

The following actions were taken by the Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center Governing Board at their regular meeting held October 28, 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. Gov. Mike DeWine signed HB 57, into law, which requires any public or nonpublic school that elects to keep a supply of an overdose reversal drug for emergency use to adopt and implement a policy regarding the supply's maintenance and the drug's use. HB 57 also includes expanded timeframes for students to attend release time for religious instruction. This bill will become effective law 90 days after being signed on January 18, 2026.

The Senate passed SB 156, which would require school districts to provide "success sequence" instruction in at least one course required for high school graduation. The bill now goes to the House for consideration.

The House passed HB 186, which would cap tax growth for districts on the 20-mill floor to inflation and includes a retroactive tax credit. The bill was amended by the House Ways and Means Committee earlier in the week to provide \$465 million from the sales tax holiday fund to keep school districts whole from tax credit losses. ODEW will provide payments to impacted districts in August 2026 and August 2027. HB 186 also received a hearing from the House Finance Committee before going to the House floor. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

The chamber also passed HB 335, which would cap the inflationary growth on all inside millage beginning in tax year 2026. The bill was amended by the House Ways and Means Committee earlier in the week to exclude revenue attributable to new improvements or the expiration of tax reductions from the bill's growth limit and to authorize a school district to reduce the rate of inside millage levies to account for revenue from a new or increased school district income tax. The amendment requires a school district seeking to increase the rate so reduced to have the increase approved by the county budget commission before it can take effect. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

The Senate Education Committee held its fourth hearing on SB 144, which reverts the educator licensure grade bands to the bands utilized before House Bill (HB) 33 of the 135th General Assembly – grades pre-K through 5, grades 4 through 8, and grades 7 through 12. It also permits school districts to employ individuals who have at least one year of experience as a licensed classroom teacher to teach outside of the designated band.

The committee held its first hearing on HB 455 which would make changes to the operation of public schools and the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and eliminate obsolete provisions of education law. The committee accepted an amendment to remove provisions from the bill that would have revised the procedures for public schools' parental notification of instruction with human sexuality content; services related to a student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being; changes in a school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment and the provision of health care services to students.

The committee held their third hearing on HB 304 which would permit students to use club sports or other athletic activities to fulfill the high school physical education requirement and require recess time for K-8 students.

The Senate Finance Committee held a series of first hearings on multiple bills, including SB 93, which declares the General Assembly's intent to establish a new school financing system. Sen. Brenner explained the details of his new school funding proposal, which will be adopted in a substitute bill in the coming weeks. The pending subbill would allow the state to collect a 20-mill property tax and increase the state sales tax by 1.75 percent, both of which would directly fund education. Lottery and sports gaming profits would continue to provide supplemental school funding. School districts would no longer be able to levy local income or sales taxes. Local governments would also be prohibited from using any of their ten inside mills for school funding. Instead of each district having its own unique per pupil figure, there would be a single statewide average. The proposed amount is \$11,535 per student. Categorical funding would still be added to the per pupil amount as determined by the student's needs. Per pupil funding will follow the student to public and public nonchartered schools, eliminating the EdChoice Scholarship program. The responsibility for transporting students would shift from individual districts to regional Educational Service Centers.

The House Public Insurance and Pensions Committee held its second hearing on HB 473 which would prohibit a public employer from paying certain contributions to a state retirement system.

•OSBA STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT LIAISON: Dr. Christine Smallman shared several stories that highlight how Ohio students are learning, creating, and preparing for their futures. At the Mahoning County Film Festival, middle school students from Austintown, Campbell, South Range, West Branch, and Youngstown took part in Operation Keepsake's 12th Annual Film Festival. Their short films tackled important topics like cyberbullying, giving students a creative way to express their voices and raise awareness.

At Kettering Fairmont High School, students are exploring career-technical pathways, including a growing Advanced Manufacturing program. Through hands-on projects and partnerships with local industries, students are gaining real-world skills that will serve them well after graduation.

The 70th OSBA Capital Conference is just around the corner, and nominations are open for the Student Achievement Fair. It's a great opportunity to showcase an outstanding student group, club, or art program from our districts.

A national survey by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce found that more than 80% of employers remain concerned about students' readiness to enter the workforce after graduation. Employers continue to emphasize the importance of industry credentials, practical experience, and strong interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Many hiring managers reported that real-world experiences like internships, volunteer work, or participation in student-led projects can sometimes outweigh formal degrees when assessing readiness for employment. In response to these changing needs, the College Board will roll out new AP Career Kickstart courses beginning in the 2026–27 school year. These courses, which include business, personal finance, and cybersecurity, are designed to give students a head start in developing essential career and life skills. Dr. Smallman noted, these findings reinforce what educators already know - a diploma is just the beginning. The combination of academic preparation, hands-on learning, and essential life skills is what truly prepares students for success beyond high school.

