# Report of NEA-Retired Directors NEA Board of Directors Meeting February 9-11, 2012 Washington, DC

# Thursday, February 9

After attending a legislative briefing for all Board members, your NEA-Retired Directors headed for House and Senate offices with their active colleagues to lobby their Congressional Delegations on three major topics:

#### 1. ESEA Reauthorization:

Each member of Congress was asked to fight to ensure that any ESEA reauthorization bill preserve the critical federal role in addressing inequities that harm students and communities with the greatest needs. They were also urged to support efforts to restore federal requirements that states maintain their level of spending on K-12 education and not be permitted to lower funding levels even further.

- **2. Educator Tax Deduction**: Congressional members were urged to support including in any payroll tax deal an extension of the expired tax deduction for educators' out-of-pocket classroom supply expenses.
- **3. Social Security Offsets**: Each Senator was asked to cosponsor the **Social Security Fairness Act (S. 2010)** to repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision. If not willing to do so, why not?

# Friday, February 10

#### **President's Overview**

**President Van Roekel** officially began the meeting by giving an overview of the agenda and the business that the Board would cover during the two-day meeting. He mentioned that the new NEA Teacher Evaluation Tool Kit is now available at the NEA website.

### **Report of the Secretary Treasurer**

**Becky Pringle,** Secretary Treasurer, reported that membership in Active Certified is down over 60,000 and Active ESP is down over 16,000. Total membership now stands at 3,078,074 for a total loss of around 80,000 since last year. **However, Retired membership increased by more than 2200 and higher education has also grown.** Student membership is slightly down, but is anticipated to gain membership by the end of the year. NEA has a total annual budget of over \$375.6 million, with total net assets over \$75.5 million and undesignated net assets equaling \$60,526,126. Special purpose funds have total net assets of over \$108 million. With just over 66% of the fiscal year remaining, there is still 74.64% of the budget remaining, which means the budget is still very solid. However, because of membership loss, budget expenditures need to account for more than a \$10 million loss that was not anticipated when building the budget. NEA has and will continue to function more efficiently through innovation and consolidation.

#### **Actions of the Board**

The Board took the following actions:

- Adopted the 2012-13 membership dues; Active Certified are set at \$180 and Active ESP were set at \$107.50; **NEA Retired Lifetime will increase to \$250 (a \$50 increase) and annual dues will be \$30 (an increase of \$5).** NEA Retired dues were last raised in 2005
- Approved the eight recommendations of the Task Force on For-Profit Colleges and Universities (see Report of the Vice President for details)
- Approved the appointment of the members of the Board Steering Committee; **Linda Somo** will represent retired members on the committee
- Opposed Constitutional Amendment 1, which would amend the preamble to the constitution to include "defend public employees right to collective bargaining"

- Supported CA2, which would change the percentage of classroom teachers required on NEA committees from at least seventy-five percent to at least fifty percent
- Opposed Bylaw amendment 1 which would add "k. Advocate for tax reforms to reduce the gap between the nation's economic classes" to Bylaw1-1. Specific Objectives
- Opposed Standing Rule Amendment 1, which would 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 (Note: this SR will be withdrawn and all the rest will be renumbered)
- Opposed Standing Rule Amendment 2, which would require the maker of an "object to consideration" motion to submit a written rationale indicating why the main motion should not be considered by the RA; and to require the presiding officer to read the rationale to the RA prior to the vote on the objection
- Opposed Standing Rule Amendment 3, which would 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
- Postponed action on Standing Rule Amendment 4, which would require two one-hour breaks during the RA, until the May meeting
- Supported Standing Rule Amendment 5, which would 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
- Approved the Annual Meeting Review Committee recommendations
- Approved the Executive Committee recommendation for an expenditure of up to\$1.9 million from the Contingency Fund to cover the unforeseen membership loss during the 2011-12 membership year
- Approved a proposal that each NEA Director will receive copies of all correspondence from NEA with school sites and local associations in his or her state participating in the Priority Schools program
- Approved a proposal that NEA Government Relations Department will notify all members of the NEA Board at least one week prior to each lobby day of the general topics most likely to be included in their lobbying responsibility during the upcoming Superweek

