

## Introducing CEA's New Labor Relations Consultant: Will Klatt

The Columbus Education Association is pleased to welcome Will Klatt as its new Labor Relations Consultant (LRC). Will brings more than a decade of labor advocacy experience and a deep commitment to supporting educators and strengthening unions.

Will has spent the past ten years with the Ohio Education Association (OEA), most recently serving local associations in Delaware and Marion counties. Throughout his tenure, he worked closely with educators and union leaders to protect members' rights, strengthen local organizations, and advance public education.

Prior to joining OEA, Will built a diverse background in the labor movement, working in communications, community relations, and organizing for several SEIU and AFSCME locals across Ohio. Following labor's successful campaign to defeat Senate Bill 5, Will founded the Ohio Student Association, a statewide advocacy organization dedicated to empowering young people and expanding civic engagement. These experiences helped shape his collaborative approach to leadership and reinforced his belief that strong unions are built through engaged members and collective action.

CEA members can look forward to working with Will as he brings his experience, energy, and passion for the labor movement to his new role.

## Retiring? Avoid OTES

Bargaining unit members who are planning on retiring during the 2026–2027 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. 30. You must continue to complete the evaluation process until your retirement has been approved by the Board of Education.

Go to <https://www.ccssoh.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.

## Why TFI 3.0 Matters for Teachers

The Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) is a tool CCS has used for years to support school-wide systems that help students feel connected, staff feel supported, and families feel welcomed. This work is not new. Schools have been using TFI 2.1 for a long time to reflect on how Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) are working at the school level.

TFI 3.0 is an update that helps schools take a closer look at systems already in place—especially those that contribute to calm, predictable, and supportive learning environments. It creates space to reflect on PBIS and restorative practices, recognize what is working well, and identify areas where schools can better support both staff and students.

TFI is not an evaluation of individual teachers or classrooms. Instead, it looks at school-wide structures and practices. The goal is greater consistency across settings and more intentional professional learning—so educators have the support, tools, and shared expectations needed to focus on teaching, learning, and relationships. See the infographic towards the end of the *CEA Voice* for more information.

**TFI 3.0 IS COMING!**

**Academic Benefits**  
Create consistent, schoolwide systems that sustain strong, engaging, instruction with fidelity.

**Attendance Benefits**  
Create consistent, schoolwide systems that foster a sense of belonging to enhance relationships, engagement and attendance.

**SEB Benefits**  
Create consistent, schoolwide systems to strengthen social, emotional, and behavioral skills to empower students for success as citizens in a global community.

**School Year 2026 – 2027**  
TFI 3.0 will focus on exploration, installation, and initial implementation of Tier 1 strategies. During this time, schools will become familiar with the process, build understanding, and begin laying the foundation for effective implementation.

**School Year 2027 – 2028**  
Full Implementation

**Phase 1 August 2026 – October 2026**  
Schools explore elements of the TFI 3.0, complete a self-reflection (2.1 vs 3.0 alignment) and create an action plan for the year.

**Phase 2 October 2026 – January 2027**  
Schools will complete TFI baseline scoring, practice using the new TFI walkthrough and adjust building systems as necessary.

**Phase 3 January 2027 – May 2027**  
Schools will complete official TFI assessment in preparation for full implementation in the 27-28 school year.

**COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS**  
District CCSC's will provide support throughout this process.

**Taking your Climate and Culture to the Next Level!**

See the full-size graphic above on Page 4

## Sick Leave Bank is now the Sick Leave Borrowing Program (UPDATED)

Until the reopener last year, the *CEA Master Agreement* contained language for a Sick Leave Bank. Under that language, only members who donated two days of sick leave became members of the sick leave bank. That would afford them the ability to borrow up to ten days, paying back with their monthly accruals of sick leave.

With the creation of the Sick Leave Bargaining Program (SLBP) your Bargaining Team improved the ability of our members to:

- Use the SLBP to borrow time for family and/or parental leave
- Made it easier to receive a loan

Instead of being an opt-in situation as was with the Sick Leave Bank, SLBP is an opt-out situation for all bargaining unit members. Please note the following:

If you were previously a member of the “Bank,” and want to continue, you will automatically be a member of the SLBP—no further action is required. If you're not sure if you were a member of the “Bank,” go to <https://bit.ly/3S7SBTi> to download a list of the most recent members of the “Bank”, searchable by CCS ID number.

If you were hired prior to the 2026–2027 school year and were not a member of the “Bank” but would now like to join the

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*The CEA Master Agreement is set to expire in fewer than 713 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.ceaohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Grievance-260907-4.pdf>

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SLBP, you will automatically be opted in with no further action, which will initiate your donation of two sick days in order to join. If you do not want to join the SLBP, you must fill out this opt-out form <https://bit.ly/46bf4SV> on or before September 30 of each year to prevent your sick days from automatically being deducted.

If you were hired prior to the 2026–2027 school year and were a member of the “Bank” but would like to leave, you must opt-out by filling out this opt-out form <https://bit.ly/46bf4SV>.

If you are a first-year teacher, you will be enrolled in the SLBP automatically and two days will be deducted from the five days advanced to you at the beginning of the school year. If you do not want to be a part of the SLBP, you must opt-out by filling out this opt-out form <https://bit.ly/46bf4SV>.

## 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. 2026–June 2027. 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. 2026–June 2027 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. The deadline is 4 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 9. If you have questions, call Kathy Wilkes at (614) 253-4731. To download the application form, go to <https://bit.ly/4wNZIEp>.

