

NEA's Guide to Affiliate Early Career Educator Groups

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Why Focus on Early Career Educators?

As the next generation of our Association's leadership, early career educators are an integral part in the future sustainability and growth of our organization. Creating systems of support for our early career educators is needed to ensure the next wave of educators are equipped with the tools necessary to use their collective voices to build power via organizing, leadership development, and professional learning to be advocates for their students, themselves, and their profession.

What do we gain?

- Increased collective voice
- Increased overall power around issues that matter to educators and students
- Increased membership density among early career educators
- Decrease in active membership loss

It's a tough world out there for new educators... ... and they are voting with their feet.

Forty-four percent of new educators leave the profession within five years of entering the classroom. "The teacher shortage is real, large and growing, and worse than we thought," according to an EPI report. Our message to new educators is simple: "The union is where you find power."

According to new and early career educators, they care about:

- Social justice
- The craft of teaching
- Improving the lives of their students

What they want:

- Authentic relationships built on regular, in-person contact
- Confidence that they are **supported** by their union
- A voice inside and outside of the classroom

How we can support them:

- Encourage them to advocate for the profession
- Build a strong community around unionism and professional practice
- Provide activism and leadership opportunities
- Engage them in collective action to improve pay, benefits, and student learning conditions

If we build it, they will stay

Many new educators don't know a lot about professional associations or unions. At the same time, early career educators are the least familiar with the benefits of joining. The good news is that new educators will stay if they have professional supports, career and leadership pathways, and fair compensation.

68% of Millennials view unions favorably

Source: [Pew Research](#)

Creating an Inclusive Environment for New Educators

“The ultimate survival of public-sector unions will depend not on preventing dropouts but on their ability to convince new employees that union membership is important.”

Source: [Governing Magazine](#)

Supporting ECE Groups is a Win-Win for State Affiliates

Renewing Our Association

- **Growth:** States with ECE groups establish bridges to Aspiring Educator members and improve new educator recruitment and retention.
- **Leadership:** These programs develop and train the next generation of union leaders and activists.
- **Energy:** ECEs will bring in energy as they organize on behalf of our students, bargain for the issues they care about, engage school boards, and lead on racial and economic justice.



Bringing ECE Groups into the Fold

Our job is to identify, recruit, support, and engage new educators in our Association and connect them with **strategic** and **meaningful** opportunities for professional learning, leadership, and advocacy.

Strategic being defined as purposeful; carefully designed or planned to serve a particular purpose or advantage—especially long-term.

Meaningful being defined as serious, important, or useful quality or purpose.

The most successful ECE Groups align their programs, activities, and budgets to include all three of the following:

Leadership

Identification, Development, Training, and Support

Professional Supports

Union-led, union-delivered high-quality professional supports targeting early career educators

Organizing

Membership Organizing, Growth, Recruitment, and Retention: ECEs leading on membership organizing efforts targeting their fellow ECEs.



Best Practices from Affiliates with Successful ECE Groups

Demonstrate Value

- Create and implement relevant professional, social, and emotional supports that meet the needs of ECEs.
- Show that the Association is the path to a successful and meaningful career as an educator.

Foster Ownership & Community

- Actively listen to new members when they express concerns and discuss professional issues.
- Invite ECEs to create and develop their own groups. It promotes ownership and offers an opportunity to invest in something beyond their classroom.
- Build leadership pathways within the ECE group that connect to the Association.
- Create opportunities for community building and sharing between ECE peers.

Make a Commitment

- Resource the ECE group appropriately with staff, time, and money.
- Avoid “one-offs” by planning events in a series and connecting them to the other work of the state association or local.

Grow Your Power

- Educate the ECE group about their union and its victories.
- Train ECEs to become organizers. They are often successful in recruiting, engaging, and supporting each other.
- Be opportunistic: Every event is a chance to capture contact information for future organizing.
- Put professional issues at the center of the work.

Self-Assessment:

Just like there is no one-size-fits-all approach to teaching students, there are no hard-and-fast rules on how to create and grow an ECE group. This self-assessment will allow you to holistically evaluate your current ECE program and think about ways to strengthen your program.

