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## **MEMO**

**TO:** Delegates to the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly

**FROM:** Rebecca S. Pringle, President  
National Education Association

**DATE:** June 2022

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**RE:** NEA Media Campaign Fund

Attached is the annual report on the NEA Media Campaign Fund for the 2021 - 2022 NEA fiscal year as required in Bylaw 2-7n.

The annual membership dues of Active members of the association, as computed pursuant to Bylaw 2-7.a, includes \$20 which is allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund. Sixty percent of the dues were allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises Fund and are available to assist state affiliates in dealing with ballot measures and legislative crises, and 40 percent are available for national and state media campaigns.

The NEA Media Campaign Fund includes two components. The first provides funding for national campaigns to advance the cause of public education and publicize the role of the association and its affiliates in improving the quality of public education. The second provides funds for grants to NEA state affiliates for communication campaigns created and directed by state associations.

This report provides a summary of fund activity since the 2021 NEA Representative Assembly.

Attachment

# NEA MEDIA CAMPAIGN FUND

## ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 2022

### SUMMARY

The NEA Media Campaign Fund is allocated into two separate funds, a national campaign fund and a state affiliate campaign assistance fund. The promotional efforts supported by these funds have helped to positively position NEA and its affiliates as leaders in the cause of providing a high-quality public education for every student, regardless of ZIP code. Administration of the funds falls under the responsibilities of the NEA Center for Communications (CFC).

### NATIONAL BRAND PROMOTIONS

NEA is working with a new media firm, M+R, to revamp our brand program after nearly seven years of working with a previous firm. Our first campaign activation kicked off at the start of Teacher Appreciation Week (TAW) on May 2 and will run for two weeks, pushing to our SMS texting program and TAW pledge. The TAW campaign reaches parents, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) parents, and NEA members asking them to celebrate educators' efforts as they face increasingly difficult working conditions and attacks on public education. The ads can be seen on social media, the New York Times, Spotify, and video streaming platforms. We will continue with the brand campaign during the back-to-school season, with creativity that highlights NEA's vision for great public schools for every student.

The National Media Fund also supports the association's efforts to **rebrand the Read Across America (RAA) program** to be more inclusive and not tied to one specific partner. The rebranding visually demonstrates the association's emphasis on the need for diverse books by diverse authors in public schools nationwide. NEA entered its final year with Marley Dias, author, and social justice activist, as our RAA ambassador in support of pushing back against nationwide book bans and uplifting the diversity of our titles, authors, and stories by producing rich shareable content for an outward facing audience. Marley also recorded interviews with authors and activists in robust conversations from authors Alicia D. Williams to Jason Reynolds on [readacrossamerica.org](https://readacrossamerica.org). The website continues to provide digital resources, new recommended books, and activities, for members and the public, to promote the program and "Celebrate a Nation of Diverse Readers."

### PUBLIC AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

The CFC team partnered with the NEA Center for Advocacy (CFA) on several projects to promote public education initiatives and defend against attacks on public schools and our members.

We have used the National Media Fund for our **SWAT program**, where we partner with state affiliates to support strategic communications campaigns that work to promote and protect public education. The SWAT program provides remote and on the ground communications support through an expert campaign communicator. Opportunities to engage with states come in many forms, but our goal is to increase the short- and long-term capacity of an affiliate while providing strategic and tactical support when they are presented with threats and opportunities. A prime example this past year was our partnership with North Carolina to support their work during the legislative session to amplify the need for a pro-public education budget that will support students and educators in public schools. NEA partnered with the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE) to provide additional strategic planning and execution for a communications plan, while helping to make the public case for NCAE's priorities.

As part of our continued issue accountability work, we are creating content to drive our narratives around public education and delivering this content via paid and social media to key audiences, including parents. We will also be partnering with state affiliates to organize members to create and deliver content to their in-state audiences.

