

NEA Board of Directors' Report
February 7, 8 & 9, 2008
Washington, DC
Ken Buhrmann & Tom Wellman

NSEA/NEA Legislative Briefing and Lobbying on Capitol Hill – (Thursday, February 7, 2008)

Nevada's NEA Directors returned to Washington, DC on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, to attend a legislative briefing scheduled for the next day. As stated in previous reports, NEA has been very successful in slowing down the reauthorization of ESEA/NCLB and getting members of congress to more carefully inspect any proposed language and goals of the reauthorization. This will allow NEA the opportunity to promote its positive agenda for reauthorization and the opportunity to insure that any proposed legislation truly meets our goals and objectives as an association and makes life in the classroom better for our members. As traditionally happens when we attend these briefings and lobby days our agenda can be very fluid and flexible. Although, ESEA/NCLB is essentially on hold for the present time we still wanted to keep the pressure on and let congress know this was still an issue and a priority for NEA. We were presented NEA's Principles for the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and asked to present this item to members of our congressional delegation. Items from the President's last state of the union address were also discussed along with the impact of these items on the budget.

The president's budget requests:

- Essentially flat funds ESEA/NCLB
- Increases Title I by only 4%-not keeping up with the 6% inflation increases IDEA by less than inflation-keeps federal share at about 17%. Congress has promised 40%.
- Eliminates over 40 programs including career and technical education, Even Start, family literacy, education technology, and parent resource centers.
- Cuts funding for 16 programs, including after school, Safe and Drug Free Schools, and Teacher Quality State Grants.
- Moves \$100 million from Teacher Quality to Teacher Incentive Fund (merit Pay).
- Diverts \$300 million to new voucher program (Pell Grants for Kids)
- Continues DC voucher program
- Converts after-school program to voucher program.

So, as you can see our plates are still very full trying to deal with issues that erode the quality and stability of public education.

NEA also presented information on hot issues in this legislative session. The issues being monitored are:

1. Higher Education
2. School Construction
3. Class Size Reduction (NEA Director Ken Buhrmann went to the microphone and spoke to this issue. He encouraged NEA to keep in mind class size reduction to benefit all grade levels not just elementary grades)
4. Rural Education
5. Economic Stimulus Package
6. Social Security
7. Educator Tax Relief
8. Health Care
9. Immigration
10. Hate Crimes
11. Employment non-discrimination

NEA will continue to monitor these and will provide updated information on any changes in the issues.

We were sent to Capitol Hill to meet with the members of our congressional delegation and to lobby them on the following questions:

1. Will the Member support increasing education funding for FY 09, including:
 - Increasing Title I funding by at least \$1 billion
 - Increasing the federal share of special education costs to 20 percent
 - Restoring funding for programs targeted for elimination and/or cuts in the president's budget request

Congressman Porter and Heller were supportive of these ideas but wanted to see how the break down occurred and the actual impact on the budget before they would truly commit to these issues. Congresswoman Berkley was very supportive of these issues. Senator Reid's office was also supportive and felt those were good spending priorities. Senator Ensign's office was cool to the idea and felt they were more likely to support the budget cuts.

2. Will the member support inclusion in any ESEA reauthorization of:
 - a. Grants to help schools and communities fund school repair, modernization, and construction?
 - b. A separate program to reduce class sizes, particularly in the early grades?

Again, Congressman Porter and Heller were supportive of these ideas but wanted to see final wording on the issues before they would be able to offer support. Congresswoman Berkley thought these issues were very important and was very

supportive of their inclusion in the reauthorization. Senator Reid also supported the issues but was a little more cautious. Senator Ensign was supportive but did want to see language before he could offer full support.

NEA Pacific Regional Caucus – (Thursday, February 7, 2008, at 4:00 p.m.)

This meeting of the Pacific Regional Caucus was held to make sure that all participants understood their roll in the upcoming Pacific Regional Conference. Time was also devoted to discuss the conference schedule and the speakers that would be present. Presidents were given the chance to present their state reports. They had a chance to discuss the issues that were being presented in their state and the impact they were having on education. The caucus time was cut short to allow members to prepare for the NIFE Gala scheduled for later that night.

**NEA Board of Directors' Meeting
February 8 & 9, 2008
NEA Building
Washington, DC**

Leadership Reports:

President: President Weaver discussed his activities with us since our last meeting. The first major item of discussion was the election and state caucuses and the results from Super Tuesday. Many organizations, members, and candidates have been watching and waiting to see what and who we endorse. Since there was no real clear cut winner from the results of Super Tuesday it was determined that NEA would not bring forth a candidate to recommend at this time. President Weaver's concern, as it should be our associations concern, is that education appears to have taken a back seat in this campaign. NEA is contemplating a couple of ideas to move and promote the education agenda. One is a press release to the candidates encouraging them to discuss the education issues that confront the people of this country. The second is a letter to former candidates Richardson and Edwards asking them to help push the current candidates to discuss more fully the education agenda they have for the students, parents, and teachers in this country. NEA is also considering an ad campaign that target both Democrats and Republicans addressing concerns over the candidate's stance on public education.

