Tomorrow’s Teachers

An Annual Magazine for NEA Student Members
2011 EDITION

Real Connections

Successful new teachers use everything they’ve learned in the classroom—and in the rest of life—to help all students achieve.

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The NEA Student Program Core Values

**Teacher Quality** encompasses pre-professional development and job preparation. Our members’ involvement in the NEA Student Program increases their ability to become quality teachers.

**Community Outreach** describes how NEA Student Program members engage the people and environment around them; we impact our communities—locally and globally—and value the meaningfulness of such involvement.

**Political Action** includes both the realization that political and legislative issues impact the education world and the initiative to get involved.
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**Contributing Writers**
Mary Ellen Flannery
Cindy Long
Kristen Loschert
Dave Reber
Michael D. Simpson
Tim Walker

**Editorial Interns**
Meredith Barnett
Lance Fuller

**Design**
Groot Creative, Inc.
COVER PHOTO
Miller Studio

**NEA Interactive Media**
LEONIA HIRAOKA
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, NEA PUBLICATIONS
DOUG WALKER
EDITOR
AMANDA LITVINOV
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
MARSHA BLACKBURN

**NEA Student Program**
CHAIRPERSON
TOMMIE LEADERS
DIRECTOR, CONSTITUENT RELATIONS
DANIEL R. RIVERA
ORGANIZATIONAL SPECIALIST
KIMBERLY ANDERSON
NEA PRESIDENT
DENNIS VAN ROEKEL
NEA VICE PRESIDENT
LILY ESKELSEN
NEA SECRETARY-TREASURER
REBECCA S. PRINGLE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JOHN I. WILSON

**Postmaster**
SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:
Tomorrow’s Teachers
NEA
1201 16th Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20036-3290

**How to Reach Us**
Have a comment, suggestion, or story idea? E-mail us at: alitvinov@nea.org
Or contact us by mail: Tomorrow’s Teachers, 1201 16th Street N.W., Washington, DC 20036
By phone: (202) 822-7203
By fax: (202) 822-7206

ILLUSTRATION: UTTAM GURJAR

**On the Cover:**
Now in her third year of teaching, **Laura West** works with diverse kindergarteners.
Decisions made in statehouses across the nation today will affect tomorrow’s teachers for years to come. NEA is fighting to ensure that you will have a voice in those decisions.

As this year’s edition of Tomorrow’s Teachers goes to press, educators are under attack.

All eyes were on Wisconsin in February, when Governor Scott Walker declared war on the middle class by doing everything in his power to strip the right to collective bargaining for educators and all public workers. But this is not just happening in Wisconsin. It’s not just in Ohio, Indiana, Idaho, Alabama, Tennessee, Michigan, Arizona, New Jersey, or New Hampshire, where similar attacks on workers’ rights have been proposed. It’s everywhere anti-public education activists see an opportunity to blame educators for a recession created by Wall Street, and justify eliminating unions.

It’s everywhere where the voices of educators, calling for smaller class sizes or increased funding to classrooms, have become too irritating to conservative politicians. It’s everywhere where public employees have questioned the long-term wisdom of tax cuts for the nation’s wealthiest corporations and citizens.

“I believe there is even more urgency to the work we do at the National Education Association today than when I became a teacher more than 35 years ago,” says NEA President Dennis Van Roekel. “This fight is about giving politicians the unchecked power to make critical decisions about our students and ourselves. Educators are ready to share the pain of getting through this tough economy. But we refuse to surrender our right to a voice at the table.”

These poor economic times will pass. But the legacy of these current battles between partisan politicians and public employees will impact classrooms and campuses across this country for years to come. Will you have 42 kids in 22 desks in 2015? Will your tax pay the private-school tuition of rich kids? Will you have a job at all?

It all depends on who wins these state legislative battles. And that’s where you can make a difference. The teachers and support professionals, and parents and
students—who so rarely have a voice in public debate—need to be heard.

“When we look at you, our next generation of educators, we realize that you are also the ones who will continue our work as NEA members,” says Van Roekel. “You make us optimistic about the future.”

NEA Student Program Chair Tommie Leaders says that even as you prepare to enter the classroom full-time, you should also prepare to be politically active on issues that affect public education. “Collective bargaining does not directly impact us yet, but it has a direct impact on the career we are preparing to enter,” says Leaders. “Pay attention to what’s going on in the political world and in your state; lobby your elected leaders and let them know that investments in education are investments in the future.”

Jessica Hourigan, co-political chair of the Illinois NEA-Student Program, has a few tips about how you can get involved now:

BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER of your Student Program chapter—your NEA membership opens up a ton of opportunities for you. It’s made me a lot more educated in the field of public education!

REMEMBER YOU’RE DECIDING THE FUTURE when you vote—don’t give up that opportunity. Talk to your friends and family about what their votes could mean to public education.

IF YOUR STATE HAS A LOBBY DAY, make sure you attend! It’s so inspiring—if there’s anything to make you politically active, it’s going to Lobby Day.

THE INTERNET IS YOUR BEST FRIEND. Go to www.educationvotes.org to sign the national petition for educators’ rights and sign up to be an online volunteer. Find the Speak Up for Education campaign on Facebook.

CHECK YOUR STATE ASSOCIATION’S WEB SITE for updates. And keep up with the national picture by joining the NEA Student Program Facebook group and subscribe to RSS feeds from NEA’s other properties:

>>NEA.org

>>EdVoices.nea.org NEA’s new blogging community

>>NEAtoday.org NEA’s daily news site

—THE EDITORS
Fair Game

KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR UNIVERSITY’S CAREER FAIR.

BY KRISTEN LOSCHERT

As an undergraduate student, Teia Grayned knew how valuable her college job fair could be. By attending, she landed several internships. But after 15 years working as a pension administrator, this second-career educator had lost her faith in the process.

“I had attended job fairs in different cities and they were more like expos, so I was skeptical about going [to another one],” says Grayned, a 2008 graduate of Cambridge College.

But as she pursued her master’s degree in counseling, with no employment prospects in sight, Grayned took a chance and attended an education job fair organized by the Georgia Association of Educators Student Program. After the fair, she received seven job offers.

“Once I attended, I realized you can get results,” says Grayned, now a high school counselor in DeKalb County, Georgia.

Attending a job fair may be the easiest way future educators can expand their job prospects, because the districts represented there have active openings to fill, says Stephanie Zuckerman-Aviles, director of the career development center at Buffalo State College. Plus, job fairs let prospects explore districts they might not otherwise have considered.

That was the case for Ashley Evett, a 2008 graduate of Illinois State University. Evett landed a teaching position in Illinois after attending a job fair during her senior year. But when budget cuts cost her that job two years later, she attended a job fair in Tennessee where she secured her current position teaching eighth-grade reading.

Attending a job fair “is like setting up a lesson plan,” says Evett. “You have to do your research and you have to be prepared.”

You won’t snag a new job just by walking through the door; but, with the right strategy, you could leave your next job fair with an offer or two in hand.
Before the Fair

Find out which districts will be there.
The fair’s organizers can provide a list, which may include the names and job titles of the specific recruiters attending. A large fair can have between 100 and 200 districts. You won’t be able to visit every one, so pick your top 25 choices, prioritize them based on your interest, and research them. “It doesn’t look good when you are at the fair interviewing with a district and you know nothing about that district,” says Zuckerman-Aviles.

Prepare your paperwork.
Use your research to craft personalized cover letters for the contacts at your top-choice districts, suggests Evett, and make sure your résumé is solid. List your teaching credentials at the top to provide a snapshot of your skills. Prepare a shortened version of your portfolio with your teaching philosophy and a favorite lesson plan, suggests Zuckerman-Aviles, and complete the district’s job application. Then tuck multiple copies of each item into a simple portfolio to take to the fair.

At the Fair

Arrive prepared and on time.
“This is not something you want to be late to,” says Zuckerman-Aviles. “Districts may leave early or get tired or fill up their interview slots.” Dress professionally—that means a suit—and bring along an emergency kit stocked with pens, paper clips, breath mints, a mess-free snack (like nuts), and extra stockings for ladies.

Make a plan, but stay flexible.
Seek out your first-choice district, but move on to your second or third choice if your first gets mobbed. You still can use the time to network, says Zuckerman-Aviles. Introduce yourself, provide your résumé, and collect a business card or ask if the recruiter can meet during lunch or after the fair. “If you say why you are interested in
that district, the recruiter will make time for you,” adds Zuckerman-Aviles. Keep in mind, “not all of the interviewers are at the table,” says Evett. “They may be interviewing people in line. You never know where someone is who could help or hurt you in getting a position.”

Take a break.
Attending a job fair is exhausting—for candidates and recruiters alike. Get some fresh air, have a snack or water, or chat with a friend to ease the tension.

Stay positive.
“When I was inexperienced, job fairs were very overwhelming,” says Evett. “When I went the second time as a teacher, I changed my mindset that these people weren’t my competition, but my potential colleagues. That mindset puts you in a more positive place and you feel more confident.” Don’t forget to smile!

Don’t accept an offer on the spot.
Yes, that’s right. Districts usually keep an offer open for several weeks, says Zuckerman-Aviles, so take time after the fair to research the district, visit the school, and meet with the principal before you accept.

After the Fair

Follow up.
Send thank-you notes to the recruiters who interviewed you, and anyone else you met, along with additional copies of your résumé. Then in the spring, when districts are finalizing their openings, call your contacts to remind them of your interest, suggests Grayned. “Those schools keep you in mind for years and years and if you need to apply later, they will remember you based on your performance and your follow-up,” adds Evett.

Interview 101

Not all job interviews fit the classic candidate–interviewer mold. Here’s a primer on the most common interview scenarios you may encounter and some tips for acing them.

Elevator Pitch
Use this one- to two- minute speech to introduce yourself at a job fair. Highlight your certifications, special skills, significant awards, and the reason you want to work for the school district. The goal is to entice the recruiter enough to offer you a screening interview.

Screening/Phone Interview
This interview occurs at the fair or by phone. Stay focused, listen to the questions asked, and answer confidently and concisely. If you don’t have an answer, say “that’s a great question” or ask the interviewer to repeat the question to buy some thinking time. If the interview happens by phone, take the call in a quiet room without distractions. Don’t eat or chew gum. Use your voice to convey your enthusiasm for teaching.

Panel Interview
This interview happens at the district and involves administrators, teachers, and even parents. Make eye contact with the person asking the questions, but connect with everyone in the room. Use examples and stories to demonstrate your ability to meet students’ needs.

All Interviews
Practice, dress professionally, and smile! Don’t forget to send thank-you notes after the interview.

Tips courtesy of Buffalo State College and Putnam City (Oklahoma) Public Schools
Few things cause more stress and anxiety than creating and polishing your teaching portfolio. What should it look like? What should you include? How will you ever finish it?

Fortunately, crafting a stellar portfolio doesn’t require lots of teeth gnashing, head banging, or late-night cramming. With a little time and planning you can create a portfolio that showcases the awesome teacher you truly are—and you’ll even have fun doing it.

“Often students get into an education program and they see the portfolio as their end test, because that is what they need to do to finish their program,” says Sharon Schleigh, advisor for the Student NEA chapter at East Carolina University in North Carolina. But “the portfolio is really a reflection of who they are, what they think, and what they can do . . . and they need to make it unique if they really want to use it.”

In other words, an effective portfolio is much more than a flashy presentation about your semester of student teaching.

The portfolio documents your accomplishments throughout your education program, stresses Schleigh, and can include artifacts from your freshman through graduate years. What you include depends on how you plan to use the finished product.

