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# REPORTS OF COMMITTEES 2021–2022

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July 2022

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# Foreword

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The NEA committee structure provides for:

- Board Strategic Committees that are aligned with the Association’s Strategic Plan and Budget and advance at least one of NEA’s strategic goals or objectives. The Board Strategic Committees provide a structure through which the Association benefits from the expertise and talent of education practitioners, who are also trained as higher-level decision-making leaders. The work of these committees is intended to inform and guide the advancement of NEA’s Strategic Objectives;
- Social Justice and Constituency Committees that make recommendations to the governing bodies on matters of concern to constituencies they represent;
- Special committee established on an ad-hoc basis.

On May 14 2022, the NEA Board of Directors received and acted on the 2021–2022 committee reports and recommendations. The Board’s action on recommendations is shown at the conclusion of each of the following committee reports

# Aspiring Educators

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cameo Kendrick, <i>Chair</i> Kentucky	Ronald Duff Martin <i>Executive Committee Liaison</i> Wisconsin	Sabreena Shaller Pennsylvania
Amanda Gainer Virginia	Jonathan Oyaga California	Brianna Stone Indiana
Elizabeth Horvat Illinois	Alana Rigby Florida	Dajsha Williams Ohio
Samantha Kress Pennsylvania	Vincente Rodriguez California	<i>Staff Liaison:</i> Ann Coffman Sonia Yilmaz

## I. COMMITTEE OVERVIEW & WORK ASSIGNMENTS:

The 2021-22 Aspiring Educator Advisory Committee (ACAE) met bi-weekly as a whole group and then also met bi-weekly on two subcommittees – one focused on the Aspiring Educator Conference (AEC) and the other focused on the work of the Aspiring Educator Program. Three meetings were held that explicitly dealt with the charges assigned to the committee – November 16, 2021, January 25, 2022, and March 22, 2022. The first two of these meetings focused on charges 1 and 2 respectively and the last was to vote on the charge recommendations that would be submitted to NEA.

**Structure:** During 2021-22 school year, the work of the ACAE was implemented by the members of three small-group subcommittees: 1) Awards Ceremony, AE Celebration; 2) Community Builders, Self-Care; and 3) Professional Development. The members of each subcommittee are shown in the table below:

Subcommittee	NEA Board Lead	NEA Staff Lead	CAE Members
Awards Ceremony, AE Celebration	Dylan Toth Illinois	Kimberly Anderson	Amanda Gainer, Elizabeth Horvat, Cameo Kendrick, Samantha Kress
Community Builders, Self-Care	Yesenie Cano Oklahoma	Andrea Prejean/ Ann Coffman	Jonathan Oyaga, Brianna Stone, Dajsha Williams
Professional Development, AEC Advocacy	Hannah StClair Oregon	Blake West	Sabreena Shaller, Vicente Rodriguez, Alana Rigby

**Responsibilities:** The Conference subcommittees met individually as needed and in whole group sessions bi-weekly, and made recommendations to the Aspiring Educators Conference (AEC) Planning Committee through the ACAE Chair, who is also the national Aspiring Educators Chair. The subcommittees will also help to implement the AEC.

ACAE members also simultaneously served as a member of one of the following three 2020-2021 AE Work Teams: Member Engagement; State Support; and Chapter Supports. This additional responsibility was designed to engage and strengthen specific components of the national Aspiring Educator Program—and ultimately help inform the recommendations for the AEC.

### Orientation and Subcommittee Meetings:

The 2021-2022 ACAE began its work during a virtual Orientation meeting held October 22-23 2021, followed by three additional meetings: November and December 2021, January 2022, culminating on March 23, 2022 to finalize and vote on the recommendations. In addition, an in-person NEA Aspiring Educators Leadership Development Convening was held in Washington, D.C., December 11, 2021, which included the ACAE members meeting on December 12.

## II. 2021-22 COMMITTEE CHARGES

### Barriers for MSI students in the Profession and Union:

1. Identify supports/practices of how the NEA and its affiliates can better assist the transition from Aspiring Ed member to professional member.
2. Identify the elements integral to Aspiring Educator leadership to recommend what should be included in AE Leadership training.
3. Provide input to the Aspiring Educator Conference Planning Team through the Aspiring Educator Advisory Committee Chair.

## III. RECOMMENDATIONS:

**Charge 1** – Identify supports/practices of how the NEA and its affiliates can better assist the transition from Aspiring Ed member to professional member.

### Recommendation:

1. That NEA investigate the impact of scaffolding dues—a gradual increase of dues in relation to salary – for the first five years of Active Membership, and use the findings to determine whether to initiate a pilot to document the impact in relation to recruitment, retention, and engagement within the Association and profession.
2. That NEA improve the collection and analysis of AE data as members move from Aspiring Educator to Active Member and make that data readily available to AE stakeholders and organizers.

### **Discussion:**

This first charge is one of prime and ongoing importance to Aspiring Educators and was addressed in both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 committee reports, although a different focus was presented in each year. In 2019-20, the lens used focused on building and enhancing national, state, and chapter program development. In the following year, 2020-21, the focus was on Aspiring Educators of Color studying at Minority Serving Institutions to increase their recruitment and support into both the profession and the Association.

### **This year’s ACAE members identified two recommendations to address Charge 1:**

- A need to adjust union dues to be more in line with educator salaries earned during the first five years of professional employment, and if adopted, to document any impact on member recruitment, retention, and engagement. This proposed financial strategy is one that can be part of the Association’s comprehensive approach to addressing the teacher shortage – which has been exacerbated by the global pandemic now continuing into a third year. AE leaders and members have discussed this issue for the past few years and it was a prominent issue addressed by the ACAE by during their January 25, 2022 recommendations meeting. The following initial examples to the approach of scaling association dues for new educators were cited:

- Examples of states that are currently picking up the cost of Aspiring Educator dues and paying to NEA, with no direct cost to AEs: Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, New Mexico, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina;
- Education Minnesota (reduced dues for new teachers); Florida Education Association (consideration of reduced dues);
- Pennsylvania State Education Association (dues rebate program)

It was acknowledged, however, that some actions would likely require a change to NEA’s bylaws. There was also mention of an NEA study conducted years ago involving a pilot state where scaffolded dues were implemented to accommodate certain situations, but neither the committee nor NEA staff inquiries have been able to locate this report.

- A need to collect appropriate, strategic, and more accurate data for tracking members, starting specifically with Aspiring Educator members and their unique demographic and tracking considerations. This is critical toward addressing existing Association contact and engagement “gaps” currently being experienced at the local, state, and national levels. Further, there is the related critical need to track—at the very onset of members—our pre-service members consistently throughout their professional career, and to include data about their civic, community, and leadership engagement. This is necessary to increase association capacity to strategically plan, deliver, and effectively respond to member current/real-time, ongoing and future needs.

Some examples of AE-specific data that should be captured and integrated into the NEA 360 database for future analysis of the impact of variables in member recruitment, retention and engagement include:

- School Campus Address
- Permanent Mailing Address
- School Email
- Personal Mail
- Preferred way to receive association communications (provide options and ability to rank preference)
- College or University attending
- If you’ve changed schools, why?
- Year in College/University
- College/University Major (and Minor, if applicable)
- Does your program provide paid student teaching?
- Are you currently participating in paid student teaching?
- Expected Graduation Date
- Are you interested in a Teacher Residency Program?
- Do you:
  - plan to teach in your home state?
  - plan to teach in your home community?
  - plan to teach in the state where you attended school, if it’s other than your home state?
- When was the most recent date when you voted?
- Other

**Charge 2** – Identify the elements integral to Aspiring Educator leadership to recommend what should be included in AE Leadership training.

**Recommendation:**

That NEA prioritize the various elements identified as integral to Aspiring Educator leadership into a formal orientation and follow-up trainings for new ACAE members and other AE leaders – to be adapted and updated with AE leader input, as needed.

**Discussion:**

The primary group discussion and development occurred at the first ACAE recommendation meeting, held in virtual format on November 16, 2021, with opportunity for continued feedback thereafter. Prior to the meeting, the committee members prepared for examining the committee charge and development of recommendations by review the 60-minute module “Leadership Development 101: A Foundational Course for Activists and Leaders” on the NEA Learning Management System (LMS) at <https://neapartnera.learnupon.com>

NEA Center for Governance staff, Associate Director Cory Wofford and Senior Policy/Program Specialist Kisha Davis-Caldwell of the Center’s Leadership Development Team, facilitated the initial in-depth exploration of the charge and discussion of the elements. ACAE members provided written feedback after the initial meeting and a final review in March 2022.

ACAE members affirmed that effective AE Leadership Training Program should include a focus in three areas:

1. Better Understanding of Self
2. Better Understanding of Leadership (Leadership Development v. Professional Development)
3. Better Understanding of the Association

ACAE members believe that the program should be flexible and provide the opportunity for Aspiring Educators to craft an individualized leadership plan that meets their unique need for enhanced growth. Components under each area could include, but not be limited to:

- AE Core Values
- Understanding and crafting one’s WHY statement
- Story of Self
- Understanding the Structure and Strategic Framework of NEA including NEA’s Vision and Mission
- Understanding NEA-focused Tools for Leadership (Leadership Competencies,
- Teachers Leadership Institute/TLI, ESP Professional Growth Continuum/PGC, etc.)
- The Three (3) Frames of Unionism
- Social and Racial Justice efforts and tools

**CHARGE 3:** Provide input to the Aspiring Educator Conference Planning Team through the Aspiring Educator Advisory Committee Chair.

The AEC has ongoing work and planning to implement Conference plans for June-July 2022. The recommendations for this work have included the AEC Planning Team as work has moved forward.

