

The following actions were taken by the Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center Governing Board at their regular meeting held December 17, 2024.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by President Deborah Gerken. All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

REPORTS:

•OSBA LEGISLATIVE LIAISON: Mr. Brian Baker reported on several legislative items. The 135th Ohio General Assembly is expected to close its legislative work this week. The House Primary and Secondary Education Committee will not meet again this year. The Senate Education Committee has one committee hearing scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 17. A few education-related bills are still pending and could receive action this week. HB 8 is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Education Committee. The bill would enact the "Parents' Bill of Rights," requiring public schools to adopt a policy on parental notification on student health and well-being and instructional materials with sexually explicit content. The bill was amended to require districts to adopt a policy allowing for release time religious instruction (RTRI) and defines core curriculum as "reading and English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and health education." House Speaker Jason Stephens has repeatedly stated that he wants a "clean" bill, meaning that he doesn't want the bill to pick up amendments that do not pertain to the title. Even if HB 8 doesn't move during this General Assembly, the bill will likely be reintroduced in the next General Assembly. SB 295 would require schools in the bottom 5% of the performance index and bottom 10% of the progress measure for three consecutive years to choose to either close or implement an alternative to closure. SB 295 is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Education Committee. The bill could be amended in HB 206. Like other education-related bills, if it fails to be enacted during this General Assembly, it will likely be introduced in the next General Assembly. HB 206 would make changes regarding the expulsion of a student from a public school for actions that endanger other students' or school employees' health and safety. HB 206 could pick up Senate amendments as they look for an education-related vehicle to address any items the Senate wants to take legislative action on during this General Assembly. However, the House will need to concur with any Senate changes. Mr. Baker closed by sharing that Lame Duck is always a flurry of activity, and the remaining hours of a General Assembly can see unexpected action or inaction.

•OSBA STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT LIAISON: Dr. Christine Smallman shared several items related to student achievement. A recent Columbus City Schools' Teacher Chat podcast emphasized proactive strategies in special education, such as accessible technologies and tailored teacher training to support diverse learning environments. These strategies are vital in ensuring equity and inclusion for students with disabilities. Physics professor Andrew Vanden Heuvel has turned Fortnite into a tool for science education by creating an immersive physics laboratory. The virtual lab allows students to explore concepts such as speed, acceleration and free fall through interactive experiments, demonstrating the potential of video games as educational simulations. There is a shift in how parents assess their children's academic performance, with communication from teachers now trusted more than grades as indicated by a national survey of 20,000 parents. The survey reflects concerns about grade inflation; and the increased use of online communication tools by teachers. Subitizing is the ability to instantly recognize quantities without counting. This math teaching method is gaining popularity in pre-K and some early grades as a way to develop number sense, as studies suggest that students who can subitize often have better math performance and will better understand more complex math concepts. However, empirical evidence is limited.

•CFO/TREASURER: Mrs. Abby Lorenzen reported that the annual insurance open enrollment was completed on November 13. There was slight movement between plans, and five more employees picked up medical while seven employees picked up dental. PowerSchool has given a 20% discount on implementation and 40% discount on their Allvue product. Allvue will provide access to tools for allocating and managing budgets and resources, including real-time access to all budgeting information, along with analytics and dashboards to track and manage spending. This will empower supervisors and administration. Mrs. Lorenzen recommended entering a depository agreement with Premier Bank. They have waived all fees and will be giving a better interest rate than StarOhio. Mrs. Lorenzen has been working with the administrative team on mid-year program cost estimates. Member districts will receive their estimates on January 14. The next finance committee meeting will be held at 5:45 on January 21.

•DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION: Mrs. Jill Gilliland reported on several items. The band Ten Talents performed at the IEC on December 4th. They will return on two more occasions in December to do songwriting

lessons with middle and high school students. This program is covered by a grant obtained by Relevant Speakers. Paulding County Opportunity Center (PCOC) teachers visited the IEC on Dec. 2nd. PCOC currently has 12 staff members, and they have all visited the IEC to learn more about our program. Recent changes to the Early Childhood Education (ECE) grant rules have affected our ability to utilize all awarded grant slots for students. Our organization submitted a letter to the Department of Children & Youth to explain how the new regulations are affecting our ability to utilize the ECE grant. Special Education Model Policies and Procedures are now available on the ODEW website. School districts are required to upload verification of local school board approval by March 30, 2025.

•DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Mr. Andy Hunter reported that the Regional Data Leads conducted full-day training sessions for teachers, focusing on strategies to better utilize value-added data to enhance instruction. They also provided training for administrators, empowering them to use this data for informed decision-making within their schools. Additionally, he shared that the curriculum department hosted Sara Levitt for an ELL training session titled "Supporting Newcomers." The session was well-attended, with participants providing overwhelmingly positive feedback. Finally, it was noted that quiz season is officially underway, with several quiz leagues and tournaments hosted across the region. Julie Weber has taken the lead in organizing and facilitating these events. Her exceptional planning and coordination have ensured their success, earning deep appreciation from all participants.

•DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY & OPERATIONS: Mr. Chad Rex reported that Learn21 has been selected to continue as our software development contractor for the online databases and applications that serve the special education and business offices. Mr. Rex is facilitating the scope of work and managing ongoing technical and communication activities. Mr. Rex shared that the kickoff meeting for the Cybersecurity Co-Pilot Program with NWOCA/DataServ went well. Kerri, Abby, and Mr. Rex attended the brief meeting, and he will be contacted with next steps. Mr. Rex has been working on E-Rate programming details to ensure the opportunity is leveraged as effectively as possible. He meets quarterly with the phishing campaign and training platform vendor. The testing campaign is distributed quarterly, and brief monthly training videos are emailed to every employee. The current "phish rate" for this quarter is 9%, which is below the education industry average of 13%. Great job to everyone! Mr. Rex coordinated a meeting with NWOCA's student data privacy consultant, Dawn Schiavone. The meeting provided an overview of S.B. 29, general student data privacy information, and next steps. Additionally, the ESC's ETLA membership has now been activated. This membership allows the ESC to leverage ATLAs efforts in obtaining data privacy agreements (DPAs) with software vendors. Mr. Rex met with the ETLA leadership team to initiate the membership and plans to discuss it further with the administrative team. Recently, Mr. Rex conducted a Smartboard training session with Raegan Keller and Dr. Sutton at IEC to support them with a multimedia project aimed at creating engaging and interactive experiences for their students. Mr. Rex and Mr. Corey Todd have developed plans for both the inventory project and the network closet project. These projects will be a primary focus over the next several weeks. Mr. Rex shared that the technology leader network meetings, held monthly, continue to thrive. The November meeting had a total of 32 attendees, with 19 attending in person and 13 joining remotely. Lastly, Mr. Rex shared that Mr. Larry Davis has been rebuilding the main office sink faucets, which is generating considerable cost savings. Further updates will be provided once the work is complete.

•Approved the CFO/Treasurer Consent Items:

- Minutes from the regular board meeting and the Finance Committee meeting held November 18, 2024
- Financial Transactions - appropriation modifications, transfers and advances, and monthly financial reports.

•Approved the CFO/Treasurer Recommendation Items:

- Depository agreement for the period of January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2029 with Premier Bank for Active and Interim Funds.

•Approved the Superintendent Consent Items:

•AGREEMENTS

-Henry County Common Pleas Court-Juvenile Division to provide to NwOESC, Attendance Officer Services for the period of 8/15/24-6/15/25.

-Johnson Controls to provide to NwOESC, Planned Service Agreement and Scope of Work for the period of 12/4/24-12/31/25.

-Learn21 to provide to NwOESC, Database Maintenance for the period of 1/1/25-6/30/25.

-PowerSchool to provide to NwOESC, Allvue Professional Services for the period of 12/17/24-9/30/29.

-NwOESC to provide to Montpelier Exempted Village Schools, Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer Search Services for the period of 12/01/24-position is finalized or until agreed upon by both parties to terminate services.

-NwOESC to provide to Napoleon Area City Schools, ELL Specialist Services for the period of 8/15/24-6/15/25.

-NwOESC to provide to Patrick Henry Local Schools, ESL Instructional Assistant Services for the period of 10/23/24-6/15/25.

-NwOESC to provide to Stryker Local Schools, Instructional Services at the Liberty Education Center for the 2024-25 academic year.

•Approved 2025 membership dues to Ohio School Board Association including subscription to School Management News.

•Approved participation in the OSBA Legal Assistance Fund Consultant Service Contract for the period of 1/1/25-12/31/25.

•Approved the Superintendent Recommendation Items:

•Approved Policy 2265 - Protections of Individual Beliefs, Affiliations, Ideals, or Principles of Political Movements or Ideology (New)

•Established the 2025 Organizational meeting: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at 6:00 PM at the NwOESC Conference Room with President Pro Tem, Mr. Ross Stambaugh.

