



Board Report

Washington, D.C.

NEA—Great Public Schools for Every Child

September 2009



CALIFORNIA DIRECTORS: Tamara Conry (District 1), Claire Merced (District 2), Marc Sternberger (District 3), KC Walsh (District 4), Carol Mathews (District 5), VACANT (District 6), Margie Granado (District 7), Darla Bramlette (District 8), VACANT (District 9), Elizabeth Ahlgren (District 10), Katherine Underwood (District 11), George Sheridan (District 12), VACANT (District 13), Sue Cirillo (District 14), Charlie Young (District 15), Carole Bailey (District 16), Gilda Bloom-Leiva (District 17), Theresa Montañó (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), Dixie Johansen (non-voting member).

President's Welcome and Report

President Dennis Van Roekel opened the Board of Directors meeting by welcoming new and returning board members. The President briefly identified many of the challenges education and the NEA face in the coming year.

Dennis Van Roekel reminded the Board of the six observances over the coming year. He stressed the importance of recognizing groups who have endured and experienced discrimination, recognizing their contributions to the nation and striving as a union for social justice.

There also was a moving tribute and remembrance to Senator Edward Kennedy by Kim Anderson: Kennedy was the "Lion of the Senate" who served the country for forty years. His imprint and influence can be seen in over 300 pieces of legislation from social justice legislation, victory for labor unions and economic justice issues to his most cherished work on educating the nation's youth. He will be sorely missed.

President's Activity Report

Dennis Van Roekel reviewed his activity calendar mentioning the Western Summit in Denver and meeting with labor leaders as a couple of the highlights. Dennis also expressed his thanks for the new Board of Directors Orientation held July 24–26.

President's Reflections

Dennis Van Roekel recognized the NEA Board members' roles during the board meetings. The discussions are the beginning of each board member's role. Training is an important aspect of the board member's job, and Dennis' discussions with NEA Directors must continue outside of D.C. so that he can continue to be apprised of what's going on in specific areas.

In reviewing the 2009 Year-End Evaluation Summary Dennis found that it is a good indicator of what the Board of Directors liked and it is his goal to meet the board members where they want to be.

Headline News

This is a new feature at the NEA Board meeting where each of the department managers gives highlights of what is going on in his/her respective departments. Updates were given by the following department managers (with email addresses): Education Policy and Practice (kbrilliant@nea.org), Education Support Professional Quality (rdove@nea.org), Research (rhenderson@nea.org), Field Operations (cquesada@nea.org), Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy (braabe@nea.org), Human and Civil Rights (ssimmons@nea.org), and Campaigns and Elections (kwhite@nea.org).

Some of the highlights included Race to the Top (RTTT) and the fact that NEA has been responding to the recommendations made by the Department of Education. The research department reported on the economy and the fact that the recession may be ending, but states will be having difficult times ahead. The HCR Department has posted the application for the 2010 HCR awards on the website and all applications are due by December 10, 2009.

A Visit from Arne Duncan

Education Secretary Arne Duncan came to the meeting to address the NEA Board. Secretary Duncan made a few remarks prior to answering questions posed to him by NEA President Dennis Van Roekel, including some of the 95 questions that had been submitted prior to the meeting.

Secretary Duncan began his remarks by talking about the 2.1 million students who drop out annually and the poverty and social failure to which those students are condemned. The dramatic investment this administration has made in education is intended to help all children reach their potential and to reduce the drop-out rate. He understands the issues and demonstrated that when he discussed the disparity that kindergarten students present as they enter the system—some ready to read while others only know their nickname and don't know which end of a book points up.

Duncan spoke of the need for higher education, about making college more affordable, and about elevating the teaching profession. He said, "Good teachers are my heroes." His vision is for teachers to get useful feedback and to have more time to collaborate.

The four principles that guide his work at this time are:

1. Treat teachers like the professionals they are, let them have real time data to improve their practice, and evaluate and compensate teachers on the growth and learning of the students.
2. Break down the barriers to entering our profession.
3. Seek to train and empower strong school leaders.
4. Insure that good teachers and school leaders get to the schools that need them the most.

