

An Important Message From Your CEA JIC Members

Dear Colleague:

On Wednesday, Oct. 7, you received an email from the CCS Board of Education President. Your Joint Insurance Committee wanted you to hear our response to the Board President's message, because we were present for the events that have unfolded, and the Board President was not. Please note that italicized text are quotes directly from the Board President's message sent on that date.

A district HR administrator discovered and called out inaccurate forecasts received from AON [sic] and we quickly took action to bring in an independent expert to investigate, and CCS terminated the contract with AON [sic].

Following the investigation, the district gave specific information in separate detailed presentations to the CEA Joint Insurance Committee and CSEA Joint Insurance Committee, J-I-C for short—this was six months ago in March 2026.

The district investigation began on September 25, 2025, and the next month, the Board hired an independent actuary to investigate the plan financials. CEA was not notified. Six months after suspecting a problem, the Board terminated the contract with Aon prior to the Joint Insurance Committee (JIC) meeting on March 11, 2026.

At the March 11 meeting, the JIC was informed that the plan was billed \$22 million above what premiums paid for the 2025 plan year. For the 2026 plan year, the first quarter financials were unavailable, because the first quarter had not yet ended. An estimate was provided for what the deficit could be for 2026. CEA informed members via email of the meeting on March 12.

Additionally, the district was unable to provide answers to questions that the JIC had in that meeting. The JIC was told that more information would be provided at future meetings. We tried to get meetings on the books, but the district scheduled, then cancelled a May 11 JIC meeting because they weren't ready for us. The next meeting wouldn't happen until August 10, five months later.

We were also informed at the March 11 meeting that Aon had been fired, after the fact. Aon served as our health care broker, and in doing so acted as an independent intermediary between the JIC, district and our healthcare and pharmacy providers.

The role of the health care broker is to help make adjustments to the plan, monitor the plan usage, provide updated financials and also provide cost-saving options to the JIC. Since the district had fired the broker, we were at an immediate disadvantage because without a broker, we would be unable to make changes to the plan or be provided necessary information to formulate a plan or make decisions.

The Joint Insurance Committee was told on March 11 that a Request For Proposal (RFP) was being drafted and there would be a "60–90 day turnaround on a broker." An RFP is a formal document that the district uses to invite potential vendors to submit competitive bids; in this case the RFP was to hire another health insurance broker.

The RFP was not posted on the district's website until August 14—five months later. The application period closed on September 22. The JIC will not meet to hear from applicants until November. The JIC will make a recommendation for who the broker should be based on their RFP and their presentations, it still must go to the Board for their approval and action to hire the broker. Given the speed of sloth that the district moves at, it may be 2027 before the Board actually takes action to hire them.

AON [sic] was a problem, but that did not cause the cost increases for 2027 and beyond.

Aon, along with the Board's failure to notify us in a timely fashion of what was going on or providing us with actual answers or updates were THE EXACT problem. At and after the March meeting, the JIC made requests for specific information to be provided, but the District was unable to provide them to us, and, to date, has still not provided this information.

We hear the call for independent oversight of future health plan administration, and I applaud that request. But, this is not up to the board. This is the express role of the CEA and CSEA Joint Insurance Committees. Under the contract, they are responsible for looking at the options and vendors and recommending plans to the Administration. The JICs need to communicate this information with union members.

The Board's claim that its hands are tied by the contract is factually incorrect. Under Article 806.05, the scope of the Joint Insurance Committee's authority is limited to matters such as insurance plan design, wellness programs, coverage for members' households, funding levels, premiums, and employee contribution rates for the CEA bargaining unit.

It is not the role of the Joint Insurance Committee to execute contracts, terminate contracts with vendors, or verify that information provided by consultants, administrators, or vendors has been accurate, honest, and transparent. Like every other district operation, those responsibilities rest with the Board and administration. It is their duty to oversee employee benefits, validate data, write checks, hold vendors accountable, and ensure that administrators charged with managing these programs are fulfilling their obligations. Their own internal investigation by an outside party clearly outlines repeated failures to monitor data, and hold the vendor accountable.

As educators, we are expected to be data-driven. We are expected to know students' strengths and weaknesses, taking into account their needs and prior knowledge, while making and acting on a plan to move them to the next level. Sound instructional decisions for students cannot be made without accurate data provided in a timely fashion to drive a thoughtful plan that makes meaningful results. This is also true for the work of the Joint Insurance Committee. Without correct, timely data, we, as the Joint Insurance Committee cannot make sound decisions that positively impact the plan for our members' benefit.

To date, the Board has not responded to CEA's comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding, which would establish additional transparency and accountability measures. We have made that proposed MOU available for your review at bit.ly/4zmQfzR. Rather than embracing an opportunity to restore trust and confidence, the Board has chosen not to engage constructively with employees on these critical issues and instead continue its incorrect narrative of its failure to provide timely, accurate data for the JIC.

