

# The CEA Voice

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Columbus Education Association

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## Sick leave: follow the rules

Sick leave is available for you when you or a family member becomes ill. It is important to know how sick leave works so that you do not put yourself at risk for disciplinary action or termination. Follow the rules as outlined in Article 701 of our contract.



CEA will represent you if your sick leave has been questioned. In cases where abuse is substantiated, members could be docked 10 days for every one day of sick leave abuse. This is the equivalent of 1.3 paychecks.

Here are the rule highlights:

- + Full-time bargaining unit member earns 15 days of sick leave per year, accruing them at the rate of 1.5 days each month from September through June.
- + New employees are allowed to go “into the hole” up to five sick days.
- + Sick leave is for personal illness, absence due to illness in the immediate family or for death in the immediate family. See the contract for the parameters.
- + If you are absent for one full school day or more, you must report your absence to the principal or to the Substitute Employee Management System. When you return to work, you must complete an absence form within three days.
- + Absences longer than 10 continuous school days require an “Application for Leave.” Before you return, you must have a doctor’s statement and district pre-approval.
- + Absences of three consecutive school days to care for a family member also require a doctor’s statement.

If your supervisor has a question about your sick leave, he or she can request a conference with you, and you are entitled to the CEA representation of your choice. Your administrator may require written documentation from your physician to justify sick leave when:

- a. There is a pattern of use such as workdays before or after a holiday or vacation period, on Mondays or Fridays, or a certain time of year; or
- b. There is reasonable suspicion of sick leave abuse; or
- c. The teacher has been absent using sick leave for consecutive workdays; or
- d. The teacher has been absent using sick leave for more than 10 days total during the same school year; or
- e. The teacher is on an extended absence and the Superintendent has reasonable grounds to question the continued absence, once every 30 calendar days.

Your sick leave was negotiated for you in good faith so that it is there for you when you need it. Let’s live up to our end of the deal and follow the rules.

## NEA Code of Ethics

Abiding by the NEA Code of Ethics is every educator’s responsibility. The code, adopted in 1975 and amended in 2010, represents the principles of our profession. CEA believes strongly in them and expects that every educator will uphold these standards, including:



Commitment to the Student focuses on nurturing student learning and its eight points include:

- ① Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning.
- ② Shall not unreasonably deny the student access to varying points of view.
- ③ Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student’s progress.
- ④ Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
- ⑤ Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.
- ⑥ Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, or sexual orientation, unfairly—
  - a. Exclude any student from participation in any program;
  - b. Deny benefits to any student;
  - c. Grant any advantage to any student.
- ⑦ Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
- ⑧ Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

Commitment to the Profession reminds educators how much the education profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility that requires the highest ideals of professional service. Its eight points includes:

In fulfillment of the obligation to the profession, the educator—

- ① Shall not in an application for a professional position deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications.
- ② Shall not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications.
- ③ Shall not assist any entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education or other relevant attribute.
- ④ Shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a pro-



professional position.

- ⑤ Shall not assist a noneducator in the unauthorized practice of teaching.
- ⑥ Shall not disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
- ⑦ Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague.
- ⑧ Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.

## Know your Governor

Kevin Jackson ran for district governor shortly after he started working at Champion MS in 2009. He was in his third year of teaching.

He couldn't say no. He knew CEA had his back and wanted to return the favor. For instance, it was CEA that stepped in when he didn't get his first CCS paycheck. It was his first teaching assignment at Northland HS. It turned out that someone else had received his check by mistake.

"Jan Bell (District 2 Governor at the time), set up class coverage for me so I could go downtown and get it corrected without penalty to myself," he said.

When Jackson was staff-reduced during October count week and reassigned to Columbus Africentric ECSS, his PAR consultant and faculty representative stepped in to mediate problems he was having "getting support for my new placement from my administrator."

Jackson has been a Columbus resident since birth. He attended Valley Forge ES, Woodward Park MS and Northland HS. "Union service has been extremely rewarding," he said.

