



Great Public Schools for Every Child

NEA Directors Report

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On the Hill

Your Nebraska NEA Directors and state officers visited the offices of Nebraska's



Congressional delegation to address several key issues: the American Jobs Act, AYP in ESEA Reauthorization, and the Super Committee. We have listed the key talking points below, and the fact sheets and leave-behinds will be emailed to you so that you can use the information in them when you contact members of Nebraska's Congressional delegation.

Below is the link to contact Congress regarding the American Job Act:

<http://www.capwiz.com/nea/issues/alert/?alertid=53447546&type=CO>

Below is the link to contact Congress regarding the Super Committee:

<http://www.capwiz.com/nea/issues/alert/?alertid=52693536&type=CO>

American Jobs Act

Below are some of the points we made with our delegation:

- Investing 2% more in public education generates 3900 new jobs and \$92 million in new personal income. An equal tax cut generates less than half those gains.
- The American Society of Civil Engineers gives the condition of our schools a grade of "D," a reflection of health and safety conditions in which students and teachers teach and learn. The average age of our public schools is more than 40.
- Schools need an estimated \$500 billion in repairs and upgrades.

- An initial \$50 billion would employ 500,000 workers (a third of the 1.5 million construction workers now unemployed).
- The initial cost could be largely offset over 10 years by ending certain tax breaks.

- More than 330,000 education jobs have been lost since September, 2008, and an additional 227,000 will be lost in the 2011-2012 school year, not a reflection of the school-age population. These lost education jobs will trigger the loss of nearly 70,000 additional jobs in other sectors.



- Poverty is the single greatest threat to children's well-being.
 - The many out-of-school factors most likely to limit student success are highly correlated with poverty and include inadequate medical, dental, and vision care; food insecurity; exposure to mercury, lead, and other pollutants and poisons; family breakdown and stress; and neighborhood violence.
 - The official child poverty rate rose by 18% between 2000 and 2009.
 - In 2009, 42% of our nation's children lived in families with incomes below twice the federal poverty line.



AYP in ESEA Reauthorization

Replace the "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) system with one that recognizes schools that

make progress toward achieving learning goals and correctly identifies struggling schools — to provide meaningful support instead of punishment. Base determinations of school success on multiple measures, not just limited test scores.

Super Committee

- The plan put forward by the Super Committee must focus on jobs. Investing in public education creates more jobs than tax cuts. Discretionary funding for the next decade already took a significant hit in round one of deficit reduction, and additional cuts will unavoidably harm critical investments in education.
- The Committee's plan must protect children by opposing cuts to Medicaid. Additionally, Social Security and Medicare did not cause the nation's deficit and should not be cut to address it.
- The Super Committee should seek a balanced approach to deficit reduction that includes revenue.

Obama Administration NCLB Waiver Plan

The White House has outlined how states can get relief from provisions from ESEA (NCLB) in exchange for serious state-led efforts to close achievement gaps, promote rigorous accountability, and ensure that all students "are on track to graduate college- and career-ready." President Obama said that the purpose is not to give states and districts a reprieve from accountability, but rather to unleash energy to improve our schools at the local level.

Talking points in support of the waiver proposal include the following:

- Students, educators, school districts, and states all need relief as quickly as possible from the undue burdens caused by the law and its regulations.
- This package is an important *interim* step for relief.
- Working with Congress to make comprehensive changes during the



reauthorization process remains the ultimate goal.

- Teachers and educators closest to classrooms understand best what students need.
- This proposal
 - allows for additional locally developed strategies that focus on innovation, and professional judgment tailored to the student population;
 - preserves more flexibility for the rural districts;
 - does away with the punitive AP system and requires states to set "ambitious, but achievable" annual measurable objectives instead of requiring 100% of students to meet an arbitrary benchmark on a particular day of the school year;
 - gives more flexibility to local needs and promotes more school district efficiency, collaboration, and strategic planning;
- This proposal
 - maintains a commitment to civil rights and to student success, with a focus on children of color and those in poverty;
 - removes harmful labeling of schools and instead recognizes the lowest 5% of Title I schools as the nation's "Priority Schools;"
 - preserves a commitment to closing the achievement gaps by continuing to disaggregate data.
- There is a stronger recognition of the profession of teaching and its complexities because it
 - recognizes collective bargaining as a process for innovation and positive change;
 - respects educators by creating time for planning and piloting prior to requiring implementation of teacher and principal evaluation systems;
 - focuses on better, stronger professional development that is

tied to supporting great teaching and in sync with teacher evaluation systems;

- respects the views and judgments of teachers by guaranteeing them a seat at the decision-making table.
- This is an improved process because
 - applications for waivers are open and transparent;
 - the package calls not only for civil right organizations and parents to be involved, but students themselves.