As part of our Strong Public Schools campaign, we utilized the National Media Fund to help educate the public and members around key initiatives around the safe and just re-opening of school buildings amidst COVID-19. In that regard, we used a portion of the funds to educate members about COVID-19 vaccines to best equip members with information and resources to learn about access to vaccines. We also used funds to mobilize members, families, and key allies to reject efforts to continue standardized tests this school year. That effort yielded more than 100 thousand signatures to our open letter to the Department of Education and thousands of entries to the federal registry record open comment page.

The Center for Communications' team supported the **Educator Voice, Health & Safety efforts, and Professional Excellence** work by encouraging members, and families to get vaccinated as the first best step to helping ensure schools can stay open this school year. We also leveraged these funds to create and promote best practices developed for members by members as well as NEA developed programs for educators looking for resources to adjust teaching and learning amidst COVID-19 and the trauma it left in its wake. We've promoted this content via digital and social media advertising and producing and promoting the SchoolMe podcast.

We also partnered to produce two videos that promote the promise and possibilities of community schools to meet the needs of students and their schools.

NEA continues to partner with **ParentsTogether** to engage and mobilize parents. We have successfully partnered with them to engage parents to sign petitions and contact leaders on a wide range of NEA priorities and help us expand our digital capabilities.

We've used this resource to adopt a new platform planning tool to coordinate promotional tools and performance analysis and look at our various content distribution channels by audience, priority areas, and issues.

## **NEW EDUCATOR PROGRAM**

In 2021, National Media funds supported the continuation of the New Educator Digital Journey, an important component of the New Educator Organizing Program. The Digital Journey was created to give new educators an online home and resources, and to complement the field component of the New Educator program. During the pandemic, we've found that now, more than ever, developing an online relationship with new educators is critical to maintaining a connection with this important audience. In the 2021 - 2022 school year we expanded the journey to include an SMS texting program. More than 100,000 new educators received the 2021 - 2022 New Educator Digital Journey this year.

## **ADVANCE RACIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION**

NEA's Center for Communications worked to support our priority work in Racial Justice in Education through artist collective series with several artists producing content for use across centers to engage the members—our allies, parents, and members with diverse visuals. Additional activations and artist driven projects were put on hold because of the emergence of COVID-19. This work has now been adjusted and now under way addressing the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 in communities of color.

We produced several Read Across America videos addressing destructive books ban policies, produced and uplifted Honesty and Education (CRT) content, continued to produce Asian American and Pacific Islander and LGBTQ+ art, music, and content as well as engage creatives in the social justice art field in the development of shareable art, and music in support of NEA and its affiliates.

We also committed time and resources on Race Class Narrative research, which is equal parts empirical message testing, organizing strategy, and a creative communications approach fused together to motivate and mobilize voters to reject right-wing faux populism and embrace progressive solutions and the kind of government that can implement them for our members, parents, and students.

### **State Affiliate Advertising Assistance Program**

When the NEA Representative Assembly established the NEA Media Campaign Fund, 20 percent of the available funds were earmarked for grants to state associations for advertising initiatives and/or expanding the reach and activities of existing state advertising efforts.

The NEA Representative Assembly also established a broad-based advisory group to decide how funds are spent and to create guidelines and criteria for making those decisions.

### **State Affiliate Advertising Assistance Advisory Group**

- Christine Sampson Clark, NEA Executive Committee member, New Jersey
- Rudolph Burrus, NEA Board of Directors, Pennsylvania
- Rachella Dravis, NEA Board of Directors, Iowa
- Megan Tuttle, president, New Hampshire
- Maddie Fennell, executive director, Nebraska
- Nancy Andrews, communications director, Connecticut
- Sarah Antonacci, SEAComm President Proxy, Illinois
- Kyle Leyenberger, communications specialist, Arkansas
- Ramona Oliver, senior director, NEA Center for Communications (Advisory Group chair)

Criteria, guidelines, and application forms are distributed annually to state association presidents, executive directors, NEA Board members, and state association communications directors. At the request of NEA state affiliates, the NEA State Media Advisory Group considers and approves grants in the NEA fiscal year in which the grant will be provided.

For the 2020 - 2021 NEA fiscal year, the Advisory Group reviewed 12 competitive grant applications submitted by 12 NEA state affiliates. Fund requests totaled \$2.433 million; \$3.552 million was available.

