

## Open Enrollment — It's Required

During Open Enrollment (Oct. 9–27), all benefits-eligible bargaining unit members must do one of the following:

1. Reconfirm any current benefit elections
2. Elect or make changes to benefits (add or delete dependents, update beneficiary information, etc.)
3. Waive coverage Employee Self Service (ESS) will be used for the 2024 enrollment process.



Make sure you are able to log on to ESS PRIOR to the start of Open Enrollment. Benefit choices made during Open Enrollment will be effective Jan. 1, 2024. This year's Open Enrollment is completely virtual. To participate in Open Enrollment, benefits-eligible bargaining unit members can:

1. Log into ESS to make your elections for core benefits (Medical, Dental, Vision, FSA and Life), you do not need a counselor.
2. If you do need support with making your elections through ESS, meet online with a Benefits Counselor in a cobrowsing session. Visit <https://bit.ly/3SH9YVE> to schedule your call center enrollment meeting ahead of time, or call 800-735-0080. Appointments will be available Monday–Friday from 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. You must be able to access ESS and join the Benefits Counselor on a computer. You will be responsible for entering your information into ESS with counselor assistance.
3. Use ESS to confirm, change or waive your benefit elections. CCS must report health care coverage information for its employees and their dependents to the federal government. Verify that the Social Security numbers entered into ESS for you and your dependents are correct. Note that if you are enrolling a new dependent, you will need to verify their eligibility. Please be on the lookout for communication from BMI, the District's dependent verification administrator.
4. You must meet with a Benefits Counselor online or over the phone to make or change elections for your Voluntary Benefits which include: Life Insurance with Long Term Care Benefits, Short Term Disability, Critical Illness Insurance, Accident Insurance, Pet Insurance, and Term Life Insurance. If you wish to terminate any of your Voluntary Benefits, you must contact your Voluntary Benefits provider to notify them of your cancellation. If you have questions regarding the Open Enrollment Process, contact CCS Benefits Department at (614) 365-6475.

## CCS Levy: You Don't Punish Kids to Teach Politicians a Lesson

The following Op-Ed was published in *The Columbus Dispatch* on Wednesday, Oct. 4.

“There is no single organization in Columbus that has been more vocal in our displeasure with the Columbus City School Board's leadership in the past five years than the Union I am elected to lead, the Columbus Education Association (CEA). This displeasure culminated in a citywide strike in 2022—the first in half a century—which led not only to historic wins for students like HVAC in every building and smaller class sizes, but also to an overdue change in District leadership with the appointment of Dr. Chapman to lead our District forward.

And yet, CEA stands strongly in support of Issue 11, the upcoming CCS Levy. That's because the answer to holding politicians accountable is not punishing kids. If our community fails to pass the levy, nearly 50,000 children in our city will lose 650 counselors, social workers, interpreters, and other critical school support personnel. The District's plan to expand Pre-K at 6 sites will be shelved. Elementary summer programs will be drastically reduced. The most vulnerable and youngest members of our community, who have exactly zero responsibility for managing district finances, will suffer. Politicians who make financial decisions will not.

Statements from various organizations, purporting to represent factions of the community which withhold support for the levy over (often legitimate) grievances, are deeply irresponsible. The accountability mechanism for Board decisions is School Board elections. CEA has been fully engaged in recruiting and endorsing new leaders who are committed to transforming our District, including two new candidates who are running this Fall. The reality is that there are not even enough candidates running this year to challenge all incumbent Board members. If the handful of non-profit “CEOs” and experts in water quality coming out of the woodwork with negative statements about the levy are so upset with District leadership, where have they been when collecting signatures for, and supporting, new School Board candidates?

CEA and members of the community who are truly invested in our District will continue to hold School Board members accountable. We will also continue to fight for the schools our students deserve. The reality is that to achieve that, we must pass Issue 11 in November.”

*John Coneglio is President of the Columbus Education Association, the union representing more than 4,500 teachers, librarians, nurses, counselors, psychologists, and other education professionals in Columbus City Schools. The Columbus Education Association is a proud affiliate of the Ohio Education Association and the National Education Association.*

## United Way Kickoff

The CEA Legislative Assembly, along with CCS Superintendent Dr. Angela Chapman, kicked off this year's United Way campaign at East HS. The United Way is extremely important to our families and our students. Look across your classroom. There are probably students sitting there who don't have enough to eat, whose parents have lost their jobs, who don't have access to a dentist, or whose neighborhoods are not safe. You can do something to help. You can give to United Way of Central Ohio. When you authorize a payroll deduction to support United Way, you are helping your students, their families, and many other people across our communities. Go to <https://uwco.upicsolutions.org/uwco/CCS> to make a donation. The campaign ends Friday, Oct. 27. If you have questions, contact your faculty representative or CEA Vice President Phil Hayes at (614) 253-4731.







