



NEA is working to provide great public schools

Directors' Newsletter

February 2018

NAACP's Johnson a crusader for justice

Says educators are on the front lines of new Civil Rights movement

As it does annually during its February Board of Directors Meeting, the NEA hosted its Black Observance. This year's featured speaker was Derrick Johnson, President and CEO of the NAACP.

"Our speaker today is a warrior," said NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia.

NEA Black Caucus Chair Cecily Myart-Cruz doubled down on Garcia's sentiments as she introduced Johnson to the Board: "The NAACP has been around for over 108 years. It is the oldest and largest non-partisan Civil Rights organization in the country. It's always stood for us.

"With Derrick Johnson at the helm there has been a signal that a change has come. No longer will this organization be siloed or go gently into the night. Now is the time to take these fights head on. Derrick will do just that and continue to be a crusader for justice."

Johnson, who was named president and CEO in October 2017, began his remarks by recalling his high-school English teacher, Miss Brown, whom he credits with his graduation.



NAACP President & CEO Derrick Johnson addressed the NEA Board at its February meeting.

"She recognized that gap for many of us who could fall between the cracks," he said. "It was Miss Brown who made sure I graduated. She created a Business English class for us (7 African American males who were failing). She always pressed upon us to ask 'Why' in her

English class. She understood what we were about to face. I was able to form a level of critical thinking that allows me to be here before you today."

Johnson continues to ask why to this day. In fact he told the Board that it is the why question that leads us to continue to celebrate Black History Month, noting: "There are still people who want to create a system of cheap labor. If you want cheap labor you weaken the education system. Education policy is driven by local industry and business interests and not by the future needs of our young people."

He noted the three fundamental principles of belief systems: 1. Care for our elderly; 2. Train and develop our youth; 3. Protect our disadvantaged.

"These principles offer us a platform not only deliver a quality education to our young people, but also defend the institution of public education as we know it," he urged. "On the front line of this Civil Rights movement today are our teachers. They're the ones who encourage us to ask the why questions, to understand democracy and how we protect it, and how we remain a house united and not a house divided.

As Johnson's keynote rose to a crescendo he reflected on another important educator in his life, a college professor named Dr. Simmons. He recalled an exam that was returned to him and his classmates early in the second se-

(Continued on page 6)

Dues Task Force releases findings

At its February 2017 meeting, the NEA Board of Directors approved the dues rate for the 2017-18 fiscal year. It was an increase of \$1 over what was originally projected when the 2016-18 budget was initially implemented at the 2016 Representative Assembly in Washington, DC. That \$1 increase – caused by the rise in the nationwide average teacher and education support professional salaries – led to a significant amount of discussion by Board members about how these average salaries are produced and whether or not it is the most effective and fairest

procedure.

Due to this discussion, NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia formed a Dues Task Force chaired by NEA Secretary/Treasurer Princess Moss to "study the indexes currently applied to our dues formula and determine if they are the most accurate mechanisms to achieve a reliable and consistent national dues structure among all NEA Active members." This task force of 12 educators, including four ESP and one higher education representatives, delivered its findings to the

(Continued on page 6)

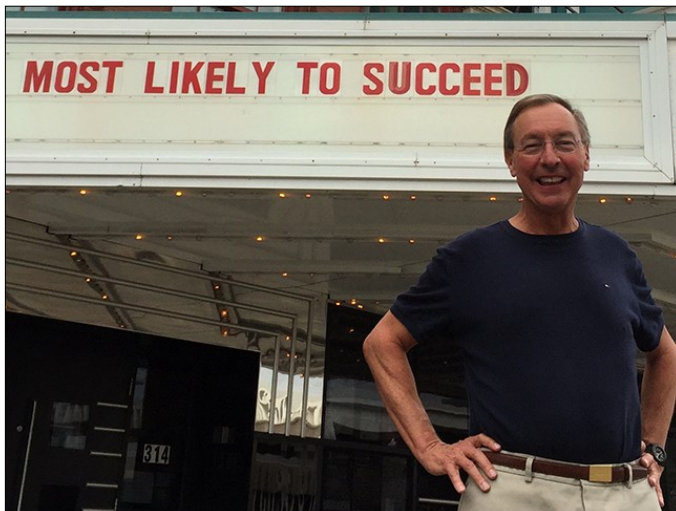


Venture capitalist named NEA Friend

Debbie Lee (PA), chair of the NEA's Friend of Education Committee, announced the recipient of the 2018 award, Ted Dintersmith.

