

NEA-R RA/Convention DELEGATE CANDIDATES

Table of Contents

NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Dr. Michael W. Putney Sr.....	2
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Derevana Robinson Leach	3
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Emma Walker-Sorce	4
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Gretchen Lampe	5
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Maria Springfield-Rashid	6
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Paul David Beaver	7
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Joseph F. Sorce	8
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Dr. Tiffany Smith	9
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Ira LaVerne Reed	10
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Janis E. Simmons	11
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Kenneth Bennett	12
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Preston Waddell.....	13
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Gloria McKenzie	14
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Debbie Abel.....	15
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Tom Simmons	16
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Sandra Hatley.....	17
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Linda Gunter.....	18
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Gilbert Spears	19
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Tama Bouncer	20
NEA-R Delegate Candidate: LaVeta Weatherington	21

NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Dr. Michael W. Putney Sr.

Local Positions Held:

- Forty six years as an educator. A member of NCAE since 1979, I have been building level rep and local unit president in Northampton County.

State Positions Held:

- President of the Division of Principals/Administrators - three terms
- NCAE Board of Directors - three terms

NEA Positions Held:

- NEA Delegate 2009 - 2025 (excluding 2018, 2019, and 2023)

Personal Statement

Dedicated to public education for 46 years, I've learned that real change happens when we stand together. As a recent retiree, I am committed to staying active within my association and supporting my fellow members. Now more than ever, we must protect the integrity of our schools. Public education is the greatest engine of opportunity we have, and I'm honored to continue the fight to help our youth become the productive citizens our society needs.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Derevana Robinson Leach

State Positions Held

- Region 5 Treasurer: 2025- present
- 37 years as an NCAE Staff Member (supporting management & governance teams)

Personal Statement

I am campaigning to be a NEA-R delegate to represent NCRSP's voice with integrity and purpose. I care deeply about NCRSP and its future. I know I can bring strong representation, clear communication, and commitment to positive change. By developing a culture of collaboration, understanding, and support, I believe shared ideas can be turned into action that benefits everyone. Serving in this role allows me to give back, stand up for others, and help move NCRSP, the NEA-R, and NCAE forward together with strength and purpose.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Emma Walker-Sorce

Local Positions Held

- Teacher Assistant/ESP Building Representative
- School Improvement/SIT Representative
- PTA Board Member
- North Carolina Association of Teacher Assistants/NCATA Local Board Secretary
- Chairperson Oratorical Committee
- Interim Children's Library Director

State Positions Held

- NCAE Delegate
- NCRSP Delegate

NEA Retired Position Held

- {Attended as Guest NEA Delegate}

Personal Statement

If elected, I will participate in delegate discussions and decision-making of the NEA Convention. In addition, I will report back to the North Carolina Retired School Personnel/NCRSP and to stay informed of current events.

Also, my principal and personal beliefs include to **Empower** yourself with knowledge and facts, **Embrace** your strengths, your faith, and your creativeness for new ideas, and lastly to **Excel** with the mindset of limitless possibilities for yourself, for others, and the highest expectations for your students.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Gretchen Lampe

Local Positions Held

- Asheville/Buncombe RSP Treasurer: 2022-present.

State Positions Held

- NCRSP State Treasurer: 2024 to present
- NCRSP State Communications Chairperson and Panorama Editor: 2022-2024.
- UniServ Director / Research Director / Legislative and Executive Branch Lobbyist Kentucky Education Association: 1986-2000
- UniServ Director and Chief Negotiator for the Indianapolis Education Association, Indiana State Teachers Association: 2000-2009
- UniServ Director South Carolina Education Association: 2009-2010
- State Membership Organizer and Coordinator of the Student Program and NEA Benefits Coordinator Kentucky Education Association: 2010-2012
- UniServ Director South Carolina Education Association: 2012-2013
- UniServ Director and Coordinator for the NEA Organizing Initiative Head of the LEA Instructional Institute Louisiana Association of Educators: 2014-2020.
- NEA State Affiliate Staff Positions: UniServ Director for Texas State Teachers Association: 1985-1986

NEA-R Positions Held

- NEA-Retired delegate to NEA-Retired Annual Meeting 2025
- NEA-Retired delegate to the NEA-Retired Representative Assembly in 2025
- Presenter to the NEA-Retired Conference in 2023
- NEA-Retired Communications Committee 2022-2025



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Maria Springfield-Rashid

State Positions Held

- Region 5 Associate Director

Personal Statement

Maria Springfield-Rashid is a retired educator and Senior Administration Officer of Continuous Improvement & Professional Development of the Wake County Public School System. She is a graduate of Saint Augustine's College and North Carolina Central University. She continued her education at North Carolina State in 1988 where she received an A+ Certification in Technology.

