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centraloeane.org
ohea.org
nea.org

160 South
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January 2019

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The Advocate

President

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GRIN – You Did It Again



You are appreciated for your efforts and especially your giving. GJEA was able to collect a total of \$11,663 from you on behalf of GRIN. Even though this was short of the collection from last year of \$12,423, your contribution is very much appreciated! The GRIN Program helps the families we serve directly in Gahanna. GJEA is so proud to collaborate with this worthwhile program and hope it continues for many years to come.

Ohio Deferred Compensation (457) Plan

If you are looking for the best way to save money for retirement with the least amount of fees attached to the account, this is the plan for you! It is only for public employees across the State of Ohio. This is another option as we already have some choices for 403b accounts and their fees are fairly high.

You may have any amount deducted from your paycheck and placed in this account. The amount is free from tax and will grow over the course of your career as the money will be invested for you. STRS is a great retirement system, but all teachers need to put extra away before retirement to make sure we are comfortable for many years. If you need information on the 457 Plan for Ohio, go to ohio457.org and either learn about what benefits there are for you OR download the application. You must fill it out and mail it in before it will be deducted from our treasurer's office. This does take a little time, but the minimal fee on your account is worth the time it takes.



Gahanna- Jefferson Education Association

GJEA Officers

Membership Chair
Lindsay Dexter, LE
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Fund for Children and Public
Education Chair (FCPE)
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Negotiations Chair
Dwayne Marshall-LHS
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Social Media

Please remember that your social media posts celebrating or complaining about snow days, delays or the lack thereof are NOT advised. It is important that the community perceives us in a positive light. Please watch what you post, you are a public employee and can be held accountable.



Mark Your Calendar:

February 2 – Groundhog Day

February 15 – No School/Comp Day

February 18 – President's Day/No School

February 21 – School Board Meeting, Clark Hall 6:30

February 25 – Professional Day

New Tax Laws are in Effect

Due to the new Tax Law, you may have seen a bump in pay in January last year.

Other changes include:

- Increasing the Standard Deduction from \$6,500 to \$12,000 for singles and from \$13,000 to \$24,000 for married couples
- The personal exemption of \$4,150 was eliminated
- The Child Tax Credit was increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000
- Mortgage Interest Deductions and Charitable Contributions had a few small changes
- Home Equity Lines of Credit can be deducted in cases where the money has been spent on home improvements
- There is a \$10,000 limit on State and Local tax deductions
- The \$250 deduction used for classroom supplies for teachers remains
- Union Dues, mileage and job-related expenses unless you are a small business are no longer deductible

Most likely you will see a significant decrease in your refund check and in many cases, you may owe money. If you owe money, you may want to speak with Kay Melaragno at CO about increasing your tax withholdings to offset this for next year. Please consult a certified tax advisor on how the new law changes your personal tax filings.

SLO's Second Semester Due Dates

If you are teaching a second semester class and are using this class for one of your SLO's, you will need to make sure it is submitted to your evaluator by Friday, February 1st. Please remember that due dates are a part of the evaluation that we all need to be aware. If you do not turn it in on time, it may affect your final rating in May.



2019 Tax Deductions

Due to the new tax law that was passed by the US Congress starting with the 2018 calendar year, you are NOT permitted to deduct a portion of your NEA/OEA/GJEA dues from taxes as before. GJEA is sorry about this change for our members.

Negotiations Survey

Thank you to all 303 of you who participated in the survey, which is an outstanding number of responses from our teachers. Rest assured that your Negotiation's Team will take the results seriously as we form a proposal to present to the board's team as we negotiate this spring.

License Renewal – LPDC

Welcome back from your LPDC committee. Many of you may have licenses expiring this year or questions about your IPDP or our renewal process. We wanted to let you know, don't hesitate to reach out. Last year we started an LPDC email to ask any questions, or get information. You can email lpdc@gjps.org or any of our LPDC members. Please note, this is for questions not submissions.

Our meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools Central Office, from 3:00-6:00 pm. You can send your updated IPDP and CEU requests to LPDC at CO in office mail. Please remember that our handbook and all of our LPDC forms that you may need are found on the GJPS Curriculum site under [Licensure](#). Our meeting dates are as follows:

February 12

March 12

April 9

May 14

We look forward to working with you,

Your LPDC Members

Teachers:

Sandy Nicholson, Vice Chair – Blacklick Elementary at nicholsons@gjps.org

Angela Potts, Chair – Lincoln High School at pottsa@gjps.org

Rhonda Wamsley, Secretary – Middle School South at wamsleyr@gjps.org

Administration:

Erin Schmidt, Academic Officer, Jason Bates, Academic Officer

Why do I need my Union?

Many people ask the question: "What do I get from paying dues?" Some teachers only recognize the union during contract negotiations. Your association does so much more than bargaining for a contract even though negotiations are a very important part of what we do for our members. There are teachers who say they are willing to pay for local dues but they see no point in paying dues to the National Education Association (NEA) or the Ohio Education Association (OEA). GJEA could not service our membership without the help of BOTH OEA and NEA. They protect our rights on so many levels that most teachers do not witness which means they are doing their job to stand up for us so we can do what we do best--- TEACH!

First and foremost, this is your professional organization. Both OEA and NEA represent the best interest of teachers at ALL levels. They hire lobbyists to gain information and campaign against laws that make your life as an educator more difficult. They have connections within the statehouse that help us continue the work to change bad laws that have been passed by both the National and State Congress.

Examples of what our union does to help teachers:

- They fight legal battles when legislators have an agenda that is harmful to public education.
- The hours that are spent on testing has been greatly reduced at the national and state levels due to this work.
- School districts who have unionized teachers, on average, have higher achieving students. If you look at the top states for education, they are states which do not have "Right to Work."
- Unions help create a stable and social climate within school buildings. Administrators are unable to operate in stealth. There is more fairness and cooperation amongst employees.
- Unions advocate for state and national funding. States with strong teacher's unions teach in states that pay higher for student funding.
- Unions protect jobs when technology threatens to replace and increase student/teacher ratio. With the addition of online classes, this protection is needed more than ever.
- Teacher's associations have been the biggest advocates for special education classes and have fought and won state policy changes. These policy changes have included class size to help overburdened teachers increase instructional time for students.
- Unions DO NOT protect "bad" teachers. The association assures that Due Process is followed during discipline and/or termination hearings.

Any person who says the union used to be vital and is no longer useful, needs to visit the states in which unions don't exist or have been weakened by their State Lawmakers. In a Wisconsin school, teachers have a dress code in which the women are required to wear dresses. They have to pay out of pocket to their own substitute for missing a day of school because of illness. They cannot receive a raise that is above inflation without the community voting, strikes are illegal and they have seen a significant reduction in salaries and benefits. In some places, their contract is 1-2 pages long. Basically, they have no rights to change their working conditions including advocating for their students.