## Know Your Contract: Middle and High School Grade Entry

In 2025, during the full bargaining, the district came to your Union with a proposal regarding the frequency of middle and high school teachers’ grade entry. At the time they brought their proposal, the language they wanted to change in Section 210.03 (2)(a) for teachers in grades 6–12 read: “Teachers shall keep families informed of student progress by regularly updating assignments and grades in their district-provided electronic gradebook.”

The district’s initial proposal would have required CEA members in grades 6–12 to update their gradebook on a weekly basis. Your Bargaining Team was able to get the district to agree to a compromise. The current language for grade entry for teachers in grades 6–12 reads as follows:

### 210.03

- 2. For grades six (6) through twelve (12):
  - a. Teachers shall update assignments and grades in their district-provided electronic gradebook every ten (10) teacher attendance days beginning on the first day of student attendance.

If you have any questions, please contact the CEA Office.

## Know Your New Contract: Teaching a Sixth Period in MS and HS

Prior to last year’s reopener, middle and high school teachers were required to go through the Reform Panel process to teach a sixth period. As a result of the reopener, your Union negotiated the ability of our members, at their sole discretion, to teach a sixth class in lieu of a duty without having to go through the Reform Panel process.

CEA members are completely in charge of whether or not they teach a sixth period class for the 2026–2027 school year. Once the form is completed, no further action on the part of the member is required. To complete the form, go to [bit.ly/4giegR4](https://bit.ly/4giegR4).

## Religious Leave

Our contract ensures that educators have the right to participate in their religious traditions. Section 702.11 of the *CEA Master Agreement* allows bargaining unit members to be absent, with pay, for a maximum of three days to observe established religious holidays throughout the school year. This leave is not deducted from any other time off. Remember that a request for religious leave must be made in writing to the Human Resources Department at least five school days prior to the holiday.

## See You at the CEA Fall Fling!

The Fling is right around the corner! Join us for the CEA Fall Fling this year. Mark your calendar for Friday, Oct. 23, from 4–8 p.m. at the Hilton Columbus at Easton, 3900 Chagrin Dr.

Your Association just welcomed more than 200 new members this school year. Help them celebrate their new endeavor and welcome them to the CEA family! Our annual party features music, great food, and prizes. Get to know your colleagues. Meet candidates for public office and local elected officials. Admission is free. Beer and wine are just \$5.

## Special Notes

CEA’s First Legislative Assembly at The Boathouse: **Attention All Faculty Representatives**, attend the **CEA Legislative Assembly on Thursday, Sept. 10**. Registration opens at 4 p.m. The meeting begins at 4:30 p.m. Dinner will be served at the conclusion of the meeting. **RSVP to [gablej@ceaohio.org](mailto:gablej@ceaohio.org)**.

**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: **Jennifer Burley, Valleyview 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).

**Due to vacancies on the Board of Governors and OEA Delegates for 2026–2027**, there will be a **Special Election**. CEA is electing candidates for the **unexpired term of Governor for District 7 (2028)**, **High School Governor-at-Large (2029)** and **OEA Delegate (2026–2027)**. **Declaration** runs from **Sept. 28 through Oct. 9**. Voting runs from **Oct. 21 through Nov. 4**.

**PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING AN ORGAN DONATION!** A transplant is 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](http://bit.ly/40y23zN).

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.ceaochio.org](http://www.ceaochio.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@ceaochio.org](mailto:membership@ceaochio.org). Call CEA at (614) 253-4731 with questions.

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

Note: The CEA Voice will be published electronically and in a hard-copy format for the next issue.

**Bank where you belong!** 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 personalize service. Join today at [www.educu.org](http://www.educu.org).

# Join The Lunch Bunch

## STEPPING UP 2.0

### FOR OUR SCHOLARS

#### FUNDRAISER

to provide scholarships to  
Columbus City Schools students in need.



Afternoon of  
**FOOD AND JAZZ**  
with  
**KEN WEAVER**  
and Friends

LOCATION  
**CHAMPIONS GOLF COURSE**  
3900 Westerville Rd  
Columbus, OH 43231





**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026**  
3:00 - 6:00 PM



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF  
TABLE OF 8 DISCOUNT!  
\$450 per table of 8



**Lunch Bunch**  
sponsor of the  
Helen Jenkins Davis  
Scholarship

PAY WITH ZEFFY



Scan to pay

OR VISIT:  
<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/stepping-up-for-our-scholars--20>

**COST**  
**\$60**  
PER PERSON

**CHECKS**  
The Lunch Bunch  
P.O. Box 360941  
Columbus, OH 43236

# TFI 3.0 IS COMING!

## Taking your Climate and Culture to the Next Level!

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### Attendance Benefits

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### SEB Benefits

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It's not another thing...

### A National Tool

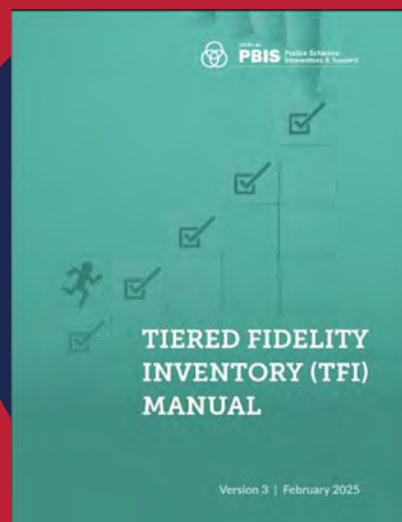
The TFI is a fidelity tool used to create, measure and strengthen systems and supports for student and staff success.

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