Join us for an  
**OCTOBER SOCIAL**  
Friday Oct. 27 @ 4:45 pm  
Join us for some Fall  
trivia fun!  
@ Ohio Brewing Company  
421 E 2nd Ave Columbus, OH 43201

Can't make this one? We will see you Dec. 8th  
for our annual RMHC volunteer experience!  
Questions? Email [columbuscece@gmail.com](mailto:columbuscece@gmail.com)



**The CEA Master Agreement is set to expire in fewer than 679 days.**

# Grievance Update

CEA works 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 regularly inform you of grievances we are working to resolve. To view each grievance in its entirety, go to <https://bit.ly/3LQ3PFQ>.

Building/Unit Administrator	Statement of Grievance	Relief Requested	Disposition
Ridgeview MS Natalie James	The CEA/Board Agreement was violated, misinterpreted and/or misapplied when the principal of Ridgeview MS, Natalie James, failed and/or refused to adjust the grievant's class load.	That the grievant be made whole in every way, including but not limited to adjusting the grievant's class load for the second semester of the 22-23 school year, and that NO REPRISALS be taken against the grievant or any other...	Arbitration requested, pending arbitrator selection and hearing dates.
Cassady ES Amber Hall	The CEA/Board Agreement was violated, misinterpreted and/or misapplied when the principal of Cassady ES, Amber Hall, subjected the grievant to repeated and/or extreme verbal abuse in...	That the principal apologize in writing to the grievant, that the principal does not subject the grievant to repeated and/or extreme verbal abuse in the future; that the administration work with the principal to control such behavior in...	Awaiting Step 2 response.
PAR Administrator Rhonda Rice	The Columbus City Schools Board of Education and/or its Agents violated, misinterpreted, and/or misapplied negotiated provisions of the 2022-2025 CEA-CCS Master Agreement when they...	Grievant shall be made whole in every way, including but not limited to the following: Grievant shall immediately be paid in full for supplemental wages owed based upon her 2022-2023 Peer Assistance and Review supplemental...	Resolved via negotiated settlement agreement.
CCS Administration	The CCS Board of Education and/or its agents violated, misinterpreted, or misapplied provisions of the 2022-2025 CEA/CCS Master agreement when it was determined that...	Both grievants shall be made whole by immediate repayment of the classroom reassignment pay that has been calculated, plus 5% interest compounded annually; and that NO REPRISALS be taken against the...	Step 2 hearing pending. Awaiting response.
CCS Administration	The CEA/Board Agreement was violated, misinterpreted and/or misapplied when the Administration unilaterally altered the start and end times of the school day at the JIC.	That the administration revert to the original start and end times in place at JIC, that the grievants be made whole for any expenses incurred as a result of the change (i.e. child care) and that NO REPRISALS be taken...	Step 2 hearing pending.
CCS Administration	The CEA/Board Agreement was violated, misinterpreted and/or misapplied when the Administration unilaterally changed the schedule at JIC from a nine period day to an eight period...	That the administration reduce the number of teaching sections to five and reinstate the duty period, and that NO REPRISALS be taken against the grievant or any other bargaining unit member due to the filing of this...	Step 2 hearing pending.
Salem ES Nikki Myers	The CEA/Board Agreement was violated, misinterpreted and/or misapplied when the principal of Salem ES, Nikki Myers, subjected the grievant to direct verbal criticism/extreme verbal...	That the principal apologize in writing to the grievant, that the principal does not subject the grievant to repeated and/or extreme verbal abuse in the future; that the administration work with the principal to control...	Step 2 hearing requested. At the Step 1 meeting on Sept. 27, 2023, the grievant...
CCS Administration	The Columbus City Schools Board of Education and/or its agents violated, misinterpreted, or misapplied provisions of the 2022-2025 CEA/CCS Master Agreement when video evidence...	The grievant shall be made whole in every way, including but not limited to the following: The Board shall immediately remove all references to the written reprimand issued on September 14, 2023 from all employee...	Step 2 hearing pending.
Indianola Informal K-8 Brandy Koeth	Indianola Informal K-8 Principal Brandy Koeth, acting in her capacity as agent of the Columbus City Schools Board of Education, violated, misinterpreted, or misapplied provisions...	The grievant shall be made whole in every way, including but not limited to the following: The Board shall provide appropriate administrative support consistent with Article 208.01 and shall immediately cease and...	Step 1 hearing held. Awaiting response.

## The November General Election is Almost Here

There are many local races that matter. For our Union, none is more crucial than Issue 11, the CCS Levy. The Membership Action Team (MAT) will be hosting two canvas dates in the voter-dense Clintonville neighborhood. Join the MAT Team on Saturday, Oct. 14 and Saturday, Nov. 4 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. We'll meet at the **Iron Grill BBQ & Brew** (5295 N. High St.) both times and disperse from there to knock on doors and encourage folks to vote *YES* on the levy. Go to <https://bit.ly/cea23canvas> to sign up.

