COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS

2027 HEALTH INSURANCE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

OVERVIEW:

CCS and its labor partners regularly work in Joint Insurance Committees (JIC) to maintain quality employee health benefits, address health care costs, and provide oversight. Each JIC is governed by collective bargaining agreement language. On September 16, the CSEA JIC approved plan design changes affecting all classified staff and limiting premium increases to the negotiated 10%. On Sept. 28, the CEA Joint Insurance Committee unanimously approved plan design changes that impact all teachers and administrators and limit the premium increase for participating CEA members to the negotiated 8%. Open Enrollment begins the first week of October.

BACKGROUND:

The CSEA JIC governs the health insurance plans available to the classified staff of Columbus City Schools. Those employees include bargaining unit members of CSEA, OAPSE Local 581, and classified supervisors. The CEA JIC governs the health insurance plans available to the certificated staff of Columbus City Schools. Those employees include bargaining unit members of CEA as well as all administrators and Board direct reports.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

CCS is self-insured, meaning the employee benefits self-insurance fund (made up of contributions paid by the Board of Education and by employees enrolled in the health care plans) pays health care costs. These costs in 2025 and 2026 were higher than forecasted and budgeted.

2025-2026 Healthcare costs exceeded forecasts.	**$40 MILLION ESTIMATED** Preliminary forecast of costs that exceeded contributions paid for 2025-2026.	**$23.8 MILLION** Actual costs that exceeded contributions (as of July 2026), as identified by an independent actuary.

1. Why is health insurance going up?

Health care costs are rising, and employee and family health care use exceeded the forecasts.

2. Did CCS lose $40 million?

No. The $40 million figure was the difference between the preliminary forecast for years 2025 and 2026 and contributions collected. As the independent actuary continued to track actual costs, as of July 2026 the higher-than-forecasted costs totaled $23.8 million. Premiums paid for health care claims and associated costs; no additional money from the general fund was used to cover the increased health care costs.

3. What is a surcharge?

A surcharge results from negotiated contract language between the Board and CEA that imposes an additional premium increase on employees when premiums are projected to exceed 8%. Because the CEA JIC approved plan design changes that limited premium increases to 8%, the need for a surcharge was eliminated.

4. Will employees pay more in 2027?

Yes. Teachers and administrators will see an 8% increase. Classified staff will see a 10% increase. Both increases are the negotiated limits for each plan.

5. What changes are being made for 2027?

The approved options include plan design changes to help manage rising costs while maintaining quality coverage. Specific benefit and plan details are available on the district's website.

6. What went wrong with the health insurance fund?

The independent review identified concerns with cost forecasts. Actual health care use and costs were higher than anticipated and budgeted. CCS ended its relationship with Aon after identifying concerns.

7. Did this cause the District's $50 million operating-budget problem?

No. They are separate issues. The higher-than-anticipated health insurance costs were paid for by reserves from the employee benefits self-insurance fund and did not create the District's $50 million operating-budget reduction.

8. What is CCS doing differently moving forward?

CCS is selecting a health care consultant through a competitive process that includes our labor partners. This will strengthen our healthcare cost forecasting so future decisions of the JICs are based on more accurate information.

9. Do employees need to take any action right now?

Open Enrollment began October 5. Employees should refer to their Benefits Guide for Open Enrollment information and carefully review their 2027 plan options, premiums, and benefit changes. The Benefits Guide is available on the District's website.

SUMMARY:

CCS did not lose $40 million. Reserves from the employee benefits self-insurance fund covered the higher-than-expected health care costs. Plan design changes approved by the JICs limit the premium increase for participating employees to the negotiated limits of 8% or 10% and allow Open Enrollment to move forward as scheduled.