The previously submitted questions involved the affordability and access to higher education, the lack of parity in teacher work load when students are unprepared for school, the need for parent involvement, and the difficulty in finding improvement models for rural and reservation schools. The last question involved bullying; the Secretary expressed the need for character education, a need he has seen in his 7-year-old child's school as well as in the Chicago Public Schools where a child was lost every two weeks.

Technology Tidbits

The NEA Board viewed a short video presentation on social media and its impact on the way people communicate. This interactive media is a fundamental shift in how people access news and other information. Leona Hiraoka, Director of NEA Interactive Media, highlighted the many ways that NEA is now involved in social media. *NEA Today* has launched NEAExpress, an electronic magazine with 1.4 million members. Other interactive media provided by NEA are “Works4Me,” the NEA RA Blog, and NEA on Blip.TV, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, Wikipedia, and YouTube; there is something for everyone.

Within mere moments of hearing this informative presentation, the members of the NEA Board received an email with links to all the various NEA social media sites:

- D2D Dennis to Delegates: Social media site connecting Dennis Van Roekel with RA delegates and Association leaders, www.nea.org/dennis2delegates.
- NEA Today Express: Best of *NEA Today* magazine delivered by email, www.nea.org/home/29166.htm.
- NEAToday.org: Daily education news digest for activists and opinion leaders, www.neatoday.org.
- Twitter: Social networking and micro-blogging, <http://twitter.com/neatoday>.
- Facebook: Social networking, www.facebook.com/neatoday.
- YouTube: Video sharing, www.youtube.com/neaqbs.
- Blip.TV: Video sharing, <http://neatoday.blip.tv/>.
- Wikipedia: Reference site with content written and edited by readers, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Education_Association.
- Flickr: Photo sharing, www.flickr.com/nea-hq.
- NEA RA Blog: <http://nea-ra.blogspot.com/>.

Strategic Discussions

Code of Ethics

The Board reviewed the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession, originally adopted by the 1975 RA. It was discussed whether the Code should apply only to teachers, or whether it should include education support professionals and other NEA Active members. Also discussed was the provision of the NEA Constitution giving the Association the power to censure, suspend or expel a member for violation of the Code of Ethics. Should a review board have the right to expel a member for violating the Code? If the review board deems someone has violated the Code, should NEA take action with regard to that person's employment? Multiple options were discussed in small groups; the Board may make recommendations at a later meeting.

150 Limit

Also discussed was the section of the NEA Constitution that caps membership of the NEA Board of Directors at no more than 150 state directors. Currently each state has one director, with additional directors for each 20,000 Active members. Currently there are 149 state directors. As the Association grows, several states are expected to be eligible for additional directors in the near future. Multiple options were discussed.

The first option was to eliminate the cap. This option would permit the Board to grow beyond 150 state

directors, with each state continuing to be eligible for an additional director for each 20,000 Active members. This would require an amendment to the NEA Constitution.

The second option would be an allocation of the 150 state seats. This option would ensure that 150 seats are proportionately allocated to state affiliates. This would be achieved by adjusting the number of Active members required for an additional director, in a manner that keeps the number of available state seats constant at 150.

The third option would raise the membership ratio and through attrition lower the number of state director seats. This option would permit the Board to reduce the total number of state directors by a desired figure, after which the Board would be permitted to increase once more toward the maximum of 150. This would be achieved by increasing the number of Active members required for an additional director to a fixed figure so that the total number of eligible director positions is downwardly adjusted to a number that is less than 150. This option would also require an amendment to the NEA Constitution.

The Board discussed the pros and cons of each option, plus brainstormed other possibilities. Each group's discussion answers were recorded and submitted to the Board for discussion at the next meeting.

Labor Report: American Labor at Crossroads

Michael Edwards presented “American Labor at the Crossroads,” a powerful and moving presentation highlighting the “challenges facing working families and their unions in the United States, including the devastating reality that although union workers are paid more than 30% than their non-labor union counterparts, union membership is at its lowest point in seventy-six years.” Michael's talk also pointed out that education union members represent the highest percentage of union membership and that the NEA's presence in the labor movement is at its all time high. Mr. Edwards' update on the state of the labor movement included a brief presentation on the AFL-CIO and Change to Win. According to Michael, the AFL-CIO represents 57 unions and 8 million members, while Change to Win, after losing the carpenters and UNITE HERE, represents 5 unions and 5 million members. The NEA with its 3.2 million members remains a major force in the union movement.

