

The CEA Voice

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Columbus Education Association

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Requests for staff reductions

Article 211 of the *Master Agreement* permits members to request to staff reduce themselves from schools, programs or buildings for health or safety reasons or for philosophical differences (i.e. instructional program, teaching assignment, etc.). The reduction must be mutually agreed upon by Human Resources and CEA.

If you want to make a request to be staff-reduced from your current teaching assignment based on philosophical differences, you must write a letter that clearly states the reason(s) for your request. Letters should be sent to Victoria Frye, Human Resources, Columbus City Schools, 270 E. State St., Columbus, OH 43215. Emails and faxes will not be accepted. CEA strongly suggests hand-delivering your letter to HR. You will not be allowed to make requests for staff reduction status after the 211 vacancies are posted.

SB 229 (Support): Would allow school districts to reduce from 50 to 35 percent the amount of value-added in the student growth measure of teacher evaluations and make evaluations every other year for teachers rated “Skilled” or “Accomplished.” After being unanimously passed by the Senate in December, SB 229 was referred to the House Education Committee for its first hearing on Feb. 12. As of the time *The Voice* went to press, no further hearings were scheduled for the bill.

HB 193 (Monitor): Would delay the implementation of the online PARCC assessments until the 2015–2016 school year and end-of-course exams would not replace the Ohio Graduation Test until the 2016–2017 school year. HB 193 would make numerous additional changes to high school diploma requirements. HB 193 was sent to the Senate on a 90–1 vote at the end of January and received its first hearing in the Senate Education Committee on Feb. 19.

When your school is closing

As everyone knows, there are seven schools the administration has recommended for closing: two high schools, Brookhaven and Independence; one middle school, Monroe; and four elementary buildings, Arlington Park, Fifth Avenue, Maybury and Siebert. The CCS Board of Education will make the final decision. Our contract provides for the following in a memorandum of agreement with the board:

- When a building is being closed and students reassigned to multiple existing buildings, the entire staff of the building will be staff reduced and participate in the normal 211 interview process/job fairs.
- When two buildings are merged, the staff of both buildings will be merged, treated and counted as one staff. Staff reductions will be made from the merged staff based on seniority.
- When building staff and students are moved into an interim space or a new space, the staff will be subject to the normal 211 assignment and transfer process. Special education teachers will follow their units to the unit’s new location, unless they choose to staff reduce themselves. Please call CEA if you have questions.

Getting a master’s? Apply for a scholarship

Many of you are pursuing a master’s degrees. You can apply for assistance from the Franklin County Retired Teachers Association. Eligible candidates must:

- * Be current teachers in a public school system in Franklin County with contracts for the upcoming year
- * Have a minimum of two years’ experience
- * Be pursuing a master’s degree or equivalency from an approved program at any public or nonprofit, independent college or university in the U.S.
- * Be U.S. citizens

Apply here: <https://www.scholarselect.com/scholarships/14825-2014-franklin-county-retired-teachers-association>.

Legislative update

HB 8 (Opposed): Would allow school districts to designate school employees who would carry a concealed weapon as part of their job descriptions. This term and condition of employment would be imposed by a school board and would not be subject to negotiation. After passing the House on a largely party-line vote, HB 8 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Civil Justice.



Staff survey closes soon

You still have time to complete the CEA Staff Survey and be registered to win an iPad or a \$25 gas card. The staff survey window will close on Sunday, Mar. 2 at 11:59 p.m.

CEA urges all members to complete the online survey, so everyone will have an accurate picture of the professional climate in every building. You will be able to view the responses made by your colleagues on the CEA website shortly after the survey closes. This information may be useful to you as you consider applying for positions during the 211 process.

If you have not received an email with the link to the survey, send a message from your non-CCS email address to tellcea@ceaohio.org. Include your name and school/unit.



Cast your vote

Election materials arrived in buildings Tuesday, Feb. 18. Your faculty representative will schedule voting in your building. Itinerant members will receive ballots through school mail or U.S. mail. Contact Michele Mays at CEA (253-4731) with any election questions or if you have not received a ballot or information on voting. The last day to vote is Monday, Mar. 3.

