The Hard Questions

Responding to the Reasons that Non-Members Give for Not Joining the Association

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It costs too much!
If you needed an attorney to defend you against false charges, how would you pay it?
Have you ever thought of how much you’ve gained in salary over the years?

It’s like insurance. You don’t know when you are going to need help.

Think of it as $15 a pay — or less than $1 a day!

You can’t even buy a large soda for that!

Your dues are tax-deductible if you file a long form.

You are investing in the gains that you can make through a strong Association.

List the benefits: lobbying, monitoring, contracts, legal support, group discounts, respect.

Everybody is in the same boat. Some of us make it a priority.

Dues-TAB provides life insurance in the amount of your NEA dues for continuous membership.

What if you lost your job! Think of what THAT would cost you.

How can you afford not to?
It costs money to represent employees.

It's not free. Your co-workers are paying the tab for you!

You don't have a say in how the Association is run if you aren't a member.

Without a strong membership base, we can't win all we want for you and others.

The Association is a strong voice for schools and school employees. We need you to be stronger.

The Association only represents members on non-contract matters.

With more members, we could have more support.

Dues support the benefits you get like Association programs and professional development.

If you're not a member, there are lots of benefits you DON'T get.

If something happened, it would be too late to join.

You can't vote on Association leaders or on the contract.

Many of us feel bad about supporting those of you who won't make a commitment to your profession.

There's a lot we ALL don't get because we don't stick together.

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There's a lot we ALL don't get because we don't stick together.
Some of our positions are distorted by the press. Find out the truth.

Public education is at stake. We are its strongest supporters.

Some abstract positions don't affect us day to day, but think of the advantages of being a member.

Association policies are determined at our Representative Assemblies.

Join — and run to be a delegate to the next Representative Assembly.

What if taxpayers refused to pay for schools because they don't have kids!

You're supporting services you get, just like you pay taxes for fire and police protection.

I don't agree with everything the government does. But I support my country!

I don't agree with them.

Few people agree 100% with ANY organization they belong to.

We're a representative organization. You have a voice and vote in activities and policies.

If you don't agree, get active to change things.

The voice of one or a few people can change things. Get involved and make a difference.

If you've got a specific question, call our staff person and talk to him or her.

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If you've got a specific question, call our staff person and talk to him or her.
One individual can’t make as much difference as we can together.

Let me tell you how things work in the Association.

Do you think we would have made the progress we’ve made if we didn’t work together on it?

What do you think of when you say “union”?

The dictionary defines union as “joining together for a common cause.”

What would happen if there were no union to monitor what goes on?

We are your exclusive representative. We are your voice. We work on professional development, child protection, discipline, certification, discipline, collective bargaining, and more. The school board has its organization.

Even the superintendent belongs to this association.

I don’t like unions.

What about it? Tell me your experience with unions. Have you had a bad experience with a union?

Do you think we would have made the progress we’ve made if we didn’t work together on it?

What would happen if there were no union to monitor what goes on?

There are a lot of issues—like health care and wages—and where the union stands is your voice.

What do you think of when you say “union”?

Say “union” again.

I don’t like unions.
We're not just about dollars. We're working to make the schools better. That's an ongoing job. Fighting to defend the contract goes on all the time. We've got a heck of a fight in the legislature to get more school funding. The Board & County Commissioners see our membership numbers as a sign of our strength or weakness. What happens in the next county affects us. We need to show our support.

Between contracts is when a lot of the work on health care, etc. takes place. We're still fighting unfair and arbitrary decisions that affect everybody.

It costs money for staff and arbitrations to keep the contract in force. We've got to keep up our office and staff so we're ready & strong. We've got a heck of a fight in the legislature to get more school funding.

Winning a good contract isn't just something we do for several months every three years. We've got to fight to fund our salary increases EVERY YEAR.

What about research, professional development, pension improvement. We don't need it this year. We're not bargaining.

We've got to fight to fund our salary increases EVERY YEAR. Fighting to defend the contract goes on all the time.
I realize you both read the publications. But the amount of your dues that go for publications is minimal.

You weren't hired as a couple. Each must stand on his or her own.

You're both important members of our unit. We need you both!

If you are treated unfairly outside the contract, you won't have the right to representation.

Only one of you has liability insurance? What happens if you have a problem?

You both get the salary gains and fringe benefits.

Most of your dues pay for direct staff services to you as a member.

How many salaries do you get?

My husband belongs, so I don't need to.