In Solidarity,

Your CEA Joint Insurance Committee

Phil Hayes, Chair (CEA Office)

Teri Mullins (CEA Office)

Janaya Foster (Berwick K–8)

Dwayne Zimmerman (Elem. Music)

Tai Hayden (CEA Office)

The CEA Master Agreement is set to expire in fewer than 678 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/2026/10/Grievance-261012-09.pdf>

Open Enrollment Deadline to Enroll: October 23 — It's Passive This Year!

1. If you want to make changes to your benefit elections and/or you want to elect an FSA, then you must complete Open Enrollment as usual.
2. If not, your current benefit elections will roll over for 2027.

Make sure you can log on to ESS PRIOR to the start of Open Enrollment. Benefit choices made during Open Enrollment will be effective Jan. 1, 2027.

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 FSA elections or benefit changes 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. If you are meeting with an Enrollment Counselor, you must have your ESS Username and Password, a telephone, and a computer or smart phone on which to complete your enrollment.
3. 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. Be on the lookout for communication from Dependents Audit, 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. 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

Know the Contract: Covering a Colleague's Class

Sometimes teachers are absent from the classroom and there is no sub to teach that day. Section 209.04 of our contract addresses this situation.

In elementary schools, when a member of the bargaining unit is absent for one half a school day or more and no substitute is available, the absent teacher's assignment shall be divided among the teaching staff. Divided students remain with the receiving teacher.

In middle and high schools, the assignment shall be rotated among the teaching staff. Middle and high school teachers can be assigned to cover the class of an absent colleague during their planning period or their duty period. Only coverage during a teachers' conference period is paid.

Your Union has been receiving reports of administrators "thinking outside of the box" and coming up with new and innovative ways to violate the Master Agreement with regards to class coverage, with offers of extra money. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Elementary administrators assigning an entire class to one teacher instead of dividing it up among the teaching staff.
- MS/HS administrators assigning a teacher to supervise multiple classes that have been combined into a "super class" during their conference or duty period.
- MS/HS administrators dividing students up and assigning them to MS/HS teachers during one of their five instructional sections instead of their conference or duty period.

If your administrator asks or assigns you class coverage in violation of the *Master Agreement*, please speak with your Faculty Representative or call the CEA Office immediately at (614) 253-4731.

United Way

When you give to United Way, you're joining a movement to set our children and the entire community on a path to success for generations to come. Your generous contribution stays here, in the place you call home. With our long history as a trusted convener, United Way is uniquely positioned to bring together educators, corporations, non-profits and government entities, as well as donors and volunteers like you, to ensure every child has the resources and opportunities necessary to succeed in school and life. Join us in our vision for a stronger, more equitable community and give today. The campaign ends Friday, Oct. 30.



Spring 2027 Fee Waivers

The application period runs from **Oct. 26–Nov. 12, 2026, closing at 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. Log in at bit.ly/4jhgJM3 to complete the application. 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.

Go to bit.ly/4y2IOgd for assistance with frequently asked questions, links to each of the universities, priority status, and documentation guidelines. Call (614) 365-5039 or email feewaivers@columbus.k12.oh.us if you need assistance.

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 was 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–5: No more than 27 students each
- 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 number of pupil stations. For instance, assigning 35 students to a computer class with 30 computers would be a violation of the contract.

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.

2026 Mini Grant Application Window is Open!

The application window will close at 4:30 p.m. on Oct. 19, 2026, to align with the first Records Day of the year. To apply for this year's CEA Foundation Mini Grants, make sure to sign in to your personal Google Drive and go to 2026 Mini Grant Application (bit.ly/46TRDhq).

There have been significant changes to the Mini Grants:

- There will be only two categories this year, both with grants eligible up to \$500. One of the grant categories will continue to be for new educators only, the other will be for everyone else, encompassing all categories. It works best to complete the application on a Chromebook, laptop, or desktop.
- ALL Mini Grant winners will be asked to fill out a W-9 form.

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 bit.ly/4z1VZyW 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.

Know Your Contract: Extended Time Pay Process Now Digital

In August of 2025, CEA members voted to ratify the *2025–2028 CEA Master Agreement* with a number of new provisions. One of them was the District's intent to roll out a fully digitized process for CEA members to submit and track payments for extended time for the 2026–2027 school year. Your Union is pleased to announce that beginning October 1, the District will officially transition to this system.

The extended time form has officially transitioned to a fully digital workflow in SCView.

Link <https://auth.myscview.com/Identity/Account/Login>

This solution eliminates paper forms, simplifies submissions, and allows CEA members to follow the form through the various approval processes.

