

NEA DIRECTOR'S REPORT

December 2011



Virginia's NEA Directors

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December 6, 2011 – Board Conference Call

The Board of Directors heard the report of the Commission on Effective Teachers and Teachers (CETT)

Thursday, December 8 □ Virtual Meeting

In an effort to economize, the usual two-day Friday/Saturday Board meeting was changed to one full day on Saturday in DC, and a virtual meeting via phone & computer on Thursday.

Report of the Vice President

Lily Eskelsen, NEA Vice President, reported on her activities, which included:

- Attending the dedication of the Martin Luther King Memorial with President Dennis Van Roekel.
- Lily is serving on the White House Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. Their first meeting was at the White House.
- Along with other Executive Committee members, she worked in Ohio for the **NO on Issue 2 Campaign**, which was highly successful in defeating the anti-union legislation with 61% of the vote.

- Lily has been appointed to serve on the Education International Advisory Council which will monitor the Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development Committee, which has traditionally had an anti-public education agenda.

Report of the Executive Director

John Stocks, Executive Director, noted some of the recent positive election highlights where NEA members played key roles including: successes in Ohio (overwhelming defeat of Issue 2), Iowa, and New Jersey on ballot issues; re-election of a pro-education Governor in Kentucky; recall of the Michigan Chair of the Education Committee; and Maine successfully protecting same-day voter registration.

Report of General Counsel

General Counsel, Alice O'Brien detailed some coming attractions for 2012 including: Knox vs. SEIU a national right to work case seeking to upend agency fee jurisprudence; this case will be heard by the Supreme Court

Petitions to watch:

- **Fisher/UT** - (seeking to change college admissions practices that might be favorable to diversity); Blue Mountain/Social Media
- **Affordable Care Act** - spending clause challenge; never before accepted; if accepted here could jeopardize a wide array of federal laws
- **Payroll deductions** Arizona law has been enjoined and so far there is no appeal; crux of case revolves around the differential treatment of only education employees who are being denied their 1st amendment rights
- **Immigration** - NEA joined in amicus brief with School Boards Association against anti-immigration bill HB56 in Alabama, specifically the part involving K-12 and higher education; AL Attorney General has asked the AL Legislature to repeal the part of the law requiring schools to check legal status of students
- **Indiana voucher case** Meredith vs. Daniels; NEA contends this is a violation of state constitution prohibition against aid to religion

Report of Secretary Treasurer

Becky Pringle, NEA Secretary Treasurer, reported that NEA has experienced another drop in membership of over 37,000. The budget must be adjusted to reflect the loss, which means cutting an additional \$9.5 million from the 2011-2012 budget. Current membership stands at 3,065,287 with over 100,000 loss this past year.

Forty-one states are down in membership, while 10 states have had a membership increase. Retired Life membership is up and so is retired annual membership with an expected increase of about 8,000. Contingency Fund available balance is \$2.9 million, which is very good.

Legislative Briefing for Back Home Lobbying

The Board was briefed on important issues and asked to contact their congressional delegations on two key pieces of legislation:

- Education Funding: Because of the failure of the Super Committee to reach agreement, unless Congress acts. If Sequestration is implemented, it will result in 7.8% cut to education funding.
- School Modernization: Senator Brown (D-OH) and Representative DeLauro (D-CT) have introduced the (S. 1597/H.R.2498), which would provide needed funds to ensure students the learning environments so essential to their success. -The FAST Act will provide \$30 billion to the learning environments they need and deserve. It also includes \$5 billion to modernize community college facilities. Community college enrollments continue to rise as workers seek to enhance their skills in order to find employment in this tough economy or advance in their careers. Modernization of facilities is critical to accommodate these record numbers of students. The bill will also help create good jobs to put Americans back to work, as construction and building repair generally create 9,000-10,000 jobs per billion dollars spent. Will not be heard by full Senate until February, 2012;
- Applications for waivers for the current NCLB penalties to school districts are available to states.

Read Across America

Steven Grant, NEA staff, detailed the plans for this year's Read Across America activities, The Lorax, a Dr. Seuss book which deals with preservation of the environment has been made into a movie. The movie will premiere February 18th, and will open nationwide on March 2nd. For more information and to subscribe to the RAA e-newsletter go to www.nea.org/readacross.

Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching

Maddie Fennell, Chairperson, during the first of two Board conference calls, presented highlights of the report of the Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching on Tuesday, December 6. Response from the press has been very positive. This report is available online.

- The Commission developed its recommendations independently of NEA and presented its report to NEA. The report is among other essential input the Association has been and will continue to receive as it looks for promising ideas and practices that strengthen the profession of teaching.
- The charge of the Commission was to craft a new vision of a teacher profession, led by teachers and ensures teacher and teaching effectiveness.
- Its final report looked at three major issues: 1. Leading the profession: Teachers have the responsibility to act as professionals, and share leadership in decision-making that impacts student learning. Teachers take responsibility for their individual and collective effective teaching practice. 2. Collective Accountability: Teachers co-create fair and transparent support, assessment, and evaluation systems grounded in peer assistance and review (PAR). A system centered on

student learning and shared responsibility. 3. Collaborative Practice: Teachers work together to create a professional culture that ends teacher isolation, promotes shared learning and establishes shared responsibility throughout the learning community.

