

2026 NEA RA Category I State Delegate Candidates (In the order as they appear on the official ballot.)

Jenny Weindel, NORTHWEST EDUC ASSN



Jenny Weindel is a dedicated teacher with over 29 years of experience.

Working with her local, Jenny has served in various roles. She has been a building representative for two middle schools for two years, and on the negotiation team three years. She is currently serving her second term as treasurer for her local, and in year two of the MNEA Board of Directors. Her background and experience makes her a dedicated and effective member of the MNEA and NWEA communities. Please consider her for your vote to represent Missouri at the NEA Representative Assembly for the coming year.

Lisa Baldwin, NORTH KANSAS CITY NEA



I currently serve as the 2nd Vice President of NKC-NEA and as a building representative, as well as a member of our negotiation team. I have been an active member of MACCE for four years and have served on the Board representing Governance District 5. In addition, I have been a representative to the National Representative Assembly for the past 16 years.

Moira McCracken, PARKWAY NEA



Moira McCracken is hoping to represent Missouri at the National RA in 2026! She is in her fourth year as President of Parkway NEA, a full time position, released from teaching theater. She has served as building rep and secretary within PNEA. Moira has attended 3 previous RAs, NEA Leadership Summits (attended & presented at), and NCUEA conferences. Within MNEA, she has attended state RAs for 15 years, co-chairs the Women's Issues Committee, and has presented at MNEA Leadership Conferences. Moira is a passionate advocate for public schools and is looking to support Missouri's unique needs at the national level.

Justin Smith, NORTH KANSAS CITY NEA



I am a library media specialist in North Kansas City with almost two decades of classroom experience. I have been my building rep for ten years and now represent two buildings. I also serve as a local secretary have been elected multiple times to the State RA national RAs. I love collaborating with colleagues and coaching them to solve issues at the building and applying what I learn at the RA to our union. I would love the opportunity to help you stand up for your rights and advocate for the freedom to read at the RA. Thanks for voting!

Alicia Kleoppel, NORTH KANSAS CITY NEA



With 17 years of teaching experience (K-12) and a decade of local leadership, I've served as building representative, executive board member, secretary, and currently as 1st Vice President for NKC-NEA. Passionate about professional growth, I engage in NEA trainings at the state and national levels, both as a presenter and attendee. Serving on Missouri's Resolutions Committee for four years, I've advocated for policies that support educators. I'm eager to represent Missouri educators at the National RA in Denver. Your vote would be an honor as I continue my commitment to amplifying educators' voices while strengthening our union.

Jennifer Wofford, NEA ST LOUIS



My name is Jenn Wofford, I am a nurse practitioner and cohort leader for the Saint Louis Public School district in Missouri serving as a school nurse. I am seeking to advance my leadership role within the NEA to amplify the voices of school nurses, staff and students. The NEA offers a vital platform to advocate for resources and policies that ensure success for all. I've attended local and national NEA conferences, presented at the fall MNEA conference. I have held 2 presentations through the MNEA and NEA nationally. Serving as an RA delegate will help me grow as a leader and strengthen my ability to represent and empower our community.

Joaquin Cuni-Carreno, NORTH KANSAS CITY NEA



My name is Joaquin Cuni-Carreno. I am a high school Spanish teacher at North Kansas City High School and currently serve as building representative and at-large member of NKC-NEA executive committee. I also sit on the MNEA Board of Directors and co-chair our Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee. I am running as a state representative to the National RA because I believe in the value of multiplying and empowering the voices and perspectives that come to a national assembly. All our stories and experiences are needed to protect and strengthen public education. Let's do this.

Michelle Shepard, COLUMBIA MNEA



Hello! I'm Michelle Shepard, a special services instructional aide from Columbia, and I'm asking for your vote to represent our members at the NEA Representative Assembly. Throughout my years of service, I've had the privilege of working in multiple leadership roles, including NEA ESP Leadership Institute; MNEA ESP-at-Large; MNEA PAC Committee; Chair of both the MNEA PR Committee and MNEA Convention Committee; and several CMNEA positions, including Vice President, Treasurer, ESP Chair, and Public Relations Chair.

I am deeply committed to advocating for and empowering all students and educators, and I would be honored to represent MNEA in Denver.

Dr. Nana Becoat, HAZELWOOD NEA



Dr. Nana Becoat is a 20 year educator, literacy leader, and writer with a career-long commitment to the NEA and public education. As a current building representative, she advocates for educators, collaborates with colleagues, and helps amplify teacher voice at the school level. Her work centers culturally responsive, justice-oriented literacy and community engagement. Attending the NEA State Delegate Meeting would give Dr. Becoat the opportunity to represent her building and district with integrity, contribute informed perspectives grounded in classroom experience, and participate meaningfully in decision-making that strengthens our profession and protects equitable, high-quality public education.

Brendan Kearns, ST CHARLES E A



I am about to complete my third term as President of the St. Charles Education Association. I also serve as a member of the MNEA Board of Directors for Governance District 10. MNEA has played a central role in my development as a professional and a teacher advocate. Missouri NEA has given me an amazing opportunity to work with passionate and dedicated professionals fighting for students and education professionals. The National RA is an opportunity to be at the center of what makes our organization great. As a National RA delegate, I intend to advocate for our members.

Michelle Barbieri, NORTH KANSAS CITY NEA



Having been an MNEA member and an educator at North Kansas City High School for the past ten years, I take great joy and pride in helping to represent the vast diversity and depths of our schools, our educators, and our desire to continually move forward. My heart lies in helping uplift the voices of others, broadening my own horizons, and helping others embrace positive change and momentum.

Francine Hill, FRANCIS HOWELL E A



My name is Francine Hill. I am the President of the Francis Howell Education Association. I enjoy being involved in the important business of MNEA. If selected to represent Missouri at the national level, I will work to make decisions beneficial to Missouri. It was my honor to serve on the MNEA Board as one of the Governance 10 directors for 7 years. I will serve as the Chair for the new SOGI committee and work with LGBTQ+ Caucus. I am a director on the MLL Caucus, and being at the RA allows me to attend their meetings. Thank you.

Katie (Kathryn) Bedford, FORT ZUMWALT EDUC ASSN



I, Katie Bedford, would be honored to represent FZEA and MNEA for a 5th time as a state delegate at the National RA this summer. I have been a building representative for my local my entire school career. I have attended local and National RAs for the past 10 years. I am passionate about advocating for the rights of my fellow union members and will continue to utilize this opportunity to ensure the voices of MNEA are heard. I will continue working to ensure that NEA and MNEA are the best and strongest unions in the nation.

Brooke Silliman, SPECIAL ED EMPLOYEES (Paraprofessionals)



Brooke Silliman is an RBT with SSD. She currently serves on her local union executive board as corresponding secretary and regional organizer. She was also selected to be part of the SEAM committee for MNEA this year. She is passionate about raising ALL voices and advocating for change for her students. Brooke plans to run for higher leadership positions at the local and state levels in the future. As a past attendee of the National RA, she most enjoyed the debates at the early morning state caucus meetings. Brooke would be honored to have your vote to return this year!

Kimberly Duvall, BLUE SPRINGS NEA



I believe in the strength of our collective voice. As local President, West Central secretary, and an MNEA Board member, I've worked alongside dedicated educators to protect and advance public education. When vouchers threatened our schools, I stood with MNEA as a named plaintiff because together we can defend what matters most: our students and our profession. I am passionate about building bridges, fostering collaboration, and ensuring every educator's voice is heard at the national level. Elect me as your NEA RA delegate, and I will work tirelessly to represent Missouri with integrity, unity, and a shared vision for strong public schools.

Todd Geringer , METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE NEA



Hey, It's Todd.

Those who know me, know MNEA is my FAMILY. I WORK hard ADVOCATING for US, how OUR money is spent, and that OUR views are heard. 9years local President, year 3 on MNEA BOD, I get up everyday and serve OUR MEMBERS. I do so because there's work to be done and it's time to RISE! Show the world what you're made of, what you believe in, and friends will BELIEVE in you.

Thanks to my MNEA family. YOUR LOVE and SUPPORT means the world. Vote Todd and I'll go to THAT. I'm on it!

Dr. Alexander Tai, COLUMBIA MNEA



My name is Dr. Alexander Tai, and I am an English Learner Specialist with Columbia Public Schools in Columbia, Missouri. As an LGBTQIA+ Asian American educator, I value the power of diverse and minority voices in advancing our association's mission. I have proudly served our union as Native People and People of Color Director-at-Large, Executive PAC Council member (GD 6), and Local Vice President of Columbia MNEA. I respectfully ask for your vote to serve as a state delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.

Hunter Wood, FORT ZUMWALT EDUC ASSN



I currently serve as President of the Fort Zumwalt Education Association and as an MNEA Board member. I have attended the NEA Representative Assembly three times previously and value the responsibility of representing Missouri educators at the national level. In my leadership roles, I regularly advocate for members, collaborate across locals, and work to advance the mission of MNEA. I bring experience, preparation, and a strong commitment to ensuring Missouri's voice is informed, engaged, and effectively represented at the NEA RA.

Lieda Shadwick, RIVERVIEW GARDENS NEA



Lieda Shadwick, MAT, is a Career and Technical Educator with over 25 years of experience advocating for students and educators. She has served as a local executive board officer, a building representatives, and for many years on the Professional Practice Committee. I am committed to strengthening public education through collaboration, leadership, and informed advocacy. Through my continued involvement with MNEA, I seek to support educators, elevate professional practice, and contribute to meaningful, sustainable change for our schools and communities.

Erin Mareth, NEVADA-NEA



I am an educator with eight years of classroom experience, currently teaching Foundations in Teaching and leading a lab preschool program focused on developing future educators through a Grow Your Own model. My work centers on building strong educator pipelines, supporting student leadership, and strengthening public education from the ground up! Through my involvement with MNEA, including serving as a Governance District 3 board member, I have gained a strong understanding of association leadership and member voice. I would represent fellow educators thoughtfully, collaboratively, and with integrity at the NEA Representative Assembly!

Anna Strawhun, SPECIAL ED EMPLOYEES (Paraprofessionals)



Anna Maria Strawhun has been a dedicated union member for 7 years, serving her local with commitment and heart. As a Regional Organizer, Human Rights Committee Chair, and Constitution and Bylaws Committee member, she works to strengthen her union and uplift every voice. Anna Maria is also a paraprofessional in special education, where she advocates daily for students with diverse needs, ensuring inclusion, dignity, and meaningful support. She has made connections at the National R.A. and contributed to amending national resolutions. Passionate about equity for all, she also creates Indigenous Educational Resources. Anna Maria is ready to bring strong advocacy

Carrie Begemann, ODESSA MNEA



Please consider me, Carrie Begemann, as a representative to the NEA Representative Assembly. As a member of a small, rural local located near Kansas City I have gained valuable experience. I am local President for Odessa MNEA. I am the chairperson for West Central Governance District and have served on the State Credentials, Membership Advisory Committee, and currently the MNEA PAC Board and Women's Issues Committee. I have greatly enjoyed all the experiences that NEA has provided me at the local, state, and national levels. Please allow me to represent our state locals this summer and would be honored to serve MNEA while I expand my knowledge as a delegate.

Paulette Luckett, NEA ST LOUIS



Serving as an RA delegate last year strengthened my ability to represent the voices of the MNEA and school nurses and advocate for change. Building on this experience, I have continued to grow as a leader through local and national trainings that deepened my understanding of the challenges and opportunities within education. I remain committed to driving meaningful progress by sharing advocacy-driven strategies that support and uplift every member of our organization. Championing the presence and perspective of school nurses in critical decision-making forums is a priority for me, and I would be honored to continue advancing this work further.

