



NEBRASKA NEA Director's Report

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Organizational Redesign

NEA board recommended major structural changes to the budget during a very challenging May meeting. Following the lead of executive director John Stocks, the NEA board proposed to reorganize the entire budget around two goals and six core functions. The board approved the goals and core functions at the September 2011 meeting. Regional conferences would not happen next school year, but winter meetings would return the following year in the form of an East and West summit. Although the budget changes were necessitated because of projected membership losses of approximately 7 percent, the new plan does much more than make "across

the board" reductions.

Every NEA employee has been shifted to work within the two goals and six cores, and every NEA function now falls within these areas. The two goals are "Strong Affiliates" and "Uniting the Nation for Great Public Schools." The six cores are "Research, Policy and Practice," "Organizing," "Advocacy and Outreach," "Communications," "Business operations," and "Governance."

Attacks on collective bargaining and public education have forced the change. "Our choice is pretty clear," said Stocks. "Stay on the same path and defend ourselves to our death, or create a new path that leads to a stronger union, focused on our members and the students they serve." NEA Secretary-Treasurer Becky Pringle and the board's budget committee made unprecedented recommendations to

reshape NEA's efforts. The new principles focus on growing membership through organizing and advancing the cause of public education by leading the profession. "We're going to focus this organization like we never have before on members, affiliates and students," Pringle said.

Although structural change guided the board, the change that members are most likely to recognize is the canceling of the regional conferences. The one-year hiatus meant to allow NEA leadership and staff to prepare and plan for the summits. While the regional conferences are removed, individual training conferences would continue in the 2012-2013 school year. These include: The ESP Conference, Student Conference, Retired Conference, Higher Education Conference, ESP Leaders for Tomorrow Training, Higher Ed Emerging Leaders Academy, Minority Leadership Training and Women's Leadership Training. In the 2013-2014 budget, these conferences would merge to become part of the East and West summits.

The 2011-2012 budget was reduced by \$17 million by the RA last summer. But with continued membership losses, more cuts are necessary. In total, from 2010 to 2014, the budget will have been reduced \$65 million. The NEA staff has already felt the pinch of the budget reductions. A voluntary exit program this winter ended in March with 56 employees choosing to depart. Although an annual loss of 148,000 staff hours. In 2010, NEA had 540 employees, but that is down to 439. Executive support staff has been reduced 25 percent, and pay freezes for executives remain in place.

The proposed reorganization and budget shifts would result in a change in the traditional ratio of how NEA dues revenue is spent. Traditionally, the ratio has been roughly one-third spent on the categories of staff, state affiliates support, and programs and governance. The proposed changes would shift to approximately 31 percent on staff, 39 percent state

and local support, and 30 percent on programs and governance.

The shift in the ratios is intentional. Given the attacks on state affiliates, the board chose to make this section of the budget a top priority. UniServ grants and other money to state affiliates received the highest priority in the budget. The board voted to set the UniServ rebate at \$35,850, a \$1,000 increase from what was announced in February. Unfortunately, the increase was due to UniServ job losses around the country. "We can't ignore our reality," Stocks said. "If we do, we do it at our peril ... And now to meet (members') needs, so must we change."

The board spent an entire day analyzing and discussing the detail of the budget and all the myriad changes. Relying heavily on the board budget committee recommendations, numerous proposals to restore areas target for cuts or reductions were defeated. The board chose to eliminate one of its five yearly meetings at a savings of just under \$500,000. Perhaps the most contentious area of reductions was the choice to have the NEA ethnic minority caucus chairs use virtual meetings instead of flying to Washington D.C. twice per year. A motion to restore that funding failed 91-71. Numerous other motions to restore programs also failed.

Board Business

Board supports more breaks at RA

The NEA board voted to support a Standing Rule change that would require a one hour break on the second and third days of the Representative Assembly. The change was proposed to allow caucus groups to meet and conduct business within the meeting. In addition, the board changed its position on Constitutional Amendment number 1 from "do not pass" to "no position." The proposal would add the phrase, "defend public employees' right to collective bargaining," to the preamble.

Get Ready for Representative Assembly

The 150th annual Representative Assembly is less than two months away and thousands of NEA members are making plans and reservations for Washington D.C. Most parts of the event are already set, but one big question remains: Who will be the featured guest speaker? President Dennis Van Roekel has invited President Barack Obama, but the White House won't confirm such this far out.

If the president does speak, it would likely be on the morning of July 3. If it does happen though, Van Roekel said he would try to speed up the screening process by having two lines, one for people with bags and one without. Last year when Vice President Joe Biden spoke to the RA, Van Roekel asked delegates not to bring much, but lines bogged down because many ignored the advice. He said that he heard that someone brought an ironing board to security. "Who brings an ironing board?" Van Roekel joked.

Another interesting part of this year's RA could make delegates with iPhones happy. NEA plans to have an RA app. No word yet on what the app will do, but it must mean that delegates will have access to wi-fi. The "Dennis 2 Delegates" program is also continuing this year. Delegates who want to hear about the latest news can listen to Van Roekel during a series of tele-townhall meetings in the run up to the June 29 to July 5 event. The phone calls are all on Wednesday nights between 8 and 9 p.m. eastern time. They run May 30, June 6 and 13. The RA will also feature a "Day of Learning" on July 1 where delegates will focus on the concepts around "leading the profession." In addition, the annual Human and Civil Rights awards dinner will take place that same night. A screening of the movie "Bully," by filmmaker Lee Hirsch is also expected either during the day on July 1 or the evening of July 2.