Dintersmith is a venture capitalist by trade and father of two, he has devoted most of his time, energy and millions of his personal fortune to education-related initiatives that call for a radical remaking of what and how students learn. He has emerged as one of the leading advocates of student-centered, teacher-led classrooms in the nation.

His commitment to innovative education of our students is unparalleled. Dintersmith is adamant that for innovative teaching – no matter the form – to succeed, teachers and their unions must play a pivotal role in designing and implementing school plans.



NEA Friend of Education Ted Dintersmith under the marquee for his film.

He is the producer of the documentary Schools that Succeed which is thought to be the antithesis of the more widely marketed Waiting for Superman. The overarching message of the film is that students and teachers should be given the latitude and trust to define their own approach to learning. His second book, What School Can Be: Insights and Inspiration from Teachers Across America, is due out April 17, and chronicles his findings of a year spent visiting classrooms in all 50 states.

Dintersmith will be honored during the RA this July in Minneapolis.

NEA News in Brief

HCR Celebration Changes

The NEA is changing how it honors recipients of its Human and Civil Rights awards. Traditionally, the event has been a formal dinner with some entertainment and an awards presentation. This year, with access to an auditorium onsite at the Minneapolis Convention Center, the NEA will produce more of an awards ceremony (think Academy Awards). No dinner will be served and that fact drives the cost of a ticket down from \$75 to \$35. Additionally, the auditorium's capacity of approximately 3,400 will allow significantly more than the 1,000 or so who have traditionally been able to attend the black tie dinner in the past. Plans call for it to still be a formal occasion.

Membership Ticks Up

During her report NEA Secretary/Treasurer Princess Moss brought positive membership news. Overall, total active membership increased by 22,157; this includes an increase of 22,065 for certified staff, 647 for ESP. Active life members declined by 555. Overall, when Student and Retired are factored in, the net gain as of January 9, 2018, is 13,739. Membership currently sits at its highest level (just under 3 million) since fiscal year 2013. Moss also noted the organization received a clean audit in November and has approximately 72% of its budget available.

Legal Update

The brunt of NEA General Counsel Alice O'Brien's report centered on the forthcoming U.S. Supreme Court case *Janus v. AFSCME*. The case is on the court's docket for February 26. At its core, this case aims to determine if the First Amendment require public sector unions to be right to work overturning a ruling to the contrary in *Abood v. Detroit Board of Ed* in 1977. In advance of the hearings, there have been 39 briefs filed in support of maintaining agency fee requirements and 24 against it. O'Brien also walked the Board through what's at stake in this case. Twenty NEA state affiliates still require an fair share fee for those who choose not to be members. If SCOTUS rules in favor of *Janus* and overturns *Abood*, it would immediately impact 20 million public sector unionized workers. In anticipation of a victory, the ultra-conservative Freedom Foundation has already begun campaigns to inform members of their pending right to leave membership. O'Brien also noted key wins for NEA in Federal Circuit Courts of Appeals. The first, *Elliot* was in the 7th Circuit (IN, IL, and WI) where the court ruled for the plaintiff that the state cannot strip a tenured teacher's rights to be retained over a non-tenured teacher in a layoff for a position in which both are qualified.