Go to: <https://www.ceahio.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/SOP-Extended-Time-Employee-3.pdf> to access the Standard Operating Procedure Instructions for SCView.

To view a video of how to use SCView, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8joLe2-jXc>.

If you have any questions or need assistance submitting a form, please reach out by emailing scview@columbus.k12.oh.us

Join the New Black Affinity Group!

The Minority Involvement Program is excited to announce the Black Affinity Group. This group was created to

- Create a safe and supportive space for BIPOC educators
- Foster authentic community, connection, and healing through shared lived experiences
- Increase engagement and leadership within local and state level association activities
- Serve as a pathway for potential members to remain active the organization

The vision is to build a powerful, connected community of Black educators within our union who are supported, valued, and empowered to lead.

The vision is to support all BIPOC educators as well. All CEA members are invited to join.

Note: The Black Affinity Group is hosting its first event at Flavor 91 Bistro. Art Under Glass will happen on Tuesday Oct. 20, from 4:30–6 p.m. Come meet other educators of color and start making connections. Craft is free, food and drinks available for purchase. *RSVP* using link <https://form.jotform.com/262715981788172>. See the flyer for the event on page 5.



Scan to Join!

LA Attendance

One of the many duties of Faculty Representatives is to attend the CEA Legislative Assembly (LA). Held on the first Thursday of nearly every month of the school year, the LA is the policy-making body of your Association. Your elected Faculty Representatives receive vital updates from CEA Officers and Staff and vote on important issues affecting your Association. Any CEA member is welcome to attend the LA. The following is a list of buildings/units that were represented at the Oct. 1 Legislative Assembly:

17th Avenue Service Center, Alpine ES, Arts Impact MS, Avalon ES, Avondale ES, Beatty Park ES, Beechcroft HS, Berwick Alternative ES, Binns ES, Briggs HS, Burroughs ES, CAHS, Cassidy ES, CEA Office, Cedarwood ES, Centennial HS, Climate & Culture Systems Consultants and PBIS Coordinators, Clinton ES, Colerain ES, Columbus Africentric EC MS, Columbus City Prep. School for Girls, Columbus Downtown HS, Columbus Gifted Academy, Columbus International HS, Como ES, Devonshire ES, Dominion MS, Duxberry Park ES, Eakin ES, East HS, East Linden ES, Eastgate ES, Easthaven ES, Eastmoor Academy HS, ECE @ Central Enrollment, École Kenwood, Elementary Art, Elementary Music, Fairmoor ES, Forest Park ES, Ft. Hayes Arts & Academic HS, Gables ES, Georgian Heights ES, Hubbard ES, Independence HS, Indian Springs ES, Indianola Informal K–8, Innis ES, Johnson Park MS, Leawood ES, Liberty ES, Lincoln Park ES, Lindbergh ES, Linden STEM Academy, Linden-McKinley STEM Academy, Livingston ES, Maize ES, Marion-Franklin HS, Medina MS, Mifflin HS, Mifflin MS, North Linden ES, Northgate Intermediate ES, Northland HS, Northtowne ES, Nurses, Oakmont ES, Olde Orchard ES, OT/PT, Parkmoor ES, Parsons ES, Psychologists, Ridgeview MS, School Counselors, Scottwood ES, Sherwood MS, Siebert ES, Social Workers, Southland, Southwood ES, Special Ed. TOSAs, Speech & Language, Student Support Center, Sullivan ES, Trevitt ES, Valley Forge ES, Valleyview ES, Wedgewood MS, Weinland Park ES, West Broad ES, West HS, Westmoor MS, Whetstone HS, Windsor STEM Academy, Winterset ES, Woodward Park MS, World Language MS, and Yorktown MS.

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

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 has been approved for Catastrophic Leave and are in need of donated days: **Dawn Berenzweig, Displaced;** and **Jennifer Burley, Displaced.** 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.

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.

Columbus Teachers Endorse:

- **Governor/Lt. Governor:** . . . **Dr. Amy Acton (D)/David Pepper (D)**
- **U.S. Senate:** **Sherrod Brown (D)**
- **U.S. House 3:** **Joyce Beatty (D)**
- **Attorney General:** **John Kulewicz (D)**
- **Treasurer of State:**. **Jay Edwards (R)**
- **Secretary of State:** **Allison Russo (D)**
- **Auditor of State:** **Annette Blackwell (D)**
- **Associate Justice:** **Jennifer Brunner (D)**
- **Associate Justice:** **Marilyn Zayas (D)**