I'm surprised to hear you say that. Women are just as important as men and need equal protection.

Each one of you has different needs and concerns, because your jobs are different.
We fought to improve your pension 2 years ago and now we need to take on the issues again this year.

The Association is your voice on all the issues that affect your retirement.

Your retirement will be based on your last three years' salaries. We need your support for maximum gains.

The future is never certain. You may choose to stay on. Then the investment would be small.

All the more reason to be involved in the effort to improve your pension.

You're not the kind of person that lets someone else pull the weight for you.

NEA has terrific benefits, like long-term care insurance, for retired members.

We monitor the State Retirement and Pension System.

It's even more important now, since your future depends on how these last years go.

For now, join the group. Be a part of making us stronger. You won't regret it.

I'm getting ready to retire.

You've already got so much invested. Don't jeopardize it now.

The future is never certain. You may choose to stay on.
"New Unionism" means we're not just being adversarial.

Our NEA dues go primarily to provide staff to our local.

NEA & MSTA provides professional development, bargaining assistance, research and legal programs to you, through our local.

Through its democratic process, the Association is taking new directions.

We're working at all levels to improve schools and the image of public education.

What if you or a colleague had a problem and we didn't have the resources to fight it?

Most of our local programs wouldn't exist without support from MSTA & NEA.

Precedents set across the state affect us all. Our state Association protects us.

Only the tip of the iceberg shows here at the local.

If you're concerned I'd like to share a copy of the budget with you.

You're represented at all levels by delegates you elect.

I'll join the local, but not NCAE & NEA.

I can't agree with you....

...but you have a right to your opinion. I won't argue.
It was really rough and made gains lately. But I know what's happening now. Many people who share your feelings are active members now. That's history.

What do we need to do now?

I like to think positive. Just look at what we've accomplished since then.

Nothing can change the past. But we can work together to make the future better.

We've elected a whole new group of leaders since then.

Many people who share your feelings are active members now.

I understand and respect your feelings.

Even if that's true, what can we do to insure better results next time?

It might not have been so good in the past. What are you willing to do to change things?

Nothing can change the past. But we can work together to make the future better.

I know it. A lot of people feel that way.

I'm still mad about what happened '89.

I don't know much about what happened then ...

... But I know what's happening now.
The Association supports both Democrats and Republicans.

Candidates can only be supported with voluntary contributions from members.

Education takes place in a political arena.

Our decision is: will we affect those decisions or not?

What do you mean by "politics."

Every decision about each brick, book and employee in schools is political.

Members make the decisions about which candidates and legislation to support.

Political funds must be kept strictly separate from dues.

Dues money CAN NOT be used to support candidates!

What exactly do you mean when you say "stay out" of politics?

Wonder why we did or didn't support someone you like? Let's look at their record on education.

We focus on issues that affect education, education employees and students.

They should stay out of politics.

The people deciding about our lives were elected — or appointed by someone who was.
I don't like the guy who's president.

Could you suggest a better leader?

Get involved and give us a chance.

Is there something we're not doing that we should do?

We all have equal access to decision-making.

How well do you know the current leader? Let's get together and talk to him/her.

All our elected leaders are volunteers.

Majority rule — one person, one vote — is the rule in the Association.

All our leaders are elected by open nominations and secret ballot elections.

Do you think things could be run more fairly than it is now?

What is it that concerns you?

What should we do about it now?

What should we stop doing that we're doing now?

We need people with your views to be a part of things.
Check out: Read Across American, scholarships, professional library, anti-bullying, safe school programs, publications.

Would you like to get involved in a project like that?

We're the strongest voice in the state for the funding our schools need to serve kids.

Our first priority does have to be to serve our members. But we want to do more.

With more active members, we could take on more projects.

Association members are a vital part of PTA's and PTO's.

The Association and its members work closely with parents to address student needs.

Our professional development aims to help kids by improving schools.

NEA puts $1 of every member's dues aside to keep kids from dropping out.

Have you read NEA Today or the MSTA ActionLine recently?

The Association works collaboratively with Board of Ed and community on student issues.

We provide protection for you so you can do your best with students—without worry.

They don't care about kids.

What do you think we should be doing?

Would you like to get involved in a project like that?

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"Homework"

Write your own responses to the "reluctant joiners" on the next six pages.
You're okay, but I don't like the other guys.
I'm Republican & they're Democrats.
They're so negative! Always fighting.
I have 6 kids. I can't afford it.
They're not a REAL union anyway.
I'm going to work for UPS next year.