O'Brien

Nebraska's NEA Directors

Linda Freye

Lfrey62@gmail.com

402-540-3746

Tracy Hartman-Bradley

trhb1000@hotmail.com

402-740-6991



Richards stands strong for women

Planned Parenthood chief asks educators to keep empowering

The NEA Board of Directors was treated by a presentation from Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards during its annual Women's Observance as part of the February Board Meeting.

Richards, daughter of the late Texas Governor Ann Richards, has served as Planned Parenthood's President since 2006. She has announced her departure in May of this year, but the only future she wished to address with the NEA was women's rights, education, and how she believes the two are inextricably connected to our country's future.

"The two most resilient groups in America today are educators and women," Richards said. "Every single time they come at us we come roaring back twice as strong. ... The fact is 87% of calls coming into Congress these days are coming from women.

"I love it that women are bringing their experiences out of the shadows. ... We demand a government that stands with us from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue to the Department of Education.

Richards, who previously served as a deputy chief of staff for House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (CA), has seen Planned Parenthood's membership triple since becoming its President. There are now over 10 million members and she proudly touts that number is one and a half times the number of members of the National Rifle Association.

That said, Richards told the Board she envisions a dawning of significant changes.

"Perhaps because of everything we're up against, this is a once in a lifetime moment," she said. "Over and over women are beating the odds and it's the new normal. Twice as many women are running for governorships this year and three times as many women are running for seats in Congress.

"It is important to recognize that we still have work to do. It is not up to just women of color to save this country from itself. It's really important that the rest of us now have to do the same work they have been doing. ... Nobody's free until everybody's free.



Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards addressed the NEA Board of Directors at its February meeting as part of the Women's Observance.

"The two most resilient groups in America today are educators and women. Every single time they come at us we come roaring back twice as strong. ... The fact is 87% of calls coming into Congress these days are coming from women."

**— Cecile Richards
President, Planned
Parenthood**

"Change is on the horizon but it's not going to come unless we make it get here."

Richards shared a poignant story of Arizona teenager Deja Foxx who took on Sen. Jeff Flake in a Mesa town hall on Flake's views on Planned Parenthood and Title X funding in which Foxx said:

"So I'm a young woman and you're a middle-aged man. I'm a person of color and you're white. I come from a back-

ground of poverty and I didn't always have parents to guide me through life. You come from privilege. So I'm wondering, as a Planned Parenthood patient and someone who relies on Title X – who you are clearly not – why it's your right to take away my right?"

Richards noted that since this April 2017 showdown Foxx has since gone on to overhaul her school's reproductive health curriculum, testified before Congress, and has accepted a full scholarship to Columbia University.

"This is due to educators like you who believed in her and empowered her," Richards said. "The lasting legacy of this time will not be 45 – let's kick him to the curb – it will be the generations of young women and women of color who are fighting now more than they ever have before."



CCBR brings 14 amendments forward

Board provides input on 10, also weighs in on three from NEA Executive Committee

Tim Graham, the NEA Chair of the Committee on Constitution, Bylaw, and Rules, led the NEA Board of Directors through consideration of six proposed amendments to the NEA's Constitution and eight proposed amendments to the Standing Rules at its February meeting. Constitutional amendments are due annually at the close of the annual Representative Assembly while Bylaw and Standing Rules amendments are due by March 2, 2018. All other proposed amendments will be considered at the Board's May meeting.

Following are the proposed amendments, a brief description, and Board action taken, if any:

