

## President's Message

### What are Your Strategic Priorities?

By Rob McFee, NEOEA President

Winter break is the light at the end of the proverbial tunnel—a hard-earned, well-deserved break, a time to recharge our batteries. Non-educators do not understand how this time is so vital to our mental health and the health of our students. Students will use this time to reconnect with friends, stay up late, go to the movies, and play on their game systems late into the night. The rest of us will sum up winter break with three words: leave me alone!

I'm kidding, of course, mostly kidding anyway. Some of us may use this time to plan future lessons, to grade papers, or to work on professional development. I am simultaneously in awe of you while also having feelings of hopeless inadequacy in myself! However, I will quickly get over it knowing that I also have plans to use this time wisely.

My first strategic priority this winter break is to be able to squeeze every ounce of sleep out of my pillow as I can. I plan to sleep in late, go to bed early, and, please do not judge, I may have several

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naps scheduled. I also look forward to the opportunity for a few impromptu naps where I will just go with the flow.

My second strategic priority is to keep my self-expectations very low and attainable. I intend to wear nothing but sweatpants and long sleeve t-shirts during this time of relaxation. Some days, it may be the actual same sweats and t-shirt from the previous day—again, no judging please! For the actual big event where family comes over, I will at least put on a clean t-shirt and maybe even socks. If they truly love me, they will understand.

My third strategic priority will be to avoid people (other than family) as much as possible. I may or may not answer my phone, but please don't be offended. After two years of frantically putting out fires everywhere we go, some well-deserved time away from the chaos has been well earned. Our brains have been conditioned like Pavlov's dogs to jump every time that phone rings. We owe it to ourselves to simply unplug, at least for a short time.

My fourth strategic priority will be to keep all decision-making to a minimum. *Psychology Today* reports that normal humans make about 35,000 decisions per day. Acknowledging the fact that educators are not normal humans, I believe we can multiply that number by a factor of 12 as a median number of decisions made during a school day. With this in mind, the biggest decision I plan to make over winter break will be whether to watch my Netflix movie from the bed or my recliner.

My fifth and final strategic priority will be to harbor absolutely zero guilt. I will look at that bag in the corner of my office with all of those papers to grade. On the very last day of break, I will still be hoping for a miracle that those papers will grade themselves, but I will not feel guilty in the least when I open it up that first day back and see them still waiting for my attention. After all, I have been here many times before.

These five priorities for me are to help facilitate my ultimate goal. That goal is to return from winter break and come back to school with a renewed energy and appreciation for what I have been privileged to do for over 30 years. A career where I get to work with some of the best professionals who are so giving of themselves. Where I get to make a difference in the lives of my students. A difference that will stay with them far into the future. By the time you read this, we will be back to the noise, chaos, and constant multitasking of a typical school day. I hope your break was everything you hoped for! Me, I am just now turning on the ringer on my phone.

NEOEA, together we are strong! *Rob*



With the Winter Olympics coming up, members got a chance to throw a rock at the house, but didn't hog it, as they enjoyed a first—curling—at one of our NEOEA Day programs.



One of our service projects on NEOEA Day was volunteering at the Cleveland Children's Book Bank. See page 8 for more photos of the sessions held at our annual namesake day on October 8.



Join us for our annual Megaconference on Saturday, March 5—all from the comfort of your own home! Through Whova you'll see sessions on leadership, personal, and professional development. We'll also have photo contests, prizes, and more. Sessions and their descriptions are on pages 5-7.

## District News

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

Congratulations to **Lori Weigand** from **Revere EA**, 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: **Two of our members were honored as ULA Unsung Heroes: what is the official name of ULA?**

We'll welcome all entries, but to be considered for the gift card, the winner needs to answer by Friday, February 18. To answer, go online to <https://tinyurl.com/NEOEA2022-01>.

Thank you to all who have participated!

### Five Star Award

By Barb Armour, NEOEA Public Relations Committee

The NEOEA Five Star Award was developed by the Public Relations Committee and has been a continuing local award since 2001. The Five Star Award highlights the activism of the locals in NEOEA shown by their participation in Representative Assemblies, member education opportunities, political action, and applying for grants for the locals.

