

# OUR UNION VOICE

UNITING                      EMPOWERING                      ADVOCATING

Digital Version: [OrangeCTA.com](http://OrangeCTA.com)

April 21 , 2025

**READ TIME: 12 MINUTES. VIDEO VERSION [HERE](#).****TOO LONG; DIDN'T READ? DON'T MISS THE ITEMS IN RED!****PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:**

I hope you're doing well. The next few weeks are a really critical time for our Union. Ballots were mailed by the Public Employee Relations Commission (PERC) April 16 for the recertification election, and are due back by May 14. Many have already received them and mailed them back!

Without any notice to CTA or FEA, PERC decided to change the rules in the middle of the game and NOT send a postage paid return envelope. You will need to stamp your ballot to be sent to Tallahassee. Why would they do this, when the past practice for nearly 50 years has been to include postage? TO SILENCE YOU. The cost of postage would have been shared by the district and CTA so there is no other reason to remove this other than to drive down the turnout. **YOU can ruin this UNION BUSTING attempt by simply paying for a stamp.** Our Union and our Contract are worth that cost. CTA and ARs can't provide stamps to you because that could be seen as interference in the election but you're welcome to work together to get stamps, just don't use district email resources in this process.



Why is the turnout so important? Since we are heading into bargaining, we want to send a strong message to the district that our bargaining unit is **united!** **Let's see which school gets the highest percentage of voting participation!**

**EMAIL LAWMAKERS TO ASK THEM TO PRIORITIZE PUBLIC ED FUNDING**

**Neither of the current budgets proposed by the House or Senate add any significant funding. Contact legislators [HERE](#) and urge them to prioritize public education in the state budget.**

**MAY 1 DAY OF ACTION**

Don't miss out on this important chance to let your voice be heard in multiple ways and have some fun at the same time! Join us at RockPit Brewing for a drink and action. We will have multiple QR codes for everyone to participate in some Good Trouble! See more info below under Events.

**TEACHER APPRECIATION GIFT**

CTA Teacher Appreciation gifts are on their way to schools! While some members may receive theirs a bit early, our goal is to make sure everyone has their gift in hand by Teacher Appreciation Week. If you haven't received your gift by May 2nd, please reach out to us at [orangecta@gmail.com](mailto:orangecta@gmail.com).

**Call the CTA office if you need us! We are here to help you.**

We are here for you when you need someone in your corner. Please be sure to call us at 407-298-0756 or email us at [orangecta@gmail.com](mailto:orangecta@gmail.com) if you have any questions or need union support. Together, we can make a difference!

**In Solidarity,**

**Clinton McCracken, CTA President**

**WEAR BLUE FOR YOU!**  
**TUESDAYS APRIL 22, 29 AND MAY 6**  
*We are the union! let's all ask our colleagues to vote!*  
**CTA RECERTIFICATION ELECTION APRIL 16-MAY 14**

# CTA RECERTIFICATION PERC ELECTION

**APRIL 16  
THRU  
MAY 14,  
2025**

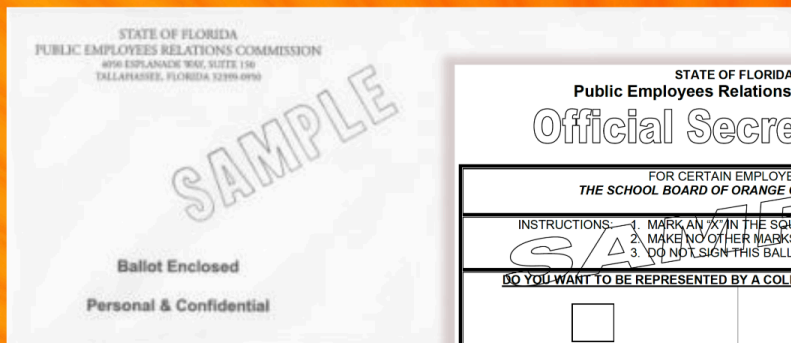
- ✓ **BALLOTS WILL BE MAILED TO HOME ADDRESSES APRIL 16**
- ✓ **BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MAY 14 (NOT POSTMARKED)**
- ✓ **BALLOT COUNT TO KEEP CTA AND YOUR CONTRACT WILL BE ON MAY 14**



[WWW.ORANGECTA.COM](http://WWW.ORANGECTA.COM)

**WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEMBERS OF THE BARGAINING UNIT TO VOTE!**

**YES! LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!**  
**A YES VOTE MEANS CTA REMAINS THE BARGAINING AGENT AND WE KEEP OUR CONTRACT.**



STATE OF FLORIDA Public Employees Relations Commission Official Secret Ballot	
FOR CERTAIN EMPLOYEES OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA	
INSTRUCTIONS: 1. MARK AN 'X' IN THE SQUARE OF YOUR CHOICE. 2. MAKE NO OTHER MARKS ON THIS BALLOT. 3. DO NOT SIGN THIS BALLOT.	
<b>DO YOU WANT TO BE REPRESENTED BY A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGENT?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes – Orange County Classroom Teachers Association, Inc.	No



**BALLOTS SHOULD BEGIN ARRIVING AT YOUR HOME ADDRESS BY APRIL 18**  
**CALL CTA (407-298-0756) IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE YOUR BALLOT**



## **BARGAINING**

Your voice matters, and we need your input as we prepare for the next round of contract negotiations. Based on your feedback from the bargaining suggestion form, and the feedback from the Bargaining Committee and ARs, we've identified several specific areas of the contract that the Bargaining Team could focus on during the upcoming negotiations. Please note that this is not a complete list of priorities. **Click [HERE](#) to complete the bargaining survey. The school with the highest survey percentage gets a catered lunch!**

**The Bargaining Committee will be meeting April 23 at 5:00. We will be providing updates on where we are in the process, including bargaining dates. If you are part of the bargaining committee (ARs, Sub-Groups, and Liaisons) please check your email for the registration link.**

## **CONTRACT REMINDERS**

**April 30 - FIFTH WEDNESDAY:** April 30 is the fifth Wednesday of the month, so teachers have uninterrupted planning time after the student day ends. Administrators cannot schedule meetings, PLCs, or other activities during this time. *"During the contract year, whenever a fifth Wednesday of the month falls on a duty day, teachers will receive an uninterrupted planning period after student contact time. No meetings, workshops or professional development will be scheduled during this time."* - Article XIV.V (P. 67)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**MAY 1 DAY OF ACTION MEETUP (CTA/OESPA):** Stop by RockPit Brewing for a drink and "Action Tables" co-sponsored by both CTA and our sister union for support professionals, OESPA. We will have multiple QR codes at our tables where you can scan and engage in sending emails about prioritizing public ed funding, school board and district concerns, national concerns, and most importantly, a final push to complete our very short **BARGAINING SURVEY** and a reminder to **VOTE** in the recertification election. There are 1,000 Day of Action events being coordinated across the country for May 1, "International Workers Day". Central Florida Jobs with Justice will join us for our social/action event! RSVP [HERE](#).

**VOYAGE RETIREMENT DROP SEMINAR:** Nearing the decision to join DROP? Seeking guidance on what DROP can do for you? Want to create a tailored retirement strategy? **Join Voyage Retirement for an in-depth look at the Deferred Retirement Option Program on April 30th at 5:00 pm. RSVP [HERE](#).**

**PUERTO RICAN PARADE:** **Join CTA in the Puerto Rican Parade this Saturday, April 26! RSVP [HERE](#).**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:** The current budget proposals would keep Florida at the bottom of the nation in average teacher pay. This is a direct cause of the teacher shortage which leads to ever-increasing class sizes. **Contact legislators and ask them to prioritize public ed funding.**

**POWER HOUR:** Every Tuesday during the legislative session, 5:30-6:30 PM YOU can help make a difference in the legislative process that affects us in this career. Hear a brief legislative weekly update and take collective action while on the zoom. Registration is required at <http://www.feaweb.org/powerhour>.

**PEOPLEONE HEALTH OP-ED:** When teachers are supported, students thrive. CTA President Clinton McCracken and PeopleOne Health CEO Jordan Taradash co-authored [this Op-Ed](#) about burnout, stress, and health challenges educators face every day. If we want strong schools, we need to invest in the people who make them work — both with pay, and also with real support for their well-being. See Op-Ed below.

