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CEA Voice
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Final Presidential Debate

On Thursday, Oct. 22, the final Presidential debate was held. A single question was asked to both candidates about schools re-opening during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Below is the transcript of both candidates' responses from the debate.

[14:46] Welker: Let me follow up, President Trump. You've demanded schools open in person and insisted they can do it safely. But just yesterday, Boston became the latest city to move its public school system entirely online after a coronavirus spike. What is your message to parents who worry that sending their children to school will endanger not only their kids, but also their teachers and families?

[15:04] **Trump:** I want to open the schools. The transmittal rate to the teachers is very small, but I want to open the schools. We have to open our country. We're not going to have a country. You can't do this, we can't keep this country closed. It is a massive country with a massive economy. People are losing their jobs, they're committing suicide. There's depression, alcohol, drugs at a level that nobody's ever seen before. There's abuse, tremendous abuse. We have to open our country. You know I've said it often — the cure cannot be worse than the problem itself, and that's what's happening, and he wants to close down. He'll close down the country if one person in our, in our massive bureaucracy says we should close it down.

[15:49] Welker: Vice President Biden, your —

[15:51] **Biden:** Simply not true. We're gonna be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. We ought to be able to safely open, but we need resources to open. You need to be able to, for example, if you're gonna open a business, have social distancing within the business. You need to have, if you have a restaurant, you need to have plexiglass dividers so people cannot infect one another. You need to be in a position where you can take testing rapidly and know whether a person is, in fact, infected. You need to be able to trace. You need to be able to provide all the resources that are needed to do this and that is not inconsistent with saying that we're going to make sure that we open safely. And by the way, all you teachers out there — not that many of you are going to die, so don't worry about it. Don't worry about it. Come on.

Records Day

The first Records Day of the 2020–2021 school year will be Wednesday, Oct. 28. On this day, there will be no PD pull-outs, no forced TBTs, no suggested meetings by supervisors or administrators; they also get and need this time. This is your day to spend working on whatever professional items you need to do such as: grade cards, progress reports, IEPs, RIMPs, lesson plans, etc. Records day is a work day. All members are expected to work the full day at their regular start time. Let's show everyone how valuable this day is to us. Take full advantage of the time we have to get the things done that take valuable time away from our ability to provide additional support for our students.

Textbook Selection Committee Nomination

Our *Master Agreement* provides CEA members input into vital classroom decisions. Section 504.01 details the agreed-upon framework for one of these, textbook selection. When it is time to review textbooks in a particular subject area, teachers from those subjects participate. The District will be selecting textbooks for social studies for grades 6–12. Here's how the process works:

- CCS posts a notice asking for textbook-adoption commit-

tee participants.

- Only teachers from each pertinent subject area and grade level at schools involved elect the nominees.
- Each of the building nominee elections is conducted by its principal and Association Building Council (ABC).
- Nominations should be emailed to CEA President John Coneglio (coneglioj@ceaohio.org) and copied to Kenny Lee (klee1@columbus.k12.oh.us) no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30.
- Nominations should be on school letterhead signed by both the building principal and Senior Faculty Representative.
- Nominees go to a joint Association and Board committee for a final vote.

Your Dues Dollars At Work: Mini-Grants

CEA is pleased to announce the Fall 2020 CEA Foundation Mini Grants available to ALL CEA members. The CEA Foundation's mission is to empower CEA members to design and implement innovative initiatives that will ultimately lead to higher achievement for all students. There are three mini grants for members to choose from:

- **Early Educator Mini Grant**—20 total grants up to \$300 each (for teachers in Years 1–5 of their career)
- **STEM/STEAM Mini Grant**—10 total grants up to \$600 each (open to all CEA members)
- **General Mini Grant**—25 total grants up to \$320 each (open to all CEA members)

CEA encourages members to think about supplies, materials and/or programs they personally fund. Members are eligible to receive one Mini Grant per year. Due to COVID-19, the application is online through the CEA website (www.ceaohio.org) and can be found under the 'Forms/Resources' tab.

These Mini Grants are separate from the Teacher Dream Grant and all CEA Mini Grants are funded completely through the CEA Foundation. Only CEA members are eligible to apply for the Mini Grants. Your emailed application is due no later than 4:30 p.m. on Oct. 28, 2020. If members previously sent in applications through the U.S. Mail, a new application is not needed, however, all new applications must be emailed to CEA. See the directions posted on the CEA website.

Retiring? Avoid OTES

Bargaining unit members who are planning on retiring at some point in the 2020–2021 school year can be exempted from the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System. If you would like to exercise this option, you must submit the notice of retirement by Friday, Oct. 30, to Human Resources. Go to <http://bit.ly/ccsretireresign> to download a copy of the retirement/resignation notification form or feel free to draft your own. You can email your notice of retirement to Terri Trigg (ttrigg@columbus.k12.oh.us) in Human Resources. If you have further questions regarding this option, contact Teri Mullins, CEA Staff Consultant at (614) 253-4731.

