Amplifying Our Voice: Leading Boldly for Our Students, Our Professions, and Our Union

Monitoring the Association’s Strategic Budget to Assess the Association’s Strategic Plan

Gregory Brennick, NEA Rhode Island Business Manager
COMPETENCY: STRATEGY AND FISCAL HEALTH

• NEA Leadership Competency progression level:
  • Level 3: Agenda Driving

• NEA Leadership Competency theme:
  • Understands the interdependency of strategic planning, budget development, and business policy
NEA Strategic Goal and NEA Organizational Priority:

• NEA Strategic Goal
  • Building the capacity of the local, state and national union to ensure the success of public education

• NEA Organizational Priorities
  • Supporting Professional Excellence
What is a strategic budget?
A Strategic Budget is....

....The budget for a strategic plan!
Monitoring strategic budgets

• Should be done at every stage of the strategic plan

• Monitoring your budget solves the biggest problem of most strategic plans – that they are never implemented!
  • Most organizations already have periodic budget reviews
  • Reviewing plan performance breeds accountability
Strategic Plan and Budget Continuous Process, Not Just a Product
The Stages of a Strategic Plan

• Mission statement
• SWOT analysis
  • Strengths
  • Weaknesses
  • Opportunities
  • Threats
• Strategies and tactics
• Action plan
• Budget and operating plans
NEA as a Mission Driven Organization

The National Education Association
Vision, Mission, and Values
Adopted at the 2006 NEA Representative Assembly

Lily Eskelsen Garcia  Rebecca S. Priingle  Princeto R. Moses  John C. Stocks
President  Vice President  Secretary-Treasurer  Executive Director

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

We, the members of the National Education Association of the United States, are the voice of education professionals. Our work is fundamental to the nation, and we accept the profound trust placed in us.

OUR VISION
Our vision is a great public school for every student.

OUR MISSION
Our mission is to advocate for education professionals and to unite our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interconnected world.

OUR CORE VALUES
These principles guide our work and define our mission:

Equal Opportunity. We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.

A Just Society. We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

Democracy. We believe public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.

Professionals. We believe that the expertise and judgment of education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.

Partnership. We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.

Collective Action. We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.
What does a mission statement have to do with a budget?
What does a mission statement have to do with my budget?

• What are the levels of effort towards achieving the core values?

• Expenditures can be an indication of the association’s priorities
Total Budget Comparisons By Line Item
What does a mission statement have to do with my budget? (cont.)

• If the association’s priorities are perceived as equal – are the levels of funding equal?
• Funding does not need to be equal but should be able to explain why
• May need to allocate salaries and related expenses
• What is more important to the stakeholders – the level of funding or the relative priorities of the goals?
SWOT Analysis and the Budget

• Delve deeper into the strengths and weaknesses
  • Is there a way to quantify strengths and weaknesses?

• Strengths
  • Why were these strengths identified as strengths?
  • What data would support validating strengths?

• Weaknesses
  • Why were these weaknesses identified as weaknesses?
  • What data could assist in identifying areas of improvement?
SWOT Analysis and the Budget (cont.)

• Opportunities – Put your money where your mouth is!

• Threats
Strategies and Tactics

• Funding of individual tactics and specific line items

• Tactics form the “action plan”
NEA Strategic Objectives

**Strategic Objectives**

To grow and strengthen our union, we will organize our members around issues that impact teaching and learning and the lives of our students. In partnership with our affiliates, NEA will:

*Increase Educator Voice, Influence, and Professional Authority:* Develop and sustain effective structures, processes, and leaders to increase educator influence in decision-making at worksite, district, state, and national levels.

*Recruit and Engage New and Early Career Educators:* Identify, recruit, support, and engage new educators in our Association, and connect them with opportunities for professional learning, leadership, and advocacy.

*Advance Racial Justice in Education:* Support members in advancing racial justice in education and improving conditions for students, families, and communities through awareness, capacity-building, partnership, and individual and collective action.

*Provide Professional Supports:* Build a system of Association-convened, educator-led professional learning and supports for all educators across their career continua to ensure student success.