- ◆ **Constitutional Amendment 1:** To open NEA membership to public education allies while preserving NEA governance positions for education professionals and active equivalents. As it was submitted by the NEA Board, **Support** is recommended.
- ◆ **Constitutional Amendment 2:** To change the allocation of delegates to the Representative Assembly beginning in 2022. The net effect would be a reduction in both state and local delegates with this proposed ratio change. No action was taken by the Board at this time, therefore its position at the moment is **No Position**.
- ◆ **Constitutional Amendment 3:** To replace the word student with the term "Aspiring Educator" when referring to student members. The Board position is **Support**.
- ◆ **Constitutional Amendment 4:** To change the frequency of the Representative Assembly from every year to every other year beginning in 2024. The Board was informed by the Chair that the maker is **Withdrawing** this proposed amendment.
- ◆ **Constitutional Amendment 5:** To establish the Representative Assembly as the only body to recommend or endorse presidential candidates for both the primary and general election. The Board position is **Opposition**.
- ◆ **Constitutional Amendment 6:** To move the deadline to submit a proposed amendment to the Constitution from the end of the previous RA to 120 days preceding the RA. No action was taken by the Board at this time, therefore its position at the moment is **No Position**.
- ◆ **Standing Rule Amendment 1:** To require that the Executive Committee perform all duties of the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws and Rules related to determining the outcome of business, where such business was submitted for consideration by the Committee. The Board position is **Opposition**.
- ◆ **Standing Rule Amendment 2:** To strike language requiring that New Business Items be the first order of business at all business meetings. No action was taken by the Board at this time, therefore its position at the moment is **No Position**.
- ◆ **Standing Rule Amendment 3:** To require at least one screen at the Representative Assembly to display all NBIs still eligible for debate as well as the current item being debated and its status. (Graham noted that if this were approved at the RA, it would not be possible to implement until the 2019 RA.) The Board position is **Opposition**.
- ◆ **Standing Rule Amendment 4:** To require makers of motions to bundle NBIs for referral to committee to secure the consent of each maker and gather all makers at one microphone; and to provide each maker of an NBI proposed for such bundling one minute to speak to their item. The Board position is **Opposition**.
- ◆ **Standing Rule Amendment 5:** To require the playing of the song, "NEA Standing Strong" at the start of all Representative Assembly business meetings. The Board position is **Opposition**.
- ◆ **Standing Rule Amendment 6:** To require delegates with requests for information to direct those requests to other specified sources before being allowed access to the speaking queue. The Board position is **Opposition**.
- ◆ **Standing Rule Amendment 7:** To limit the total cost of adopted new business items to 30 percent of the budgeted contingency fund. The Board position is **Opposition**.
- ◆ **Standing Rule Amendment 8:** To require state delegations to the Resolutions Committee to be comprised of at least twenty percent ethnic minority members where appropriate and possible. No action was taken by the Board at this time, therefore its position at the moment is **No Position**.

In addition to action on these 14 items, the Board also considered three amendments brought forward from the NEA Executive Committee. The first was an amendment to Bylaw 11-9(b) which would allow greater flexibility with regards to scheduling the budget hearing following transmission of the budget. The second was an amendment to the Standing Rules which proposes to allow greater flexibility with regards to voting on Constitution and Bylaw amendments. Each of these received the support of the Board and will be placed in the queue for the RA delegates to consider in July.

The final item brought forward by the Executive Committee proposed modifying the Standing Rules requiring submission of New Business Items (NBIs) by noon of the second day of the RA to close of the first day of the RA. The measure did not initially receive support from the Board; an amended motion submitted by Board member Amanda Curtis (MT) the following day changed the language to allow the following: New business items submitted by (a) Petition of Delegates shall be submitted to the CCBR no later than the close of business on the first day of the RA. NBIs submitted by (b) State Delegation, (c) Formally recognized and affiliated NEA caucus or council, (d) Governance Body, or (e) CC BR shall be submitted to the CCBR no later than noon on the second day of the RA. This amended Standing Rule was approved and now moves forward to the RA for consideration as Standing Rule Amendment A.



Board recommends “Community Ally” membership category

A year ago, when current U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos was working through the confirmation process, the NEA saw a tremendous spike in the number of contacts made to Congress utilizing its system (over 1.5 million email contacts alone). As NEA reviewed the data of who was utilizing the system it made a significant discovery.

“Nearly 40% of the contacts through our hosting site were coming from individuals who were *not* NEA members,” NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia told the Board of Directors at its February meeting. Garcia noted this fact motivated leadership to revisit the idea of NEA associate membership and allowing those who work outside the field of education to become a members.

