

## President's Message

### Inauguration Day!

By Rob McFee, NEOEA President

Good afternoon NEOEA! I am writing this article on the very day that Joe Biden will be sworn in to become the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States—inauguration day.



This past election has divided this country in many ways, yet I believe most of us would love nothing more than to put the political rhetoric behind us and look forward to what could be. It is similar to the feelings of waking up on the first day of school: anticipation, expectation and, most importantly, hope. Students at the beginning of the year experience these feelings almost every year. Anticipating seeing friends

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they haven't seen all summer. Expectations that run from how will they get to school, what their classes will be like, will they get the "cool" teachers, and who will they get to eat lunch with. Alive with the hope that this year will be the best one yet.

As adults in this chaotic world of public education, we experience these same feelings. Anticipation of seeing our colleagues again, wondering which students will be on our class lists, and what will our work schedules be like this year? Expectations for ourselves and our students bearing an eerily resemblance to New Year's

resolutions. Some quickly forgotten, but others giving us a feeling of hope for what can be accomplished.

I sit here on inauguration day with those same feelings of anticipation, expectation, and, most importantly, hope. There are many reasons to be hopeful. Vaccines are being rolled out across the country, and our nation's most vulnerable citizens and our front line workers are already receiving the vaccine. Educators are next in line! We have a new president, Joe Biden. Kamala Harris was sworn in as the Vice President of the United States—historic! The President's Cabinet picks were recently released; true to his word, the diversity in his cabinet mirrors our country's diversity. Of the 26 cabinet positions that President Biden gets to fill, he chose 13 people of color, and of those 26 nominations, 12 of them are women. His pick for Assistant Secretary of Health is Rachel Levine, a transgender doctor who is currently Pennsylvania's Secretary of Health. She would become the first openly transgender federal official to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Pete Buttigieg was picked to become the Secretary of Transportation. If confirmed, he will become the first ever openly gay person to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. President Biden's Secretary of Education nominee Miguel Cardona, whose parents immigrated to this county from Puerto Rico, has actually attended and worked in our public school system (unlike the outgoing Sec. of Ed.). Miguel Cardona was a fourth grade public school teacher and has worked as a school principal and was most recently the Commissioner of Education for the state of Connecticut. Miguel will hopefully bring back integrity and respect to the



Our Social and Human Concerns Committee is encouraging Random Acts of Kindness. Sheffield-Sheffield Lake TA pitched in with the Second Harvest Food Bank. #RAK #NEOEALoveyourlaborandyourneighbor

concept of a free public education for all of our nation's students. The diversity of each of these nominations represents what all of our students can hope to achieve.

As I finished writing this article, the inauguration ceremonies have ended with the most patriotic fireworks display I have had the pleasure to witness, and I paused to reflect on all I have seen and heard. I heard Lady Gaga, while wearing a stunning brooch of a dove carrying an olive branch, sing the National Anthem with more passion than I have ever seen or heard. I was nearly moved to tears by listening to Jennifer Lopez singing a song that I remember singing in my elementary music classes. The current times have made the words, "This land is your land, this land is my land" ring with so much more potency than I have ever felt. I felt blessed to have the privilege to listen to Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman recite her poem "The Hill We Climb." The living picture this talented young lady can paint with her words was filled with emotions from sad, to real, to awe inspiring.

*"We learned that quiet isn't always peace, and the norms and notions of what 'just is' isn't always justice." — Amanda Gorman*

As public educators we know the lessons we teach our students today will become the America we live in tomorrow. My anticipation, my expectations, and my hopes are all sky high today—for this country, for us as public educators, and for our future—our students. Thank you and stay safe!

United we are stronger,

*Rob*

## District News

### Will You Be the Lucky Winner of Our Quarterly Quiz?

Congratulations to **Nicci Clinger** from **Painesville City TA**, winner of the last issue's "Quarterly Quiz" contest.

