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# The Advocate

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## Wisconsin Teachers "Right to Work"



Even though there seems to be little worry about "Right to Work" in Ohio, most people don't have a complete understanding of what it means or the impact such a

law could pose for our Teacher's Association. When the State of Wisconsin, under the encouragement of Governor Scott Walker passed their Right to Work Law, it devastated the teacher's union. Included in their law was the loss of the right to bargain, the right to collect dues through payroll deduction and the loss of the right to collect a fair share fee. What have been the results of these laws on the teachers in Wisconsin? First, their membership has dwindled from 110,000 to 40, 000 members. The average teacher has lost \$6800 a year in salary and benefits. Every time they miss a day of school for an illness to them or a family member or the death of a family member, they have to pay for their own substitute to be away from their classroom. They no longer have a say or a voice on educational matters in their state. Teachers in Wisconsin are now under the control of any legislation that comes their way and they have nobody that will stand up for their rights as we do in Ohio.

Right now it seems that we do not have a voice at the statehouse, but without OEA speaking on our behalf every day there would never have been any change in the OTES or funding laws from their original form. Right to Work laws may not be in our future but there are laws being proposed that will do similar damage to diminish the rights of teachers in Ohio. Who amongst us thinks they can go into their classroom, shut the door, do their job and they have nothing to worry about? Just take a look at what testing is doing to our children and how the evaluation system has caused hours away from planning and implementing creative lessons. There are legislators that would love to take our right to bargain away. They would love to make us ask voters for every raise we receive that is over inflation which is usually 1%. They want to reduce sick days to 10 per year and you lose them if you don't use them. They think our pay should be according to what the Board of Education sees as your importance in the academic hierarchy of teaching. That means merit pay by what each Board of Education thinks you are worth to the district. These are scary times for our profession, but we will forge ahead and hopefully remain a strong unit to fight these harmful edits toward our profession.

## State Budget

Governor Kasich has produced what he believes is the best possible budget for the next two years. This is important because it deals with educational funding until 2017. You may hear that there is a record increase in school funding but beware. OEA has studied his budget and has determined that even though there is a \$464 million increase, this is below inflationary levels. More than half of the public schools will see less aid with a major increase for both charter schools

and school vouchers. There is some good news; there will be better controls on charter schools. This includes reassignment of poor performing charter schools to a better, higher rated sponsor. This will not be the final budget because it still has to go through both the House Legislation and the State Senate. There are expected changes. We will keep you updated as we learn more from OEA in the coming months.

### Mark Your Calendar:

2/23	Professional Dev.
2/28	GJEF Gala
3/8	Clocks Spring Ahead
3/11	Bd of Ed @ 6:30 PM
3.14	National Pi Day
3/17	St. Patrick's Day
3/20	First Day of Spring

### GJEA Board of Directors Meetings

**March 18** 4:00 PM at the LHS Library

**April 15**  
**May 13** All members are welcome to attend!

## Evaluation Results

Statewide, less than 1% of teachers were branded Ineffective. These findings tell us that the new evaluation system that was put into place to expose poor quality teachers did no better than the previous evaluation system. The study also found that Value-Added teachers scored lower on average than teachers who used a SLO. The State Legislation is now talking about how to reduce the use of SLOs and have as many teachers as possible have Value-Added Data.

## 2014 Tax Info.



As an association member, you are permitted to deduct a portion of your 2014 dues when itemizing on your federal income tax return. Go to "miscellaneous deductions" on Schedule A of Form 1040, and follow the instructions for deducting association dues. The calculated amount has been provided by OEA, and is **\$799.59 for a full-time educator in Gahanna**. Please refer any dues-related questions to any of your GJEA officers and any tax-related questions to your personal tax advisor.

## End the R-word

**Spread the Word to End the Word** is a national movement focused on mutual respect and human dignity whose goal is to eliminate the use of the word "retard(ed)" — also known as the "r-word." Sponsored through **Special Olympics**, communities and schools across the country are banding together on March 4th to encourage people everywhere to stop and think about their hurtful and disparaging use of the r-word and to pledge to stop using it. By doing so, these groups are promoting acceptance and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities. Within our schools, many of our teachers and students are involved with the campaign. To learn more, visit [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org). **When you visit the web site, be sure to encourage all of your students to sign the pledge and "spread the word to end the word!"**

## What is Fair Share?



Fair Share is the right to collect dues from members who choose not to join GJEA to become a full member. They do not pay the entire amount of dues that a regular member does although it is very close to the same. They do not have the exact same rights as a full member. A Fair Share Fee Payer cannot vote on any issues that the local association chooses to ask their member's voice on including the contract. They are still entitled to representation but would not have all the resources or privileges of a regular member. They will not have access to our LRC (Labor Relations Consultant) from OEA if they have a question or need help in a situation. There is

a strong possibility that Fair Share will be ruled unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court as some are challenging to dismantle these laws and are making their way through the courts at this time.

## Value Added

Starting next year the following courses will no longer require a SLO because they will become Value-Added Courses: Algebra I, Geometry I, English I, English II, American Government, American History, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science and 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies. If you wrote a SLO continue to collect the data and finish your assessments because it is still in effect this year. Your end of the year exams will be a summative score that

## Collective Bargaining Conference



In the spring of 2016, it will once again be time to start bargaining for a new contract. Your team has already started preparing by attending OEAs Collective Bargaining Conference from February 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>. Dwayne Marshall, Negotiations Chair and Bobby Swartzentruber, both teach at LHS, attended various sessions such as looking at OTES, The Grievance Process

and Communications during Collective Bargaining. All of these sessions should be beneficial to help your team in the process of producing the best possible contract. While at the conference, OEA mentioned that GJEA had some of the best evaluation language they have seen. It shows that working ahead of time to look at items within our contract to help all of us is worth it. Many items in our contract we take for granted on a daily basis. We are very fortunate to have a mature contract because of the Bargaining Teams that have worked tirelessly for us for many years.

## Lobby Days

How would you like the opportunity to speak personally to your state legislator about certain issues like testing and OTES? Your personal stories need to be heard and your voice can help to guide legislation that affects education. On March 18th, April 14th and May 13th, OEA will be sponsoring Lobby Days. You will be able to use a professional day that includes reimbursement for lunch and parking. OEA will set the meetings that will allow you to personally speak to your State Representative and/or State Senator in a group setting. If you are interested in participating in Lobby Day, please contact Jenny Palguta ASAP so she can place you on the list. There are only so many spots, so the earliest you can commit, the better. Past participants have reported to having both positive and worthwhile experiences. They were able to speak to several legislators both Republicans and Democrats and give

them vital information about upcoming bills dealing with educational issues. **YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

