

Human and Civil Rights Award Winner

◆ Missouri National Education Association ◆

Rosena J. Willis Memorial Award (State Affiliate)



An organization whose values are centered in democracy, professionalism, partnerships, collective action and advocacy, fairness, a just society, equity, dignity and respect for all, the Missouri National Education Association's mission is "To serve as the united voice to promote, advance and protect public education and to advocate for the rights and interests of students and our members."

Using these principles as a foundation, the Missouri NEA Board revisited the Associations' belief statements and legislative platform to find ways to align their mission and core beliefs into actions. The board began to create policies focused on racial justice and eliminating educational disparities that have historically placed people of color at a disadvantage in the educational system.

Starting in 2016 and continuing to the present-day, Missouri NEA's Legislative Resolution committee conducts a comprehensive review to identify policies in Missouri NEA's platform that prop up institutional racism and re-writes or eliminates the resolutions or legislative planks. Consistently striving to meet and exceed their 3-1(g) policy Bylaw, a universal governing policy to increase racially diverse leadership within the Association, Missouri NEA celebrates the involvement of members and communities of color at their Fall and Spring Representative Assemblies (RA). Members of color are recognized at the Fall RA luncheon for their involvement at the national and state levels. In addition, ethnic minority membership goals for 2018-2019 Board of Directors and PAC Executive Council were met.

The Association, through their growing Educators Rising Program, encourages high school students of color to consider education as their profession. With a focus on future diversity within the state's educational system, the program assists students through support and scholarship. Additionally, the Gilbert Balderrama Minority Scholarship was established for high school seniors of color in Missouri public schools accepted to a college or university pursuing a college degree.

The organization has successfully involved more minority members in the work and leadership of the Association with 29.79% of membership comprised of people of color. The 33,000 members of the Missouri National Education Association are public school teachers, librarians, counselors, coaches, school psychologists and psychiatrists, administrators and faculty in colleges and universities. Membership includes the backbone of every successful educational system: it's bus drivers, custodians, teacher aides and paraprofessionals, nurses, school secretaries, and food service workers.

Through various programmatic and legislative actions at both the local and national level, the Missouri National Education Association maintains their vision to "To keep the promise of quality public education through a great public school for every child."