



## Leading in a Crisis: Using Strategy to Guide the Affiliate

### No Easy Choices

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, activists and members will continue to closely watch the behaviors and actions of elected leaders.

COVID-19 has already, or soon will, impact the association's strategic plan and financial resources. Now is the time for association leaders to turn to the strategic plan to remind themselves of the vision, mission, core values, organizational goals and priorities. It may be that goals and priorities will shift. Regard-

less of direction, every leader will have an opportunity to use or learn the knowledge, skills, and abilities outlined in the Strategy and Fiscal Health competency domain ([www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment](http://www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment)). Now is the time for leaders to align the association's work with member needs, use data and analyses to inform deci-



*"Through our #RedForEd movement and the response to COVID-19, we have seen the Leadership Competencies come to life every day through our members. Our educator leaders have shown that these competencies are a foundation upon which they can create the environment our students need to be successful."*

– Princess Moss,  
NEA Secretary-Treasurer

sion-making, as well as supporting the financial health of the enterprise.

### 5 Things You Should Do and Know

1. Start by reviewing the association's strategic plan.
  - IDEA: Convene the Association's leadership team. Use powerful questions to guide the conversation. Some questions to consider (not exhaustive):
  - Are the strategies and tactics we are executing still relevant given the moment? What opportunities exist? How do we continue to work toward our goals? What does the affiliate need to start, stop, or continue doing?
2. Assess the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats of the Association, including the use of an equity audit tool.
3. Continue to promote a culture of fiscal responsibility

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by ensuring association bylaws and other governing documents and policies support financial health. At the same time, what are the levers for change within those documents that will allow the leadership to be nimble and agile, during crises or when new challenges arise? In reviewing the governing documents and bylaws, look for language that signals the organization's 'must-do's' and what is optional. Where are the opportunities for giving elected leadership the flexibility they need, while allowing for various forms of decision-making from stakeholders?

4. Adopt financial best practices that support and strengthen the association's fiscal health. Crises provide



an opportunity to review outdated procedures and practices that could lead to mismanagement and a lack of shared accountability.

5. Engage with members, often, to build member support for association strategic goals, and communicate the need for change before, during, and after a crisis.

## Additional Resources

To learn more about the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to navigate leadership during COVID-19, review the NEA Leadership Competency Framework and complete self-assessments of your leadership at [www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment](http://www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment).

Performing a SWOT analysis? Here's one resource that could be helpful: [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC\\_05.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm).

During this crisis, communicating frequently with activists and members should be a key strategy. If you have never used digital and social media, or want to enhance your engagement, NEA has developed a series of short, informational, online learning modules: [www.learn.nea.org](http://www.learn.nea.org).

## Leadership . . . Idaho Style

BY PEGGY HOY, NEA DIRECTOR FOR IDAHO

Last year, at the NEA Leaders for Just Schools training program in North Carolina, I was introduced to the NEA Leadership Competencies. These six characteristics outline the knowledge, skills, and abilities every education leader needs to be effective in their association and in the areas of professional practice. (For a complete list of the competencies, see Page 4.)

Much of the Just Schools training focuses on advocacy, and as the NEA director for Idaho, I see a clear relationship between my understanding of that competency and my ability to help our association build strong, trustworthy relationships with the policymakers whose decisions play them-



Peggy Hoy

selves out in public school classrooms across the state. Part of building those relationships is having the capacity to step back from a situation and look at it from a variety of perspectives, not just my own, and then provide a rational response, not just a reaction.

Last Spring, I put those skills to use

when I was invited by Idaho Governor Brad Little to represent IEA on the "Our Kids, Idaho's Future" task force, which sought to improve dismal policies used by the state to attract and retain professional educators. The task force created favorable recommendations, which included raising the salaries of starting teachers and establishing an advanced professional salary schedule for our veteran teachers.

Now, the governor has established a COVID-19 Crisis Committee for Education. Again, I have been asked to serve. I am the only teacher among superintendents, state board members and gubernatorial staff. Our

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Matt Aber-Towns, IEA executive director, Peggy Hoy, Governor Brad Little, Layne McInelly, IEA president

committee meets virtually several times a week to focus on the ways education funding will be affected by the pandemic.

