ceaVOICE™

See CEA's Full Slate of Endorsed Candidates for the Nov. 3 Election on Page 4

John Coneglio
President

www.ceaohio.org

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Help Get Out The Vote!

Every year, you hear the same thing around election day, that this is "the most important election ever." This year, more so now than ever—we have an important opportunity to elect pro-public education candidates up and down the ballot in federal, state and local races. The rewards of winning are palpable, but the damage that could be done by losing is incalculable.



The attacks by the Republican candidate for governor are particularly concerning and create an existential threat to our careers and our families' livelihoods. "There should be no public teacher employee unions and no special protection for public employee teachers" and that unions for local teachers and federal workers "shouldn't exist at all."

Instead of our usual phone banking or canvassing for candidates, we will be taking a different approach to this election.

Your Union will be holding a sit-down Get Out The Vote event at the Ohio Education Association building (225 E. Broad St.) from 3:30–6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 21. We will be sending postcards to OEA members in Franklin County.

The postcards will feature CEA and OEA-endorsed candidates, and volunteers are needed to write a brief, personalized member-to-member message on the postcards to encourage other OEA members to make sure their voice is heard this election day. *RSVP* at **https://bit.ly/ceagotv1021**. Refreshments will be provided.

Be A Poll Worker

Recently, your Union signed a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the district regarding members being poll workers for the General Election on Tuesday, Nov. 3. Members may use their personal leave to work the polls on Election Day. However, members will still be required to make up the half-day of Professional Development scheduled on Nov. 3 prior to the end of the 2026–2027 school year. For more information, consult the LOA at **https://bit.ly/loaceapoll**.



Potential Changes To ES, K–8, 3–8 Start and End Times

On Wednesday, Oct. 14., your Union was informed by the administration that the district is considering changes to the start and end times for any school with elementary grade levels (inclusive of K–8 and 3–8 schools) for the 2027–2028 school year.

Under Section 204.04 of the *CEA Master Agreement*, the administration has the right to change the start and end times of the school day. The contract requires notification to teachers of a change of school day start and end times, for the following school year, to be made prior to the beginning of the Article 211 process. Teachers who are impacted by this change may use this change as reason to request a voluntary staff reduction ahead of the 211 process in the spring.

Currently, CEA members work from 8:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. at those schools. The administration's proposal would move the start time and end time 20 minutes, changing members' start time to 8:35 a.m. and their end time to 4:05 p.m. The district explained that late buses are driving this potential change. Additionally, the district let us know that based on their calculations, moving the start and end times for ES would save the district $1.6 million, which could count towards the $50 million in cuts.

This item was scheduled for discussion at the CCS Joint Committee meeting on Thursday, Oct. 15. Note: In order to make a change to the start and end times, a vote of the Board is required. Currently your Union does not have a timeline of when a Board vote would be scheduled.

Special Fall CEA Election

The position of Governor for District 7 was won by acclamation by Mary Hoffman (Buckeye MS) to fulfill the unexpired term. Due to a vacancy on the CEA Board of Governors, there will be a Fall Special Election for one High School Governor At-Large. The following CEA members have submitted their declaration forms for the position:

Clarence Daniels, Jr. (Mifflin HS)
Chris Monteiro (Northland HS)
Chris Weyand (Ft. Hayes Arts & Academic HS)

Campaigning is underway and ends Nov. 4, 2026. Ballots will arrive in buildings the week of Oct. 19, 2026. Voting will begin Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2026, and ends Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2026. Ballots will be collected and tallied by the Election Committee on Thursday, Nov. 5, 2026. Call Brittany Pierce, CEA Election Co-Chair, at (440) 225-2631 or Christy Burchfield, CEA Election Co-Chair at (614) 886-2807 with any questions.

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-eligi-

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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.ceaohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/Grievance-261019-10.pdf**

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ble 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 *CEA 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 closes THIS WEEK!

The CEA Foundation Mini Grant 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

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.

Please reach out to ceaminigrants@gmail.com for all Mini Grant questions and communications.

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.

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!

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.

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**.

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.

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**.

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Contact us today and allow our experience to work for you.

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)

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)**

TBS
Teachers for Better Schools

- **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): . . Kelley 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.

EARLY VOTING DATES AND HOURS

November 3, 2026 - General Election

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