

The following actions were taken by the Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center Governing Board at their regular meeting held February 25, 2025.

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

REPORTS:

•OSBA LEGISLATIVE LIAISON: Mr. Brian Baker reported on several legislative items. The Senate Finance Committee heard sponsor testimony on SB 44. This bill would allow students to concurrently receive an Educational Choice scholarship or Pilot Project scholarship and either an Autism or Jon Peterson Special Needs scholarship and make a \$42 million appropriation in FY26 and FY27 to offset costs. New bills introduced include SB 107 which would require state and school district board members to appear on the ballot with a party designation; and SB 109 which would reimburse public and nonpublic charter schools to provide breakfast and lunch at no cost to students, and appropriate \$300 million to offset costs. A discussion ensued regarding the State Biennium budget (HB 96), and the impact potential reduced school funding to traditional public schools will have on students across the state.

•OSBA STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT LIAISON: Dr. Christine Smallman shared items related to student achievement. A study challenges the benefits of handwriting over typing. A recent rebuttal from scientists in Spain and France questions the findings of a Norwegian study published last year that suggested handwriting activates the brain more than typing, potentially enhancing learning. Another study with high school students further investigates the impact of note-taking methods on learning. However, many struggle with it due to self-monitoring challenges and procrastination. It was shared that creating systems to track progress and setting clear, measurable goals leads to increased accountability. Finally, it was shared that in the US, unpaid school meal debt has risen despite more free meals. While more districts are offering free meals, unpaid school meal debt rose 26% in 2024 to a median of \$6,900 per district, according to a survey by the School Nutrition Association.

•CFO/TREASURER: Mrs. Abby Lorenzen noted that the fiscal year 2026 initial estimates were distributed on February 18. Districts were asked to inform the team of any service changes promptly and to return the approved estimates by April 1 to ensure they are processed for the next fiscal year. There were 22 applicants for the payroll specialist position, and 4 viable candidates with prior payroll experience were interviewed. Ashley Waters was chosen to be the top candidate. She accepted the position and began working on February 6. Recently relocated from Alabama due to her husband's job transfer, Ashley brings 6 years of payroll and HR experience. She has been a great fit, and the team is pleased to have her. The finance/audit committee will meet prior to the April Board meeting on April 29 at 5:45.

•DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION: Mrs. Jill Gilliland provided an update on job posting and recruitment efforts. Our team is reviewing information about NWOESC consortium classroom enrollment, along with the recent survey on autism programming needs throughout our service area. Enrollment projections are increasing for the 25-26 school year. We have expanded our staffing recruitment efforts with a focus on our Intervention Specialist, Speech Therapist, School Psychologist, and Behavior Consultant Specialist positions. Sarah Kirkingburg is advertising these positions early and directly with universities in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan; Mrs. Gilliland is meeting with university seniors who are studying in these areas; and we are encouraging applicants to apply prior to graduation.

•DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Mr. Andy Hunter provided an update on final preparations for the annual Franklin B. Walter Celebration, noting that everything is on track for a successful event. He expressed his gratitude to Michelle Hollstein for her invaluable efforts in coordinating the planning process, as well as to the many individuals who contribute to making the evening a success. He also highlighted the recent MathCounts competition, which took place last week. Fifty-five 6th-8th grade students from the area participated, competing both individually and in teams to showcase their problem-solving and math skills. Finally, Mr. Hunter reflected on the conclusion of this year's Brunch and Learn series. He commended Eric Sheninger for leading insightful sessions on Pedagogical Leadership, which sparked meaningful discussions and provided valuable ideas for area administrators.

•DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY & OPERATIONS: Mr. Chad Rex shared that he attended the Ohio Educational Technology Conference in Columbus where the key topics were artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. Mr. Rex expressed his appreciation and that it was extremely informative and beneficial to attend to grow in my awareness and knowledge of these technologies and topics as well as the networking with colleagues across the State. Mr. Rex highlighted that he is serving as a member of the EdTech Leaders Alliance's (ETLA) conference committee, and they held their first meeting to plan for the ETLA conference in October. This is a growing conference among the tech leaders in Ohio. The ESC is a member of ETLA. Mr. Rex also noted that he met with NWOCA and DataServ for a "technical discovery" meeting as a part of the Cybersecurity Co-Pilot initiative we are engaged in. Network scans and audits will be executed in the coming weeks resulting in an updated report. A quarterly "key stakeholder meeting" with Mr. Rex, Superintendent Weir, and Mrs. Abby Lorenzen will be conducted on March 3rd. Mr. Rex announced that he finalized the process to utilize our remaining dollars in Category 2 funding (i.e., internal connections, network equipment). The ESC will be purchasing a new network switch and running additional internet lines at the IEC. A new 5-year budget for this category of funding will hopefully take place in the next funding year. Mr. Rex also stated that he completed the Google single-sign on for our PowerSchool student information system that is used for the IEC and preschool programs. Staff are now able to use their NWOESC Google accounts to sign in. These accounts utilized MFA which provides security, and this process provides staff convenience as well. Mr. Rex noted that he has been chipping away at the department's inventory project where he is mining data from the business office and importing it into the departmental system. In the area of Operations, Mr. Rex was excited to share that the first ever maintenance supervisor meeting was held on February 19th with 11 participants. A big shout out to Mr. Larry Davis and Ms. Pat Turpening for their help in the planning, communication, and delivery of this meeting. Mr. Davis did a wonderful job facilitating the dialog. The group would like to meet in June and then twice during the school year. It was a strong 2-hour discussion about a variety of topics ranging from staff shortages and pay to facility rental processes and energy controls and related issues. Lastly, Mr. Rex commended Mr. Davis for the completion of the renovation of the Business Office workroom into a new office space. The only outsourcing in this project was the carpet. Great work, Larry!

•Approved the CFO/Treasurer Consent Items:

- Minutes from the organizational and regular board meeting and finance-audit committee meeting held January 21, 2025
- Financial Transactions - appropriation modifications, transfers and advances, and monthly financial reports.

•Approved the Superintendent Consent Items:

•AGREEMENTS

-NwoESC to provide to Anthony Wayne Local Schools, Independence Education Center Services & Related Services-Speech Therapy for the period of 12/2/24-6/15/25.

-NwoESC to provide to Anthony Wayne Local Schools, Independence Education Center Services & Related Services-Speech, Occupational Therapy, Adaptive Physical Education for the period of 1/16/25-6/15/25.

-NwoESC to provide to Eastwood Local Schools, Visual Impairment (VI) Services for the period of 8/15/24-6/15/25.

-NwoESC to provide to Otsego Local Schools, Visual Impairment (VI) Services for the period of 8/15/24-6/15/25.

-NwoESC to provide to St. Mary Catholic School, Occupational Therapy Services for the period of 12/11/24-6/15/25.

•Approved designation of NwoESC Director of Technology and Operations as the authorized signer for all Northwest Ohio ESC Data Privacy Agreements (DPAs)

•Approved the Superintendent Recommendation Items:

•Approved the following policy recommendations:

Bylaw 0100	Definitions	Revised
Bylaw 0142.1	Oath	Revised
Bylaw 0151	Organizational Meeting	Revised
Bylaw 0152	Officers	Revised
Bylaw 0155	Presiding Officer	Technical Correction
Bylaw 0163	Presiding Officer	Technical Correction
Bylaw 0164	Notice of Meetings	Revised
Bylaw 0165	Board Meetings	New
Bylaw 0165.1	Regular Meeting	Rescind
Bylaw 0165.2	Special Meetings	Rescind
Bylaw 0166	Agendas	Renumbered/New
Bylaw 0167.2	Executive Session	Renumbered
Bylaw 0167.7	Use of Personal Communication Devices	Renumbered/Revised
Bylaw 0173	Board Officers	Rescind
Policy 1130	Conflict of Interest	Revised
Policy 3113	Conflict of Interest	Revised
Policy 4113	Conflict of Interest	Revised
Policy 4121	Criminal History Record Check	Revised
Policy 5136	Personal Communication Devices	Revised
Policy 5136.01	Electronic Equipment	Revised
Policy 5200	Attendance	Revised
Policy 5500	Student Conduct	Revised
Policy 6110	Grant Funds	Revised
Policy 6111	Internal Controls	Revised
Policy 6112	Cash Management of Grants	Revised
Policy 6114	Cost Principles - Spending Federal Funds	Revised
Policy 6320	Purchasing and Bidding	Revised
Policy 6325	Procurement - Federal Grants/Funds	Revised
Policy 6460	Vendor Relations	Revised
Policy 7310	Disposition of Surplus Property	Revised
Policy 7450	Property Inventory	Revised
Policy 7530.01V2	Board-Owned Technology Resources Used for Communication	Revised
Policy 7530.02	Staff Use of Personal Communication Devices	Revised
Policy 7540.03	Student Technology Acceptable Use and Safety	Revised
Policy 7540.04	Staff Technology Acceptable Use and Safety	Revised
Policy 7540.09	Artificial Intelligence ("AI")	New
Policy 8310	Public Records	Revised
Policy 9160	Public Attendance at School Events	Revised

