

BARGAINING 25-26 STRONGERTOGETHER



CTA

Orange County Classroom Teachers Association
FEA | NEA | AFT #7448



08.27.2025

President's Statement

We come into this session with a simple but urgent truth: **Florida ranks 50th in the nation for teacher pay.** Our teachers are hurting and you'll hear from them today as our team shares their stories. And as many know, teachers are leaving the profession in numbers that should alarm every single one of us.

In preparation for today, I also asked former teachers to share with me why they left and the responses were heartbreaking. These were educators who loved their students and dedicated their lives to this career. But too many said they just couldn't pay their bills on a teacher's salary. Others said the stress and toxic environments had taken too great a toll.

Teacher pay hasn't kept up with the rising cost of living. While we know Tallahassee must do better—and only provided enough for a meager 0.6% raise—the district has a responsibility to prioritize pay and fill the gap. Teachers can't continue to bear the brunt of the state's neglect.

We recently learned the district quietly gave some Assistant Principals a 5% increase—though they were told not to call it a raise, but a “market adjustment.” Let's be honest: if your paycheck goes up, that's a raise. And if Assistant Principals needed a market adjustment, then it's even clearer that our teachers—who are struggling to keep up with the cost of living—desperately need one too.

And let's not forget—this isn't just about wages. Health insurance costs continue to weigh heavily on educators, many of whom are already struggling to make ends meet. Our proposals today address both of the fundamental issues of pay and health insurance.





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ARTICLE XVII

Insurance



Insurance



Q. Slice Plan

1. Slice Plan. Effective June 30, 2026, and implemented the beginning of Plan Year 2026-27 a new plan ("Slice Plan") shall be offered with benefits actuarially equivalent to or greater than those currently provided under Plan D ("SureFit").
2. Plan Options. The Slice Plan shall be offered in addition to the existing plan options available to teachers. It shall be a self-funded plan administered by an independent third-party administrator selected in accordance with the process set forth in Section 9. The Slice Plan shall utilize a clinically integrated network composed of healthcare providers, hospitals, specialists who maintain direct contracts with the network administrator. PeopleOne Health shall be included as a participating entity within this network.¹
3. District Contributions. For the 2026-27 Plan Year, the District shall make contributions on behalf of each employee enrolled in the Slice Plan equal to 100% of the actuarially determined premium² projected for employee-only coverage for Plan D. In each subsequent year, the District's contribution on behalf teachers enrolled in the Slice Plan shall increase by the average year-over-year percentage increase in the actuarially determined premium across all non-slice plans, weighted for enrollment by plan and coverage tier.
4. Employee Contributions. For the 2026-27 Plan Year, employees enrolled in the Slice Plan who elect dependent coverage shall contribute the difference between the actuarially determined contribution for Plan D and the District Contribution. In subsequent years, the employee contribution shall be the difference between the actuarially determined total premium for the Slice Plan and the District Contribution as defined in Section 3.
5. Right to Information. The District will provide to OCCTA such documentation as may be required to determine the costs of the other plans offered by the District including but not limited to utilization and administrative costs. Reports shall be provided on a monthly basis reflecting the per member per month costs of each plan offering, per member per month revenue, enrollment by plan and coverage tier, aggregate demographics of enrolled employees, and the profit/loss statement.
6. Exclusive Use of Savings. All savings achieved through the Slice Plan shall be specifically identified and retained for the exclusive use of the Slice Plan. For the purpose of this agreement, "Savings" shall mean the positive difference, if any, between the overall average PMPM cost of non-Slice health plans (i.e., Plans A, B, C, D) and the corresponding PMPM cost of the Slice Plan, as measured over the same timeframe. Example: If the average per member per month (PMPM) cost of all non-Slice plans is \$600, and the Slice Plan's average PMPM cost is \$500, the resulting Savings shall be \$100 PMPM.
7. Use of Savings. The Union shall have the right to determine how Savings generated by the Slice Plan are used. Such uses include, but are not limited to the following: plan design improvements, reduction in employee premium contributions, and such other benefits and/or compensation.
8. Independent Verification. An independent actuary mutually agreed upon by the parties shall be commissioned to establish actuarial equivalency, premium contribution rates, and Savings levels generated by the Slice Plan.
9. Procurement Process. The District agrees that due to the complexity of the integrated clinical network, its direct contractors, and other factors necessary to incorporate this separately administered plan, it shall utilize an Invitation to Negotiate procurement process. This process shall be initiated no later than sixty (60) days following ratification of this agreement.





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ARTICLE XVI

Salary

The voices of our educators



“With a Master's degree and 21 years in the county, I shouldn't have to work 2 jobs to make ends meet. I shouldn't have to look at the doors/windows on my house and see the sunshine coming in through the edges or have them taped up with duct tape/contact paper so they don't fall apart completely.”