Not only are these activities ones that will get recognition for the local, but these activities are also an actual benefit for members. Grants! Member education! What great opportunities!

And attending the Representative Assemblies for NEOEA and OEA and participating in the governing bodies, making decisions, and networking with other educators from all around Ohio is so valuable. This Five Star Award is just the cherry on top for doing what we all need to be doing in our Union. *Strive for Five!*

*Find additional information, ideas for grants, and the application forms for all the awards on the NEOEA website, [neoea.org](http://neoea.org), under the "Awards and Grants" tab.*

### Is Your School Green?



One of last year's winners—  
Tim Pira from Madison EA

NEOEA's Green School Award honors schools within local affiliates that are leaders in environmental education. **The winning school(s) will receive a cash award.** To receive the NEOEA Green

School Award, a school building that is part of a local association needs to demonstrate having met at least one criterion in each of the objective areas.

Examples of activities and documents verifying that your school is an NEOEA Green School are listed on the form, available at [neoea.org/files/GreenSchoolAward.pdf](http://neoea.org/files/GreenSchoolAward.pdf). If you are uncertain about the activities at your school or about the appropriate documentation, please contact Melisa Norton of the Environmental Concerns Committee at [melisalison@gmail.com](mailto:melisalison@gmail.com). Applications are due by Tuesday, February 8, 2022.

## Winter Calendar

**Tuesday, January 25**  
Leadership Summit

**Saturday, February 5**  
ESP Virtual Conference

**Saturday, March 5**  
Megaconference

**Monday, March 21**  
Legislative Receptions

**Saturday, April 9**  
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)

- Communications Contest
- Community Involvement Grant
- ESP Virtual Conference
- Green School Award
- Leadership Summit
- Megaconference
- NEOEA Friend of Education
- Nomination Form/Letter of Intent for Elections at the Spring 2022 RA
- Positive Image Award
- PR Mini-Grant

## Social Media

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

[neoea44124](https://www.instagram.com/neoea44124)

[@NEOEA](https://twitter.com/NEOEA)

## Fun Fact

The first teacher elected president of NEOTA—in 1942—was Alma Zinninger of Canton. Before this, all the presidents of NEOTA were administrators.

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

Rob McFee, President  
Melanie Hameed, President-elect  
Lillian Tolbert, Past President  
Suzie Neff, Recording Secretary  
Mary Alice Conkey, Executive Director  
Linda Grunden, Executive Assistant and Editor

Address all correspondence to the NEOEA Office, 6001 Landerhaven Drive, Suite D, Mayfield Heights, Ohio 44124-4190. Views are not necessarily those of NEOEA, the editor, or the officers and Board of Directors.

Address email for *News & Views* to [desk@neoea.org](mailto:desk@neoea.org).

### Summary: NEOEA Representative Assembly November 6, 2021 (virtual)

NEOEA held the fall meeting of its Representative Assembly virtually on Saturday, November 6.

The Representative Assembly (RA) is the top governing body of NEOEA, following a governance structure similar to the National Education Association and the Ohio Education Association, with which NEOEA is affiliated. Representation is proportional: each local is allotted at least two delegates at NEOEA's RA, and larger locals are allotted more delegates.

The 239 delegates and 18 guests present were greeted by Rob McFee, President of NEOEA.

Presiding at the first of the RAs in his fourth year of office, NEOEA President Rob McFee acknowledged the service veterans present. President McFee addressed the assembly with the traditional presidential remarks. He ended his remarks with a recorded message in which he spoke of the many

changes this world, this organization, and he himself have been through during his lifetime. At the end, he included an inspirational video.

In a fund-raiser conducted during the Legislative Committee's report at the Representative Assembly, delegates donated \$3,985 to the OEA Fund.

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee presented several proposed amendments to the NEOEA Constitution, which will be voted on at the Spring 2022 RA. Amendment 1 makes changes in language to recognize current practice. These changes do not alter NEOEA practice. Amendment 2 changes the method of taking a secret ballot so that the ballot can be conducted outside the time and place that the Representative Assembly is in session.

At the recommendation of the Resolutions Committee, delegates enacted the NEOEA Resolutions for

2020-21. NEOEA's new resolutions document includes 181 statements setting forth Association principles on topics identified in the organization's Constitution. Delegates approved three new resolutions: in section C – Historic Preservation, another section C – Vaccinations, and in section F – Workplace Accommodations for Lactating Employees.

Jen Hein (Brunswick ESP Assn.) was elected by acclamation to fill the vacancy for NEOEA Unit 9 West Representative.

Northeastern Ohio delegates to the OEA Representative Assembly met in caucus as preparation for the OEA RA when it meets on December 4.

Delegates received reports from OEA President Scott DiMauro, OEA Vice President Jeff Wensing, and OEA Secretary-Treasurer Mark Hill.

The NEOEA Representative Assembly meets again on Saturday, April 9, 2022.

### NEOEA Seeks Candidates

Local delegates will have plenty of decisions this spring. Nine positions will be filled in election at the NEOEA Representative Assembly on Saturday, April 9, 2022.

- NEOEA President-elect
- NEOEA ESP Representative at-large
- NEOEA Unit 1 Representative
- NEOEA Unit 4 Representative
- NEOEA Unit 7 Representative

- NEOEA Unit 9 West Representative
- OEA/NEOEA Unit 2 Representative
- OEA/NEOEA Unit 5 Representative
- OEA/NEOEA Unit 8 Representative

The online version of the form ([neoea.org/MemberData/Nomination\\_Spring2022.pdf](https://neoea.org/MemberData/Nomination_Spring2022.pdf)) includes a list of the locals comprising each electoral unit. To access the form, be sure to "Join NEOEA Online" if you don't yet have a password.

Members interested in serving in any of these positions should submit a letter of intent to the NEOEA office by Wednesday, February 23, 2022.



### College Now is Recruiting Volunteers

College Now Greater Cleveland is recruiting volunteers with a college degree for a virtual opportunity to mentor college scholarship recipients starting in the 2022-2023 academic year. Students are from Northeast Ohio and are receiving a College Now or a Say Yes Cleveland scholarship. Join over 2,000 professionals from Greater Cleveland in making a difference by mentoring!

As a mentor, you message your mentee twice a month and meet or connect virtually three times a year. Mentors

provide advice, guidance, and support to students, many of whom are first in their families to attend college. According to Mary Alice Conkey, our Executive Director and a College Now mentor, "It's a great way to give back, while not requiring a huge time commitment. Others helped me to get where I am, and I wanted to pay it forward. This program lets me do just that." Indeed, such a small investment of time pays huge dividends—College Now students graduate at nearly twice the rate of their

peers nationally!

By signing up today, you can help ensure that these ambitious students from Northeast Ohio have the support they need to succeed. Apply at [tinyurl.com/GC-CollegeNow](https://tinyurl.com/GC-CollegeNow) by April 1 to be considered for a match in summer 2022. Once your application is complete, you will be contacted about the next steps. Contact Madeline Rife [mrife@collegenowgc.org](mailto:mrife@collegenowgc.org) or 216.635.0163 for more information.

## Representative Assembly Honors Leading Locals

In 2001, NEOEA's Public Relations Committee and Executive Committee created the "Five Star Local Award" to recognize local affiliates that set an example of engagement with the Association at large.

In order to win the award, local affiliates participated in a variety of activities offered by NEOEA and the Ohio Education Association. Those activities involved:

- professional and leadership training for local members;
- accessing resources provided to the local affiliate by the larger organization;
- meeting with colleagues in neighboring associations;
- involving members in the Association's legislative program; and
- representing their members at Representative Assemblies.

Five Star Locals receive a certificate honoring their accomplishment along with a check.