Ongoing Challenges to the Association: John Stocks

Public perception of the public education system and unions remains critical

to the Association's future. Education reformers are able to enact radical plans because only about one fifth of the public thinks that the nation's schools should be graded "A or B." As a result, there is a national discussion about how to improve schools and teachers. 47% of the public think that unions have hurt public education (PDK/Gallup 2011 report). Efforts to build a resonant message and to significantly improve public education must continue if we are to win in the long term.

With union membership at the lowest level in 70 years, few voters enjoy the benefits of collectively bargained contracts, thus few voters personally appreciate the benefits of collectively bargained contracts.

These are challenging times for the entire Association. SEAs have been weakened, and this has weakened the entire Association. There is an acute need for the NEA's leadership and targeted support, for clear strategy and disciplined action.

We do have some positive, even hopeful, things going on in the NEA. Academic achievement overall is growing; the achievement gap is closing; we are having deeper communication with members at the

state and local level; there has been a sharp increase in member involvement; through data bases, we are able to track membership more efficiently; the culture of organizing is developing with members becoming more engaged through one on one dialogue; our priority schools campaign is further establishing us as the positive voice for struggling schools; public perception of schools has increased: 77% of parents grade the school of their oldest child as A or B; conservative movement has put the success of public education at the front of political discussions, and it is now being tied to the survival of the middle class.

We also have to deal with immediate threats to our membership. By November we can project membership for the end of the fiscal year. If AL comes in at 90% of "flipped" members; WI comes in at 80%; and AZ comes in at 80% - then we will have met our budgeted loss of members, without yet considering the loss in other states. NEA is working with the Western Region Organizing Academy for recruitment; and looking into using iPads for immediate recruiting. In OH we are engaged in the fight over voter registration and identification. There are strong indicators that if we can win in OH, we can stop many future attack efforts. Our biggest threat to ESP is privatization, and the only way to fight privatization, is quality - we cannot compete on cost.

John will visit TX in October to become sensitized and experienced regarding border communities. He will continue to visit communities in other states to learn more about children in poverty, particularly in rural areas. "It is critical that our association work on issues of justice and civil rights for our children."



The NEA Ballot Measure/ Legislative Crises Fund

This Fund began with a carry-over of \$8,056,561, and dues collections for 2010-11 are projected to be \$13,275,000. Thus, the total amount available in the 2010-11 membership year for ballot measures and

legislative crises is projected to be \$21,331,561. As of August 31, 2011, NEA had approved \$9,435,660 in assistance to 11 state affiliates for ballot measure campaigns, \$10,682,768 in assistance to 23 state affiliates for legislative crises, and \$2,500,000 for national lobby-campaign efforts related to ESEA reauthorization. The NEA Board of Directors allocated \$5,000,000 for the newly approved Affiliate Defense Fund, a designated account within the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises Fund set up to provide a targeted and collaborative strategy for supporting affiliates' efforts to defend against unprecedented attacks.



NEA Policy Briefs

NEA recently released three new and one updated policy brief. They are listed below

and will be forwarded to you in a subsequent email. Each brief gives an overview of the issue, including references to the relevant research. While the briefs were written for an external audience - legislators at the state and national level - we encourage you to share them with your state and local EAs, school board members, and others concerned with education policy.

- Blended Learning
- School-Family Engagement: Staff Preparations and Support are Vital
- Beyond Two Test Scores: Multiple Measures of Student Learning and School Accountability
- Subsidizing Private Education at Taxpayer Expense



Reframing the Education Debate

The NEA/State Affiliate Working Group released its message guide, "Reframing the Education Debate" as part of the National Message Project. NEA conducted both member and public/voter research; to affirm national findings, 21 states conducted the same member survey in their states; and 11 states conducted the public survey.

The kit was designed to provide a framework to help shape message and can be used in communications with members and the external public, such as the media, elected officials, policy makers, parents, neighbors, and community leaders. The message framework is outlined briefly below.

Core Message:

- America's teachers are on the front lines of education every day. We became educators because we care deeply about our children's future and we are committed to the success of every child.
- Our classroom experience has taught us that the only way to guarantee our children's future - and our own - is to put students at the center of education reform and make a nationwide commitment to
 - Hold all of us accountable for our student's success - teachers, students, parents, and elected officials.
- Invest in the classroom priorities that build the foundation for student learning.
- Ensure that every student has a qualified, caring, and committed teacher in the classroom.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report: Becky Pringle

Financial outlook:

- The end of the economic downturn is near - maybe.
- The recovery of employment and school funding will lag the economic recovery
- NEA is exercising caution and continued diligence in the conduct of our fiduciary duties.