“A category for individuals who support public education but are not otherwise eligible for membership,” Garcia said.

This had been tried before, in 2006, 2007, and 2008 at the annual Representative Assembly. Each year, the Constitutional Amendment fell short of the 2/3 majority needed for passage. The Board has proposed a similar amendment to the 2018 RA. It reads as follows:

“2(a) Membership, as provided in the Bylaws, shall be to open to... (iii) persons interested in advancing the cause of public education...

“e. Persons interested in advancing the cause of public education who are granted membership pursuant to section 2a(iii) above and who are not eligible for any other category of membership shall not have the right to serve as officers of the Association, as members of the Board of Directors, or as delegates to the Representative Assembly.

Should this Constitutional Amendment pass an accompanying Bylaw change would also be needed. To develop this language,

Garcia commissioned a Task Force on a New Membership Category of 14 NEA members from across the nation to study and propose the appropriate language. It stated the following in its executive summary:

“The NEA Task Force on a New Membership Category recommends that the NEA Board of Directors submit a Bylaw Amendment to the 2018 NEA Representative Assembly establishing a ‘Community Ally’ membership category open to ‘any person who demonstrates support in advancing the cause of public education, who advocates for the mission, vision, and core values of the Association, and who is not eligible for any other membership category.’

“The Task Force also recommends for Board consideration a number of specific elements appropriate to the implementation of such a membership category, including the process for setting dues; membership criteria, the application process and how such members might best be recruited; the relationship of such members to NEA state and local affiliates; the services, programs, and benefits they might receive; and the engagement of such members in NEA’s advocacy and political action efforts.”

NEA Executive Committee member Maury Koffman (MI) presented the report to the Board and noted much time was spent poring over floor debate discussion transcripts from the RAs of the late 2000s to ascertain why previous efforts to this end were not successful.

“The large problems we had in the past were simply uncertainties faced by the delegates at the Representative Assembly,” he said. To that end he accepted input from the Board on behalf of the Task Force in an effort to become pro-active in developing answers to and plans for any such questions that may arise on the RA floor this year.

Should both the Constitution and Bylaw amendments pass in Minneapolis, this Community Ally membership category would go into effect beginning September 1, 2018.



NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia and AFT President Randi Weingarten delivered report cards to U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos on February 8.

NEA calls for DeVos to resign

The NEA Board of Directors was unanimous in its decision to call for the resignation of U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

NEA Executive Committee member Hannah Vaandering (OR) presented the following to the Board early in its meeting: “The Board of Directors call on Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos to resign for failure to respond to the February 14, 2017 letter sent to DeVos by NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia, and for failing to protect students’ civil rights, attempting to underfund and undermine public schools, and disregarding the promise of public education.”

Vaandering went on to note the four yes/no questions Garcia had asked in her letter the year previous (to see the full letter please find it here: <http://lilysblackboard.org/2017/02/betsy-devos-called-sent-letter/>):

- ◆ Do you agree that all schools receiving public dollars must be held to *the same* accountability and transparency standards?
- ◆ Will you agree not to privatize funding for Special Education or Title I?
- ◆ Will you stand with educators and protect our most vulnerable students from discrimination, including LGBT students, immigrant students, students of color, girls, and English language learners?
- ◆ Will you focus, as educators are focused, on civil rights of all children, regardless of their zip code, by challenging the inequities so many face in equal access to programs, services and support?

The Board’s actions came just one day after Garcia and American Federation of Teachers’ President Randi Weingarten, along with nearly 100 fellow “couriers” were locked out of the Department of Education as they tried to deliver over 80,000 report cards for DeVos – mainly Fs.



Dues Task Force Reports Findings

(From page 1)

Board at its February 2018 meeting.

In short, the Task Force is recommending no changes to the way the average salaries formula is determined.