Level 101: *Foundational: Understands processes and strategies for Early Career Educator member recruitment, engagement, and retention.*

Level 201: *Mobilizing & Power Building: Develops imaginative recruitment and retention strategies, specific to Early Career Educators, that continue to grow the Association's diverse membership and influence other Early Career Educators to become more actively involved in the recruitment and engagement process.*

Level 301: *Agenda-Driving: Influences all members to own the agenda of the Association through their active participation and attitude toward collective action.*

Note: It is likely states will have a range of ratings, depending on specific strengths and identified opportunities. For example, an Affiliate may assess themselves at the 101: Foundational level in one area, but a 301: Agenda-Driving in another area. The rubric offers specific, tactical insight on how to move from one level to the next. Reaching a rating of 301: Agenda-Driving in any component is an opportunity to applaud success, test new innovative tactics, or invest deeper into successful tactics. Leaders at the 301 level may be asked to share their work with their colleagues in order to build capacity throughout our union.

We have also included three real-world 301 level best practices by state affiliates, as well as strategies for integrating groups into the larger Association through leadership development, issue organizing, and professional learning. Should you have any questions or need any assistance, please contact Aesha Baldwin directly at abaldwin@nea.org with "ECE Affiliate Help" as the subject.

Strategy	101	201	301
<p>Professional Supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development designed and delivered by affiliate staff or does not offer professional development opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> State affiliate does not participate in ELL or ECLF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development designed and delivered by ECEs and state affiliate staff <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate staff recruit ECEs to participate in ELL and ECLF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development designed and delivered by ECEs <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs recruit other ECEs to participate in ELL and ECLF
<p>Organizing/ Distributive Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No established state, regional, or local ECE group <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs have no role in the planning of back to school events/NEOs nor do they participate <input type="checkbox"/> No follow up with new hires based on New Ed card data following NEOs <input type="checkbox"/> No ECE networking events in your state <input type="checkbox"/> State affiliate does not participate in issue organizing campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Established state OR local/regional ECE group <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs involved in ONLY the planning of back to school events/NEOs OR participate in NEOs when asked by a local leader or affiliate staffer <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate staff and ECEs follow up with new hires based on New Ed cards following NEOs <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate staff plan ECE networking events <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate staff plan issue organizing campaigns and ECEs execute them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Established a state level ECE group that also functions on local/regional levels <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs plan and participate in back-to-school events/NEOs <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs follow up with new hires based on Ned Ed card data following NEOs <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs plan ECE networking events <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs plan and execute issue organizing campaigns
<p>Leadership Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs are rarely/never sent to state and national trainings, meetings, convenings, and RAs <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs are rarely/not represented on local and state committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs are sometimes sent to state and national trainings, meetings, convenings, and RAs <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs are somewhat represented on local and state committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs are regularly sent to state and national trainings, meetings, convenings, and RAs <input type="checkbox"/> ECEs are highly represented on local and state committees

Real-World Models in the States

If they can build it, so can you!

Every ECE group is unique. It's important that early career educators have the space, time, and budget to build a community that is meaningful to them. Below are three models that demonstrate the value of the Association, strengthen the state affiliate, and give early career educators a pathway to leadership.



Model #1: Emphasize Professional Learning Supports

Cultivate organic professional learning opportunities that engage them with their Association.

“I want to learn with my peers.”

Real-World Example: Early Career Learning Labs in Louisiana

Model #2: Issue Organizing: Find a Role for Everyone

Marshall individual talent for collective strength using the distributive leadership to win on issues.

“Help me help myself.”

Real-World Example: Fighting Unfair Educator Assessments in Ohio

Model #3: Develop Leaders and Make Space

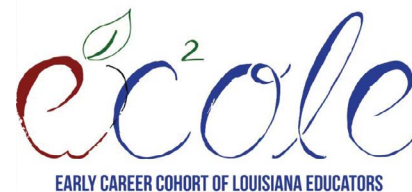
Leadership Development.

“Teach me and trust me to lead.”

Real-World Example: Setting Up Early Career Educators for Leadership in Florida



Early Career Educator Group Model #1



Emphasize Professional Development

The Louisiana Association of Educators

Early Career Cohort of Louisiana Educators (E'C²OLE)

Real-World Example: Early Career Learning Labs in Louisiana

Cultivate organic professional learning opportunities:

ECEs want to know that the benefits of being a member reach far beyond liability insurance. They need to be supported and have access to relevant professional learning that will help them become proficient in their classrooms. E'C²OLE aims to assist new educators in developing the skills needed to meet the demands of today's classrooms. Membership gives educators access to free professional development courses, including Early Career Success Strategies, Cultural Competency trainings, and other areas of best professional practice.

Summary

The Louisiana Association of Educators has created an ECE Network, *Early Career Cohort of Louisiana Educators*, E'C²OLE, with professional learning at the center. Utilizing programs from NEA's Center for Great Public Schools, like Early Career Learning Labs and Micro-Credentials, LAE has added value to the Association by creating a fresh group of professional practice leaders. Established by early career educators and for early career educators, the cohort focuses on providing school employees with less than 5 years of experience in the profession with the support needed to become acquainted with full-time work in Louisiana's K-12 public school system.

Why/how was it created?

LAE strategically targeted locals to participate in the ECLL program where they were also planning to invest in organizing efforts through the New Ed Campaign. Utilizing the New Ed data collected, they created targeted professional learning opportunities for early career educators and used them as follow-up engagement opportunities for New Ed Contacts. The Professional Supports of the ECLL served as an entry point to identify professional practice leaders and build community among early career educators. These leaders, from individual locals, then served as the nexus for the creation E'C²OLE as a statewide network of support within LAE that expanded focus into membership recruitment and retention through Year-Round Organizing efforts.

Resources

[Early Career Learning Labs](#)

[Micro-Credentials](#)

Early Career Educator Group Model #2



Find a Role for Everyone in Issue Organizing

Ohio Education Association

Ohio's New Educators (ONE)

Real World Example: Fighting Unfair Educator Assessments in Ohio

Distributive Leadership in Issue Organizing:

Great leadership is at the heart of every high-quality public school. Within schools, leadership is most effective when it's distributed among a team of individuals with different skillsets and experiences but a shared mission to spark and sustain a school-wide culture of learning and improved outcomes for students. These types of instructional leadership teams can drive positive change throughout a school. Ohio Education Association's ECE Group ONE (Ohio's New Educators) applied this concept of [distributive leadership](#) to build their group.

“When you set out to build the program, you rarely build leaders. When you set out to build leaders, you will always build the program.”

Todd Jaeck

Membership Consultant, Ohio Education Association

Summary

Ohio's New Educators (ONE) is a unique community within the Ohio Education Association (OEA) supporting early career educators in their first years of teaching. This statewide network engages and empowers educators in the first 10 years of their career to become successful, active, and visible in their profession and community through collective action. By using the distributive model, they have successfully recruited and trained the next generation of professional practice and Association leaders. [See ONE overview.](#)

Why/how was it created?

ONE was created in response to the implementation of a punitive high stakes assessment within the educator licensure program of the state called the Resident Educator Summative Assessment (RESA). RESA not only resulted in teachers focusing more on the test than their students, but also added to the already extensive teacher shortage by ending an educator's career after three (3) failed attempts.

Because OEA had invested in [professional issues organizing](#) and membership organizing training of ECEs in Ohio, they were primed to begin organizing around RESA. Members of ONE organized within their union structure to secure support of local leaders and pass a New Business Item calling for changes to RESA and supporting ECEs in the state. ONE generated over 6,000 signatures from ECEs throughout the state calling for the reform of RESA and garnering veteran educator and community support for their cause. They won some improvements to the program, including keeping some educators in the classroom. With this early win under ONE's belt, they are a recognized leader on issues of concern for new educators.

Early Career Educator Group Model #3

Develop Leaders and Make Space

Florida Education Association

Florida's Young Remarkable Educators (FYRE)

Real World Example: Setting Up Early Career Educators for Leadership in Florida



Leadership Development:

Leadership roles facilitate execution of an organization's strategy through building alignment, winning mindshare, and growing the capabilities of others. Florida Education Association's FYRE has built a strong statewide group through its grow-your-own style of leadership development.