"I have had the chance to become an advocate not only for myself but for public education, my colleagues, my students and my community," he said. "I had the privilege to serve on the OEA Legislative Committee and am the current OEA GLBT Caucus vice chair, along with being an OEA and NEA delegate. I have had the opportunity to attend many conferences and networking events where I can share the great things we do with others and even learn from them to bring back to our local and state Associations."

His goal is to encourage and motivate others to stand up and be heard and to advocate for the teaching profession and social justice issues. Team spirit infuses all his activities. When he's not teaching, Kevin plays volleyball, softball and rugby.

## We stand 8 strong

Your union dues do more than earn you a place at the negotiating table. They get you a chair with the Ohio 8, the strategic alliance of superintendents and teacher union presidents from Ohio's eight urban school districts—Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown. CEA President Rhonda Johnson attends the meetings and represents your concerns.

Just as you do, Rhonda and the Ohio 8 believe that a high-performing public education system is essential to the civic and economic health of Ohio's cities. Standing together enables the superintendents and union presidents to work together to improve academic performance, increase gradua-



Kevin Jackson

tion rates and close the achievement gap for urban children throughout Ohio.

The Coalition also works closely with legislators, educators, parents, labor and community officials. Learn more about the work our CEA president is proudly involved in at [www.ohio8coalition.org](http://www.ohio8coalition.org).

## Teaching preferences

Have a particular teaching preference? Now is your chance to make your request for the 2014–2015 school year. Section 211.05 of the *Master Agreement* allows members to express their teaching assignment preferences in writing for the following school year to the building principal. The deadline is Feb. 1. There are no guarantees, but our *Master Agreement* gives educators this opportunity.

## Donate days for catastrophic leave

Each year, some of our colleagues experience devastating illnesses and injuries that require long recovery periods. That's why we have a catastrophic sick leave bank. This is a fund we negotiated to protect income and benefits for members who may face catastrophic illnesses or injuries (Section 701.07 of the contract). An employee who has exhausted all sick and personal days and faces a life-threatening illness may receive as many as 45 donated days if approved by the Joint Catastrophic Sick Leave Committee.

Please think of your colleagues and donate. It takes just 7.5 donated days to cover a two-week paycheck for an individual on catastrophic leave. Your donation of as little as one day will make a difference.

To donate to the bank, enter your name at the top of the CCS "Report of Employee Absence" form. In the "Comments" section write the words, "Catastrophic Sick Leave Donation." Be sure that you and your principal or supervisor have signed the form. We often experience a shortage of donated days.

## Jan. 31 deadline: Same-sex couple benefits

Thanks to the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act, same-sex married couples are eligible for health benefits on a pre-tax basis. Teachers/administrators with valid marriage certificates from one of the 16 states and the District of Columbia may now add their spouses to their CCS benefit plans. Open enrollment will end on Jan. 31. Benefits will be effective Mar. 1. Bring your documentation to the CCS Benefits Department and complete an enrollment form to make the change. For more information, contact a Benefits Team Member at 365-6475. If you get married after Jan. 31, you may enroll within 30 days of this qualifying event.

## Special notes

- ❑ The declaration period to run for an Association office ends Jan. 27. The formal campaign period is Jan. 28–Mar. 3. Voting is Feb. 18–Mar. 3. Votes will be tabulated on Mar. 4. Declaration forms for OEA and NEA (local and state) delegates are available at <http://bit.ly/NEAOEADeclare> and at the CEA office. Declaration forms for officers are available only at CEA. Call CEA Elections Committee Chairperson Michele Mays at 253-4731 with questions.
- ❑ The Joint Evaluation Panel has guidance available at <http://bit.ly/ILEADEval> regarding changes in the teacher evaluation structure and Student Learning Objective (SLO) process. Draft SLO(s) are due Jan. 31.
- ❑ CEA thanks the following buildings/units that have recently completed their United Way campaigns: Cranbrook ES, Northland HS and Yorktown MS.