•CFO/TREASURER: Mrs. Abby Lorenzen reported on the annual insurance premium changes that were included in the discussion section of the agenda. The TrueCost Reference Based Plan (RBP), Advantage High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP), and Access+ Plans each had a 2.5% increase. The Advantage HDHP single deductible also rose to meet new IRS requirements. Dental and life insurance rates remain unchanged, and vision plan rates are locked in through 2027.

She noted that the Clark, Schaefer, Hackett audit is in process of being completed remotely due to her absence and has gone smoothly. The audit report will be submitted to the Auditor of State by the end of November and released publicly by the end of December. The Board indicated that they would like to waive the exit audit interview again this year.

Mrs. Lorenzen shared instructions for those attending the OSBA Capital Conference, taking place at the Greater Columbus Convention Center November 16-18, 2025.

•DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION: Mrs. Jill Gilliland reported on several items. NwOESC Preschool Programs use the Creative Curriculum. Through a grant with the Department of Children and Youth, NwOESC is able to purchase the digital portfolio GOLD Assessment which will result in a \$50,000 savings. We are waiting to hear if we will also receive the Pre-K edition, which is applicable for 4 and 5 year olds.

Ohio's Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) rating system has also been revised from a five-star model to a new three-tier system—bronze, silver, and gold. The revised system focuses on three key goals: implementing an Ohio-approved curriculum, emphasizing meaningful staff-child interactions, and allowing educators more flexibility in choosing professional development topics. During SUTQ on-site visits, DCY specialists will conduct a 30-minute observation focused on classroom interactions, curriculum implementation, and environmental organization, shifting the focus away from extensive paperwork toward observable quality practices.

An update on OhioRISE (Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence) was also shared at the Ennis Britton Roadshow. OhioRISE has identified inpatient treatment facilities for students with significant behavioral needs who may be parentally placed upon program recommendation. These facilities provide educational services

during admission, while the student remains enrolled in their district of residence, which excuses attendance until discharge.

•DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Mr. Andy Hunter reported that the release of this year's Value-Added data, originally expected on October 22, has been delayed, with no new date announced. Once released, the ESC will host training sessions for administrators and teachers to support districts in interpreting and using this important measure of student growth.

He also shared that the Gifted Speaker Series, based on Todd Stanley's *A Teacher's Toolbox for Gifted Education*, has been well-received and will conclude with an in-person session featuring the author on November 5.

Mr. Hunter thanked Michelle Leatherman, who has taken over ESC's social media accounts, effectively promoting events, trainings, and opportunities while strengthening community engagement.

Lastly, he highlighted the expansion of the ESC's assessment coaching services, which help educators design meaningful assessments aligned with state standards to improve instruction and student outcomes.

•DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY & OPERATIONS: Mr. Chad Rex reported that as part of the Co-Pilot program, the NWOESC held its second Quarterly Business Review (QBR) with NWOCA and DataServ. He noted that the group reviewed progress on action items and key achievements from the recent cybersecurity assessment. Action plans are in place and will continue to be a strong focus for the remainder of the year. Mr. Rex highlighted notable advancements in Multifactor Authentication, Access Management, Email Content and Delivery, Data Backup, Endpoint Detection and Response, and User Education.

Mr. Rex met with TechGuard/InfoSec, the organization's cybersecurity awareness and phishing-training partner, for their quarterly review and planning meeting. He reported that the organization continues to perform well in monthly training completion and in identifying and avoiding phishing attempts. Employees have shared that the training has been helpful in recognizing suspicious emails, and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

He shared that compliance efforts under Senate Bill 29 have resulted in 58 signed Data Privacy Agreements (DPAs), including one agreement developed by NWOESC that other entities across the state can now leverage. Mr. Rex met with Dawn Schiavone, NBEC's Student Data Privacy Officer, who provided positive feedback on the organization's progress. He expressed appreciation for staff who continue to use the technology resource request process, noting that it is critical to maintaining compliance and operational efficiency.

Mr. Rex reported that he worked with Current Office to implement a supported eFax solution. The solution was successfully implemented on Wednesday, October 22, for the Special Education and Business departments. He noted that this system enhances data privacy and security while improving operational workflow.

Mr. Rex shared that Onboard Instructor (OBI) Ken Muntz is in the final stages of training the IEC bus driver, and that Archbold Schools has requested training for two additional drivers. He highlighted that Archbold's transportation supervisor expressed appreciation for this support. He commended Ken, Larry Davis, and Pat Turpeining for their excellent work in communicating, coordinating, and delivering this service to districts.

