

Get to Know: **JOE CENA**

## BOARD CONNECTION

By Dave Lowrey, Executive Director



### *Teacher by Day... Board Member by night*

- Lockport High School Grad
- Niagara University - Bachelors & Masters Degree
- Depew UFSD - English Teacher and TOSA

**Joe Cena** is a 2000 graduate of Lockport High School. He attended Niagara University where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in English Education and a Masters in Students with Disabilities, English 7-12. He has been teaching at Depew UFSD since 2005 and is currently a teacher of 8th grade English and a Teacher on Special Assignment for Student Leadership. Mr. Cena ran for the Akron Board of Education because he felt that he was able to bring a new perspective to the Board of Education serving as a teacher and being able to share the truth about how a school operates with the community. During his tenure on the Akron Board of education, he would like to improve communication between the Board and the Community. He feels that there is too much misinformation about schools in the media lately. Joe's mentor/hero in his life has always been his father,

Left: Joe enjoys a tropical vacation during a school break. Joe is pictured with his wife Jessica and their three children, Devin (8), Cameron (11), and Jordan (9).

## NEW BOARD MEMBER:

**Joe Cena**  
**Akron CSD**  
**Board of Education**

**NYSSBA ANNUAL CONVENTION :**  
**OCTOBER 26-28, 2023**  
**BUFFALO, NEW YORK**

## TRIVIA.....

All correct answers will be entered into a drawing for an ECASB a \$15.00 gift card to Tim Hortons. What High School did ECASB Executive Secretary and Information Specialist Sue Summers graduate from? (Hint: A Superintendent from an ECASB Member District graduated from the same school).

## KICK OF TO CONVENTION

October 25, 2023



Erie County Association of School Boards

[www.ecasb.org](http://www.ecasb.org)

September 2023 - #2

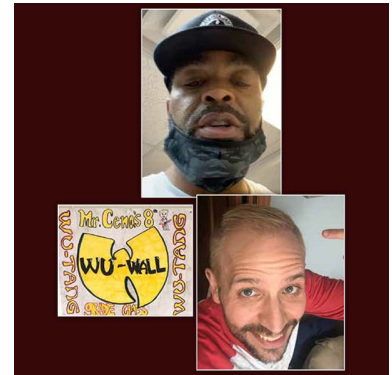


who he has tried to emulate. Joe's hobbies include coaching his youngest son in baseball. He enjoys the Buffalo Bills, the Toronto Blue Jays, golfing, reading and traveling as much as time allows. He also volunteers for the Akron Youth Football league. Mr. Cena serves on the Akron Youth Baseball/Softball Board and is a member of the Depew Teacher's Organization. As an employee at Depew UFSD he serves as a class advisor and is a teacher on Special Assignment at Depew UFSD. Joe serves as an Ambassador for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and volunteers for Kaley's Kindness Fundraiser and the Christmas Angel Program.

If you are able to visit the Akron Community, Joe would recommend you check out Yogi's Brick Oven Bistro, the Market on Main, and the Akron Falls Park.



**Side Note: "One of my students reached out to Method Man from the Wu-Tang Clan about what a big fan I am and how I incorporate that into my English classes. He responded with a shout-out video to both me and my classes. Definitely the coolest moment for me!"**



The picture collage above and the article below appeared in NYSUT Magazine.

*They call themselves the Depew-Tang Clan.*

*Depew middle school teacher Joe Cena has found a creative way to combine two of his biggest passions: Getting kids to read — and the hip-hop group Wu-Tang Clan. It started in a moment of desperation during pandemic teaching last year when Cena realized fewer than half of his eighth graders were completing independent reading requirements.*

*To try to boost motivation, Cena created a Wu-Wall, where students earned a hallowed place every time they completed an assignment and online quiz.*

*He ordered a bunch of Wu-Tang magnets and stickers for special certificates, took photos of the students and used an online Wu-Tang name generator to give the kids special names. "As silly as it is, it definitely increased their motivation to read books," Cena said.*