

Youngstown Charter School Teachers Seek to Join OEA

COLUMBUS – Educators at two Summit Academy schools in Youngstown, Summit Academy - Youngstown and Summit Academy Secondary - Youngstown, informed management today of their collective and historic decision to form their own union. The group filed authorization cards with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) on behalf of the majority of educators at the school. This triggers an NLRB-supervised election, which should take place within a month, to certify SAYEA as the exclusive bargaining representative.

If a majority of educators and staff vote to form the Summit Academy Youngstown Education Association (SAYEA), it will be the first charter school union in Youngstown and will be affiliated with the 121,000 members of the Ohio Education Association.

The decision of educators and staff to seek representation was inspired by the mission of Summit Academy, namely the commitment “to providing an extraordinary, safe, and nurturing learning environment where students will reach their full potential.”

“As advocates for their students and community, future SAYEA members seek recognition so that they can best advocate for their students, many of whom have special needs,” said Becky Higgins, president of the OEA. “We look forward to welcoming the educators and staff at the Summit Academy Youngstown into our union, and working with them to carry on our tradition of improving education and the lives of Ohio’s students.”

Currently, teachers fear the threat of retaliation if they advocate for greater resources and programs for their students. They would like to make working at Summit Academy a career rather than being treated as at-will employees. By forming a union, they believe they will have a greater ability to advocate for their students.

The hopeful SAYEA educators embrace Summit Academy’s “Full Value Contract” and ask Academy officials to honor its principles of, “Safety, Respect, Full Participation and Honest Feedback.” Summit Academy educators look forward to a mutually respectful and cooperative relationship with Academy management as they work to improve their schools and towards a first union contract.