

## Sixth Grade RIMPS

In 2023, the Ohio Legislature removed the automatic requirement that third grade students be retained for not scoring proficient. One of the legislative requirements that was enacted with this change was that students would remain on a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan (RIMP) past third grade until they scored proficient on the English Language Arts portion of the Ohio State Test (OST). As a result of this change, there are now nearly 1,500 sixth grade students in CCS who need a RIMP.

Your Union has met with the administration regarding the state requirements, and expressed our members' concerns with completing RIMPS prior to the October 30 deadline. To that end, the district has sent the message below to principals, Area Superintendents, and other administrators regarding time for the completion of RIMPS:

*Dear Principals,*

*As we continue implementing the requirements of HB33, we recognize that the Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan (RIMP) process is a significant lift for teachers, particularly at the 6th grade level. A common concern we have heard is around when teachers have dedicated time to complete the RIMP documents while balancing their daily instructional responsibilities.*

*To help address this challenge, the Curriculum and Instruction team recommends that schools provide teachers with structured time during staff meetings or district PD days to work on RIMP documents. Additionally, principals should consider providing release time from certain duties for teachers who need additional time to complete RIMPS. These approaches will allow teachers to focus on completing the plans thoughtfully and thoroughly, while reducing the pressure of finding time outside of their already full schedules.*

*We know your leadership is critical in creating the space for this important work. Thank you for your continued partnership and for supporting both teachers and students in ensuring our RIMP process is implemented with fidelity.*

*Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or if you'd like to talk through how this might work in your building.*

The district's message to principals is clear—find additional time for sixth grade ELA teachers within the workday to complete RIMPS prior to the deadline. If your administrator is not providing you additional time for you within your workday to complete these state-mandated compliance requirements, call the CEA Office.

## United Way Kickoff

The CEA Legislative Assembly, along with CCS Deputy Superintendent Kathryn Moser, kicked off this year's United Way campaign at Columbus Downtown 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 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.



## Save The Date

The November General Election is almost here—there are many local races that matter. For our Union, all are crucial. CEA will be hosting two canvas dates; Saturday, Oct. 18 and Saturday, Oct. 25. The events on both dates will begin at 9 a.m. and last until approximately 11 a.m. More information will be provided once the canvas locations are finalized.

## Class Size Matters

The CCS administration has to make a concerted effort to complete initial class size adjustments within the first 19 student attendance days of the school year. Oct. 1 is the deadline to reorganize classrooms that exceed the class size guidelines prescribed in Article 301 of our *Master Agreement*. Here are the size limits:

- K-4: No more than 27 students each; grade 5 - 28 students
- EL classrooms: K-5 No more than 15 students per EL class time; 6-12 maximum of 100 EL students
- Middle school: No more than 33 students per class and 150 students per day.
- High school: No more than 34 students per class and 150 students per day.
- High school or middle school non-academic classes (computer, physical education and music) must not exceed the

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# 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. Go to: <https://www.ceahio.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Grievance-251006-08.pdf>.

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number of pupil stations. For instance, assigning 35 students to a computer class with 30 computers would be a violation of the contract.

If your school still has not decided how to reorganize classes to meet class size requirements, district administrators will intervene to assist you. If at any time class sizes exceed contractual limits, a reorganization must take place.  
If you have any questions about class size, call the CEA Office at (614) 253-4731.

## Open Enrollment — It's Required

During Open Enrollment (Oct. 6–24), 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 2026 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, 2026. 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 co-browsing session for both core and voluntary benefits. Visit <https://columbuscityschools.annualenrollment.net> to schedule your call center enrollment meeting ahead of time, or call 614-401-5172 between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. EST. At your scheduled appointment time, you will receive a call from the iBTR Enrollment Representative. The phone number they will be calling from is 614-401-5172. You are encouraged to save the number in your phone so you will know who is calling.
- 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. Remember that if you enroll in Core benefits through ESS but also want to make changes to your voluntary benefits, you can make those changes yourself on the bswift platform by visiting [columbuscityschools.bswift.com](https://columbuscityschools.bswift.com). You can watch a video to learn to use bswift by copying and pasting this link in your browser: <https://youtu.be/IM1ZYwVsygA>. If you need assistance with your voluntary benefits, you can reach out to iBTR by calling (614) 401-5172. Voluntary benefits include: Short-Term Disability, Long-Term Disability, Critical Illness Insurance, Accident Insurance, Hospital Insurance, Pet Insurance, Identity Theft Protection, Whole Life, and Term Life Insurance.

If you have questions regarding the Open Enrollment Process, contact CCS Benefits Department at (614) 365-6475 or [benefitquestions@columbus.k12.oh.us](mailto:benefitquestions@columbus.k12.oh.us).

