



Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools

160 South Hamilton Road Gahanna, OH 43230 (614) 471-7065 www.GahannaSchools.org

October 9, 2020

Dear Gahanna-Jefferson families,

Our Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools (GJPS) negotiation team met several times this week with union leaders, and we worked hard to seek common ground and find a compromise. We listened, and we considered all of the concerns raised during negotiations. While we have been unable to reach an agreement, we will continue to work toward resolution.

Gahanna-Jefferson Education Association (GJEA) has scheduled a community meeting around safety and how a strike will affect our community. This creates unnecessary fear by suggesting our schools are not safe for in-person learning. **We are well prepared to safely resume school on October 13, and our health and safety protocols have been approved by Franklin County Public Health.**

We have provided the union with a thorough and thoughtful proposal. We remain committed to the negotiation process, and we hope to continue our conversations.

On October 2, GJEA served the Board with a notice of intent to strike effective October 13. Although we remain hopeful this negotiation will have a successful outcome, the district also has a responsibility to take steps to prepare for the possibility of a strike.

We believe a strike at this time is in violation of the law, and the district has filed legal actions, including a motion for a temporary restraining order and an unfair labor practice intended to pursue any and all of its legal options to ensure our students can return to school. That is our obligation to our students and families.

Today, our Board also voted to authorize district leaders to do what is necessary to prepare for a potential strike, including securing teachers and educational resources outside the district to assure equity and access to learning for all GJPS students.

If we cannot reach an agreement, the GJPS Board of Education has every intention to continue providing instruction via distance learning. Our plans for that approach are underway.

We know you have many questions, and while we don't have all the answers yet, we are committed to being open in our communications with our school families, including families of our special education students. To keep you as fully informed as possible as to the current status of classes and extracurricular activities, the district will update our website with current information. We will also attempt to issue periodic updates to inform you of the status of the schools and negotiations with GJEA.

This is difficult for our teachers, our students and our community, as it is for the Board and district leaders. We hope for complete resolution of this situation as swiftly as possible, and we are sorry for the disruption this is causing for our students and our school community.

Sincerely,

Steve Barrett
Superintendent
Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools