

NEA Representative Assembly Recap

by Maury Koffman, APA President

The 95th NEA Representative Assembly (RA) kicked off on the morning of July 4 with the typical energetic celebration among the 7,000 delegates in attendance.

As the top decision-making body for the 3 million-member NEA, the RA debated 125 new business items that are intended to help direct the efforts of our national union in the coming year. Some key new business items called on the Association to join a national effort to prevent acts of violence targeted at LGBTQ individuals and to protect their civil rights. Others addressed funding and debt free programs for colleges and universities.

“We are making a long-term investment. An investment that will command persistence and struggle and commitment and a whole lot of work from every single one of us,” said NEA Vice President Becky Pringle.

On July 5, delegates were visited by the presumptive 2016 Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton.

On July 6, NEA’s Executive Director John Stocks addressed the RA and warned the delegates that the new generation of educators may not necessarily understand how vital our union can and will be to them and their students.

“We must become relevant to them, to help them meet the changing needs of their students...to help them be successful educators” Stocks said. “And we must act with urgency.”

The RA is the top decision-making body for NEA and, after days of debate, concluded at 9:31pm on Thursday, July 7.

APA Board member Deb Porter shares her perspective on the 2016 NEA Representative Assembly:

Once a year our national affiliate, the National Education Association, holds a convention requesting delegates from every state attend to develop and do the business of the organization. These are the folks that represent over 3 million public education employees, from pre-school thru higher education and are there to represent you. This year there were approximately 7,000 delegates in attendance.

The assembly itself is just a few days, however there are numerous meetings and committees in the days prior to the assembly. I had the honor and privilege to be your representative at the National Council for Higher Education and the National Council for Education Support Professionals prior to the 2016 National Education Association Representative Assembly (RA). In addition, I also attended the RA as a state delegate for the Michigan Education Association.

Every day we started about 6-6:30 AM and went to 7, 8 or 9 PM. We worked on amendments to the constitution, bylaws and standing rules. We worked on resolutions and policy statements as well as business items as well as passing the budget. We listened to speakers such as Jahana Hayes, Teacher of the Year; Doreen McGuire-Grigg's, ESP of the Year; John Stocks, NEA Executive Director; friends of education Senator Patty Murray and Senator Lamar Alexander; Lily Eskelsen Garcia and Presidential Candidate Hillary Clinton.

My take away from the time spent at the assembly is this. We are very lucky to be associated with an organization that cares and works hard for our children, families, communities and all educational professionals at every level. They are passionate about what they do, knowing they may not always agree, however they are willing to listen, engage and advocate for education. I am proud to be a member of the NEA!

[Clinton Address to NEA 2016 RA](#)



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On July 5, 2016, the Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, delivered a rousing address to the National Education Association's Representative Assembly. She began her comments by explaining her vision to strengthen public education, K-12 and colleges and universities. Clinton

made it clear that any national campaign to create great schools for every student will only succeed with the strong voices of those educators who serve students everyday.

“I’m with you,” the presumptive 2016 Democratic presidential nominee declared to enthusiastic applause. “I have this old-fashioned idea that we should listen to the teachers and the support professionals who are with our kids every day.”

Lifting up educators will be central to Clinton’s plans for public education if elected in November. In her RA speech, she announced plans to launch a national campaign to elevate our professions that will spotlight the importance of career-long professional development, higher salaries for teachers and support staff professionals, and relief for crippling student debt.

“Unions helped create the strongest middle class in the history of the world. You’re not just fighting for your members. You’re fighting for your students, and families across the country.”

In her speech, Clinton proudly contrasted her vision for public education with that of her opponent in November, Donald Trump. She derided the GOP nominee’s plan to eliminate the Department of Education and slash funding for critical programs – from pre-k to Pell Grants – that serve low-income students. “[Trump] has said that America spends too much on education. He would leave our most vulnerable students to fend for themselves. He shouldn’t have anything to do with our children’s education.”

“I’m asking you – and all educators across the country – to work with me. Advise me, hold me accountable. And keep advocating for your students and your professions.”

Your Fellow APs

Interview by Laura Wise, APA Executive Board

Our APA Member Spotlight this month is highlighting Todd Wilson at Infrastructure Planning and Facilities.

What is your job title?

Project Representative

How long have you been at MSU?

22 years

Have you been a member of APA the whole time?

No, I was originally hired into a position that was represented by CTU, and transferred to an APA position in 1999

Can you tell me a little bit about what you do?

I manage Capital Construction projects in the Planning, Design and Construction office, in Infrastructure Planning and Facilities.

What brought you to your job at MSU?

I was employed as a Student Aide at (then) Physical Plant while I was working on my undergraduate degree in Philosophy. My background is mechanical, and I really enjoyed the place and the people I worked with. When an opportunity came to work here full time, I applied for a position as a Programmer in the Energy Management office at IPF and was hired.

What do you love about working at MSU?

The diversity. There are so many great things happening here, and such a broad array of experiences to be gained... Great people... beautiful campus... I'm proud to be at MSU

What do you like to do when you are not at work?

I coach robotics in Haslett with kids aged 9-14, and have coached competitive baseball (ages 8-14) for 8 years. Also, myself and two friends brew beer, and are in the process of trying to open a commercial brewery here in Lansing... Gearhead Brewing Company.