

# OEA Special Education Work Group

## New Business Item for the OEA Representative Assembly

**“Create an OEA Special Education Work Group to develop recommendations for professional development programs, sample contract language, OEA Resolutions, and OEA Legislative Policies that would address the needs of OEA members involved in or supporting education programs for students with special needs.”**

**One time action: 10 - 12 members, 3 - 6 meetings over 1 - 2 years**

## Who, What, When, Why, How

OEA members in all settings, especially the roughly 15% that identify as working in special education, report they face critical challenges obtaining and providing additional supports and accommodations for students with special needs to be successful.

The overwhelming concern is for more professional development for teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff; especially in the areas of appropriate IEPs and classroom/behavior management.

Critically important are the issues of staffing, case load, and planning time. Members state that they are stretched too thinly to adequately meet the needs of their students. Local contract language needs to be reviewed. Sample contract language is needed.

Furthermore, the OEA Resolutions and Legislative Policies should be reviewed to assure that they adequately address the needs of members involved with special education.

An OEA Special Education Work Group would be able to quickly assess needs and develop recommendations from a statewide perspective. Perhaps some of the recommendations could result in options for the OEA Summer Academy. Other recommendations could be passed to the appropriate OEA committee for further action.

The OADDP will expand its focus to advocate for the needs of K-12 Special Educators and consider a name change to “Ohio Association of Special Needs Professionals.” For information on the Spring Conference visit [OADDP.org](http://OADDP.org).

## Short list of issues reported by OEA members:

### Professional Development:

Teachers; Paraprofessionals; Support Staff  
Art, Music, and Physical Education  
Administrators; Parents

### Advocacy for Students:

Identify and Provide Supports, Modifications, and Accommodations; Unidentified Needs  
Assistive Technology  
Nonacademic Issues; Physical and Emotional  
Functional Daily Activities  
Graduate with Class or Continue Until 22  
Post-Secondary Planning

### Appropriate IEPs:

Assessment, Planning and Preparation Time  
Alternative Assessments and State Tests  
Student Placement and Referrals  
Least Restrictive Considerations  
Expectations and Follow Through

### Classroom and Behavior Management:

Student and Staff Safety

### Staffing Decisions; Roles and Responsibilities:

One-On-One Personal Aides  
Paraprofessional Assistants  
Specialist Case Load