

Bargaining Alert #2: The Master Agreement Reopener Process

Dear Union Family:

Earlier in January, the CEA Board of Governors voted unanimously to approve the internal process for the upcoming Master Agreement reopener. Here is an overview of what the process will look like.

For the first time in many years, we will have a reopener in the middle of the contract. Unlike full bargaining cycles, there is a limit on the number of items we can bring to the table. CEA gets to bring three items to the table to bargain, as does the Board. One of our three items will be compensation/benefits per our *Master Agreement*; the other two items will come from the direction of the members and the work of the Legislative Assembly, Large Bargaining Team, Board of Governors, and Core Bargaining Team.

The Bargaining Priorities Survey will be sent out to members on Monday, Jan. 26, and remain open until Sunday, Feb. 8. The survey will be broken up into two parts. The first part will be about community priorities. The Columbus Education Justice Coalition has identified four priorities after working closely with the community this fall. Members will be given information about the community priorities and will be able to rank them. This section of the survey represents a continuation of our commitment to bargaining for the common good while remaining true to the principle that members determine our bargaining priorities.

The second part of the Bargaining Priority Survey asks our members where we should focus our bargaining efforts. Members will be asked to rank each of the categories in order to provide direction for the bargaining team and the Board of Governors. Community priorities will be an option for members to rank amongst the categories, as illustrated below:

- Assignments and Transfers
- Building Use and Environment
- Community Issues
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Discipline
- Leave
- Professional Development
- Special Education
- Student Support Services
- Technology
- Testing and Assessment
- Workload/Scheduling



At the February CEA Legislative Assembly, Faculty Representatives will work to develop some general topics of focus that fit under the categories listed above to share with the Bargaining Team.

The Bargaining Team will meet in conjunction with the members of the Board of Governors on Feb. 12 to review the survey results and talk about the topics generated at the February Legislative Assembly. The suggestions from the meeting will be documented by the Bargaining Chair.

Following that meeting, the Board of Governors will review all suggestions from the Legislative Assembly and full Bargaining Team. The Board of Governors will approve the categories selected by members and provide direction to the Core Bargaining Team in the creation of bargaining proposals to submit to the Board of Education.

From Feb. 13 through Mar. 4, the Core Bargaining Team will be selected based on the categories going to the table. During this time, the language for the three proposals that will be presented to the district for the reopener will be developed. The reopener platform for bargaining will be shared at the March Legislative Assembly.

The unique nature of a mid-contract reopener with limited issues requires a process that is intentional about gathering member input, considering the needs of all members, and providing transparency throughout the process. Your elected Board of Governors put significant consideration into this process and are confident that it will lead to a successful outcome. As always, final approval of any tentative agreement remains in the hands of the membership. Please be on the lookout for additional updates.

In Solidarity,

John Coneglia, CEA President

Article 211 Calendar Pushed Back

Last week, the Administration came to your Union and asked to push back the Article 211 process. Your Union agreed, because we wanted to make sure that the Article 211 selective interview process was done correctly. As of the time the *Voice* went to press, a finalized Article 211 calendar was unavailable. CEA will send the Article 211 calendar out to members as soon as it is finalized with CEA.

ICE Belongs in Your Coffee, not School—Join Your Community in Keeping Us Safe!

The Columbus Education Justice Coalition, our partners at Pint Size Protesters, and Defend & Recruit have been diligently working with grassroots organizations and neighbors across Columbus and Central Ohio, Chicago and North Carolina to

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The reopening of negotiations will begin Mar. 15, 2026. The CEA Master Agreement is set to expire in fewer than 949 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. Go to: <https://www.ceaohip.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Grievance-260120-20-10.43.26.pdf>.

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develop local neighborhood and school patrols in response to ICE presence in our communities.

We have developed neighborhood ICE Watch teams. Now we are building our school patrols. School patrols involve volunteers who have been trained in ICE Watch to surround schools and monitor the area for ICE activity. They notify the community in the event that ICE does show up. The main goal for school patrols are to keep targeted parents who are dropping off/picking up their kids safe AND to show kids and staff that they are not alone — we keep us safe!

School Coordinators will be connected with the lead organizers in their neighborhood patrol, as well as a chat for all school coordinators to check-in, discuss protocols and tactics, etc.

If your school building is interested in being connected to your neighborhood team, please reach out to Izetta Thomas at thomasi@ceaohip.org to be connected. We will make sure that you are trained, connected to your neighborhood team, and supported in every way.