• Approved Board Member Appreciation Proclamation: The Superintendent and Administrative Team recognizes each board member for their dedicated service to the NwOESC Governing Board, as January is Board Member Appreciation Month in the State of Ohio. We want to thank our Educational Service Center's governing board as well as those serving on area city, village, local, and joint vocational boards of education for their dedication, hard work, and commitment to molding an education system that meets the needs of both today's and tomorrow's children.

•Approved Personnel Consent Items:

•RESIGNATIONS

Heisinger, Kathleen, Paraprofessional-Effective 1/3/2025

•EMPLOYMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Certified Limited

Name	Contract	Length
Wolf, Phillip	CERT-1 YR	12/9/2024-7/31/2025

Classified Limited

Name	Contract	Length
Whitman Drewes, Lindsay	CLASS-1 YR	12/12/2024-7/31/2025

•Substitute Paraprofessionals

Phonepaseuth Dominique, Angela Ferrell, Connie Jacoby, Krista Kirsch, Misty Mekus, Jasey Spiess

•Substitute Teachers

Ethan Adams, Rea Beck, Natalie Bentz, Amaya Boyd, Lillian Burkholder, Hayden Dales, Denise Decker, Janelle Degraffenreid, Kaylee Dickinson, Madison Ducat, Angela Ferrell, Shalyn Findling, Adam Harr, Emily Harr, Austin Harvey, Connie Jacoby, Nicole Keller, Krista Kirsch, Coralee Masters, Makayla Mays, Misty Mekus, Creed Muehlfeld, Hayden Shultz, Ethan Siebenaler, Jaidah Torres, Leah Townsend, Taylor Waldron, Abby Wiemken

•Long-Term Substitute Paraprofessional & Teacher Rates

Established long-term substitute rates through Dedicated Staffing for paraprofessionals and teachers when the individual is covering for 5 or more days in a single opening.

•Student Teachers/Interns/Volunteers

Rose, Halie, Field Experience as a Western Michigan University student, Spring 2025, Placed with Matt Ferguson and Haley Schwab

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- The Consortium of State School Boards Association National Conference is being held March 21-23, 2025 in Atlanta Georgia.
- The next General Election will be held on November 4, 2025. Candidate Filing Deadline is August 6, 2025.

•**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Superintendent Kerri Weir reported on several items. The Montpelier Treasurer/CFO posting rolled out on 12/13/2024. It is anticipated that interviews will be done in February, and a new leader identified in March who will transition into the position over the summer/August 1 for the upcoming school year. The Coalition of Ohio Rural & Appalachian Schools (CORAS) held a regional meeting in Van Buren on 12/12/2024. The group has grown to over 80 districts (up from 50 last year) with Randy Gardner as our regional liaison. Priorities for the State Biennial Budget and other legislation include Fair School Funding implementation, transportation funding/overhaul, Early Childhood Education funding/grant processes, College Credit Plus cost reduction, school facilities expansion, and workforce development licensing flexibility for education. President Todd Hernandez of Northwest State Community College recently confirmed that the college will continue to fund the expense of College Credit Plus textbooks for any area HS students taking CCP classes through NSCC. His board and foundation believe that this approach reduces barriers related to access and strengthens partnerships with area districts. We appreciate this effort! NwOESC is excited to host the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce Director, Stephen D. Dackin, on Thursday, December 19th at NwOESC to share with our BAC members, community partners, business leaders, interested stakeholders, and ESC and area administrators his vision for K-12 public education and workforce development in Ohio. Thank you to Andy Hunter and Mike Remer for assisting in the planning. The NwOESC Main Office held several events recently in the spirit of the holidays. Thanks to Linda Schlosser for helping coordinate these activities spanning the week. Christmas Treat bags were delivered to all ESC staff. Thanks to the students who helped assemble the bags and to the staff who assisted and helped in the deliveries. Several of our student programs have held special events for the holidays including a gathering at the for students who receive hearing impairment program supports, a talent show at the Liberty Education Center, a combined Christmas party for students in our multiple disabilities' classrooms, and a Christmas breakfast celebration for the IEC students. The NwOESC Office will be closed to the public December 23 – January 3, 2025. Abby and I will be meeting with our Ohio Migrant Education Center (OMEC) Director, Jose Salinas, for a Year End Report and Updates in early January. New trends and/or developments in the migrant area will be shared.

•**Executive Session:** Entered into Executive Session for the purpose of consideration of the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee, or official. No action was taken upon exiting this session.

•**Adjournment:** As all the business of the evening was complete the meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m. The Organizational and Regular Meetings of the Board will take place on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center, 205 Nolan Parkway, Archbold, OH 43502.