A portion of the presentation included discussion on the relationship between the AFT and NEA. The presentation concluded with a reminder that NEA's role in the labor movement is to harness the power of our members to advance our vision of great public schools for every student and to assure that America's workers enjoy the rights of benefits they so fully deserve.

Internal Concerns Committee Report

Internal Concerns Committee (ICC) Chair Chuck Thompson brought four proposed revisions to the NEA Board for approval at the September 2009 meeting. These are editorial and substantive changes to the NEA Board of Directors' Handbook. The proposed revisions are designed to clarify current practices and address matters that have come before the ICC repeatedly for resolution, such as the appropriate reimbursement of salary loss/substitute pay. Lastly, the committee

suggested a modification that would allow a greater flexibility to the chairperson when conducting elections during Board meetings. All four proposed revisions passed.

Whistleblower Policy for NEA Officials

NEA officials (NEA Executive Officers, a member of the NEA Executive committee, Board of Directors, NEA Committees and any person designated by governance to represent NEA) are obligated to comply with all relevant legal requirements in carrying out their NEA responsibilities. The term does not mean an employee of, or a consultant retained by, NEA. The purpose of the WB Policy is to establish a procedure by means of which any such failures can be brought to the attention of NEA, so that appropriate corrective action may be taken. Any person who believes that an NEA official has engaged in misconduct, or is about to, is encouraged to exhaust the WB Policy before attempting to deal with the matter in any other forum. At this time, Vice President Lily Eskelsen is responsible for implementing the policy. A copy of the policy is available to the aforementioned members and on NEA Connect.

Union Pride

With the slogan, "We Are the Union," NEA effectively voiced its union pride by showing a short film to NEA board members. This film celebrated teachers in their professional and union activities, and support staff working towards unity. The film depicts a group of ethnically diverse professionals and paraprofessionals celebrating solidarity in Michigan, a state that is entirely merged. To reiterate, the most constant and effective force for maintaining American families is the union. Unions are essential to the creation and sustainability of our middle class.

Conflict of Interest Policy for NEA Officials

The purpose of the Conflict of Interest Policy for NEA officials is to provide guidance to NEA officials in complying with their fiduciary obligation to act in the best interest of NEA. The term NEA officials refers to NEA Executive Officers, a member of the NEA Executive committee, Board of Directors, NEA Committees and any person designated by governance to represent NEA. The term does not mean an employee of, or a consultant retained by, NEA. No NEA official shall, directly or indirectly, have any interest or relationship, take any action or engage in any transaction, or incur any obligation which is in conflict with, or gives the appearance of a conflict with, the proper and faithful performance of his or her NEA responsibilities. Secretary Treasurer Becky Pringle is responsible for implementing the policy. A copy of the policy is available to the aforementioned members and is available on NEA Connect.

American Indian/Alaska Native Observance

STAND UP, a group of students from Rancho Cucamonga, CA, performed the "Native American Experience." The students want to learn about their culture and heritage. The American Indian has become invisible to many, but they are still here. The group did an excellent performance conveying their message and received a standing ovation!

GLBT Observance

On Friday the NEA Board held the annual GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender) Observance. GLBT Caucus Co-Chairs Nichole De Vore and Stephen Henry made opening remarks regarding the importance of GLBT issues within NEA and our schools and asked members of the GLBT Caucus to join them on the stage. Stephen Henry introduced the speaker, Thomas Krever, Executive Director of the Hetrick-Martin Institute, which is the home of the Harvey Milk High School in New York City. The Harvey Milk High School is an educational safe haven for LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning) youth and Thomas Krever shared the foundation's goals and how the foundation is working to reach those goals in support of LGBTQ students. Mr. Krever also shared sobering statistics of the plight of many LGBTQ youth and how as educators we can all help make getting an education a safer environment for students.

Social Security Offsets Task Force

This year California has three members on the NEA Task Force working to repeal the GPO/WEP: Darla Bramlette, Tamara Conry and Paula Monroe. The NEA Board thanks Patty Taylor, and all those who served before her, for the time and energy spent on this task force.