•Approved tuition reimbursement agreement for Midori Shaink to obtain school psychology licensure through University of Toledo finishing in Summer 2025.

•**Approved Personnel Consent Items:**

•**LEAVES**

FMLA and Disability

•**RETIREMENT**

Hill, Melissa, Paraprofessional Effective- 7/31/2025

•**RESIGNATIONS**

DeLong, Ashley, Paraprofessional Effective-7/31/2025

Opdycke, Debra, Speech Language Pathologist Effective 7/31/2025

•**EMPLOYMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

CONTRACTS

Certified Limited

Name	Contract	Length
Shaink, Midori	CERT-1 YR	8/1/2025-7/31/2026
Warner, Page	CERT-1 YR	6/1/2025-7/31/2025

Classified Limited

Name	Contract	Length
Fanfan, Dady	CLASS-1 YR	10/1/2024-6/30/2025
Florez, Barbara	CLASS-1 YR	4/1/2025-12/31/2025
Hernandez, Maria	CLASS-1 YR	4/1/2025-12/31/2025
Rocher, Marc	CLASS-1 YR	10/1/2024-6/30/2025
Waters, Ashley	CLASS-1 YR	2/6/2025-6/30/2025

Approval of 2nd Semester Teaching Assignments for staff assigned to positions in which their current licensure does not align:

Last Name	First Name	Position	Location
Ball	Madison	Intervention Specialist	Independence Education Center
Cole	Rachel	Intervention Specialist	Independence Education Center
Elton	Grace	Intervention Specialist	Wauseon Elementary School
Haines	Brooke	Intervention Specialist	Edon Middle/High Schools
Hug	Skeat	Intervention Specialist	Independence Education Center
Klausing	Sandra	Preschool Intervention Specialist	Defiance City Schools
Morris	Alexis	Preschool Itinerant Intervention Specialist	NWOESC Multiple Locations
Richmond	Karlin	Intervention Specialist	Edon Elementary School
Snyder	Taylor	Preschool Intervention Specialist	Liberty Center Local Schools
Thomas	Cheyenne	Intervention Specialist	Wauseon Primary School
Wolf	Phillip	Preschool Itinerant Intervention Specialist	NWOESC Multiple Locations

Yeager	Julia	Preschool Intervention Specialist/Preschool Itinerant	Archbold Elementary School/Multiple Locations
McBride	Tiffany	Adaptive Physical Education	Independence Education Center/Multiple Locations
Deuel	Jenny	Preschool Intervention Specialist	Patrick Henry Elementary

Additional Wage Payments

Year 1 Mentor Service to Resident Educators to the following individuals:

Christi Ranzau mentoring Paige Patton

Year 2 Mentor Service to Resident Educators to the following individuals:

Glenda Funnell mentoring Jessica Cheek

Christi Ranzau mentoring Cailyn Prigge

Michelle Winters mentoring Natalie Nelson & Katelyn Yenser

Rhonda Wise mentoring Kaitlin Kersey & Alexis Samlow

•ESC Long Term Substitute Paraprofessional

Cassidy Smith

•Substitute Paraprofessionals

McKayla Ayers, Rea Beck, Mallery Cardarelli, Stephanie Mills, Elysha West

•Substitute Teachers

Lisa Arend, Aaron Betz, Alesa Brown, Myriah Clay, *Emily Gillson*, Brady Harlett, Breanna Huffman, Donald Johnson, Bryan Lucas, Vickie MacFarlane, Kiersten Manon, Stephanie Mills, Josie Reitzel, Macey Schlosser, Thomas Schoen, Jeremy Snider, Suzanne Wilson, Paige Wolford