The voices of our educators



"I need a raise because everything is so expensive right now and I am working hard to help my family. I am struggling financially and I am about to lose my home due to foreclosure. I am upset, I would need to get a second job to pay what I owe and I am already so tired. This isn't right. I have a masters degree and I am a professional. I need more than this."



The voices of our educators



“My husband and I have been teachers with OCPS for 28 years now. We remember the step increases, we remember when we did not have to contribute to our own pension. We can barely pay our bills. Everything is more expensive. It’s so embarrassing when I have to ask my mom to lend money to cover a bill, or even ask my own children if I can borrow money for groceries. It shouldn’t be this way. We don’t even have any car payments, our cars are 18 years old now. Money is always tight.”



The voices of our educators



"With my rent increase this year, I will only have \$20 left from my paycheck to last me until my next paycheck. I don't even live anywhere expensive. My rent is \$1725 a month. Yet that's half my monthly income. Plus side, I don't have to buy gas to get to work since I've been getting a ride with a coworker because my car has been dead in my driveway since the middle of May. Downside, I can't get a new second job to supplement my income without a way to get there or to afford a decent used car. I've worked for OCPS since 2007 and have a total of 25 years teaching experience even though they didn't count it. Single, 52 year old woman with a bachelors degree and I can barely afford rent, can't afford a used car. Ridiculous."



The voices of our educators



"I am a single teacher with 24 years of experience. Due to the increase in taxes and insurance hikes I am about to be priced out of my home. Our salary has not kept up with the real cost of living. I am not asking to be rich. I am just asking for our salaries to increase proportionately to the rising costs in our city. When I purchased my home, I was able to cover the mortgage with one check and still have about \$200 left. Now one check doesn't even cover the mortgage."



The voices of our educators



"I'm almost embarrassed to say this, because as an adult, college-educated, top of my class, a leader and innovator in my field, I still find myself barely able to survive at times. Summers are the hardest—this past one especially—where it got to the point that I didn't even have groceries to eat...counting down the days to August 20. My closest friends don't even know, because of the embarrassment, and honestly because they'd just tell me again to "find a better job" than the one I love.

Some people say, "just save during the year," but how do you save when there's barely enough to get through the month? A few summers ago, I had to take out a loan—not for a vacation, not for home repairs, but simply to survive. That loan later caused much financial stress because I struggled to pay it back as inflation soared, and I almost lost everything. On our salary, I can't save enough to carry me through the year. Costs have risen significantly but not our salaries. It's demoralizing."



The voices of our educators



“As a dedicated teacher, I want nothing more than to give back to my students and school community, but the reality is that my salary does not cover the cost of living. As a single mother, I’m struggling to keep up with my mortgage, car payment, insurance, and basic expenses. I often find myself selling items online or working weekends just to make ends meet. No teacher should have to live paycheck to paycheck or take on extra jobs during school breaks to survive. We deserve a fair, livable wage that allows us to focus on teaching and supporting our students.”



The voices of our educators



“Last weekend I was coming to the realization that my marriage was over, so when I began to look at the cost of an apartment for myself and my elementary aged daughter, I came to the stark realization that I will not be able to afford even a one bedroom apartment on my current teacher’s salary. How is it that the most educated profession is also the poorest? Instead of planning my new chapter, I’m now forced to stay in a toxic marriage because I cannot support myself on my salary alone. My paycheck is \$1783, after taxes, every two weeks. This is with the district provided insurance and a modest contribution of \$50 to my 401k. A one-bedroom apartment in my area starts at \$1,500– that would mean my daughter and I sharing a room. There is no reason any working professional would need to subsidize their paycheck with government assistance or a secondary job. Don’t pretend to praise teachers for earning you an A grade as a district, then refuse to pay us what we’re worth. Do better.”



The voices of our educators



“For the amount of pressure, education, and certification this career demands, we deserve better. This isn’t about wanting extra—it’s about necessity, dignity, and survival. Last year, a teacher in our district got kicked out of her home due to rising costs she couldn’t keep up with and was living in her car. I think about her often and wonder how she is fairing. But you’d never know...we still show up, put on a smile, and represent the glory of an A district with F wages and teachers who are barely hanging on.”



The voices of our educators



“We bought our house just before Covid and that is the only reason we can afford the mortgage, and barely at that. I feel for teachers trying to purchase now, it is basically impossible to afford to live in the areas most of us teach in. Or any area that's safe.”



The voices of our educators



“I currently live paycheck to paycheck with a two income household which is sad to start with. What makes it even sadder is that I am the bread winner in my family. Over this past summer I had to start donating plasma to have money for even food. My family does not get to enjoy life because of how little I make with a bachelor's degree. I had to worry about food for my family but because the state and federal government says I make too much I can't get assistance to make sure my family has food on the table. No teacher who is required to have at least a bachelor's degree should worry if they can afford the basic necessities of life such as a roof over their head and food on the table.”



