



# Board Report

Washington, D.C.

NEA—Great Public Schools for Every Child

May 2010



**CALIFORNIA DIRECTORS:** Tamara Conry (District 1), Claire Merced (District 2), Marc Sternberger (District 3), KC Walsh (District 4), Carol Mathews (District 5), Sonia Martin-Solis (District 6), Margie Granado (District 7), Darla Bramlette (District 8), Kendall Vaught (District 9), Elizabeth Ahlgren (District 10), Katherine Underwood (District 11), George Sheridan (District 12), Sergio Martinez (District 13), Sue Cirillo (District 14), Ron Edwards (District 15), Carole Bailey (District 16), Gilda Bloom-Leiva (District 17), Theresa Montaño (Higher Ed At-Large), Michael Musser (ESP At-Large), Jolene Tripp (ESP At-Large), Greg Bonaccorsi (Alternate), Alexandra Condon (Alternate), Peg Myers (Alternate), Paula Monroe (Executive Committee Member), and Dixie Johansen (non-voting member).

## NEA Condemns Arizona Immigration Law

WASHINGTON, APRIL 29, 2010 –

NEA President Dennis Van Roekel sent a letter to Arizona Governor Jan Brewer today condemning a new immigration law in Arizona that will likely result in racial profiling. The letter expressed serious concerns with the law that would allow police to question anyone on the mere suspicion of being an illegal immigrant. It would also require immigrants to carry their registration documents with them. NEA President Dennis Van Roekel stated:

“The immigration law in Arizona could lead down a dangerous road of racial profiling and civil rights violations. As president of an Association that prides itself in promoting justice and equality, I am deeply troubled. As a long-time educator, I am disturbed by the lessons this law teaches children about democracy, inclusion, and non-discrimination.

“The new law could adversely impact children. The right of undocumented immigrant children to a K-12 public education has long been protected. This legislation may be the start of a very slippery slope. So what’s next? Will lawmakers require teachers, education support professionals, and school employees to act as *immigration agents*? That is not why we became educators. Our goal is to provide great public schools for every student.

“The fear of law enforcement could easily extend to other public employees and interfere with the culture of trust necessary for educators to build and sustain strong home-school connections, which we know are essential to students’ academic success.

“Student success also is determined by environmental factors. Both documented and undocumented immigrants may become so afraid of the police that they fail to report crimes in their communities. The absence of order creates an aura of fear and oppression that impedes the mission of teaching and learning.

“We cannot diminish the gains our nation has made in fostering diversity and equality by adopting punitive policies that profile people on the basis of race or ethnicity. The federal government must have

a deeper involvement in immigration reform and we must develop sensible solutions so that all of our children can feel safe in their communities.”

Click [here](#) to read the letter in its entirety.

## ESEA/Jobs Campaign Report

NEA is working 24/7 to ensure the passage of Senator Harkin’s Jobs bill. This bill would provide \$23 billion for education jobs. A campaign “war room” has been set up in the building and eleven NEA staffers have been assigned to the campaign. John Stocks is heading up the effort and according to Mr. Stocks, he sees this as a “seminal moment... a future-shaping moment... for NEA and public education.” He went on to equate this time to when collective bargaining began.

NEA’s broad goals around ESEA reauthorization are twofold: To secure legislative success by saving members’ jobs and getting a bill through that we can support. The second goal is to build organizing power by an intense member mobilization to ensure that members know what we are fighting for.

Kim Anderson spoke about the campaign in terms of increasing jobs. The current opportunities all have too many strings attached (RTTT, SiG, 3i). The Obama Administration’s Blueprint noticeably lacks any mention of money for jobs.

Congress is extremely partisan right now and much depends upon the outcome of the mid-term elections. We want a bipartisan bill. The communication team is working on tele-town halls and Hill visits.

We won Round 1, we’ve slowed the process down, and Arne Duncan isn’t speaking about the Blueprint. NEA provided questions for Duncan at the Congressional hearings, primarily around the lack of evidence on the efficacy of the turnaround models. Duncan also has said that it was never the Administration’s position to override local agreements.

When the Jobs bill is passed, NEA will pivot back focus to ESEA reauthorization.

Christy Levings, chair of ESEA Advisory Committee, asked us to continue the postcard campaign. She

also noted how essential it is to get accurate information.

Please visit NEA's Legislative Action Center [here](#) to learn more and take action!