Saturday, December 10 Board meeting in Washington DC

- President Van Roekel asked members to keep an open mind and defer judgment while reading the report of the Commission on Effective Teaching, and not to get hung up on the words.
- He also encouraged all Board members to become familiar with three websites, Go.neafund.org (fundraising tool), Neafund.org (educators for Obama), and Educationvotes.org (resources & Just the Facts). These sites will be extremely important to our members as we enter the coming election cycle.

Actions of the Board

The Board took the following actions:

- Approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee to support the principles and message of the Occupy Wall Street movement, i.e., building a strong middle class, equitable taxation policies, regulation of the financial industry, and the right to collective bargaining for all workers.
- Priority Schools Campaign: Sheila Simmons, NEA staff, presented an update on the NEA Priority Schools Campaign. NEA sponsored a three-day forum in November (designed for teams from schools the Campaign is working with intensively) to address the challenges of implementing and sustaining education reforms and school transformation. Teachers, ESP, administrators, parents and community members worked collaboratively to develop plans for school improvement. Three elements of sustainable school transformation, according to Warren Simmons of Brown University, 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 accountabilityNew PSC resources are available at <http://neapriorityschool.org>.
- Strong Affiliates: According to Karen White, Victories in various states, like OH, KY, IA, and WI, were due to the hard work of NEA members in those states. NEA anticipates needing to help affiliates in crisis through grassroots advocacy, building coalitions, offensive and defensive campaigns. NEA affiliates nationwide are under attack. Looking ahead to 2012, NEA will be working to help affiliates with: the political landscape, including new voter ID laws (making it harder for pro-education

voters to vote) elimination of dues deduction and collective bargaining; potential negative ballot measures that will limit taxes and cause huge budget deficits, thus cutting public education funding. Thanks to the passage of the increase in the Legislative Crisis Fund at the 2011 RA, NEA is in a better position to help state affiliates meet these challenges in 2012.

Ohio Victory

Pat Foster Brooks, President of OEA, detailed the work of OEA members in their successful campaign to repeal SB5 which stripped union members of collective bargaining rights. OEA was instrumental in the **No On Issue 2 Campaign** with the help of NEA staff and resources.

Hispanic Observance/Welcoming Immigrant Families and Students

President Van Roekel introduced the Hispanic Observance by recounting the anti-immigration actions of the past, including the deportation of Hispanics during WWII, the passage of SB1070 in AZ, and HB56 in AL. Throughout U.S. History, great social change has caused great social friction, and now history is repeating itself. Maria Elena Cantu-Clair, Chair of the Hispanic Caucus, spoke about Joaquin Luna, an outstanding high school senior who took his life because he believed that he would never be able to fulfill his dream of becoming an engineer, earning citizenship, and leading a full and prosperous life in America. She encouraged Board members to lobby for the passage of the DREAM Act.

Thomas Saenz, nationally recognized civil rights attorney and President & General Counsel of MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund), was the guest speaker. 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 %. This is all part of a larger demographic shift in the U.S. that will lead to there being no ethnic majority in the United States by 2050. The Hispanic population is expected to triple by 2050. Saenz detailed how MALDEF is working to stop the creation of a social atmosphere of hate and exclusion which is being created through the passage of anti-immigration laws in states such as AZ and AL. Alabama is the only state, so far, that has actually targeted public schools and students to enforce immigration policies. Saenz concluded by saying that public schools and education need to be at the center of welcoming immigrant families and students.

Board Discussion Groups

Following lunch, the Board broke into groups of 10 to have in-depth discussions on seven key questions pertaining to the Strategic Budget, the role of NEA Board members in leading the profession, and how NEA elected leaders (Representative Assembly, Board and Executive Committee) can best provide strong governance and leadership for members and our profession.

Leading the Profession

Secretary Treasurer Becky Pringle presented information on the Joint committee on Leading the Profession. In partnership with state and local affiliates and members, NEA will be the leading voice and advocate for the quality of the education professions. It is the task of the Joint Committee to recommend ways of accomplishing that goal. The committee will utilize the report of the Committee on Effective Teachers and Teaching as a starting point for their work, along with the 2011-2014 Strategic Plan and budget.

National Member Survey

The Board received information about the latest NEA member survey which focused on the upcoming Presidential election with a strong approval rating for job performance. Members support Obama over all other Republican candidates, but there are still many undecided. www.neafund.org, and www.educationvotes.org to sign up, stay active, and stay informed.

Regional Conferences

Barby Halstead-Worrell, NEA Director for Field Operations, gave an update on the upcoming regional conferences. Organizing our members, coalitions and communities is the overall theme for all the conferences this year. There will be an emphasis on how to organize at the worksite level, use of technology, and involving younger members.

[NEA's Mid Atlantic Regional Leadership Conference will be held Jan. 27 – 29 at the Crystal City Marriott in Arlington, Va.](#)

Thanks go to the NEA Board members who share their reports to all board members so we may accurately report to members regarding the NEA Board meetings!