“Don’t think that in one sitting you can build a portfolio,” says Marie Frizzell, a former Student member from the University of Maine. “It needs to be built over time and revised over time. It’s an ongoing process that really doesn’t end unless you want it to.”

Start by identifying the portfolio’s purpose, such as a job application or admittance to a graduate program, recommends Schleigh. Then look at the criteria candidates must satisfy to get that job or into that program. This gives your portfolio a structure and focus. You also can use the
professional teaching standards for your certification area to guide how you build your portfolio, Schleigh suggests.

Next, collect evidence from your coursework and field experiences that shows how you meet each one of those qualifications and explain how those items demonstrate your skills. You can include your teaching philosophy, a résumé, lesson plans, class assignments, notes from your students, faculty recommendations, photos, videos, or recorded messages. Think about experiences outside of your education program too, such as community work, study abroad, tutoring, and leadership positions any place you have gathered relevant skills.

To save file space, Lyon College graduate Codi Ribitzki posted her artifacts online and included hyperlinks in her portfolio, which she created using PowerPoint. You also can store your portfolio and artifacts together on a disk or CD. Whatever format you choose, save multiple copies in different places, says Ribitzki, now a middle school English teacher in Arkansas.

“Creating the portfolio really emphasized to me that districts hire people,” says Ribitzki. “Your opinions and experiences matter because they affect the kind of teacher you’ll be.”

The items you include in your portfolio don’t have to be your “best” work, either. In fact, Schleigh suggests including successful lessons and a few flops accompanied by your thoughts about where you can improve.

“Reflection is so important,” says Schleigh. “[Preservice teachers] want to make themselves look good and they forget that teaching is a learning experience. There is value in not doing well and recognizing how you can improve.”

While your exposition can, and should, address any mistakes you have made as a beginning teacher, the portfolio itself should be flawless. “Double-check your spelling and formatting to ensure your files display properly,” says Frizzell. Also, “label your artifacts clearly, group them logically, and check that links connect to the correct items,” adds Ribitzki. Include a table of contents as well, to guide people through your portfolio.

“Organizing your information keeps the prospective viewer focused on the information itself rather than on navigating your portfolio,” says Ribitzki.

Finally, highlight your most outstanding qualities and summarize what distinguishes you from other teacher candidates. Then, once you start teaching, update your portfolio regularly. You can use it to showcase student work, communicate with parents, or simply document your growth as a teacher.

“I don’t see the portfolio as being the end-all thing,” says Schleigh. “That’s the advantage of having it electronically, you can move things around to have different focuses and needs. . . . It’s a growing piece. You are always adding to it.”

Portfolios with purpose help you showcase your progress, says Codi Ribitzki.
“Creating the portfolio emphasized to me that districts hire people. Your opinions and experiences matter because they affect the kind of teacher you’ll be.” —RIBITZKI
What I Didn’t Learn in College…and Wish I Had!

By Kristen Loschert

Let’s face it, we all have those moments in life when we lament, “If someone had only told me!” But for a beginning teacher, knowing what to expect can make or break that first day in the classroom. Tomorrow’s Teachers asked veteran NEA members what they wish someone had told them before they started teaching. We collected their advice on everything from classroom management to communicating with parents to keeping your sanity after a long day. You may not have their years of experience just yet, but you can have their tips and tricks to start your career on the right track. (We won’t tell your students you’re a newbie!)

What do you wish you had known when you first started teaching?

“No matter how careful you are, there is always room to be even more careful. Keeping the paper trail is probably the best way I know of to C-Y-A.” Dan Bernard, (pictured) substitute teacher, New York

“How to care about my students without letting their home and family problems tear me up inside.” Christine Bernard, special education teacher, New York

“I wish I had known how much of my own money I would spend to teach my class. I probably spend between $500 and $600 a year on things from learning games to cookies.” Caryl Crowell, kindergarten teacher, California

What is your best classroom management strategy?

“Keep them busy. Don’t give them too much downtime. . . . You need to let them know who is the boss from the beginning and that’s hard when you are 22 and they are 18. But if you start out as the buddy it won’t work.” Rita Wells, orchestra teacher, Montana

“Consistency, consistency, consistency. Make yourself so consistent that your students can predict with 100 percent certainty how you will react to any situation.” Christine Bernard, special education teacher, New York

“I build teams and I make them work together to get rewards as a team. I have marble jars and they collect marbles for positive behavior. The team with the most marbles at the end of the week gets to go to my treasure box.” Caryl Crowell, (pictured) kindergarten teacher, California
How do you connect with parents?
“I send home a weekly newsletter and when I need to get something out quickly I use e-mail.” Caryl Crowell, kindergarten teacher, California
“I send daily [student] schedule sheets home for parents to sign each night. [The sheet] has space where I can write a short note and space for parents to write notes back to me.” Christine Bernard, (pictured) special education teacher, New York

What keeps you energized?
“Doing something you are passionate about that is outside of work. It’s therapeutic.” Dan Bernard, substitute teacher, New York
“I like it when I see the kids getting it. I love inventing ways of giving the same information differently.” Natashia Ogunyemi, fourth-grade teacher, Louisiana
“I hold on to memories of students who’ve made surprising gains during the time they spent in my classroom.” Christine Bernard, special education teacher, New York
“Knowing I’m doing my job to the best of my ability and seeing the progress the kids are making is enough to keep me going.” Caryl Crowell, kindergarten teacher, California

What is the best advice you ever received from a fellow teacher?
“Tomorrow is always another day. If something doesn’t go your way just get up and keep going the next day.” Rita Wells, (pictured) orchestra teacher, Montana
“Trust yourself.” Dan Bernard, substitute teacher, New York
“Don’t spend a lot of time and money making fancy bulletin boards. Use your students’ work to decorate your room. Better yet, put the students in charge of creating the bulletin boards. Taking ownership of something can give them a great sense of accomplishment and pride.” Christine Bernard, special education teacher, New York
“Be meticulous about maintaining student development notes.” Natashia Ogunyemi, fourth-grade teacher, Louisiana
“When you are putting yourself out there and always want to do more, it’s good to remember that you only can do so much.” Caryl Crowell, kindergarten teacher, California

What do you want future teachers to know?
“Establish a friendship with at least one or two colleagues. That relationship will help you maintain your sanity.” Natashia Ogunyemi, (pictured) fourth-grade teacher, Louisiana
“Think about what they post on Facebook or other social networks. Pictures and negative comments about parents, kids, and administration could come back to haunt you.” Nancy Malsom, middle school inclusion teacher, Iowa
“Make friends with your school’s secretary, the custodian, and the lunch ladies. These support staff are extremely important in how the school runs. They hold a deep reserve of information and are a great help, especially to new teachers.” Christine Bernard, special education teacher, New York
YOUR FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

I’ll Make How Much?

A PRIMER ON SALARY SCHEDULES

BY CINDY LONG

AFTER BACK-TO-BACK school years of hiring freezes, budget cuts, and a flurry of pink slips, landing a job in the classroom is no small feat. Congratulations! Now the real work begins—figuring out how to manage your classroom, plan engaging lessons, and decipher that bewildering salary schedule.

A salary schedule offers you a glimpse into the future of your education career. Charted in steps and increments, it’s a timetable of when you’ll receive raises. But accurately reading a schedule can be daunting. How do you make sense of all those columns and rows? It’s easier than you may think if you keep a few things in mind.

STARTING SALARY
First, take a look at the top left corner. That’s your starting salary, and arguably the single most important factor to consider when deciding on a job. It’s the launching pad for future raises, so the higher the starting salary, the more you’ll earn over time.

The National Education Association’s national salary campaign advocates for starting salaries of at least $40,000. Everyone needs a basic standard of living, and no matter where an educator is living, a minimum of $40,000 is a reasonable amount. For more on the NEA salary campaign, visit nea.org/pay.

NUMBER OF STEPS
A strong salary schedule has the fewest possible steps, which means that you’ll reach the top rate sooner and maximize your career earnings. Take a look at the starting salary and count the number of steps to maximum. If it’s more than about 15, it’s too long a schedule.
That’s because most educators can “master” their jobs in about five to ten years. More than 10 or 15 steps creates inequity, with unequal pay for equal work. Long schedules can also create tensions at bargaining time, pitting low-seniority teachers against the veterans.

HORIZONTAL VALUES
The salary schedule will also show you whether there’s an opportunity to earn more with advanced degrees and professional development. Since those values are usually listed horizontally, this is referred to as moving across the salary schedule “lanes.” In Pennsylvania some of the best schedules have 18 horizontal values, with increases for every six credits earned from a bachelor’s to a doctorate.

THE HISTORY
Politics and economics often impact a school or district salary schedule. In a tough economy, steps might be added, or increments devalued. (An increment is the dollar difference between two consecutive steps on a schedule.) Take a look at the history of the schedule to see how consistent it’s remained through different political climates and economic downturns. Districts shouldn’t decrease the amount of money that comes with movement from one step to the next, and they shouldn’t add more steps to the salary scale.

Also, check to see if increments were uniform throughout the schedule. They should always remain the same from one step to the next. A “bubble” is an oversized increment that destroys the integrity of the schedule.

How Collective Bargaining Boosts Your Pay

BY ILANA KOWARSKI

Negotiating with your employer can be intimidating, especially when your salary is at stake. Whether we like it or not, money matters, so getting the right salary schedule is important: Economic research has shown that your salary schedule has a big impact on your long-term earnings.

And it’s not just a financial issue: Salary schedules also affect the classroom environment, according to NEA’s director of collective bargaining, Bill Raabe. Better pay for educators means better working and learning conditions in schools, and so salary schedules should “always be given careful consideration, study, and development at the bargaining table,” he says.

To get the salary schedule you deserve, you need all the support you can get, and that’s where your union comes in. Through collective bargaining you have strength in unity and numbers. Even in nonbargaining states, your union can help you with better pay by lobbying
state legislatures and social boards.

“Sometimes you’re not your own best advocate,” NEA policy analyst Dave Winans explains. “It’s often better to have an experienced advocate who has some distance from the people you are working with.” When the local union advocates on your behalf, administrators are less likely to walk away with personal grudges against you if the negotiations don’t go their way, says Winans.

Most important, collective bargaining changes the balance of power between you and your boss. By yourself, you may not be able to sway decisions in your favor; but a group of employees is a force to be reckoned with. When your union advocate speaks for the whole group and not just for you, they have more power at the negotiating table, so you’re more likely to get a fair deal.

### Compensation Glossary

**AVERAGE SALARY** – Base salary cost divided by the total number of full-time employees (FTE) on the scattergram.

**BASE SALARY COST** – Total of each step on the guide multiplied by each corresponding step on the scattergram. Other amounts that might be taken into account include longevity, extracurricular activities, stipends, building stipends, etc.

**BREAKAGE** – The amount saved between the salary of a departing employee (due to retirement, resignation, or leave of absence) and the salary of the new employee.

**Example:**
- $50,000 salary of retiring employee
- $30,000 replacement employee
- $20,000 breakage

**BUBBLE/BALLOON** – An abnormal separation between two steps on a salary guide.

**Example:**
- Step 13: $39,000
- Step 14: $40,000
- Maximum: $50,000
- Increment: $10,000 or 25%

**CUMULATIVE EARNINGS** – Total sum of all salaries in a specified time period or career. New Jersey Education Association Research calculates the 10-, 20-, and 30-year earnings based on a long-standing formula of five years on the BA column and the remaining years on the MA column. Longevity is added, as are any other negotiated amounts at the appropriate time.

**LONGEVITY** – Additional money paid to an employee above the salary guide. It is usually based on years of service, either to the school district or the profession in general. It is usually a specific dollar amount, but it can also be a percentage of salary.

