

***Summary: NEOEA Representative Assembly
April 18, 2026
Olmsted Falls High School***

The North Eastern Ohio Education Association held the spring meeting of its Representative Assembly on Saturday, April 18.

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.

Presiding at her last RA, NEOEA President Sue Messinger greeted the 205 delegates and 34 guests present. She also recognized and thanked the NEOEA Past Presidents, new delegates, all committee members, and the NEOEA Board of Directors. She shared her thoughts these past few weeks as her final RA was approaching. She also reminisced that education was not her first career, and that she finally became a teacher in her 40's. Sue spoke of how her career is now winding down, but how she will always want to make a difference and continue to advocate for others.

Our Friend of Education Award winner is Amy Acton, candidate for Governor of Ohio. Dr. Acton gave a few remarks recognizing her husband, Eric, who has been a life-long educator, and also briefly described her time as Ohio Health Director and what led her on her path. She reflected on her childhood, which was not easy, and commented that public schools saved her life. She advocated for change in Ohio and for public servants who solve problems instead of making problems.

We also recognized our scholarship program recipients:

Graduate Program scholarship: Angela Conroy

ESP Advanced Training Program scholarship: Ljilana Ignjatovic

Brian McConnell Music Education scholarship: Joseph Bugos, who attended and gave a few words of thanks

In a fundraiser conducted during the Legislative Committee's report at the Representative Assembly, delegates donated \$4,243.76 to the OEA Fund.

Delegates elected two new officers to the NEOEA Board of Directors: in a contested race Jason Scherer (Field Local TA) was elected NEOEA President-elect, and Laura Ponsart (Fairview Park EA) was elected by acclamation as NEOEA Recording Secretary.

Some of the positions for representatives on the Board of Directors were filled by acclamation: Amanda Fehlbaum (YSU-OEA) as NEOEA Higher Education Representative at-Large, Bryan Bain (Willoughby-Eastlake TA) as OEA/NEOEA Unit 5 Representative, Marissa Platten (Austintown EA) as NEOEA Unit 5 Representative, Crystal Boyd Funderburk (Hudson EA) as NEOEA Unit 7 Representative, and Jerry Turillo (Boardman EA) as NEOEA Unit 8 Representative.

There are two new Directors: Suzie Neff (Columbia Local EA) as NEOEA Unit 4 Representative and Benjamin Beukeman (Euclid TA) as OEA/NEOEA Unit 3 Representative.

For statewide positions to be elected by the OEA Representative Assembly in May, delegates endorsed Tonya Horn for OEA ESP Director #1. They did not make an endorsement for OEA Director at-Large #1 and took no position on the race for NEA Director #1. Delegates were reminded that this past fall they had endorsed Amy Butcher for NEA Director #2.

Delegates received reports from OEA President Jeff Wensing, OEA Vice President Dan Greenberg, and OEA Secretary-Treasurer Rob McFee.

The 2026-27 Budget was presented and was adopted by unanimous consent.

Delegates honored the winner of the Green School Award for 2025-26: Angie DeLeon and the Amherst TA. The local received a \$100 cash prize.

Delegates also honored the winners of the Positive Image Awards for 2025-26. Each local association received a certificate and a check for \$150:

- Kelly DiCato from Chardon EA for Care Closet;
- Euclid Teachers' Association for Food Bank Volunteers
- Chris Forgacs from Garfield EA for Garfield HS Veterans Wall
- Jenna Hogue from Lakeview TA for Holiday Give-Back
- Lakeview Teachers' Association for School Board Candidate Night
- Laura Wieland from Tallmadge TA for Shop with a Cop
- Trumbull Career and Technical Center Education Association for TCTC Tales
- Kristina Edmison from Vermilion TA for Veterans Lunch

Northeastern Ohio delegates to the Ohio Representative Assembly met in caucus to review procedures before the OEA RA when it meets on May 8-9. The delegates also voted to support the proposed changes to the OEA Resolutions document.

The Representative Assemblies for 2026-27 will meet on November 7, 2026, at Brookside High School in Sheffield-Sheffield Lake and on April 17, 2027, at Orange High School.