

**NEA Board of Directors' Report**  
**September 27, 28 & 29, 2007**  
**Washington, DC**  
**Tom Wellman and Ken Buhrmann**

**NSEA/NEA Legislative Lobbying on Capitol Hill – (Thursday, September 27, 2007)**

Nevada's NEA Directors returned to Washington, DC on Wednesday, September 26, 2007, in order to attend a legislative briefing scheduled for the next day. In the legislative process there are always many issues that face and confront NEA, state, and local affiliates. During this time frame one of the central issues of concern was the reauthorization of ESEA (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act). The first draft of the reauthorization had been released by the House and was a 1000 plus pages and included a very short timeframe for comments. The Committee hearing was held on September 10, 2007, and President Reg Weaver testified. Congressman Miller, chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, was moving fast. At the time of our briefing no date for "mark-up" of the bill had been announced. NEA had multiple concerns with this first draft and was concerned that our "friends" in congress were not even listening to our feedback to improve ESEA. The issues NEA expressed their concerns with in the reauthorization of ESEA are listed below:

1. Continues to measure school success overwhelmingly on two standardized tests
2. Fails to take into account the unique needs of ELL students and students with disabilities
3. Contains pay for test scores – linking standardized test scores to teacher pay
4. Ignores class size reduction, access to quality early childhood education, and adequate resources
5. Eliminates High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation
6. Imposes many new mandates with guarantee of additional funding.

The following issues were also addressed during our legislative briefing:

1. Children's Health care – NEA supported bill to expand/reauthorize SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program)
2. Education Funding
3. High Education: College Affordability- NEA supported College Cost Reduction Act (which has now been signed into law by President Bush). One of the most comprehensive reforms in over fifty plus years.
4. Higher Education Reauthorization
5. Higher Education: Dream Act – NEA supported bill which would allow states to offer in-state tuition to talented students with undocumented immigration status.
6. Employment Non-Discrimination
7. Rural Education

## 8. Educator Tax Relief

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

**1. Will the member oppose inclusion in any ESEA reauthorization bill of pay-for-test score programs that mandate teacher pay based on student performance?**

NEA strongly opposes this concept and its inclusion in the reauthorization. They feel this is an issue for local bargaining and control. Congressmen Heller, Porter, and Congresswoman Berkley's staff felt they could support this issue with local bargaining and control. Senator Reid's staff was also supportive of this issue. An interesting comment came out of Senator Ensign's office from his staff stating that this issue was pretty much a non-issue as this draft would never come to a vote as appropriations bills had to be passed first in order to keep the government running.

**2. Will the member support ensuring that single statewide standardized assessments in reading and math are not the primary measures of school quality and student learning in the ESEA reauthorization?**

NEA strongly opposes this concept to be included in the reauthorization. They feel that states should be able to utilize multiple measures to assess growth in meeting AYP. This was supported by all members of our congressional delegation.

**3. Will the member support the inclusion of a separate class size reduction program in the ESEA reauthorization?**

NEA strongly supports this concept and its inclusion in the reauthorization. This was supported by all members of our congressional delegation.

**4. Is the member a cosponsor of the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R.82/S.206), which would repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision?**

NEA strongly opposes these acts and has targeted these acts for an aggressive lobby effort. All members of our Congressional delegation are co-sponsors of H.R. 82 and support its full repeal. Although Senator Reid is not a co-sponsor of S.206, because of his leadership position, he does support the repeal. All members cautioned that this was a big ticket item and our members should not expect the full repeal in the very near future as this would take time to negotiate. Senator Ensign's position is that this is double dipping and he still does not support this legislation.

Congresswoman Berkley's office shared with us a letter that was sent to US Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spelling on behalf of the Nevada delegation expressing disappointment in the decision to reduce Nevada's 2007 Title III allocation by over two million dollars. Money from the Title III program is used to help ensure that English Language Learners (ELL) and recent immigrant students attain proficiency in English. This cut will result in a significant reduction to Nevada's per-pupil ELL funding from \$85 per student last school year to \$73 per student. We appreciate these efforts on behalf of students, parents, and teachers impacted by these cuts.

