The President’s Take

After every Representative Assembly meeting, I will send out a “President’s Take” as part of my message to membership. I wish to give you a comprehensive take on our RA meeting. This will certainly not cover every last conversation that was held or every question that was asked, but it will hopefully help to support the building level communication that is already happening. I will put a modified version of this at theta.org. There might be topics about political action or other business that would not be appropriate to put on our website. Throughout this message, there will be links that you can follow if you are interested in even more depth of knowledge about something that was discussed at our RA.

For my first meeting as President, I opened the meeting with a thank you and a general address regarding the vision I see for our ETA. I have had a chance to visit with more than 30 schools in the district since the election and have seen and been a part of the great things ETA members have done for students in U-46. I am a product of the great and dedicated teachers of this membership. I am so grateful for everything this district and the ETA has given to me as a student and as an employee. I have had a chance to work with very dedicated and talented individuals on your Board of Directors and we are only in the infancy stages of building a unified vision for the future of the ETA, so we have some work to do together.

These are the pillars of my vision are the same ideas we talked about since we began our campaign way back in February: Communication, Teacher Voice, and Political Action.

Communication will be open, transparent, and timely. You have my personal email; I freely give out my personal mobile number. You have access to me whenever you need me. I have also made a real effort to show my face to members and have engaged in real conversation about pressing issues. My main goal in communication is to make personal connections. Personal relationships with all members. One of the goals of the IEA is to meet 1 on 1 with members. This has been a goal of mine since the beginning. If we are to increase member involvement, we must increase member recognition, member connections, personal connections.

We must be a strong advocate for our members and for ourselves. You will hear from Jen Bury, Jeff Horler and Joyce Juenger, representing our grassroots political advocacy group, and they will ask for your help. There are many ways to help out, please get out there and help as much as you can. I want you to write down these dates, put it in your phone, on your calendar, put it somewhere you will see it – November 8th, 2016 and April 4th, 2017. Of course, November 8th is a National, State, and Local Election Day and April 4th is the School Board Election Day. First things, first, if you are not registered to vote, get registered. Then go out and make sure that you use your federally protected, constitutionally given, right to vote. Get out there and vote in those elections on November 8th and April 4th. Secondly, we need all the volunteers we can get, please send an email to Jen, Jeff or Joyce and volunteer your time. If you are a talker like me, go out and knock on some doors. If you are not the social type, volunteer to stuff envelopes, or create flyers or whatever else you can do to help. I will be in buildings asking for your help, please get involved so we can secure a bright future for our children.

I would like to see our voice as teachers in the decisions that affect our classrooms in significant ways. We have bargained to be a part of many of the decisions, but we need to work for more voice in decisions that deal with teaching, discipline and philosophical decisions being made by administration. We need to use our power as School Department committees and School Improvement plan committees. We must use our influence in those committees, and if we need to give training to schools, we will do so. Our contractual committees have done phenomenal work in the past few years. The Instructional Council has pushed new resources through for teachers that desperately needed them. Our student growth committee has done an amazing job in creating a plan where teachers have a strong influence in determining their growth portion of their evaluations. We need to continue that important work and we will continue to make the work of those committees transparent and easily accessible. Membership must not only know what decisions are being made, but why those decisions are being made.

We must work to make the relationship between the ETA and Administration a partnership. A partnership where decisions are made collaboratively, with an eye on practicality of those plans. I want to implore you to continue doing the great work you are doing, but I want you to make an effort to reach out and create relationships with your colleagues throughout the district. We are all in the same profession with the same goal. We are the ETA. We are educating the next generation for the welfare of children and the advancement of public educational opportunities for all.

**Committee Reports**

There are some committees where we need people. Members interested in joining the Insurance committee need to reach out to Richard Johnson. For this committee, there are a minimum of four meetings that occur during the school day. BOE Communications Team also needs help. Three teachers meet with a Board member throughout the year to have a social contact with Board. For this, you can go to the website to find information and apply for it. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BOEComm2016>

Application closes at 5:00 pm on August 30, 2016.