- **Ohio House District 1:** **Dontavius Jarrells (D)**
- **Ohio House District 2:**. **Charity Martin-King (D)**
- **Ohio House District 3:**. **Ismail Mohammed (D)**
- **Ohio House District 4:**. **Beryl Piccolantonio (D)**
- **Ohio House District 5:**. **Meredith Lawson-Rowe (D)**
- **Ohio House District 6:**. **Christine Cockley (D)**
- **Ohio House District 8:**. **Anita Somani (D)**
- **Ohio House District 9:**. **Munira Abdullahi (D)**
- **Ohio House District 10:** **Mark Sigrist (D)**
- **Ohio Senate District 3:** **Stacie Baker (D)**
- **Ohio Senate District 15:**. . . . **Latyna Humphrey (D)**
- **Ohio Senate District 25:** . . . **Bill DeMora (D)**

- **Judge of the Court of Appeals 10th District:**. **Terri Jamison (D)**
- **Judge of the Court of Appeals 10th District:**. **Michael C. Mentel (D)**
- **Judge of the Court of Common Pleas (General Division):** **Carl Aveni (D)**
- **Judge of the Court of Common Pleas (General Division):** **Andy Miller (D)**
- **Judge of the Court of Common Pleas (General Division):** **David Young (D)**
- **Judge of the Court of Common Pleas (General Division):** **Chris Brown (D)**
- **Judge of the Court of Common Pleas (Domestic Relations Division):** **Kelly Gabrielle Boller (D)**
- **Judge of the Court of Common Pleas (Domestic Relations Division):** **Lasheyl N. Stroud (D)**
- **Judge of the Court of Common Pleas (Probate):** **Chris Junga (R)**
- **County Auditor:**. **Michael Stinziano (D)**



CEA Endorsed Issues:

- #3** To require voters to present photo identification in order to vote: Oppose
- #5** Bexley City School District Proposed Bond Issue & Income Tax: Support
Delaware Area Career Center Proposed Tax Levy (Renewal & Decrease): Support
Pickerington Local School District Proposed Income Tax Increase: Support
- #6** South-Western City School District Proposed Bond Issue: Support
- #7** Upper Arlington City School District Proposed Tax Levy & Bond Issue: Support
- #8** Proposed Columbus Charter Amendment (By Petition): This proposed amendment would limit the ability to vote for candidates for Columbus City Council to only those electors living within the districts that those candidates seek to represent. (Our City Our Say)
- #9** Proposed Columbus Charter Amendment (By Council) This proposed amendment would limit the ability to vote for candidates for Columbus City Council to only those electors living within the districts that those candidates seek to represent. The amendment adds two (2) at-large council representatives to be elected in 2027, and an additional two (2) at-large council representatives to be elected in 2029. All at-large council representatives will be elected for four (4) year terms. The amendment includes provisions for transitioning from the current nine (9) member Council to an eleven (11) member Council and then subsequently to a thirteen (13) member Council, allowing for the ongoing staggering of terms.

Vote Tuesday, Nov. 3

IN-PERSON ABSENTEE VOTING, Franklin County Board of Elections
1700 Morse Road, Columbus, Ohio 43229
DATES AND HOURS (subject to change)

EARLY VOTING DATES AND HOURS

November 3, 2026 - General Election	
October 6–9 (Weekdays Only Tuesday–Friday)	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
October 12–16 (Weekdays Only - Monday–Friday)	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Weekday Voting and Saturday Voting	
October 19–23 (Weekdays Only - Monday–Friday)	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Saturday, October 24	8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Fourth and FINAL Week of Early Voting - Extended Weekday Hours & Weekend	
Monday, October 26	7:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday, October 27 (Last Day to Request Absentee Ballots)	7:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Oct. 28–Friday, Oct. 30	7:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, October 31	8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Sunday, November 1 - Final Day of Early Voting	1 – 5 p.m.
Ohio law now requires all absentee ballots be received by 7:30 p.m. on Election Day. Your absentee ballot MUST be received no later than 7:30 p.m. on Election Day.	

Black Affinity Group Meet-up

Art Under Glass

Come and meet other educators of color and
join us for a fun craft

October 20, 2026

4:30-6:00pm

Flavor 91 Bistro

5186 E Main St. Whitehall, OH
43213



SPRING 2027 FEE WAIVERS

Application Window

OCTOBER 26, 2026 - NOVEMBER 12, 2026

*APPLICATIONS MUST BE
SUBMITTED BY 11:59 P.M.
ON NOVEMBER 12, 2026.*

HAVE YOUR COLLEGE ID
NUMBER READY.
UPLOAD YOUR PDF
DOCUMENTATION WITH
YOUR APPLICATION.
CHECK YOUR CCS EMAIL
REGULARLY.

APPLY
THROUGH
CCSDAS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE
VISIT OUR FEE WAIVER WEBPAGE FOR
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
REGARDING THE FEE WAIVER
PROCESS, LINKS TO EACH OF THE
UNIVERSITIES, PRIORITY STATUS
GUIDELINES, AND DOCUMENTATION
GUIDELINES.

Professional Learning and Licensure



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