**Example:**
- $1,000 additional for 15 years of service to the district
- or 3% of individual salary for 15 years of service to the district.

**OFF-GUIDE SALARIES** – Any salaries that are paid above what appears on the printed salary guides.

**SCATTERGRAM** – A chart showing the number of employees on each step and level/category of a salary guide. These employees will generally be in the full time equivalency (FTE) category of employment.

Above: A sample schedule from Pennsylvania (location randomly chosen).

![Salary Guide Example](image-url)
You know what it's like to be a stressed-out student. Remember that night before finals? Cocktails of Red Bull and tears? But the high-stakes stress of a first-year teacher is a whole new experience.

The nightmares: I was naked in front of the class!
The headaches: I collapsed into bed at 6 p.m.
The weight gain: Good-bye, perfect jeans.

It’s not unusual for first-year teachers to actually make themselves sick from stress and long hours. Their classroom lights are still burning at 9 p.m., as they work on the next day’s activities, and their eyes are still shining at 3 a.m., as they run through state standards in their mind.

“My principal would come into my room last year and say, ‘Why are you still here? Leave!’ I’d come in on the weekends and I’d stay until 7 or 8 at night,” recalls Laura Winiarczyk, a teacher of English as a Second Language at Manheim Township High School in Pennsylvania.

Not surprisingly, Winiarczyk worked herself into a sickbed. In October, she came down with swine flu—a terrible ordeal for her and also no good for her students, who were deprived of a healthy teacher.

Keep this in mind: A stressed-out, exhausted teacher is not an effective one. For the sake of your health and your students’ performance, you should take steps to reduce stress.

Here are a few to try:

Get a hobby.

WINIARCZYK PUT ON HER swing-dancing shoes in the spring of her first year of teaching. “It saved my sanity,” she says. Similarly, new teacher Taylor Dinges, a special educator at Mill Creek Elementary School in Madison City, Alabama, recently discovered that she loves to paint. “I completed my first painting several months ago and I was surprised at how much it relaxed me. An added bonus is that I have new decorations in my house.”
Get to sleep.

IF YOU’RE THAT COLLEGE STUDENT who never schedules a seminar before 9 a.m., and then strolls into the classroom in floppy-eared bunny slippers, then you’re probably in for a rude awakening (pun intended). Teachers wake up really early. But a lack of sleep will make you even more stressed-out and prone to sickness, and more likely to die young. (Seriously! Go to bed!) If you need to rise at 5 a.m., then make sure your head hits the pillow at least 8 hours earlier, advises Mary Minnehan, an Education Minnesota trainer.

Eat right.

YOU WANT SOME CARBOHYDRATES—those are “feel-good” foods, says Minnehan. “If you take all the carbohydrates out of your diet, you’ll be one cranky person!” she promises. But opt for whole-grains so that you don’t get the “sugar drop” from empty carbs. Also, when you need a snack, nuts make a good choice.

Exercise.

“RUNNING REALLY HELPS ME on a day that has been particularly challenging,” says Taylor Dinges. Plus, with a job that requires her to be “quick on (her) toes,” a little exercise helps keep her focused and alert. If you don’t have time for a 30-minute jog, check out one of Minnehan’s favorite books, Eight Minutes in the Morning, by Jorge Cruise. It offers two different strength-training exercises on a 28-day cycle.
**Practice yoga.**

**BOTH MINNEHAN AND THE MAYO CLINIC** recommend yoga to reduce stress. Attempting a yoga pose without clearing your mind of lesson plans and parent conferences is almost impossible. Its practice requires focus and balance. Studies also show it reduces blood pressure and heart rates. Check out a book like *Office Yoga: Tackling Tension with Stretches You Can Do at Your Desk.*

**Breathe.**

**WHEN YOU TAKE A DEEP BREATH,** your brain gets the message to relax—and then it sends that signal to the rest of you. Best part is, you can do it anywhere. Try it now! Feel anything different?

**Smile!**

**THE SIMPLE ACT OF SMILING** releases a feel-good hormone to the brain in 44 percent of the population, says Minnehan. Plus, it sends the right message to your students: I like this job! “The more you can smile and enjoy what you’re doing, the better you’ll feel.”

**Make friends.**

**WHEN WINIARCZYK WENT DANCING,** she met a group of friends in her new community. Similarly, Dinges says she’s so thankful for the support of her best friend, her husband Andy; as well as her co-teacher, mentor, and other colleagues. A good colleague, friend, sibling, or spouse can put your head in the right place—don’t be afraid to ask them for help.
More than five kids killed themselves at the beginning of the school year last year. All were gay, or perceived to be, and had been kicked, beaten, shoved down stairways, taunted, and tormented by bullies.

Each left a devastated family, a shocked school community, and more than a few educators wondering: What can we do to prevent future deaths?

The answer: A lot.

More than 90 percent of GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) kids say they’ve been harassed or bullied at school, according to survey by GLSEN: the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network. But, even worse, more than 30 percent say they’ve been called names or physically harmed while educators stood by—and did nothing.

Next year, when you walk into your own classroom or school-based office, consider what kind of teacher you’re going to be: the kind who idly listens to verbal harassment? Or the kind who posts a “safe space” sticker on your door and a “ThinkB4USpeak” poster on your classroom wall? When a kid comes to you and says, “I’m thinking of starting a club and wondering if you could like . . . maybe . . .” will you offer your support or turn them away?

“You have to be the change you want to see in the world,” said Virginia teacher Jaim Foster, a member of the NEA cadre of trainers on GLBT issues. “Every day . . . I’m trying to be a reminder of human rights for everybody.”

And it’s not just a matter of moral obligation. It’s a matter of legal obligation: In late 2010, the U.S. Department of Education sent a letter to 15,000-plus schools and districts, reminding them that bullying against gay kids—or kids perceived to be gay—actually violates federal anti-discrimination laws. And it’s a matter of achievement as well: Kids who are bullied are much more likely to miss classes, do worse in school, and eventually drop out.
But just one supportive adult on a campus can change a kid’s world—and that could be you. According to GLSEN, gay kids who can’t point to a single adult get significantly worse grades, are twice as likely to miss school, and almost three times less likely to see college in their future.

When Connecticut teacher Kristie Schmidt hears her teens complain, “That’s so gay!” she quickly rejoins, “You’re not using that word correctly.” When they protest that they just meant something was lousy, she strikes again: You are insulting all gay people with your negative speech. “Do you know any gay people?” she asks.

Devon Bearden, the president of the gay-straight alliance at Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, told NEA Today last year about a teacher who clipped a newspaper story about the gay pride parade in their community and pinned it to her bulletin board. “That was just so cool,” she recollected.

The presence of a club like Bearden’s also makes a huge difference: Nearly half of gay high-school students say their school has a GSA, and those kids are about a third less likely to be threatened or injured at school, and less than half as likely to attempt suicide. Studies also show it doesn’t make a big difference if the GSA is large or small, loud or quiet—its mere presence makes a positive difference in the lives of students.

Bearden’s club advisor first turned them down, he told NEA Today. He just had so much work to do—another assignment? No thanks. But then he reconsidered. Everybody needs a place where they fit in, he said.
grievance officer). If you don’t know who that authority is, ask your principal. In all cases where a bullied student has come to you, follow up. Check back with the student to find out whether he or she has been informed by the school system of the steps it is taking.

3. Reassure, do not judge. If a bullied student comes to you for help, reassure the student that you care about him or her and will do what you can. Do not, however, question the student about why he or she is being bullied. It is the behavior of the bully, the perpetrator, that matters. If a student volunteers information about his or her sexual orientation or other personal information, do not judge that student—the student’s safety and education should be your concern—and of course keep the information confidential.

4. Get the student the appropriate professional help. If a student seems to be in emotional or psychological distress, offer to help the student get in touch with a counselor, social worker, or school psychologist right away; be supportive. But don’t give advice beyond your expertise. And if the student seems in imminent physical danger, alert the school administration immediately.

5. Stand up and speak out for students in need. There is now a wealth of information on the Web about bullying and how to stop it. Share what you’ve learned with your colleagues, and in your staff meetings, advocate for bullied students. Become part of the solution.

6. Do something. If in the hallway, stairwell, or your classroom—or some other school space—you witness a student being harassed and humiliated by another student, intervene—but get additional support if necessary. Everyone involved—the victim, the perpetrator, and the witnesses—needs to know this is unacceptable behavior. Research shows that creating a safe learning environment for all students requires the adults in the school working together.
I knew Aiden Rivera-Schaeff. He was a close friend of my 15-year-old daughter Kate and a frequent guest in our home.

Last April Aiden committed suicide. He hanged himself from a tree in his neighborhood. Aiden was 17.

The heart-rending memorial service was almost unbelievable. Grown men wept openly, unashamed. The kids lined up around the chapel walls, waiting their turn to speak their piece and say goodbye to the boy they loved so.

Afterward, I huddled together with other distraught dads drinking coffee. Each of us voiced the same question, “Why?” and recited the same silent prayer, “Please, God, don’t let this happen to my family.”

On the drive home, I asked Kate the question. Her answer was quite blunt, “I think he just got tired of having his head bashed against the lockers at school.”

You see, although Aiden was raised in a loving home and supported by accepting friends, he was a transgendered youth, a teenager whose differences sparked hate, fear, and ultimately physical assaults from his homophobic peers.

We’ll never know whether the bullying he suffered at his suburban Washington, D.C., high school caused Aiden’s death. But this much we do know: every day in this country, GLBT students are subjected to vicious harassment and attacks, an ugly fact that has had deadly consequences.

Last year alone, at least five GLBT students killed themselves because of brutal acts of harassment at school. It’s been called bullycide.

Thirteen-year-old Seth Walsh, who was openly gay, hanged himself in the backyard of his Tehachapi, California home last September after a “relentless barrage of taunting, bullying, and other
There appears to be a real correlation between in-school bullying and suicide.

abuse at the hands of his peers,” according to the New York Times.

Another 13-year-old, Asher Brown from Houston, shot himself in the head at his home last September. Students accused him of being gay and performed mock gay sex acts on him during PE class.

Also last September, 15-year-old Billy Lucas from Greensburg, Indiana, hanged himself in the family barn. The school bullies called him “gay” and told him to “go kill himself.”

Justin Aaberg, a 15-year-old from Andover, Minnesota, hanged himself in his bedroom last July after suffering a constant stream of vicious anti-gay harassment at school.

Eighteen-year-old Tyler Clementi, a Rutgers University freshman, jumped off a campus bridge last September after his roommate outed him by secretly videotaping a sexual encounter with another man and broadcasting it over the Internet.

There appears to be a real correlation between in-school bullying and suicide. According to a recent national survey, fully 84.6 percent of GLBT youth have experienced harassment at school within the last year. Also, several studies have found that 30 percent of GLBT youth have attempted suicide.

The recent epidemic of suicides by gay youth has awakened a national consciousness. Last September, columnist Dan Savage
posted a YouTube video reassuring gay teens that they too can lead happy and fulfilling lives. That simple act has grown into a national phenomenon called the “It Gets Better Project” (IGBP).

More than 5,000 celebrities and political leaders have submitted videos to the site (itgetsbetter.org) reminding GLBT youth that they are not alone and promising a better, more accepting world as they mature. The site’s gotten 15 million hits.

Contributors include President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, pop icons such as Justin Bieber, Ke$ha, and Dennis Van Roekel. Yep, the NEA President posted a video on the IGBP Web site.

