



## NEA Directors Report

December, 2011 John Heineman, Jenni Absalon, NEA Directors

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**Political Engagement:  
Our Profession and Students At Risk**

**FAST Act: Fix America's Schools Today**

The December NEA BOD meeting had no scheduled time for lobbying, so your Directors will be making back-home appointments in December and January.

Take action! Call and email your Senators to fix America's schools! While Congress debates ways to hold schools accountable for student outcomes, far too many students are learning in schools with leaky roofs and peeling paint in overcrowded classrooms with out-of-date or no technology. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Rep. Rosa DeLauro (C-CT) have introduced the Fix America's Schools Today (FAST) Act (S 1597/HR 2948) which would provide needed funds to ensure students the learning environments so essential to their success. Call and email your Senators to put America back to work and ensure our children the education they deserve by supporting school and campus modernization.



Click on

<http://www.capwiz.com/nea/issues/alert/?alertid=54523501&type=CO>

Or go to the NEA Home page, click on "Issues and Action," and then click on "Legislative Action Center."

**Obama's American Jobs Act**

- included \$25 billion to repair K-12 schools and \$5 billion to repair community college facilities
- Senate failed to get enough votes; House won't bring full AJA up for a vote

Cuts (at least \$3.54 billion) would be devastating to students, educators, and the economy

- \$1.1. billion Title I cut would impact almost 1.5 million students,
- \$896 million IDEA cut would impact more than a half a million students
- \$590 million cut to Head Start would impact more than 75,000 young children
- Cuts to education programs would also result in a projected loss of more than 71,000 jobs

**Moving ESEA in pieces** has negative consequences for public education such as

ending 42 programs; privileging charter schools; and allowing districts to transfer funds among programs including Title I and ELL. Bills on accountability and teacher/leaders are still expected in the next session. Other issues to be voted on: highly qualified teacher definition, assessments for students with disabilities, and true multiple measures of student and school progress.

**Great Web Sites: Stay Informed!**  
 Fundraising: [Go.neafund.org](http://Go.neafund.org)  
 Educators for Obama: [NEAfund.org](http://NEAfund.org)  
 Resources...Just the Facts:  
[Educationvotes.org](http://Educationvotes.org)

**Just the Facts**

On Educationvotes.org, read the updates entitled "Just the Facts." They're one-pagers that take a single issue such as vouchers or Medicaid and then state the following:

- Obama's position and actions
- the positions and actions of the GOP candidates
- NEA's beliefs

**Read them, share them, start conversations with them!**

Here are some excerpts from the Just the Facts on education jobs:

- Obama: Obama's jobs bill contains \$30 billion for states to pay teachers and prevent 400,000 teachers nationwide from receiving pink slips (fully paid for by increasing tax rates for the richest Americans by 0.5% on each dollar of income earned over \$1,000,000)
- NEA believes
  - Children nationwide cannot afford the consequences of reducing the numbers of classroom teachers (increased class size causes a widening of achievement gaps, particularly

in grades K-3)

- Obama's American Jobs Act would retain jobs for bus drivers, classroom assistants, and other school staff
- \$30 billion in funding for educators specifically supports state and local efforts to retain, rehire, and hire early childhood, elementary, and secondary school educators.



**Federal Education Funding under NCLB: Fairness Contributor or Inhibitor?**

- This new policy brief provides an overview of the issues, including references to the relevant research.
- Needed: a better measure of poverty. Federal funding formulas, particularly Title I, rely on a measure of poverty determined by the U.S. Census, which is not adjusted for geographic differences in the cost of living. As a result, the number of students in poverty in high-cost states and regions may be understated, while the number of students in poverty in low cost states and regions may be overstated. For example, California and New York have moderate poverty levels according to the Census measure, but have among the highest poverty rates when using an alternative measure adjusted for differences in geographic costs.
- Needed: a cadre of professional school finance experts. The federal government needs to ramp up its education research agenda several fold from its current level; and underwrite the development of a new generation of independent school

finance experts to provide scientifically valid and reliable research to guide policy makers on the causes and cures of educational inequities.