It was reported that Charlie Rangel, Chair of the Ways and Means Committee, wants the GPO/WEP to be part of full reform of Social Security and does not want to do it piece-meal. It was hoped that it would be part of this session, but it is not on the priority list for this administration right now. Yes, President Obama did say he would sign it when it crossed his desk, but with Health Care still not done, and other items on the list ahead of it, it won't get there by the close of this session. Thankfully, it will not have to start over with signatures in January, as it will be the beginning of the second half of the 111th Congress and all current co-sponsors will stay on.

The task force members discussed what we need to do to get this moving. NEA is sending a survey out to members: "Government Pension Offset/Windfall Elimination Provision Study." All members who receive the survey are urged to complete and return it to NEA as soon as possible.

When talking about the offsets with people it needs to be relayed as being a social injustice, punishing those who paid into Social Security, or whose spouses did, and not getting that money due them. Members' pictures need to be added to their stories; add a price to every story when possible. If the administration is looking at the face, reading a dollar amount owed to that person, and reads their sad story... maybe that will get this on the agenda for the coming year.

Please go to www.nea.org and roll your mouse over the Issues and Action bar on the top left, click on the Legislative Action Center part way down, and click on Social Security Offsets (GPO/WEP) on the right side. Here there are a variety of things everyone can do to help. Spread the word, tell all of your co-workers, family and friends that they too can help right this wrong.

Financial Outlook Report

Although NEA's current membership and budget show some modest growth, the Financial Outlook Report reflected the fairly bleak national and state economies, with cuts in education funding in more than half the states. The economy's impact on the NEA budget, because of job losses, and decreases in membership will probably be felt most in the next two years. Secretary Treasurer Becky Pringle outlined cuts that the budget committee has been making to keep the budget balanced.

Recommendations for 2010–2012 NEA Core Services and Strategy Goals

The Board debated, amended and approved the Executive Board Recommendations for 2010–2012 NEA Core Services and Strategy Goals. The Core Services include Student Learning and Workforce Quality, Membership, Advocacy, Partnerships, and Business Operations. These are the programs and services that are essential to the infrastructure of NEA and its work. The Executive Board recommended that Partnerships be moved from the Strategic Goals Area to the permanent Core Services Area. This reflects the need for NEA to continue developing partnerships with ethnic minority, labor, faith-based, environmental, philanthropic, educational, civil and human rights, and business communities.

Strategic Goals include increasing School Funding, establishing minimum starting salaries for NEA's Teacher, Educational Support Professional, and Higher Education Members, and partnering with state and local affiliates to provide support for struggling schools and students who are at greatest risk.

Report of the Vice President

Vice President Lily Eskelsen focused her report on two major areas. First, she addressed the continuing NEA goal of building partnerships with organizations that traditionally have not been associated with NEA. Vice President Eskelsen shared four examples.

1. *Parenting Magazine*: Vice President Eskelsen reported an article that addressed the weaknesses of the ESEA/NCLB. Also, the editors of the magazine now contact NEA routinely when it comes to issues involving education and child development.
2. The Dropout Prevention Task Force of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America: Many local association chapters around the country are linking up with this organization to provide NEA's expertise as educators in their organizations.
3. Annual Meeting of the Hispanic Bar Association: Vice President Eskelsen was invited to speak and participated in a panel discussion on education and health care issues.
4. The Teach for America group in Texas: Vice President Eskelsen was invited to speak to this group, the most controversial example in her presentation. Vice President Eskelsen informed the Board that 7,000 teachers nationally are Teach for America teachers. The program provides a 5-week training session and a 2-year assignment in a hard-to-staff school. The intent is that these young people will continue on in college, get their professional degrees, run for public office and then make policy effecting public schools in the future—essentially

building education leaders outside the education community. Vice President Eskelsen implored the Board to view these folks as potential NEA members and to encourage them to remain in public education as our members rather than to leave the profession entirely.

The report concluded with an update on the NEA Academy, which is found on the NEA website. It serves both as an outstanding recruiting tool and a perfect alternative to professional development. It can be found in the Tools drop-down menu. There are promotional flyers that you can click on to get the permission needed to have a course count toward professional growth credit in your school district. Course content and selection is constantly being reviewed and improved. There are also offerings that meet the needs of ESP members.