Dennis tells GLBT teens, “If you’re being tormented by bullies, please don’t try to go it alone; don’t keep quiet. . . . Teachers and counselors and school employees are united in tackling this problem.”

Beginning teachers should know that schools have a legal obligation to stop anti-gay harassment. Last October, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) issued an official “Dear Colleague” letter to educational institutions across the country. ED explains that Title IX prohibits sexual harassment in schools that receive federal funds, and that prohibition includes “anti-gay slurs” and other forms of bullying based on the perception that a student might be gay.

Although a helpful reminder, this is not a news flash. Most lawyers already know that Title IX is a powerful legal tool to hold school districts accountable for failing to stop the harassment of GLBT youth. Since 1990, there have been a slew of verdicts and settlements requiring school districts to pay money damages to GLBT victims.

But the stakes and the dollar amounts rise sharply when the harassment results in a student’s suicide. Just as surely as day follows night, lawsuits will ensue.

Last year, the parents of Tyler Lee Long sued the Murray County (Georgia) School District for damages after the 17-year-old hanged himself. According to his mother, Tyler’s tormentors “would spit in his food, call him ‘gay,’ and say ‘I can’t wait until you are six feet under!’”

In Ohio, the parents of Eric Mohat have sued the Mentor School District, claiming that the 17-year-old shot and killed himself because of constant bullying he suffered. Students called him “homo” and kicked him in the head.

Note to NEA members: school employees are not immune from these lawsuits. In two different cases from Kentucky, NEA members were sued for failing to do enough to stop peer harassment and bullying at school, one of which resulted in the suicide of a 14-year-old. In each case, NEA’s liability insurance carrier paid damages and expenses totaling six figures.

But fear of being sued should not be the reason for school employees to do their part to stop this national nightmare. It is a moral imperative. Trust me on this: You don’t ever want to attend the funeral of one of your students who committed suicide, or—for that matter—your daughter’s best friend.
Closing the Culture Gap

WHEN IT COMES TO CONNECTING WITH STUDENTS, CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN A COMMON ETHNIC BACKGROUND.

BY TIM WALKER

The majority of the 22 students in Lauren Mead’s first-grade classroom are White, but like the nation as a whole, only just. Almost half are Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, or Black. Students at Rose Hill Elementary in Kirkland, Washington, speak more than 20 languages.

Laura West and students.
Mead, now in her third year of teaching, is a White woman faced with an increasingly racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse classroom. And she’s not alone. The teaching force in the United States has remained stubbornly White, despite changes in public school student demographics.

But in terms of teacher effectiveness, does this really matter?

It depends, say the experts. The so-called “culture gap” between students and their teachers can contribute to achievement gaps among different student groups. But merely boosting the ranks of teachers of color would be a short-sighted solution, especially since the definition of “culture” is far more expansive than matters of race.

**It can be hard to accept that we have as much to learn in some ways from our students as they do from us. But that is how we can connect culturally and help them learn.**

—DEVON ALEXANDER

“I probably had more in common with a White teacher from a lower-income background than I had with a Black teacher who grew up in a more affluent environment,” says Manuel Scott, a former inner-city high school student whose teacher, Erin Gruwell, went to great lengths to relate to her students, as captured in the book and movie *Freedom Writers* (see sidebar).

“Connecting to your students means a lot more than having the same skin color.”

Helping students make the link between what they learn in the classroom and the life they know outside of the classroom is at the core of cultural competency, a skill sought after by school districts across the country.

“Our nation can no longer be satisfied with success for some students,” says National Education Association President Dennis Van Roekel. “Educators with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to value the diversity among students will contribute to an educational system designed to serve all students well.”

**“We’re Really Not Prepared for This”**

Culturally responsive teaching is not only an issue for White, female educators. Devon Alexander, a young, Black English teacher at Oak Park High School in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, Illinois, is every bit as concerned about reaching all of the students in his classroom.

Establishing a connection with his White students, many of whom have never had a Black teacher, can take as long as half a year, he says. Then they “realize it’s an opportunity to expand their experience and understanding of race.”

Some students have turned to him for advice. He recently counseled a Hispanic student who was “nearly in tears. She was explaining how she had a hard time in her honors-level English class with her White teacher and predominantly White classmates. She said, ‘it’s like she says stuff and I need them to explain it in a different way. But it’s not that way for the White kids in the class.’”

Alexander says it’s his job to help students like her figure out how to engage in class while making it clear that they’re not expected to change in order to do that.

“First and foremost, let your students know that their experiences are valid and valued. They have every right to hold on to who they are, what they know, and what they live, even if sometimes they have to stop and work through differences,” he says. “But you also have to show them how to navigate our school culture so they can succeed.”

“Given the diversity of today’s public school classroom, most new teachers lack that serious professional background or training to deal with racial and cultural issues,” says Alexander. “We’re really not prepared for this.”

According to a 2008 survey by the Public Agenda Foundation, 76 percent of new teachers reported that that their training covered teaching diverse students, but only 39 percent called this training helpful.

The multiculturalism training that many incoming teachers receive can serve as a solid foundation for more in-depth cultural competency training, but alone it lacks the breath and sophistication needed to properly prepare
When Manuel Scott was 14, he was abusing drugs and on the path to dropping out—until new teacher Erin Gruwell walked into his classroom. Through sheer determination, the young White educator gained the ability to speak to her diverse students’ experiences, and inspired Scott and his classmates to write. Their story became the 2007 Hollywood movie, Freedom Writers, starring Hillary Swank. Today, Scott is a Ph.D. candidate and motivational speaker.

Scott spoke to Tomorrow’s Teachers about Gruwell and how new educators can scale the cultural walls that may separate them from their students.

**On Erin Gruwell:**
“She was clueless at first. Here was this White lady from a gated community on her way to law school who chose to teach at one of the toughest schools in the district. She had no idea on how to reach us. But she kept trying because she wasn’t afraid to discover our culture, our families, our values, and our music. We were a tough crowd, but Ms. Gruwell was very good at finding bridges for communication.”

**On Reaching Students:**
“You have to start where they are and work your way up. Ms Gruwell would ask questions about our lives without being invasive. We could see she was sincerely interested and she cared. She wanted to know about our interests, our culture. I meet some teachers who don’t want to do this, that it’s somehow beneath them to have to spend time speaking to students on their level. Nothing could be more misguided.”

**On the Culture Gap:**
“It’s important to remember that the culture gap doesn’t just exist between White teachers and students of color. I agree with Education Secretary Arne Duncan when he says we should have a more diverse teaching body, but that’s not a cure-all. It’s still about the individual teacher’s strategy—whatever color or religion—on how to engage the students. If you think that the culture gap will disappear just because we have, for example, more Black and Hispanic teachers, you’d be mistaken.”
educators for a diverse classroom, say many new teachers.

“My teacher training in this area was all about multiculturalism and not the more academic aspects,” Laura West, a kindergarten teacher in Brookline, Massachusetts, recalls. “It’s the ‘heroes and holidays’ routine—songs and happy-go-lucky celebrations—a bit cheesy really.”

“Culture is so much more than the color of a student’s skin. You have to dig deeper,” says Lauren Mead. “Culture is about family life, religion, home life, and socioeconomic status. It’s about who your students are and where they fit in their community, and society as a whole.”

Mead concedes that once an educator steps back and begins to understand the myriad ways a student’s culture can impact learning, the task may seem overwhelming. But to be an effective teacher makes it no longer a choice.

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Everything is changing,” says Alexander.

“Teachers bear the burden and we have to take the lead on it.”

Teachers as Learners

Although Mead is still relatively new to teaching, she confidently engages her students on issues of culture. They don’t shy away from talking about the fact that the children they go to school with every day come from different ethnic groups, religions, and family structures.

“Even though they are so young, students are able to begin to think of each other and respect one another on a deeper level than their gender and their race.”

She has taken full advantage of the professional development opportunities her district provides, including a monthly cultural seminar at her school this fall and winter.

But it wasn’t always like this. Her first year, like that of many other new educators, was about, as she says, “survival.” Faced with a mountain of demands and responsibilities—establishing basic classroom management strategies, learning who’s who in the building, identifying mentors, and developing curriculum—she acknowledges that cultural competence wasn’t high on her list.

“If I could do it over I would,” she says. “Because what I learned is that there are ways to begin that process, maybe start small, and build on it from there.”

“There are no cut-and-dried solutions to some of the challenges we face in the classroom,” she says. “When we get together and talk about some of the problems and possible solutions, we know it’s a safe place where it’s OK to say ‘I don’t know.’”

Similarly, Laura West participates in a group at her school in Brookline called the Critical Friends Group in which staff members have roundtable informal discussions about navigating though cultural issues in the classroom, particularly strategies on connecting with students’ families.

“You really have to go above and beyond with the family,” explains West, “and create a dialogue—even if it requires translators. There are cultural questions and issues that are best for parents to answer. You don’t want to put your students on the spot.”

Teaching is about learning, says Devon Alexander, and educators have to learn about their students’ culture—from their parents, from the students, from their peers and, yes, books can help too.

“After all our education, it can be hard to accept the fact that we have as much to learn from our students in many ways as they do from us. But that is how we connect to our students culturally and help them learn. It’s about teaching on their level, teaching where they are.”

Our best advice: NEA’s C.A.R.E. Guide


NEA Priority Schools: Raising Achievement

NEA and its members are dedicated to raising academic achievement in lower-performing schools, and culturally responsive teaching plays an important role. Find out how NEA is working side-by-side with educators, communities, and policymakers, and working to keep great educators in schools of greatest need at www.nea.org/priorityschools.
No Teacher Is an Island

Don’t let anyone tell you that experience and advanced degrees don’t matter in K–12 education.

BY DAVE REBER

Armchair education reformers, and the philanthropists who pay them, insist that advanced teaching degrees and years of teaching experience have no benefit for students. This facet of education reform, like so many others, is built on oversimplification, willful ignorance, and deliberate misrepresentation of facts.

Most studies used to “prove” that advanced degrees and teaching experience have no effect on student achievement are “think-tank” research studies, usually published as “working papers,” a cryptic euphemism for “lacking peer review.” Examining the funding structures of these organizations further opens the gates to suspicions about the integrity of their research.

Such so-called “research” presents a completely inaccurate concept of teachers, teaching, and public schools. Their vision of public schools resembles a telemarketing office, where employees work in fierce competition. The goal is winning, and helping one another is unheard of.

But public schools don’t work that way. As a first-year teacher, I did a fine job with no experience and no advanced degree. But here’s why: I had the guidance and support of my elder peers, some of whom had more than 40 years’ experience and most of whom held advanced degrees. As a rookie, easily half the decisions I made grew from collaboration with my more experienced, more educated peers.

Many years later, I now help new teachers in the same way my elder peers helped me. Experience and advanced education improve not only the individual teacher, but their entire school environment as well. Think-tanky research largely ignores such effects; they’re too busy trying to connect...
student achievement to individual teachers to justify merit pay schemes. You cannot separate the benefits of advanced degrees and teaching experience among teachers unless you completely isolate the new teachers from the veterans. Forbid collaboration or shared lesson plans. Forbid sharing of classroom management strategies; forbid unified efforts among teachers to help struggling students. And forbid counselors, social workers, administrators, and school nurses from helping students in any way, as these factors also confound the data and render any teacher-specific conclusions invalid.

Think-tanky researchers acknowledge that advanced degrees do improve secondary-level student achievement if the degree is in a content area rather than in education. This is likely an artifact of their narrow definition of student achievement—which looks only at grade levels and subjects for which there are widespread standardized tests—and pedestrian understanding of teachers and schools. The beneficial effect of subject matter knowledge manifests directly with an individual teacher’s students, whereas education-practice knowledge more likely affects the entire school and beyond.