**RETIRING SOON?:** Continue your union membership by joining ORANGE CTA/OESPA RETIRED. Retired Membership costs \$66/yr for Instructional, \$52/yr for ESP, and \$500 for a lifetime membership. Continuing in this group allows you to keep discounts on life, homeowners, and car insurance. Included in membership: Information about issues that concern you as a retiree, continue to enjoy benefits and discounts as a member of NEA, AFT, and FEA, monthly meetings at the CTA office include informative speakers, pot-luck lunches, and scheduled field trips! To join, contact [ctaoespamember@gmail.com](mailto:ctaoespamember@gmail.com) for an application.

**TEACHERS’ BILL OF RIGHTS:** The Florida Teachers’ Bill of Rights, established in 2023 under Chapter 1015 of the Florida Statutes, delineates specific rights for educators to enhance their professional autonomy and support within the educational system. The key provisions include the right to employment, the right to continuing education, the right to control the classroom, and the right to direct classroom instruction. These rights are designed to empower teachers, affirming their professional judgment and providing protections that support their role in fostering student success. Click [HERE](#) to read the Teacher Bill of Rights.

**CONGRATS!:** CTA Vice President Maira Rivera has been appointed to the executive board of the AFT Latino Caucus. CTA President Clinton McCracken also sits on the AFT LGBTQ+ Task Force. These appointments give our local and our members an important opportunity to expand our voices within this national affiliate. Last month Clinton was also appointed to the Executive Board of the Florida AFL-CIO as a District Vice President and has also been appointed to the AFT Teachers Program and Policy Council.

**NEW TITLE - CTA SPECIALIST:** We have renamed our Field Reps as “CTA Support/Organizing Specialists”, or “CTA Specialist” as a shortened version. People often referred to their “Rep” when sometimes talking about the Field Rep and sometimes when talking about Association Rep. We currently have three CTA Specialists so schools have begun to be divided among them with the remaining changes occurring over the summer.

**LCLAA KNOW YOUR RIGHTS CARDS:** Click [HERE](#) for Know Your Rights cards created by the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement.

**NEA MEMBER-EXCLUSIVE SWEEPSTAKES:** Prizes: \$300, \$600 & \$1,000 Gift Cards (9 winners) Being a member has its perks! Enter for a chance to win our giveaway drawings happening throughout the year. The next drawing is coming up in May—and NEA members have a chance to win a \$600 gift card! Don’t miss out. [Enter Now](#)

**IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...**

**SCHOOL/WORKSITE BARGAINING LIAISONS:** Last year, we expanded the bargaining process and added a Bargaining Committee. This is a separate group from the Bargaining Team, but both are critical. The Bargaining Team is a small group of 11 members who go to the table during negotiations. The Bargaining Committee is composed of ARs, representatives from several subgroups in our unit, and a new position called **Bargaining Liaisons**. We have invited each school to have a Bargaining Liaison to help provide input and help communicate bargaining updates with the AR at your school. This ensures all members know what is happening in the bargaining process and have opportunities to let their voices be heard. We are more likely to succeed in bargaining when members are engaged in the process. [Click HERE to volunteer to be the Bargaining Liaison for your school!](#)

**CTA SOCIAL MEDIA:** [Click](#) to join the CTA Members FB group (the only official CTA FB Group). “Like” CTA’s public FB Page [HERE](#) to see posts in your feed. Follow Instagram, Threads, Bluesky @orangecta.

CTA MEMBER BENEFITS - CLICK BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION			
<a href="#">NEA MEMBER BENEFITS</a>	<a href="#">CTA OPTIONAL BENEFITS</a>	<a href="#">UNION PLUS</a>	<a href="#">VOYAGE RETIREMENT SOLUTIONS</a>
<a href="#">AFT MEMBER BENEFITS</a>	<a href="#">WASHINGTON NATIONAL</a>	<a href="#">UNION FIRST</a>	<a href="#">SUNCOAST CREDIT UNION</a>
<a href="#">NATIONAL UNIVERSITY</a>	<a href="#">NTA LIFE</a>	<a href="#">TICKETS AT WORK</a>	<a href="#">CREATIVE BENEFITS</a>
<a href="#">BMG MONEY</a>	<a href="#">FACEBOOK MEMBERS GROUP</a>	<a href="#">LIBERTY MUTUAL</a>	<a href="#">HOTEL ENGINE</a>

**FREE CTA MEMBER T-SHIRT:** Members click [HERE](#) to order your T-Shirt if you haven’t yet received one.

The Contract, Lesson Plan Agreement, MOUs, Evaluation Info, Supplement Handbook and more are available [HERE](#).  
Our ongoing Bargaining Suggestion Form can be accessed [HERE](#).