Committee Recommendations	Relevant Charge	Board of Directors Action
1.The Committee recommends that NEA investigate the impact of scaffolding dues—a gradual increase of dues in relation to salary--for the first five years of Active Membership, and if adopted, then propose a timeline to pilot and document the impact in relation to recruitment, retention, and engagement within the Association and profession.	Charge 1: Identify supports/practices of how the NEA and its affiliates can better assist the transition from Aspiring Ed member to professional member	Refer to President and Executive Director
2. The Committee recommends that NEA ensure that its current enterprise-wide data initiatives specifically prioritize the collection and strategic analysis of critical Aspiring Educator-specific data, and create the necessary data nexuses in NEA 360 to accurately track individuals in association, civil, and community leadership and engagement from Aspiring Educator to Active Members.	Charge 1: Identify supports/practices of how the NEA and its affiliates can better assist the transition from Aspiring Ed member to professional member	Adopt
3. The Committee recommends that NEA prioritize the various elements identified as integral to Aspiring Educator leadership into a formal orientation and follow-up trainings for new ACAE members and other AE leaders—to be adapted and updated with AE leader input, as needed.	Charge 2: Identify the elements integral to Aspiring Educator leadership to recommend what should be included in an AE Leadership training.	Adopt

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# ESP Careers

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## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Margaret Powell, *Chair*  
Jackson, NC

Vin Levcowich  
Wood River Jnct, RI

Alfonso Salais  
Lansing, MI

Andrea Beeman  
Maple Heights, OH

John McLaughlin  
Jeffersonville, IN

Ivory Smith  
Pittsville, MD

Gwendolyn Edwards  
Dumfries, VA

Rae Nwosu  
Austin, TX

Dennis Tabb  
St. Louis, MO

Karl Goeke  
Bloomington, IL

Saul Ramos  
Worcester, MA

Erika Zamora  
Perris, CA

Nelly Henjes  
Clearwater, FL

Robert Rodriguez  
*Executive Committee Liaison*  
Riverside, CA

*Staff Liaisons:*  
Amber Parker  
Jennie Young

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### Charge 1

Identify the obstacles, impacts and potential solutions for the significant shortage of education support professionals (ESPs) across America's schools and submit recommendations for NEA action to address the issue.

The ESP Careers Committee presented its end product for Charge 1 to President Pringle and Vice President Moss on November 17, 2021. The report, which can be found on the final three pages of this ESP Careers Committee report, identifies the obstacles, impacts and potential solutions for the significant shortage of education support professionals (ESPs) across America's schools and concludes with recommendations for NEA action to address the issue. Given the ongoing and extensive impact of ESP shortages, the committee worked diligently and with a sense of urgency to complete this charge.

The committee first sought to gain insight into the experiences of ECC members and others around ESP staff shortages. Committee chair Margaret Powell, in collaboration with the NEA ESP Quality team, developed and disseminated an informal survey to committee members who, in turn, shared it with their networks. Survey respondents were asked to identify obstacles, impacts, potential solutions, and recommendations for NEA action. The committee reviewed the results, which informed the recommendations found in the report.

Every respondent indicated that, yes, they were experiencing ESP staff shortages. Most respondents indicated that paraeducators were experiencing shortages followed by custodial and maintenance and then transportation services. When asked what obstacles they thought were causing the shortages, many responded that low wages, poor benefits, lack of respect, feeling undervalued, poor working conditions, and COVID-19 were the precipitating factors.

When asked about the impacts of ESP staff shortages, responses included: increased workload/longer working

hours, expanded assignments and responsibilities, cuts in student services, impact on staff mental and physical health, low staff morale, and increased student behavior issues and violence. When asked what their school district or college/university was doing to address ESP staff shortages, responses included: increasing pay, holding job fairs, offering signing and retention bonuses, and paying for required certifications. Lastly, when asked how NEA should engage around the issue of ESP staff shortages, responses included engaging around better pay and benefits, developing talking points, working with federal agencies to create career pathways for ESPs, and continuing to advocate that ESPs are professionals who deserve professional pay, hours, and respect.

Fortunately, because of President Pringle's commitment to prioritize and move this important work forward, NEA has and continues to take an inclusive and comprehensive approach to addressing ALL educator shortages.

### Charge 2

Review the nomination submissions and recommend to the Executive Committee a recipient for the 2022 ESP of the Year.

At an October 19 virtual meeting, Jennie Young (ESPQ) reviewed the ESP of the Year (ESPOTY) timeline noting that the nomination and scoring process would remain online using the same system as last year and that the criteria and nomination requirements had not changed. Affiliate points of contact once again worked with nominees to collect award requirements and then submitted them on their behalf. Important dates were shared, including the date for submitting nominations and the date of the next virtual meeting to review the scoring process and receive implicit bias training.

On December 16, the committee participated in a virtual meeting during which they received training on implicit bias as it relates to scoring nominations objectively. They also reviewed the nomination review and scoring process

(e.g., award criteria, nomination package requirements, scoring rubric and materials) and received an online demonstration of the online reviewer portal through which the committee reviews and submits scores for each nomination. Optional question and answer sessions were also held virtually on January 11 and 18.

At the February 11 meeting, which focused on selecting the ESPOTY, Margaret reviewed items of importance, including the confidentiality of all matters related to the selection process before, during, and after the meeting; objective discussion and scoring; and the process for the meeting (i.e., decision making based on Robert's Rules of Order). Committee members were reminded that the recommended nominee remains anonymous until announced at the NEA ESP National Conference on March 26.

The selection process took place and Debra Ward-Mitchell, a paraeducator from Illinois, was selected for recommendation to the Executive Committee.

A subsequent debrief on Charge 2 focused on better connecting the ESPOTY awards program to the strategic, mission-driven work of NEA. Committee members were asked, "After reviewing and scoring this year's nominations, how do you think we can use the ESPOTY awards program and nominees to grow and strengthen membership?"

Highlights of the debrief included:

- Establish a targeted mentoring program for nominees who have completed the process so they can support future nominees in their state and others who have not

been through the process. The goal would be to get all affiliates to submit a nominee each year.

- Implement a public outreach program to highlight what ESPs do and their impact on the community, students, etc. Members know what ESPs do, but the public doesn't necessarily know their roles and responsibilities or the impact they have on education.
- Use the accomplishments and activities of recipients of the NEA ESP of the Year to highlight the broad spectrum of individuals involved in the education process and the diverse portfolio of initiatives and actions that ESPs undertake beyond those associated with their specific profession.
- Use the word "professional" intentionally and consistently when talking about ESPs and the work they do.
- Have a session at the NEA ESP National Conference where current and past recipients of the NEA ESPOTY award share their experiences during their time as the NEA ESPOTY (e.g., what they did, what they are doing now, how the award has catapulted their professional or personal life). The goal of the session would be to inspire, encourage, and help other ESPs recognize that they too can be or already are an ESPOTY. Create and disseminate a PSA that highlights the last five NEA ESP of the Year recipients, their journey, and accomplishments.
- Utilize ESP leaders to help promote and lift the awards program to state leaders. This could include explaining the nomination and selection process, the role and activities of the NEA ESPOTY once selected, and ways for NEA At-Large ESP Directors to help with promotional activities.



## MEMO

**TO:** Becky Pringle and Princess Moss

**FROM:** Margaret N. Powell  
Chair, ESP Careers Committee

**DATE:** June 20, 2022

**RE:** ESP Careers Committee (ECC) Charge 1 End Product

The ESP Careers Committee is pleased to present the following report as its end product for *Charge 1: Identify the obstacles, impacts and potential solutions for the significant shortage of education support professionals (ESPs) across America's schools and submit recommendations for NEA action to address the issue.* The report identifies the obstacles, impacts and potential solutions for the significant shortage of education support professionals (ESPs) across America's schools and concludes with recommendations for NEA action to address the issue.

The following findings were derived from the results of an informal survey disseminated to committee members and their networks as well as committee discussion.

### Obstacles/Causes of ESP Staff Shortages

- Low wages and benefits (especially health benefits). You can go to McDonalds or Amazon to make a better salary.
- Increased workload; expanded responsibilities and assignments
- Health and safety concerns from COVID
- Poor working conditions
- Student violence. Students are "WILDING OUT"! Many ESPs are going to Uber Eats because there they have minimal contact with others, they can choose their own hours, and they are not hit, slapped, or spit on.
- Lack of opportunity for advancement; having to work several years to move up the pay scale
- Lack of respect; lack of inclusion; feeling undervalued
- Disrespect, especially from certificated staff; classism/elitism

### Impacts of ESP Staff Shortages

**Impacts on Students** (i.e., students not receiving services they need and deserve)

- As a result of food service shortages, there are reduced food options at lunch, students must wait longer to get their food when serving lines are shut down, and food is not even being delivered to schools due to overall supply shortages.

- Transportation routes cut, resulting in crowded buses, students having to find rides to school, enduring longer bus routes and having to wake up much earlier as a result, students arriving late or not making it to school at all, students having to wait for buses after school – all of which is added to stress to both students and parents.
- As positions have gone unfilled and as duties have changed to address COVID, students with chronic health conditions are not receiving the services they need.
- With so many vacant paraeducator positions students are losing instructional time, not receiving language translation services, their full IEP services, and the social and emotional support that they need more than ever.

### **Impacts on Staff**

- There is an increase in workload; some ESPs are working longer hours, and, as a result:
  - Bus drivers having additional routes/double and triple runs
  - Paraeducators assigned more students due to sub shortages
  - Custodians are working multiple shifts; are having to cut back on regular cleaning and maintenance; aren't able to stock classrooms and restrooms with supplies
  - Skilled trades can't keep up with repairs needed to help create safe learning and work environments
- Expanded work assignments and responsibilities (e.g., staff being assigned additional responsibilities outside of their normal job descriptions to cover the gaps left from vacant positions)
  - For example, in one district bus mechanics, monitors, and other staff are covering vacant routes.
  - ESPs are assigned unpaid additional duties including having to monitor students who are waiting for buses.
  - Paraeducators have to clean classrooms and replenish supplies due to a shortage in custodians.
  - Job requirements for teacher assistants changed to require sub certification so they can be deployed



- as a sub (in addition to their contracted job) when there are sub shortages
- Staff shortages lead to constant changes in schedules, which are contributing to low morale of staff (and staff retiring or quitting).
- Increase in ESPs (for example, paraeducators) leaving the profession due to an increase in student behavior issues and violence toward each other and staff.
- ESPs are leaving the profession to jobs where they have minimal contact, choose their own hours, and don't get "hit, slapped, or spit on", are paid higher wages and offered benefits.
- All of this, and more, is contributing to a stressful working environment and the physical, mental, and emotional deterioration of staff.

