



Dear OCPS Educator,

Happy CTA Solidarity Day! Our members are wearing red today as a visible sign of our solidarity and they are in conversations across the district to share why they are Union members. I want to invite you to join your Union and join our collective efforts to improve our profession. While we bargain for all 14,000 members of our bargaining unit, paying to be a member of your Union has specific benefits and I'll mention a few below. I'm a 23 year OCPS art teacher from Howard Middle School and serving as the CTA President. I believe in the power of collective efforts because I've seen what can be accomplished by standing together. There are currently billionaires funding Union Busting campaigns in Florida because they know the potential of this collective power and that we are advocates for strong public education, for teachers who are treated well, and for students who deserve the best. These people don't want you to join your Union because they know the difference we could make if you do.



As you know, our union has been bargaining for the past two months. We are pushing the district to pay us real percentages instead of a flat amount. The district proposal was 9% to the budget line item for raises. This wouldn't be a 9% increase for everyone. For some people it ends up being much less than that. Their proposal also came with strings attached - an increase to your insurance costs. Our finance expert from AFT talks about this in our recent Town Hall (this was recorded and is available to members on our Member Facebook Group). We have also proposed to increase the Retention Supplement to help address wage compression and inflation, make it permanent, and pay it across each paycheck instead of at one time.

We've proposed other things like paying our hourly rate for PD outside the duty day instead of \$25/hour, recognizing Juneteenth as a holiday, Virtual Workdays on non-student contact days, and addressing the enormous maintenance issues across the district. All of these things are easier to fight for with more of our bargaining unit contributing to our collective efforts. We invite you to join us to strengthen our position at the bargaining table. The district walked away from the bargaining table and declared impasse because we would not agree to their significant increases to insurance and we demanded they pay individual percentages. You can learn more about the impasse process in the Town Hall video.

As you probably know, in order to keep our contract we need to have 60% Membership Density. We need another 960 members to be safely above this requirement. Please consider doing your part to join your Union and help ensure our Contract doesn't go away. This has happened in other states and their contracts were replaced with 2 or 3 pages. In districts where there is no contract teachers sit with their students during lunch, are not limited to specific duty day times for example if a faculty meeting goes until 5pm, have multiple evening duties throughout the year, have required lesson plan templates, pay for their substitutes, and have no grievance process.

Many of these districts say things like, "You don't need a union. Trust us, we'll have your back." You and I know that is laughable. In this profession, a Union is your best chance of making things better and we need a Union to be in our corner in the tough times. One thing to consider is that if we don't reach 60% and our contract disappears, all of the district's proposals at the bargaining table wouldn't be proposals. They would simply be implemented because there wouldn't be a bargaining table. They would no longer have to negotiate. You wouldn't ever vote to ratify anything, because you would have no voice in the matter.

Members of our Union are automatic members of FEA, AFT, NEA, and the AFL-CIO and because of this receive benefits from each of these affiliates. Our members also receive representation and legal protection in the event of an unfair accusation causing your job or certification to be at risk.

If you have questions about membership I invite you to talk with a member at your school/worksite or call/email the CTA office at orangecta@gmail.com or 407-298-0756. You can also see some of our other benefits at www.orangecta.com and click "Join Here". It is a fast and easy process to join and begin receiving the many benefits of membership and be part of what will make our Union even stronger.

Join today at www.tinyurl.com/joinmyunion

In Solidarity,
Clinton McCracken



Orange CTA President