Conversations about furloughs and reductions in force made it clear administrators were not receiving adequate information about current stimulus options at the federal level. My NEA leadership experience helped me to mitigate the frenzy with administrators and share information that would reset our conversations and direct our committee away from worst-case scenarios. I made NEA's information available to the committee so that they understand the resources that are flowing into our state to help school districts remain whole—this year and next.

IEA is growing as a notable player at the table—as a member of the governor's task force to increase teacher salaries *and* during the global pan-

demic, which has flipped education on its head. Now, my colleagues and I are viewed as the calm voices of reason and trusted

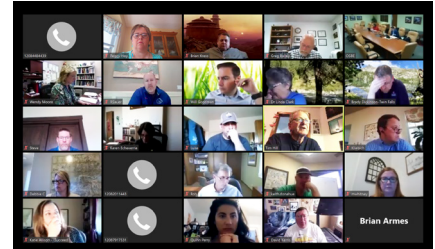
advisors to our pro-public education Republican governor. We know that our success, growth, and opportunities

*I made NEA's information available to the committee so that they understand the resources that are flowing into our state to help school districts remain whole—this year and next.*

—Peggy Hoy  
NEA Director, Idaho

are tied to his success, and we are exercising our political power to ensure he is successful.

As we tackle these challenges educators are being acknowledged for having unique and first hand-knowledge of



COVID-19 Crisis Committee for Education Meeting on Zoom

the issues confronting students and parents. We know the extended closure of school buildings can affect communities in myriad and complicated ways. We see the possibilities and challenges that will need to be tackled as we transition to online and distance learning.

Throughout all of this, Idaho educators in every area of public education will continue to keep their students' needs close to their hearts. In these unprecedented, stressful times, I am happy to be the voice for Idaho educators. More than ever, I know our work with education stakeholders will make a long-lasting impact on our profession and on our state's students and educators. I am committed to representing my association with honesty, integrity, and diplomacy because I know that is what my members expect and deserve.

SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 12-14, 2021

LOCATION TBD

[www.nea.org/leadershipsummit](http://www.nea.org/leadershipsummit)

nea | Leadership  
Development  
NATIONAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

# LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

NEA's Leadership Competency Guide is available online at [nea.org/leadershipdevelopment](http://nea.org/leadershipdevelopment)



## Alabama EDUCATOR LEARNS NEW SKILLS: Self-Care and Mental Wellness

### Restoring Balance Requires Intentional Effort



Benita Moyers

Last year, Alabama kindergarten teacher Benita Moyers was honored with the NEA Foundation's Award for Teaching Excellence in Washington, D.C. The honor is given each year to educators from around the country who show a deep dedication to the education profession, community engagement, professional development, and more. It was a fitting honor for Moyers.

The kindergarten teacher of 14 years has more than a decade of experience as a local and state association leader. She's a Google certified trainer and

works with other educators to help improve their practice. She has an extensive portfolio of leadership skills, picked up at NEA-affiliated workshops and trainings, including NEA's National Leadership Summit and the Emerging Leaders Academy. Yet, hours before the ceremony, Moyers found herself crying.

"I felt like a hypocrite," she says, "because I had decided I was going to find another job at the end of the year."

Her experience as an educator and a leader were no match for her mounting stress and burnout. In 2015, Moyers lost her father to esophageal cancer. Three years later, her mother suddenly passed. Family and close friends also had succumbed to illness. She was fighting her own health issues, too. Add her professional challenges; she had been injured on the job by a student who struggled with stress; she was federally mandated to test kindergarteners and forced to replace her classroom social centers with more academic ones; and she was losing precious planning time to meetings or other duties. All this turned a profession she loves into a struggle, with no outlet to express her frustration—until last year that is.

While the NEA Foundation ceremony was short, it made a lasting impression. That's where Benita Moyers met guest speaker Danna Thomas, founder of the [Happy Teacher Revolution \(HTR\)](#), a network of teachers who serve as a support system for educators struggling with balancing a demanding profession with their own sense of self and happiness. The



Alabama kindergarten teacher Benita Moyers (center right) is honored with the 2019 NEA Foundation's Award for Teaching Excellence in Washington, D.C. She is celebrated by NEA President Lily Eskelsen García (far left), Carl B. (Beau) Brown, chairman of the board, California Casualty (center left), and, at the time, president and CEO of the NEA Foundation Harriet Sanford (far right).

program trains educators on wellness strategies and social-emotional and trauma-informed practices, and then become certified to host support meetings in their home towns.