### **NEA Pacific Regional Caucus – (Thursday, September 27, 2007)**

The Pacific Regional Caucus was held on Thursday, September 27, 2007, in room 814 of the NEA Building. Presidents from the Pacific Region presented their reports on issues of concern for their state. Many of the reports revolved around concerns with the reauthorization of ESEA and how this would impact state and local affiliates. Presidents also presented information on legislative concerns regarding possible upcoming ballot initiatives. This was a very informative meeting. It's always good to know that other states face many of the same issues as we do.

### **NEA Board of Directors' Meeting September 28 & 29, 2007 NEA Building Washington, DC**

**President:** President Weaver discussed his activities with us since our last meeting. As can be expected, many of his activities were directly related to the association's work on the reauthorization of ESEA and the recently released draft for reauthorization. He went on to explain efforts to oppose Congressman Miller's proposed changes to ESEA. President Weaver was actually very pleased with NEA's lobby efforts after the draft was released, bringing in 72 members from around the country to talk with their freshmen members that sit on the House Committee on Education and Labor. The proposed changes in this draft of the reauthorization of ESEA are just not acceptable and make the act even more cumbersome for students, parents, and educators. He spoke briefly about NEA's efforts on behalf of the Jena Six. The Board was also informed that the PAC Fund Council had voted to give him the flexibility not to make recommendations of presidential candidates at this time.

**Vice-President:** Vice-President Van Roekel brought us up-to-date on his activities and work since our last meeting. He continues to work with the Associate membership category since a Bylaw Amendment was introduced for a vote at the next RA. He went on to talk about discussions with the AFT and our Jurisdictional Agreement, which was extended until July, 2009. Both sides have agreed to a Charter School Organizing Protocol which basically says that if a charter school opens in an NEA local affiliate, that affiliate will attempt to organize the charter school employees. Board members were

encouraged to nominate deserving ESP members for the NEA ESP of the Year Award. He went on to detail three emerging issues that will be addressed in the coming months: NEA-Retired Bylaws revision, NEA membership eligibility, and dues structure.

**Secretary – Treasurer:** Secretary – Treasurer Eskelsen talked about her activities since our last meeting. Her PowerPoint centered on the recommended core services for NEA. They are as follows: learning conditions and working conditions, affiliate programs and services, communication, leadership and governance, and business operations. The budget committee also recommended strategic goals: authentic accountability systems, ethnic-minority outreach, salary initiative, political action, and TEF (Tax, Economic Development and School Funding). Membership in the organization continues to grow. We have grown by 1.8%, or an additional 49,388 members. NEA now has 3,167,763 members.

**Executive Director:** Executive Director Wilson reported on his work with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and the transformation of schools. He explained that schools will have to transform and change in an effort to keep students competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are a number of state affiliates and education agencies currently working with the NEA to promote this transformation and change. He went on to talk about what NEA is currently doing in this area of working conditions. Plans are in the works for a summit on the issue of staffing high poverty schools with highly qualified teachers. In conclusion, he went on to talk about the two latest awards that the NEA had received from the Public Relations Society of America for the 2006 National Teacher of the Year Program and their efforts with the Gulf Coast Read Across America program. “Keep up the GOOD WORK! You make us proud.”

**General Counsel:** Mr. Chanin, general counsel for the NEA, briefed the Board on the Jenna Six and the situation in Louisiana. It was decided by the NEA Executive Committee that NEA would focus their efforts in three major areas of concern in an attempt to assist the state and local affiliate. The areas of concern are legal representation; the education of the accused students; and the need to assist the community with the healing process. There is a great deal of divisiveness within the community as a result of this case. In a neutral role, NEA has been asked to assist within the school and the community. Meetings were scheduled with the state association and the local affiliate in an effort to develop a plan and get all segments of the community together in order to let the healing move forward.

**Executive Committee:** Members of the Executive Committee provided all members of the Board of Directors’ a written report detailing their activities since our last meeting.

## **Action Items**

### **1. CONTINGENT ACADEMIC WORKER ACTION PLAN AND TACTICS (BILLIRAKIS - CROWDER)**

**Recommend** for Board of Directors' approval the allocation of \$100,000 from the contingency fund to implement the plan.

Motion Carried: Roll call 183 yes / 0 no

**II. 2008 – 2010 CORE SERVICES AND STRATEGIC GOALS SUMMARY**  
**(ESKELSEN – LEVINGS)**

**Recommend** for Board of Directors' approval the framework for the Core Services and Strategic Goals Summary.

Motion Carried: Voice Vote

**III. CONTINGENCY REQUEST: MISSOURI NEA COLLECTIVE**  
**BARGAINING CAMPAIGN**  
**(BILLIRAKIS – CEBULSKI)**

**Recommend** for the Board of Directors' approval an allocation of up to \$335,480 from the contingency fund for assistance to help Missouri NEA with it collective bargaining campaign.