After careful review and a full debate, the Advisory Group fully or partially funded 12 proposals, totaling \$2.315 million. These funds were made available to state affiliates during the 2020 - 2021 NEA fiscal year. The remaining balance will carry over to next year.

NEA state affiliates that have received funding during the 2020 - 2021 budget year are:

ALABAMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$120,000
ARIZONA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$98,424
CONNECTICUT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$250,000
MICHIGAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$340,000
NEA NEW MEXICO	\$125,000
NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS	\$300,000
NORTH DAKOTA UNITED	\$250,000
OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$130,000
OKLAHOMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$250,000
THE SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$150,000
VIRGINIA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$250,000
WYOMING EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$51,250
<b>TOTAL APPROVED for FY2020 - 2021</b>	<b>\$2,314,674</b>

## ENTERPRISE OPERATIONS

### Digital Tools

A key priority of the Enterprise Operations team is to identify and operationalize digital organizing tools that will allow us to effectively and efficiently leverage data to strengthen, personalize, and scale our communication with members and the public alike around the value and the necessity of the association in their lives. As such, the Center for Communications' team supports several Enterprise digital tools, including **EveryAction**, **Sprout Social**, **Hustle**, and **Salesforce Marketing Cloud**.

Many of these platforms are offered to state affiliates to support their efforts to grow and strengthen the connection members, potential members, and education activists have with the union online. In addition, we are in the process of developing an offering around the nea.org Content Management System, Drupal, for all state affiliates. To date, through a pilot program, seven state affiliates have come onto this platform: Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

### Enhancing NEA.org

Nea.org is our most powerful digital asset. At a moment in time when NEA and our affiliates are looking to drive the growth and strength of our union and be a valued resource for members, improving the presentation and utility of this platform is a critical opportunity. The new nea.org, which was launched in September 2020, is designed to demonstrate the value of membership, serve as a unifying voice for public educators, set a clear agenda for members, and position the union as a relevant and vital organization in the fight for public education.

Data collected since the launch of the revamped nea.org shows that members and potential members are engaging with the site for longer durations, exploring more content, and taking actions ranging from initiating membership registration to signing up for professional learning opportunities.

This fiscal year, a key enhancement to the website is the launch of the NEA Action Center, which has been designed to increase visitor participation in advocacy opportunities, and help visitors to nea.org understand what NEA advocates for and why—and [its powerful track record](#) in advocating for students and schools. Some key highlights of the action center include an [Issue Explainer template](#) that allows for new storytelling and encourages visitors to learn and do more a highly shareable [Action template](#) that crisply pairs problem and response, and a [Take Action page](#) that shows the full breadth of NEA's commitment to advocating for change and allows visitors to browse for opportunities that matter most to them.

We also launched the [Representative Assembly](#) web experience on nea.org that protects the delegates' democratic process, while also inviting NEA members and the public to understand their work and follow the outcomes. The new presence introduced a log-in feature, expands the nea.org search experience for Business Items and events, and prioritizes storytelling.

## **Member Research**

NEA continued to support state affiliates in listening to members' needs and support. This year, we supported more than two dozen state affiliates in member research. In addition, NEA fielded national member, parent, student, and activist surveys (including member surveys in two dozen states).

## **Media**

NEA has prioritized lifting the voice of NEA leaders and members in the media to shape the narrative around public education and to advocate on behalf of students and our members. We have used Satellite and Radio Media Tours to connect with local and national media outlets on important topics like educator shortage and supporting educators during back to school. We also have partnered with vendors and state affiliates to help increase member voices in the media to help shape the narrative around safety in schools, school funding, educator shortage, social and emotional health, educator pay, and other important topics. NEA has had major success in driving media coverage, and this work was key to that.

Finally, NEA will be sponsoring the Education Writers Association and National Black Journalist Association/National Hispanic Journalist Association annual conferences, where reporters from outlets across the country congregate to learn about important topics and get to know NEA's leaders and staff who they can work with.



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