Rachel Barlow, CAMERON R-I



I am a teacher in the rural Northwest corner of Missouri and have been through the trials and tribulations of speaking truth and confronting the indifference that we face as educators everyday. I have been through a hearing in front of a school board and I can attest that school administrators and school board members need to be held accountable for their judgment. We also need to have legal consequences within the state for denying our right to union representation. Our educational system needs to change for the better and protect our teachers.

Amy Metz, RITENOUR NEA



Amy is looking forward to continuing her professional growth within the union as a state delegate to the RA. She is in her first year as local President for Ritenour NEA after completing four 2-year terms as local Vice President. Amy has served as the collective bargaining chair and grievance chair during her tenure. She's excited for the potential to return to the RA this summer and expand on the strong work in her local and state.

Tresina Alvested, ODESSA MNEA



My name is Tresina Alvested. I am an educator in the small, rural school district of Odessa. I am ready to be a voice for Missouri educators at the Representative Assembly. I am the treasurer of my local. I currently serve on the Missouri Professional Practice Committee. At the national level, I am a member of the NEA Disability Rights and Resource Cadre. I believe that it is imperative that our voices are heard so we can improve the current state of public education. It would be my honor to represent all Missouri Educators at the RA.

Eric Powell , JOPLIN ESP NEA



My name is Eric Powell, I live in Joplin Missouri, I have been with Joplin schools for 21 years, I've also been a member of Joplin NEA ESP for 21 years as well. Eight of those years I was Union president, and now I serve as member chair. My goal is to bring equality and diversity to all, and to represent any aesp in a professional matter to wherever the case may arise. I look forward to being on the state ballot for the upcoming representative assembly. And to represent the area of Southwest Missouri.

Mikey Selby, SPECIAL ED EMPLOYEES (Paraprofessionals)



Greetings, I'm Mikey Selby. I've worked as a Paraprofessional for the Special School District of St. Louis County at Marquette High School of the Rockwood School District since 2005 and have been a member of SEEA from the beginning. I've served our local Special Education Employees Association as an Association Representative for my building, on the Negotiations Committee, as Vice President, and now as President. I've been a voting delegate at the MNEA Representative Assembly since 2019. I have attended the NEA Representative Assembly three times. Hope to earn your vote for the NEA Representative Assembly in Denver.

Aireka Thompson-Rogers, SPECIAL DISTRICT-NEA (Teachers)



My name is Aireka Thompson-Rogers, and I have been with the district for more than 12 years. I am deeply passionate about the work I do as a special education teacher and about advocating for educators across our district. As an African American educator, I value representation and equity, and I would be honored to serve as the next member of the state union board. I am committed to advocating for all of my fellow teachers and ensuring that our voices are heard and understood. United we stand!!

Dennis Tabb, FERGUSON FLORISSANT NEA



Good morning, my fellow advocates. Once a teacher, always a teacher, you are the institutional memory of the labor movement, and I will ensure that memory translates into action. The fight for security, our primary mission is dignity. It is unacceptable that the GOP/WEP penalize those who dedicate their lives to public service. You didn't work for decades for partial social security and pension, that should be prioritize as non-negotiable. Public education is under siege from political and cultural deference. Structuring our chapters, mentor "Aspiring Educators", providing the support they need to stay in the profession. You are the bridge

Danielle Swallow, RITENOUR NEA



I am excited to run as a first-time state delegate to our association's representative assembly. At the local level, I am currently serving my first year as Vice President. As a building representative, I was involved in organizing events such as the American Education Week celebration and recognition, as well as the Martin Luther King Essay/Poster contest. I look forward to working with delegates from across the country for the collective good of public education.

Kaylee Houston, RITENOUR NEA



Kaylee Houston is entering her third year as a building representative and is looking forward to running as a state representative! Houston has served on the negotiations committee within her district and has attended multiple state-level representative assemblies within her three years. I, Kaylee Houston, want to continue to grow as a representative and collaborate with others to bring more amazing things to my local.