Summary

Florida's Young Remarkable Educators, FYRE, was created in 2013. FYRE has done a phenomenal job with identifying and training Association leaders by connecting the values of young educators to values shared by the Florida Education Association. With nearly 20 active chapters and almost another 20 in formation, the program's intended outcomes align with FEA's Strategic Goals through a heavy focus on leadership and self-development.

FYRE has been successful with getting an ECE on almost every major committee within the organization. With networking and opportunities to experience their Association in action, FYRE gives a voice to new members with which to advocate for their students, their Association, and their profession.

Why/how was it created?

FYRE was established based on a want and need for young educators to create their place within the union movement. The political climate has made teaching less desirable to enter as well as to stay. If we do not engage and empower our young and aspiring educators, we will be failing our profession and the students will suffer.

FEA convened a group of young educators in December 2013 to discuss the direction of their profession and their union. Two months later the group reconvened and established FYRE. FYRE is a way to build our bench of union activists and leaders and create an amazing support system for young educators. FYRE has worked to create a cadre of well-rounded professional practice leaders and provide multiple opportunities for growth within the Association. Focusing on training and collaboration, they accomplished this goal without a formal resolution.

Early Career Educator Group Sample Mission Statement

Georgia Association of Educators
Georgia Association of Millennial Educators (GAME)



I. Purpose

The Georgia Association of Millennial Educators (G.A.M.E.) will engage, recruit, and retain Georgia Association of Educators' (GAE) Millennial members while assisting with several areas of growth that are identified by the GAE Board of Directors as well as other committees.

II. Mission

The G.A.M.E. exists to support and enhance early educators in Georgia.

III. Vision

The G.A.M.E. will nurture emerging educators to become highly effective and engaged members of GAE. This will be achieved primarily by providing professional development, mentor/mentee pairing, and opportunities to network, as well as the familiarization with core leadership competencies.

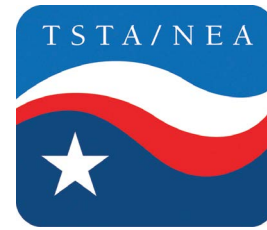
IV. Members

Four (4) active young members from each of the four (4) districts of GAE will be identified to assist with carrying out the vision of the organization and the purpose of this group. This will lead to 16 team members, along with the GAE Executive Director, and UniServ Director/Field Staff. The committee will meet to discuss the Phases of the group during the early summer of 2016. Each phase will include a set timeframe as well as issues or concerns that can be addressed by the young members of the organization.



Additional Resources

Texas State Teachers Association



Sample Early Career Educator Engagement Activity: Drop-In PD Day

The purpose of this activity is to provide new members and potential members an overview of resources available through the Association without having to commit to a full day. The schedule will be published, allowing ECEs to register and drop-in to any session that interests them. Use this as a teaser to add VALUE and make the members and potential members request a full training, available ONLY to members.

Intro to SEA Professional Development Day

SCHEDULE	TITLE/TOPIC	OBJECTIVES	ATTENDEES	PARTICIPATION
9:00 -9:45	Advocate for yourself!	Learn how to write a succinct and effective rebuttal to a letter of reprimand and/or negative evaluation	Recommended for all classifications	Practice writing and presenting samples that make you more confident and professional
10:00 – 11:30	Let's talk about those 16,000 member benefits	Save money with your SEA/NEA benefits	Recommended for all classifications	Learn ways to save on care insurance, groceries, clothing, car repair, and take that cruise you wanted
12:30 – 1:20	The Top 10 Violations of the SEA Education Code and District Policies	Know when and if your administrator is out of compliance. Be an informed employee	Recommended for all classifications	Sometimes administrators violate policy unintentionally. Be a good steward and help your colleagues and supervisor follow
2:30- 3:30	Contract Basics 101	Know and understand the most violated parts of your contract	Recommended for all classifications	Locating and understanding the most violated portions of your contract, the law, and district policies
Snacks and water are provided, but no meals	Come for one session or stay for all			



NEW EDUCATOR
CAMPAIGN

Additional Resources Available
(email NewEducator@nea.org for design files to print).