Of NEOEA's 184 locals, 103 have received the designation award at least once, and three locals have qualified all twenty times: Euclid TA, Painesville City TA, and Twinsburg EA.

Each year's Five Star Locals are honored by the Representative Assembly in the following fall; on November 6, the RA honored the 32 locals who earned this recognition for 2020-21; they constitute over 17% of NEOEA's local affiliates.

Following are the newest winners. (# Indicates local earned all of the six stars available.)



Austintown EA	Cuyahoga Falls EA	Madison EA	Sheffield-Sheffield Lake TA
Bay TA	East Cleveland EA #	Maple Hts. TA #	Southeast Local District TA
Bedford EA	Elyria EA	Medina City TA	Stow TA
Campbell EA	Euclid TA	Mentor Class. Emp.	Tallmadge TA
Cardinal EA	Field Local TA #	Newton Falls ACE #	Twinsburg EA #
Champion EA #	Garfield EA #	Niles EA	Waterloo EA
Clearview EA #	Howland Classroom TA	Painesville City TA #	Westlake TA
Columbia Local EA	Lorain EA	Riverside Local EA	Willoughby-Eastlake TA

## Delegates Honor Eight Locals in Our Communications Contest

The annual Communications Contest is a project of NEOEA's Public Relations Committee. At the fall Representative Assembly, delegates honored winners of the Communications Contest for this past year.

As the Outstanding Communication for 2020-21, delegates recognized *Akron Association of Classified Personnel*, prepared by Akron ACP's **Rene Garrett and Dorothy Christian**, and presented the local with a \$100 check.



**Two locals received \$50 for their Awards for Excellence:**

Bedford EA (large local winner): *BEA Beacon* – **Trish Duncan**  
Niles EA (medium local winner): *NEA News* – **Melissa Ciminero**

**Five Honorable Mentions received a certificate:**

Chagrin Falls EA: *CFEA News* – **Lisa Salyers**  
Lorain EA: *The Profession* – **Julie Garcia**  
Madison EA: *MEA Newsletter* – **Julie Watt**  
Niles EA: *NEA News* – **Melissa Ciminero**  
Painesville City TA: *PCTA Newsletter* – **Carol Peterson**  
Strongsville EA: *As We SEA It...* – **Kristin Russ**

*Congratulations to these editors and the locals they serve!*

## Legislative Committee Recognizes Leaders in OEA's FCPE Fundraising

Thank you to all of the delegates at the NEOEA RA on November 6 who contributed to the OEA Fund. We raised \$3,985! Also at the RA the Legislative Committee recognized locals in each unit who are leaders in two categories for contributions to the OEA Fund.

**Locals with the highest dollar contributions per member:** Brunswick EA, Cardinal EA, Champion EA, Clearview EA, East Cleveland EA, Field Local TA, Lakewood TA, LEADD, Twinsburg EA, Wellington SSP, and YSU-ACE.

**Locals with the most improved dollar contributions per**

**member:** Akron Assn. of Class. Pers., Brunswick EA, Canfield EA, Howland Classroom TA, Lakewood TA, Lorain EA, Maple Hts. TA, Newton Falls ACE, Painesville City TA, Tallmadge TA, and YSU-ACE.

*Thank you, and congratulations!*

The Legislative Committee will be sponsoring a session entitled "Organizing and Engagement with the OEA Fund" at Megaconference this year. We hope to see you on March 5!

We also wanted to remind you that the NEOEA Legislative Receptions will be held on March 21.

# MEGACONFERENCE 2022

Saturday, March 5 — 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. — Virtual

NEOEA invites you to our Megaconference, presented by NEOEA's Environmental Concerns, ESP Organizing, Leadership Development, Legislative, Minority Organizing, NEOEA-R Organizing, Personal Welfare and Financial Planning, Professional Development, Public Relations, and Social and Human Concerns Committees.

The 2022 Megaconference is **free** for our members and features twelve simultaneous breakouts in three one-hour time slots. This year it will be presented virtually and is open to NEOEA members

only. For the latest information about Megaconference, go to [neoea.org/Education-Union/Conferences](https://neoea.org/Education-Union/Conferences).

