Teacher Evaluation Update

The Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) is entering its fourth year of implementation in Columbus. Ohio House Bill 64, signed into law on June 30, 2015, prohibited the use of value-added ratings for evaluation purposes for the 2015-16 & 2016-17 school years, so ALL teachers must once again do two Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). OTES applies to any certificated or licensed teacher who instructs students fifty percent or more of their employed time meaning that all teachers, tutors and part-time hourly teachers whose primary job is instructing students are required to be evaluated under OTES.

Pertinent details of the CCS-adopted format for this school year include:

• 50% of a teacher’s rating is based on summative evaluation of

Vote Pro-Education

The General Election is coming in November and early voting begins October 12. We will elect national, state and local representatives who will have the power to make decisions on behalf of the nation’s teachers. The following is the list of candidates and issues endorsed by the CEA Legislative Assembly:

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Insurance Plan Update

CCS has a self-funded insurance plan. In this type of insurance plan, claims are paid from the money collected for members' insurance benefits. Claims are only paid out when they occur. If claims are consistently lower than expected, money collected from members' insurance premiums remain in reserve. Higher-than-expected claims result in a quicker depletion of the self-funded plan reserve and cause future premium costs to increase.

Due to our bargaining unit members' increased usage of the self-funded insurance as well as higher-than-expected claims, the amount required to fund expenses for 2017 from the CCS self-funded insurance plan will amount to an 8.2 percent increase in premiums.

After investigating a number of plan design changes to lower members' premium increases, the Joint Insurance Committee declined to make any plan design changes at this time. The proposed changes would have slightly lowered premiums; but members would have faced increased copays for primary care, specialist, urgent care and emergency room visits, increased out-of-pocket maximums and a wide-ranging and massively disruptive prescription drug plan retooling. The proposed changes would have cost CCS bargaining unit members more money out of pocket than they would have actually saved in premium reductions in the 2017 calendar year.

Here are some drivers for the escalation in cost of claims for members of the CEA bargaining unit.

Price inflation has caused an increase in the cost of goods and services of health care providers. New medical techniques and more aggressive treatments of conditions also have resulted in an increase of costs for members. Ongoing changes in STRS benefits over the past few years have resulted in a higher number of retiring employees who have used CCS insurance for high-cost claims prior to enrolling in STRS insurance.

Fifty-one certificated members, less than a half of a percent of total claimants, were responsible for one quarter of the entire cost for medical claims in 2015. These claims amounted to slightly more than $12 million of the total $48 million medical cost claims.

Life's unexpected events can threaten a family in more ways that you can imagine. A diagnosis of cancer, a disabling injury, a stroke or a heart attack could be devastating. Fortunately, the insurance benefits in CCS protect your family and your financial security. These increases in premiums will be difficult, but they leave you in a better position than your peers in other school districts and in the public and private sector.

Negotiations Input

The CEA/Board Agreement will be expiring August 20, 2017. Now is the time to organize our priorities, and the CEA Bargaining Team would like your input. The team will be holding two Town Hall meetings this fall. These meetings will allow every CEA member the opportunity to submit proposals to be considered for the negotiations survey. The first town hall meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 28, at The Boat House Restaurant, 679 W. Spring Street, beginning at 4:30 pm. Refreshments will be available. Please contact Teri Mullins at the CEA office, (614) 253-4731, or tmullins@ceaohio.org to RSVP.

Be sure to check the next two issues of The CEA Voice for a special tear-off form that will also allow members to submit issues/concerns to be considered for the negotiations survey.

Special Notes:

Consider donating some of your sick leave for those who may need it in the future. Contribute by filling out the Sick Leave Bank enrollment form (http://bit.ly/sbkpp) by September 30. The district will deposit two of your sick days in to the bank. Those who need it may borrow up to 10 days. Borrowed sick leave must be repaid to the bank by the time you leave the district. Your initial deposit of two sick days will be refunded once you leave the district. Fill out the form and send it to CEC, Route 1. Remember to keep a copy for your records.

Help CEA join the fight against breast cancer. Register for the Making Strides Walk, scheduled for 9:30 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 23, starting from COSI, 333 W. Broad St. Free registration begins at 8:30 a.m. Create your own team, or join ours, the CEA Dream Team. Go to www.makingstridestwalk.org/columbus to register. List Columbus Education Association as your team company. Be one of the first thirty people to register by calling Exzetta Murray at (614) 253-4731 and get a free T-shirt.

CEA Member Scholarships are available for your college senior. Distributed through The Columbus Foundation, this fund provides $1,250 in tuition assistance. Only CEA members who have taught in CCS for the past four years are eligible. Your student must have at least a 2.0 GPA in order to apply. The deadline to receive the application is 5 p.m., Friday, Oct. 21. Go to www.ceaohio.org to download an application. Call Kathy Wilkes at (614) 253-4731, if you have questions.