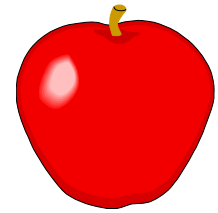


CHALKDUST



2007-2008 NCOEA Leadership Team

Brad Strong	President
Patty Levingston	Vice-President
Jen Lepard	Recording Sec.
Patti Dice	OEA Director
Becky Mayer	NEA Director
Chris Swank	Executive Secretary-Treas.

NCOEA 2007-2008 Calendar

March 3	"Read Across America"
March 6	*NCOEA Executive Com.
March 11	OEA Educator Lobby Day OEA, 9:00 am
March 11	NCOEA Spring Workshop, Mansfield Senior H.S.
March 13	CentWest, Tiffin
March 27	C.A.R. UniServ Council Lexington Office, 5:30 pm
March 31	NCOEA Spring RA, Mansfield Sr. H.S. Registration 5:00 pm
April 10	*NCOEA Executive Com.
April 18-19	OEA Spring RA, Columbus Convention Center
May 4-10	Teacher Appreciation Week
May 6	National Teacher Day
May 8	*NCOEA Executive Com.
May 12	HCC UniServ Council, Willard
May 22	C.A.R. UniServ Council, Lexington office, 5:30 pm
June 7	NEA Delegate Briefing
June 12	CentWest, PTBD
June 20-21	NCOEA Retreat, Mohican
July 1-6	NEA RA, Washington DC
August 4-6	OEA Leadership Academy Crowne Plaza, Dublin
Week of Aug. 11	NCOEA Treasurers' Workshop TBA
September 4	*NCOEA Executive Com.
November 8	State ESP Conference, Mansfield Sr. H.S.

*All NCOEA Executive Committee Meetings begin at 6:00 pm, at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, at Route 42 North and Route 30 East in Mansfield. All NCOEA members are welcome to attend. Pizza, salad and snacks are served at 5:15 pm.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN –

Brad Strong, Mansfield City Dedicated Educators

As most of you know I am an outdoor education teacher in the Mansfield City Schools. I get the opportunity to teach and observe a lot of students, teachers and ESP staff through this program. I have a unique perspective of the students, teachers, and ESP staff who come through the program. Recently, I watched some of the most dedicated teachers, ESP staff, and some of the most special students I have had the opportunity to be with in my career. Allow me to explain.

One of the opportunities I have is working with Special Education students in the outdoors. It is a very positive experience for them, their teachers, and me. We have canoed, studied a stream, gone cross country skiing, snow tubing, studied predator and prey skulls, and observed live wild birds. For a lot of these students it is the first time many of them have had or will have an opportunity to do these types of activities. It is a very memorable and educational experience for the students and the staff. Imagine a student who spends his days in a wheel chair participating in these types of activities with the assistance he requires to enable this participation. One student, let's call him "David", has made a positive impact on me. Seeing the smile on David's face when he went canoeing for the first time is an image I will have sketched in my mind for the rest of my life. Having him ask me to take him down the hill on the tube, again, because it is the first time he has ever gotten the opportunity to do it, leaves a picture on my cell phone that I will look at and remember this positive memory for him, and me. Watching David, who has limited control over his arms & hands, get to touch a red-bellied woodpecker and talk about how soft it is, and ask what it eats, makes some of the more challenging days seem worth it. Having David and his friend with Down

Syndrome ask to go back and observe the skulls, again, is why I became a teacher.

None of these teaching experiences I just mentioned would be possible without the amazing teachers and ESP staff that dedicate their lives to these students. Yes, I said lives. Most of these students will be with the same teacher and paraprofessional for multiple years. These caring educators know when something is wrong, or just not quite right with these young people. I watched the look in their eyes when their students experienced something new. I watched how they made sure they were fed, cleaned up, and got to experience as much as they could. They pushed wheel chairs to the bottom of a hill to collect a student, just so the student got to ride the tube down the hill again. I want to thank each and every special education teacher who dedicates so much for their students. I also want to thank every ESP staff member who dedicates so much for so little. As ESP staff you are underpaid and underappreciated by the education system. Our school districts would not function without your dedication and hard work. I think that each and every ESP staff should have their salary greatly increased; *you are worth it, and I thank you.*



Brad Strong, NCOEA President