## CEA Foundation Mini Grants Are Back! Apply, Dream Big, and let your Creativity Shine!

Now is the time to prepare for the CEA Foundation Mini Grants. This is your chance to receive funding to support, grow, or enhance the amazing work already happening in your classroom or school. Below is all the information you need to know!

### Application Timeline

- Opens: 7 a.m., Thursday, Oct. 2, 2025
- Closes: 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2025 (our first Records Day)

### What's New This Year

- **How-To Video** (<https://youtu.be/2vWa6ILamUM>) Step-by-step guidance, hints, and updates for applicants.
- **Three Grant Categories:** General Mini Grant, Early Career Educator Mini Grant & STEAM/STEM Mini Grant
- **Funding Update:** All grants are up to \$500.
- **New Rule:** Only one application per project per school will be accepted to maximize impact.



2025–2026 Mini Grants at-a-Glance	Examples of use	Criteria	Amount
General Mini Grant	• Electives/ Unified Arts • OT/PT; APE, etc. • Supplemental supports	All CEA members in good standing	\$500 per grant
Early Educator Mini Grant	• Interactive bulletin boards • Class library/ manipulatives • Flexible seating	All CEA members in good standing in years 1–5 of their career	\$500 per grant
STEAM/STEM Mini Grant	• Robotics/Kinex • STEAM/STEM Club supplies • Fees for competitions	All CEA members in good standing	\$500 per grant

Questions? Email [ceaminigrants@gmail.com](mailto:ceaminigrants@gmail.com) from your personal email address.

# Only CEA Members’ Children Get Free College Scholarships

The CEA Member Scholarship Fund is now open for applications. **This benefit is for our members with children who are college seniors between Sept. 2025–June 2026.** 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. 2025–June 2026 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.

Download the application at <https://bit.ly/41MTvX4>. The **deadline is Friday, Oct. 10, 4 p.m.** If you have questions, call Kathy Wilkes at (614) 253-4731.

## Fight Flu and Earn a Gift Card from Wellness

Staff who receive a flu shot before Dec. 31 will earn a \$25 gift card from the CCS Staff Wellness Initiative. After you receive your flu shot, visit the Flu Shot Information tab on the Wellness website, [ccsoh.us/wellness](https://ccsoh.us/wellness), and fill out the flu shot form. You do not need to receive your flu shot at a CCS location in order to be eligible for the gift card. As a reminder, gift cards are a form of compensation and are subject to employee payroll tax.

Questions? Email [wellness@columbus.k12.oh.us](mailto:wellness@columbus.k12.oh.us).

## Attention: Mid-Career Educators

We are excited to invite you to participate in the Mid-Career World Café, a collaborative gathering designed to share experiences, insights, and ideas that can help shape the future of Ohio’s Educator and Support Staff community.

To help us prepare and ensure the conversations reflect the priorities and interests of participants, we kindly ask you to complete this short form: [bit.ly/3K9WFOQ](https://bit.ly/3K9WFOQ).

Your input will guide the topics of discussion and ensure the event is meaningful and relevant to your journey as a member of OEA, such as:

- Mentorship Matters: Mid-career educators emphasized the need for mentors to be compensated for their time and expertise.
- This recognition is essential to building strong, sustainable support systems within our schools.
- Relevant Professional Development: PD must be meaningful and applicable to the realities of mid-career educators. Generic or disconnected training does not serve our growth or our students.
- Mental Health & Wellness: Burnout is real. There is a clear call for mental health initiatives that support educators in maintaining balance, resilience, and well-being.

### Details

Event: Mid-Career World Café

Date & Time: Nov. 1 or Nov. 8, 2025 (*Pick ONE date*) 10 a.m.–2:30 p.m. (Lunch provided)

Location: **Ohio Education Association HQ** – 225 E Broad St. Columbus OH 43215

Complete the form by Oct. 27, 2025. We look forward to learning from your perspective and building a space where Mid-Career Educators and Support Staff can connect, share, and inspire one another. More information regarding meeting times and dates to come!

## Learning Walks

Your Union has received many phone calls, emails and text messages regarding the district’s “Learning Walks” with concerns about whether they are evaluative as well as how they are being conducted. In August, CEA members approved a Conceptual Agreement that contains the following new language regarding non-evaluative classroom visits:

Section **211.09 A. Nonevaluative Classroom Visits** refer to classroom visits by board employees for the purpose of improving instructional practices, curriculum implementation, and student learning. Any written nonevaluative feedback generated from the visit shall not become part of any teacher’s personnel file or evaluation.