"Danna was talking about building support groups for teachers and the importance of self-care and mental

***"I brought back this whole change to how I teach and how I help other teachers. I never would have gotten that had I not gone through these programs within NEA and AEA."***

***—Benita Moyers,  
Alabama Kindergarten Teacher***

wellness," recalls Moyers. "I have never heard this spoken about in the education realm. We are told that when students walk into your classroom you need to forget about what's bothering you, put on a smile, and be the best you can be."

She adds, "It's true, you don't want students seeing you upset, but it's hard when you're in pain and have lost loved ones. Yet, you're expected to say

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everything is 'OK.' This gives kids a false image and it tells them you can't ever be upset or sad."

While many educators experience exhaustion, stress, and burnout, schools and districts provide little in the way of support. After the ceremony, Moyers was on a quest to change this.

### A different kind of leadership skill

Moyers enjoys learning new skills and sharing them with others. And some of the "best training I've received has come from NEA and the Alabama Education Association (AEA)," she says, adding that the skills she has learned

**"People are starting to see the importance of self-care and mental wellness," Moyers says, "but many still don't know much about it or may have heard of the buzz words without knowing what it really means."**

*-Benita Moyers*

along the way has "made it easier for me to take these new skills and incorporate them in my classroom and association work. I probably wouldn't be where I am now...if I had not had all of this training."

It's this training coupled with her encounter with HTR's Founder, Danna Tomas, that motivated Moyers to pick up a new skill: self-care.

When Moyers returned to Alabama, she immediately signed up for HTR training. She shares, "I would usually stay after school and help people, and I wouldn't get my work done. I had to learn how to set boundaries. I had to start saying 'no,' and it's hard to say 'no' as a teacher. It also frustrated my team, but I had to do that for my own health and mental wellness."

After she became certified, Moyers started her own support group, which has met much success. As the only certified educator in her state to host these meetings, Moyers has found that "people are hungry for positivity and to learn about social, emotional learning, mental wellness, and self-care."

Additionally, Moyers manages a private Facebook Group that has seen tremendous growth.

"Benita Moyers has been a powerhouse in her local community, and honestly on a national scale," says Danna Thomas. "[She] began her Revolutionary Certification training in the spring of 2019, and now is a leader within the global organization. She singlehandedly organized and spearheaded an over 900 member Facebook community and actively led Happy Teacher Revolution meetings in-person in her own school district as well as in other areas around her state. ...She is truly a gift in her community and exemplifies our belief that teachers are not renewable resources."

### Five Tips from Benita Moyers on how to learn to take care of yourself

1. Learn to say "No."
2. Set boundaries, such as leave your school building at a reasonable hour. If you don't finish your task, it's okay, finish it tomorrow.
3. Enjoy your family by not bringing work home.
4. Find a support system.
5. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

### Taking self-care and wellness to the next level

Late last year, Moyers drafted a resolution that called for the AEA to share self-care and mental wellness resources. She took the resolution to the state's delegate assembly in December 2019 where it passed with overwhelming support.

"People are starting to see the importance of self-care and mental wellness," Moyers says, "but many still don't know much about it or may have heard of the buzz words without knowing what it really means. This is where I feel, as association leaders, we can teach educators how to take care of themselves and the social, emotional needs of their students."

Moyers also provided her voice and expertise to AEA's legislative lobby team who worked with area legislators to pen a resolution urging the Alabama Legislature to fund mental wellness programs for educators and students. The resolution passed one chamber, and then the coronavirus hit the nation. "I don't think it will get to the governor's desk for a signature."

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However, the resolution brought self-care and mental wellness for educators to the forefront, compelling the governor to create a task force to look at teacher recruitment and retention through these two lenses, as well as funding for more school counselors and wellness programs for educators. AEA plans to pick up where they left off once health officials deem it safe to reopen schools.