Report of the Secretary-Treasurer

Secretary-Treasurer Becky Pringle reported membership increases in the past year in all categories of membership except active life and agency fee payers. Membership grew almost 20,000 for a total membership of 3,235,762.

The Financial report included the Contingency Fund Expenditures, Implementation Funding for 2009 NEA RA New Business Items and an Income/Dues Report. A more extensive report will be presented at the next meeting after the books are closed and audited.

The Secretary-Treasurer also explained the NEA Financial Structure to the Board.

Report of the General Counsel

NEA General Counsel Bob Chanin reported on four cases at our Board Meeting this month. The first case is out of Alabama and has been a six-year journey so far. This case involves the Landrum-Griffith Act. NEA, along with 33 other pure public sector organizations, is seeking to continue a policy that existed for over 40 years until the dawn of the Bush Administration: To continue to be exempt from the Landrum-Griffith Act. This Act requires reporting requirements that will be costly to NEA and CTA and could limit our political activities. In February 2009 the Federal Court ruled against us. The case is now in the Court of Appeals as of May 4. Mr. Chanin is attempting to resolve this issue within the Obama Administration in the hopes that this lawsuit can be dropped or resolved to mutual satisfaction. The Labor Department agreed to hold in abatement any decision on the case until these talks are completed.

The next case Bob reported on was Pontiac School District (NEA) versus the Department of Labor, a case involving the unfunded mandates of NCLB. The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals agreed to a re-hearing of the case in January 2008 and that Hearing has concluded. NEA has been awaiting a decision in this case for 10 months now. On April 16th NEA met with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to discuss the case. In July of this year NEA met with the Department of Education and the Department of Justice to further try and resolve this case; NEA will continue to push for some form of resolution.

The next case Mr. Chanin reported on was Redding versus Stafford School District. This case involves a public school's student rights as they pertain to a strip-

search of a 13-year-old girl and her 14th Amendment rights. On June 25 of this year a decision was handed down from the Supreme Court in an 8 to 1 decision in favor of the student (Redding). This is an important case for NEA to be involved in since NEA advocates for Student Rights; this victory was celebrated. Finally, there was an update on the issue in Colorado which involved an attempt to take the rights of Associations to be in the Political arena through a November 2008 ballot initiative. On July 17th, a temporary injunction was ordered in this case, as we believe it violates the 1st and 14th Amendments under the Constitution. The State of Colorado has now appealed its case to the Colorado Supreme Court, which now has the case under consideration.

Report of the Executive Committee

The NEA Executive Committee Report emanated from Executive Director John Wilson's office. The NEA staff has indicated that additional funding of \$493,883.00 is needed to implement new business items approved by the 2009 NEA RA. An allocation in said amount is recommended from the NEA Contingency Fund. The NEA Board of Directors voted to approve the allocation on September 26.

The following lists the implementation funding for New Business Items (as numbered at the 2009 NEA RA):

- #5 NEA Response to H1N1 Virus \$8000.
- #6 EPA Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools National Symposium \$50,000.
- #9 Middle and High School Teacher Recruitment Program Tool Kit \$7500.
- #10 Men's Issues Conference \$20,000.
- #17 NEA Republican Outreach \$129,000.
- #18 Parliamentary Procedures Training Materials \$13,000.
- #44 Ethnic Studies Ban \$23,856.
- #45 Advocate for Adult Education Programs \$50,000.
- #47 Gender Gap in Education \$22,000.
- #48 Strategies and Information on the Damage of Sexing in Schools \$13,627.
- #52 Fine Arts Teachers E-Survey \$50,000.
- #60 Membership Code for Institutional Teachers \$5,000.
- #62 National Standards and Educational Goals \$10,000.
- #63 ELL Module for Professional Development \$29,500.
- #76 School Reconstitution Research \$11,500.
- #87 NEA RA Delegate Scholarships \$50,000.

CAROL'S QUIPS

Welcome back to another difficult year in Public Education. Michael Musser and I visit our congressional offices in DC and lobby on your behalf. Please feel free to contact Michael or me if you have any questions.

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