Article XVI - Salary

ARTICLE XVI

SALARY

A. Salaries shall be as set forth in Appendix A, which is incorporated into, and hereby made a part of this Contract and shall be retroactive to the first duty day of the current school year. For school year ~~2024-25~~ **2025-26**, there will be no retroactive pay for any teacher who leaves the district prior to final ratification.

1. There will be a ~~cost of living~~ across the board adjustment of ~~0.20%~~ **1%** for all personnel regardless of instructional practice score.
2. Teachers with a summative performance rating of Effective shall receive an additional ~~1.50%~~ **3%**.
3. Teachers with a summative performance rating of Highly Effective shall receive an additional ~~2.05%~~ **4%**.
4. The ~~cost of living~~ across the board adjustment shall be paid beginning with the first check after ratification of this Contract. Raises based on performance shall be paid after the Student Growth scores have been finalized and combined with the Instructional Practice score to create the Summative Evaluation score. This will occur after all assessment scores used in the calculation of local student learning growth models are received by the district, verified, and final calculations completed.

5. Pursuant to the Governor's 2025 Teacher Salary Allocation, all bargaining unit members shall receive the maximum per the DeSantis K-12 adjustment of 0.67% retroactive to July 1, 2025.

6. The Commissioner of Education for the State of Florida stated in his July 30, 2025 Memorandum regarding Teacher Salary Increase Allocations that the average minimum salary for teachers has increased by approximately \$9,400 between 2020 and 2024 (or approximately \$2,350 per year). The parties agree that effective July 1, 2025, and prior to the implementation of the across the board adjustments and performance based raises described in paragraphs 1-4 above, the base salary of any bargaining unit member who did not receive a base salary increase of at least \$2,350 per year for each year worked from 2020 and 2024, shall be adjusted to the base salary that he/she would have had if he/she had received a base salary increase of at least \$2,350 per each of the aforementioned years worked. The maximum increase in implementing this paragraph of the Agreement shall be \$2,350 per employee.

7. Referendum Funds: [Proposal to be made at upcoming session].



APPENDIX A-5

RETENTION SUPPLEMENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL EMPLOYEES

The Orange County Classroom Teachers Association, the Orange County School Board and the Superintendent recognize and value the work performed by the instructional employees of Orange County Public Schools and wish to demonstrate their appreciation by awarding instructional personnel with a retention supplement.

This supplement for ~~2024-25~~ **2025-26** as outlined below will be distributed to all eligible, instructional personnel based on cumulative years of District employment in a benefited position with the District as of the initial date of payout for each year of the program.

All eligible, instructional personnel must have an active employment status on the date(s) the supplement is paid. Those employees who retire between the date of execution of the Resolution of Disputed Issue – Retention Supplement and the date(s) of payout who otherwise are eligible to receive the supplement will be included.

The supplement is scheduled to be paid in one (1) annual installment. The District will distribute the supplement during the ~~2024-25~~ **2025-26** school year.

~~2024-25~~ **2025-26** School Year

	5 - 9 Years	10 - 14 Years	15 - 19 Years	20 - 24 Years	25 - 29 Years	30+ Years
Supplement	\$625	\$1,250	\$1,875	\$2,500	\$3,125	\$3,750



APPENDIX A-6

SELECT SUPPLEMENTS FOR SCHOOL YEAR ~~2024-25~~ 2025-26

A. Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

1. Classroom teachers assigned to a self-contained unit with at least one student identified as ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) or EBD (Emotional/Behavioral Disability) will receive an annual supplement of \$4,000.
2. Behavior Specialist who are not assigned to a self-contained unit with at least one student identified as ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) or EBD (Emotional/Behavioral Disability) will receive an annual supplement of \$2,500.
3. Staffing Specialists and 504 Coordinators will receive an annual supplement of \$2,000.
4. Exceptional Student Education teachers including EMH, emotionally handicapped, Prek handicapped, profoundly handicapped, SLD, speech therapy, teacher of the deaf, TMH teacher, varying exceptionalities, visually handicapped, vocational education/exceptional education who provide services listed on a student's IEP but are not covered by paragraphs A.1, A.2, or A.3 above will receive an annual supplement of \$1,500.

B. Certificate of Clinical Competence

Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists holding a current Certificate of Clinical Competence and employed as a speech language pathologists or audiologists will receive an annual supplement of \$8,000.

C. Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Mental Health Counselors, and Registered Nurses.

Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Licensed Mental Health Counselors, Licensed Registered Nurses holding a current license and employed as a social worker, mental health counselor, registered nurse respectively will receive an annual supplement of \$5,000.

D. Payment for supplements is added to the employee's regular paycheck,

If an employee starts a supplemented position late or terminates from it early or for any other reason cannot complete all of the requirements to receive the full supplement, s/he shall be paid a prorated amount based on the period of time during which the supplemented position was held.



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