While Moyers may have returned to her hometown with a national award, she came back with so much more: “I brought back this whole change to how I teach and how I help other

teachers. I never would have gotten that had I not gone through these programs within NEA and AEA.”

Developing social and emotional competencies help educators, especially those who step into leadership, like Moyers, avoid burnout and prevent them from leaving the profession. Moreover, educators who learn how to unwind after a busy day are in a better position to help their students and other educators, as well as lead in their local and state associations. Social and emotional competencies are not usually a part of teacher preparation programs. That’s why NEA is explor-

ing ways to incorporate them as part of the NEA Leadership Competency Framework.

Learn more about NEA’s Leadership Competencies at [nea.org/leadership-competencyguide](http://nea.org/leadership-competencyguide).

Find out about the Happy Teacher Revolution: [happyteacherrevolution.com/](http://happyteacherrevolution.com/).

Join the Happy Teacher Revolution Facebook Group: [bit.ly/h-t-r-facebook-group](https://bit.ly/h-t-r-facebook-group).

A version of this story will appear in the August issue of NEA Today!

## Leaders on The Move

BY BRENDA ÁLVAREZ

### Lawrence Binson

Social Studies Teacher  
North Carolina

“My first touch point with the association was during my second year of teaching when someone approached



Lawrence Binson

me to talk about membership. We talked for a bit. He gave me an application and I filled it out.

“I attended a couple of meetings, but I really wasn’t active, and then I noticed the association was providing

professional development. I started attending those and found the learning experiences were so much greater than the PDs from other groups.

“They were member led and that’s how I became involved in the association. I quickly found that I wasn’t alone—that I could lean on people who could help me grow as an educator, a professional, and as a leader.

“I attended leadership summits and

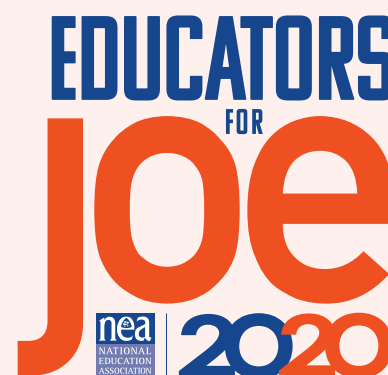
*“I quickly found that I wasn’t alone—that I could lean on people who could help me grow as an educator, a professional, and as a leader.”*

—Lawrence Binson  
Social Studies Teacher,  
North Carolina

## TAKE ACTION WITH NEA’S 2020 CAMPAIGN

After nearly four years of Donald Trump and Betsy DeVos’s anti-public school agenda, educators, parents, and supporters of public education are ready to elect a president who is with us. NEA is working hard in 2020 to elect public education champions up and down the ballot.

Visit [www.StrongPublicSchools.org](http://www.StrongPublicSchools.org) to sign-up for a virtual training, find volunteer opportunities, become an Educator for Joe, and learn more about our campaign.



teaching institutes. I began to see more and more educators advocating for issues that were important to educators, students, and parents. It wasn't just an individual person and by just attending a leadership summit, I learned how to advocate, and that's what motivated me to do more for my students and their families.

"I took on some small leadership roles that eventually led me to serve on the board of directors for the North Carolina Association of Educators and as president of my local association.

"If it wasn't for the association, I don't think I would have picked up a lot of the skill-set needed to help advocate for the resources students need to be successful."

**Marilyn Warner**  
 president of the Florida  
 NEAP-Retired

"When I went to college in the 60s, women didn't have all the career choices they have now—we were limited. Many either became educators, secretaries, or nurses. Now women can do anything they want to do. But for me, teaching is all I ever wanted to do. I loved being in the classroom and seeing my first graders learn to read throughout the year. It was as if the lights went on for them and they suddenly realized, 'I can



Marilyn Warner

do this. I can read!' To me, that was one of the most exciting moments of my career, and I hoped this excitement would make an impact so they became life-long readers.

While in the classroom, I found my association to be instrumental because it gave me additional knowledge about what was happening and needed in public education. I attended meetings and met people who had the same interest as I did or were facing similar problems. I had an immediate community of people I could talk to and share experiences with. It was a common ground right from the beginning. I wasn't being evaluated on what I asked and I knew my colleagues could help me as much as I needed, and they were willing to do it, too.