Potential Solutions (When asked what the respondents school district or college/university was doing to address ESP staff shortages, responses included:)

- Increase pay and benefits
- Create additional support positions
- Provide additional pay for staff having to take on extra duties (e.g., paraeducators are receiving pay to take on additional assignments resulting from teacher and substitute shortages).
- Offer hiring incentives and/or retention or "hazard pay" bonuses
- Pay for required certifications, such as CDL certifications for bus drivers
- Continuous use of COVID leave for staff that must quarantine

#### Recommendations for NEA Action

The issue of ESP job shortages requires long-term "big" solutions and a collective will to recognize that many of the needs and issues outlined in this document were present long before COVID. While NEA cannot solve this issue, we believe NEA can engage with federal, state and local stakeholders in the following ways to develop short- and long-term solutions.

- Engage around **better pay and benefits**, including:
  - Engaging in a National Living Wage Campaign, including lobbying the federal government to establish a national living wage
  - Providing support and resources to affiliates so they can engage in statewide living wage campaigns
- Engage in an initiative to **rebrand public education** in order to recruit and retain individuals in the education profession. Approach rebranding by asking, "What do we need to meet student needs?" and reimagining what it means to be an ESP.
- ESP-focused legislative program and lobbying efforts
- Host an NEA summit of educators to address ESP staff shortages
- Host a roundtable discussion with White House (e.g., First Lady Jill Biden) and/or Department of Education official (e.g., Secretary Cardona)
- Engage with federal agencies to create opportunities for career pathways for ESPs
- Develop ESP job shortages talking points for affiliates and local leaders
- Continue to advocate that ESPs are professionals who deserve professional pay, hours, and respect

- Engage in advocacy efforts around related workplace protections and/or benefits (e.g., forgiveness for certification costs after a period of employment, tenure like protection for members)
- Increase awareness of certificated staff on the importance of demonstrating respect for ESPs in an effort to reduce or eliminate classicism and elitism

#### Federal Resources Available

Many of the solutions and activities outlined in this report can be implemented using federal resources such as Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. These funds are available to provide students with social, emotional, and academic supports and to implement COVID-19 mitigation strategies to ensure the health and safety of all building occupants. Continued promotion of NEA's [Federal Emergency Aid for Public Education: A Guide to Funding Amounts, Uses, and Requirements](#) can help members understand the available emergency resources for public schools; identify the activities, programs, and services the funds support; and advocate for evidence-based solutions for students. Similarly, the [ARPA Checklist](#) can be used to identify allowable ESSER funding priorities.

# ETHNIC MINORITY AFFAIRS

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## COMITTEE MEMBERS

Jodi Kunimitsu, *co-chair*  
Wailuku, HI

Christine Trujillo, *co-chair*  
Henderson, CO

Terry Addison  
Puyallup, WA

Maritza Avila  
Port Hueneme, CA

Karen Butler-Moore  
Lynwood, IL

Gina Harris  
Oak Park, IL

Tracy Hartman-Bradley  
LaVista, NE

Taunya Jaco  
San Jose, CA

Edwin Kagawa  
Hilo, HI

Cherlynn Lee  
Kirtland, MN

Ricky Lind  
Anchorage, AK

Cecily Myart-Cruz  
Inglewood, CA

Alberto Nodal  
Castro Valley, CA

Estella Owoimaha-Church  
Lawndale, CA

CarVaughn Page  
Loganville, GA

Christine Sampson-Clark,  
*Executive Committee Liaison*  
Trenton, NJ

Roman Trejo  
Blue Island, IL

Tammie Yazzie  
Glendale, AZ

*Staff Liaisons:*  
Merwyn Scott  
Lindsay Pfeifer

*Report coming July 2022*

# Human and Civil Rights Awards

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## COMITTEE MEMBERS

Jennifer Scurlock, *Chair*  
Eugene, OR

Heather Bakke  
Winthrop, MN

Reed Bretz Grand Rapids, MI

Phyllis Carter-Bell  
Liberty Twnp, OH

Michelle Dennard  
Brooklyn Park, MN

Michael Harman  
Salt Lake City, UT

Tracy Hartman-Bradley  
LaVista, NE

Serena Kotch  
Clarence Center, NY

Robbie Kreitz  
Dublin, CA

Aaron Kubo  
Keaau, HI

Anita Lang  
APO, FEA

Turquoise LeJeune Parker,  
Durham, NC

Marcia Mackey  
Rosebush, MI

Cecily Myart- Cruz  
Inglewood, CA

Robert Rodriguez  
*Executive Committee Liaison*  
Riverside, CA

DeWayne Sheaffer  
Carson, CA

Nick Sirek  
Eau Claire, WI

Angela Stewart Columbus, OH

Christine Trujillo  
Las Cruces, NM

Kelly Villalobos  
Keyes, CA

Yan Yii  
Stoneham, MA

*Staff Liaisons:*  
Alexandria Richardson  
Shannon Nephew  
Michael Scott

## Introduction

Due to the enduring coronavirus pandemic, the Human and Civil Rights Awards Committee hosted all virtual meetings throughout the fiscal-program year to plan for the 2022 Human and Civil Rights Awards in accordance with their charges. The committee met virtually on October 25th 2021; January 27th, 2022 and on February 20th 2022.

At the onset of the year, the committee chair laid out a vision for committee affairs and engagement that would focus on re-educating the committee members on award category stakeholders and the general historical legacy of the HCR Awards and how to carry that legacy forward.

### Charge 1

Review the criteria, process and forms for nomination of candidates for all Human and Civil Rights Awards, and make changes as needed. Review the nomination submissions and recommend to the Executive Committee recipients for the 2022 Human and Civil Rights Awards.

Prior to their fall meeting, the committee was asked to review biographical sketches of award category namesake holders César Chávez and George I. Sánchez to uplift their values during the nomination cycle and representation to the program. In addition, committee members were given the HCR Awards informational brochure and awards category criteria for review prior to their fall meeting to be acquainted with the nomination process, questions, award categories, and awards criteria. The committee was asked to provide recommended changes and edits.

In their October meeting, once Ambassador assignments and roles were determined across the award categories, Award Ambassadors were asked to review and become acquainted with their awards criteria for nomination solicitation. The committee engaged in immersive conversation around generating nominations for the 2022 HCR Awards.

During their January meeting, members of the committee were briefed on the process of accessing, reading, scoring and selecting Human and Civil Rights Award nominees for the NEA Executive Committee's consideration and approval utilizing a new database. The new database for the HCR Awards was built to be able to hold historical data related to the awards in a secure environment and was also created to automate correspondence to the committee and all HCR Awards candidates. The committee was instructed on the use of the EdCommunities group site where all nominations and nomination materials were uploaded for 24/7 access, and organized into folders. During the meeting, committee members were able to view and access the EdCommunities site and all nomination materials.

During and before their meeting on February 20th, the committee reviewed 23 applications for the 2022 NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards, deliberated over them, and chose 12 recipients to be recommended to the NEA Executive Committee as Award winners, including one recipient for the NEA President's Award.

The NEA Executive Committee and President Becky Pringle approved the 12 recommendations submitted by

the committee for the 2022 Human and Civil Rights Awards. Names of this year's award winners and winner profiles will be available to view at [www.nea.org/hcrawards](http://www.nea.org/hcrawards).

### Charge 2

Assist in the planning and execution of the Human and Civil Rights Awards Ceremony.

Prior to their October 25 meeting, committee members were given a homework assignment to watch the *NEA-ATA merger video "Honoring Our Legacy of Inclusion"* and during the meeting discussed parallels between the origins of the HCR Awards in the American Teachers Association (ATA), and how the legacy of the program affects and advances our current organizational and social environment. In relation to the video, the committee also discussed how the Awards advance strategic organizational objectives towards workers' rights, human and civil rights, and racial and social justice. This pre-work assignment and discussion set the framework and provided context for later planning for the 2022 HCR Awards.

Under the direction of the Chair, the committee's second homework assignment was to review biographical sketches of award category namesakes César Chávez and George I. Sánchez. The Committee had a goal and vision this year of reacquainting themselves and the general public of the award namesakes and historical context surrounding the awards. To ground themselves in the true meaning of the awards and what they represent, the committee engaged in an in-depth conversation around the values of these historic figures in the human and civil rights movement and how to uplift their profiles in the criteria of the awards and throughout the program.

During its February meeting, the committee selected the theme for the 2022 NEA HCR Awards: *"Rising Strong for 55 Years of Unity Through Joy, Justice, and Excellence"* and were provided updates on the return to an in-person meeting with a virtual option.

The 2022 Human and Civil Rights Awards will be held on Saturday, July 2nd 2022 in Chicago Illinois.

In their October meeting, the committee deliberated and discussed key takeaways on engagement and virtual participation for the 2021 virtual Awards; seeking to implement some key learnings as it concerns the virtual option in July 2022.

### Charge 3

Make recommendations for collaboration with HCR award winners to advance outreach to communities and partners in support of NEA's Strategic Objective within that year.

During their fall meeting, the committee received remarks from Rocio Inclan, Senior Director of the NEA Center for Racial and Social Justice and Strategic Objective lead for Advancing Racial Justice in Education. Rocio presented to the committee on the various racial and social justice issue advocacy campaigns and projects the Association is leading across various constituency

groups. The presentation gave space for the committee to brainstorm on touchpoints between the historical and current legacy of the Awards and how the ceremony itself can engage the broader NEA membership, larger public, and the network of award winners on how to advance racial and social justice advocacy.