Membership:

- Students up by 4%
- Retired up by 5.5%
- Higher Ed up by 2.6%
- ESP down by .7%
- Active certified down by 2.2%

NEA/State Affiliate Shared Priorities:

- Communications: internal and external; coalitions and external partnerships
- Organizing: creating a culture of organizing that recruits, retains, engages, mobilizes members
- Great Public Schools: policies and programs to improve school; focus on Priority Schools
- Advocacy: policies, politics, member rights, contracts, and crises
- Fiscal Health: NEA and affiliates

Association Advocacy

In partnership with state and local affiliates and members, NEA will be the leading voice and advocate for the quality of the education professions. How we will make this happen:

- Partner with affiliates and members
- Focus NEA's existing work in this area
- Implement RA directives
- Look for organizing opportunities
- Use our message framework
- Prioritize our work (so we know what must "come off our collective plates")

Some of our existing programs, projects, and activities include

- NEA Policy Statement on Teacher Evaluation and Accountability
 - Examine existing mentorship, peer assistance, and peer review programs
 - Develop, implement, and enforce high quality evaluation and accountability systems
 - Develop a package of recommended policies and implementation tools by 12.1.2011
- The Indicators Project
- NEA Foundation - Closing Achievement Gaps Sites and Institute Sites
- Priority Schools Campaign

- School transformation approaches that involve educators, communities, and policymakers; and
- Collaboration on innovative programs to measure student success and teacher quality
- Attracting and keeping the best educators and necessary resources for the schools of greatest need
- Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching
 - Develop a teacher-inspired, student-centered definition of effective teachers and teaching; create a new vision of the profession; and develop a set of recommendations to strengthen the profession.
 - Hold tele-town halls and public events to communicate report, beginning in November.

Vice President's Report:

Lily Eskelsen

Eskelsen has been appointed to serve on the White House Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. Its mission is to develop, implement, and coordinate education programs and initiatives at the DOE and other agencies that focus on improvements of education opportunities and outcomes for Hispanics of all ages.



Within five years, 25% of Kindergarteners will be Hispanic, yet the American Hispanic school-age population suffers from

- highest dropout rates
- lowest rate of college enrollment
- lowest rate of college completion
- language barriers (kids and parents)
- immigration issues
- poverty issues

Dr. Patrick Dolan

The NEA BOD began small-group discussions in an effort to analyze NEA's role in the current political, cultural, and public education landscape. The initial discussions were in response to remarks by Dr. Patrick Dolan in which he presented a perspective of an Association and public education out of sync.



The focus of Dolan's consulting firm is public education and its restructuring from a joint perspective of union/management cooperation. He has helped to implement collaborative structures at the state and local district and site levels; and he has also done extensive work with locals and state affiliates of the NEA. Dolan has worked with over 200 school districts on deep reform of both the structure of decision-making and the culture surrounding and supporting improvements in teaching and learning.

In his opening remarks, he said that, "We add authentic voice to those who have no voice." He then provided a historical perspective (pre-NCLB) of the four roles of public education:

- citizenship in democracy
- social justice
- development of the child
- academic achievement

NCLB and resulting policy and practice have nearly eliminated all but a very narrow sliver of academic achievement.

Below is the link to the first video of Dr. Dolan sharing his perspective of the new reality for public schools.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4G2cjmC8Uk>

GLBT Observance:

Graeme Taylor

Jay McDowell, an NEA teacher in Howell, Michigan, was temporarily suspended after telling a student wearing a Confederate flag and a student making anti-gay remarks to get out of his class. At the next school board meeting, openly gay 14-year-old high-school student Graeme Taylor came to McDowell's defense, thanking the teacher for doing "an amazing thing" in a town home to the KKK, and urging the school board to give McDowell his pay and reverse the disciplinary action.

Graeme, whose parents are both NEA members, said, "I've been in classrooms where children have said the worst things - the kinds of things that drove me to a suicide attempt when I was only 9 years old. These are the things that hurt a lot. There is a silent holocaust out there, in which an estimated 6 million gay people every year kill themselves."

What McDowell tried to do, says Taylor, was move the needle ever so slightly in the other direction and defend LGBT kids who have found hallway torment to be status quo. "The best thing you can do right now is just give him his pay for that day, and just reverse the disciplinary actions. He did an amazing thing. He did something that's inspired a lot of people. And whenever — ever — I have a teacher stand up for me like that, they change in my eyes. I support Jay McDowell, and I hope you do too." Graeme ended his remarks by saying, "Make no mistake about it, educators. Students count on you to stand up for goodness. Without it, everything you teach is empty."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJBvdfAQjs>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaOIIwmVbzw>





American Indians and Alaska Natives Observance: Kevin Gover

Kevin Gover (Pawnee/Comanche) is Director of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). He is a briefcase warrior (Indian lawyer) who reminded us that, since the first European incursion, American Indians have been defined by others, by non-Indian observers.

