

Nobody Can Make You Feel Inferior Without Your Consent: Reginald L. Weaver

Reginald “Reg” Lee Weaver was born on August 13, 1939, in Danville, Illinois. The son of a coal miner, Weaver earned his B.A. degree in special education at Illinois State University in 1961, and later received his Masters degree from Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois.

Weaver was hired by the Harvey School District in Illinois as a middle school special education teacher. He would be elected to the presidency of his local union, and later to the presidency of the Illinois Education Association, serving from 1981 until 1997.

During that time, Weaver led a 15-year struggle for a comprehensive collective bargaining law for all public education institutions in Illinois. That bill was passed and signed into law by in 1983 and remains the foundation of collective bargaining for that state today.

Weaver was elected to the NEA Executive Committee in 1997. He was later was elected to the position of NEA Vice President, and was elected NEA President in 2002, serving until 2008.

As President of NEA, he traveled nationally and internationally, working tirelessly as an ambassador for public education and advocating for the basic right of every student to attend a great public school. Weaver testified before Congress on federal education policy and frequently provided a critical voice on public education for national publications.

Weaver also served as Vice President of Education International, a 394-member organization representing nearly 30 million teachers and education workers in 171 countries. He was even named one of *Ebony* magazine’s 100 Most Influential Black Americans for his national influence.

However, before the national stage, before the speeches in Washington, before the policy debates and television appearances, Reg Weaver was one of CEA’s proudest union siblings.

Reg was family to CEA. He delivered keynote speeches at CEA Legislative Assemblies, emceed CEA events and even attended CEA trainings. Reg had a way of making everyone feel heard. Members from all over the city often found themselves drawn to him, not because of his title, but because of his sincerity. He would linger after meetings, asking about their classrooms, their students, their struggles. His favorite saying, “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent,” was a staple in his speeches and conversations.

When Reg would visit Columbus, it wasn’t with fanfare—it was with familiarity. He greeted everyone by name. He asked about schools as if they were extensions of his own home. His leadership was rooted in relationships. He believed that strong schools were built not just on policy, but on people—on trust, respect, and shared purpose. It was a belief shaped in Columbus and carried with him to the national stage.

The Columbus Education Association mourns the passing of this great union leader. Our hearts and thoughts go out to the family and friends of Reg Weaver. He will be missed for all time.



Know Your Contract: Verbal Abuse

Respect is the cornerstone of our profession. Teachers work hard to model it for our students, and we expect to receive it—especially from our administrators. Direct verbal criticism of a CEA member in front of students or parents reduces one’s ability to maintain an orderly teaching and learning environment. Administrators do occasionally need to redirect staff. However, such direction should be respectful and should NOT be given in front of students, parents or other staff members.

Section 404.06 of our *Master Agreement* details your rights when criticism has been lodged inappropriately. If criticism occurs in an inappropriate setting, the teacher may request a conference with the administrator to discuss the incident. If the administrator repeats the inappropriate behavior, the teacher can file a grievance. During these meetings, CEA members are always entitled to CEA representation. If you have been subjected to verbal abuse, call your Association.



STRS Update

At the March 19, 2026, board meeting the State Teachers Retirement Board unanimously approved the following benefit changes for STRS Ohio members:

- **Retirees and benefit recipients:** Effective July 1, 2026, eligible benefit recipients will receive a 1.6% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in fiscal year 2027. Retirees who started receiving benefits on June 1, 2022,



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The reopening of negotiations will begin Mar. 15, 2026. The CEA Master Agreement is set to expire in fewer than 880 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.ceahio.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Grievance-260330-30.pdf>.

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or earlier will receive a COLA that will be added to the base benefit on the retirement date anniversary and each month thereafter.

- **Active members:** For active members, the board extended the current required years of service for an additional five years. Retirement eligibility criteria is now as follows:

Retirement Dates	Unreduced benefit*	Reduced benefit*
June 1, 2025–May 1, 2035	Any age and 32 years; or age 65 and 5 years	Any age and 27 years; or age 60 and 5 years
June 1, 2035–May 1, 2037	Any age and 33 years; or age 65 and 5 years	Any age and 28 years; or age 60 and 5 years
On or after June 1, 2037	Any age and 34 years; or age 65 and 5 years	Any age and 29 years; or age 60 and 5 years

*An unreduced retirement benefit is calculated at 2.2 percent multiplied by total service credit at retirement. Working fewer years impacts your retirement benefit.

Here is a link to the Defined Benefit Plan 25–26 brochure. The charts that are on pages 30–32 will remain the same and the effective dates on them will just shift to what is shown in the table above. https://www.strsoh.org/_pdfs/15-126.pdf

Selling Personal Leave

In the 2022 round of negotiations, your Union bargained the ability for members to sell back two personal days to the district for 85% of the daily rate of the BA minimum salary, approximately \$227 per day this year. The provision calls for members to notify the district in writing no later than May 1 of their intent to do so. To participate in the personal leave buy back program, go to ESS at <https://columbus.munisselfservice.com/>. After you log in, click on the document icon in the upper right-hand corner in the blue margin. Once the gray menu opens, scroll all the way down to the bottom and click on the link titled “**CEA PERSONAL LEAVE CONVERSION.**” You will be taken to a Google form that will allow you to sell one or two personal leave days. This opportunity will open Wednesday, Apr. 1, and close Friday, May 1.