In each issue we'll be asking a question. (Often, this one for instance, the answer can be found in the pages of the newsletter itself.) All the entries will be made online, and one winner will be drawn each month to receive a gift card. Answer a few, quick questions, and you

could be our winner!

The second question this year is: **Which NEOEA committee uses the hashtag #NEOEALoveyourlaborandyourneighbor?**

We'll welcome all entries, but to be considered for the gift card, the winner needs to answer by Friday, March 19. To answer, go online to <https://tinyurl.com/NEOEAA2021-02>.

Thank you to all who have participated!

### Public Relations Awards and Grants

Through its public relations efforts, NEOEA gives several grants and awards. Although the deadlines for some have passed, keep them in mind for next time and start now to think of ideas for your application.

**PR Mini-Grant:** January is the deadline for submitting ideas for a Public Relations Mini-Grant for projects that bring positive attention to your association.

**Positive Image Award:** February is the deadline for nominating members or locals that enhance the image of their members, schools, school districts, or public education in general in the community.

**Community Involvement Grant:** To strengthen the relationship between a local school employee union and its community, NEOEA's Community Involvement Grants encourage local affiliates to become actively involved in local charitable events

such as the American Cancer Society Relay for Life, Reach Out and Read, Special Olympics, or other highly-visible community charitable events. Applications are due in December and May.

**Communications Contest:** For those locals who have a newsletter, whether online or on paper, the Communications Contest runs through the year, with entries due by June 30.

**Five Star Award:** Another award that accumulates through the year is the Five Star Award. Check out the criteria online and see how easily your local can be recognized in this category.

More details and applications can be found on the NEOEA website under "Resources," "Awards and Grants." Also check out the PowerPoint and brochure developed by the Public Relations Committee.

### Legislative Committee Update

The committee will be sponsoring a session titled "Introduction to Lobbying" at Megaconference this year. This training will focus on how to lobby, toolkits that

are needed, and generating talking points. NEOEA Past President Kim Richards and other NEA Directors will be leading this session. We hope to see you on March 6.

### Committees Seek Members

If you have an interest in improving our profession and the welfare of our members, NEOEA has a committee for you! NEOEA succeeds because of the talent and dedication of almost two hundred committee volunteers. Most committees meet a few times a year;

NEOEA pays expenses, including mileage, and provides meals. The specialties of NEOEA's fourteen committees, and a form for applying, are available on the NEOEA website at [neoea.org/CommitteeVolunteer.pdf](http://neoea.org/CommitteeVolunteer.pdf).

## Spring Calendar

Saturday, March 6, 2021

Megaconference

Saturday, April 17, 2021

NEOEA Representative Assembly

For the most up-to-date information on the NEOEA calendar, go to [www.neoea.org](http://www.neoea.org).

## Web Resources

at [www.neoea.org](http://www.neoea.org)

- Best Benefits Club
- Bright Now! Dental discount
- Committee Volunteer form
- Communications Contest
- Community Involvement Grant
- Megaconference
- NEA Member Benefits

## Social Media



[facebook.com/NEOEA](https://facebook.com/NEOEA)



@neoea44124



#NEOEA

## Fun Fact

In 1989, as NEOTA's (North Eastern Ohio Teachers Association) membership became more diverse, the organization changed its name to NEOEA.

## Labor Lines

*The story of the labor movement needs to be taught in every school in this land... America is a living testimonial to what free men and women, organized in free democratic trade unions, can do to make a better life. We ought to be proud of it. — Hubert Humphrey*

North Eastern Ohio Education Association  
is affiliated with the  
Ohio Education Association  
and the  
National Education Association

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Address e-mail for *News & Views* to [editor@neoea.org](mailto:editor@neoea.org).

### Nearing Retirement? Stay Involved: Maintain Association Benefits

If you have already “pre-retired,” then read no further; just remember to call OEA Membership at 800.282.1500 and tell them the date to switch you over to retired status.

If you have not “pre-retired” yet, now is the time to pre-retire with an OEA-R and NEA-R lifetime membership.