Motion Carried: Roll call 183 yes / 0 no

**IV.** Established an audit committee and approved the appointment of Dennis VanRoekel, NEA Vice-President, Lily Eskelsen, NEA Secretary/Treasurer, Mike Billirakis, NEA Executive Committee, Phyllis Parks-Robinson, retired Maryland and Loretta Doon, former CFO from California Teacher Association.

Motion Carried: Voice Vote

**V.** Elected Maureen Honan (CT) to the NEA Member Benefits Corporation Board of Directors.

**VI.** Elected Carole Bailey (CA), Marlys Pearson (SD) and David Theisen (WA) to the Program and Budget Committee.

**VII.** Approved the President's recommended appointments to the Standing Committees of the NEA.

Motion Carried: Voice Vote

**VIII.** Approved a motion to direct staff to compile a summary and analysis of NEA's policies relating to the association's position on the issues of pay-for-performance.

**Information Items**

1. Legislative Update – Randy Moody, NEA Government Relations, gave the update and talked about the continuing work on the reauthorization of ESEA and their work to get Congress to override the promised veto of the SCHIP (children’s health care).
2. Utah Ballot Initiative Update – Karen White, NEA Campaign and Elections, gave a comprehensive report on the efforts to defeat the ballot initiative in Utah. The Board got the chance to view a number of the television clips that were being utilized in this battle.
3. ESEA Update – Becky Pringle, Chair of ESEA Advisory Committee. Becky gave her report on the activities of the committee since our last meeting. She explained there were a number of problems with the House draft for reauthorization. The primary problem is Congressmen Miller’s pay for performance relating to test scores. This stands in direct opposition to our policies that oppose the use of test scores to pay teachers and undermines our stand on collective bargaining.
4. Education International World Congress – The NEA funded participants to the Congress gave a report of their travels to Berlin, Germany. They came away with a whole new understanding and appreciation for the challenges our colleagues face on a daily basis in just trying to do their job.

## **Board Training**

Board members participated in a two hour training on Saturday morning that centered on the culture of organizing. This helpful and enlightening training provided Board members the chance to evaluate why we organize and how we can best assist our members.

## **Speakers and Observances**

Members of the Board participated in a Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender observance on Friday, September 28, 2007, and had the opportunity to hear from author John Amaeche. Mr. Amaeche, a former NBA player, is the author of Man in the Middle and the first professional basket ball player to “come out” publicly.

Members of the Board participated in an American Indian/Alaskan Native Observance. Mr. Keith Moore, Director of Indian Education, a division of the state department of education in South Dakota, talked about the American Indian Education Act which was established by the South Dakota Legislature in 2005.

During the meeting, Board members also had the chance to hear from Paul Orfalea, founder of Kinkos and author of Copy This. He voiced his very strong objection and concerns to No Child Left Behind because of the act’s strong reliance on testing. Linda Pearlstein, author of Tested, spoke of her experiences as an elementary teacher and the impact of No Child Left Behind on students in the classroom.

The next meeting of the NEA Board of Directors is scheduled for December 7 and 8, 2007 at NEA Headquarters in Washington, DC.

### **NEA Director's Additional Activities**

1. October 6, 2007 – NEA Director and WEA President Ken Buhrmann provided welcoming remarks at the California Teachers Association Region 2 – “Fall Leadership Conference.”
2. October 10, 2007 – NEA Director, Ken Buhrmann and NSEA State President, Lynn Warne met with US Senator Harry Reid and NSEA/NEA staff regarding the reauthorization of ESEA and the ways that Senator Reid could help us in this process.
3. October 15, 2007- Both NEA Directors attended the NSEA Leadership Team meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada.
4. November 3, 2007 – Both NEA Directors, Ken Buhrmann and Tom Wellman, attended the UCN meeting in Fallon, Nevada.
5. November 6, 2007 – Both NEA Directors, Ken Buhrmann and Tom Wellman, were able to attend the first hearing on the repeal of GPO/WEP, chaired by US Senator John Kerry, D-Massachusetts, in Washington D.C.