Teaching was a life-long career for me, and it should be like that for everyone. Today, educators are leaving within

the first five years. It shouldn't be like that. I get excited to hear what young educators are doing and it's one of the reasons why I'm so involved now as a retired educator.

Through my local, state, and national involvement on various committees, I get to see the enthusiasm of all

*"I'm not ready to be that little old lady, sitting at home, twiddling my thumbs yet. As long as I can continue to stay involved, it helps active educators, students, and our grandchildren."*

*—Marilyn Warner*

these active educators and hear about the projects they're working on. It's important to stay involved and help to keep public education alive. As a retiree, I have time to work during the day and help the association.

I'm not ready to be that little old lady, sitting at home, twiddling my thumbs yet. As long as I can continue to stay involved, it helps active educators, students, and our grandchildren."

**Leadership Development Resources**



The vision of the NEA Center for Governance Leadership Development Team is to deepen the Association's collective understanding of leadership development and what it means to be a "NEA Leader." We view the development of education activists as a major strategy for en-

hancing organizational capacity throughout the NEA enterprise. To learn more about Leadership Development resources and programs that can support your leadership journey, visit [nea.org/leadershipdevelopment](http://nea.org/leadershipdevelopment)



## Diversity and Inclusion as a Matter of Practice and Principle

The NEA Leaders of Color Pathways Project is putting into practice the theory that when racial and ethnic leaders are included, given dedicated access, plus follow-up and support, the organization will see an increase in the number of diverse leaders at all levels of the organization.

The project which began last year, includes 68 NEA members who applied and were selected to serve as a peer coach or cohort member. To address the importance of mentorship, project participants were paired with a mentor. Mentors are able to provide guidance on navigating the challenges of leadership, specifically for leaders of color, and assist participants with the creation of individualized leadership development plans. Additionally, peer coaches have an opportunity to deepen and expand their leadership, so that the



Participants and staff liaisons pose for a group picture at the conclusion of the MLT/WLT training in Orlando, FL.

process is equally as valuable for them. In this case, leadership is defined by the NEA Leadership Competency Framework, which includes six competency domains that collectively identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities educators need to lead in the association and in their professions.

Because leadership development is viewed as a journey, rather than attending episodic training events, participants receive directed training at one of three, existing NEA national experiences, beginning with the NEA Minority Leadership Training/Women's Leadership Training, NEA National Leadership Summit, and the NEA Conference on Racial and Social Justice. In between, participants are supported and trained by staff from the Center for So-

cial Justice and Center for Governance, using multiple virtual platforms.

Like every project at NEA, the LOCPD was impacted by COVID-19. Despite not being able to convene at the Leadership Summit and Conference on Racial and Social Justice, the project is using coaching calls and virtual trainings to help participants meet their goals.

These emerging leaders will provide a different perspective, assist in closing the gap in bench strength for leaders, and enhance organizational capacity at the local, state and national levels.

*The Leaders of Color Pathways Project is facilitated by Kim-Shawn Gary of the NEA Center for Governance and Robin McLean of NEA's Human and Civil Rights department.*

## NEA Offers Micro-Credentials

NEA offers over 180 micro-credentials for educators. A micro-credential is a short, competency-based recognition that allows an educator to demonstrate mastery in a particular area, such as creating a safe learning environment for LGBTQ students or education policy-making. Our micro-credentials are grounded in research and best practice and designed to be:

- ▶ **Personalized:** You can create your own learning journey, based on your interests and career goals; gaps in your skills; and the specific needs of your students, school, and district.
- ▶ **Flexible:** You can study when it's convenient for you, alone or with your peers.
- ▶ **Performance-based:** Unlike "sit-and-get" certifications, NEA micro-credentials are awarded based on demonstrated mastery of the subject matter, not just for showing up.

To learn more about micro-credentialing, including information specific to NEA affiliates, visit [cgps.nea.org/micro-credentials](https://cgps.nea.org/micro-credentials). To view the micro-credential library, go to [nea.certificationbank.com](https://nea.certificationbank.com).