One semester graduate credit is also available for NEOEA's Megaconference

2022 through Lake Erie College. For more information, go to [neoea.org/files/GraduateCredit.pdf](https://neoea.org/files/GraduateCredit.pdf).

## 9:00-9:50 SESSIONS

- 9A, What Is This Self-Care We Speak Of?** Self-care is defined as the practice of taking action to preserve and improve one's own health. Educators will learn some tricks of the trade for self-care in this session that you will be able to implement in your own life immediately.
- 9B, Student Loan Forgiveness: New Reforms Give a Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity for Borrowers:** This year the US Dept. of Ed. announced major reforms to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program which will streamline the process for new borrowers AND provide a limited-time opportunity for more than 550,000 borrowers to achieve forgiveness much faster. This session shares the latest information about loan forgiveness and how the NEA Student Debt Navigator, a free tool provided by NEA Member Benefits, can help.
- 9C, Representation Matters: Identifying with Films:** Engage your students by exploring a range of different film media and inviting an open dialogue about the content. Media literacy is a focus of the Cleveland International Film Festival's educational program for students: <https://www.clevelandfilm.org/festival/special-programs/filmslam>.
- 9D, Recruiting and Running Member Candidates for Local School Boards:** More and more our local school board elections have become high-profile targets for anti-public education forces looking to weaken the power of local associations. Building off the successes in 2021 and previous years, we need to recruit and run pro-public education candidates in 2023 and beyond. Join Jeff, Dan, and Dan for a practical discussion about how to turn the idea of running into a seat on the Board of Ed. Spoiler Alert! - You'll have LOTS of help!
- 9E, SERS Overview and Update:** A session with information related to system funding from member and employer payroll deductions, retirement and health care eligibility, and benefit calculation formulas.
- 9F, Ways to Save Your Dollars:** This comprehensive workshop provides useful information about financial planning by addressing the main areas of financial planning: cash management, tax planning, risk management, retirement planning, investment planning, and long-term care.
- 9G, Show Us How to Get the Money:** This primer will focus on how to use information in the General Fund Analysis (GFA) to bargain economic issues. This session will also include some creative approaches to maximizing member compensation.
- 9H, Overworked and Overbooked: Understanding Caseload, Workload, and the Calculator Process:** From large caseloads to long lists of duties, the responsibilities for special educators continue to increase in our school districts. Did you know that Ohio law requires school districts to determine the caseload of a special educator based upon the individual workload of that educator, and provides a calculator that helps special educators to determine if their workload aligns with their caseload? During this session you will learn the difference between caseload and workload, explore the calculator, and discuss what could be bargained to ensure that special educators have enough time to meet the needs of their students in a compliant manner.
- 9I, Hot Seat!** While all disciplinary situations are unique, we often find ourselves as union representatives being asked similar questions by members facing potential discipline. This session offers an overview of some commonly-encountered aspects of member discipline including rights to representation, roles of OEA Plan Attorneys, specifics of paid administrative leave, progressive discipline, personnel files, and related topics.
- 9J, Presiding 101:** Meetings of members, executive boards, and committees all have one thing in common: they need skilled, confident leaders. This session will focus on the knowledge and skills presiders need to enhance decision-making, increase efficiency, and reduce frustration in different kinds of meetings.
- 9K, Beyond the Reusable Water Bottle:** Take a virtual tour of a home that has made some small swaps to make for greener living. The swaps are affordable and achievable with a few simple habit changes. Let the Environmental Concerns Committee guide you through some simple substitutions. There will be prizes for participants.
- 9L, The Ultimate Duo: Creating Trauma-Informed and Culturally-Competent Classrooms:** The effects of trauma can ultimately influence a child's educational performance, social interactions, and health development. When fostering a trauma-informed classroom, considering a student's cultural needs is just as important in creating a safe space for learning. In this session, participants will explore the connection between trauma and culture, learn strategies for supporting students affected by trauma, and understand the importance of student-specific self-care plans for classroom success.

