

The following actions were taken by the Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center Governing Board at their regular meeting held March 24, 2026.

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

-The Treasurer administered the oath of office to Stephanie Parsons.

-Mr. Jim George was commended for achieving the 10 year milestone of board service. His leadership and service are appreciated. Jim was recognized recently at the OSBA Spring Conference in Liberty-Benton.

REPORTS:

•**OSBA LEGISLATIVE LIAISON:** Mr. Brian Baker reported on several legislative and state-level updates impacting education. He shared that the State Board of Education has appointed Philip Wagner, superintendent of Johnstown-Monroe Schools, as the new State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Wagner succeeds Paul Craft, who has transitioned to a role with the U.S. Department of Defense as Director of Education Activity. Mr. Baker also noted remarks from Governor Mike DeWine encouraging the legislature to advance House Bill 304, particularly provisions that would increase daily recess time from 30 minutes to 60 minutes for students in kindergarten through eighth grade, except on days when physical education is scheduled. Updates from the House Education Committee included continued hearings on Senate Bill 19, which would require districts to implement individualized mathematics improvement and monitoring plans for students receiving intervention services beginning in the 2025–2026 school year. The committee also held a fourth hearing on House Bill 661, which would prohibit middle and high school student-athletes from earning compensation related to their name, image, and likeness. Additionally, the committee unanimously passed House Bill 125, which expands allowable excused absences for students. Mr. Baker reported that the Senate Education Committee has begun hearing testimony on several House bills, including House Bill 326, which proposes changes related to the use of the Classic Learning Test as a college entrance exam. From the House Ways and Means Committee, Mr. Baker highlighted House Bill 598, which includes involvement from Representative Jim Hoops and would allow local governments to establish residential stability zones offering partial property tax exemptions for qualifying homeowners. He also noted House Bill 613, which proposes to establish a one-year deadline for decisions by the Ohio Board of Tax Appeals and outlines changes to the process for taxpayers to challenge certain decisions made by the tax commissioner. Mr. Baker also shared an update on House Bill 737, which has been introduced and referred to the House Ways and Means Committee. The bill would require cash payments made to state and local government entities to be rounded to the nearest nickel, reflecting the declining use of pennies in circulation. He noted that the proposal is in the early stages, and any potential implications for school-related transactions and local government operations will continue to be monitored.

•**CFO/TREASURER:** Mrs. Abby Lorenzen reported on several items. Districts continue to review and approve their 2026–2027 service agreements. Those approved at the local level are included on this month's consent agenda for Board approval, with the remaining agreements anticipated to be presented at next month's meeting.

The Fiscal Year 2025 audit has been officially released by the Ohio Auditor of State's Office and resulted in a clean opinion, with the exception of reporting on a non-GAAP basis. The ESC's transition to OCBOA reporting in 2020 has continued to provide cost efficiencies related to report preparation, audit services, and staff time, and remains consistent with practices used by the majority of member districts. Mrs. Lorenzen recognized the business office for their excellent work in achieving a clean audit while maintaining a high level of service to ESC staff.

Mrs. Lorenzen also provided an update on current cash flow and investment considerations, noting that adjustments have been made to support ongoing financial stability. She shared that the ESC will continue to focus on maintaining strong cash reserves while maximizing available resources moving forward.

Meeting reminders were shared for the NWOESC Records Commission Meeting on March 24, 2026, immediately following the regular meeting, and the Audit/Finance Committee Meeting scheduled for April 28, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. prior to the public comment/regular meeting. She concluded with a reminder for Board members to complete their Ohio Ethics Commission filings by May 15.

•**DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION:** Mrs. Jill Gilliland shared that April 1 has been designated as Paraprofessional Appreciation Day. Paraprofessionals will be recognized with small gifts themed “Paras make it possible!” in appreciation of their dedication and daily support of students.

Planning for the 2026–2027 school year is underway, with continued review of projected caseloads across services and classrooms. This work will continue throughout the spring as IEP meetings, student transitions, graduations, and district service requests are finalized.

Mrs. Gilliland also shared that she and Nichol Herold attended the Parent Mentor Conference at The Ohio State University on March 20, and that Mrs. Herold participated in the Ability Center’s “Make It Take It” event at Defiance College on March 18, providing families with opportunities to connect with community resources.

•**DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Mr. Andy Hunter reported that the annual Franklin B. Walter Scholarship Award event was held on March 9, 2026. He noted that the event continues to be a meaningful tradition, recognizing one high school senior and one educator from each district. He expressed appreciation to all who contributed to the event’s success, including Michelle Hollstein for coordination, Larry Davis for setup, Four County Career Center for the centerpieces, and ESC consultants for their support during the event.