Benefits Open Enrollment; It's Required

During Open Enrollment (Oct. 12–30, 2020), all benefit-eligible bargaining unit members must do one of the following:

1. Reconfirm any current benefit elections. Note that if you are planning to contribute to an FSA in 2021 you will need to make an election. Your 2020 election **will NOT** rollover.
2. Elect or make changes to benefits (add or delete dependents, update beneficiary information, etc.) It is important to know, if you are adding a new dependent to any of your Core benefits (medical, dental or vision), you will be contacted via CCS email by HMS (the third party verification administrator for CCS) to provide eligibility documents. Review page 7 of the 2021 benefits guide for detailed information.

Employee Self Service (ESS) will be used for the 2021 benefits enrollment process to enroll in CORE benefits (medical, dental, vision, and life). Make sure you are able to log on to ESS PRIOR to the start of Open Enrollment to ensure you are able to access the system at <https://columbus.munisselfservice.com/default.aspx>.

Benefit choices made during Open Enrollment will be effective Jan. 1, 2021. This year's Open Enrollment is completely virtual. To

participate in Open Enrollment, benefits-eligible bargaining unit members can:

1. Meet online with a Benefits Counselor in a co-browsing session or over the phone. To schedule your meeting ahead of time, visit <https://bit.ly/34f9HBJ>. Scheduled Call Center appointments will be available from 10 a.m.–6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. You must be able to access ESS and join the Benefits Counselor on a computer with the ability to print your confirmation statement. You will be responsible for entering your information into ESS with Counselor assistance. Note, if you are planning to make changes to your Voluntary Benefits, you must schedule a call with a Benefits Specialist, as Voluntary Benefits cannot be changed in ESS. Voluntary benefits include; short-term disability, critical illness, accident coverage, life insurance and pet insurance. You can also terminate any coverages during your meeting with the Benefits Specialist or call 1-800-735-0080 to terminate coverage.
2. Use ESS to confirm, change or waive your core benefit elections on your own time. It is important to know that CCS must report health care coverage information for its employees and their dependents to the federal government. Ensure the Social Security Numbers, dates of birth, and genders are entered correctly into ESS. Once you have submitted your elections, you should receive a confirmation page to your CCS email. If you do not receive the email, double check your submitted your elections.

If you have questions regarding the Open Enrollment Process or about the plans, contact CCS Benefits Department by emailing them at benefitquestions@columbus.k12.oh.us or calling (614) 365-6475. Benefits information can found on the CCS Benefits page at <https://www.ccssoh.us/employeebenefits>.

Spring Fee Waivers Coming

The Spring 2020 Fee Waiver online application will open on Nov. 2 and close at 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 18. If you have **Priority 1** or **Priority 2** status, be sure to upload the proper documentation with your online application. Documentation is required with each fee waiver process. Your Priority status will change without the proper documentation. Instructions on how to complete the online application can be found at <http://bit.ly/2jhWSjd>. Call Sarah Lowery at (614) 365-5039 or email her at: feewaivers@columbus.k12.oh.us if you have any questions.

PAR/CEU Classes

The Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) office will be offering a series of professional growth opportunities for teachers of all skill and grade levels. Participants will receive CEUs. Course materials will be provided.

- Oct. 28 Encore/Specials Brainstorming Session (0.1 CEUs)
- Nov. 4 Understanding the Power of Assessments (0.2 CEUs)
- Nov. 4 Books Bring Balance-Middle School (Session 1) (0.1 CEUs)
- Nov. 17 Google Suite (0.2 CEUs)
- Nov. 17 Books Bring Balance-Middle School (Session 2) (0.1 CEUs)

Register today on PD Planner for any or all of these sessions. All classes will begin at 4:30 p.m. Call the PAR Office at (614) 365-5110 for more information or ask your PAR CT if you have questions.

Requesting an Absentee Ballot

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, many Ohioans will choose to vote via absentee ballot instead of in-person voting. In order to vote by absentee ballot, voters must request a ballot no later than Oct. 31 at 12 p.m. Voters can obtain an absentee ballot in several ways:

- 1) Go online and print your own absentee ballot request form at <https://www.ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/absentee-ballot/>.
- 2) Fill out the required information on a sheet of paper listed at <https://www.ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/absentee-voting/>.
- 3) Call your local board of elections and ask them to send you an absentee ballot request form.
- 4) If you are already registered to vote, you may have already received an absentee ballot request form in the mail from

Grievance Update

Your Association works hard to protect your rights and maintain the integrity of the negotiated contract. While we advise bargaining unit members to work out problems at the building level first, we know this isn't always possible. We will regularly inform you of the grievances on which CEA is working.