## **Report of the Executive Director**

**John Stocks,** Executive Director, reported on membership and financial projections.

#### **Report of the Vice President**

Lily Eskelsen, NEA Vice President, reported on the For-Profit Colleges and Universities Task Force that she chaired. The group of NEA leaders and staff spent the past year completing its charge to review NEA's policies on for-profit adult education and provide its rationale for whether, and to what extent, NEA should support degree programs offered by for-profit colleges and universities and to report to the NEA President by February 1, 2012. Through their research, the committee found that three universities, U Mass Online, Walden, and Western Governors University fit within the NEA's criteria for offering the degrees and programs that our members requested from the NEA Academy. However, Walden is the only one that meets all of NEA's criteria. The Task Force made eight recommendations to the Board:

- No change in current NEA policies regarding higher education; and that NEA assist members by vetting and partnering only with high quality online institutions so that our members are assured of quality and value
- Continue to vigorously advocate for the enforcement of federal program integrity rules designed to ensure appropriate levels of transparency in all higher education programs, including gainful employment, program completion, default rates, waste, and fraud
- Officially adopt the criteria for ethics and integrity in business practices for online degree programs, including
  investigations of financial transparency, labor disputes, deceptive or fraudulent business practices, student
  recruitment market budgets and practices, student loan default rates, and hidden costs and fees
- Officially adopt as policy in vetting all higher education partners for the NEA Academy on-line programs the
  criteria for content quality and technical support, including qualifications and diversity of the faculty, support for
  students seeking licensure, interactivity of the learning environment, accommodations for learning styles,
  compliance with regulations to ensure access for students with disabilities, availability of orientation to online
  formats, availability of counselors, quality platform and systems, technical support, and regional and national
  accreditation

- Recommend to the NEA Member Benefits Board that they adopt the same criteria for ethics, integrity, content quality, and technical support of all higher education institutions that partner with the NEA Academy so that it is aligned with NEA policy
- NEA and NEA Member Benefits adopt a policy that in any decision to partner with an institution of higher education on the NEA Academy, consideration first be given to institutions that have unionized NEA faculty and/or staff; and that the partnership should be aligned with NEA's union values and relevant policy positions
- NEA publish and inform leaders and members of our ethical and quality criteria so that the details of the criteria are easily accessible
- The NEA President assign the appropriate body to explore the labor trends of the online education field and its potential as an area of membership organizing of student and active members

# **Women's History Month Observance**

Lynn Rosenthal, the Whitehouse Advisor on Violence Against Women, was the keynote speaker for the Women's History Month Observance. Her topic was how school employees can help to prevent violence against women. Statistics show that one in five women report they had been raped or had experienced an attempted rape in their lifetime. Forty-two percent of these rapes occurred before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and 80 percent before their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. One in four women reported having been beaten by an intimate partner, and one in six women reported having been stalked. The first step in any prevention strategy is to acknowledge the breadth and depth of the problem in our society and schools. The second step is to remind ourselves that we are not helpless. Schools can provide staff (including counselors, sports coaches, and education support professionals) with training in how to spot the signs of abuse and what to do about it. They can also provide middle and high school students with course material about the difference between healthy and abusive relationships. Since abused, sexually harrassed, or bullied students often feel very isolated, they don't know to whom they can turn. If educators make it clear to students that they are willing to listen, will not judge but will help, and are prepared to take action on behalf of the student, they will make a huge difference in the lives of those students. The Violence Against Women Act, first passed in 1994, was the first U.S. federal legislation acknowledging domestic violence and sexual assault as crimes, and it provided federal resources to encourage community-coordinated responses to combating violence. It also led to the creation of the National Domestic Violence Hotline – 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), which now receives 21,000 calls a month and provides access to translators in 170 languages. It recently has added 24/7 texting ability. The law's reauthorization in 2000 created a much needed legal assistance program for victims, and its reauthorization in 2005 created the first federal funding system to support rape crisis centers and to develop culturally and linguistically-specific services for communities. This legislation is now up for reauthorization again. NEA encourages members to contact their elected Representatives and Senators and urge them to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