For example, much of my master’s degree coursework dealt with curriculum design and writing of standards and outcomes. These skills manifest outside of my classroom. I have designed entirely new courses, updated the curricula of existing courses, and helped determine the scope and sequence of K–12 science district-wide. The skills I gained from my master’s program now benefit teachers—and their students—across the district and across grade levels.

Think-tanky research would not track this value of my advanced degree or experience back to me.

Other coursework in my master’s program dealt with intervention strategies for at-risk students, and I spent many years as a member of my school’s Student Improvement Team. However, the majority of students I helped during that time were not enrolled in my classes. My skills helped students succeed with different teachers and different subjects. Think-tanky research would not track this value of my degree or experience back to me.

Some kids take longer to reach than others. I even taught one student four years in a
row, plus summer school. Often, my efforts to counsel misguided youth into responsible adulthood don’t pan out right away. But I regularly see my efforts manifest in students the following year and beyond—with different teachers and different subjects. Think-tanky research would not track this value of my master’s degree or experience back to me.

Those who insist that a teacher’s education and experience have no value in education don’t comprehend, or choose not to acknowledge, the true nature of teaching. So what is their real motive? It’s a simple business strategy: Inexperienced and minimally educated teachers cost less to employ.

Cheaper teachers mean higher profits for charter management organizations. Cheaper teachers also free up traditional public school dollars, perhaps for reallocation in new computer software and virtual-learning systems. And brokers of young, hastily trained temporary teachers will naturally claim that minimal education and zero experience produces the best “highly qualified” teachers.

But next time someone tells you that education and experience don’t matter, think about how you choose your surgeons, lawyers, auto mechanics, or contractors. Better yet, ask them how they choose theirs.

Lobbying 101

WHEN IT COMES TO EDUCATION LEGISLATION, WHAT YOU DON’T KNOW CAN HURT YOU. NEA CAN HELP YOU KEEP UP WITH THE ISSUES — THE REST IS UP TO YOU.

BY MEREDITH BARNETT

Believe it or not, lobbying is a lot like teaching: you, an expert, use your personal stories to educate individuals who are pretty clueless about your subject. You just happen to be talking to lawmakers about policy, instead of eighth graders about the Pythagorean Theorem.

There has never been a more important time for the next generation of teachers to take a stand.

“Congress is doing a lot that concerns you,” says Erin Duncan, an NEA lobbyist.

Among the hot topics Congress is debating this spring:

PELL GRANTS, which many students depend on to pay for college. Will they be preserved or slashed?

And NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB), which will affect your future in teaching. Will there be more high-stakes testing, or will the federal government back off and give teachers more flexibility to use their professional knowledge in the classroom?

Plus, state legislatures are making important BUDGET DECISIONS on issues that affect pay, job security, and the quality of education that students will receive.

NEA-Student Program President Tommie Leaders got his first taste of lobbying in 2007 with the Got Tuition campaign. At first, he was intimidated approaching his Nebraska policymakers to rally for college affordability.

“But, you voted them in,” he reminded himself. “They’re there to serve you!”

Now, he’s a vocal advocate for students exercising their political muscles.

“If you’ve chosen to work in the field of education, you need to have knowledge of politics,” he says. “It affects the students you work with, and it’s so hard to have an impact when there’s legislation that goes against what you’re trying to do.”

Being informed is the first step to action, advises Leaders. Know your lawmakers, where they stand, and how the legislative decisionmaking process works.
Lobbying Cheat-Sheet


2. Use technology to your advantage — connect with legislators and fellow activists through Facebook, Twitter, and blogs.

3. Always be professional, honest, and upbeat. Lose your cool, and you’ll lose the case!

4. Political decisionmaking can be drawn out, so stay patient and don’t get discouraged.

5. You’re busy, so find the lobbying strategy that works for you. Organize a group with your chapter to write letters together, to make it more social, for instance.

“So many people came together and expressed concerns, and they had support to back up their claims…. Our voice was heard.” —HOURIGAN

Duncan recommends registering on NEA’s EducationVotes.org and checking out the Legislative Action Center on nea.org.

Once your homework’s done, start your political engines! Paying your lawmakers a visit is the quickest way to impact your leaders—a study by the non-profit Congressional Management Foundation found that 97 percent of Congressional staffers agreed that in-person visits from constituents influenced their lawmakers.

But don’t dismiss the power of making phone calls, writing letters, or dropping an email to your legislators. That same study found even these personalized communication methods were more likely to change a member’s mind than a professional lobbyist’s efforts.

When reaching out to legislators in any form, employ those same persuasive-essay tactics you teach your students. Politicians approach education from their own limited student experience, so tell your story. Try to show them what you’re concerned about as you enter the profession, or the hardships you’ve observed in your student teaching.

Leaders joked that talking with lawmakers can feel like you’re speaking different languages. But reading up on your lawmakers’ backgrounds and values can help you build a relationship, even if you disagree. Are you both from the same town, or did they work their way through college just like you are? Say it—that can be your bridge. Once you’ve made your “ask” for a specific issue, stay in touch. Keep them abreast of the issues you’re concerned about, says Duncan.

Jessica Hourigan (front, with orange purse) knows educators make their strongest statement with a collective voice.

PHOTO: COURTESY JESSICA HOURIGAN
It’ll help them keep matching a face—yours!—to numbers.

One of Duncan’s main focuses this year is on NCLB, which is the current incarnation of President Lyndon Johnson’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). NCLB has failed to reach or even approach its key goal of closing achievement gaps. Congress is overdue to make changes, and this year, that may finally happen. But what changes? That may depend on what members of Congress and Senators hear from you.

“ESEA is always on my mind,” says Jessica Hourigan, a student at the University of Illinois. She’s co-political chair of the Illinois NEA-Student Program, and educates her fellow student members about the bill and what may change in it.

ESEA should promote school innovation, support excellence in teaching, boost funding, and cut the obsession with high-stakes testing. But it’s not likely to unless educators’ voices are heard.

“This is legislation that will impact their careers for the next 10 years,” says Duncan. “It’s now or never.”

Not all lobbying happens in Washington—far from it! Begin at your state and local level. That’s where Hourigan got her start. She attended her state legislature’s Lobby Day in spring 2010, where she and thousands of education advocates rallied against proposals that would batter pensions.

“It was a huge statement—we were all coming together to see this change,” she says. “It was very inspiring. If there’s anything to make you politically active, it’s going to Lobby Day.” (Many states have them—see if yours does.)

The wheels of change at the local, state, and especially federal levels can turn slowly, Hourigan realized. At Lobby Day, activists were fervently called on to lobby, but victories were small and far down the road. She recalls working right up until Christmas this year, battling a law that would cripple collective bargaining rights. It was easy to feel discouraged, but in the end, the legislature didn’t pass the measure.

“So many people came together and expressed concerns, and they had support to back up their claims,” she says. “Our voice was heard.”

“If you’ve chosen to work in the field of education, you need to have knowledge about politics.” —LEADERS
Outreach to Teach: Helping a Louisiana Community in Recovery

BY AMANDA LITVINOV

Outreach to Teach, NEA’s annual school repair project, is always a meaningful affair. But there was something singularly special about this year’s effort to repair and beautify Belle Chasse High School, in Belle Chasse, Louisiana, one of the many communities outside of New Orleans forever changed in 2005 by Hurricane Katrina.

“It really hits home to bring this kind of support here,” says Brandan Trahan, a junior at the University of Louisiana, Lafayette, and student leader of the Louisiana Association of Educators.

Belle Chasse sits at the northernmost point of the long, narrow Plaquemines Parish, whose southern stretch caught the worst of Katrina. And then the levees failed. Amidst the civic breakdown that ensued, Belle Chasse High School opened its doors wide, housing the displaced in the immediate aftermath and later absorbing students from four other parish high schools lost to the storm.

“NEA has come together to do something truly big to help a community still in recovery,” says Trahan.

In this case, something big was the sum total of hundreds of important tasks—a hard day’s work by more than 400 NEA Student and Retired members, plus Belle Chasse faculty. It was scraping peeling paint from hundreds of surfaces. It was sanding rust spots on exposed metal pipes. It was painting (and painting and painting), and carefully taping windows and walls so trim could be touched up. It was replacing rickety courtyard benches with new, sturdy ones. It was using choice walls and every bulletin board as a chance to inspire students with the school emblem or a quotation like this one: _Know your history; make your future._

With temperatures surging well into the 90s, it was the hardiest souls (or perhaps those who woke up late on job sign-up day) who took on the outdoor projects—like prepping the courtyards for sod by clearing out old vegetation and raking dirt.

“If we’re going to be here, we might as well do some real work,” said Ashley Salter of the University of Alabama. She was part of a small crew struggling with a stubborn root, and was duly impressed when Retired member John Frederick stepped in to hack it out by pounding a machete with a rubber mallet.

PHOTOS: GERALD LILLARD

Student and Retired members work side-by-side each summer to refresh a school campus.
“Wherever you go, you have to improvise,” said the Flint, Michigan, resident, who holds 32 years’ experience teaching math and zero years’ experience landscaping.

In a nearby hallway, a group of students was painting these words: *Some succeed because they are destined to, but most succeed because they are determined to.*

“It’s inspiring to see how the Students can pull the NEA family together for a major service project like this,” says Colleen Heinz, an Active member and vice president of the Colorado Education Association who served as NEA Student Program chair from 1986-88.

Former Student Program Chair and future educator Jermaine Coleman says service projects are a key part of the next generation’s idea of educating. “It’s not enough for us to only be in the classrooms,” he says. “We also want to be part of the community.”

“They are our future leaders,” says Heinz, gesturing toward the hundreds of students laboring around her. “If they can do this, just think what else they can do.”

Even as she spoke, a student’s careful brushstrokes filled in the letters that make up Gandhi’s most famous words of wisdom: *We must be the change we wish to see in the world.*

For the first time in the history of Outreach to Teach, now in its 15th year, local design firms were engaged for special redesign efforts to create inviting, restful spaces for students and staff alike. HMS Architects designed the complete refurbishment of the school’s two staff lounges, which now sport chic decor and modern amenities. The library makeover, planned by Sizeler, Thompson, Brown Architects, includes fresh paint, new tables, chairs, and rugs, plus a cozy lounge area.

Outside, new stadium seating will accommodate larger groups thanks to Green Parrot Nursery and Garden center, which also provided sod, rubber mulch, and 10 citrus trees.

“Every day the students of this school will see these changes and know someone out there believes in them,” says NEA-Retired President Barbara Matteson.

The front office was the site of another important transformation. The walls went from cherry bomb red—it must have seemed like a good idea at the time, that being one of the school colors and all—to a soothing pale green, much more conducive to calm, productive encounters with Principal and NEA member Leeland Lee.

But also important was properly painting the spaces outside—the parking spaces, that is.

“You might think it’s just lines in a parking lot—how will that make a difference?” says Ja’Quincey Ponder, who also participates in local Outreach to Teach events back home in Alabama. “But words cannot explain how much it means to the educators and kids—that someone came to fix up their school.”

Does he expect to be out here as an NEA-Retired member someday? “That is the goal,” says the 23-year-old Ponder. “Just let me get my career started first.”

Published on neatoday.org, June 29, 2010 (http://neatoday.org/2010/06/29/nea-volunteers-give-louisiana-high-school-extreme-makeover/).
Soaring temperatures did not stop the parking-lot-to-windowsills makeover of Belle Chasse High School.
The Lakeland chapter of the Student Wisconsin Education Association (StWEA) was awarded a $1,000 NEA Community Learning Through America’s Schools [CLASS] grant this summer. The NEA Student Program chapter used the grant to bring environmental awareness to all who visit the Ellwood H. May Environmental Park, a 120-acre, city-owned park on the north side of Sheboygan.