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Congratulations was given to NwOESC Board Member, Brian Baker, on being a recipient of the 2025 OSBA Service Award. The Service Award is a distinct award and is part of our STAR Awards Program—Service, Training, Aptitude and Recognition. Brian will be recognized at the upcoming OSBA NW Region Spring Conference in Leipsic.
- The OSBA Northwest Region Spring Conference will be held at Leipsic High School on 3/13/2025.
- The minutes from the NwOESC Business Advisory Council Quarterly meeting on 09/17/2024 were shared.
- A reminder was provided to complete the 2024 Ethics Commission Financial Disclosure Statements by 5/15/2025.
- The 2025 Board Member Contact Information Sheet was reviewed.
- The Program and Service Information 2025-26 Catalogue was shared with the Board, highlighting new service options for the coming year.
- The timeline and process for consideration of reemployment of Dorothy Lambert, Educational Consultant/Gifted Supervisor, was discussed.
- The NwOESC Regular Board Meeting date was changed from April 22, 2025 to April 29, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the NwOESC.
- Discussion regarding conducting a targeted compensation analysis for specified positions was held.

•SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Superintendent Kerri Weir reported on several items. NwOESC is nearing the conclusion of its search service for a new CFO/Treasurer for the Montpelier district. The involvement of an

experienced CFO/Treasurer throughout the process was highly beneficial. Thank you, Abby Lorenzen. In grant-related news, NwoESC, in collaboration with the Ayersville School District and the NwoESC Preschool located there, has been awarded funding through the 2025 Ohio Security Grant (SFY25 OSG). The Department of Public Safety received over 750 applications totaling more than \$63 million in requests. Special recognition is given to Chad Rex, Jill Gilliland, Jessica Fredrick, and Stacey Parrish for their contributions to this achievement. Planning will be underway to enhance the presence of an SRO. Safety and security remain a priority at NwoESC. Annual emergency management testing has included functional exercises on a variety of scenarios. Full-scale emergency exercises are being planned for the 2025-26 school year. Safety plan revisions are also in progress for multiple locations, with estimated completion dates set for April 2025. Plans are being adjusted to accommodate the relocation of the Delta Preschool to the Delta Elementary building for the coming school year. ALICE training for the 2024-25 school year was successfully conducted for IEC/Opportunity School staff, facilitated by the Defiance County Sheriff's Department. ALICE training will be scheduled for NwoESC/NWOCA Main Office staff during the 2025-26 school year. Additionally, Naloxone/NARCAN training was provided to IEC/Opportunity School staff in August 2024, with multiple kits available in both buildings. Thank you, Stacey Parrish for spearheading safety efforts. In support of staff well-being, the NwoESC Wellness Committee has introduced *Thriving Together in 2025: Embrace the Marigold Mentality*, a mid-year challenge promoting wellness, growth, and community engagement. Running from February through April, the initiative highlights three themes: *Heart & Home* (February); *Mind Matters* (March); and *Spring Into Action* (April). Staff are encouraged to participate in various activities, track their progress, and compete in monthly challenges for prizes. A volunteer component reinforces the organization's commitment to community service. This initiative is supported by an annual Wellness Grant from NBHP, the healthcare consortium. Planning is already underway for NwoESC's 2025 fall events. The schedule includes Driver Training on August 4 at Archbold High School, the annual Administrators' Conference on August 5 at NwoESC, and the Fall Staff Meeting on August 7, also hosted at NwoESC. In regional efforts, NwoESC is proud to support the upcoming Substance Use Prevention Breakfast, scheduled for February 27. Now in its third year, this collaborative event brings together county coalitions and other community stakeholders to address substance abuse prevention strategies. Finally, the nomination period for the 2026 Ohio Teacher of the Year is now open through March 31. Each of Ohio's 11 State Board Districts will select one teacher to be recognized as their State Board District Teacher of the Year and a candidate for the statewide honor. More information and nomination details are available at the State Board of Education website. NwoESC remains committed to supporting its schools, staff, and communities through these initiatives and ongoing efforts.

•**Adjournment:** As all the business of the evening was complete the meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m. The NwoESC Records Commission Committee held a brief meeting, ending at 7:11 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will take place on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center, 205 Nolan Parkway, Archbold, OH 43502.