Constitution and ByLaws

The following proposed changes to the NEA Constitution & Bylaws were discussed at the February NEA board meeting. The board took positions (noted after the summary) on each item:

Constitution Amendment No. 1 This amendment would add the following phrase to the preamble of NEA's Constitution where it would join 10 other statements of purpose: to "defend public employees' right to collective bargaining ..." The NEA board recommends: **change to NO Position**

Constitution Amendment No. 2 This amendment would lower the required number of classroom teachers on nearly all NEA committees from 75 percent to 50 percent. A similar amendment to this one was defeated last year at Representative Assembly. The amendment was slightly changed and appears to have greater support. The NEA board recommends: DO PASS

Bylaw Amendment No. 1 This bylaw change would add an eleventh goal to the list in the bylaws: It would add the following sentence: "Advocate for tax reforms to reduce the gap between the nation's economic classes " This item was debated quite heavily. The NEA board recommends: DO NOT PASS.

Standing Rule Amendment No. 1 The standing rules govern how the Representative Assembly functions. The first proposed change would eliminate the ability of people speaking on behalf of a state delegation or the NEA board to speak for three minutes instead of the standard two minutes. Speakers would still be required to announce that they were speaking on behalf of a state delegation or the NEA board, but individual speakers would not have to say they were speaking "as an individual." The NEA board recommends: DO NOT PASS * *Because this amendment was submitted by the Committee on Constitution & Bylaws and the board did not support it, the proposal will be withdrawn.*

Standing Rule Amendment No. 2 This rule change would modify the "object to consideration" rule. If someone wanted to make an "object to consideration" motion they would have to submit a written rationale as to why the motion was either "strongly undesirable" or a "protection from abuse" of the RA's "generosity." The NEA board recommends: DO

NOT PASS

Standing Rule Amendment No. 3 This standing rule would require the chair to ask a question of the RA after a "motion to refer" is made. After the person who moved to refer has spoken, the chair would ask whether there are speaker request forms to speak to the motion to refer to committee. The NEA board recommends: DO NOT PASS

Standing Rule Amendment No. 4 This standing rule would require a minimum of two one-hour breaks during the RA. Currently, there are no such requirements and the chair is given the leeway and flexibility to call breaks as necessary. The NEA board recommends Do Pass

Standing Rule Amendment No. 5 This standing rule would change references in new business items that refer to K-12 or Pre- K-12 to "Pre-K-Graduate School." The NEA board recommends: DO PASS

Because Standing Rule Amendment 1 was withdrawn, the numbers will be reordered.

Lobbying / Politics



On lobby day, NEA Director Jenni Absalon and NSEA Vice President Leann Wildhalm spent the day meeting with Nebraska's elected representatives on Capitol Hill.

Topics for the Visit:

Closing Corporate Tax Loopholes: Research shows that a significant portion of profitable Fortune 500 companies pay nothing in taxes, and this translates into cuts to the critical services, such as education, we all rely on as a society. Corporations need to pay their fair share. They are sitting on record profits, and yet are taxed at historically low rates.

Closing seven federal tax loopholes would result in nearly \$1.5 trillion dollars in additional revenue over the next ten years.

- Every impoverished child under age five in America could get high-quality pre-school.

Right now, less than 20% are served.

- The government could boost the maximum award for the Pell Grant to help low-income students cover college.
- Every school in America could get \$518,000 for Title I supports to help students from low-income families.
- The federal government could finally meet its obligation to provide 40 percent of the cost of educating students with disabilities. That would save states money so they could get resources such as classroom aides, pre-school programs, and special transportation services.

Paying Fair Share (The Buffet Rule): Those most able to do so must pay their fair share toward the deficit reduction. We must choose between two different visions for our nation: one that places the American Dream within greater reach for everyone, and one in which we continue to cater only to the wealthiest. We cannot balance the budget on the backs of working families, children, and seniors while exempting the wealthiest individuals.

The Buffet Rule is a principle that everyone should pay their fair share in taxes. No household earning more than \$1 million should pay a smaller share than middle-class families. For families making less than \$250,000, taxes should not go up.

- The wealthiest Americans are paying nearly the lowest tax rate in 50 years.
- Some of the wealthiest are paying just half of the federal income tax that top income earners paid in 1960.
- The top 1% of households takes home 17% of the national income.
- The top 0.1% makes more than 7% of the national income.
- Top 400 earners paid on average 18.2%, lower than many earning much less.
- Most income from capital gains and dividends is taxed at 15%.

Student Loan Rate: The current fixed interest rate on 3.4% on federal subsidized student loans is scheduled to double on July 1st. Due to rising college costs, students are taking out larger loans. On average, students who take out loans graduate owing \$25,000.

- **More than 8 million postsecondary students receive financial aid.**
- **70% of financial aid comes from the federal government.**
- **Americans now owe more debt on their student loans than they do on their credit cards.**
- **Total outstanding student loan debt is expected to exceed \$1 trillion this year.**
- **In the next decade, college enrollment will increase by 14%.**
- **80% of new students over the next decade will be ethnic minorities; and 20% will come from poverty.**
- **Keeping the interest rate low would save the average student over a thousand dollars.**

Board Reports

Leading the Profession

A report by NEA's Joint Committee on Leading the Profession was released at the May board meeting.

The plan makes five recommendations:

- 1) The quality of the profession (NEA must collaborate both internally and externally to bring the best educational practices to classrooms)
- 2) The quality of the profession (NEA must provide strategic help to improve evaluation systems)
- 3) The quality of schools (NEA must form partnerships and coalitions for school-based transformation)
- 4) The quality of our union (NEA must train staff, partner with state affiliates and the NEA foundation and change internal structure to put students first)
- 5) The quality of education policy (NEA must lead in the areas of standards, assessment, and compensation).

General Information

Important Reminders

Sign up as an education advocate at www.EducationVotes.NEA.org

Sign up to be an Educator for Obama and recruit others to do the same at www.EducationVotes.NEA.org

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