Joe Hernan, Director of Math, Innovation and Technology provided this email to summarize how he has described the purpose of “Learning Walks” to administrators:

*“Learning Walks are short, non-evaluative classroom visits that give us a clear picture around curriculum implementation and instructional practices. The tool helps us collect consistent data, provide teachers with supportive feedback, and spot trends across classrooms and schools. That information guides the kind of professional learning and instructional support we offer.”*

*“They’re not about evaluating teachers—they’re about making sure our curriculum is implemented with fidelity and using what we see to strengthen teaching and learning across the district.”*

If your administrator is doing something different, call CEA.

## Retiring? Avoid OTES

Bargaining unit members who are planning on retiring during the 2025–2026 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 Friday, Oct. 31. You must continue to complete the evaluation process until your retirement has been approved by the Board of Education. Go to <https://www.ccsoh.us/Page/2340> to download retirement information or access the Google form to submit notification of retirement. If you have questions, contact Teri Mullins, CEA Staff Consultant at (614) 253-4731.

## Special Fall CEA Election

Due to three vacancies on the CEA Board of Governors, there will be a Fall Special Election. CEA is seeking candidates for the unexpired terms of Governor for District 2 (2028), District 4 (2026) and District 7 (2028). The **declaration period**



**begins Monday, Sept. 29, and ends Monday, Oct. 13.** A Declaration of Candidacy for CEA Office will be available on the CEA website at [bit.ly/3IDDYCy](https://bit.ly/3IDDYCy) or by calling CEA at (614) 253-4731. Forms are accepted in hard copy or electronic format at [elections@ceaohio.org](mailto:elections@ceaohio.org). **Declaration forms must be received by the CEA office no later than 4:30 p.m., Monday, Oct. 13, 2025. Campaigning begins Monday, Sept. 29, and ends Nov. 11, 2025. Ballots will be in the buildings on Oct. 24, 2025. Voting will begin on Monday, Oct. 27, 2025, and ends Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2025. Ballots will be collected and tallied by the Election Committee on Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2025.** Call Brittany Pierce, CEA Election Chair, at (440) 225-2631 with any questions.

## Join the New Special Education Caucus! All CEA members are invited to join.

CEA is excited to announce the launch of the Special Education Caucus — a new group created by and for members who are passionate about supporting our students with disabilities and the educators who serve them.

The Caucus will be a place to:

- Connect with other special education professionals across the district.
- Share resources, strategies, and solutions.
- Advocate for the needs of both students and staff.
- Make sure special education voices are heard within CEA.

Whether you’re an intervention specialist, related service provider, or simply a member who cares deeply about special education, you are welcome!

Here is the membership form to join: <https://forms.gle/ThsefQWJy7X69Zch8>.

Special Notes
<b>Transplant Needed for CEA Member: Robyn Chernack</b> , Intervention Specialist ( <b>Cedarwood ES</b> ), is in need of a kidney donation from a living donor. Such donations are typically very successful and ideal when made by living donors. Eligible donors have matching blood types and are free of diseases including high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, kidney and heart disease. Donors are able to lead normal lives. To become a donor, go to: <a href="https://bit.ly/40y23zN">bit.ly/40y23zN</a> .
<b>Make a donation to the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank:</b> When someone experiences a life-threatening illness or injury, and they are out of accrued time, they can apply for catastrophic leave. When approved, sick leave days can be donated, allowing them to remain in paid status and receive healthcare benefits. The following members have been approved for Catastrophic Leave and are in need of donated days: <b>Linda Hulteen</b> , Displaced; and <b>Mary Barber</b> , Columbus North International HS. To donate, complete the Catastrophic Sick Leave Donation Form, available on the CEA and CCS websites. Submit the completed form to <a href="mailto:leavesofabsence@columbus.k12.oh.us">leavesofabsence@columbus.k12.oh.us</a> .
<b>CEA Members:</b> If you are not receiving electronic communications from CEA, email <a href="mailto:tellcea@ceaohio.org">tellcea@ceaohio.org</a> with your name and non-CCS email address. This issue can usually be resolved quickly.
If you know someone new to your building or unit, approach the person and ask them to become a member of CEA. We have made joining CEA simple. <b>Step 1:</b> Click “JOIN” on the homepage at <a href="http://www.ceaohio.org">www.ceaohio.org</a> ; <b>Step 2:</b> Download the CEA Membership Form to your device and complete it. (It is a fillable pdf for your convenience); <b>Step 3:</b> Email the completed form to <a href="mailto:membership@ceaohio.org">membership@ceaohio.org</a> . Call CEA at (614) 253-4731 with questions.

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