Fee Waiver Application Window Opening Soon

Summer 2026 Fee Waivers: The application period will open Jan. 26, 2026, and close Feb. 12, 11:59 p.m. Access the online application from home or work using your CCS email username and password. Have your college ID number available when applying. You will automatically be sent a confirmation email once your application is submitted. To complete the online application, Go to <http://bit.ly/2jhWSjd>. If you have Priority I or Priority II status, 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. For assistance with frequently asked questions, links to each of the universities, priority status, and documentation guidelines, go to <https://www.ccsoh.us/Page/4815>. Call (614) 365-5039 or email feewaivers@columbus.k12.oh.us if you need assistance. Check your CCS email regularly for updates.

CEA Staff Survey Out Now

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? Participants will be able to rate work locations on professional environment, democratic procedures, teacher involvement, and other important areas. Members may provide additional open-ended, anonymous responses on the survey.

The 2025–2026 annual staff survey will be administered online. Additionally, this year's survey will offer bargaining unit members in citywide departments the opportunity to rate their department as well.

An email containing the link to the survey was sent to members' non-CCS email addresses on Friday, Jan. 9. The survey will close on Sunday, Jan. 25, 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@ceaohip.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.

Do You Have Your Continuing Contract?

It is that time of year where you can apply for a Continuing Contract. Bargaining unit members submit their Continuing Contract application using Google Forms only. Bargaining unit members will have to be logged into their CCS email account to utilize the online form. To utilize the online application process, go to <https://bit.ly/4jKUq22>.

All the eligibility requirements must be met to be considered. In accordance with *CEA Master Agreement*, Article 401.08, to be eligible to receive a continuing contract, you must have the following:

- A five-year professional license or a permanent certificate shall be on file in Human Resources. The certificate/license should be received in Human Resources on or before Mar. 6, 2026.
- At the conclusion of this school year, you must have completed three years of successful Columbus teaching experience within the last five years or if you previously had a continuing contract in Columbus or another Ohio district, you must have completed two successful years of Columbus experience. Under the new licensing standards, you must also meet the following coursework requirement:
 - If you hold a master's degree at the time of initially receiving a teacher's certificate/license, six (6) semester hours of graduate coursework in the area of licensure or in an area related to the teaching field since the initial issuance of such certificate or license is required.
 - If you do not hold a master's degree at the time of initially receiving a teacher's certificate/license, thirty (30) semester hours of 300 level coursework or above in the area of licensure or in an area related to the teaching field since the initial issuance of such certificate or license is required.
 - If you believe that you will be completing the requirements making you eligible for a continuing teacher contract for the 2026–2027 school year, you must complete the online application and provide original transcripts. Only digital transcripts will be accepted and should be sent to transcripts@columbus.k12.oh.us. The electronic form and original transcripts must be received no later than Mar. 6, 2026.

Questions regarding this information should be directed to Teacher Certification & Licensure at (614) 365-6680 or license@columbus.k12.oh.us. All applicants will receive an electronic confirmation. Applicants must check their email (spam or clutter folders) to ensure they receive the confirmation as additional information may be requested. Approvals, denials, or delay notices for the Continuing Contract applications will be sent via email by Mar. 31, 2026. * Note: Official transcripts must be sent. Email license@columbus.k12.oh.us to verify if the transcripts on file are up to date.

Capital District RA and Elections

The Capital District Spring Representative Assembly (RA) will be held on Wednesday, Apr. 22, 2026, at The Boat House, 679 W. Long Street Columbus, OH 43215. Registration begins at 4:30 p.m. and the RA starts at 5:30 p.m. Alternates are welcome to attend the RA. A key focal point of the Capital RA will be the Spring Elections for Capital District President and Vice President. CEA Members may declare their candidacy starting Jan. 20, 2026, through Friday Mar. 27, 2026. Voting will take place during the Capital RA on Apr. 22, 2026. Go to <https://bit.ly/4jNr4QM> to download a declaration form.

The Capital District seat on the Ohio Education Association Board of Directors is also up the deadline Jan. 30, 2026. Please get more information from William Baird at OEA. His email is baird@ohea.org. The seat will be voted on at the Capital RA.

News from the STRS Board

Dear CEA Members:

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Chad Smith and I am currently an educator at Centennial HS with almost 28 years in the district. Many of you already know, but I am one of your elected STRS trustees. My term began last September and I will be serving until Aug. 31 of 2029. With the support of CEA, I hope to give you regular updates through the *Voice* and I hope to make some appearances at some of the Legislative Assemblies this year.

If I were going to give you any advice for the time being, there are two things that you should be doing. The first is investing additional money into a 457 with Ohio Deferred Compensation (ohio457.org) or a 403B so you can offset any unexpected expenses during retirement and to protect yourself from rising inflation. The second item is you should set up an on-line account with Ohio STRS (strsoh.org). Setting up an STRS account on-line will give you access to your retirement statement and regular updates like board meetings and changes in benefits.

If you have any questions, contact me at csmith2767@gmail.com.