## PAR/CEU Classes

The Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program facilitates professional development sessions which are open to all CCS educators. Session descriptions can be found in the **CCS PD System (PDS) #57848**. Call the PAR Office at (614) 365-5110 for more information. Upcoming sessions include:

Oct. 17	<b>Equity: Creating a Culturally Relevant School Community</b> (4:30-6:30 p.m. at Columbus Metropolitan Library Main Library Rm 3B)
Oct. 19	<b>Yo Girl! You Got Drama?</b> (4:30-6:30 p.m. at Hudson Professional Library)
Oct. 24	<b>RESA Support for RE2's and 3's</b> (4:30-6:30 p.m. at AIMS Cafetorium)

## Special Notes

**Make a donation to the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank:** The following members have been approved for Catastrophic Leave and are in need of donated days: **Jimmie Beall, Lincoln Park ES; Sarah Helvey, Independence HS; and Andrea Spaulding, West Mound ES.** To donate, complete the **Catastrophic Sick Leave Donation Form**, available on the CEA and CCS websites. Submit the completed form to [leavesofabsence@columbus.k12.oh.us](mailto:leavesofabsence@columbus.k12.oh.us).

**2023 Mini Grant Application Window Closes Monday, Oct. 25, 4:30 p.m.** To apply, sign in to your personal Google Drive and go to <https://bit.ly/ceaminigrant>. There have been changes to the application process. There will be **one (1) application window**. If you have a **project planned for the spring, apply now**. Complete the application on a Chromebook, laptop, or desktop. You must be in your personal Google Drive, *not your CCS Drive*. To receive guidance and see a real-time application being completed, join the Mini Grant Zoom training Oct. 10, 4:30 p.m. This is optional and will not impact the selection process if you cannot attend. To attend, log into Zoom: Meeting Code 850 1686 8143, Passcode: MiniGrants. Contact Tracie Helmbrecht at [ceaminigrants@gmail.com](mailto:ceaminigrants@gmail.com) or text (614) 398-1201 with questions.

**Members of CEA:** If you are not receiving electronic communications from CEA, email [hernb@ceaohio.org](mailto:hernb@ceaohio.org) with your name and non-CCS email address.

**CEA Members' Children Get Free College Scholarships: The CEA Member Scholarship Fund** is open for applications. This benefit is for our members with children who are college seniors. The fund provides **\$2,500 in tuition assistance for each senior attending a four-year college or university**. Eligible students are college seniors between Sept. 2023-June 2024, with at least a 2.0 GPA. Payment will be made directly to the college or university. Parents or guardians must have taught in the Columbus City Schools for four years prior to the application date and must be continuous CEA or CEA-R members. Go to <https://bit.ly/46x4ljQ> to download the application. The **deadline is Friday, Oct. 13, 4 p.m.** If you have questions, call Kathy Wilkes at (614) 253-4731.

**CEA Special Fall Election:** The following elected positions will be filled in the **2023-2024 Special Fall Election:** Governors for High School At-Large, Middle School At-Large, and 1-2 OEA Delegates and Alternates. The **declaration period is open now**. Declaration forms are available for download on the CEA website and may also be obtained by contacting Jen Gable ([gablej@ceaohio.org](mailto:gablej@ceaohio.org)). **Declaration forms must be received by the CEA office by Friday, Oct. 13, 4:30 p.m.** Ballots will be sent to building SFRs the week of Oct. 23. **The voting window begins Monday, Oct. 30, and ends Tuesday, Nov. 14.** Members of the Elections Committee will collect ballots for tally **Wednesday, Nov. 15.** Call CEA Elections Chair Brittany Pierce at (440) 225-2631 with any questions. (If there is a run-off election, ballots will be sent to buildings on Friday, Dec. 1. Run-off voting begins Tuesday, Dec. 5 and ends on Monday, Dec. 18. Tally day is Tuesday, Dec. 19.)

**For the position of Capital Vice President**, declaration begins Monday, Oct. 2, and must be filed with the Election Chair of the Capital District prior to 5 p.m. of the deadline date of Friday, Oct. 27, 2023.

**Retiring? Avoid OTES: Bargaining unit members who are planning on retiring during the 2023-2024 school year can be exempted from the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System.** To take advantage of this, submit your notice of retirement to Human Resources by Wednesday, Nov. 1. You must continue to complete the evaluation process until your retirement has been approved by the Board of Education. To download retirement information or access the Google form to submit notification of retirement, go to <https://www.csoh.us/Page/2340>. If you have questions, contact Teri Mullins, CEA Staff Consultant at (614) 253-4731.

**Professional Leave:** There is **\$200,000** available to bargaining unit members each year to pursue professional development opportunities outside the school district. These include taking a course or attending a conference or workshop. Forms to apply for professional leave are available in the "Forms" section of the CEA website or the CCS Intranet, along with the full leave guidelines. Act as soon as you know the date of your conference.

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.

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



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