## 10:00-10:50 SESSIONS

- 10A, High Quality Say What?** OTES 2.0 requires teachers to have two pieces of High Quality Student Data starting next year. In this session, the criteria to be named an HQSD instrument will be reviewed as well as conversation about what you already have that may be claimed as a High Quality Student Data instrument. It's easier than you might think.
- 10B, Tech in Classrooms:** In this session you will discover two different platforms—Peardeck and Formative—that will help your students to remain engaged in your lessons and allow you to easily create and grade quality asynchronous assignments. You will learn how to create slide decks and assignments that include interactive questions and polls as well as how to track student responses in real time throughout your lesson. Simplify your workload and magnify your impact with Peardeck and Formative!
- 10-11C, I See Your True Colors Shining Through:** True Colors is a fun and engaging personality assessment that will give participants the opportunity to learn their True Colors spectrum. During this double session, we will explore the strengths, values, stressors, and keys to personal success for each primary color. We will introduce the keys to successful teaching by learning to identify individual teaching styles and personal-

- ities, which will assist participants in creating a positive learning relationship with all students. This session will provide tools for participants to navigate difficult topics such as gaining cooperation, disciplining, and troubleshooting for students based on their primary True Colors.
- 10D, Selling Solidarity:** Do your members really know what the Association does for them and all the advantages of belonging? Are they proud to be Association members? How do district parents and other community members view staff and the Association? Come and find out how to “sell” your association to members and to the community and how to build solidarity both within the local and to the wider district community. Experts from OEA will be on hand to help you with ideas for marketing your Association to members and the community.
- 10E, Introducing Ohio Deferred Compensation:** Ohio Deferred Compensation is a supplemental 457(b) retirement plan for all Ohio public employees with low plan expenses. The savings plan allows participants to supplement retirement/pension benefits by saving and investing pre-tax dollars through payroll contributions. Contributions and any earnings are tax-deferred until money is withdrawn. Roth Plans are also available from select public employers.
- 10F, Purchase Your Service Credits:** Many members have service from other states, parochial schools, city, county and municipal employment and the military. The program will outline eligibility, costs, payment plans, and the timing of credit purchases. SERS and OPERS credit purchase standards are similar, and members of these retirement systems are welcome to attend.
- 10G, COVID and School Funding:** This session will explain how federal relief impacts Ohio schools, the regulations that our districts must comply with, and how you can access information about your district’s use of federal COVID relief funds. This session will include a demonstration of accessing a district’s funding application.
- 10H, Let’s Mediate Before We Arbitrate:** Mediating a grievance before going to arbitration saves time, money, and keeps the parties in control of resolving the grievance. In this interactive webinar, federal mediators will walk you through the grievance mediation process and share best practices for resolving grievances through mediation.
- 10 I, What’s the Legal Update?** Find out the latest developments on the legal front. You will hear an OEA attorney versed in the latest ways to protect yourself and your members. The content of legal updates depends on legal developments at the time of the update.
- 10J, Assembly Power:** Effective organizations have leaders on the floor as well as in the president’s chair. This session will help provide the knowledge and skills you need to exercise your rights and provide leadership at a meeting—whether that assembly is an RA, your local membership, or a committee.
- 10K, Don’t Be Late to Stop the Hate:** Kari Beery, an educator in Mayfield Heights, will share her expertise with the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage’s free Stop the Hate curriculum. This past year Mayfield High School was one of the Stop the Hate Schools of the Year. This unique program has given the participants life-changing experiences and tapped into their creative side to produce projects that are both helpful and rewarding for all involved. Kari’s class won the Youth Sing-out Songwriting Contest, and Kari was named one of two Stop the Hate Teachers of the Year.
- 10L, Special Education: Advocating for the Information and Support You Need to Thrive on the Job:** ESPs are critical to the academic and behavioral success of special education students. Too frequently, however, ESPs are asked to support students with little training or information from their school district partners. During this session we will discuss how to advocate for the training and working conditions that are needed to ensure that ESPs have the knowledge and tools needed to best support themselves and their students. *(Session open to all educators.)*