If you currently enjoy any of the NEA Member Benefits—credit cards, insurance, investments, discounts, etc.—you need to continue your membership into retirement to maintain those benefits. Planning to substitute? Don’t give up your NEA \$1 million liability protection policy.

OEA benefits are important, too! In retirement, you may need the Attorney Referral Service as you update legal documents. The Educator Access discount program will help you extend those precious fixed-income dollars.

Stay in touch with professional developments and your

colleagues through NEOEA-R, OEA-R, and NEA-R newsletters, publications, and workshops. In addition, your interests at the statewide level are represented by the OEA-R Advisory Council, a governing body committed to protecting and enhancing your STRS, SERS, and PERS retirement and health care benefits.

Pre-invest some of that upcoming severance check. The one-time unified life membership in both OEA-R and NEA-R is \$450. Unlike other educator retiree organizations, we are the only organization of retirees affiliated with OEA and NEA.

Contact your local treasurer or call OEA Membership Services at 800.282.1500. You may also “pre-retire” online at <https://ims.nea.org/JoinNea/> with both OEA-R and NEA-R on the NEA website. Links to the pre-retired form and the OEA-R brochure are on the NEOEA website at [neoea.org](http://neoea.org) and click on “View Our Committees.”

### Environmental Concerns Activities

The Environmental Concerns Committee has, as we all have, adapted to the ever-changing routines when facing this on-going pandemic. Our Megaconference session will encompass incorporating edible plants into the residential landscape. Discussion will focus on plant selection, planning, and practical considerations. As we saw a boom in gardening last summer we

are hoping to help add to new gardeners’ repertoires as well as strengthening seasoned gardeners’ knowledge. To add to our theme of outdoor activity, we will be offering a Green Tour Hike set at your own pace in the spring. We will work with local park systems to create a scavenger hunt you and your family can enjoy at your leisure. Please be on the lookout for more details.

### Consumer Corner

#### NEA MB: Helping Make Members’ Lives Better

The pandemic has impacted members’ lives in consequential ways and caused heightened levels of stress, anxiety and depression for many. In response, NEA Member Benefits has partnered with Sanvello Health to offer the NEA Mental Health Program, which is based on Sanvello’s proven mobile app solution—the #1 mental health app used by over 3.6 million people nationwide.

The NEA Mental Health Program and Sanvello app consists of four options:

- Sanvello Free Self Care: Access for those age 13+ to online guided journeys, meditation tools, hope boards, goal tracking, and support communities.
- Sanvello Premium: Access for those age 18+ to more enhanced tools at a 25% discounted member fee of \$6.75/month or \$40.49/year.
- Sanvello Coaching: Access for those age 18+ to coaches for one-on-one messaging, personal support, and live group video sessions at a 10% discounted member fee of \$45/month or \$315/year.
- Sanvello Therapy Services: Available to those in select states ages 18+ seeking the guidance of a licensed therapist/psychiatrist, either by direct pay or through a number of contracted insurance providers (see list of providers at [www.sanvello.com/therapy](http://www.sanvello.com/therapy)). Standard therapy rates apply.

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. Find out how the NEA Mental Health Program can help you and your family at [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com).

**Recognizing great teachers and students is fun, fast and free.**

**Academic All Star**  
Nominate K-12 students who are achieving, growing and learning.

**Teacher of the Month**  
Nominate K-12 teachers who innovate, enable and inspire others to succeed.

**Rewards**  
Academic All Star and Teacher of the Month winners will receive:  
- Certificate of Excellence  
- \$75 gift card  
- \$75 prize pack  
- Their name posted on our Partners of Education web page

**It only takes a minute!**

1. Go to this website: [ohiolottery.com/About/Partners-in-Education](http://ohiolottery.com/About/Partners-in-Education)
2. Select the form for a teacher or student
3. Fill out the nomination form
4. Hit “Submit”

**Partners in Education**

By participating, your school has a chance to become School of the Year!  
To find out more, call 216-774-5688