Mr. Rex reported that Veregy, the HVAC controls contractor, provided this year's energy savings report, and the results continue to be outstanding. He noted that since May 2021, NWOESC has achieved nearly \$500,000 in total cost savings and over 19.8 million kBtu in energy reduction, with Year 4 alone yielding \$176,807 in savings. These savings are due to LED upgrades, HVAC controls, and the solar field installation. He added that the cumulative savings chart shows actual savings outpacing projections, reflecting continued success and cost efficiency in energy management.

•Approved the Following Consent Items:

- Minutes from the regular Board Meeting held September 23, 2025

- Financial Transactions – appropriation modifications, transfers and advances, and monthly financial reports.

•AGREEMENTS

Approved the following service agreements and MOUs:

-Above Pete's Garage to provide to NWOESC, 21st Century (Defiance Elem), Extended Learning Opportunities Services for the period of 1/1/26-6/30/26.

-Defiance Karate to provide to NwOESC, 21st Century (Defiance MS), Extended Learning Opportunities Services for the period of 10/13/25-6/30/26.

-NwOESC to provide to Anthony Wayne Local Schools, Independence Education Center Services & Related Services-OT for the period of 10/8/25-6/15/26.

-NwOESC to provide to Archbold Area Local Schools, Roots Analysis Services for the period of 7/1/25-11/30/25.

-NwOESC to provide to Bowling Green City Schools, Auditory Services for the period of 9/10/25-6/15/26.

-NwOESC to provide to Hicksville Exempted Village Schools, Roots Analysis Services for the period of 7/1/25-11/30/25.

-NwOESC to provide to Liberty University, Psychology Observational Experiences (Affiliation Agreement) for the period of 10/28/25-10/28/26.

-NwOESC to provide to Napoleon Area City Schools, Instructional Services at the Liberty Education Center for the 2025-26 academic year.

-NwOESC to provide to Otsego Local Schools, Visual Impairment (VI) Services for the period of 8/15/25-6/15/26.

-NwOESC to provide to Swanton Local Schools, Roots Analysis Services for the period of 7/1/25-11/30/25.

•Adopted the Northwest Ohio ESC Teacher Evaluation Framework, as presented. This framework establishes the standards, procedures, and timelines for evaluating NwOESC teachers in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Sections 3319.111 and 3319.112, and State Board of Education requirements. It aligns with Board Policy 3220 – Standards-Based Teacher Evaluation - and was developed in consultation with NwOESC staff.

•Approved Policy 3220 – Standards-Based Teacher Evaluation, as presented, as a replacement policy, foregoing the second reading. This policy conforms with Ohio Revised Code requirements, establishes procedures for teacher evaluation, and authorizes the Superintendent to oversee implementation and ongoing review with teacher participation.

•Set the annual Tuition Reimbursement Budget for 2026-27 per board policy #3450.

•Approved resolution to Adopt Special Education Model Policies and Procedures - V1.0 2025.

•Approved Personnel Consent Items:

•LEAVES

FMLA and Disability

•RESIGNATIONS

- Damazyn, Amanda, Paraprofessional, Effective 10/10/2025
- Garcia, Rylee, Paraprofessional, Effective 10/22/2025 (position abandonment)
- Kaiser, Sabrina, Occupational Therapist, Effective 12/22/2025
- McQuillin, Rodney, Paraprofessional, Effective 11/28/2025
- Mireles, Jena, Paraprofessional, Effective 10/1/2025 (position abandonment)
- Trivelas, Alexandra, Intervention Specialist, Effective 10/10/2025
- Vasko, Laura, Intervention Specialist, Effective 10/31/2025

•EMPLOYMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Certified Administrative

Name	Contract	Length
Rex, Chad	ADM-3 YR	8/1/2025-7/31/2028

Certified Limited

Name	Contract	Length
Bullano, Amy	CERT-1 YR	8/20/2025-7/31/2026
Dunham, Jody	CERT-1 YR	10/27/2025-7/31/2026
Kelly, Jacqueline	CERT-1 YR	10/7/2025-7/31/2026

Porter, Machetta CERT-1 YR 8/15/2025-7/31/2026

Classified Limited

Name	Contract	Length
Fierros, Brittnay	CLASS-1YR	10/7/2025-7/31/2026
Nofziger, Natalie	CLASS-1YR	10/10/2025-7/31/2026
Weaver, Valerie	CLASS-1 YR	10/29/2025-7/31/2026

