

# Representative Assembly (RA) 101

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## What is the RA?

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The RA is the primary legislative and policymaking body of the National Education Association (NEA) and derives its powers from, and is responsible to, the membership. Various committees, constituencies, caucuses, leadership groups, and delegates from state and local affiliates gather to set policy and chart the direction of NEA business. With over 8,000 delegates, the RA is the largest democratic deliberative assembly in the world and adheres to Robert's Rules of Order, except as otherwise specified in NEA governing documents. Over the course of eight business sessions spanning four days, RA delegates debate the vital issues that impact American public education and set Association policy and activities for the year ahead.

## Is the RA the same as the Annual Meeting?

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No. The Annual Meeting is the six-day period of time that includes the RA. The first two days of the Annual Meeting are devoted to delegate registration and a wide range of pre-RA meetings, conferences, and exhibits.

## Who goes to NEA's Annual Meeting and RA?

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The RA consists of roughly 8,000 delegates representing state and local affiliates. These delegates are elected by their local and state Associations and represent preK-16 educators, including education support professionals, student members, retired members, and other segments of the united education profession. View a list of future Annual Meeting sites at [www.nea.org/ra](http://www.nea.org/ra).

## How do NEA members become delegates?

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In balloting conducted by NEA affiliates throughout the country, NEA members elect their peers to represent their concerns at the RA. The delegates represent NEA local and state affiliates, student members, retired members, and other segments of the NEA membership. The elected delegates determine NEA's strategic plan and budget, legislative program, and resolutions. Delegates also vote, by secret ballot, on proposed amendments to the NEA constitution and bylaws and elect NEA's executive officers, Executive Committee members, and at-large members of the NEA Board of Directors.

## What is MTA's role at the NEA-RA?

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Since the strength and effectiveness of the NEA is derived from the membership, it is critical that members have a direct voice in determining its guiding principles and policies. MTA delegates are directly responsible, individually and collectively, for representing the professional, political and union interests of their locals and the MTA as a whole. The seriousness of that charge cannot be overstated.

## When and where is the RA?

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The Annual Meeting and RA is held every year during the last week of June and/or first week of July. The Annual Meeting kicks off with conferences, committee meetings, and events. The RA takes place during the final four days of the Annual Meeting. The location of the meeting varies year to year. For more information, visit [www.nea.org/ra](http://www.nea.org/ra).

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**What factors determine where NEA holds its annual meetings?**

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The NEA Board of Directors decides the location of the annual meeting. These decisions are limited by the size of a city's convention center, hotel availability, dates and affordable pricing.

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**Is the RA always in the same city?**

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No. The site is determined by the NEA Board of Directors each year.

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**Why does the RA meet every year?**

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The RA adopts the strategic plan and budget, resolutions, the legislative program, and other policies of NEA. Delegates propose, debate, and take action on new business items for the Association and vote by secret ballot on proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws. Those delegates with full voting rights elect the executive officers, Executive Committee members, and at-large members of the NEA Board of Directors, as appropriate.

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**Why is the annual meeting held over the July 4th holiday?**

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Traditionally, July 4 was chosen because it was convenient for many educators. It was a time when most schools had finished the regular school year. In most cases, July 4 did not interrupt summer school sessions, and cities are often able to offer more availability and lower prices when meetings are scheduled over the holiday.

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**What is a State Caucus?**

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The State Caucus is a meeting of all MTA accredited delegates to the NEA-RA. The purpose is to discuss and to take positions on new business items, resolutions, proposed amendments to the standing rules and bylaws, and the endorsement of candidates for NEA elected office. The meetings are held each morning before the RA. The Chair of the delegation may call meetings at another hour.

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**May we bring spouses?**

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Yes, spouses are welcomed to come, at their own expense. They may attend the morning caucus meetings each day, although they need to be seated in the rear of the room. They must register as a guest and sit in the non-delegate seating area at the RA. They may participate in any of the MTA's or NEA's social events for an additional fee.

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**How can I find out more about the RA?**

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Go to <http://ra.nea.org/> for the latest news from the meeting, election results, and access to floor action items.