## 11:00-11:50 SESSIONS

- 11A, Hackers, and Spammers, and Malware – Oh My! Protect Yourself Online (without Deleting Everything!):** Today’s online world is fraught with danger. Hackers are hiding behind every email, web link, and attachment. Keeping yourself secure online does not have to be complicated or difficult though! Come and learn some of the best ways to keep yourself safe against today’s online threats.
- 11B, The Art of Listening to Create Change:** Anyone can contribute to a culture of inclusion. Before we take the step to welcome others, we must first reflect on our own lived experiences and how those experiences shape how we interpret the world. Facilitated by OEA Organizer Makia Burns and OEA Education Policy and Practice Consultant Daria DeNoia, participants in this session will explore their social identities and reflect on how they impact their personal and professional lives.
- 10-11C, I See Your True Colors Shining Through:** *continued from 10:00.*
- 11D, Who Is Undermining Public Education?** You’ve probably heard about the Koch family and the Waltons, but the web of families and organizations working to undermine our work as public educators is much broader than you may realize. This session provides a look into the systemic way many well-funded corporate entities are working to undermine public education and weaken labor unions and how we’re fighting back.
- 11E, Health Care Terminology:** This session will cover basic health insurance terminology and also provide information about trends in Ohio public education on issues like deductibles, plan design, and spousal carve-out.
- 11F, STRS Overview and Update:** This session will offer a general overview of the benefits provided under each STRS Ohio retirement plan during a member’s career and retirement and addresses the topics of: service retirement eligibility criteria, benefit payment options, survivor benefits, and disability benefits. An update on issues before the STRS Board for consideration will also be presented.
- 11G, OTES 2.0: Everything You Wanted to Know but Didn’t Ask:** This session will review the changes to the law and required framework and discuss the “educational why” of changes a local may want to consider within their Collective Bargaining Agreement and current evaluation procedures.
- 11H, Clear Channels of Communication:** From major media interviews to ten-minute meetings with fellow members to quick conversations with parents at the grocery store, educators are being asked to weigh in on the big issues every day. Learn how to develop a powerful message for any situation and how to effectively deliver it to a wide range of internal and external audiences.
- 11 I, What’s the Legal Update?** Find out the latest developments on the legal front. You will hear an OEA attorney versed in the latest ways to protect yourself and your members. The content of legal updates depends on legal developments at the time of the update.
- 11J, Rethinking the NEA Retirement Program to Create New Options for Bargaining and Member Retirement Security:** Some members are so stressed they are seeking a way to retire earlier with a reduced benefit; with no COLA on the horizon for retirees, surviving retirement might be just as stressful as continuing to work. The NEA Retirement Program may have solutions to help create ways for compensation to be added in bargaining that is less likely to create a backlash in communities and to create ways for members to ensure a more economically-stable retirement. This session will share new, creative, and somewhat “outside the box” possibilities that might be achieved using the NEA Retirement Program.
- 11K, Organizing and Engagement with the OEA Fund:** With all the political decisions impacting public schools, members are getting more engaged in political action and advocacy. Participants in this section will be provided with an overview and introduction to how they can get engaged with OEA’s political action and advocacy. Join us to learn about the OEA Fund and its uses, OEA’s screening and endorsement process, how your local can engage in OEA’s political advocacy, and some messaging to counter anti-public education rhetoric at the local level.
- 11L, Supporting Students on the Gender Spectrum:** Are you wanting to better support youth in the LGBTQ+ community, specifically those who are trans or gender expansive? Staff from Colors+ will be talking about gender and how to be better allies and advocates for all youth. Come with your questions and learn in this interactive training together.

# MEGACONFERENCE 2022

## Megaconference — March 5, 2022

Mail to NEOEA Megaconference, 6001 Landerhaven Drive, Suite D, Mayfield Heights, OH 44124-4190 OR email it to [desk@neoea.org](mailto:desk@neoea.org). Questions: Please email us at [desk@neoea.org](mailto:desk@neoea.org). For a Word-fillable form, go to [neoea.org/files/Megaconference.rtf](http://neoea.org/files/Megaconference.rtf).