#### **Special Presentation**

Richard W. Hurd, Professor of Labor Studies at Cornell University, spoke to the Board about Public Sector Unions Under Siege. At a time when NEA is facing increased demands on their resources to meet members' needs who are facing unprecedented attacks from elected officials, we are facing reduced membership and dues revenue. Private sector unions who faced similar challenges in the 1990's reacted in four different ways: Strategic Rigidity; Organizational Evolution; Organization Combustion; or Inclusive Unionism. The most successful strategy has been Inclusive Unionism. The SEIU is an example of this successful strategy for change. NEA can learn from these experiences. Barriers to union transformation include: reliance on limited structural fix; strategic rigidity/denial; lack of clarity; resistance from elected leaders, members, and staff; the servicing magnet; burnout, apathy; internal dissonance; and conflicting values. In order to achieve successful transformation, all of these issues have to be addressed in the context of strategic planning and change. Not only is it essential to have effective leadership, it is also important to organize at the grassroots level. It is necessary to assert a strong vision, engage leaders/members/staff, build internal political coalitions, and remove obstacles (get the elephants out of the room). The choice for NEA's future is to just manage decline or to build for strength.

**Barby Halstead-Worrell, NEA staff,** detailed the implications of successful change strategies for NEA, and talked about potential members that we could be recruiting. As retired membership continues to grow, NEA affiliates need to discover ways to utilize this valuable resource. She also described the problems experienced by the states that have lost payroll dues deduction and have been forced to switch to other forms of dues payment. States that still have payroll dues deduction were encouraged to fight to keep it. While NEA membership has remained relatively stable, market share has decreased. The good news is that NEA affiliates in all 50 states are working to create new locals. We all must become organizers with a laser focus to empower others

Ann Johnson, NEA Staff, talked to the Board about engaging the Millenial Generation (those born after 1980) to become leaders in the NEA. She stated that the average age of an NEA member is 46, but the average age of an activist is 57, meaning the activists are older than the general membership. In the next 5-10 years, 1 million members from the baby-boomer generation will be leaving education. NEA is creating a researched based model for young member engagement, following new members from age 20-30. To meet the needs of, and engage, this younger generation, NEA needs to: create mentorship programs; help ID new, emerging leaders; be open to change and new ideas; engage them in social events; value face-to-face contacts; and understand how they differ from older members.

## **Report of General Counsel**

Alice O'Brien, General Counsel, was not present due to attending to adoption of a baby, but the report was given by an NEA staff attorney. He detailed the AZ lawsuit against payroll deduction prohibition, which was successfully overturned by the court in favor of AEA, and the AL lawsuit, which was decided in the state's favor. The AL decision was referred to the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court which upheld the law and gave the AL Supreme Court grounds to further uphold the law. There has been no decision in the WI case against the anti-union laws. North Carolina lawsuit against the override of Gov. Perdue's veto of SB727 (prohibiting payroll deduction of union dues) resulted in an injunction granted by the court. All four new anti-union bills in AZ (which would prohibit any negotiations for public employees) are likely to pass and might be given emergency status which means they will go into effect immediately; and there is a new Utah bill to restrict negotiations to salary & benefits only.

### **Leading the Profession**

Bill Raabe, NEA staff, and Paula Monroe, NEA Executive Committee, reported on the ESP survey work to assess members' perceptions, attitudes, and expectations of the union's role in fulfilling their needs. Focus groups were conducted throughout the country. ESP members and non-members are worried about job security, decreases in benefits, and ongoing increases in healthcare costs. Most have little knowledge of the union, but say they joined for protection and security, and want the union to improve their salaries. They are genuinely interested in the success of students and are thrilled when they feel they are a part of that success. Raabe also reported on NEA's efforts to identify the criteria for great public schools and how NEA will assist state affiliates to implement policies that will enable the establishment of great public schools in their states.

Becky Pringle, Secretary Treasurer, mentioned that the work of the NEA Committee on Leading the Profession is continuing, and they will present their findings at the May Board meeting.

# Saturday, February 11

# **Leveraging Polarity**

Barry Johnson, Ph.D., and Cliff Kayser, organizational consultants, conducted a training session for the Board in understanding and managing polarities. Polarities are a free energy system in which we all live. For each pole, there is an upside and a downside. When experiencing a downside of one pole, the antidote to that downside is the opposite, e.g., inhale/exhale, or activity/rest. What drives the system is anticipation of the downside of one pole and the upside of the opposite pole. Understanding and leveraging upsides and downsides can help leaders deal with the many challenges facing our organization and public education.