Noelle Gilzow, COLUMBIA MNEA



Noelle Gilzow is current President of Columbia MNEA and has served in this capacity for the past 5 years. Additionally, she serves on the MNEA Budget and Accountability Committee and is an active participant in MNEA RAs, learning conferences and events. She also represented her local at the NCUEA conference in December and will again in July. She applied to present at the Social Justice conference which occurs just prior to the NEA RA. She is an outspoken advocate for her local, state and national union!

Laura Lopez Reese, ST CHARLES E A

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PROVIDED

*25+ teaching experience (bilingual education, math, science and Spanish)
*Hispanic woman with strong advocacy for diversity, equity, inclusion, culture learning and being a global traveler and learner, and immigration rights
*teacher sponsor of 2 clubs: LGBTQ+ alliance and the Hispanic Heritage Club
*MNEA member for 10 years and currently very active in the following: SCEA negotiations team, 1st year in LJS Baltimore Cohort, participant in Fall and Spring conferences and member of EMAC *Would love to serve as a voting member that represents the Hispanic/Latino/Latinx communities with budgeting plans, union policies and strategic plans to help improve our public education.

Joy Banks, GRANDVIEW NEA



My name is Joy Banks, President of the Grandview NEA, and I am asking for your vote to allow me the privilege of representing our fellow MNEA members at the National RA. This is my 10th year as an MNEA member. I desire to continue my growth as a leader and participate in more NEA/MNEA opportunities as I lead my local. I would love to have the opportunity to attend the National RA to continue my development as an educational support professional and assist in the progress my local is making with our district. Thank you for your support.

Leah Hayes, SPECIAL DISTRICT-NEA (Teachers)



I am thrilled to run for MNEA State Delegate! My 20-year NEA journey- including 11 years with SDNEA and serving as Recording Secretary and Hazelwood District Representative- has been incredibly rewarding. I am passionate about our union and eager to learn from educators across the nation in Denver. I believe leadership is about constant growth, and I'm excited to bring fresh, innovative strategies back to Missouri to better serve our members and students. I would be honored to represent you with enthusiasm and a commitment to lifelong learning. Let's shape the future of education together!

Amanda Irvin-Black, PARK HILL NEA



Hi, I'm Amanda! You may know me from Park Hill, the SOGI Caucus, the State Resolutions Committee, the MNEA PAC Board (District 5), or from asking an awkward yet memorable series of questions at last year's RA. I also serve as Park Hill NEA's Legislative Chair and High School Rep, and I was the one who ran our super-fun bingo night at the Fall MNEA Conference. I'm running for NEA RA delegate because Missouri's voice matters on the national stage, and I want to represent educators from every corner of our state - large districts, small rural districts, and everything in between.

Rebekah Messick, WENTZVILLE NEA



As the current President of the Wentzville NEA, I am deeply committed to the success of our educators and the students we serve. We are navigating a uniquely challenging cultural landscape, and now more than ever, we must unite our voices to protect our educational freedoms. I would be honored to represent Missouri at the National Representative Assembly and help lead the charge in one of the most powerful democratic assemblies in the country.

Lennelle Gilpin, WENTZVILLE NEA



I am Lennelle Gilpin, and I have been an educator and active union member here in Missouri for 23 years. Currently I serve as a building representative, my local's vice president, and as a member of the MNEA PAC Board. We know that strong public schools and strong communities are deeply connected. Unfortunately, many in our nation, spurred by the current administration, are trying to dismantle public education, leaving our children unequipped and unprepared for their future. I am committed to fighting for our teachers and students, securing a brighter future for our communities, our state, and our country.

Shannon Benne, SPRINGFIELD-NEA



My name is Shannon Benne. I am the local Union President in Springfield. While I have been a delegate for my local, I have never had the opportunity to be a delegate at the national level. I would love to have this experience and would be honored to do so.

Angie Warner, INDEPENDENCE NEA



My name is Angie Warner and I am an active ESP member currently serving as the Treasurer for Independence NEA. I have attended 2 national RA's and many more state RA's. I have a passion for advocating for my fellow union siblings and my students with whom I work each day. If elected, I will represent all Missouri NEA members with integrity and passion. I respectfully ask for your vote to ensure that our ESP voices are lifted! Thank you!