LAST SUMMER, StWEA Co-Presidents Kelly Ochalek and Rob Pockat brainstormed various ideas for area programs that would benefit from receiving the grant money. “One of the things we considered is the literary benefit the program would have for the community,” said Pockat. “One goal of StWEA is to provide overall literacy for Sheboygan school-aged children, as well as resources for parents which help promote literacy in the home.”

The decision in writing the grant proposal was based on the knowledge that Maywood interacts with a significant population in the Sheboygan area community and schools. Maywood serves thousands of students annually through a variety of educational programs.

After months of preparation, the grant proposal was sent to NEA last summer. A letter of full grant funding was received last September.

Two objectives of the grant proposal included: “To foster a lasting relationship between Lakeland College and Maywood to form a partnership around the common goal of providing area schools and the community with the best opportunity to learn about the environment through hands-on activities; and, to provide the foundation for an environmental literacy corner within the visitor center.”

Since receiving the grant, StWEA has purchased approximately $450 worth of nature and environmental books of different skill and developmental levels that will be housed on a portable bookshelf built by Ochalek’s father. Pockat added, “With grant money, we began to fill the bookcase with books and materials with subjects related to environmental issues, focusing mainly on Wisconsin.”

Ochalek has also created Environmental Literacy brochures that will be available for parents at Maywood. “They are put together by age level and basically give parents some literacy tips about reading with and to children as well as some suggested book titles,” said Ochalek.

StWEA also has plans to provide “explorer” backpacks which would possibly include a magnifying glass, tree and animal identification guides,
and other fun, useful items that families would be able to check out while visiting Maywood. “We are still nailing down the details,” added Pockat. “We want to enhance the experience for children and parents.”

Beyond the financial support the grant provides, StWEA members will be participating in monthly activities at Maywood. They will provide labor for the eventual reconstruction of the EcoAdventure low-ropes challenge course as well as story time for children visiting the center.

According to Ochalek, additional accolades have followed the NEA grant. “The project was actually nominated and won the Wisconsin State Reading Association outstanding literacy project for an organization. This is a major accomplishment as this award rarely goes to student organizations of any kind.”

StWEA Advisor and Professor of Education Eileen Hilke accepted the award for Lakeland at the state reading convention in February.

Although only in its second year, StWEA also was awarded a grant last year with the goal to promote literacy throughout Sheboygan County. “Last year we also received a grant through the NEA,” said Pockat. “We provided the Early Learning Center (in Sheboygan) with materials to promote early childhood literacy.”

Ochalek added, “As an organization which has only been up and running for two years now, we have accomplished some great things.”

**CLASS GRANTS** fund community outreach efforts. Application deadlines: First semester, August 31; Second semester, January 31.

**SOAR and Be Seen!**

**WITH THE HELP** of NEA’s 2010-2011 Student Organizing Assistance Resources (SOAR) grant, members of the Student Virginia Education Association (SVEA) at Virginia State University (VSU), a historically Black university, set out to encourage more students to get involved.

They used the grant to provide workshops, that they combined with their general meetings, to attract more education students interested in learning about how to prepare for life in the classroom. They soon found that students who attended the workshops were more likely to join the Student Virginia Education Association.

The final project funded by the grant will be to identify a local feeder high school to develop a Future Educators Association and target graduates who enroll in VSU to become members of the VSU SVEA. The chapter plans to visit the school several times during the academic year to serve as mentors and to tutor students for the assessments required for admission to the Teacher Education program.

**SOAR GRANTS**. Intended to help chapters organize and recruit new members. Application deadlines: First semester, August 31; Second semester, January 31.

Adapted from “StWEA is awarded $1,000 service grant,” published in the January 27, 2010, edition of *The Lakeland Mirror*, Copyright 2011. Reprinted with permission.
Hello National Education Association Student Program (NEA-SP) members, welcome to the first annual Student Program Crossword Quiz! We know that as college students you spend a great deal of time studying and preparing for exams. It usually takes a steady supply of caffeinated beverages, a bag of Cheetos, and an iPod blaring your favorite motivational music to get you through your cram session. Well, this is not your standard “standardized” test!

Since this is a pop quiz, the NEA Student Program is offering you the chance to cheat...um, we mean “use your resources.” This is an open book test, so feel free to use your Facebook lifeline, text a friend, or hit up nea.org for help. The first 100 students who get 100 percent on their crossword and submit it to the NEA Student Program office will win their very own, one of a kind, NEA-SP lapel pin! (pause for applause here)

**Clues**

**Down**

1. Community service project at SLC (3 words)
2. Making college possible for all students, regardless of their parents’ immigration status (2 words)
3. Electronic way to lobby your elected officials (2 words)
4. The governing body of NEA (3 words)
5. The NEA Secretary-Treasurer (2 words)
7. Another acronym for NCLB
8. The NEA President (2 words)
13. NEA’s largest celebration of literacy (3 words)
14. Community Outreach, Political Action, Professional Development (2 words)

**Across**

6. 2010-2012 Student Program Chairperson (2 words)
9. Location for the 2011 Student Leadership Conference
10. Student Program Organizational Specialist (2 words)
11. NEA’s annual convention with 10,000 delegates
12. The NEA Vice-President (2 words)
15. National fall leadership conference
16. Publication providing information to NEA members (2 words)
17. NEA’s campaign to improve America’s lower-performing schools (2 words)
18. Discount program for NEA members (2 words)
How well do you know NEA?
Alabama

State Student Leader: Ja’Quincey Ponder
State Organizer: Sandra Jackson
sandraj@alaedu.org

Beginning Teacher Salary: $36,144
Average Teacher Salary: $48,282
For current job openings visit:
www.alsde.edu/teachInAlabama/

Certification Requirements:
Alabama Department of Education
http://tcert.alsde.edu/Portal/Public/Pages/Services/Certification.aspx
(334) 242-9935

Arizona

Student Leader: Amber Mills
State Organizer: Anna Montalbo
anna.montalbo@arizonaea.org

Beginning Teacher Salary: $31,689
Average Teacher Salary: $47,553
For current job openings visit:
www.arizonaeducationjobs.com/

Certification Requirements:
Arizona Department of Education
https://www.ade.az.gov/certification/
(602) 542-4367

Arkansas

Student Leader: Rebecca Cluts
State Organizer: Richard Hutchinson
ar-rhutchinson@nea.org

Beginning Teacher Salary: $31,933
Average Teacher Salary: $47,700
For current job openings visit:
www.arkansased.org/educators/ recognition/nbct.html
(501) 682-1146

California

Student Leader: Areli Dohner-Chavez
State Organizer: Guil Watts
gwatts@cta.org

Beginning Teacher Salary: $41,536
Average Teacher Salary: $69,434
For current job openings visit:
www.teachcalifornia.org/

Certification Requirements:
California Department of Education
www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ps/te/mbps.asp
(916) 325-4963

Colorado

Student Leader: Karen Carnahan
State Organizer: Dave Mussetter
dmussetter@nea.org

Beginning Teacher Salary: $31,156
Average Teacher Salary: $49,958
For current job openings visit:
www.teachincolorado.org

Certification Requirements:
Colorado Department of Education
www.cde.state.co.us/index_license.htm
(303) 866-6600

State information is updated online.
Go to www.nea.org and click on the
State Affiliate link.

TOP 10 BEGINNING TEACHER SALARIES
1. District of Columbia $47,917
2. New Jersey $46,353
3. Hawaii $43,157
4. Maryland $42,647
5. Wyoming $41,804
6. New York $41,685
7. California $41,536
8. Connecticut $41,190
9. Alaska $40,332
10. Massachusetts $39,494

TOP 10 AVERAGE TEACHER SALARIES
1. New York $72,708
2. Massachusetts $71,017
3. California $69,434
4. New Jersey $66,985
5. District of Columbia $66,601
6. Connecticut $65,751
7. Maryland $65,113
8. Illinois $63,005
9. Alaska $61,093
10. Rhode Island $60,923

STATISTICS FOR SURVIVAL
TOP 10 BEGINNING TEACHER SALARIES
1. District of Columbia $47,917
2. New Jersey $46,353
3. Hawaii $43,157
4. Maryland $42,647
5. Wyoming $41,804
6. New York $41,685
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9. Alaska $61,093
10. Rhode Island $60,923

PHOTO: IDAK

Tomorrow’s Teachers 2011 43
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<thead>
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<th>Student Leader</th>
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<td>Michelle Gilbert</td>
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<td>Heather Keith</td>
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<td>Kayla Choloupek</td>
<td>Coy Marquardt</td>
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Kansas

Student Leader: Megan Lutz
State Organizer: Kevin Scarrow
kevin.scarrow@knea.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $32,558
Average Teacher Salary: $47,080
For current job openings visit: www.kansasteachingjobs.com/
Certification Requirements: Kansas State Department of Education
(785) 296-8010

Kentucky

Student Leader: Kevin Fox
State Organizer: Rosalind Bryant
rosalind.bryant@kea.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $35,041
Average Teacher Salary: $50,038
For current job openings visit: http://apps.kde.state.ky.us/keps/
Certification Requirements: Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board
www.kyepsb.net/certification/index.asp
(502) 564-4666

Louisiana

Student Leader: N/A
State Organizer: Laurie Guillot
laurie.guillot@lae.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $38,671
Average Teacher Salary: $49,634
For current job openings visit: http://www.doe.state.la.us/divisions/hr/employment.html
Certification Requirements: Louisiana Department of Education
www.doe.state.la.us/divisions/cert/certification.html
(225) 342-3490

Maine

Student Leader: Andrea Bryant
State Organizer: Jamie Daggon
jdaggon@nea.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $30,420
Average Teacher Salary: $47,182
For current job openings visit: www.servingschools.com
Certification Requirements: Maine Department of Education
www.maine.gov/education/forms/fingerprint/letter_1.htm
(207) 624-6605

Maryland

Student Leader: N/A
State Organizer: Debra Nixon
dnixon@mseanea.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $42,647
Average Teacher Salary: $65,113
For current job openings visit: www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/certification_branch/teach_md/teacher_positions
Certification Requirements: Maryland State Department of Education
www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/certification_branch/teach_md/teacher_positions
(410) 767-0412

Massachusetts

Student Leader: Michael Card
State Organizer: Christina Canfield
chanfield@mde.mass.edu
Beginning Teacher Salary: $39,494
Average Teacher Salary: $71,017
For current job openings visit: www.doe.mass.edu/jobs/
Certification Requirements: Massachusetts Department of Education
www.doe.mass.edu/Educators/e_license.html
(781) 338-3000

Minnesota

Student Leader: N/A
State Organizers: Bob Whalen
rwhalen@massteacher.org
Paul Toner
ptoner@massteacher.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $33,418
Average Teacher Salary: $53,215
For current job openings visit: www.mnasa.org
Certification Requirements: Minnesota Department of Education
http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Teacher_Support/Educator_Licensing/Licensing_Info/First_Time_Licensure/index.html
(651) 582-8491

Michigan

Student Leader: Michael Card
State Organizer: Christina Canfield
chanfield@mde.mass.edu
Beginning Teacher Salary: $35,612
Average Teacher Salary: $58,595
For current job openings visit: http://michigan.gov/jobs
Certification Requirements: Michigan Department of Education
www.michigan.gov/mde
(517) 373-3524