Mr. Hunter also shared that state testing windows are approaching for area districts, with results expected to be available within the current school year. Results are expected to be released on May 12, 2026, for Math, Science, and Social Studies, and May 20, 2026, for English Language Arts.

Additionally, he noted that the curriculum department is in the process of distributing Summer Honors Academy flyers to area schools. Districts will identify and invite students who are a strong fit for the program, which will be held in early June at the Archbold Area Local School District. Registration will open on April 14 at 6:00 p.m., and classes are expected to fill quickly as planning continues for this well-regarded annual event.

•**DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY & OPERATIONS:** Mr. Chad Rex reported completion of the annual Franklin B. Walter video and website project, including editing 28 student videos, finalizing the presentation, and developing the event webpage to house all video content. The videos are now available online, and he expressed appreciation for the opportunity to support this important event.

Mr. Rex also shared that the Transportation and Maintenance Supervisor Network Meetings were held on March 4. These meetings, held three times annually, continue to provide valuable opportunities for participants to collaborate, share resources, and discuss current topics impacting their work.

He further reported that Miller Brothers Construction, Inc. staff have been onboarded into their temporary workspace within the building. Preparations included network infrastructure work completed by Corey Todd, with support from the Northern Buckeye Education Council and Brad Rellinger. The dedicated internet connection is now in place, and staff have begun utilizing the space.

Mr. Rex noted that he and Larry Davis are preparing for the upcoming annual building meeting and have met with Superintendent Weir to review agenda items and ensure readiness.

In alignment with the State’s Severe Weather Awareness Week, Mr. Rex communicated key safety information to staff and coordinated the organization’s annual tornado drill, which was conducted on March 18 at 9:50 a.m. in conjunction with the statewide drill.

He also shared that students from the Work Transition program assisted the department with a cable organization project, helping measure, wrap, and label network cables. He expressed appreciation for their contributions and the value of their support.

Finally, Mr. Rex reported that planning continues for campus safety improvements at the Independence Education Center. This includes enhanced signage led by Stacey Parrish and Jistine Curry, as well as planned upgrades to interior and exterior doors and rooms. He added that Larry Davis has scheduled the required SB112 door inspection, and the team is awaiting the official report.

•Approved the Following Consent Items:

- Minutes from the organizational and regular Board Meeting held February 24, 2026
- Financial Transactions – appropriation modifications, transfers and advances, and monthly financial reports.

•AGREEMENTS

Approved the following service agreements and MOUs:

- Ohio Schools Council to provide to NwOESC, Electricity Purchase Program for the period of 3/24/26-3/24/31.
- NwOESC to provide to Defiance City Schools, Behavior Coaching Services for the period of 10/29/25-6/15/26.
- NwOESC to provide to Grand Canyon University, Field Placement Affiliation Services for the period of 3/5/26-3/5/29.
- NwOESC to provide to Pettisville Local Schools, OBI Instruction for the period of 12/2/25-6/30/26.
- To approve Annual Service Agreements with the following districts for the 2026-27 school year per R.C. 3313.845:

- Bryan City Schools
- Central Local Schools
- Edgerton Local Schools
- Edon Northwest Local Schools
- Liberty Center Local Schools
- Millcreek-West Unity Local Schools
- Montpelier Exempted Village Schools
- Northeastern Local Schools
- Patrick Henry Local Schools
- Swanton Local Schools

•Approved the Annual Report/Joint Statement of the NwOESC Business Advisory Council submitted on March 1, 2026 as required by ODEW.

•Approved Personnel Consent Items:

RESIGNATIONS

- Grunden, Ashlee, Paraprofessional, Effective 7/31/2026
- Myers, Jane, Education Consultant/Gifted Program Consultant, Effective 7/31/2026
- Semer, Lexie, Speech Language Pathologist, Effective 7/31/2026
- Wolfrum, Amanda, Paraprofessional, Effective 3/9/2026 (position abandonment)

•EMPLOYMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTRACTS

Certified Limited

Name	Contract	Length	Schedule
Meyer, Katelyn	CERT - 1 YR	7/1/2026-6/30/2027	Salary

Certified Limited

Name	Contract	Length	Schedule
Warner, Page	CERT - 1 YR	6/1/2026-7/31/2026	Salary

Classified Limited

Name	Contract	Length	Schedule
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Florez, Barbara	CLASS - 1 YR	4/1/2026-12/31/2026	Hourly
Hernandez, Maria	CLASS - 1 YR	4/1/2026-12/31/2026	Hourly
Soto, Landis	CLASS - 1 YR	3/1/2026-11/30/2026	Hourly

•Approve the following substitute teachers and paraprofessionals:

ESC Long Term Substitute Paraprofessional

Lisa Flores

ESC Long Term Substitute Paraprofessional

Becky Lammon

Substitute Paraprofessionals

Rita Brand, Ava Halle, Heather Rodriguez

Substitute Teachers

Jett Baun, Lillian Burkholder, Kamryn Chaffee, Erin Elser, Elizabeth Fritsch, Ava Halle, Gabrielle Leupp, Natalie Newman, Avrianna Olmstead, Kathy Reynolds, James Snively, Angelica Stickley

•Approve the following 21st Century Staff

21st Century Teachers

Defiance Elementary- Amy Brubaker
Defiance Middle School- Erica Young

•Approve the following Student Teachers/Interns/Volunteers

Wheeler, Brooke, Student Teaching as a Purdue University student, Spring 2026, Placed with Christi Ranzau

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Independence Education Center/Northwest Ohio Opportunity School - A make up day is scheduled for April 2, 2026, due to this year's inclement weather.
- Presentation, discussion, and acceptance of public comment on Independence Education Center/Northwest Ohio Opportunity School Calendar for the 2026-27 School Year. The calendar is anticipated for adoption at the April meeting.
- Policy Updates and Recommendations First Reading:

Policy 3440	Job-Related Expenses	Revised
Policy 4440	Job-Related Expenses	Revised
Policy 6109	Acceptance of Payment by Credit Card	Revised
Policy 6320	Purchasing and Bidding	Revised
Policy 6325	Procurement – Federal Grants/Funds	Revised
Policy 6423	Use of Credit Cards	Revised
Policy 6424	Procurement Cards	Revised
Policy 6425	Use of Center Tax Exempt Certificate	New
Policy 6460	Vendor Relations	Revised
Policy 6465	Affinity, Rewards, or Other Discount Programs	New
Policy 7540.09	Artificial Intelligence (“AI”)	Replacement

- NwOESC Business Advisory Council Quarterly Update – December 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes were shared, highlighting the on-site visit to North Star BlueScope Steel.

- A reminder was shared that public comment regarding the anticipated re-employment of Jenifer Kitchenmaster will take place on Tuesday, April 28, 2026 at 5:50 p.m. (prior to our regular meeting).

- A reminder was shared with the board that Financial Disclosure Statements due to Ohio Ethics Commission by May 15, 2026.

•**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:** Superintendent Kerri Weir reported on several items. In response to increasing financial pressures on member districts due to recent property tax reforms and legislative changes, NwOESC is conducting a comprehensive review of its program and service costs. The review is focused on identifying opportunities to operate more efficiently while maintaining high-quality services, with analysis centered on staffing-to-student ratios, departmental operations, and potential adjustments to service delivery models. Revised estimates are expected to be shared with districts by the end of the week. Superintendent Weir provided an update on HB 684, introduced by Representatives Hiner and John and currently under consideration in the House Education Committee. The proposed legislation includes broad changes to ESC territory, governance, and operations, including revisions to governing board structure and selection, potential realignment of service territories, and updates to statutory language guiding ESC-district relationships. Members of the OESCA Critical Issues Committee recently met with the bill sponsors and found them receptive to ESC feedback. Craig Burford is organizing a working group to further engage in the process, and OESCA has distributed a statewide survey to gather input from ESCs. While details continue to evolve, the bill represents a significant potential shift in ESC governance and organization. Superintendent Weir shared that treasurer/CFO searches are in process for both Pike-Delta-York and Archbold. Interviews for Pike-Delta-York are underway, while the Archbold posting remains open through April 1. Superintendent Weir and Treasurer Abby Lorenzen are coordinating. The Board was also reminded of the upcoming OSBA Northwest Region Spring Open House, which will be hosted at NwOESC on April 29 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The event is designed as a networking and informational opportunity for board members and district leaders and is free of charge, with registration available online. Next, Superintendent Weir highlighted the continued success of the NwOESC “Shout Outs” initiative, now in its fourth year, which recognizes and celebrates staff contributions across the region. Submissions of stories and photos are shared monthly via email and social media, providing an opportunity to acknowledge the positive impact of staff in classrooms, programs, and offices. Thanks to Chad Rex and team for coordinating.

- Entered into executive session for the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee, official, licensee, or student unless such employee, official, licensee or student requests a public meeting; except that consideration of the discipline of a Board member for conduct related to the performance of his/her duties or his/her removal from office shall not be held in executive session. No action was taken upon exiting the executive session.

- Adjournment:** As all the business of the evening was complete the meeting adjourned at 6:59 pm. The next regular meeting of the Board will take place on Tuesday, April 28, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. (5:50 public comment) at the Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center, 205 Nolan Parkway, Archbold, OH 43502.