Certified Notice

Name

Lirot, Donna

Classified Notice-Hourly Rate

Name

Russell, April

•Approved the following substitute teachers and paraprofessionals:

Substitute Paraprofessionals

Alondra Cano, Gillian Carte, Kelijo Chaffee, Kelli Dreher, Stacy Jackson, Bailey Jankowiak, Jillian Kabwata, Joslyn Mohring, Tess Pennington, Alexandria Schliesser, Susan Smith, Darren Yeager

Substitute Teachers

Anjelita Avers, Tracey Backhaus, Caitlan Bales, Nicholas Cummins, Denise Decker, Krysann Dunbar, Vivian Gebers, Miranda Giddens, Sophie Graham, Joe Grieser, Bruce Hart, Valerie Hausch, Amanda Kortekamp, Allison Kozina, Charles Lawrence, Jennifer Leitch, Austin Lichty, Olivia Liechty, Brianna Mercer, Gracie Miller, Kylee Miller, Paige Morgan-Smith, Brandi Myers, Joy Richmond, Candace Roberts, Karl Schrag, Susan Smith, Addison Tussing, Bruce Vanarsdalen, Michael Ware, Tabitha Wolf, Porsha Wolfrum, Darren Yeager

•Approve the following 21st Century Staff:

21st Century Site Coordinator

Defiance Elementary- Reggie Beck, Megan Stambaugh

21st Century Teacher

Defiance Elementary- Jennison Vincent

Hicksville Elementary- Amber Zachrich

•Approved the following Van Drivers:

Substitute Van Drivers:

Jason Stein, Elysha West

•Approve the following Student Teachers/Interns/Volunteers:

Kern, Kylee, Observation as a Liberty University student, Fall 2025, Placed with Raegan Keller

•Approve Mentor Service for Resident Educators

Additional Wage Payments

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

- MaryBeth Beck mentoring Taylor Snyder
- Cathy Gribler mentoring Rachel Cole
- Terry Lind mentoring Jenny Deuel
- Kris Ritter mentoring Johanna Sutton
- Adrian Whitney mentoring Opal Thomas
- Michelle Winters mentoring Jamie Englehart

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

- Christi Ranzau mentoring Paige Patton
- Glenda Funnell mentoring Phillip Wolf

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- NEOLA Policies First Reading

Policy 1422	Nondiscrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Anti-Harassment	Replacement
Policy 1422.02	Nondiscrimination Based on Genetic Information of the Employee	Rescind
Policy 1623	Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Disability Discrimination in Employment	Revised
Policy 1662	Anti-Harassment	Rescind
Policy 2260	Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Opportunity	Revised
Policy 2260.01	Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Discrimination Based on Disability	Revised
Policy 2266	Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities	Revised
Policy 3122	Nondiscrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Anti-Harassment	Replacement
Policy 3122.02	Nondiscrimination Based on Genetic Information of the Employee	Rescind
Policy 3123	Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Disability Discrimination in Employment	Revised
Policy 3130	Assignment and Transfer	Revised
Policy 3220	Standards-Based Teacher Evaluation (approved 10/28/2025)	Replacement
Policy 3362	Anti-Harassment	Rescind
Policy 4122	Nondiscrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Anti-Harassment	Replacement
Policy 4122.02	Nondiscrimination Based on Genetic Information of the Employee	Rescind
Policy 4123	Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Disability Discrimination in Employment	Revised
Policy 4162	Drug and Alcohol Testing of CDL License Holders Who Perform Safety-Sensitive Functions and are Subject to DOT Testing	Revised
Policy 4162.01	Drug and Alcohol Testing of Employees without CDL Licenses Who Transport Students in Alternative Vehicles (Non-DOT Testing)	New
Policy 4362	Anti-Harassment	Rescind
Policy 5136	Personal Communication Devices	Revised
Policy 5200	Attendance	Revised
Policy 5223	Released Time for Religious Instruction During the School Day	Revised
Policy 6109	Acceptance of Payment by Credit Card	New
Policy 6152	Student Fees, Fines, and Charges	Revised
Policy 6830	Audit	Revised
Policy 7540.02	Digital Content and Accessibility	Revised
Policy 7541	Electronic Data Processing Disaster Recovery Plan	Rescind
Policy 8300	Continuity of Organizational Operations Plan	Revised
Policy 8305	Information Security	Revised
Policy 8400	School Safety	Revised
Policy 8462	Student Abuse and Neglect	Revised
Policy 8600.04	Bus and Alternative Vehicle Driver Certification	Revised
Policy 8640	Transportation for Non-Routine Trips	Revised
Policy 8650	Transportation by Alternative Vehicles	Revised

- A Summary of the 2026 Benefit Increases for Health, Dental, Vision, and Life was shared.
 - Northern Buckeye Health Plan (NBHP) recently set the health, dental, vision, and life rate increases for 2026.