I want to serve as a delegate to advocate for stronger education policies, fair compensation for all school employees, and ensure our students have safe, equitable schools where they can thrive and succeed.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Paul David Beaver

Local Positions Held

- Davidson County NCAE : Past President, Vice President, and Secretary
- Davidson/Lexington NCRSP: Vice President

State Positions Held

- Cluster 2: Past President and Secretary, Cluster 2 Director

Personal Statement

I joined NCAE in 1987 and have remained a member ever since. I am proud of our association and for what it has done and what it attempts to do. These are trying times for educators. Our teachers and staff need raises. Our retired members need COLA increases. We have to work to achieve these things.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Joseph F. Sorce

Local Positions Held:

- President Local PSEA Affiliate
- Vice President Local NCAE Affiliate
- President Local NCAE Affiliate
- Cumberland County School Board Member

State Positions Held:

- Delegate to NCAE Conventions
- Vice President Region 6A NCRSP
- Delegate to NCRSP Conventions

NEA-R Positions Held:

- Delegate to NEA Conventions

Personal Statement:

If elected, I will communicate with the NCRSP membership, what happened during the 2026 National Education Association Representative Assembly in Denver, CO through written reports, public speaking, and personal interaction. In addition, I will participate in the debate and serve on appropriate convention committees.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Dr. Tiffany Smith

Local Positions Held

- She has held multiple local leadership roles, including president, treasurer, and local representative.

State Positions Held

- At the state level, she served on the NCAE Board of Directors representing the Division of Principals and Administrators from 2010–2012 and again from 2021–2024. Dr. Smith is committed to advocating for educators and ensuring high-quality education for all students.

Personal Statement

I am Dr. Tiffany D. Smith, a 20+ year NCAE member and former local and state leader. I seek election to advocate for educators and students at every level and to represent you with experience, integrity, and commitment at the 2026 Representative Assembly.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Ira LaVerne Reed

Local Positions Held

- CMRSP - Vice President, Membership Chr., GRC/Legislative Chr., Treasurer, Secretary, Games / Travel / Fun Comm. Co Chr., Train To Raleigh Co Chr., PAC Chr.,
- Political Actions-Get Out & Team

State Positions Held

- State & Region 3 - Director, Associate Director, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Chr., Executive Bd. Member, Legislative Contact Team Member ,
- NCRSP & NCAE Conv. Delegate
- NCRSP Planning Committee Member
- Summit Mid Winter Meeting Participant-San Diego & Chicago, Reading Material/Book Drive i.e. Western Carolina Educators & Students Coordinator
- NCFPSC Golden Ticket Winner 4 years, Memorials Chr.
- Red 4 Educ Shirt Drive Coordinator

NEA-R Positions Held

- NEA R /NEA Convention Delegate
- Resolutions Committee Member
- Minority Leadership Conference in Philadelphia
- Education International Representative-NCAE to Ottawa, Canada; Thailand, Asia, and Buenos Aires, South America
- NEA Host Committee member invited to serve on the stage with NEA Leadership.

Personal Statement

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you as a delegate. While in Denver, you can depend on me to be about the business of our union and the state of Public School Education as well as our democracy. Six retired delegates are given the opportunity to be elected to the NEA Resolutions Committee. If I am honored to win your confidence to represent North Carolina retirees I will run for one of those 6 positions. Thanks for your support.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Janis E. Simmons

Local Positions Held

- Previous Brunswick Co. President
- Previous Brunswick Co. Vice President
- Previous Brunswick Co. Secretary
- Previous Brunswick Co. Treasurer
- Association Rep

State Positions Held

- NCAE DISTRICT 13 Vice President
- NCRSP Region 6B Treasurer
- NCRSP Region 6B Legislative Contact

Personal Statement

I was an active member of NCAE for 33 years, serving as association representative at 5 schools and in association offices. I have been a member of NCRSP/Brunswick Co RSP for 16 years. I am a nominee for Brunswick Co RSP President for 2026-28. I was a candidate for Brunswick Co Board of Education in 2024. I will continue to support NCRSP and public education for North Carolina as long as I am able.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Kenneth Bennett