The Elections committee will also have a request for participation. There will be three openings for that committee.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ETA_Elections_Comm>

**TAP**  Missy Ross is the co-chair. Missy, Jack Janezac, Melanie Meidel, and Richard met last week to discuss TAP oversight. We are looking for one more ETA member to work on this. Melanie shared with us that they made a concerted effort to have members with administration create the information for TAP. Everyone should have been given this notification at the school level already. If you have not, this needs to be addressed. This information is to make sure you understand how you will be evaluated by your administration. Melanie is co-presenting with a teacher, Jeron Shleton. The third group that are presenting are TAP trainers. This group is composed of full-time teachers who do this in addition to their teaching duties. They are continuing to train. These three individuals will be out supporting TAP training. Our dream is to grow this group so that the same message with the correct answers are given to all members and administrators. Please try to identify leaders in your building who might help with this.

TAP professional development is taking place in the auditorium at locations below:

August 31 4:00-5:30pm Bartlett High School

September 7 4:00-5:30pm Elgin High School

September 8 4:00-5:30pm Larkin High School

September 14 4:00-5:30pm South Elgin High School

September 15 4:30-6:00pm Canton Middle School

Please try and make it out to one of the trainings. I would never advocate for bringing an admin anywhere, but in this case it is very important. We want to make sure that the message about evaluations is the same message for both teachers and administration. So, grab and admin and make them come to the meeting with you. Sign up in Coursewhere to attend.

**IEA** On October 20th from 4:30-7:30pm there will be doing an opportunity to do ETA rep training. This training will be held at The ETA office. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/eta-representative-training-tickets-27385383419?utm-medium=discovery&utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&aff=escb&utm-source=cp&utm-term=listing>

This training will help reps to advocate for themselves and for their members.

**Special ED Committee** will be having their first meeting Thursday September 8th. Any concerns with SPED you can contact me at [richardajohnsonlaw@gmail.com](mailto:richardajohnsonlaw@gmail.com)

**District PD** will have its first steering meeting this week and its first meeting next week. Every site should have a member a part of this committee. This is an elected position. This person needs to communicate with the SIP team but not be a part of the SIP team. This is NOT a position that your administrator decides.

In **Region 24**, we elect people to go to NEA every summer over the July 4th weekend. This year it was at DC. Doreen Roberts gave an overview of what happens at the NEA. Please visit <http://ra.nea.org/> if you wish to read about anything that happened during this exhaustive week of educator involvement from across the country.

If you have not gone to the IEA website, please register. <https://ieanea.org/benefits/my-profile/>

If you do not know your ID #, please contact Kathy Difatta at [kathy.difatta@ieanea.org](mailto:kathy.difatta@ieanea.org) or 847.428.7640 Please update your profile as necessary.

ERO - The early retirement option has not been extended by the Illinois Legislature. Members that have paid in will receive a refund. Check the website for more information. [ERO - What happens next?](https://ieanea.org/2016/07/02/ero-has-expired-what-happens-next/)

**Those Who Excel** will host our scholarship bowl on April 20th. We are looking for corporate sponsorship and any support we can get. If you have connections to anyone that might support this endeavor, please email Gary Lorber at [spartan1990b@yahoo.com](mailto:spartan1990b@yahoo.com).

**Early Career Fellowship** Leaders gave a presentation about their work. Please watch the video posted on the ETA website to see the great work they are doing with new teachers. They are inspiring new teachers to get involved in leadership positions and providing support and voice to new teachers. The video is posted on the website under RA Resources

[Early Career Fellowship video](http://theeta.org/about/governance/representative-assembly/)

**Section Breakout** - The meeting ended with breakout sessions for sections. Section directors met with each of their sections to discuss building level issues and to confirm information. Each of the sections were asked to find out the member representatives in the following areas – School department/committee chair, School Improvement committee chair and the Professional development representative. If you didn’t have a chance to provide that information to your section director, please make sure to do so.

Homework was also given to head reps. They were asked to get the packets to building reps and to collect. When you have completed homework packets, please return them to your section directors. The homework packet has a few questions for each rep to answer about the beginning of school and information on the interest in union social activities. If you didn’t receive the packet, you can get a copy on the ETA website under RA Resources. <http://theeta.org/about/governance/representative-assembly/>