## Twenty-seven Locals Apply for PR Mini-Grants

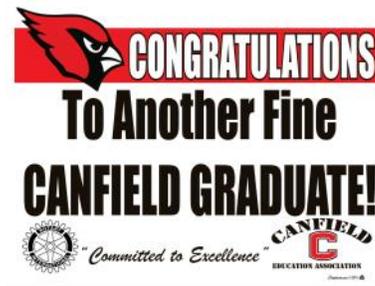
In NEOEA's annual program of PR mini-grants, 27 local affiliates applied grants for projects designed to improve the image of NEOEA's local affiliates. The projects will share the \$12,500 budgeted by the PR Committee.

These projects run the gamut from yard signs or sling bags for graduating seniors to banners for recreation fields to Veterans Day programs to holiday giving activities.

Photos of current and past Mini-Grant projects are shown.

In a development authorized 16 years ago, locals which attended the fall Representative Assembly are permitted to apply for a second grant. Two eligible locals did just that. A list of the locals who received PR mini-grants as well as a brief description of each project is available at [neoea.org/PRminiGrants2020-21.pdf](http://neoea.org/PRminiGrants2020-21.pdf).

The next Public Relations award for this school year is August 1, the deadline for the Communications Contest. Information about this award is available at [neoea.org/CommunicationsContest.pdf](http://neoea.org/CommunicationsContest.pdf).



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## The Fund for Children and Public Education has Loyal Supporters from NEOEA

OEA's donations to endorsed candidates don't come from member dues: they come from voluntary donations to the Fund for Children and Public Education. Those donations go to candidates of both parties who win OEA and NEA endorsements by meeting with screening committees composed of local presidents and their designees. At the May and December RAs in 2020, the following members received awards for their leadership in supporting FCPE.

### Hall of Fame (\$6,000 total)

Nora Suder-Riley, Twinsburg EA

### Lifetime Achievement (\$3,000 total)

Jennifer Dudley, Stow TA  
Jessica Holland, Lakewood TA  
Jean Jerina, Cardinal EA  
Marchell Josie, East Cleveland EA  
Regina Reynolds, Canfield EA  
Jason Scherer, Field Local TA  
Hasheen Wilson, YSU-ACE

### President's Club (\$1,000 in 8 years)

Linda Aguiñaga, Elyria EA  
Mayra Coughlin, Lorain EA  
Stacia Darrell, East Cleveland EA  
Caitlin Dukes, Lakewood TA  
Terri Duperow, Lakewood TA  
Diane Gerg, Lakewood TA  
Nancy Hvizdos, Lakewood TA  
Tracy Jurek, Painesville City TA  
Denise Kirk, Elyria EA  
Martha Logan, East Cleveland EA  
Karla Lustig, Riverside Local EA  
Nora Murray, Lakewood TA  
Jeannette Pecora, Elyria EA

Kathleen Rog, Lakewood TA  
Sharon Seitz, Cuyahoga Hts. TA  
Valenta Ward-Gravely, East Cleveland EA

### Executive Club (\$500 in 5 Years)

Norman Baker, Parma EA  
Karen Carney, Campbell EA  
Larry Ellis, Youngstown EA  
Michael Farren, Barberton EA  
James Field, Riverside Local EA  
Carolyn Gibbons, Orange TA  
Joanne Krickovitch, Medina City TA  
Danny Libert, Howland Classroom TA  
Devan Molnar, North Royalton EA  
Margaret O'Brien-March, Warren EA  
Marissa Platton, Austintown EA  
Lawrence Perry, East Cleveland EA  
Stephanie Prince, East Cleveland EA  
Patricia Spring, Twinsburg EA  
Amanda Varga, Lakewood TA  
Valenta Ward-Gravely, East Cleveland EA  
Evangeline Wasinski, Twinsburg EA  
Christina West, Portage Co. Educators for the DD  
Stacy Whiteamire, Lakewood TA  
Linda Williams, East Cleveland EA