The Task Force’s charge included the following seven parameters:

- ◆ Be revenue neutral
- ◆ Be actuarially sound
- ◆ Treat all members fairly
- ◆ Be based on an examination of economic factors and health care costs
- ◆ Be based on consistently collected data that do not present access issues
- ◆ Result in no reduction to NEA Bylaw-driven grants
- ◆ Be Transparent



Moss

Presently the average salaries are calculated utilizing data collected through the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) with full-time Pre-K-12 and ESP salaries from public schools utilized for the calculation. This survey collects data annually. ESP data comes from the nine ESP families within the NEA and those salaries are weighted based upon the percentage of total ESP members per family in the NEA. NEA Research then removes statistical outliers at both ends to provide a more realistic average. For the 2017-18 school year the averages were: \$59,019 Professional and \$32,693 ESP. To provide a preliminary estimate of dues for the second year of the 2-year budget cycle, NEA Research staff uses the Employment Cost Index (ECI) to adjust

these average salaries for inflation that second year.

In an effort to see if there were other economic indices to adjust salaries for inflation and establish the first year rate through a salary average, the Dues Task Force examined the Consumer Price Index – All Items (CPI), Consumer Price Index – Less Medical Costs, Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE), and the ECI for all labor.

The Task Force found that, when applied to the public education salaries, none of these indices were able to check all seven criteria laid out in President Garcia’s parameters. The one that was nearly universally impacted was being revenue neutral. All but the PCE’s impact on ESP saw an increase of dues on members – in some cases as much as \$9 for Professional and \$3.50 for ESP, a significant increase to many members. There was also question among the Task Force if each method treated both ESP and certified teaching members equitably.

- ◆ **2018/19 Dues Amount Set:** As is necessary to allow the budget process to proceed, the Board took action on recommending the annual dues rate for the 2018/19 fiscal year. Based upon the formula utilized to calculate the rate, there will be an increase of \$3 for active professionals to \$192 and an increase of \$1 for active ESP to \$116.50. The estimated dues amount for 2019/20 are \$195 active for certified teachers and \$118.50 for active ESP. This amount will not formally be known and acted upon until February 2019.

NEA UniServ Grant appears headed for steep decrease

Acting Chair of the NEA UniServ Advisory Committee, Donald Tinney (VT), presented the committee’s preliminary report on its projected grant amount for 2018/19.



Tinney

“NEA Bylaws dedicate a specified percentage amount of individual dues to fund the UniServ program,” Tinney said. He noted this is predicated almost entirely on membership counts. Due to the pending *Janus v. AFSCME* U.S. Supreme Court decision, NEA is projecting a steep decline in membership next year. These projected declines will cause a reduction of \$6.9 million to the UniServ program. Increasing dues will mitigate approximately \$1.8 million. That said, the decrease of \$5.1 million equates to a drop of 7.3%, or \$2,855 per UniServ grantee to \$36,400.

State affiliates have until April to submit their UniServ grant requests and, as such, Tinney indicated a definitive number will be forthcoming to the Board at its May meeting seeking a recommendation for approval.



Great Public Schools for Every Child

NAACP’s Johnson Addresses Board

(From page 1)

mester of a year-long course that was, he noted, not well received by Dr. Simmons.

“He looked at us and sternly and said, ‘Some of you are resting on your laurels,’” Johnson remembered. “‘Let me tell you, they ain’t strong enough.’ I think he’s still talking to us today. Our laurels ain’t strong enough (as a society). It doesn’t matter where you are or what part of society you’re in, it’s only a matter of time.

“The next several years we must partner up,” he added. “The NAACP. The NEA. NWA. Civic engagement today will impact the next 20 years of our reality. There will be federal judicial appointments; we will be redrawing the boundaries for congressional districts; and there are census counts coming to determine districts.

“Let us stand together today to make democracy work and make history every day.”



NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia applauds NAACP President Derrick Johnson during his speech to the Board of Directors.