# Teacher burnout real — time to care for caregivers

As president of the Orange County Classroom Teachers Association, representing nearly 14,000 Orange County educators, and CEO of a primary care company partnering with school districts across Florida, we see firsthand the challenges facing our region's educators and school leaders.

Teacher well-being and retention are two sides of the same coin — inseparable, interdependent, and essential for school success. When educators feel supported physically, emotionally, and mentally, they're more likely to thrive and shape the future of learning.

Yet today's reality tells a different story. Post-pandemic burnout continues to take a toll, evident in rising student absenteeism and increasing teacher departures. Staffing shortages add strain, and other pressures — stagnant pay, administrative shifts, uncertainty about public education, student misconduct, and safety concerns — further compound the issue.

It's no surprise 69% of HR leaders cite teacher burnout as their biggest challenge. If we want a sustainable future for Florida's education system, we must invest in teacher well-being as a strategic priority.

Teaching is one of the most stressful jobs in the country. Educators are more than twice as likely to experience chronic stress as other working adults, and this widespread burnout affects more than job satisfaction — it takes a serious toll on health.

A recent study reveals that every teacher surveyed reported high stress levels; 68% experienced anxiety, and nearly a quarter battled depression. Burnout, the study found, is progressive — leading to fatigue, irritability, and chronic ailments such as migraines, ulcers, and back pain.

Burned-out teachers are more likely to leave, and those who stay may struggle to bring their best selves to the classroom. If we ignore this crisis, we jeopardize educator health and the future of our schools.

Keeping great teachers isn't just about filling classrooms — it's about ensuring educators feel healthy, supported and able to do the job they love without burning out.

The crisis is even worse in Title I schools like ours, where turnover is 50% higher than in other schools. It disrupts learning, fractures communities, and puts enormous financial strain on districts — replacing one teacher can cost up to 150% of their salary.

If we want great teachers to stay, we must take care of them — not just with pay increases, but with meaningful support for their well-being. With health-care costs rising faster than wages, benefits matter more than ever.



**Clinton McCracken**



**Jordan Taradash**

We hear it constantly — our teachers love what they do, but they're exhausted. They're worried about their health, stress, and whether they can afford to get care. They're not asking for luxuries. They just want to care for themselves the same way they care for their students.

Across the country, rising health-care premiums have made basic care unaffordable and specialized care out of reach for many. In a state where teacher pay ranks among the lowest, this financial strain can lead to delayed treatment, untreated health issues, and turnover driven by the pursuit of better benefits.

To help combat these challenges, OCPs, with the support of the unions, launched a wellness-centered program offering free primary care and mental health services through PeopleOne Health. These services are designed specifically for educators, with convenient locations, extended hours, and care teams who understand the demands of the school environment.

By removing financial and logistical barriers, the program encourages teachers to seek care early — before minor concerns become major setbacks. Early indicators point to reduced absenteeism, improved morale and stronger retention. Educators report feeling more valued and more connected to their care teams.

At a time when education is facing significant pressure, this partnership serves as a model for how districts can invest in teacher health and well-being — keeping more educators healthy, supported, and in the classroom.

Teachers are among our greatest assets in building strong, healthy communities. Investing in their well-being isn't a luxury — it's a necessity.

Every day, we see teachers pushed to the brink — overworked, under-supported, and burned out. Now is the time to implement programs that equip educators with the mental and physical resilience needed to thrive, even in difficult times.

Districts can't do this alone. It requires collaboration among unions, school leaders, benefits providers, and healthcare partners. Together, we must ensure wellness programs are integrated, accessible, and well-promoted — removing financial barriers and making care part of a long-term retention strategy.

The payoff? Lower turnover, stronger schools and an environment where both teachers and students can thrive.

*Clinton McCracken is president of the Orange County Classroom Teachers Association and an art teacher. Jordan Taradash is CEO of PeopleOne Health.*



**STOP BY ROCKPIT BREWING  
FOR A DRINK AND "ACTION  
TABLES" CO-SPONSORED BY  
BOTH CTA AND OUR SISTER  
UNION FOR SUPPORT  
PROFESSIONALS, OESPA.**



**THURSDAY  
MAY 1, 2025  
3PM-6PM**

**JOIN CTA, OESPA, AND CFJWJ AT**



**ROCKPIT  
BREWING &  
DISTILLING**

**10 W ILLIANA ST,  
ORLANDO, FL 32806**



We will have multiple QR codes at our tables where you can scan and engage in sending emails about prioritizing public ed funding, school board and district concerns, national concerns, and most importantly, a final push to complete our very short BARGAINING SURVEY and a reminder to VOTE in the recertification election.