Local Positions Held

- Current President of the Johnston County Retired School Personnel
- Treasurer
- Building Representative

State Positions Held

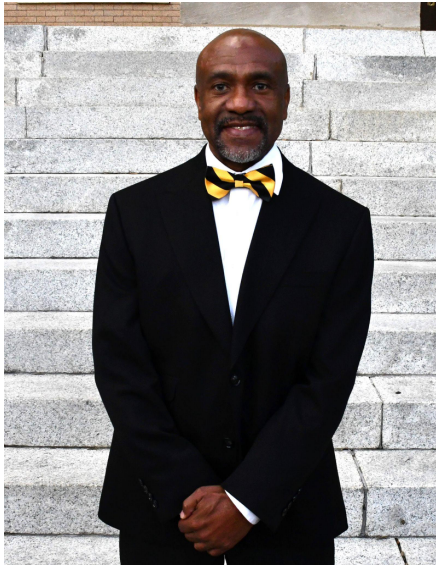
- Vice-President and Treasurer of the NCAE Principals/Assistant Principals
- Division State Delegate at the NEA Nation Convention for several years representing the Administrators Division

NEA-R Positions Held

- President - Johnston County Retired School Personnel
- Membership Chair for Region 7B
- Committee Member for Membership Grants
- Current Member of the Convention 2026 Planning Committee

Personal Statement

As a committed educator and active member of our local and state associations, I am passionate about advocating for public education, equity, and the professional rights of all educators. I would be honored to serve as a delegate, to advocate for our shared values, and to bring back new insights, resources, and energy to strengthen our local and state associations. Thank you for considering my candidacy.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Preston Waddell

Local Positions Held

- Held local positions in NCAE
- Current Secretary for Anson County RSP

State Positions Held

- NCAE Delegate
- NCRSP Delegate

NEA-R Positions Held

- NEA-R Delegate

Personal Statement

I am presently employed as a mentor at Wadesboro Primary in Anson County. I have over 45 years of service in Anson County Schools as a retired teacher and principal. Our students' education is important.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Gloria McKenzie

Local Positions Held

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg RSP President
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg RSP Secretary

State Positions Held

- Board Of Directors
- Legislative Contact Team

NEA-R Positions Held

- NEA-R Delegate to National Convention

Personal Statement

I'm Gloria McKenzie, a retired Charlotte-Mecklenburg educator and Region 3 Director. My career began in Scotland County Schools, where I served as local unit President, District 8 President, and on the NCAE Board of Directors. I've served as a delegate to NCAE, NEA and NEA-R representative assemblies. Currently, I'm active on CMRSP's executive board, membership, legislative teams and dedicated to advancing education and association goals.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Debbie Abel

Local Positions Held

- I was active with NCAE as a treasurer.
- Membership chair with NHC-NCRSP

Personal Statement

I am a retired teacher of 34 years and I look forward to sharing with members across the country to find ways to meet the needs of our students and educators.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Tom Simmons

Local Positions Held

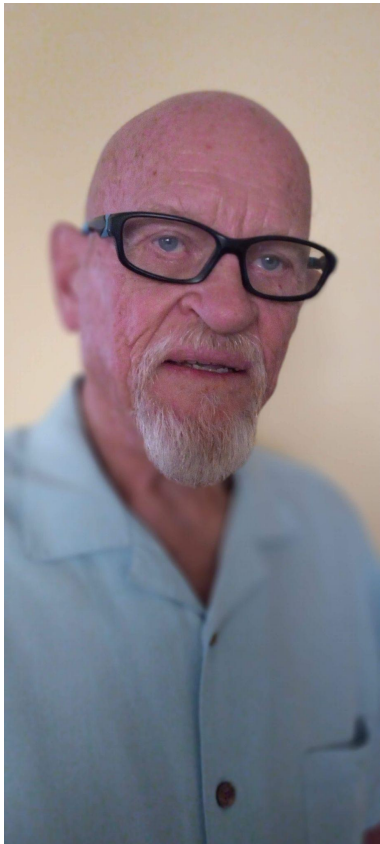
- Previous BCAE President
- Previous BCAE Vice President
- Previous Convention Delegate – NCAE and NEA
- Brunswick RSP President
- Brunswick RSP Vice President
- Brunswick RSP Legislative Contact

State Positions Held

- NCAE Board
- NCAE Finance&Personnel
- NCRSP Region 6B Director
- NCRSP Administrative Council
- Constitution Committee Chair

Personal Statement

Thank you for your vote to represent NC at the NEA/R. If elected this would be my first NEA/R convention and I look forward to the experience.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Sandra Hatley

Local Positions Held

- Past Catawba RSP President- 2 terms
- Past Catawba Vice-president- 1 term
- Current Catawba NCRSP Vice-President
- Catawba NCRSP Scholarship Committee- 11 years
- State Convention Delegate-13 years

State Positions Held

- NCRSP Region 1b Director- 2 terms
- NCRSP Community Service Chair- 1 term
- NCRSP Convention and By-laws committee-3 terms
- NCRSP Operational Policies Procedures Committee- current chair
- NCRSP State Convention Committee- 3 years
- NCRSP New Business Items- 3 terms

NEA-R Positions Held

- NEA-R Delegate 10 years
- NEA-R representative to the NEA Resolutions Committee- 6 years
- NEA-R Governance Committee- 4 years
- NEA-R New Business Items Committee- 3 years

Personal Statement

I believe NCRSP is the soundest, purest, strongest organization and voice for the rights and legacy of retired public-school educators in NC. We must have and keep this organization as THE voice defending the rights and needs for retired public educational personnel, our pensions, healthcare, and quality of life issues.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Linda Gunter

Local Positions Held

- Wake NCAE: Vice President, Membership Chair, PAC Chair, Scholarship Chair, Association Representative for 20+ years
- NCAE Staff Member: UniServ Director for Granville and Wake Counties. Volunteer lobbyist for NCRSP.
- Wake NCRSP: President, 2014-2018; Wake RSP Legislative Chair

State and/or Regional Positions Held

- NCRSP Board of Directors: President 2022-2026
- NCRSP Board of Directors: Vice President, 2018-2022
- Region 5: Legislative Co-Chair; Communication Committee, Co-Chair; Election Chair
- Administrative Council
- State Legislative Committee and State Communications Committee
- NCAE: Board of Directors and Government Relations Commission, Human Rights and Civil Rights Committee, Constitution Committee, Policy Committee
- Staff: UniServ Director and Lobbyist

NEA-R Positions Held

- NEA-R Elections Committee: 2024 and 2025
- NEA-R and NEA delegate: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

Personal Statement

As a member of NEA, NCAE, and NCRSP, I have served in leadership positions, volunteering to engage our members in the work of our Association. Our great leaders and members have helped us to make NCRSP a premier retired organization. It would be an honor to represent you as a delegate from NCRSP to the NEA-R and NEA Conventions. I would appreciate your vote.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Gilbert Spears

Local Positions Held

Various Positions in the UCAE including Board of Education Liaison (2008-2022)

NEA-R Positions held

NEA-R Delegate (2025)

Personal Statement

He believes every student deserves to be heard and understood. Mr. Spears is deeply committed to supporting students who show up differently and may need their voices amplified within the educational system. With his passion for justice and education, he looks forward to continuing his service and advocacy as a representative of NEA Retired at the 2026 National Convention in Denver, Colorado.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: Tama Bouncer

Local Positions Held

- Wake RSP President 2018-present
- Wake RSP Vice President 2016-2018

State Positions Held

- NCRSP Administrative Council 2024 - present
- Region 5 Director 2023 - present
- NRSP Convention Planning Committee Chair 2021 - present
- NCRSP Executive Board 2023 - 2027
- Region 5 Director 2023 - present
- Community Service Chair: 2019 - 2023

NEA-R Positions Held

- NEA-R Delegate

Personal Statement

I am committed to advancing NCRSP with strong advocacy, transparent leadership, and collaborative solutions. With deep experience in service and a passion for supporting retired educators, I will work to strengthen member engagement, expand community impact, and ensure our voices remain powerful across North Carolina. I humbly ask for your support.



NEA-R Delegate Candidate: LaVeta Weatherington

Local Positions Held

- Pitt NCRSP President
- LCT contact and various committee chairs

State Positions Held

- NCRSP Executive Board
- Co-Chair Quality of Life Committee
- State Convention Delegate
- State Convention Committee
- Region 7B Director

Personal Statement

As a retired member I have continued to be an advocate for public education and the membership of the Association. Through my activities I have a sense of the concerns of our members and would appreciate the opportunity to represent our retired members at NEA-R Convention.