In the 2021-2022 fiscal year a repository and database of information was created to house historical, present and future data on the HCR Awards nominations. This database will support referencing back to past HCR Award winners for future contact and network building. NEA staff continue to work with the committee and SEA/LEA leadership on ideas for connecting award winners into NEA program and larger movement building.

# Legislation

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This report covers the Legislative Committee's three charges for 2021-22. We have combined our report on Charges 1 and 2 because both involve outreach to NEA members and leaders about the Legislative Program to answer questions, gather feedback, and explain the cycle for updating the Legislative Program and proposing amendments. Charge 3 is at the end of the report.

### Charge 1

Review the NEA Legislative Program and gather feedback from NEA members and leaders. Provide recommended modifications to the NEA Legislative Program to the Board of Directors and present for approval to the annual Representative Assembly.

### Charge 2

Conduct an open hearing to review the proposed NEA Legislative Program and discuss relevant legislative issues with delegates. Work with staff to review legislative amendment submissions and determine the Committee's recommendation for each submitted amendment.

The committee in 2021-22 informed and engaged with NEA members and leaders via the June 24, 2021 **Legislative Hearing** and the March 1, 2022 **Leadership Summit Policymaking Webinar**. These virtual events, aside from informing members about the Legislative Program and the process for amending it, gave participants an opportunity to discuss the challenges they are facing and discover how NEA's legislative priorities relate to their everyday experiences.

In January-March 2022, the Legislative Committee for the first time held **listening sessions**, building on the pre-Summit webinar and the Legislative Hearing. The committee worked with state and local presidents to publicize these

hour-long sessions with the goal of fully democratizing, and involving all NEA members, in this process. All four were in the evening; the latest began at 9 PM EST specifically to draw members on from the West coast, Alaska, and Hawaii. We had more than 100 members register from across the country. Nearly every member of the committee had a speaking role during at least one session. True to President Becky Pringle's vision, there was dynamic alignment with our NEA staff, members, governance, Executive Committee, and state presidents.

Each listening session began with a brief summary of what the NEA Legislative Program is and how it is amended; what the committee's cycle is relative to the Representative Assembly; and federal updates. The sessions were successful venues for hearing members' experiences in schools and classrooms, gauging their awareness of NEA's Legislative program and lobbying activities, and answering questions about how/whether the Legislative Program and lobbying efforts addressed their concerns. During these sessions, members were encouraged to explore the [NEA Action Center](#) and engage in online advocacy on the issue of their choice.

The committee identified three main issues through the sessions:

- Barriers to aspiring educators/shortage of educators**
- Repeal of GPO-WEP**
- Full funding of IDEA**

The discussion revealed an opportunity for additional advocacy on behalf of aspiring educators/educator shortages. After hearing repeatedly from aspiring educators that the lack of pay for residencies keeps many from participating, NEA Government Relations (GR) closely examined and opted to support the bipartisan [Teacher, Principal, and Leader Residency Access Act \(S. 3171/H.R. 3244\)](#) and seek co-sponsors

for the bill. GR also created an “[Educator Pipeline](#)” issue page and a one-pager on the educator shortage, drawing on data from NEA’s January 2022 member survey.

The listening sessions also led to the first-ever “**Aspiring Educators Week of Action**,” during which approximately a dozen aspiring educators met virtually with members of Congress and/or congressional staff the week of April 4. They focused on gaining supporters/co-sponsors for the Teacher, Principal, and Leader Residency Access Act and discussed other ways that Congress could support aspiring educators and address the educator shortage.

Regarding GPO-WEP and IDEA, the committee directed session participants to NEA’s strong language advocating for repeal of GPO-WEP and full funding of IDEA in the Legislative Program. The committee also lifted up GR’s advocacy for specific federal legislation on both issues, i.e., the [Social Security Fairness Act \(S. 1302/H.R. 82\)](#) and the [Social Security 2100 Act \(S. 3071/H.R. 5723\)](#) and the [IDEA Full Funding Act \(S. 3213/H.R. 5984\)](#) and the [Keep Our Pact Act \(S. 72/H.R. 764\)](#).

### Charge 3

Reassess and continue to execute a plan to increase participation in Capitol Hill lobbying and back-home lobbying visits by NEA Board of Directors.

The committee piloted a phone app designed for NEA Board members in February 2020 to compile and submit information from Lobby Day visits on Capitol Hill. Feedback led to some changes to improve the usage experience, including creation of a confirmation message after filing feedback from Hill visits. We have not implemented the app, as lobbying has been virtual since 2020.

A brief training video will be created to help prepare the Board of Directors to use the app when the board returns fully to in-person Lobby Days.

### Recommendations

The Legislative Committee recommends that the NEA Board of Directors propose the revised Legislative Program for the 117th Congress to delegates to the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly. (The committee is meeting after this report’s due date and may propose additional amendments to

Committee Recommendations	Relevant Charge	Board of Directors Action
1. The Legislative Committee recommends that the NEA Board of Directors propose the revised Legislative Program for the 117th Congress to delegates to the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly.	Charge 1: Review the NEA Legislative Program and gather feedback from NEA members and leaders. Provide recommended modifications to the NEA Legislative Program to the Board of Directors and present for approval to the annual Representative Assembly.	Adopt



# Local President Release Time

## COMITTEE MEMBERS

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### Charge 1

Select recipients of Local President Release Time Program (LPRTP) grants, monitor progress of projects, and review evaluations of selected locals.

#### Committee discussion:

The committee reviewed twenty-three (23) grant applications. The following locals were recommended as approved for the three year grant beginning September 2022:

Zone 1:  
None selected

Zone 2:  
Martin County Education Association, FL (\$25,000)

Zone 3:  
Maine South HS-Maine Teachers Association, IL(\$11,434)  
Reynoldsburg Education Association, OH (\$12,500)  
Mapleton Education Association, CO (\$25,000)

Zone 4:  
Natomas Teachers Association, CA (\$25,000)  
Phoenix Union High School District Classified Employees Association, AZ (\$25,000)  
Bellingham Association of School Employees, WA (\$12,500)  
Coalition of Educators for Change, CA (\$12,500)

The committee reviewed twelve (12) grant evaluations from 2020-2021. Overall, the recipient evaluations were positive. The committee requested additional information from three locals due to incomplete evaluations. Once additional information was provided the committee was satisfied.

### Charge 2

Review and make recommendations as needed related to the LPRTP guidelines and budget.

#### Committee Discussion:

The committee discussed changes to the grant application. The committee recommends changes to provide better clarity on membership potential retention and engagement. The committee made the following observations:

- The committee's prior recommendation to add a question of full time status as well as previous recipient status prevented unnecessary grant applications.
- The committee would like to continue all of the grant recipients for another term in funding.

### Charge 3

Review and report on the LPRTP's annual training to ensure that the training aligns with NEA's Leadership Competencies, addresses Racial and Social Justice and provides recipients with the tools necessary to accomplish program objectives and advance a culture of organizing within the local.

#### Committee Discussion:

A subcommittee met in 2020 – 2021 to review past training goals and objectives and offered suggestions for 2021 – 2022. Based on that review, the following four virtual sessions were held:

Monday, Nov 29, 2021 4:00 – 6:00 pm ET - Opening session Community Building

Thursday, Jan 20, 2022 5:00 – 7:00 pm ET - Organizing in the Local Association

Monday, March 7, 2022 6:00 – 8:00 pm ET - Developing a System of Leadership

Monday, April 11, 2022 4:00 – 6:00 pm ET

- Communication for Leaders

In addition, a mentoring component was added to address specific individual needs that were identified through one on one conversations. It is anticipated that the training for the 2022 -2023 will be face to face in person, with an expanded training group to include those locals who have never had a face to face training from the 2020 – 2021 and 2021 – 2022 LPRTP grant classes.

**Recommendations:**

The Legislative Committee recommends that the NEA Board of Directors propose the revised Legislative Program for the 117th Congress to delegates to the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly. (The committee is meeting after this report’s due date and may propose additional amendments to the board.)

<b>Committee Recommendations</b>	<b>Relevant Charge</b>	<b>Board of Directors Action</b>
1. The committee recommends reviewing the LPRTP guidelines and qualifications for the grant process, to determine if previous grant recipients should be eligible in the future.	Charge 2: Review and make recommendations as needed related to the LPRTP guidelines and budget.	Adopt

# Professional Standards and Practice

## COMITTEE MEMBERS

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**PSP Committee Charge:** *Building on the 2020-2021 PSP report and current research, explore the intersection of-*

- *Culturally responsive practices*
- *Brain-based practices*
- *Trauma-informed practices*
- *Restorative practices*

*and describe the implications for teaching and learning (and for professional growth) for NEA (members) and affiliates.*

### **Executive Summary**

The Professional Standards and Practices (PSP) Committee investigated the growing and overwhelming evidence that our students' learning and success is deeply connected to their social, emotional, physical, and intellectual well-being. Given what we know about learning, it is our responsibility as educators to address the social and emotional needs of our students and to interact with them in culturally responsive ways.

This report identifies steps for individual educators and guidance for schools and affiliates to help members create the learning environments that students need. These are not merely "nice things for a teacher to do". They are fundamental to the brain's readiness to learn and are fundamental to professional practice. The following is brief summary of the four major components of the committee's work and suggested action for each to guide our efforts to transform our schools.

**Culturally Responsive Practices** – Each student's cultural background and their family and community norms is essential information to help educators create effective learning experiences for them. Educators need to actively plan for learning considering three key elements of culture:

1. Student learning is enhanced when we help them connect new information in meaningful ways with previous experiences and knowledge.
2. Educator actions can create stress and interfere with learning if the lesson activities seem contrary to the student's cultural or family norms for interaction (e.g. creating a highly competitive learning game when the student's cultural experience is grounded in cooperation.)
3. Learning tasks and information that connects with a student's interests can be intrinsically motivating, creating enthusiasm for participation and a tendency to work hard for success.