Paid Holidays: Know Your Leave Balance

Section 1501.03 of our contract provides for certain paid holidays throughout the school year, including the six days of Spring Break. However, pay for holidays is not a given. Members who are not in a “paid” status the day immediately preceding the holiday and the day immediately following the holiday will not receive holiday pay. If you are absent and not on paid sick leave or personal leave, you will forfeit the pay for those holidays. Call the CEA office if you have questions.

Deadline: Grant Opportunity: Teachers’ Dream Grant – Apr. 13

This grant will provide individual opportunities ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 to Columbus City Schools teachers to assist in improving teaching and learning in CCS. This is an excellent opportunity for interested teachers to acquire resources to support a unique, creative, innovative project to increase student achievement, improve social climate and/or promote social justice. The funder does not fund package programs, equipment/furniture needed for classrooms.

All applications must be submitted in CCSDAS by 4 p.m., Apr. 13, 2026. This is a district-sponsored grant; applicants will not need to submit a Grant Endorsement Form to apply but will need their principal’s or supervisor’s approval. NOTE: A CCS email account is required to submit an application.

Go to: <https://applications.columbus.k12.oh.us/ccsdas/dreamGrantRequest/create>. Use your CCS login credentials starting March 2, 2026 to submit your application.



Grant Opportunities for Educators

The Columbus City Schools Office of State and Federal Funding has recently come across several funding opportunities that may benefit our teachers and classrooms. Below is a list of opportunities currently available, along with their respective deadlines and award amounts. We encourage interested teachers to review these opportunities and consider applying.

To apply for any of the opportunities listed below, contact the Grants Office at grants@columbus.k12.oh.us so we can assist you with the application process and ensure all requirements are met.

Important: Applications submitted without the involvement of the Grants Office will be considered invalid and will not be approved for submission.

Current Opportunities:

- **Kars for Kids Small Grant**Deadline: **Rolling**Award Amount: **\$5,000**
- **Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, Open Grants**Deadline: **May 1, 2026**Award Amount: **\$15,000**

If you have questions or want to pursue any of these opportunities, contact the Grants Office at grants@columbus.k12.oh.us as soon as possible so we can begin the application process together.

Thank you, and we look forward to supporting your proposals.



CEA Awards & Retirement Banquet

CEA is holding its 50th Annual Awards & Retirement Banquet on Friday, May 15. It will, again, be at the Hilton Columbus at Easton. If you are retiring this year, contact CEA today so you can attend. As a retiree, your evening will be provided at no charge. Guests will be charged \$50 per person.



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.



Special Notes

Please consider making an Organ Donation! A transplant needed for CEA Member Robyn Chernack, Intervention Specialist at Cedarwood ES. She 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 member has been approved for Catastrophic Leave and is in need of donated days: **Shelley Kale**, School Nurse (Colerain 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.

Know Your Contract: Personal Leave In the 1980s, CEA was able to negotiate language out of the contract that prohibited members from using personal leave for things such as: recreational purposes, moving from one home to another, purchasing an automobile or major electrical appliance, accompanying a spouse on a business trip, extending sick leave or attending a fraternal function. In exchange for removing those restrictions and allowing unlimited accrual of sick leave, we went from being credited three days per year to two. As recently as the 2022 negotiations, the Board put forth a proposal that would have put severe limits on members' ability to use personal leave. Under the Board's proposal, any member who wished to utilize their accrued personal leave would have to make a written request to their supervisor at least two school days in advance for only one- or two-day increments. If something happened and a member requested personal leave less than two school days before the day of usage, the member would have to provide proof of an emergency. Additionally, the Board's proposal would allow the Superintendent or their supervisor in a department or work location to deny members' personal leave requests if, in their judgment, it would jeopardize the safe or efficient operation of the district or the continuity of instruction for students. Your Union negotiated, and the Board agreed to require members to notify their principal or supervisor in writing at least five school days in advance of their intention to take personal leave except in unusual or unforeseen circumstances. Additionally, the contract contains language allowing members to sell up to two personal days each year in the spring for 85% of the BA Minimum Salary. For the past 10 years, the Board has gone to the bargaining table seeking to limit the number of personal days our members take each year, when they take them and why they take them, and your Union has successfully fought back their efforts each and every time. Let's make sure we follow the rules of personal leave.

Join The

SPECIAL EDUCATION CAUCUS

OUR PURPOSE

1. Advocate for the needs, rights, & working conditions of special education professionals within CEA.
2. Provide a forum for members to share resources, concerns, & strategies related to special education.
3. Support & advise CEA leadership on issues impacting special education.
4. Build community, professional development, & solidarity among members.

ALL active CEA members welcome!!

SCAN ME



JOIN OHIO'S NEW EDUCATORS FOR A BEYOND THE CLASSROOM SESSION!



Rebecca Bruening

Dyslexia, ADHD, and Executive Functioning: What It Looks Like in Real Classrooms

April 16, 6:00–7:30 PM

Join us for an engaging and practical session with Rebecca Bruening as she explores how dyslexia, ADHD, and executive functioning challenges show up in real classroom settings. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of how attention, working memory, and processing demands interact with reading and learning. This session will also provide actionable strategies educators can implement immediately to reduce cognitive overload—without lowering expectations—helping all students access rigorous instruction and thrive academically.

Brought to you by:



Ohio's New Educators



OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Your Voice. Our Power. *Their Future.*
Contact us to learn more.

www.ohea.org/one | one@ohea.org | [@OHNewEducators](https://twitter.com/OHNewEducators)



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