*There are 1,000 day of action events being coordinated across the country for May 1, "International Workers Day". Central Florida Jobs with Justice will join us for our social/action event!*



**FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL  
ORANGECTA@GMAIL.COM**



**JOIN OCCTA FOR THE  
9TH CENTRAL FLORIDA 2025**



**PUERTO RICAN PARADE**



**JOIN  
US!**



**SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025  
DOWNTOWN ORLANDO  
11:00 AM TO 3:00 PM**







## Join the 30-Day Healthy Weight Challenge



**Sign up now! The challenge begins on April 1st!**

Maximize your membership benefits with the 30-Day Healthy Weight Challenge and My Healthy Weight community. Whether you're looking to lose, gain, or maintain weight, we're here every step of the way!

**What to Expect:**

- ✓ Science-backed weight management strategies
- ✓ Whole foods, targeted supplements & lifestyle changes
- ✓ Expert support & a motivating community
- ✓ 100% FREE with your PeopleOne Health membership!

DID YOU  
**KNOW?**

**42% of Americans**  
are classified as  
obese

☛ Scan to Join:



☛ Click to Join:

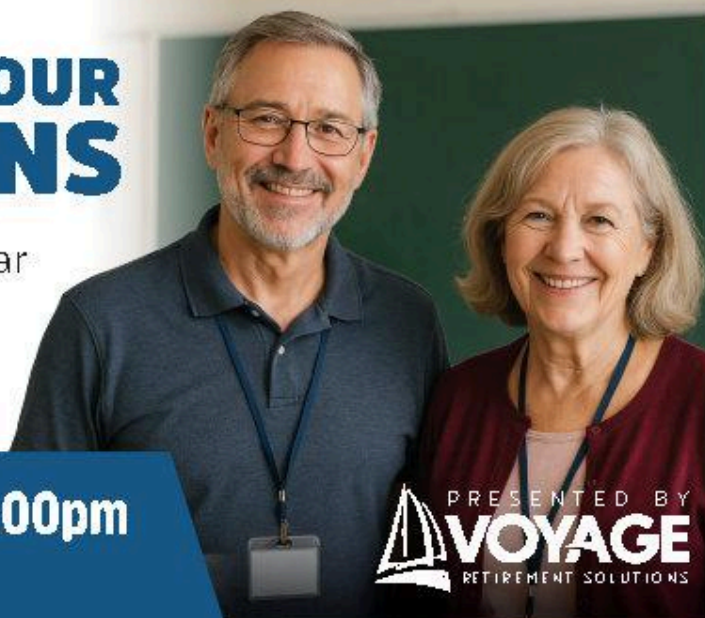


**Not a member yet?** Enroll in your free, employer-sponsored membership today, and sign up for the challenge starting April 1st. Enroll here: [peopleonehealth.com/members](https://peopleonehealth.com/members)



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR DROP OPTIONS

Join us for an in-depth seminar  
on the Deferred Retirement  
Option Program (DROP)



**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30th | 5:00pm**

**Orange County CTA Building**

1020 Webster Avenue, Orlando, FL 32804

MEET YOUR SPEAKER

## LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- Pension Plan vs. Investment Plan
- Tax Strategies
- Sick Pay Program
- DROP Strategies and Timelines
- Developing a Sound Retirement Plan

Secure your spot today & invest in your future.

**DANIEL REY**

Founder/Wealth Manager



## RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY

Scan the QR Code to RSVP or Call 888-501-3063

## SCAN TO RSVP



or visit [bit.ly/CTA4-30](http://bit.ly/CTA4-30)

## CAN'T ATTEND THE SEMINAR?

Schedule a complementary one-on-one meeting to create your custom retirement plan at [www.calendly.com/BookWithVoyage](http://www.calendly.com/BookWithVoyage)

Find Us Online  

[www.AskVoyage.com](http://www.AskVoyage.com)

888.501.3063

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