Building/Unit/Administrator	Statement of Grievance	Relief Requested	Disposition
South HS Edmund Baker	The CEA/Board Agreement was violated, misinterpreted and/or misapplied when the principal of South HS, Edmund Baker, failed to adjust classroom numbers so that the class sizes/student load for teacher(s) at South HS meet contractual requirements.	That the principal immediately adjust numbers to make all classes and student loads for teacher(s) in the building compliant with the numbers required in the contract; and that no reprisals be taken against any member of the bargaining unit because of the filing of this grievance and that NO reprisals be taken against the grievant because of filing of this grievance.	Arbitrator selected. Arbitration hearing date pending.
CCS Administration	The CEA/Board Agreement was violated, misinterpreted and/or misapplied when the Board failed to provide the sufficient number of elementary physical education teacher(s) at Berwick K-8 to ensure physical education once per week in grades K-5 for 45 minutes.	That the Board provide a sufficient number of elementary physical education teacher(s) at Berwick K-8 to ensure physical education once per week in grades K-5 for 45 minutes and that NO REPRI-SALS be taken against the grievant or any other bargaining unit member due to the filing of this grievance.	Step II Hearing pending.
East Columbus ES Jamie Spreen	The CEA/Board Agreement was violated, misinterpreted and/or misapplied when the principal of East Columbus ES, Jamie Spreen, failed to provide appropriate administrative support to the grievants in the discipline of their students.	That the grievants shall be made whole in every way, including, but not limited to the following; that principal provide appropriate administrative support to the affected bargaining unit members and that NO REPRI-SALS be taken against the grievants or any other bargaining unit member due to the filing of this grievance.	Step I Hearing pending.

Continued from Page 2

the Ohio Secretary of State's Office. Please note that regardless of the method you choose, you will still be required to fill out the request and send it to your local board of elections. Once the board has received your request, they will mail you back a ballot. You can track the status of your ballot application by going to <https://www.ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/toolkit/ballot-tracking/>.

Voting by Mail

Your ballot must be postmarked on or before Nov. 2, the day before the election. You must attach your own postage in order for it to be mailed. Due to concerns about potential mail delays, it is advisable that you mail your absentee ballot back as soon as you receive it. You may also drop your absentee ballot off at your county board of election's secure drop box up until 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 3.

Voting Early In-Person

Early in-person voting began Tuesday, Oct. 6, at all county boards of elections. The statewide schedule for early in-person voting is as follows:

- Monday, Oct. 26 through Friday, Oct. 30: 8 a.m.–7 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 31: 8 a.m.–4 p.m. & Sunday, Nov. 1: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
- Monday, Nov. 2: 8 a.m.–2 p.m.

Stop. Think. Call CEA.

When your administrator pressures you to quickly provide a written or verbal statement about an incident that you witnessed or were involved in, stop, think and call CEA. Do not be insubordinate, but do let your administrator know that you have the right to representation before making any statements.

A number of our members have needlessly incriminated themselves because of statements they provided to their administrators.

If you get called into a meeting with your principal or supervisor for an unspecified reason, it is your right under the law (*NLRB v. Weingarten*) to:

- Ask the principal or supervisor to clarify the reason for the meeting. Don't refuse to attend, but ask why.
- Get representation. If the meeting becomes disciplinary in nature, you are entitled to call CEA, even if your principal says you shouldn't or can't.
- Set the meeting at a time when your representative can attend. The administrator is obligated to do so.
- Take up to five school days to schedule the meeting to make sure your representative can be there.
- You have the right to the representative of your choice, not your principal's choice. You can be represented by your FR or by a staff member from the CEA office. FRs do not have to participate in hearings if they don't feel comfortable doing this kind of work.

CEA suggests representation any time the purpose of the meeting is for one of the following situations:

- Any type of disciplinary action
- Investigation meeting
- Reprimand
- Infraction of a work rule or board policy
- Questions concerning request or use of sick or personal leave
- Allegations of abuse

- Parental, student or community complaint

For more information about professional behavior, read Article 404 of the *CEA Master Agreement*.

Special Notes

Catastrophic Leave Donation Request: Michelle

A. Innis-Dorsey has been approved for Catastrophic Leave and is in need of donated days. To donate, 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 sign the form. Indicate on the form which individual you would like your donation directed toward.

Add Your Name to CEA's Veterans Day story.

This is a time for us to pay our respects to those who have served. For one day, we stand united in respect for you, our veterans. Send your name and branch of service to Bob Hern at hernb@ceaohio.org so CEA can recognize our members who have served.

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Partnering with NEA Member Benefits—Did you know that California Casualty Auto and Home Insurance has a Music and Arts Grant program? Congratulations to Valerie Parks of Huy ES/A.G. Bell Program for receiving a \$250 grant this fall. To apply, go to <https://www.calcasmusicartsgrant.com> for a music and arts grant to be awarded next year!

CEA Pre-Paid Legal Services Plan OEA/NEA Attorney Referral Program

At Cloppert, Latanick, Sauter and Washburn, we have dedicated ourselves to teachers in and out of the classroom. Our experienced personal injury, divorce, dissolution, criminal, probate and real estate attorneys are available to you at moderate rates which are lower than we normally charge our private clients.

Contact us today and allow our experience to work for you.

(614) 461-4455 • www.cloppertlaw.com

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