Chad Smith

Super Severance: Good Attendance Pays Off For Retirees

If you want enhanced (aka: super severance) pay, our contract requires members to notify the district of retirement intentions by Feb. 1 of their retirement year. You will receive pay for 50% of your personal leave days, regardless of when you notify CCS, but notifying the district by Feb. 1 means you receive more for your unused sick leave. Article 810 of the *CEA Master Agreement* defines how severance pay is granted. To estimate the amount of your severance pay, access Employee Self Service and use the severance pay estimator. You will need your latest pay stub to obtain the necessary information.

Notifications of **retirement** are being accepted in electronic format only. Go to <https://forms.gle/qpv9t4EQAZSnpTY56> to submit your **notice of retirement**. The example below represents a retiring teacher with a yearly salary of **\$115,475** (Master's at Step 31) with a daily rate of **\$592.18**, **410 sick leave days** and **30 personal leave days**.

You would receive **\$31,809.45** more when notifying the District of your intent to retire by Feb. 1.

Notification by Feb. 1 * 2026			Notification after Feb. 1 *		
Sick Leave			Sick Leave		
Rate	Per Diem	Amount	Rate	Per Diem	Amount
1st 100 days x 25% x	\$592.18	= \$14,804.50	410 days x 20% x	\$592.18	= 48,558.76
2nd 100 days x 30% x	592.18	= 17,765.40			
3rd 100 days x 35% x	592.18	= 20,726.30			
4th 100 days x 40% x	592.18	= 23,687.20			
10 days x 45% x	592.18	= 2,664.81			
+ Personal Leave			+ Personal Leave		
Rate	Per Diem	Amount	Rate	Per Diem	Amount
30 days x 50% x	\$592.18	= \$8,882.70	30 days x 50% x	\$592.18	= \$8,882.70
Total		\$88,530.91	Total		\$57,441.46

*This example is for illustration purposes only and is not intended for use as an official calculation.

Is Your License Expiring?

If your license from ODE is expiring June 30, 2026, and you have a limited employment contract, you must complete the required coursework or CEUs necessary for renewal and apply before May 11 to be licensed by ODE for the 2026–2027 school year. If you have a continuing contract, you have through June to complete your coursework and submit your application. Failure to renew your license may result in suspension of pay and initiation of termination/non-renewal proceedings.

In addition to the online application, you will need to complete a background check if it has been 5 years. If you have questions about the date of your last background check, or you don't plan to renew your license, contact Leslie Butler, Human Resources, Teacher Licensure, at license@columbus.k12.oh.us. Contact Leslie about questions concerning CEUs or the license renewal process at LPDC@columbus.k12.oh.us.

Special Notes

Transplant Needed for CEA Member: Robyn Chernack, Intervention Specialist at **Cedarwood ES**, 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: bit.ly/40y23zN.

Make a donation to the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank: 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: **Jeanne Collins**, Woodcrest ES; **Maria Flora**, Yorktown MS; and **Katrina Callaghan**, Northland HS. 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.

CEA Spring Elections There will be an election for the following CEA offices and positions: **President; Vice President; Governors for Districts 1, 4, 5, 10, and Minority-at-Large; 2026 NEA Delegates; Local Delegates; 2026 NEA State-At-Large Delegates***; and **2026-2027 OEA Delegates**. Declaration Forms are available on the CEA website and at the CEA office. Declaration Forms are due at the CEA office no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 6. Voting will begin on Tuesday, Feb. 24, and will end on Tuesday, Mar. 10. Ballots will be collected and tallied by the Elections Committee on Wednesday, Mar. 11. Contact Brittany Pierce, CEA Elections Chair, at (440) 225-2631 with questions.

* NEA State-at-Large Declaration Forms must be submitted to William Baird at OEA by January 31, 2026.

The Linden-McKinley Marching Band, also known as **TUMMP**, has been invited to perform in the vibrant Mardi Gras parades in New Orleans, LA. This is an incredible opportunity for LMHS students to showcase their talent on a national stage. Consider donating to their GoFundMe at: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-tummps-journey-to-new-orleans>

CEA Members: If you are not receiving electronic communications from CEA, email tellcea@ceaohio.org with your name and non-CCS email address.

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. **Step 1:** Click "JOIN" on the homepage at www.ceaohio.org; **Step 2:** Download the CEA Membership Form to your device and complete it. (It is a fillable pdf for your convenience); **Step 3:** Email the completed form to membership@ceaohio.org. Call CEA at (614) 253-4731 with questions.

CEA Members & Families—Bank where you belong! Did you know? All CEA members and their families can become members of Education First Credit Union! Enjoy exclusive financial benefits, low-rate loans, high-yield savings, and personalized service.

Join today at www.educu.org.