All salary data is from 2009-10 or the most recent available. Beginning teacher salaries were compiled by NEA Collective Bargaining/Member Advocacy. Average teacher salaries were taken from NEA’s 2010-11 Rankings and Estimates. The full report is available at www.nea.org/home/20096.htm.
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<td>Amanda Frost</td>
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<td>$29,509</td>
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<td>Jamie Diehl</td>
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<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Marissa Sims</td>
<td>Jeanette Cooper</td>
<td><a href="mailto:coopyer@ohea.org">coopyer@ohea.org</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>Dominick Cooper</td>
<td>Jennifer Smith</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jsmith@okea.org">jsmith@okea.org</a></td>
<td>$31,658</td>
<td>$49,039</td>
<td><a href="http://www.oklahomateachingjobs.org/">www.oklahomateachingjobs.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Meghan Draude</td>
<td>Christopher Budano</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cbudano@psea.org">cbudano@psea.org</a></td>
<td>$39,422</td>
<td>$60,536</td>
<td><a href="http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/job_vacancies/8633/home">www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/job_vacancies/8633/home</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Walter Young</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wyoung@shea.org">wyoung@shea.org</a></td>
<td>$38,677</td>
<td>$60,925</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ride.ri.gov/educatorquality/edjobs.aspx">www.ride.ri.gov/educatorquality/edjobs.aspx</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Mike Dale</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mdale@thescea.org">mdale@thescea.org</a></td>
<td>$31,764</td>
<td>$49,434</td>
<td><a href="http://www.scteachers.org/">www.scteachers.org/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Texas
Student Leader: Danielle Thorp
State Organizer: Bryan Weatherford
bryanw@tsta.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $33,284
Average Teacher Salary: $48,261
For current job openings visit: www.schoolspring.com/find/texas_teaching_jobs_in_texas.cfm
Certification Requirements: Texas Education Agency
www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=5830&menu_id2=794
(888) 663-5880 toll-free

Utah
Student Leader: N/A
State Organizer: Jerry Monson
jerry.monson@utea.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $33,401
Average Teacher Salary: $46,571
For current job openings visit: www.teachutah.org/
Certification Requirements: Utah State Office of Education
www.schools.utah.gov/cert/
(801) 538-7740

Virginia
Student Leader: Alyson Powers
State Organizer: Donna Hamilton
dhamilton@veanea.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $36,594
Average Teacher Salary: $51,559
For current job openings visit: www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/
Certification Requirements: Virginia Department of Education
www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/index.shtml
(804) 225-2022

Washington
Student Leader: Stephanie Dilbeck
State Organizers: Eddie Westerman
ewesterman@washingtonnea.org
Linda Woo
lwoo@washingtonnea.org
Christina Martinez
cmartinez@washingtonea.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $36,497
Average Teacher Salary: $53,796
For current job openings visit: www.wateach.com
Certification Requirements: Washington State Board of Education
www.k12.wa.us/certification/
(360) 725-6400

West Virginia
Student Leader: Lucy Sweeney
State Organizer: Kymberly Randolph
krandolph@weac.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $30,874
Average Teacher Salary: $47,253
For current job openings visit: http://wvde.state.wv.us/jobs/
Certification Requirements: West Virginia Department of Education
http://wvde.state.wv.us/certification/
(800) 982-2378

Wisconsin
Student Leader: Erik Collins
State Organizer: Paula Voelker
voelkerp@wnea.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $32,643
Average Teacher Salary: $52,031
For current job openings visit: www.wisconsin.gov/state/core/education.html
Certification Requirements: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
http://dpi.state.wi.us/tepdl/tm-license.html
(608) 266-1027

Wyoming
Student Leader: Jenn Smith
State Organizer: Ron Sniffin
rsniffin@nea.org
Beginning Teacher Salary: $41,804
Average Teacher Salary: $56,978
For current job openings visit: https://www.wyomingatwork.com/
Certification Requirements: Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board
http://psb.state.wy.us/Licensure/BecomingLicensed/tabid/65/Default.aspx
(307) 777-6261
As your knowledge grows, so will their smiles, confidence, and excitement for learning. At The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership at Walden University, we understand that as a new teacher enhancing your effectiveness is very important. That's why our online M.S. in Education program, while strongly grounded in theory, emphasizes skills and strategies you can immediately use in your classroom to enhance student learning and outcomes. As an NEA member, you can benefit from a 10 percent tuition reduction*† and a $50 application fee waiver when you enroll in either our M.S. in Education (15 specializations) or M.S. in Instructional Design and Technology (3 specializations) programs in or after September 2010. You can be a more effective educator, and you can start today by learning more about Walden. Call or visit us online.

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†10 percent tuition reduction is available to new students who have enrolled in or after September 2010.
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Prospective Alabama students: Contact the Teacher Education and Certification Division of the Alabama State Department of Education at 1-334-242-9935 or www.alsde.edu to verify that these programs qualify for teacher certification, endorsement, and/or salary benefits.

Prospective Washington state students must contact the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at 1-360-725-6275 or prof.educ@k12.wa.us to determine whether Walden's programs in the field of education are approved for teacher certification or endorsements in Washington state. Additionally, teachers are advised to contact their individual school district as to whether the program may qualify for salary advancement.

The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

Walden University

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HOW DO STUDENTS SEE FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS?

Some students report they can easily identify first-year teachers because they are: inconsistent, lenient, nervous, slow to handle discipline problems, and they try to be your friend. How can you avoid being “labeled” on your first day?

Preparation is the key to a successful first year of teaching. Newly revised and expanded for K–12 classrooms, The First-Year Teacher: Planning a Classroom that Works is the guide every new teacher needs to start the year with confidence. Whether moving from campus to classroom, elementary to secondary, or from another profession altogether, The First-Year Teacher provides step-by-step plans for the critical first four weeks of school, along with time-tested tips from experienced teachers.

Chapter by chapter, beginning teachers will learn how to:

• Enter the job market
• Prepare the classroom for the first day of school
• Structure parent-teacher conferences and gain parental support
• Develop a step-by-step classroom management plan for the first 30 days
• Improve efficiency by employing time-saving techniques
• Reflect on the first year and prepare for the next

Let The First-Year Teacher be your guide to a successful first year—and career.
50 STRATEGIES FOR ACTIVE TEACHING:
ENGAGING K–12 LEARNERS IN THE CLASSROOM

50 Strategies for Active Teaching is designed to help you actively engage your students in their own learning. It presents powerful principles of active teaching, helps you select active teaching strategies and implement them across the curriculum, and provides advice on tailoring your teaching to particular learners. As a result, students’ motivation to learn increases, their learning is enhanced, and the teaching and learning process is more rewarding for all. The accompanying Teacher Resources CD contains 32 printable templates designed to help you implement selected strategies found in the text. Available for $19.95.

THE GRADUATION GIFT PACK:
Countdown to the First Day of School
Pitfalls and Potholes: A Checklist for Avoiding Common Mistakes of Beginning Teachers
Bright Ideas: A Pocket Mentor for Beginning Teachers

Get off to a good start with the Graduation Gift Pack, a collection of three great titles from the NEA Checklist Series written especially for classroom rookies. Countdown to the First Day of School offers a time-saving checklist along with practical advice for getting acquainted, making management preparations, setting rules and procedures, organizing your classroom, and more. Pitfalls and Potholes helps you avoid many of the mistakes new teachers say they wish someone had told them about in college. This user-friendly checklist makes it easy for you to grasp the nuts and bolts of landing a job, managing student behavior, maintaining personal priorities, and more. Developed from tips by veteran teachers, the checklists found in Bright Ideas are designed to increase a first-year teacher’s chances for success. Student teachers, beginning teachers, and even mentors will find these tips helpful. Give yourself the gift of the Graduation Gift Pack, and make sure you get off to a good start. Available for $12.95.

You can find these and other valuable resources at the NEA Professional Library. Order online at nea.org/books, or call 800.229.4200.
Check out www.nea.org for Association news; links to NEA publications, state affiliates, and member benefits; information on special events such as NEA’s Read Across America; and sites for and about members. Don’t forget to visit the Student Program discussion board to chat with your fellow members.

www.nea.org

**NEW TEACHER TIPS**

**Works4Me**

Whether you’re looking for strategies to keep your students on task or just get yourself organized, NEA’s Works4Me program has the answer. The online library includes hundreds of tips submitted by fellow educators, offering practical solutions to just about any classroom issue. Be sure to join the mailing list to receive new tips by email each week.

www.nea.org/works4me

**Teachers Network**

Teachers Network is a nationwide, nonprofit education organization that identifies and connects innovative teachers exemplifying professionalism and creativity within the public schools. The website includes lesson plans, online professional development courses, information about grants, and videos. Don’t miss the “Daily Classroom Specials,” which feature project ideas, tips for working with parents, and special advice for new and substitute teachers.

www.teachersnetwork.org

**Survival Guide for New Teachers**

The U.S. Department of Education brings together the reflections of award-winning first-year teachers in this handy online guide for beginning educators. The guide focuses on teachers’ relationships with their colleagues, university professors, and students’ parents, all of which play crucial roles in their success on the job.

www2.ed.gov/teachers/become/about/survival_guide/index.html

**First Years: Help for the New Teacher**

This website, started and maintained by two veteran educators, offers classroom activities, sample letters to parents, tips for classroom management, subject-specific lesson plans, and free classroom posters and school clip art. Visitors can also join an email listserv for student and beginning teachers.

www.theteacherspot.com/firstyears

**Education World**

Tips for interviews, lesson plans, technology integration, and professional development are just some of the things you’ll find on the Education World Web site. You’ll also find information on communicating with parents, managing your finances, and even handling holidays in the classroom. Don’t miss the icebreaker suggestions and sample worksheets and handouts.

www.educationworld.com

**Teachers.net**

Teachers.net is all about peer support, with plenty of offerings for new teachers. Have a burning question you need answered? Go to the Beginning Teachers chat board. Need inspiration on how to engage kids with a particular topic? Browse the database of more than 4,300 free lesson plans. You can also connect with other new teachers in your subject area or grade level and get in on live chats.

http://teachers.net
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

NEA’s Read Across America
Celebrate literacy all year long with NEA’s Read Across America Web site. You’ll find tips and project ideas for the annual event, free posters and bookmarks to download and print, lists of popular books, and information and resources from NEA’s partners. Be sure to sign up for the monthly email newsletter to receive the latest updates on literacy issues and special discounts on members-only merchandise.

www.nea.org/readacross

Learn and Serve
Learn and Serve America grants fund community-oriented school projects. The program helps nearly one million students, from kindergarten through college, meet community needs while they improve their academic skills and learn the habits of good citizenship. Recipients use the grants to create new programs or replicate existing ones and to train staff, faculty, and volunteers. For more information, call (202) 606-5000 or visit www.learnandserve.org.

Literacy Info & Communication System
Help expand the social and economic opportunities for individuals with few or no literacy skills by teaching them how to read and write. This federal organization supports the development of high-quality literacy services and compiles data about literacy rates among various population groups in the United States.

http://lincs.ed.gov

SPECIAL EDUCATION

NEA’s IDEA Web site
Stop by NEA’s site on special education and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for current research, updates on IDEA legislation, and resources for educators working with students with disabilities.

www.nea.org/specialed

Council for Exceptional Children
The CEC is a professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of students with disabilities and the gifted. The organization advocates for sound government policies and offers opportunities for professional development to special education teachers.

www.cec.sped.org

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) supports special education programs for children, youth, and adults. OSERS also conducts research and publishes information on issues related to special education.