## **NEA Social Security Fairness Task Force**

*(formerly GPO/WEP or Social Security Offsets Task Force)*

The survey that NEA has commissioned from the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability of all of the states affected by the GPO/WEP was reported on in the December NEA Board report. However, not enough members have responded to the survey to provide accurate data. Data must be gathered by the end of May in order to be ready for the RA. As state leaders, please ask all members to take the survey [here](#). All questions or concerns should be directed to Carrie Lewis, NEA Government Relations Department, at (202) 822-7884 or [calewis@nea.org](mailto:calewis@nea.org).

NEA Governmental Relations staff Mike Egan and Kim Anderson reported to the Task Force about the new National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. This commission will look at total Social Security reform and expect the GPO/WEP issue will be part of that reform. This is a great step forward!

President Obama created the bipartisan Commission to address the nation's fiscal challenges. The Commission is charged with identifying policies to improve the fiscal situation in the medium term and to achieve fiscal sustainability over the long run.

Comprised of 18 members (6 appointed by the President, 6 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, and 6 Members of the U.S. Senate) the Commission is equally split between Republicans and Democrats, including California's House Democrat Representative Xavier Becerra. The Commission is expected to divide into three subpanels to focus on mandatory spending, discretionary spending, and revenue; it must have agreement from 14 of the 18 members in order to move forward a recommendation.

The Commission met for the first time on April 28; a video of the Commission's first meeting may be viewed [here](#). Public meetings will be held at 9:30 AM-12 PM on the last Wednesday of the month from May through September and also on November 10 and December 1. President Obama has asked Commission members to deliver their recommendations by December 1, 2010. Because the Commission is operating on a "shoestring," it has few paid staff members and no money to organize field hearings outside Washington. Instead, the Commission has invited members of the public to submit comments via e-

mail [here](#).

In addition, the Commission plans to work with outside organizations to give members additional opportunities to address the issues under their jurisdiction. The non-partisan organization AmericaSpeaks has issued an invitation for Commission members to take part in a nationwide series of electronic town halls on Saturday, June 26. Additional details will be forwarded to NEA members as available.

### **NEA WORK**

NEA has created a staff taskforce on the Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. Participants include key staff from Government Relations, Campaigns and Elections, Research, and Collective Bargaining/Member Advocacy. The group is looking at how to frame NEA's message around economic responsibility and investment in education as an economic investment. Within the next month, the group will develop a white paper discussing NEA's top priorities, as well as a paper for Members of Congress—both of which will address repeal of GPO/WEP. Al Campos, who serves on this taskforce, has already spoken with House Vice Chair and Commission Member Xavier Becerra (D-CA); Representative Becerra will be a strong ally on this issue. NEA will also be submitting comments to the Commission and encourages members to do the same.

### **GPO/WEP TALKING POINTS**

The following are talking points to use in working with Commission members:

- Any recommendation formulated by the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform to Social Security reform is strongly urged to include a recommendation to repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination provision.
- These provisions penalize individuals who dedicate their lives to public service, including educators, police, and firefighters—taking away benefits that they or their spouses have earned by paying into the Social Security system.
- Every student in every American public school deserves a competent, caring, and effective teacher. A strong public education system that attracts and retains the highest quality educators is essential to economic strength and our nation's global competitiveness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Yet, the GPO and WEP undermine efforts to recruit and retain talented educators, and particularly undermine efforts to recruit individuals from the private sector (such as those with strong math and science backgrounds) into the teaching profession.

- The GPO and WEP often leave public employees facing poverty in their retirement. For example, some 300,000 individuals lose an average of \$3,600 a year due to the GPO—an amount that can make the difference between self-sufficiency and poverty. Impacted people have less money to spend in their local economy and cost the government more as they turn to assistance programs.

Please note that NEA will also be developing broader talking points regarding investments in education and the link between education and economic strength.

### CTA Congressional Briefing

CTA Governmental Relations arranged its inaugural Congressional Briefing with the NEA Board of Directors. Lori Easterling worked with Congresswoman Judy Chu (and her staff) to secure a room in the Rayburn House of Congress Building for the briefing. The information that was provided to the Members of Congress (or their staff) was very complete. John Mockler gave members a history of education at the California state level. His presentation focused on the budget and a history of education spending in the state.

Patricia Rucker also provided reports about each Congressional district's schools' API and AYP. Included were lists of schools, School Accountability Reports, base API and growth information, AYP and Program Improvement status, each individual site's standing on the list of Persistently Low Achieving Schools, and pertinent QEIA information. Each member of the NEA Board facilitated and interpreted the School Accountability Reports for her/his own members of congress.