The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) is the eighteenth museum of the Smithsonian Institution. It is the first national museum dedicated to the preservation, study, and exhibition of the life, languages, literature, history, and arts of Native Americans. The museum works in collaboration with the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere to protect and foster their cultures by reaffirming traditions and beliefs, encouraging contemporary artistic expression, and empowering the Indian voice. Extensive collections encompass more than 800,000 works of extraordinary aesthetic, religious, and historical significance, as well as articles produced for everyday, utilitarian use. The collections span all major culture areas of the Americas, representing virtually all tribes of the United States, most of those of Canada, and a significant number of cultures from Central and South America as well as the Caribbean. Chronologically, the collections include artifacts from Paleo-Indian to contemporary arts and crafts. The museum's holdings also include film and audiovisual collections, paper archives, and a photography archive of more than 300,000 images depicting both historic and contemporary Native American life. NMAI actively strives to find new approaches to the study and representation of the history, materials, and cultures of Native peoples.



Preliminary Report of Implementation of 2011 NEA RA NBIs

Space prohibits our including the updates on the implementation of the 2011 NBIs. However, the titles are listed below. If you want information on an NBI's implementation, please email us and refer to the title as listed below.

- ESEA Reauthorization and Regulatory Relief
- Save Our Schools March
- Department of Education Accountability
- Performance-Based Teacher Assessment
- Definition of High-Performing
- Workplace Bullying
- Dream Act
- National and Regional Employment Data
- Anti-Bullying Campaign
- AARP Social Security Position
- Private Contracting of Health and Human Service Professionals
- Labor Campaign for Single-Payer Healthcare
- Corporate America's Takeover of the Middle Class
- Privatization
- Celebrate GLBT Contributions
- Privatization of the American Public School System
- Identify Potential NEA-Retired Members
- Anti-Public Education Agenda
- NEA-Retired Member Voting
- Service Delivery Models and Students with Special Needs Survey
- State Reports on Federal Funding Gap for Special Education
- Mental Health Screenings and Resources
- US Constitutional Amendment on Union Rights
- 75th Anniversary of the Future Teachers of America Chapters
- Parent Teacher Home Visit Project
- Non-Classroom Educators Support
- Promoting Public Education
- Unionized Service Providers
- National Board Certification
- Media Campaigns Defending Public Education
- Global Education
- Attacks on Public Education and Public Educators
- Education Union Partnerships
- Limited Health Plans
- Age Discrimination
- Engaging the Minority Community
- World Languages in School Curricula
- Teach for America
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Funding
- Minority Community Outreach

NEA Strategic Goals and Core Function Areas

The NEA BOD approved the FY2012-2014 NEA Strategic Goals and Core Function Areas below.

Proposed Strategic Goals	
<p>1) Strong Affiliates for Great Public Schools</p> <p><i>Preserving the voice of education professionals is critical to the advancement of public education in America.</i></p>	<p>The primary function of this goal is to assist affiliates in fending off attacks to member rights and promoting strategies designed to enhance public education, by providing financial support, technical assistance, field support, member engagement support, communications support, and facilitating the sharing of best practices throughout the association.</p>
<p>2) Uniting the Nation for Great Public Schools</p> <p><i>All of America's students deserve to be educated in a great public school, and students at greatest risk must be a priority.</i></p>	<p>In partnership with state and local affiliates, provide support and advocacy, build organizational capacity, foster Association and member led school transformation and pursue state and district level policies that support great public schools for all students.</p> <p>Struggling schools will be targeted for intensive support and lessons learned will be shared at the local and state levels.</p>

Proposed Core Functions	
<p>1) Research, Policy & Practice for Great Public Schools</p>	<p>Identify, develop and promote policy and practice that define a quality education profession. Incubate sound practice, gather key learnings that would benefit student learning, and define national, state and district policy that supports the advancement of Great Public Schools.</p>
<p>2) Organizing</p>	<p>In partnership with state affiliates, engage members as a collective by supporting affiliates to activate our vast network in pursuit of the vision.</p>
<p>3) Advocacy and Outreach</p>	<p>Advocate NEA's positions to policymakers, education stakeholders (with priority focus on ethnic minority communities and labor partners), and the public to influence policy debate and development, and to advance our members' views and expertise about policy for great public schools for every student.</p>
<p>4) Communications</p>	<p>Utilize the best communication strategies to engage members and the public.</p>
<p>5) Business Operations</p>	<p>Administer the business operations in a manner that supports the changing needs and priorities of the organization and ensure efficient and effective infrastructure that supports good fiscal management, uses technology for innovation and strengthens NEA's human capital.</p>
<p>6) Governance – NEW CORE</p>	<p>Support leadership in their development and decision making to advance the organization's mission and vision.</p>