UNCF: Your support means hope

The United Negro College Fund has helped hundreds of CCS students afford college. This is no small thing. Many of our students do not have the resources to consider higher education. Many have no examples within their families of the possibilities education can open for them. We have heard from Columbus students who have discovered how to enhance their gifts through college admission, creating bright futures for themselves. Please consider giving, whether by cash, check, money order or, preferably, by payroll deduction. Your faculty representative has the donation forms. The UNCF campaign will conclude Feb. 28.



Deduct educator expenses

It's tax time again. As you file your tax return, keep this in mind: You may be able to deduct personal expenses related to your teaching job. Qualifying expenses include: books, supplies, computers and software. A maximum deduction of \$250 is allowed. Additional deductions may qualify for books, computer equipment and supplementary materials. To learn more, see *IRS Publication 529 Miscellaneous Deductions* available at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p529.pdf.



No insurance card? There's an app for that

Some school employees have received their new insurance cards. Others have not. This does not mean you don't have coverage. Your claims will be paid.

Did you know that you can download an app that allows you to carry your insurance card on your mobile device? Simply go to the App store and search for "Medical Mutual of Ohio." You will need your insurance member number to register. If you have already registered on Medical Mutual's website, you can login with your username and password.

Please call the Benefits Department at 365-8969 if you have questions.



Columbus Area Writing Project

The Columbus Area Writing Project (CAWP) is offering the 2014 Invitational Summer Institute for teachers from all disciplines and all levels of instruction this summer beginning with a Retreat at Kenyon College from June 11–13, followed by two weeks of classes on the OSU campus (June 16–27). You can receive from 2 to 4 graduate semester credit hours from OSU. If you are applying for a fee waiver, the course number is EDUT&L 7393. Come



write with us this summer.

Have you already been through the Summer Institute? Or can't commit to it this summer? Then consider joining the Columbus Area Writing Project's Advanced Summer Institute on Digital Composition which will be held on the OSU campus from June 16–27, Monday–Thursday, of the two weeks (no classes on Friday) from 8–12 in the mornings. You can receive three graduate semester credit hours from OSU. If you are applying for a fee waiver, the course number is EDUT&L 8890 (Advanced Seminar). Join us as we explore the possibilities of digital composition.

To find out more about the Summer Institute, go to <http://cawp.ehe.osu.edu/summer-programs/summer-institute/> or explore the Advanced Summer Institute on Digital Composition at <http://cawp.ehe.osu.edu/summer-programs/advanced-summer-institute-on-digital-composition/>.

Capital RA coming in April

The Capital Representative Assembly (RA) will be held Wednesday, Apr. 23, 2014, on the 7th floor of the STRS building. Registration begins at 5 p.m., and the meeting starts at 5:30 p.m. Elections will be held for the offices of President and Vice President and for the Capital seat on the OEA Board of Directors.

Declaration forms for President and Vice President are available at the CEA office. Nominations for these offices can also be made from the floor. At this time, nominations for the Capital seat can only be made from the floor of the RA.

Call Elections Chairperson Michele Mays at 253-4731 if you have questions.

A friendly ear

From time to time, many of us need someone to talk with about the concerns in our lives. One of our negotiated membership benefits is access to counselors who can help. Our plan with the Employee Assistance Program continues, but with a new provider—LifeScope. Just like People Resources, LifeScope provides supportive resources via phone and on its website. When you call 800-227-2195, you can get a referral for matters related to work, family, health and other areas of your life, including:

- + Free, short-term counseling for stress, depression, grief, substance abuse and other areas
- + Family and caregiving consultation
- + Legal and financial issues
- + Household matters, personal and family safety, travel, recreation, relocation and more
- + Wellness services, fitness center and other healthy lifestyle supports

The website at www.LifeScopeEAP.com features articles, assessments, webinars, financial calculators, searchable databases, skill builders and more. Log on with the username "columbusci-tyschools" and the password "guest" to learn more.

Special notes

- The formal campaign period and voting in the CEA spring elections ends Mar. 3. Votes will be tabulated Mar. 4. Call CEA Elections Committee Chairperson Michele Mays at 253-4731 with questions.
- The deadline to apply for a continuing contract is Mar. 1. Section 401.16 of the *CEA Master Agreement* explains more about the process. Contact Nancy Young, Teacher Certification/Licensure at 365-5658, with questions.