Above: Representative Judy Chu

As a special note, there were members of congress from other states who had heard about the briefing and chose to send a representative from their office

to receive the information that CTA was providing for the California Congressional members. Two staffers from Senator Barbara Boxer's office also attended.

### NEA Friend of Education Award

The 2010 NEA Friend of Education Award will be awarded to Diane Ravitch. Ravitch is not easy to characterize politically, as she was appointed to public office by both George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. Secretary of Education Richard Riley appointed her to serve as a member of the National Assessment Governing Board, which supervises the National Assessment of Educational Progress; she was a member of NAGB from 1997-2004. In her political views and in her record she has always been nonpartisan and independent. In *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Undermine Education*, Ravitch critiqued the punitive uses of accountability to firing teachers and closing schools, as well as replacing public schools with charter schools and relying on superstar teachers. Her book became a surprise best seller one month after its release. One reviewer wrote, "Ravitch exhibits an interesting mix of support for public education and the rights of teachers to bargain collectively with a tough-mindedness that some on the pedagogical left lack."

While she originally supported No Child Left Behind and charter schools, she later became "disillusioned," and wrote, "I no longer believe that either approach will produce the quantum improvement in American education that we all hope for." In the major national evaluation, "17% of charters got higher scores, 46% were no different, and 37% were significantly worse than public schools," she said. "High-stakes testing, utopian goals, draconian penalties, school closings, privatization, and charter schools don't work," she concluded. "The best predictor of low academic performance is poverty—not bad teachers."

### Kennedy Institute



Above: Vicky Kennedy

During the May Board meeting, NEA Board members were honored with the presence of Vicky Kennedy. Ms. Kennedy thanked the NEA for supporting Senator Edward Kennedy's quest in passing the Healthcare bill.

Ms. Kennedy expressed that this fight was never for the Senators, but for the future for all in the U.S.

Ms. Kennedy also thanked the NEA for its donation of \$200,000 for the purpose of creating the Kennedy Institute, a center that will serve to expand the public's knowledge about public service and the role and importance of the Senate.

Senator Kennedy had great passion for civics and believed in promoting America's strong system of democracy. The Kennedy Institute will allow the public, students, and even new Senate members to use rich volumes of audio-visual materials and digital resources made available among many media outlets, especially by CSPAN. The institute will house Senator Kennedy's papers and memorabilia and will include a museum, a reception area, a library, and classrooms.

These facilities will be located adjacent to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library at Columbia Point, Massachusetts.

## Women's History Month Observance

This year, the NEA paid tribute to a great woman, Dr. Dorothy Height. She was an educator, an activist and an advocate who fought for equality for African Americans and Women. Dr. Height was a confidante of Eleanor Roosevelt and was at Martin Luther King Jr.'s side when he gave his "I Have a Dream" speech. Dr. Height was also on the dais when President Obama was sworn in. Dr. Height challenged the status quo. As a teenager, she entered a national oratory contest sponsored by the Elks, an all-white organization. She delivered a speech on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments and won first prize, four years' tuition to college (\$1000). Dr. Height applied to Barnard College and was accepted; however, when she arrived she was turned away because they already had their quota of Negroes. Not to be discouraged, Dr. Height went to NYU, which admitted her after seeing her acceptance letter to Barnard. She received a BA and then a MA in Educational Psychology. Ms. Height received three dozen honorary doctorates, from institutions including Tuskegee, Harvard, and Princeton Universities. But there was one academic honor that resonated more strongly than all the rest; in 2004, Barnard College made her an honorary alumna—75 years after turning her away.

Known for her fabulous fashions and her fancy hats, a Broadway show called "If This Hat Could Talk," told Dr. Height's story from her memoir, *Open Wide the Freedom Gates*.

In 1994 President Clinton awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom and in 2004 she received the Congressional Gold Medal, the two highest civilian honors.

Dr. Dorothy Height contributed much to our society throughout the years; we have lost a champion of justice and freedom.

## Asian American/Pacific Islander Observance



Above: Caucus Chair - Dixie Johansen, CA,  
Speaker - Marie Myungok Lee, Roger  
Takabayashi, HI

Marie Myungok Lee, an acclaimed Korean-American writer, was the guest speaker for the Asian American/Pacific Islander Observance. Ms. Lee spoke of growing up in Hibbing, Minnesota, where she was punched in the nose, called names, and told she didn't belong in America. She talked about the two teachers who helped her: The first stopped the bullying because it was the right thing to do and the other helped her become a writer. In her books she draws from her own experiences. The *New York Times* wrote that she deals with the subject of racism in a way that is both explicit and sensitive. Ms. Lee is currently a visiting Lecturer in Race and Ethnicity at Brown University, where she teaches creative writing.

