

The CEA Voice

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Columbus Education Association

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Take the Professional Staff Survey

Spring is coming, and with it comes the Article 211 selective interview process. Whether you have to interview this spring or you are thinking about interviewing, we know you want to make an informed decision. What better way to find out about a potential new school than from the CEA members that currently work there.

Because this is important for our members, it is part of the contract. The *CEA Master Agreement* provides for a districtwide evaluation of each school by the membership. Members will be able to rate work locations on professional environment, democratic procedures, teacher involvement and other important areas. Members will also have the opportunity to provide additional open-ended, anonymous responses on the survey.

The 2016–2017 annual staff survey will be administered online. An email containing the link to the survey was sent to members' non-CCS email addresses on Friday, Jan. 13. The survey will close on Sunday, Jan. 29, at 11:59 p.m. If you did not get the email message or if CEA does not have your current non-CCS email address, send it to tellcea@ceaohio.org to participate in the survey.

You will be able to access this survey from home or from work. The survey results for each school/building will be published on CEA's website, so you can make informed decisions during the 211 process.

Article 211

Columbus City Schools is gearing up for its staffing and transfer process known as Article 211. Article 211 in the *CEA Master Agreement* details how transfers within our district will take place. It also spells out how staff reductions are handled. Please take the time to read over this very important article. Important upcoming dates include:

Jan. 18 & 19 Article 211 Training for Senior Faculty Reps. and Administrators; faculty reps. must receive this training in order to be a part of the Interview Panel.

Jan. 30 Administrative Staff Reduction Notification; CEA will keep you posted of any changes or additions to the Article 211 process. If you have any questions, call (614) 253-4731.

Reorganization Rules

Administration has the right to reorganize within a building in order to best meet the needs of the building. But there are rules that must be followed:

- Reorganization may only occur prior to Round 1 of the Article 211 Process unless a subsequent vacancy occurs
- Reorganization to fill subsequent vacancies after Round 1 must be by mutual agreement between Administration and CEA
- Teachers working under supplemental temporary certificate/licenses are not eligible for reorganization into another certificate/license area in areas of shortage, e.g. Special Education and ESL
- Newly selected teachers should not be reorganized
- Reorganization may occur after the Round 1 postings ONLY if there is a vacancy

If you are interested in teaching a particular grade level or subject, notify your principal in writing by Feb 1.

Educator Tax Deduction

Recently congress restored and expanded the educator tax deduction. You now may deduct eligible unreimbursed classroom spending up to \$250. The deduction is indexed to inflation and includes professional development as an eligible expense.

So 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, software and supplemental materials. According to the IRS, you are an eligible educator if, for the tax year, you are a kindergarten-through-Grade 12:

- o Teacher
- o Instructor
- o Counselor
- o Principal, or
- o Aide, and
- o You work at least 900 hours a school year in a school that provides elementary or secondary education as determined under state law.

Go to <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p529/index.html> to learn more.

Deduct Your CEA Dues

Tax time is approaching, and some CEA members may be able to deduct a portion of their union dues on their income tax returns. These are considered unreimbursed employee expenses and may be deducted on Schedule A (Form 1040) Line 21. This type of deduction is subject to a minimum. It must amount to more than 2 percent of your adjusted gross income. Consult IRS Publication 529 for more details. Visit www.irs.gov. Search for "union dues." The table shows your deductions for Association dues for the 2016 tax year.

Full Dues

Plan A (21 Pays) \$841.63

Plan B (26 Pays) \$842.18

Switched from:

Plan A to B \$784.51

Plan B to A \$899.30

Half Dues

\$468.97

Quarter Dues

\$276.82

Know Your Governor:

Megan Hinz, High School Governor At-Large

Five years ago, Megan Hinz stood shoulder-to-shoulder with hundreds of teachers in front of the Ohio Statehouse. Next to her, at the rally against Senate Bill 5, was her mother, Rita Hinz, an active CEA member and OEA delegate. “It was the first personal day I’d ever taken as an educator,” said Hinz, who teaches STEM biology and AP environmental science at West High School. “I wasn’t quite sure what to expect. I was so surprised. There were so many people—not just educators, but firefighters and other supporters too, and you realize the importance of solidarity and that, together, our voices can be heard and make a difference.”



Hinz cites her mother, who retired in 2015 after 35 years as a special education teacher, as one of her greatest influences. Then when Megan became a teacher, she saw the many ways CEA serves its members. She was laid off after her first year of teaching, but was rehired the following year. When she returned to the classroom, Hinz began to see how important a collaborative, collegial environment was.

She became West’s Faculty Representative, and then its Senior FR. One of her proud moments was helping retain a colleague who was about to be staff-reduced. She also helped teachers and administrators at the school listen more closely to each other’s professional needs.

This year, Hinz was a voting NEA delegate. “I learned so much about organizing, developing as a leader. I met other educators and support staff from around the country. I learned a lot about policies, processes and practices that affect our students and members and how important it is to get involved and let your professional voice be heard in educational matters.”

As High School Governor At-Large, Hinz said she hopes to serve more members. “I hope I can help unify their voices so we can tackle even larger problems and address policy and legislation affecting the profession as a whole,” she said.

At West HS, Megan is the drill-team advisor and girls track coach. She founded an organization called UrbanEco, through which she takes high school students abroad to learn about conservation issues and conduct research.

Cassandra Daniels, Middle-School Governor At-Large

“CEA” may be three letters long, but the Association’s capacity for improving classroom success is much broader. As a Middle School Governor At-Large, Cassandra Daniels plans to share the many educational aspects of union membership with her fellow CEA members, including opportunities to attend workshops, join committees, and seek professional guidance.



“Teachers want to know how to be successful, but often they are scared to ask for help. Well, we have trainers to do that. We have experts who can come into our classrooms. We have teacher leaders,” Daniels said. “The union isn’t only for when you get into trouble.”

Daniels, a math and reading teacher at Champion MS, knows what it’s like to keep up with constant change in diverse environments. She began teaching for the district in 2000, as a sub, and then, after receiving certification in 2002, has taught at seven CCS schools before beginning to work at Champion. She and her husband, Clarence Daniels, Jr, a Walnut Ridge teacher, are also parents of six children and have fostered 18 others during the past decade.

It was after she became a second-alternate FR and started moving up in CEA service, that Daniels began to see the importance of the Association. At an OEA Lobby Day at the Ohio Statehouse Daniels met elected representatives and shared teacher perspectives. She also spoke with members of the Ohio Board of Education as a member of the OEA’s Commission on Student Success.

Daniels has been active with CEA’s Minority Involvement Program Committee and its Social and Economic Justice Committee. She was part of the first CEA cohort in NEA’s yearlong Teacher Leadership Initiative.

“We need to be excellent at this,” she said. “I have a quote in my classroom by Aristotle: ‘Excellence is not an accident. Choice, not chance, determines destiny.’”

Tracie Helmbrecht, Middle-School Governor At-Large

Tracie Helmbrecht likes to say she got involved in CEA by accident. Her colleagues at Sherwood Middle School elected her a Faculty Representative during a staff meeting almost before she could respond. It was a happy accident. Helmbrecht got to work reading (and re-reading) the contract, and made some discoveries.



“There were things in there I never knew,” said the Middle School Governor At-Large. “I never knew what my real contract time was. I always came in early and stayed late. It gave me a wide perspective on elementary, middle and high school and on the tutors and the ESPs. I did not know they were in the contract. It gave me an appreciation of those who came before me.”

Then Gov. Kasich signed Senate Bill 5, stripping public labor unions of many of their rights. Helmbrecht was suddenly swept into a flurry of educational organizing. “I learned about 10-Minute Meetings, and about getting people together and informed.”

Helmbrecht teaches 7th and 8th grade social studies at the Arts Impact Middle School. During her 18-year CCS career, she has taught at Seibert Elementary; at Hilltonia Middle school; and was the Literacy Coach at Sherwood and Westmoor middle schools. She also served as a district reading curriculum coordinator and an instructional leader for the Common Core. Helmbrecht taught developmental reading at Columbus State Community College for eight years.

Helmbrecht is certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. She was part of CEA’s first cohort in the NEA’s Teacher Leadership Initiative, through which she presented nationally on Teacher-Powered Schools. She also is a member of the OEA’s Commission on Student Success.

Special Notes

- ☑ **Consider running for a CEA office.** Open positions: Governors for Districts 1, 4, 5, 10 and Middle School Governor At-Large (three-year terms); 2017 NEA delegates, 2017 NEA State Delegates At-Large and 2017-2018 OEA Delegates. Members may declare their candidacy through Feb. 3. Campaigning began Jan. 4 and will end Mar. 7. Voting begins Feb. 22 and ends Mar. 7; votes will be tallied Mar. 8. In the event of a spring run-off election, campaigning will begin Mar. 9 and end Apr. 11. Voting begins Mar. 29 and ends Apr. 11. Votes will be tallied Apr. 12.
- ☑ **If you plan to retire this year, and if you want enhanced severance pay, you must notify the district of retirement intentions by Feb. 1.** Early Notification helps the District plan effectively. Advance notice may prevent a colleague from being laid off.
- ☑ **Feb. 1 is the deadline to complete your required coursework or CEUs if your Ohio teaching certificate/or license is expiring June 30, 2017.** Failure to renew your certificate/license may result in pay suspension and initiation of termination/non-renewal proceedings. You must complete the online application and a background check. Fingerprint results must be completed electronically through WebCheck. The CCS Fingerprint Office at 270 E. State Street (ask for Human Resources) is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. The fee is \$40. Accepted forms of payment are credit/debit card, or money order made payable to Columbus City Schools. If you have a continuing contract you must complete your coursework and submit your application by the end of June.
- ☑ **LPDC members will provide License Renewal Support sessions to help you write, revise and submit your IPDP.** They will also be available to help you count CEUs and review your PD Profile in CiMS. The upcoming support sessions will be held 1/19 and 2/23 from 4-5:30 p.m. in Computer Lab 1 at Hudson Distribution Center. Please sign up on CiMS if you are planning to attend.