- All health plans will see a 2.5% increase. These include the Traditional Access + Healthcare Plan, the Advantage High-Deductible Healthcare Plan with a Health Savings Account, and the TrueCost Reference Based Plan (RBP).
 - The dental and vision plans will not increase (0%).
 - Life insurance will see no increase.
 - Staff have been informed of the Open Enrollment period (November 3-14, 2025).
- The Administrative Team shared the NwOESC 2025-26 Departmental Goals/Priorities with the board for their input and feedback.
 - Superintendent/CFO Evaluation timelines and processes were discussed.
 - A summary of the OSBA Capital Conference logistics was shared with those who will be attending the conference.

•SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT: Superintendent Kerri Weir reported on several items. Staff from NWOCA and NwOESC convened for the annual building safety review, an ongoing effort to ensure the highest standards of safety at both the Main Office and the Independence Education Center (IEC)/Opportunity School. Over the years, meaningful steps have been taken to strengthen protocols and facilities, thanks in large part to the leadership of Chad Rex, Larry Davis, and Stacey Parrish. Discussions at this year’s meeting included system and drill testing, required school safety drills, Emergency Operations Plans (EOP), ALICE training, PA systems, maintenance of first aid kits, AEDs, Narcan/Naloxone kits and training, and the use of emergency response guides and bookmarks. The group also reviewed updates related to door access, surveillance, and security, with system upgrades at the main office anticipated in Summer 2026. Additional topics included Opportunity School signage, IEC room/window identification, obtaining tourniquettes for first aid kits, and continued efforts to pursue grants that align with identified safety needs.

NwOESC continues to support staff development through its tuition reimbursement program. During fall 2025, reimbursements totaled \$19,200 for coursework completed during the 2024–25 school year - an increase from \$15,824 the prior year. Six certified staff members utilized tuition reimbursement under Policy 3450, compared to ten in the previous year. Reimbursement remains capped at \$320 per semester hour, up to \$2,880 per year (or \$3,840 for those on temporary or supplemental licensure).

The Defiance County Sheriff’s Office continues to provide part-time School Resource Officer (SRO) support to the IEC campus and several Defiance County districts. Deputy Jim Hall rotates among participating districts and the IEC, contributing to a stronger safety presence across campuses. A FY26 safety grant, developed in partnership with Ayersville Local Schools, will allow for expanded SRO time focused on preschool safety at the Ayersville campus. The ongoing SRO collaboration remains an important part of NwOESC’s comprehensive safety strategy.

The transition of Swanton Local Schools’ locally hired paraprofessionals to NwOESC employment for the 2025–26 school year has been successfully completed. The Business and Special Education teams worked collaboratively to ensure a seamless, well-coordinated process that supports consistency in staffing and services.

NwOESC remains active in advocacy efforts aimed at sustaining and strengthening public education and equitable funding across the state. On October 17th, the ESC hosted a legislative discussion with Representative Jim Hoops and Senate President Rob McColley, attended by approximately 35 superintendents and treasurers. The session centered on the potential impact of House Bill 186 (version -6), which initially posed challenges for rural district funding. Following these discussions, an updated version of the bill is progressing through legislative committees, now including a two-year “hold harmless” provision to prevent immediate revenue loss for districts.

Regional participation in CORAS has expanded significantly - from four member districts in FY25 to eleven in FY26. Additionally, approximately 350 districts statewide have joined the EdChoice Voucher lawsuit led by the Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding and the Vouchers Hurt Ohio initiative. NwOESC continues to highlight the essential role of Educational Service Centers in promoting shared services and efficiencies. A recent media statement and a summary of Ohio’s school funding and property tax structure were shared.

The BASA Fall Conference, held October 7–8 under the theme “Bold Leadership,” featured keynote presentations by Emmy Award-winning broadcaster and author Anne Marie Anderson and Lt. Governor Jim Tressel. Both speakers inspired attendees to lead with purpose, authenticity, and resilience in the face of today’s challenges. During the conference, Superintendent Kerri Weir was honored with the Jerry Klenke Distinguished Service Award - a particularly meaningful recognition, as Jerry Klenke served as a mentor to her early in her superintendency.

Superintendent Weir expressed appreciation to BASA for its steadfast support and advocacy on behalf of educational leaders across Ohio.

•**Adjournment:** As all the business of the evening was complete the meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will take place on **Tuesday, December 16, 2025 (no November meeting)** at 6:00 p.m. at the Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center, 205 Nolan Parkway, Archbold, OH 43502.