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/index.html

National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education
Connected to the Council for Exceptional Children, NCPS gathers, organizes, and disseminates information
RESOURCES

for recruiting, preparing, and retaining individuals interested in serving children with disabilities. The Web site includes information on financial aid available to aspiring special educators, research and statistics on students with special needs, and resources for job seekers.

www.cec.sped.org/ncpse.htm

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities
The center provides a variety of resources on disabilities and disability-related issues for families, educators, and other professionals. The website includes information on programs and services for infants, children, and youth with disabilities; IDEA; the No Child Left Behind law; effective practices for children with disabilities; materials for parents; and links to professional associations.

www.nichcy.org

The National Association of Special Education Teachers
NASET supports those preparing for or teaching in the field of special education. Members have access to comprehensive databases containing thousands of resources and materials. Topics include exceptional students and disability information, special education and the law, and practical resources for special education teachers. The Special Educator e-Journal keeps members informed, and a career center offers current job openings, career advice, career fact sheets, and state licensure information.

www.nasct.org

Center on Education Policy
As a national, independent advocate for public education and more effective public schools, the Center helps Americans better understand the role of public education in a democracy and the need to improve the academic quality of public schools. The Center conducts research and informs the public about topics such as testing, vouchers, and school improvement.

www.cep-dc.org

National Association for the Education of Young Children
NAEYC is an organization of early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality of programs for children from birth through third grade. NAEYC works to improve professional practice and working conditions in early childhood education and to build public support for high-quality early childhood programs.

www.naeyc.org

American Association of University Women
Since 1881, AAUW has focused on expanding women’s rights in academia and other areas. Many projects focus on increasing girls’ interest and achievement in math, science, and technology. AAUW staunchly defends civil rights, gender equity, and women’s health and reproductive choices.

www.aauw.org

POLITICAL ACTION

NEA’s Legislative Action Center
Keep up with news from Capitol Hill at NEA’s Legislative Action Center. You’ll find updates on bills designed to improve the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, college affordability, and other legislation before Congress. You can track your state senator’s or representative’s voting record and even send an email message to your state and federal legislators. Don’t forget to sign up for the email action alerts!

www.nea.org/lac
American Civil Liberties Union
The ACLU defends the civil rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Some of the ACLU’s focus areas include civil rights in schools, the separation of church and state, and the rights of minorities.
www.aclu.org

Close Up Foundation
The Close Up Foundation’s programs encourage teachers, students, and young adults to participate in the American democratic process through trips to Washington, D.C., and activities with local and state governments. Close Up uses a hands-on approach to educate people about how the government functions.
www.closeup.org

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
For more than 100 years the NAACP has worked for equity and democracy by opposing discriminatory and unjust policies. The primary focus of the NAACP remains the protection and enhancement of the civil rights of African Americans and other minorities at the national, regional, and local level. The NAACP advocates for supportive civil rights legislation.
www.naacp.org

Anti-Defamation League
The Anti-Defamation League combats anti-Semitism, bigotry, and intolerance on various fronts. The organization helps the victims of hate crimes, works to protect individual civil rights, lobbies legislators, and educates people about the danger presented by hate groups. The Web site includes programs and resources to help teachers challenge prejudice and discrimination.
www.adl.org

LaborNet
LaborNet compiles online information about labor unions in the United States and abroad. The site highlights workers’ grievances and labor campaigns and offers news to keep workers informed about union activities. Visitors to the Web site will find links to labor news publications, labor employment, government statistics, and relevant legislation.
www.labornet.org

Human Rights Campaign
The Human Rights Campaign defends the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered citizens. HRC effectively lobbies Congress, provides campaign support to candidates for federal office, and works to educate the public on a wide array of topics, including workplace, family, and discrimination issues that affect gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered Americans.
www.hrc.org

Teaching Tolerance
Founded in 1991 by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Teaching Tolerance provides educators with free educational materials that promote respect for differences and appreciation of diversity in the classroom and beyond. The website offers information on classroom activities, tools, grants, and a link to Teaching Tolerance magazine. Visitors to the site also can register for a monthly e-newsletter.
www.tolerance.org/teach

ILLUSTRATIONS: UTTAM GURJAR
Education Votes
You know by now that everything that happens in the statehouse, Congress, and the White House affects you. So what’s the best way to take action on the issues that impact your work and bottom line? Find out at www.educationvotes.nea.org.

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network
The NDPC provides information for researchers, educators, and policymakers about at-risk students. The NDPC also serves as a clearinghouse on issues related to dropout prevention and offers strategies designed to increase the graduation rate in America’s schools.

www.dropoutprevention.org

Grants

The NEA Foundation
The NEA Foundation awards grants to educators who propose innovative and promising ways to help all students experience academic success and reach their full potential—especially those who have been historically underserved by society’s institutions. NEA Student Program members can partner with eligible teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty who submit grant applications. Examples of grant-funded work include study groups, action research, lesson study, and innovative project-based learning that helps close the achievement gaps. Grant amounts range from $1,000 to $3,000.

www.neafoundation.org

The National Science Foundation
The NSF represents the primary funding source for approximately 20 percent of all federally supported basic research conducted by America’s colleges and universities. In many fields, such as mathematics, computer science, and the social sciences, the NSF is the major source of federal backing. The NSF also offers special funding programs specifically for undergraduate and graduate students.

www.nsf.gov/funding

The Foundation Center
The Foundation Center collects and organizes the names of hundreds of people and organizations that provide funding for socially significant projects. Visitors to the Web site can search an online database for corporate and foundation funding or request a free CD-ROM full of sources. The Center also provides information and research about grant seeking and philanthropic efforts.

http://foundationcenter.org

Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE)
More than 30 federal agencies joined together in 1997 to create the FREE Web site. The site includes information on hundreds of federally supported teaching and learning resources in a variety of subject areas, from the arts to vocational education, and adds new resources monthly.

www.free.ed.gov

Education News

NEA Today
Keep up with education issues and Association news with NEA Today magazine, published five times a year and online at www.nea.org/nea todaymagazine. Get daily news at www.neatoday.org to learn how NEA

Resources
is working on key issues affecting you—everything from NCLB reform to protecting your salary.

**Education Week**
Ed Week covers local, state, and national education news from preschool through grade 12. Periodic special reports hit topics ranging from technology to textbooks.

www.edweek.org

**ERIC**
The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system designed to provide access to an extensive body of education-related literature. The searchable database contains more than one million documents about education issues.

www.eric.ed.gov/

**JOB MARKET**

**Teachingjobs.com**
This Web site maintains information on thousands of available positions in schools in the United States and overseas. Job seekers can receive newsletters and updates by email about the most recent job openings.

www.teachingjobs.com

**Teachers-Teachers.com**
This free service allows applicants to post their résumés and cover letters online, search for jobs by location, receive news about available teaching positions, view school Web sites, and send application materials electronically.

www.teachers-teachers.com

**GreatTeacher.net**
This Web site offers a free service that allows applicants to search for teaching openings by geographical location. Each ad includes a job description and contact information. Applicants also can post their résumés online at the site.

www.greatteacher.net

**American Association for Employment in Education**
AAEE provides information to college career centers, school districts, and teacher candidates about the education job market. At its Web site, preservice teachers will find helpful job hunt publications, links to online job databases, and information on teacher certification. Check out the annual supply and demand report for information about the need for teachers in your field.

www.aaee.org

**Bureau of Labor Statistics**
The Bureau of Labor Statistics, a branch of the U.S. Department of Labor, collects and distributes data about the current job market. In the Bureau’s Occupational Outlook Handbook, you’ll find detailed job descriptions, information on working conditions, training and education requirements, wage estimates, and future job prospects for a variety of occupations. You can search the handbook online for statistical information about education employment.

www.bls.gov
NEA: Supporting future teachers?

What is NEA?

The National Education Association (NEA) is the nation’s leading organization committed to advancing the cause of public education. NEA, with its headquarters in Washington, D.C., proudly claims 3.2 million members who work at every level of education, from preschool to university graduate programs. NEA has affiliates in every state and more than 14,000 local communities nationwide.

At the local level, NEA affiliates offer a variety of services, from conducting professional development workshops on discipline and other issues to bargaining contracts for school district employees.

At the state level, NEA affiliates lobby legislators for the resources schools need, campaign for higher professional standards for the teaching profession, and file legal actions to protect academic freedom and the rights of school employees.

At the national level, NEA lobbies Congress and federal agencies on behalf of its members and public schools. The Association also supports and coordinates innovative projects, works with other education organizations, and assists its affiliates.

How does it work?

NEA members nationwide set Association policy, most notably through an annual Representative Assembly—called the “RA”—held every July. NEA members at the state and local levels elect some 10,000 RA delegates, who, in turn, elect NEA’s top officers; debate issues; and set NEA policy. Between RAs, NEA’s Board of Directors and Executive Committee serve as the top decision-making bodies. Staff at the local, state, and national levels carry out policies implemented by the governing bodies.

How can NEA help future teachers?

By joining the NEA Student Program, you join a network of 60,000 students dedicated to improving teacher education and supporting prospective teachers. As a member of the largest preprofessional Association for future educators, you have the chance to meet practicing teachers and fellow Student members at state and national leadership conferences, workshops, and public forums. You also have the opportunity to
BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

Benefits of Membership

Services

As an NEA Student Program member, you’ll receive two publications to help you follow education trends: Tomorrow’s Teachers, published annually, and NEA Today, published five times a year. You’ll find resources, job information, and links to other NEA Student chapters on the program’s Web site at www.neastudents.org. You also qualify for $1 million of liability insurance coverage through the NEA Educators Employment Liability Program, which covers you every time you step into a classroom. Here are some Student Members’ favorite benefits:

- Ten percent off on textbooks through www.barnesandnoble.com
- Need help with Praxis II? Log on to NEA’s online workshop at www.nea.org/home/praxis.htm.
- Network with fellow future educators across the country on our Facebook page and NEA Groupsites area.

- Plus, you’ll get discounts through the NEA Member Benefits’ Click and Save Program on magazine subscriptions, car insurance rates for you and your parents, and shopping at your favorite stores. Go to www.neamb.com for details.

Professional Development

The NEA Student Program holds its own national leadership and professional development conferences as well. The Student Leadership Conference, which takes place this year on June 27–30, 2011, in Chicago, features information and training sessions, plus a community outreach project. There is also a Fall Connections Conference every November. For more information about attending conferences, contact your state student organizer.

Rebate

You’ll also receive a $20 dues rebate for each year you spend in the NEA Student Program (up to four years). You can apply to receive your rebate during your first year as a teacher.
2010–11 Advisory Committee of Student Members

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Nebraska

Mid-Atlantic Region
Renatae Cuffee
Delaware
Molly Rogers
Ohio

Midwest Region
Amanda Frost
Missouri
Michael Ruggless
Illinois

Northeast Region
Megan Funaro
Connecticut

Pacific Region
Margaret-Suzanne Bell
California

Southeast Region
Samantha Roberts
Florida
Delvin Woodard
Tennessee

West Region
Amber Mills
Arizona

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Committee on Women’s Issues
Jamie Diehl
Montana

Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification
Cheston Saunders
North Carolina

Advisory Committee on Membership
John Belleci
California

Committee on Human and Civil Rights
Nicole Cloutier
Connecticut

Committee on Legislation
Michelle Naquin
Texas

Committee on Employee Advocacy
Dexter Peeples
Alabama

Committee on Membership Services/Affiliate Relationships
Jade Bradley
Virginia

Committee on Professional Standards and Practice
Kristina Holmann
California

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Student Representatives

Board of Directors Representatives
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Illinois
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Virginia
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Resolutions Committee Representatives
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California