Nicki Lanigan, NORTH KANSAS CITY NEA



Nicki has been a dedicated member of MNEA and NKC NEA for 13 years. She has served as a Building Representative for 11 years, participated on the district calendar committee for two years, and represented members as a state delegate to numerous Representative Assemblies. Through these roles, Nicki has demonstrated a strong commitment to advocacy, collaboration, and educator voice. She seeks to serve as a state delegate to the NEA National Conference to continue representing Missouri educators and supporting policies that strengthen public education.

Margaret Govero, HAZELWOOD NEA



I have taught for 18 years and am currently teaching in the Hazelwood School District. Since joining Hazelwood NEA, I have had the pleasure of serving as a Building Representative, Secretary, Treasurer, HNEA's PAC Co-Chair, RA Delegate at the state and national level for the past two years. MNEA has provided me with many opportunities to gain leadership skills that allow my passion for public education and unions to shine. I am excited for another opportunity to be a voice for my community, my school, HNEA, and MNEA.

Jenevieve Lafferty, SPECIAL ED EMPLOYEES (Paraprofessionals)



With nine years of experience as a classroom support professional, and six years as a behavior technician, I am very familiar with the need for a union in the school setting. I am actively invested in my local union as a first-year SEEA building representative, I am committed to advocating for our members. Having attended the MNEA Fall Conference and actively receiving mentorship from my executive team, I am prepared to continue developing as a union leader. Raised in a union household, I understand the importance of strong membership and ensuring every voice is represented.

Monica Miller, COLUMBIA MNEA



Hello! I'm Monica Miller, and I humbly ask for your vote to represent you at The NEA RA in Denver. It's time our teachers' elected officials know from educators and ESP members how their decisions impact our students and their families. I am not afraid to speak up and advocate! I have served as local president, building rep, local PAC Chair, and now serve as a local PAC member. As a delegate, my goal is to support our state's goal, to provide something better for education. Thank you.

Tony Muyco, AFFTON EDUCATION ASSN



I am honored to declare my candidacy for MNEA State Delegate. I have served as President of the Affton Education Association for the past three years and previously as a building representative at Affton High School. During my presidency, our membership has grown from 50% to over 70%, strengthening our collective voice and solidarity. I also currently serve on the MNEA Political Action Committee, advocating for educators, students, and public education across Missouri. As a State Delegate, I will bring experience, collaboration, and a commitment to amplifying member voices and advancing our union's mission. I respectfully ask for your support.

-Tony Muyco President,
Affton Education Association

Julie Mensendike, PARK HILL NEA



Julie Mensendike is a dedicated middle school special education teacher in the Park Hill School District. Within PHNEA, she serves as Vice President, a building representative, a member of the negotiations committee, and a delegate to both state and national representative assemblies. Through these roles, she has collaborated with educators across Missouri and the country to advocate for student success in public education by ensuring fair working conditions, adequate compensation, and the rights and dignity of all students and educators, including ESPs, across America.

Jesse Tran, PARKWAY NEA



I'm Jesse Tran and I teach 3rd grade in the Parkway School District. I have been teaching elementary school for 19 years. Currently, I am one of the union representatives at my school. I would like to represent NEA members as a state delegate because I believe strongly in advocating for student and educators. We all know our students deserve our best selves, and I believe that we can't truly show up for them without healthy working conditions. I would be honored to advocate for all of us at the 2026 Representative Assembly.

Merilee Schallom , BAYLESS COM TEACHERS ASSN



My MNEA involvement began in 2019–2020 during my first year in public education. The following year, I stepped into leadership as Executive Secretary and continued in that role the next year. In 2022, when our longtime president stepped down and the future of our union felt uncertain, I ran for Co-President alongside our Treasurer, and we were elected. Over the past three years, I have helped lead our union by strengthening partnerships with the Central Office, leading successful negotiations, and maintaining majority membership through high turnover. Union leadership is my passion, and I would be honored to represent Missouri.Â