### **Membership and Finances**

Total membership loss thus far is 102,125, requiring budget cuts and adjustments throughout the year to compensate for the loss of dues revenue. Active certified -61,363; ESP -13,575; student -24,377; retired -1918; higher Ed +323, Administrators -774. Despite the loss of income, the Association is healthy financially.

### **Strong Affiliates**

#### **State legislative actions in 2011:**

15 states abolish or drastically limit dues deduction  
22 states strip collective bargaining  
14 states implement right to work  
13 states eliminate due process  
22 states pass voucher/tax credit bills  
49 states (except SD) legislate pension challenges

#### **Legislative threats in 2012:**

22 states: dues collection  
11 states: collective bargaining  
19 states: pension challenges  
7 states: right to work  
21 states: vouchers/tax credits  
8 states: performance pay, teacher evaluations

#### **Helping Affiliates in Crisis:**

- Look beyond the current budget cycle
- Focus not only on wins and losses but on AFFILIATE INFRASTRUCTURE left behind
- Define success
- Work collectively as an association
- Demonstrate affiliate and NEA strength

- Share best practices and align resources
- Have something to show, win, or lose



### **Strategic and Organizational Considerations**

- Focus on NEA/SEA alignment and affiliate capacity (10 Elements of

Organizational Capacity)

- Membership losses and budget cuts
- "Gut shots" to union: attacks on payroll deduction, collective bargaining, pensions
- Business model considerations (EFT)
- Demographic changes in our membership and student population

### **Tools and Support**

- Strong Schools, Strong Communities, Strong Economy (TEF)
- Technical assistance (payroll deduction, pensions, collective bargaining, policy analysis)
- Research, polling, and communications
- Data training, assistance and advice
- News media and social media
- Member-to-member voter contact

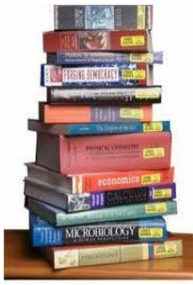
### **Leading the Profession:**

<http://www.nea.org/home/leading-the-profession.html>

### **NEA's Three-Point Plan for Reform**

This 15-page NEA publication presents the following three points:

1. Raising the bar for entry
  - a. Requiring every teacher candidate to have one full year of residency under the supervision of a



Master Teacher before earning a full license

- b. Requiring every teacher candidate to pass a rigorous classroom-based performance assessment at the end of his or her candidacy
2. Teachers ensuring great teaching
  - a. Creating a profession with career choices
  - b. Creating professional accountability
3. Providing union leadership to transform our profession

**Joint Committee on Leading the Profession; and Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching**

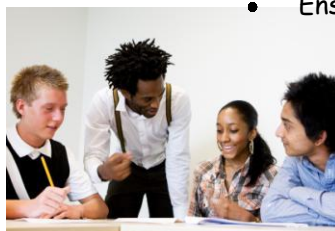
**Effective teachers do the following:**

- Engage all students in the learning process
- Focus on interactions and activities between teachers and students
- Involve collaboration among teachers
- Lead to growth in student knowledge, skills, and well-being
- Center on a continuous professional learning cycle

**NEA's vision of success:** In partnership with state and local affiliates and members, NEA will be the leading voice and advocate for the quality of the education professions.

**Transforming Teaching: Connecting Professional Responsibility with Student Learning**

The report of the Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching shared its report



with the NEA BOD. Here are a few main ideas from the report:

- We envision a teaching profession that embraces collective accountability for student learning balanced with collaborative autonomy that allows educators to do what is best for students.
- The report's vision for the teaching profession rests on three guiding principles:
  1. Student learning is at the center of everything a teacher does.
  2. Teachers take primary responsibility for student learning.
  3. Effective teachers share in the responsibility for teacher selection, evaluation, and dismissal.