### **Brain-Based Practices** –

Each section of this report is grounded in brain-based research. For example, brain research on culturally responsive practices helps us understand that a mismatch between the culture educators create in a school or classroom with the cultural norms with which a student is familiar can create a tension as their amygdala to take over in fight or flight mode, and shutting down reasoning, logic, and memory. The section on brain research describes how educators need to respond to individual differences and highlights common misconceptions about the supposed effectiveness of providing extrinsic rewards for motivation.

**Trauma-Sensitive Practices** – Just as a mismatch of a student's cultural experience with the classroom culture and learning activities generates a notable response by the amygdala, the experiences in some students' lives generate even more significant stress, toxic stress, prolonged stress, or other synonyms for trauma. Before learning can occur, educators must engage in significant interventions to

ensure the student perceives that they are in a safe, stable, and caring environment. This section is grounded in real-world examples of the kinds of stress that many students bring with them each day, leading them to be distracted, disorganized, and often unresponsive to what schools ask them to do. Rather than interpreting these characteristics as evidence that a student is belligerent, apathetic, or not intellectually capable, educators need to know and understand the backgrounds and experiences affecting their students' lives. This means patient and caring responsiveness first and consistently while a relationship of trust is fostered.

**Restorative Practices** – This section briefly introduces a range of actions and activities that also address a range of positive outcomes for students and schools. First, activities like Restorative Circles can help create an environment that helps educators address both culturally responsiveness and the needs of students experiencing stress and trauma. At a higher level of intervention, Restorative Justice can also provide strategies to help both students who have committed serious offenses be brought back into the classroom and school AND can help those who have been harmed receive caring, support, and possibly compensation for their loss. Rather than responding in a manner that assumes a student's negative actions are driven by willful rebelliousness, restorative practices provide grace and compassion, inviting a student to be healed from the trauma they have experienced, welcomed into a space that clearly is safe and reflects care for their well-being.

Particularly when Restorative Practices are an intervention imposed externally on a school, educators and parents may push-back against perceived “touchy-feely” strategies some believe pamper students rather than teaching them life lessons they need for a challenging world. This section highlights the crucial need for collaborative planning and buy-in along with appropriate training and support. When these conditions for adoption are present, the evidence of positive results is overwhelming.

### **How to implement this report**

To achieve transformation that transcends individual classrooms, the PSP committee grounded their work on the findings of the 2017 report, *Great Teaching and Learning: Creating the Culture to Support Professional Excellence* (GTL). The GTL report is also aligned with research about supporting student learning and development. In addition, it highlights crucial elements of school culture that must be part of any efforts to transform teaching and learning, schools and communities. The report's conclusion offers key reminders for building the necessary culture for success. The committee suggests choosing one of the four areas that seems most compelling to a school community and starting there. Consider all four as being deeply interconnected, though. Each transformation is a step toward our greater vision of a great public school for every student.

### **Part 1 - Culturally responsive practices**

Over the past 40 years, many educators have participated in curriculum innovations and utilized teaching and learning strategies that were labeled as “culturally responsive practices.” The primary resource used by the PSP in 2021-2022 as they explored this topic was Zaretta Hammond's 2015 book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching*

and the Brain. Hammond provides useful clarity, noting that three different strategies are often grouped into this genre. She makes the distinction that, while the first two of these strategies are worthy and important, it is the third element that could best be identified as culturally responsive practices. Those three strategies include multicultural education, focusing on increasing knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for the many cultures and backgrounds we may encounter in schools and communities. The second topic often included under the heading of culturally responsive practices is social justice education – a curriculum that brings to light a deeper understanding of race, culture, and the historical and current struggles for persons to be treated equitably and with respect for their varied backgrounds and experiences.

These are worthwhile, legitimate parts of a school's curriculum. Still, as noted above culturally responsive practices focus specifically on three important strategies for teaching and learning:

1. Enhancing learning by connecting new information and skills with each student's background.
2. Mitigating stress by matching classroom cultural norms with common student cultural backgrounds.
3. Connecting learning tasks with a student's interests to tap intrinsic motivation, creating enthusiasm for participation and a tendency to work hard for success.

With this brief (and oversimplified) background explanation about what “culturally responsive practices” means, the committee offers several observations as important for educators in varied roles to consider as they work with students, families, and communities.

- Relationships are crucial to providing productive learning environments and experiences for students. Hammond cites Maslow's hierarchy as an example of why students must perceive their relationship with educators to be grounded in trust and caring as necessary conditions to thrive even when working on more challenging academic tasks.
- Students experience greater success when there is alignment between the instructional strategies they encounter and the norms of behavior and interaction they experience in their family and/or community. For example, if a student has grown up in a setting that values collaboration and cooperation as the norm of interaction, a teacher may either enhance readiness to learn by building on strategies that elevate these norms or they might impede learning by emphasizing individuality and competition, believing that those would be motivational for the student. Students encountering a mismatch between teaching strategy and previous cultural experiences may develop anxiety that interferes with their readiness to learn.
- Educators should attend to previous experiences and knowledge a student brings to new learning opportunities. For example: if a student has grown up near the ocean, spending time engaged in activities including surfing and encounters with marine life, a teacher can tap into their previous knowledge to teach concepts in science and mathematics and offer opportunities for creativity involving art, literature, and music with examples from the student's unique community.
- Zaretta Hammond's concept of the “warm

demanders” is grounded on building a relationship and trust with students so that they are willing to try new experiences with the assurance that they are in a safe space for learning and that their teacher genuinely cares for them, having their well-being in mind. This relationship is further enhanced when the student can see that the educator has knowledge of a student’s interests and values their culture, and experiences, then uses those connections as the scaffolding for new learning.

- Safe and supportive learning environments are also needed by educators in schools and districts if they are to grow in implementing culturally responsive practices. One committee member shared an example of being asked by a colleague for help in being able to be more successful in teaching their racially diverse students. It took courage and trust for an experienced teacher to admit their need for growth. Educators must create brave spaces in which colleagues can ask tough questions, share personal experiences, and hear the experiences of their diverse colleagues to become better equipped to honestly and respectfully let their students and colleagues know that they (as educators) are still growing and that they need the support of their students’ and co-workers’. Educators need to assume positive intent even when we don’t know exactly how to ask our questions, model that everyone is a learner, and demonstrate that school is a safe place to express vulnerability for both students and adults.
- Data plays a crucial role in helping to understand students’ learning needs. Historically (consider NCLB), academic performance data focused on easily measured tasks and led to prescriptions for learning activities and interventions. Some interventions required scripted instruction without flexibility for addressing individual student needs. The best research available, though, reveals it is futile to focus only on academic performance data while ignoring equally (or more) important information (data) about relationship-building and social-emotional well-being.
- Educators should move beyond multicultural education featuring only the holidays, foods, and a short list of heroes defined as representative of a student’s culture. The ‘culture tree’ (p. 24) provides ideas on how to be responsive to student needs. We must also understand crucial cultural archetypes that define significant differences in learning strategies may be most effective. For example, knowing if a student’s culture emphasizes collectivism rather than individualism may explain how some teaching strategies resonate with some students while interfering with the learning of others.
- The diagrams (p. 39) and descriptors provided in Hammond’s chapter on the brain provide an understandable guide to HOW such events as micro-aggressions or misaligned instructional strategies can activate areas of the brain ready for fight, flight, or paralysis rather than reflection and connection to previous learning.
- In addition to understanding of cultures of our students, educators must be constantly in a state of growth and increased understanding of their own biases, beliefs, and personal cultural lens.
- PSP committee members with background in developing the content and design of teacher preparation

(e.g., Hope Street Fellow) highlighted a crucial need for programs to provide greater understanding of the brain and the role of culture and each individual’s background and learning needs as we design learning experiences for students. (In addition, the committee noted that a full year teacher residency is likely the only way to provide adequate experiences to understand culture, race, trauma, and the ways in which each of these relate to learning and the brain.)

Zaretta Hammond’s work provides many valuable insights, a clear description of research on how the brain works, and tools that are practical for use in classrooms. Individuals and teams in schools should utilize strategies (e.g., informal faculty book study) to move forward with these kinds of discussions and learnings. By using the “ready for rigor” model (Hammond, p. 17), educators have a schematic for how to improve professional practice in ways that touch the work of every educator, regardless of role, and positively impact learning for students.

Everyone is stressed in both professional and personal lives because of the impact of the pandemic AND the due to the toxic narratives attempting to silence understanding of race and privilege. At first, it might seem that adding another professional learning activity (like the book study) could push people over the top. But the content of this and other resources the PSP Committee studied brings exactly the healing relief people need in troubled times. Several ideas proposed by the committee are intended to make needed resources more widely available to members, schools, locals, and state affiliates.

- At the school level, ensure that there is an easily accessible repository of lesson ideas and background on the cultures and backgrounds in their school community. This resource could also provide information for how to connect students and families with supports they may need both to support student learning and overall well-being of the student and their families.
- The committee recommends offering a session for 2023 Leadership Summit to focus on culturally responsive teaching practices – part of the session would focus on the committee’s work and experiences and the remainder of the session would be used to encourage participants to share THEIR experiences and the positive practices they have learned and used.
- At a more systemic level, they recommend that either the Leadership Summit should intentionally include a track containing multiple sessions focused on the professional practices from recent PSP reports such as culturally responsive teaching, or as an alternative, reinstitute a teaching and learning summit to focus on professional practices.)
- Finally, NEA should expand efforts through all centers and PSP to help our members create the kinds of professional relationships and trust where employees of all backgrounds and roles can engage in difficult conversations about race, culture, and professional practices.

## **Part 2 – Brain-based practices**

The committee’s primary source for this portion of their study was the 2019 edition of *How People Learn II: Learners, Contexts and Cultures*. This is a comprehensive



compendium of the latest research on brain function, learning, developmental stages from birth to the aged. This work is an update to an earlier 2002 edition, and both are published by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Contrary to historical beliefs about the brain having fixed capacity with little ability to enhance learning beyond early developmental stages, this book highlights research that brain development is a lifelong process, not a fixed commodity. Realizing that we can create learning experiences and social contexts to impact lifelong brain development means that we can help students successfully learn if we invest the time and appropriate strategies along the way.