### Registrations due by Friday, February 18, 2022

★ ★ ★ Register by the deadline to be entered into the drawing for one of our FIVE NEOEA prize baskets. ★ ★ ★

Megaconference is for NEOEA members only. Participation requires use of the Whova app on an electronic device.  
**Registration and directions will be confirmed by email on Thursday, February 24.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Local association (full name, please) \_\_\_\_\_

Non-work email address \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_ First-time attendee? \_\_\_\_\_

Session choices (include letter): 9:00 workshop \_\_\_\_\_ 10:00 workshop \_\_\_\_\_ 11:00 workshop \_\_\_\_\_

## Workshops and Conferences

### ESP Virtual Conference

Join us at our Education Support Professionals Virtual Conference on Saturday, February 5. Whether you are a secretary, custodian, food service worker, aide, bus driver, president of your local, building representative, or member—this session is for you.

Our topic is “An Introduction to Trauma-Informed Care,” and we’ll hear why this is such an important issue for ESP from Mary Hargreaves, Vice Chairperson of the Ohio Association of Education Support Professionals.

Participants will look at the Adverse Childhood Experience

Study and the long-lasting effects trauma has on the brain. The session will explore what educators can do to heal the brain, such as creating trauma-sensitive learning environments and forming meaningful relationships with students.

More details and the registration form are available at [neoea.org/files/ESPconference.pdf](http://neoea.org/files/ESPconference.pdf).



### Leadership Summit

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, January 25, and join your fellow local leaders in the region for our annual Leadership Summit—virtual this year.

Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in three distinct sessions where you will gather ideas to easily implement in your own local.

- Community Support – It’s a Two-Way Street
- Productive Meetings in Just Five Minutes
- Time Management – How to Rank and Prioritize Your Tasks

We’ll start the Summit with some trivia games and giveaways and then get to the heart of the Summit with three break-out rooms.

This is a Presidents Plus Two event, so each president may register three people, which can include the President (or designee) and two other members. Admission is free but registration is required.

To access the form, be sure to “Join NEOEA Online” if you don’t yet have a password. The form is available at [neoea.org/MemberData/Summit.pdf](http://neoea.org/MemberData/Summit.pdf).

## Labor Lines

*The Labor Movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. — Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## Photos from NEOEA Day 2021



Exploring Karamu House: A Cleveland Staple



Greater Cleveland Food Bank



Downtown Highlights Walking Tour

North Eastern Ohio Education Association  
6001 Landerhaven Drive, Suite D  
Mayfield Heights, OH 44124-4190



Green School Tour



Fall Wreath Show Off!



Creativity and Compassion at the Akron Art Museum

## Brag Box

### Unsung Heroes of the Labor Movement

Each year, the United Labor Agency (ULA) recognizes a limited number of "Unsung Heroes of the Labor Movement." Unsung Heroes honored in recent years have included thirteen union activists from seven NEOEA locals. NEOEA was honored to submit two nominees for this award.

Audra Jantz-Oswald was nominated by Parma EA President Sue Messinger: *The respect Audra has throughout the district and the kindness she shows for others makes her the person others routinely seek out for advice. Parma*

*teachers know her as a quiet but consistent advocate for students and colleagues and that's why she is an Unsung Hero.*

Candi Peters was nominated by Cardinal EA President Kim Richards: *Candi views the union as her work family, which supports, encourages, and helps one another. She has committed herself to serving the Cardinal Education Association and creating a strong environment for all of us.*

The event was held November 18 at the Cleveland Museum of Art. As well as

honoring the nominees, the United Labor Agency celebrated their 50th Anniversary.

Thank you, Audra and Candi, for being our "Unsung Heroes"!



Audra Jantz-Oswald (left) and Candi Peters (right) with their awards from the Unsung Heroes Dinner.