*Secure the Environment to Advance the Mission of the NEA and its Affiliates:* Use all available means, including organizing, legal, legislative, electoral, and collective action, to secure the environment necessary to protect the rights of students and educators, and the future of public education.

*Enhance Organizational Capacity:* Develop and leverage the collective organizational capacity across our Association that is necessary to advance the mission of the NEA and its affiliates, with particular focus on organizing, technology, fiscal health, leadership development, and internal and external partnerships.
Action Plans

• The more exact the plan, the more accurate the budget can be
  • Makes it easier to monitor expenses

• Expenditures were budgeted for a specific reason
  • Every expenditure is tied to a tactic
Action Plans (cont.)

• Specificity is key!

• Just as specificity is key in defining success, it will also help define failure!
  • Success and failure is often a grey area to define
  • If your target is 80% membership saturation in district [X], is 75% a failure?
## NEA Strategic Objectives, Categories, Tactics and Activities

### S1: Increase Educator Voice, Influence, and Professional Authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Voice and Influence</th>
<th>2018-2019</th>
<th>2019-2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Increase member capacity as messengers, leaders, and activists to demonstrate voice at their schools or workplaces to advance opportunity on behalf of students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Build digital and other communication tools to mobilize and empower local member leaders, help them grow their knowledge and seize opportunities made available via Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in order to improve the quality of practice, build capacity and lead on building a cycle of student success driven by members strengthening their voice—further demonstrating the value of membership.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Build usable, easily understood engagement tools for members in a variety of roles in their workplaces, and support their efforts to successfully build on the narrative of value of their membership with potential members and early career educators.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify and recruit professional practice leaders to be trained as local My School, My Voice organizers who incorporate membership growth and local capacity building into their organizing plans.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase knowledge, engagement, and understanding of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by community members, NEA members, and leaders to grow, strengthen member voice at the local and state affiliate level to lead influence and impact policy and practice and improve equity and opportunity for students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintain, update, and disseminate tools used to track collective-bargaining developments and assist local affiliates achieve strong bargaining and local advocacy goals. Assist affiliates with bargaining strategy, provide technical assistance and training on bargaining and advocacy approaches to selected public policy, legislative, and contract issues, including advocating in a new environment without agency fee.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mobilize educators, parents, and community leaders to support school board policies around the Great Public Schools indicators and Community Schools Pillars in a campaign that includes both membership growth and local capacity building.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Partner with affiliates to support and recognize member leaders’ varied roles along a continuum of actions (planned and organic) designed to use the leverage points of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to influence decision making to close access and equity gaps.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide and lead student-centered opportunity message training to explicitly control the narrative, demonstrate union value, improve equity, policy learning, teaching, and practice provided for disciplined messenger voice for messages, affiliates, ESP members, surrogates, families, and communities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recruit and train educators to run for local office and school boards to influence and create educator and student friendly policy and legislation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Action Plans (cont.)

• Important to define the actual point at which the next tactic becomes impossible

• Example: The tactic requires $30,000 for the next phase
  • How many members are required before the tactic will not have resources available to support it?
    • Are there metrics tied to the goals?
    • Why were the metrics chosen?
    • Do the chosen metrics assist in evaluating the success or failure of the tactic?
Continuous monitoring

• Elements of the strategic budget are interdependent
  • The strategic budget is comprised of inputs and outputs

• The strategic budget needs to be reviewed more than once

• How frequently do you monitor your budget?
How frequently do you monitor your budget?
Monitoring the Budget

- Actual vs. budget
- Actual vs. projections
- Variances – Why?
  - One time expenses
  - Imprecise assumptions used when creating budget or projections
  - Seasonality
How do you currently monitor your budget?
Monitoring the Strategic Budget and Monitoring the Association’s Goals

• The easiest way to monitor the budget is by monitoring spending

• Three outcomes for the budget
  • Spending is lower than was expected
  • Spending is higher than expected
  • Spending is as budgeted
Monitoring the Strategic Budget and Monitoring the Association’s Goals (cont.)

• Why is the spending where it is?

• Are the goals financial?
Monitoring the Strategic Budget and Monitoring the Association’s Goals (cont.)