## NEA Black Caucus Commemoration

Dennis opened the commemoration by congratulating the Black Caucus on its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and calling attention to the passing of Dr. Benjamin Hooks, former president of the NAACP. The highlight was a presentation by Kiri Davis, a 21-year-old nationally renowned media sensation. Kiri is an award-winning filmmaker of "A

Girl Like Me,” which has been featured at more than 20 film showings and won several awards.

Below: Kiri Davis



## 2009-10 Affirmative Action Report

NEA continues its efforts to meet and exceed the objectives of its affirmative action goals. With the new fiscal year, NEA renews the commitment to this important effort. Within the past year, NEA has increased the number of Asians in the Administrative/Clerical category and the number of Hispanics in the Professional category.

Although NEA has made progress in some areas, it must continue to concentrate on increasing efforts to reach out to qualified American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic, Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander candidates. In addition, NEA will persist in pursuing qualified Black male candidates for Administrative/Clerical positions.

Each vacancy is an opportunity to achieve these affirmative action goals; membership assistance is vital to the program's success!

## NEA Representative Assembly

“Turning Hope into Action” is the theme for the 2010 NEA RA. Held in New Orleans, it will prove to be a hot time. The Essence Festival will be in the convention center July 1–3, which means we will be sharing the space during that time. NEA will not be hosting a friendship night this year; the monies that would have been spent will go to several different charities, including the Vivian Bowser Fund, the Ryan White Fund, as well as local New Orleans charities to support post-Katrina work.

There will not be any backstage tours at this year's RA; the space behind the stage is very small and there just isn't room. Expect it to be hot and humid in New Orleans. California and NEA will be staying at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel.

Two elections were conducted: (1) Elizabeth Nahl of Oregon was elected to represent the NEA Board on the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education and

Dan Quinn from Michigan was elected alternate and (2) Valerie Brown was elected to be the Board representative to the Committee on New Business items at the RA. In addition, 42 nominees (from differing states and the District of Columbia) were approved by the Board for the 2010 Elections Committee.

## Bits and Pieces

**Our Colorado colleagues are fighting a battle over teacher evaluations and their due process rights. For more information, check out the Facebook group, “Not So Fast! No on SB 191” or [www.stop191.com](http://www.stop191.com).**

**The NEA Officers' Compensation** task force recommended **no change** in the officers' compensation at this time.

**The Great Lakes Center**, supported by NEA, has published a report, “Think Twice—Research Quality,” which reviews the flaws in much of what we are given as quality research by various think tanks.

**Air quality** is a concern across the country. The **NEA Health Information Network** has produced an online course on Indoor Air Quality that's available at [www.neacademy.org](http://www.neacademy.org).

## Healthcare Reform Update

Healthcare has long been a concern of the NEA with improvement goals set at each of the last four RAs. 405 of our members have ranked “healthcare” as the #1 priority for change with 36% naming “education” as their second priority. With the passage of the “Patient Protection and Affordable Healthcare Act,” 30 million more people in the United States will have access to healthcare. Implementation of the bill is a focus with weekly communication between NEA, other unions and state affiliates. Information will be forthcoming about the impacts of the bill on collective bargaining.

## Campaign and Elections

With 62% of the national populace believing that our country is on the wrong track, the political climate is unsettled and there will be many battles. A rise in independent voters—and the tendency of their votes to be more conservative than in the past—means NEA has its work cut out!

## UniServ Advisory Committee Report

The UniServ Advisory Committee recommended the grant amount of \$34,933 per UniServ be awarded. The 2009-10 amount will be \$0. This 2009-10 amount reflects a decrease of 20,000 FTEs.

## Report of the Executive Committee

### ANNUAL REVIEW OF POLICY STATEMENTS

The Executive Committee is charged with reviewing all adopted policy statements each year to ensure they continue to serve the contemporary needs and interests of NEA. In conducting this review, the Executive Committee may seek input from NEA members, affiliates and constituency groups. The Executive Committee reports the results of its review, including any recommendations that the Executive Committee may wish to make for amending the adopted policy statements, to the Board of Directors at each year's April/May meeting. Any amendments to the adopted policy statements approved by the Board of Directors shall be submitted to the Representative Assembly for action.

Following this procedure, and after reviewing each of the statements for timeliness and consistency with the goals of the Association, the NEA Executive Committee is recommending no changes for Board consideration at this time.

## 2010-12 NEA Strategic Plan and Budget

The 2010-12 Strategic Plan and Budget was presented by Secretary-Treasurer Becky Pringle and the members of the NEA Budget Committee. The budget is based on the Goals and Core Services that were adopted by the Board in September. The Committee used the information gathered at the various Budget hearings that were held throughout the year. The areas of the Budget are:

- Strategic Goal #1: School Funding
- Strategic Goal #2: Salaries
- Strategic Goal #3: Priority Schools
- Core Service #1: Student Learning and Workforce Quality
- Core Service #2: Affiliate Capacity and Membership
- Core Service #3: Advocacy and Communications
- Core Service #4: Partnerships
- Core Service #5: Business Operations

The Budget was developed with the current economic situation in mind. The Committee also looked for effectiveness and efficiencies throughout the organization.

The Board approved the motion to submit the 2010-12 Strategic Plan and Budget as presented to the 2010 NEA Representative Assembly in New Orleans in July, at which final action will be taken.



Above: CA NEA Board Member Carole Bailey presents part of the NEA Budget Report.

## Report of the Vice President

Lily Eskelson started off her report by sharing about the Spanish radio ads, TV ads, and interviews she has been doing. The first is on the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, a bill that would allow undocumented minors who meet certain requirements and obtain a high education degree to become legal U.S. residents. This bill could be a pathway for these children to have a future and not live in fear or in the shadows of society. Another outreach involves the STEM Pipeline, which is designed to encourage more students to explore careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Hispanic children are the smallest group in these fields and therefore, outreach to them is especially important. Lastly, Lily has been doing education on the Jobs bill. With the goal of boosting employment, this bill essentially provides tax breaks for businesses and adds additional infrastructure spending.

In order to try to build understanding and build bridges, Lily has also been doing outreach to groups that normally are not receptive to the ideals of NEA. One group is the American Enterprise Institute, which is not supportive of labor organizations; Lily was happy to have the chance to hear their questions and to share NEA's points of views on education. Teach for America is a group that reaches out to recent college grads to commit

to teaching in urban and rural schools. However, the methods and ideals of Teach for America are controversial among many experienced educators. Lily appreciated getting to talk with members firsthand to hear their issues and share NEA's views. Lily's final report was on tiered dues. The tiered dues proposal was revenue neutral, which means that in order to keep revenue the same if one group's dues go up then another group's dues have to go down. The tiered dues recommendation was not approved by the December Board, as some members' dues would have been raised and some lowered. There was discussion of trying to lower dues for certain groups without raising dues for other groups; however, this proposal would cost over \$10 million and is not feasible within the budget. There is no plan to revisit the tiered dues at this time.

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

Becky Pringle stated that NEA has suffered a loss of 24,673 active certificated members this year, mostly due to layoffs. At the same time, ESP membership has grown by 4,230, mostly due to state membership campaigns. Other categories of membership are also up: Student membership is up 4,275 for the year-to-date; Retired is up 4,387; Higher Education is up 2,480. After 42% of the fiscal year, expenses are on track to be within the budget. All state affiliates are transmitting dues on time. Net assets are down about \$12 million from last year to \$71,535,204. NEA also has slightly over \$100 million in special purpose funds.

### **Report of the General Counsel**

The Board welcomed new NEA General Counsel, Alice O'Brien. Some of you recognize this name since she was CTA's General Counsel until replacing Bob Chanin. She is already doing a fantastic job in her NEA position! Alice reported first on the status of NEA's lawsuit on the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA)—the Act that would put NEA under the provisions of the Landrum-Griffith Act, limiting NEA's ability to remain in the political process. The Obama Administration has been talking to NEA, along with other public unions, about the appropriate use of the Act. Those talks continue and a decision is expected to be made in February. Alice then talked about the ESEA's School Improvement Grants, which are to be used to assist Title I Schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The U.S. Department of Education announced in December that, in order to qualify for one of these school improvement grants,

school districts would need to implement one of four "reform" models in each school for which a grant was sought. The Act must comply with state and local laws and agreements, including collective bargaining agreements, in the actions that they take to secure and implement an ESEA school improvement grants.

Alice requested that she be kept apprised of districts that refuse to comply with state or local laws or agreements in order to secure or implement school improvement grants. She would also like to hear about any successfully defeated efforts. Alice may be reached at [aobrien@nea.org](mailto:aobrien@nea.org).

#### **FROM CAROL AND MICHAEL CAROL'S QUIPS**

. Michael Musser and I visited with our congressional Education aides in DC in April and we discussed the reauthorization of ESEA. Please feel free to contact Michael or me if you have any questions.

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