While the book provides a wealth of research citations, it also cautions that much research about learning has focused on WEIRD people: western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic. There are numerous studies highlighting the importance of connecting with a learner's previous experiences and building on their cultural norms and expectations, but there is still much to be done to better represent brain development and learning across cultural groups. Brain research and the science of learning is a constantly growing field so openness to new information is crucial. Educators should also continuously engage in monitoring student progress on both intellectual and affective outcomes.

Below are just a few of the crucial topics for educators to consider.

**Responding to individual differences** – Historically, individual student differences that educators paid attention to were related to differences in prior knowledge and learning. While this is relevant, it only partially describes what educators need to know about their students. The authors of *How People Learn II* describe the range of individual differences educators need to consider as follows:

What has become far clearer since HPL I was published is that every individual's learning is profoundly influenced by the context in which that person is situated. Researchers have been exploring how all learners grow and learn in culturally defined ways in culturally defined contexts. While humans share basic brain structures and processes, as well as fundamental experiences such as relationships with family, developmental stages, and much more, each of these phenomena is shaped by the individual's precise experiences. Learning does not happen in the same way for all people because cultural influences pervade development from the beginning of life. (p. 22)

Learners function within complex developmental, cognitive, physical, social & cultural systems. Learning happens differently for different people because of the way each has been shaped by experience and cultural influences. Educators must seek to understand an individual's developmental, cultural, contextual & historical diversity to better facilitate learning.

**Motivation and reward** – Just as identified by Daniel Pink in the book *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* (2009), brain research indicates that individuals are more highly motivated to engage in tasks (including learning tasks) when three conditions are

present:

- The individual senses they have autonomy or control over at least some aspects of their activities. For learning, this could be flexibility to select a topic of study or might result from autonomy over how the learner will demonstrate mastery.
- When an individual has a sense of purpose about their activity, they are also more highly motivated. This could arise from having learning goals that are connected to the student's interests and background or could arise when the demonstration of learning is a meaningful project that the student sees as valuable.
- Finally, the individual is more likely to be motivated when they believe they are demonstrating mastery based on the quality of their work rather than mastery based on some external judgment by the teacher.

Given these conditions for motivation, learning experiences should be designed to connect with a student's interests. Demonstrations of learning should be chosen that students believe are valuable and meaningful. Educators in early grades also confirm that a student's intrinsic motivation and engagement are not stagnant but change over time, influenced by cultural and developmental processes.

The stress of moving education to virtual platforms interfered with many educators' opportunities to use strategies that elicit the three elements of human motivation cited above. As a substitute for intrinsic motivation, schools and districts often implemented practices focused on extrinsic motivations even though research indicates these are not a long-term solution to enhancing student engagement.

Often, it seems that efforts to shape student behavior are created utilizing extrinsic rewards when the students would be more responsive and committed to the behavior if they perceived intrinsic motivation connected to their actual interests. Research on external rewards indicates that durability of rewards diminishes persistence of good habits. In other words, predictable rewards reduce the durability of positive habits the rewards were intended to reinforce. Dr. Pink notes that use of external rewards (such as bonuses) increases the likelihood that individuals will never engage in the desired behavior if the reward is removed. The reward conveys a message that the desired action must be truly onerous or undesirable if we believe it takes points or bonuses to get people to do the tasks.

Committee members observed that teaching under the cloud of COVID-19 increased the likelihood that educators would be expected to use some 'scripted instruction' program. Unfortunately, such programs are likely to create negative energy for the educators expected to implement them that will also be communicated to their students.

Parents and families are also crucial drivers of motivation for students. They need to be convinced that points and grades should not be the currency of accomplishment for students. For example, students learn best from homework when there is no threat of lower grades if they try and make a mistake. Openness and honesty are crucial so students can talk about and learn from their mistakes. Students (and teachers) need an environment that fosters

trust that making a mistake is OK.

Finally, students who receive/earn praise which emphasizes ability vs effort are less likely to develop better mastery goals. Goals AND praise can be categorized as mastery-oriented or performance-oriented, and there are specific resultant behaviors associated with each. Praising a student for their intelligence or ability when they perform well does nothing to encourage the student to work hard. Students ARE motivated to greater engagement and effort with praise for work ethic and dedication.

**Teachers and self-fulfilling expectations** – Educators’ beliefs about any individual student’s capability typically translates into student performance that matches expectations. If an educator receives information that a student is on the verge of a breakthrough for success, it is highly likely that the student will achieve that successful result. And in contrast, when an educator holds low expectations for a student, those are likely to also be fulfilled. Students are perceptive, recognizing when educators don’t think they are smart, capable, or when they have low expectations for work ethic. Attitudes held by educators and parents can discourage effort and depress outcomes. As we understand the power of self-fulfilling expectations, it becomes painfully clear why persistent low expectations grounded in unconscious bias toward students of color generates poor performance while a more positive environment elicits high outcomes regardless of race or socio-economic background of students.

### **Challenges emerging from brain research**

The combination of institutional low expectations for some students, lack of autonomy for educators and learners, and externally imposed mandatory programs misaligned with how people learn combine to create extremely negative learning environments. Educators often must devise subversive strategies to help students transcend limitations of mandated programs. For example, some educators may devote 2/3 of class time for mandatory activities, then switch gears to motivational activities on the same learning outcomes for the remaining 1/3 of their time. (How People Learn II, p. 121)

Many educators also experience frustration when school leaders attempt to impose a new strategy or concept top-down, often with limited underlying understanding of why a strategy might be effective, whether it is grounded in brain research, and without a lens of cultural understanding. Top-down implementation undercuts autonomy (for both educators and students), a key principle of school transformation identified in the 2017 GTL report.

### **Part 3 – Trauma-sensitive practices**

Brain researchers continue to gain greater awareness of trauma, chronic stress, toxic stress, and various other terms used synonymously with the same basic impact on students. Generally misunderstood in schools prior to recent developments, students experiencing trauma were historically considered discipline problems, intellectually less able, or were pushed out of school altogether because of the symptoms they displayed.

One outstanding source to help educators understand and respond to students impacted by trauma is Patricia A. Jennings’ book (2019), *The trauma-sensitive classroom: Building resilience with compassionate teaching*. She tells

powerful stories illuminating the lives and challenges of youth experiencing stress and trauma. The following summarizes key learnings PSP members hope to utilize in their classrooms and schools in the coming year as they develop their own knowledge and skills and as they also present ideas to make these strategies available to members and affiliates:

- Chronic stress and trauma experienced by students causes them to respond using “protective strategies.” These may help us survive threats utilizing “fight or flight.” Coping strategies may cause rapidly shifting attention (looking out for danger), impulsiveness, increased motor activity (being ready for action), anticipating aggression and a need for response.
- Strategies that help survival in some situations are counterproductive in an academic setting, though, interfering with focus on complex learning as well as generating behaviors perceived as inattentive or even disruptive. Also, these strategies tend to have negative effects on health. Students aren’t the only people in schools who may experience toxic stress or trauma. These counter-productive strategies may also be displayed when educators experience trauma in their lives both in and outside of school.
- Trauma takes many forms: physical, emotional, sexual, and even environmental. The impact will vary depending on individual differences between persons experiencing it.
- Children who experience trauma often have less than stable environments in which they spend much of their time. Taking time to create safe spaces for them will both help them function, and will model healthy environments and relationships.
- Behavior is an outward sign of inward conflict. Trauma may generate overly defensive behavior, fear in anticipation of adult criticism, or defiance to exert control.

### **Responding to Trauma**

- Several outcomes may indicate that trauma-sensitive practices are working:
  1. a strong adult relationship (parent or caregiver) to mentor the child is in place, possibly through school interventions.
  2. good cognitive skills which are predictors of academic success can be displayed.
  3. an ability to self-regulate emotions, attention, and behaviors is present... in particular, emotions are more likely to be appropriately matched to a responsive school setting.
- Characteristic dimensions of the effects of trauma for Elementary settings include:
  1. closeness (is there positive emotion and warmth?)
  2. conflict (is there negative emotion and lack of rapport?)
  3. dependency (to what degree does the student cling to teacher?)
  4. Note that only closeness is associated with positive academic outcomes.
- In secondary classrooms, the three dimensions are:
  1. perceived support (does the student believe they have access to caring support?)
  2. utilization (is there a willingness to rely on teachers for help?)
  3. sense of relatedness (is there a sense of belonging?)Note that all secondary dimensions are associated



- with positive outcomes.
- Strategies to be applied to address these dimensions include:
  1. Model respectful interactions.
  2. Cultivate supportive peer relationships.
  3. Support relationships with parents.
  4. Help students transition to a new grade or school.
- Home visits with families (e.g. the Parent-Teacher Home Visit program) may provide support for students experiencing trauma when five non-negotiables for home visits are in place:
  1. visits are voluntary for both educators and families.
  2. teachers are trained and compensated.
  3. the focus of the visit is relationship-building.
  4. No targeting - visit all or a cross-section of students so there is no stigma.
  5. educators visit in pairs and reflect with partners after the visit.
- Principles identified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for development of trauma-sensitive approaches in schools include:
  1. Establish clear expectations.
  2. Respect cultural differences.
  3. Employ consistent classroom routines and procedures.
  4. Offer alternatives.
  5. Practice Emotion Coaching (see next main idea for details).
  6. Establish backup support systems (e.g. the Psychological First Aid for Schools (PFA-S)).
- Students (and educators) need to understand that emotions are innate, adaptive functions that guide behavior to insure survival. Students should be taught to label feelings to help them normalize the feeling of emotions. Emotion coaching supported behavioral management strategies across grade levels helped students have positive relationships with teachers and, when used with families, promoted a culture of attunement and non-judgmental interactions.
- To focus on assets, the teacher/school should:
  1. Identify students' existing strengths.
  2. Honor, value, and acknowledge these strengths.
  3. Help students become aware of their strengths.
  4. Build instructional programming that boosts social ties and networks by drawing on student strengths.
- Unfortunately, a typical response to students exhibiting signs they are experiencing trauma by some bureaucrats is to double-down on control and rules, for example, enacting zero tolerance policies that require a heavy-handed approach to students rather than the kind of responses described in the major points above. Unsurprisingly, these approaches have been found to be ineffective and harmful impact on students, particularly BIPOC students, students with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ students.
- It is more effective to “catch” students exhibiting appropriate behavior than to punish undesired behavior. Punishment exacerbates trauma, increasing the undesired student response. Also, avoid words like “good” or “bad” when discussing behavior - rather, talk about specific appropriate or inappropriate behaviors. Teach the appropriate behaviors and have discussions with students when they exhibit inappropriate behaviors.
- Effective programs teach problem-solving skills, communication and listening skills, and critical thinking

skills. They also may include peer mediation with students being trained as mediators.