President Weaver has also discussed the issue with state presidents and has encouraged them to get more of our members seated at the local, state, and national conventions. Having more of our members seated as delegates will actually promote our education agenda with both Republicans and Democrats.

The NEA Fund for Children was also discussed and President Weaver encouraged all Board members to continue seeking PAC contributions from members back home. More importantly, he encouraged us to seek new members to contribute with payroll deduction. Funds from these contributions are used to keep us active and successful in the political

arena. He also went on to discuss phase two of the Tom Joyner project. The \$1.2 million in this program are used to help teachers pass the praxis test or other major certification test they must complete. All members of the Board of Directors were asked to contribute to the NEA HIN fundraiser by sending their used cell phones to them for recycling.

Vice-President: Vice President Van Roekel started his report by thanking members of the Board for their submission in the nominations for ESP of the Year Award. He also discussed the work of the Special Committee on Membership and the NEA-Retired Bylaws. Dennis went on to discuss the move from “NEA Tomorrow” to the transformation at the state level. This will be a 50 state strategy that has begun in Ohio. This is not a one size fits all model. Each state that chooses to participate must identify a model that would conform to its needs.

Secretary-Treasurer: Secretary-Treasurer Eskelsen discussed her activities with the Board since our last meeting. As always the Secretary-Treasurer remains concerned with our membership numbers.

- Active membership is up 32,289 members a 1.4% increase over last years’ numbers.
- Student membership is on track with last years numbers and we currently have 50,283 members.
- Retired membership continues to grow with 247,537 members which are up over 5,894 members since last year, a 2.4% increase.
- Giving NEA a total of 3,202,916 members, something we can all be very proud of.

Dues increase for the 2008-2009 year:

Based on an average salary of \$52,323, dues for certified members will be \$158.00. Based on an average salary for ESP’s of \$28,964, dues will be \$91.50. This is an increase of \$4.00 a year (or .34 a month) for certified members and \$2.40 a year (or .20 a month) for ESP members.

Dues increase for the 2009-2010 year (informational and subject to change)

Based on an average salary of \$53,645, dues for certified members will be \$162.00. Based on an average salary for ESP’s of \$29,400, dues will be \$92.50. This is an increase of \$4.00 a year (or .34 a month) for certified members and \$2.40 a year (or .20 a month) for ESP members.

Executive Director: Executive Director John Wilson asked members of the Board to recognize Mel Myler. Mr. Myler is the Director of Affiliate Learning and Effectiveness and he will be retiring in March. Congratulations to Mr. Myler who has spent over 40 years in association work. It was also reported that Ms. Jan Collins, Chief Information Officer, has left the NEA to go back to work in the private sector. This position will not

be replaced but instead a new position has been created, Chief Learning Officer. This position will be filled by Ms. Julie Garcia the current Director of Human Resources.

Deputy Executive Director: Deputy Executive Director John Stock spoke on the “Behind the Wall” program that NEA will be running during this election cycle. The purpose was to make sure all members of the Board understand what this kind of campaign is and why it is an effective weapon in our fight. This was done to explain one of the action items on the Board’s agenda.

General Counsel: Mr. Bob Chanin spoke with the Board regarding the Association’s victory with the ESEA/NCLB lawsuit. In November 2006, when the case was first heard, the argument that had been presented was focused very narrowly on the question of who should pay for the implementation of ESEA/NCLB, the federal, state, or local governments. The recent legal decision will give states and school districts a defense that without proper funding this law cannot be implemented. The US Department of Education has filed a petition to rehear the arguments by the full 6th Circuit Court. Mr. Chanin also presented some very important information about “pay check protection” legislation. Information was presented on current lawsuits pending against some of our state affiliates and the implications these suits have for the way we conduct business.

Executive Committee: All members of the Executive Committee presented a written copy of their activities since our last meeting.

Action Items

1. **BALLOT MEASURE/LEGISLATIVE CRISES FUND REQUEST**
(CEULSKI-CROWDER)

Recommend for the Board of Directors approval an allocation of \$4,694,000 from the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises Fund for use by the NEA “Behind the Wall” team to fund public communications regarding ballot measures.

Motion Carried- Voice Vote

2. **CONTINGENCY FUND REQUEST: COMMUNITIES FOR QUALITY EDUCATION** (SMITH-BILLIRAKIS)

Recommend for Board of Directors approval the allocation of \$600,000 from the Contingency Fund to allow continued efforts by Communities for Quality Education to strengthen and protect children and public education.

Motion Carried- Roll Call Vote 182 yes /0 no

3. **CONTINGENCY FUND REQUEST: CAMPAIGN BUDGET**
(BILLIRAKIS-MONROE)

Recommend for Board of Directors approval the allocation of \$500,000 from the Contingency Fund to supplement the campaign budget for member and Behind the Wall team efforts.

Motion Carried- Roll Call Vote 182 yes/ 0 no

4. **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS 8-6 AND 8-14**
(CROWDER-CEBULSKI)

Recommend for Board of Directors sponsorship the proposed amendments to Bylaws 8-6 and 8-14 to empower the delegates to the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, rather than the NEA Board of Directors, to amend the NEA-Retired Bylaws.

If approved, this amendment would be placed on the ballot for the 2008 NEA Representative Assembly.

Motion Carried- Voice Vote

5. **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO BYLAW 2-1(B)**
(CROWDER-CEBULSKI)

Recommend for Board of Directors sponsorship the proposed amendment to Bylaw 2-1(b)(i) to provide that NEA Active membership will be open to any person (added language underscored):

Who is employed by or in a public school district, private elementary or secondary school, public or private pre-school program, public or private college or university, or other public or private institution devoted primarily to education, regardless of the specific nature of the functions that the person performs at the work site and regardless of who actually employs the person.

If approved, this amendment would be placed on the ballot for the 2008 NEA Representative Assembly.

Motion Carried-Voice Vote

Information Items

1. Read Across America- NEA's Read Across America activities are scheduled to begin on March 3, 2008. Members of the Board were provided an update on activities scheduled by NEA to highlight this very special week. The Cat-A-Vans will once again be traveling again through the South delivering books to public schools.

2. Report of Survey on Member/Leader Attitudes Toward Health Care Reform- Bill Raabe, Director of Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy presented results of the survey completed on membership regarding their concerns with health care issues. The survey sampling was 2304 NEA members and was conducted December 3-17, 2007. The sampling was designed to be reflective of NEA membership.

Key Findings:

1. NEA members worried about health care in America.
2. Most members feel good about their own health care, but growing issue is cost concerns.
3. Two concerns trump others:
 - Health Security-knowing your coverage will always be there
 - Access to Good Care

This was an extensive survey that provides NEA and local affiliates with lots of valid information that can be used in the continued struggle for adequate member health care.

3. Campaign and Elections Update- **Education Votes** is this years theme for NEA's election program. Karen White, Director of Campaigns and Elections updated the Board on activities surrounding this program and the elections. There is much at stake for NEA and its members in this upcoming election.

Challenges that we face with the upcoming election:

- ESEA/NCLB Reauthorization
- Children's Healthcare
- Electing Pro-Public Education Leaders
- Education Funding
- Social Security Offset Reform
- Pension Reform
- Potential Supreme Court Appointments

As you can see, we have a great deal riding on these elections and we have to make a realistic effort to elect the right people that will help public education.

4. Professional Standards and Practice Committee- The Board received a report from the committee on current NEA Policy regarding pay systems, what NEA supports and opposes. A very informative report that can help locals develop strategies that can increase professional pay for members.
5. ESEA Advisory Committee Update- President Bush had presented his State of the Union address and his priorities for education. In his proposed budget the president is proposing approximately \$170 million cuts into ESEA funding. These

cuts will seriously impact the way we do business. Rumor and innuendo fuel many of the activities on Capitol Hill and the reauthorization of ESEA is no exception. It seems improbable that anything will be done with the reauthorization prior to the general election. Senator Kennedy and his staff are working on a mark up of the ESEA which is planned to be brought out in early March.

6. Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises Report- As of January 15, 2008, the NEA Ballot/Legislative provided \$3,307,353 in assistance to 5 state affiliates for ballot measure campaigns and legislative crises. The largest share of the disbursement was \$2,838,353, which went to Utah's campaign to rescind private school vouchers. The NEA Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises Fund began the 2007-08 year with \$13,677,461 and the current balance is \$10,347,004.
7. Interim Report on Implementation of the 2007 New Business Items- The Board of Directors received a report from NEA on the status of the implementation of New Business Items from the Representative Assembly.

Special Events

Board members were able to participate in the Women's History Observance on Friday afternoon. Tia Sciguilinsky, chair of the Women's Issues Caucus led the observation and introduced us to the afternoon speaker, Sarah Albert. Ms. Albert is co-chair of the working group on the ratification of the U.N. CEDAW (Convention for Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women).

Saturday afternoon Board members had the opportunity to participate in the Black History Month Observance. Charles Smith, chair of NEA's Black Caucus, moderated the event. It was a wonderful event filled with music, poetry, and songs. The speaker for this event was Dr. Alvin Thornton, provost at Howard University.

NEA Directors' Additional Activities:

- February 13-15, 2008- NEA Directors' Buhrmann and Wellman attended the NEA Minority Leadership Training Seminar in Boise, Idaho.
- February 15-17, 2008- NEA Directors' Buhrmann and Wellman attended the NEA Pacific Regional Conference in Boise, Idaho.