## **Governance Review Project**

**Lily Eskelsen, NEA Vice President,** presented information on the history & establishment of all NEA governance processes and structures in preparation for the Board discussion groups in the afternoon. This is the beginning of a three-year process to review and verify that our processes and structures still meet our needs.

# **Transforming Teaching**

Mattie Fennell, Chair of the NEA Commission on Effective Teachers & Teaching, reported on the findings of the Commission. Guiding principles of the report include: 1) student learning is at the center of everything a teacher does; 2) teachers take primary responsibility for student learning; and 3) effective teachers share in the responsibility for teacher selection, evaluation and dismissal. Complex work, collective accountability, and collaborative autonomy should be the foundations for the classroom teacher. Some of the basics of effective teaching include shared decision making structures, teachers central to instructional decision making, and a teacher career path that demands that teacher effectiveness be the first criteria for any advancement in the profession. The full report is available on the main NEA website at <a href="https://www.nea.org">www.nea.org</a>.

## **Black History Month Observance**

**Dr. Adolf Brown III,** nationally acclaimed trainer and motivational speaker, was the keynote speaker for the Black History Month Observance. Dr. Brown overcame childhood poverty in a single-parent home to become a teacher, motivational speaker, college professor and Dean of Students at Hampton University. He stressed that relationships are the key element in teaching, and reaching, students.

### **Board Group Discussions**

Following lunch, the Board broke into groups of 10 to have in-depth discussions about NEA Budget priorities, governance structures, and a possible NEA RA one-day activity on Leading the Profession.

## Legislative & Political Landscape

**John Stocks, Executive Director,** reported on the current legislative and political landscape. He described the current political environment, Republican Presidential primary, and how the NEA is preparing for the presidential election. There are tools and materials available for all 50 states and each constituent group. Stocks detailed what is happening in the states regarding legislation that would outlaw payroll deduction, collective bargaining, and other anti-union bills. Member activism is crucial in this election year. Twenty-four state affiliates are currently being helped by the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crisis Fund, an increase of 16 over the previous year for legislative crises, and twenty states are being helped with ballot issues.

#### **Read Across America**

The NEA is partnering with Universal Studios and "The Lorax" movie to promote Read Across America. The movie will premiere on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, NEA's RAA day. Also, Mazda has pledged to donate up to \$1 million to school libraries for test driving a new Mazda between Feb. 20 – March 2. For each test drive, Mazda will donate \$25. Go to <a href="https://www.nea.org/readacross">www.nea.org/readacross</a> for more information.

#### **UniServ Advisory Committee**

**Grace Bekaert, Chair of the UniServ Advisory Committee,** reported that NEA will be able to meet its commitment to the UniServ grant program this year. For the 2012-2013 year, the committee is projecting that the grant will be reduced from \$37,048 to \$34,850. The final figure will be presented to the Board at the May meeting.

Report compiled by Linda Somo

Respectfully submitted by your NEA Directors:

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# Important Reminders

Sign up as an education advocate at <a href="https://www.EducationVotes.NEA.org">www.EducationVotes.NEA.org</a>

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

The NEA Toolkit for protecting pensions is now available through the NEA.org website. Use the search window at the top of the NEA.org website to locate "Retirement Protection".

The NEA Retired Leadership Development & Organizational Conference is scheduled for March 28-30 at Bally's Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, NV. Make reservations by March 2<sup>nd</sup> by calling 1-800-358-8711

Register for the conference online at <a href="https://www.regonline.com/nearetired2012leadershipconference">www.regonline.com/nearetired2012leadershipconference</a>

NEA Retired Grant Progress Reports are due by April 15th

Remember NEA's Read Across America is scheduled March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

Go to <a href="https://www.nea.org/readacross">www.nea.org/readacross</a> for more information; check out specifically the offer from Mazda to donate \$25 (up to \$1 million) to public school libraries for every new car test drive between Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> - March 2<sup>nd</sup>