- Effective programs begin with strong, positive relationships and caring environments in which programs to teach executive control can flourish.
- Historically some have viewed taking time to be responsive to students experiencing trauma as lost time for instruction. Research demonstrates, though, that it is useless to respond with more discipline and demands on students to force them to comply with classroom rules, expecting that they will be learners under stress that compounds their trauma.

Dr. Jennings provides a strong case that the heart of an appropriate response to students experiencing trauma is compassion. She introduces the concept of mindful compassion, a strategy that requires empathy and attunement to the suffering and needs of the student. She cautions that this kind of understanding can result in overwhelming emotions for educators, as well. Self-care is essential.

Is it surprising that researchers have found a natural tendency even among very young children to seek to be helpful when they perceive someone is struggling? It appears to be a human process that can be cultivated but can also be discouraged. It is important for educators to realize that they can grow in their ability to be responsive. It also means that students experiencing trauma will likely move through various phases or responses that push back initially when we approach them with compassion.

In describing the brain research about trauma, Jennings notes that compassionate behavior can be cultivated using some of the same techniques that are associated with mindfulness. To develop our capacity for mindful-compassionate responses, she suggests beginning by recalling a time when we were recipients of compassion. Building on this, we need to give compassion to ourselves. These two prerequisites bring us to a place where we can extend compassion to others.

Jennings' final chapter explains how to create a compassionate classroom. The PSP Committee study supports the idea that educators must not blame students for lack of the performance we expect of them, possibly ignoring the factors that bring natural responses described in this portion of the report.

NEA members and locals need to make trauma-sensitive classrooms a primary goal for transformation. Educators (including locals) might consider using Patricia Jennings' book for professional learning, or might also pursue the new trauma-informed micro-credentials recently added to NEA's library:

<https://nea.certificationbank.com/NEA/CandidatePortal/CategoryDetail.aspx?Stack=TRA>

Additional note: participants are almost twice as likely to complete study of a micro-credential when pursuing with one or more colleagues in a collaborative study. Regardless of the way you decide to pursue the knowledge and skills to create compassionate classroom, it is a fundamental task for all educators in the 21st century.

#### **Part 4 – Restorative practices –**

Restorative practices refers to a continuum of strategies

Restorative practices refers to a continuum of strategies ranging from ways to build community and address the fundamental need for positive social and emotional connectedness to restorative justice as a means to address behaviors resulting in serious physical or emotional harm to others. Two significant resources were utilized by the committee and are recommended as a starting point for those interested in beginning the important journey to implementing restorative practices:

- *The restorative practices handbook for teachers, disciplinarians and administrators* (2nd ed., 2019), by Bob Costello, Joshua Wachtel and Ted Wachtel
- NEA Micro-credentials for restorative practices. Five topics are offered in the stack at NEA's CertificationBank website (link below). They include a basic introduction to the strategies and foundation for why they are transformative, building a positive classroom culture, implementing restorative circles, restorative conferencing, and implementing restorative practices (including the concept of restorative justice). <https://nea.certificationbank.com/NEA/CandidatePortal/CategoryDetail.aspx?Stack=RP>

In addition to these resources, the committee highly recommends that individuals participate in the extensive training institutes available at one of the centers focused on restorative practices (e.g. The Conflict Center in Denver - <https://conflictcenter.org/programs/restorative-denver-program/>)

Implementation of restorative practices can be transformative. Positive results may not be achieved, though, if strategies are not implemented in a culture for transformation as described in the GTL report. For instance, school staff need to be part of any decisions implement restorative practices. Implementation must impact operational norms and culture of the school. The staff must work to create collaborative relationships and build collegial systems of coaching and support. Staff must participate in well-designed and implemented professional learning, including opportunities to practice new techniques and skills.

#### Implementation considerations

- Restorative practices may allow schools to alter how security is administered. As this occurs, implementers must be aware of multiple perspectives to be addressed. For instance, restorative practices can provide an environment that is safe and supportive for students without the need for a focus on punishment and compliance. At the same time, some may need reassurance that the transformed environment will be safer for all persons in the school, even if the presence of School Resource Officers or others seen as enforcers of compliance is reduced.
- Educators may express legitimate skepticism for any new program if they have experienced a series of short-lived innovations that either ended when leadership changed or before full implementation generated any success. Staff need to be involved in choosing to implement and should have opportunities to see first-hand how implementing restorative practices is not a drain on valuable instructional time but rather a well-justified strategy to make all teaching and learning efforts more successful.
- Educators should track policy initiatives underway

to transform schools across the country that may support or integrate with restorative practices. (e.g., the Illinois Legislature and/or Illinois State Board of Education mandate that by 2025, all new teachers must demonstrate they are 'culturally responsive' and Washington state's new regulations require 15 clock hours focused on equity and culturally responsive practices. WEA already offers many opportunities for professional learning related to culturally responsive practices.)

- Committee members observed the need to go beyond introductory training and awareness activities, particularly when those activities give us a false sense that we are "doing a good job" without looking deeper to the individual biases, beliefs, and unconscious acts that may be perceived negatively (e.g., as micro-aggressions. It is crucial that ALL school employees engage in experiences to help raise their awareness of unconscious bias and their unique cultural lens.

The growing trend to include a "Land Acknowledgment" as part of meetings might be an excellent opportunity to include the background on how restorative practices come from native American tribes in the United States and can also be found in some elements of African cultures.

#### Implementation guidance:

NEA resources (e.g., five micro-credentials mentioned above) should be publicized broadly to members and affiliates. Significant efforts are needed to make more members aware of both the resources AND the overall benefits of the program.

Awareness of resources and the value of Restorative Practices is only a first step. NEA also should investigate strategies to help members, locals, schools, districts, and communities implement these techniques, taking them to a national scale. Some of these strategic ideas PSP committee members suggested as NEA engages in strategic planning to transform schools include:

- Offer a forum, possibly as a pre-conference event at an upcoming NEA Representative Assembly, to provide an introduction to restorative practices.
- Include workshops or possibly a strand of sessions at future NEA Leadership Summits
- Consider inviting (or contracting with) one or more of the restorative practices institutes around the country to provide more in-depth training and experiences for members and staff either at pre-existing events or at events devoted to this strategy. Participants could serve as facilitators and guides for implementation in their various work settings and affiliates.
- Provide funding (possibly through grants or scholarships) to members and locals to support their efforts to implement training for staff, purchase resources (e.g., books or training materials)
- Possibly outside the context of formal restorative practices training, provide workshops or support members as they develop their interpersonal skills, communications skills, and the ability to apply these to address social-emotional learning and trauma-sensitive practices.
- Catalog and provide access to the range of resources (both NEA and vetted external offerings) that are

easily accessible via the Internet (e.g., sample links in this section of the PSP report).

- Utilize existing communications NEA channels (e.g., NEA Today, website) to advertise the availability of resources and the power of the restorative practices approach for school transformation and improved learning opportunities for students.
- Incorporate training elements regarding restorative practices into existing programs including Leaders for Just Schools, Teacher Leadership Institute.
- Utilize the power of video examples when introducing restorative practices and as a training tool (including video examples from restorative practices in schools – see resource list).

### Conclusions

COVID-19 continued to impact the work of the PSP Committee in 2021-2022, particularly as supply-chain delays limited access to crucial research materials. While the report offers insights into transformations needed in our schools, the committee hopes they will have opportunity to build on this foundation in 2022-2023 by applying professional knowledge gained in their own settings and by developing resources and strategies to disseminate their work, empowering members and locals throughout the Association.

Our vision for our students, schools, and profession is grounded in the substance of this report: teaching in culturally responsive ways, meeting the needs of students who have been subjected to toxic stress and trauma, replacing bureaucratic discipline with restorative practices and relationships are all grounded in the best research on how we all learn.

Implementing these ideas is a journey that will require we start now and build capacity systemically within NEA and our affiliates. Transformation won't happen if driven by top-down mandates, either by well-meaning school district leaders or by unions who ignore the readiness for professional growth of its members. Implementation must be grounded in the culture described in the 2017 GTL report identified as necessary for transformation in schools. Consider these elements of culture and guiding questions to aid in implementation from the 2021-2022 PSP report:

- Passion for learning – Given the best of brain research, our passion for learning demands that we build relationships and engage in culturally responsive practices, trauma sensitive practices that connect with students in supportive ways, engendering readiness for academic rigor.
- Assessment for excellence – Understanding student motivation demands that we provide opportunities for students to engage in meaningful demonstrations of learning. Brain research also demands that we remove deadlines for learning. We must be responsive to students and provide opportunities for them to demonstrate mastery in naturally motivating ways and on the timeline that matches student readiness.
- Culture of collaboration – Understanding how we learn reinforces the imperative for social-emotional development of students and educators alike. Learning is embedded in the social and cultural context of the learner and the most productive learning environments provide for interaction, dialogue, and

growth through collaboration.