A 21<sup>st</sup> century education system includes four key qualities:

1. A commitment to authentic and diverse student growth
2. An aligned system of standards, supports, and measures
3. New leadership roles in schools
4. Effective use of technology for all students

**Indicators Framework for Achieving Great Public Schools.** The

Board received drafts of the Indicators Framework for Achieving Great Public Schools. The Framework derives from the 2006 NEA Positive Agenda for the Reauthorization of ESEA:

- Prepare all students for the future with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills
- Create enthusiasm for learning and engage all students in the classroom
- Close achievement gaps and raise achievement for all students
- Ensure that all educators have the resources and tools they need to get the job done

The Indicators Framework is a matrix of the seven criteria needed to create great public schools: general areas deemed critical to public schools' ability to help students learn and thrive:

1. Quality programs and services that meet the full range of all children's needs so that they come to school every day ready and able to learn
2. High expectations and standards with a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum for all students
3. Quality conditions for teaching and lifelong learning
4. A qualified, caring, diverse and stable workforce
5. Shared responsibility for appropriate school accountability by stakeholders at all levels
6. Parental, family, and community involvement and engagement
7. Adequate, equitable, and sustainable funding

These indicators serve as the basis for analyzing state policies, practices, and outcomes related to the GPS criteria, and the corresponding metrics form the basis for benchmarking the progress of each indicator.

NEA will be working with state affiliates to facilitate use of the interim version of the framework.

In addition, NEA will be providing additional supporting policy documents that correspond to each of the criteria. NEA invites our feedback, so direct any questions and comments to

[GPSFramework@nea.org](mailto:GPSFramework@nea.org).



**Priority Schools Campaign** The Role of Community Engagement in Sustaining School Transformation  
[neaprioritieschools.org](http://neaprioritieschools.org)

Dr. Sheila Simmons reported on the Priority Schools Campaign Forum in November. Three elements of sustainable school transformation are

1. A strong focus on school instruction, culture, curriculum, and staffing
  2. Wrap-around services for students
  3. Collaboration with the community to ensure local ownership and accountability
- "Enlist the community so you can address broader social and economic factors that affect schools' performance."

Joseph E. Johnson of the National Center for Urban School Transformation at San Diego State University spoke about the importance of shared, committed leadership to school success.

Every high-performing school the Center has worked with has a team of dedicated leaders (including teachers, administrators and other personnel) who work together to establish three school-wide characteristics:

1. Climates that nurture the commitment and engagement of educators, parents, and students (the fuel that drives success)
2. Challenging, meaningful, focused curricula
3. Instruction that focuses on generating students' mastery of content

### **Family-School-Community Partnerships 2.0**

This report identifies and describes key partnerships that Association members have forged in 16 communities.

- **Part 1** reviews recent research on school and family collaboration and presents 10 key strategies for creating effective family-school-community partnerships that are focused on advancing student learning.
- **Part II** contains profiles for each of the partnership programs.

- **The 16 programs** profiled in this report fall into one of three categories:
  - Community and family-community programs
  - Programs to engage parents and other family members
  - Wraparound social and community services programs

**General Counsel: Alice O'Brien**

General Counsel's office has been busy with court cases and amicus briefs regarding the following issues: vouchers (violation of state constitution prohibitions against aid, compelled support of, religious institutions); affordable care; agency fee jurisprudence; payroll deduction (equal protection challenge to differential treatment of certain public safety unions - discrimination based on viewpoint); effect of draconian immigration laws on public education.

**Occupy Wall Street Movement**

The Board approved motion to support the principles and message of the Occupy Wall Street movement. The OWS movement is amorphous and has no established organization, articulated strategy, or national leadership. However, OWS relates to NEA's message regarding "two Americas, and supporting the existence of a strong middle class. There are also parallel efforts to Occupy Education or Occupy the Classroom and these efforts have highlighted the education opportunity gap and need for equity of access to quality public schools.

- NEA appreciates that what began as a single OWS protest about American's frustration with Wall Street has become a movement with an idea whose time has come: NEA agrees with OWS messages that the nation's leaders should represent all Americans, not just

the 1 percent.