Consider the following:

Every tactic has only one way to succeed, but a bunch of different ways to fail
Monitoring the Association’s Goals

• Need to reevaluate because there are not enough backup plans to account for the potential failures (doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try, though)

• Not only does the “what failed” impact the actions taken down the line, but “why it failed” may require a reevaluation of things from further up the plan
  • Which metrics are falling short?
  • Is the goal still achievable?
Timing, Tactics, and Action Plans

• How much does timing play into the action plan?
• What will having to do a tactic longer mean for the timing?
• Is the outcome time sensitive?
• Are any of the other tactics in the action plan?

• To some extent people’s time is already committed. If a key portion of an action plan is delayed, will that mean that a person is doing two jobs at once?
Goal Achievement

• What is additionally needed in order to achieve the goal?
  • Will more money make a difference?

  • Is the strategy wrong?

  • Was it not actually an opportunity?

• Are the metrics correct?
Financial Metrics and “Non-financial” Metrics

• Some metrics that are thought of as “non-financial” or “kind of financial” have financial implications:
  • Membership
  • Dues rate

• Some financial measures have some “non-financial” variables:
  • Revenue – function of membership and dues rate
  • Expenses – usually dependent on revenue, which is dependent on membership, dues rate, etc.
Financial Metrics and “Non-financial” Metrics (cont.)

Tying the budget to the goals involves finding ways to evaluate non-financial metrics by using financial metrics

• Return on investment (ROI)
  • How much does the target metric move based on the money being spent?
    • Is that relationship linear?
    • Is it roughly a demand curve?
    • Does the target metric move up until a certain point and then not move again?
    • What are the constraints or “pinch points”? (only so many staffing hours available, difficult to organize for more than one campaign, etc.)
What are some of the non-financial metrics you use to measure your goals?
Data – What Can You Use?

• Membership system information
  • Who is where?
  • Who is in what building?
  • Is the entire local leadership from the same building?

• Activist scoring – catalyst
  • How do people feel about unions?
  • How do they feel about what we do?
Financial Metrics and “Non-financial” Metrics (cont.)

• What can be used to let people know what we are doing?
  • VAN – New Educator Initiative
  • “One-on-ones”
  • Survey about issues important to the member
  • Other surveys
  • “Click through rates” on e-mails and articles that have run

• Other data?
  • Membership percentage
  • Any ideas for engagement?
Align the Goals with the Data

• What kind of goals are they?
  • Engagement or specific goal?
  • Total membership numbers?
Align the Goals with the Data (cont.)

What kinds of data can be used to measure either engagement or specific goals?

• Engagement/union support (i.e. the local needs a lot of help, horrible school committee, bad contracts, low engagement)
  • Surveys
  • “One-on-one” conversations
  • Click throughs
  • Catalyst scoring
  • Votes on the last contract - Was it unpopular? Did it narrowly win after several votes?
Align the Goals with the Data (cont.)

• Doing the goal for greater numbers
  • Bargaining unit lists – membership systems
  • Catalyst scoring for those that can be identified
  • Percentage of members of the bargaining unit that joined
Strategic Budgets and Goals

What can the new strategic budget and goal metrics tell us:

• Overspending
  • Was the goal achieved?
  • Overshoot the goal?
  • Is there still more to come?

• Underspending
  • Did we not need as much as was budgeted for?
  • Has the goal not yet been realized?
  • Is the opportunity still an opportunity?
Strategic Budgets and Goals (cont.)

What can the new strategic budget and goal metrics tell us:

• On budget, but is it still on track to reach the performance levels?

• Not on track for the goals – should resources be allocated differently?

• On track to over-perform the goals
  • Should resources be reallocated?
  • Should the goals be over-performed?
QUESTIONS
Contact Information

Gregory Brennick
Business Manager
NEA Rhode Island
GBrennick@neari.org
Session Outcomes

The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:

• To understand how to review actual to budget financial results

• To assess whether strategic plans and need to be modified
Closing

• Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session by using the NEA Summit Mobile App!

• Please visit the Leadership Development Resources website at www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment