September 26, 2017- TJ JFT Fall Meeting  
in Library at TJHS

### Recognitions

#### Weddings:

Kelly Scears: Babies

Sandy Burke: Baby

Have a marriage or birth to celebrate? Tell us about it! E-mail: [jjakubowski@wjhsd.net](mailto:jjakubowski@wjhsd.net)