- NEA agrees with OWS concerns that in just the last generation, the richest 1 percent almost quadrupled their incomes. The average wealth of the 1 percent is 225 times bigger than the wealth of the typical household - the highest it's ever been. At the same time, they are paying lower taxes than ever.
- NEA agrees that with OWS messages concerning a strong middle class. Over the past decade, earnings for middle class American actually fell. In fact, working American' wages are now a lower percentage of our economy than they have ever been.

**Actions**

- NEA will support these OWS principles and messages through its communications. Such actions will not require any additional expenditure or in-kind contributions.
- NEA will include OWS-related messages in public communications, speeches, and entries on its web sites and other communications vehicles.



**Representative**

**Amendments to the NEA Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules: The 2012 NEA Assembly**

The following amendments have been submitted for consideration by the 2012 Representative Assembly in DC. We will provide more information to you in the spring.

Constitutional Amendment 1: To modify the Preamble of the Constitution to include defending employees' right to collective bargaining as a stated goal of the Association.

Constitutional Amendment 2: To change the percentage of classroom teachers required on NEA committees from at least 75% to at least 50%. This change would apply to all committees except the Advisory Committee of

Student Members.

Bylaw Amendment 1: To establish, as a specific NEA objective, advocating for tax reforms to reduce the gap between the nation's economic classes.

Standing Rule Amendment 1: To limit to two minutes the remarks of all delegates recognized in debate and to eliminate the requirement that a delegate specify that he/she is speaking as an individual.

Standing Rule Amendment 2: To require the maker of an object to consider motion to submit a written rationale indicating why the main motion should not be considered by the Representative Assembly; and to require the presiding officer to read the rationale to the Representative Assembly prior to the vote on the objection.

Standing Rule Amendment 3: To require that the presiding officer ask if there are speaker request forms for delegates wishing to speak to the referral following a motion to refer to committee.

Standing Rule Amendment 4: To require a minimum of two one-hour breaks during the Representative Assembly.

Standing Rule Amendment 5: To emphasize that adopted new business item texts may be edited to replace K-12 or Pre-K-12 with Pre-K-Graduate School under specific circumstances.

### Hispanic Observance

The speaker for the Board's Hispanic observance was Thomas Saenz, President and General Counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and

Educational Fund (MALDEF). Last year, when the Arizona legislature passed S.B. 1070, a measure that fosters racial and ethnic profiling and stereotyping of Latinos in the name of exposing undocumented immigrants, Saenz predicted that Arizona's governor had launched Arizona into "a maelstrom of national controversy, community conflict, and extreme fiscal risk." He was right. Arizona, a state that has cut K-12 education by \$2 billion, has had to devote precious resources to defend a law that has so many constitutional flaws that it will likely never be implemented.



Hate- and exclusion-founded immigration laws will continue to have a devastating effect on families, children, and public education. Our entire society, not simply the students, benefits from public education.

The number of immigrant students in public schools has more than doubled since 1990. They now number 3.8 million, and Hispanic students comprise almost 60% of the immigrant students in our schools.

NEA Hispanic Caucus Chair Downing shared the tragic story of Joaquin Luna, an undocumented student in Mission, Texas, who took his life because he believed that he would never be able to fulfill his dream of becoming an engineer, earning his citizenship, and leading a full and prosperous life in America. Congressman Ruben Hinojosa addressed Congress in support of H. R. 1842, "the development, relief, and education for alien minors act of 2011" the DREAM Act. "Now more than ever, we must give these young people an opportunity to pursue their college and career goals, resolve their immigration status, and earn their citizenship. Without question, DREAM students exemplify the best of American ideals such as hard work, perseverance, and the desire to contribute to our nation's workforce, economy, and civic life."

### Read Across America

Dr. Seuss's book *The Lorax* will be the focus of reading events nationwide, along with school-based environmental education projects for Read Across America March 2, 2012. Be sure to subscribe to the Read Across America e-newsletter (at [www.nea.org/readacross](http://www.nea.org/readacross)) to get the most up-to-date information.

