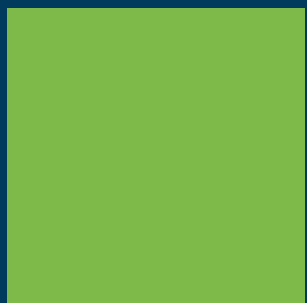


OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Public Education MATTERS

the heart of it all



Ohio Education Association Local

2023-2024

President's Handbook

Welcome!

Dear Colleague,

You have accepted a very important role in our union through your willingness to serve as a local association president. OEA's strength depends on the strengths of its locals, and our locals are strong only when we have strong leaders like you. Our members depend on us to listen to them, advocate for their needs, and organize them in ways that will build their collective strength. Thank you so much for agreeing to take on this important role.

Please know that while your responsibilities as a local president are significant, you're not alone in this work. Yours is one of about 750 local affiliates in the OEA family, and that means that there are more than 750 others (counting co-presidents) who know what it's like to be in your shoes and are here to support you in your efforts. We have a tremendous team of OEA staff members, including your own Labor Relations Consultant, who are committed to your success. Please draw on the resources of your fellow presidents, our OEA staff, and, most importantly, your fellow members within your local, as you fulfill your role. Also know that the other OEA officers and I, as well as your colleagues on OEA's Board of Directors and your district leaders, are willing to support you in any way we can.

I'm excited to share this Local President's Handbook with you as another resource that you can draw upon throughout the year. It contains key information on a variety of topics and is organized in a way that should allow you to access what you need, when you need it.

Whether this is your first year as local president or you have been in this role for a long time, I wish you the very best. Thank you for all you do for our members, our union, and the students we serve!

In solidarity,



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Preface

Being a local union leader is so much more than simply filing a grievance, and no matter what task you are undertaking, you should have these questions foremost in your mind: “How can we make our local stronger?” and “What can we do to build a more powerful local?” When you are conducting a local meeting, reaching out and communicating with members, finding ways for members to participate in their union, laying out a newsletter, putting together a communications strategy or conducting a membership drive or a voter registration campaign — always ask yourself, “How can we use this opportunity to make our local a louder voice, a stronger vehicle to improve the lives of members?”

The purpose of this resource is to guide local presidents. It is a practical guide that contains tips and “food for thought” on how to meet your important responsibilities. *We strongly encourage local presidents to regularly consult with their labor relations consultant (LRC) regarding the challenges they face, and to be informed of available OEA/NEA resources.* Your LRC can also connect you with the specialized OEA consultants from OEA headquarters who provide valuable resources to you regarding educational policy, legislative, political, school board races, and levy guidance and resources, and support in collective bargaining and school finance.

This guide is not intended to be a one size fits all model for locals. Rather, local Presidents should often look to their own governing documents, (constitution and bylaws) as well as their local collective bargaining agreement when dealing with issues pertaining to their locals.

Role of the Local President

The president plays an important role in the effectiveness of the local association. Local presidents should be willing to give time and effort to their duties, have an interest in advancing public education, and possess a cooperative spirit when working with members, management, other stakeholders, and the public. The president should lead and coordinate activities of the association but should not attempt to do all the work.

The Association president serves as the primary spokesperson for the membership. When acting in this capacity, the local president is on equal footing with the superintendent and Board of Education.

Under Ohio law, the president has the right to express openly and honestly the position of the Association, without fear of reprisals. The law protects the president from unlawful discharge due to Association activity.

The president speaks for the local on matters ranging from finance, discipline, bargaining and contract enforcement. Most importantly, by building and maintaining relationships, the president can help the local become powerful as an advocate for members, students and public education.

In carrying out this work, you will draw on a variety of strategies to be effective. Each of those is laid out in more detail throughout the Handbook.

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All forms provided as examples within this publication are for illustration purposes only and may not reflect the most current version. Current versions are available by contacting the Ohio Education Association Membership Department at membership@ohea.org or 1-844-632-4636.