- Authentic autonomy – Students must be invested in the learning activities they pursue. There should be elements of autonomy both for content of their learning and for how they demonstrate mastery. Educators also need a measure of autonomy to implement learning activities aligned with understanding of how people learn... they cannot be subjected to scripted instruction or prescriptive programs imposed outside the learning workspace of the classroom.
- Worth of each person and community – The compassionate classroom, cafeteria, library, office, school bus, playground, etc. must be the norm for all educators and schools as we view each human with dignity, respect, and compassion. Caring for each student, family, educator colleague, and our communities is driven by our commitment to the worth of each person regardless of race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, geographic locale, or any of the other characteristics. Educators must lead the quest to transform communities and transcend narratives of hate, prejudice, racial supremacy, and us-vs-them in our society.

The PSP Committee offers their report with a commitment to lead the way as they apply these ideas on their road to transformation in 2022-2023.

### Additional suggested resources—

Adams, M., Bell, L. A., Goodman, D. J. & Joshti, K. Y., eds. (2016). *Teaching for diversity and social justice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

The Arbinger Institute. (2019). *The outward mindset: How to change lives and transform organizations*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Brackett, M. (2020). *Permission to Feel*. Celadon Books, New York, NY.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning – CASEL. See their website at: <https://casel.org/>

Frey, N., Fisher, D., & Smith, D. (2019). *All learning is social and emotional: Helping students develop essential skills for the classroom and beyond*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Hopkins, B. (2004). *Just Schools: A whole school approach to restorative justice*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue. Website: <https://irjrd.org>  
See their “best practices” document at: <https://irjrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Best-Practices1.pdf>

Jennings, P. A. (2020). *Mindfulness for teachers*. New York, NY: Norton Professional Books.

Jensen, E. (1998). *Teaching with the brain in mind*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Johnson, J. F., Uline, C. L., & Perez, L. G. (2019).

Teaching practices from America's best urban schools: A guide for school and classroom leaders. New York, NY: Routledge.

Learning for Justice: Being Culturally Responsive: [https://www.learningforjustice.org/professional-development/being-culturally-responsive?gclid=Cj0KCQjw37iT BhCWARIsACBt1IzlUv-yvPD7exI40n0eVBGKGhzeDS-GRqeQ9LTO0RrNaMMzc3H0qW0AaAuXIEALw\\_wcB](https://www.learningforjustice.org/professional-development/being-culturally-responsive?gclid=Cj0KCQjw37iT BhCWARIsACBt1IzlUv-yvPD7exI40n0eVBGKGhzeDS-GRqeQ9LTO0RrNaMMzc3H0qW0AaAuXIEALw_wcB)

McTighe, J. & Willis, J. (2019). *Upgrade your teaching: Understanding by design meets neuroscience*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue. Website: <https://irjrd.org>  
See their "best practices" document at: <https://irjrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Best-Practices1.pdf>

NEA Certification Bank - Community School Improvement Science stack of 8 micro-credentials provide complete, thorough background into each step. The resource can be accessed as a reference or leaders may wish to actually pursue the micro-credentials. It can be applied to problems beyond the specific challenge of establishing a community school, too.  
<https://nea.certificationbank.com/NEA/CandidatePortal/CategoryDetail.aspx?Stack=CS>  
NEA Great Teaching and Learning report: <https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Great%20Teaching%20and%20Learning%20Report.pdf>

Nuri-Robins, K., Linsdey, D. B., Lindsey, R. B., & Terrell, R. D. (2012). *Culturally proficient instruction: A guide for people who teach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Pink, D. (2009). *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*. Buyerhead Books, New York, NY.

Posey, A. (2018). *Engage the Brain: How to design for learning that taps into the power of emotion*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Rucker, N. W. (2019). Blog post: Getting Started With Culturally Responsive Teaching: Understanding students'

lives can help teachers foster a sense of belonging and ensure that all students feel respected and challenged. Dec. 10, 2019.

Accessed from <https://www.edutopia.org/article/getting-started-culturally-responsive-teaching>

Sousa, D. (2017). *How the brain learns*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Sprenger, M. (2020). *Social emotional learning and the brain: Strategies to help your students thrive*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Teaching Tolerance website – now Learning for Justice. <https://www.learningforjustice.org/>

Thorsborne, M. & Blood, P. (2013). *Implementing Restorative Practices in Schools: A practical guide to transforming school communities*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Tokuhama-Espinosa, T. (2019). *Five pillars of the mind*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

Wolfe, P. (2001). *Brain matters: Translating research into classroom practice*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Video Resources

- NEA video (start at 2:35): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HN\\_zW4SwYY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HN_zW4SwYY)
- An elementary example of Tier 1 use of Restorative Justice circles: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTr4v0eYigM>
- A high school example of how students experience "The Zone" from Nashville and use of Restorative practices. Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-RZYSTJAAo>
- A powerful example of re-entry (Tier 3) from Oakland, CA
- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSJ2GPiprv>
- Example from middle school including discipline data comparisons <https://irjrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/RD-Handout-TASSP-TEPSA-June-2014.pdf>



# Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

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## SOGI Committee 2021-2022 Meetings

- October 27, 2021 – 8:00pm-9:00pm ET (Zoom)
- November 12, 2021 – 7:30pm-9:30pm ET (Zoom)
- December 11, 2021 – 4:00pm-7:00pm ET (Zoom)
- February 19, 2022 – 5:00pm-6:00pm ET (Zoom)
- April 2, 2022 – 8:15am-5:15pm ET (NEA Headquarters)
- April 3, 2022 – 8:15am-12:45pm ET (NEA Headquarters)

## Overall Committee Design and Action:

In order for the NEA SOGI Committee to work on the four-committee charges, the committee created two subcommittees:

- Policy and Advocacy Subcommittee - Focus on Charge #1.
- Professional Development Subcommittee - Focus on Charge #2.

At all SOGI Meetings (virtual and in-person) the subcommittees worked on their assigned charges, as well as provided input on the remaining charges (3 and 4). Both subcommittees worked on developing quarterly webinars based on the common themes and questions found within the 2020-2021 SOGI Hearing forms. Due to the delay in confirmations of new committee members, SOGI could not hold its first meeting until October 27, 2021. At that meeting, the schedule for quarterly meetings was adjusted, and the committee discussed collaborating with The Trevor Project and Project THRIVE, a multi-year national campaign through the Human Right Campaign Foundation, to collaborate on two webinars. As a result, NEA's Center for Racial and Social Justice reached out to establish a partnership with The Trevor Project and those conversations are still on going. The SOGI Committee collaborated with Project THRIVE on a webinar called: "[Assets and Allyship: Supporting LGBTQ+ Educators In and Out of the Classroom](#)". This webinar aired at 2:00

pm Eastern time on March 31, 2022, and is archived on the Project THRIVE website.

As NEA continues partnership conversations with The Trevor Project, SOGI is collaborating with NEA's ESP Quality Department to offer a second webinar. This webinar will focus on the importance of pronouns. The intended audience for this webinar is Education Support Professionals (ESP), but the webinar will be offered to all NEA members. This webinar will air in June 2022 during LGBTQ+ Pride Month. 109 people registered for the webinar.

Seven members of SOGI attended Stonewall's [2022 SNEP \(Stonewall National Education Project\) LGBTQ+ Inclusive Conference](#) from April 14-16, 2022. Three of the seven members, along with a previous member of SOGI, participated on a LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum Panel moderated by Bex Mui, the Director of the Stonewall National Education Program (SNEP). Two former members of SOGI trained attendees of the conference on one of NEA's LGBTQ+ Modules: [Module 5 – Safe and Supportive Working Environments: A Right for LGBTQ+ Educators](#). One current and one former member of SOGI applied and were selected to participate in SNEP's first ever Teaching Fellowship from April 16-17, 2022. The Teaching Fellowship provided the selected educators access to the Stonewall National Museum & Archives (SNMA) archives after the conference to create lesson plans, discussion guides, and other LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum. The conference and fellowship were at SNMA in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

At the in-person SOGI meeting, Juan Rangel from NEA Government Relations and Keira McNett from the NEA's Office of General Counsel provided the committee with legal and federal LGBTQ+ updates. The reports are attached.

**Charge 1**

Identify current states with LGBTQ+ inclusive curricula and compile strategies and/or practices that can be shared with and utilized by NEA affiliates to develop and promote LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum.

**Committee Discussion:**

At the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, the subcommittee took direct and deliberative action regarding the charge to identify and review states with LGBTQ+ inclusive curricula. To date, there are 7 states that have passed legislation requiring LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum in public schools. In most states, the focus of the legislation is on the inclusion of LGBTQ+ figures and identities within the state’s history and social science curriculum standards.

California passed their inclusive curriculum law in 2011 and spent six years preparing for its first year of implementation in the 2017-2018 school year. New Jersey,

Colorado, Oregon, and Illinois passed their inclusive curriculum laws in 2019. New Jersey and Illinois began implementation in the 2020-2021 school year. Colorado and Oregon are still in the process of reviewing the law to develop their implementation plan. Connecticut and Nevada passed their inclusive curriculum law in 2021, so they are still early in their implementation timeline.

It is important to note that most of these laws embed intersectionality of various identities that have been historically underrepresented, misrepresented, or completely erased from the curriculum. The intent of these laws is to make sure that the diversity of student identities in the classroom are accurately and honestly represented in their learning experience.

Some states are still in the process of developing their implementation plan and creating supporting resources. These states and additional resources will be added to [NEA’s LGBTQ+ Resources Page](#).

State	Resources
California	<a href="https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/supportlgbtq.asp">https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/supportlgbtq.asp</a> <a href="https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/c1f.asp">https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/c1f.asp</a>
Colorado	Policy guidance and resources are still pending <a href="http://thecommons.dpsk12.org/Page/2597">http://thecommons.dpsk12.org/Page/2597</a> - Denver Public Schools <a href="https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb19-1192">https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb19-1192</a>
Connecticut	<a href="https://ctserc.org/equity/gender-and-sexual-identity">https://ctserc.org/equity/gender-and-sexual-identity</a>
Illinois	<a href="https://icl.legacyprojectchicago.org/">https://icl.legacyprojectchicago.org/</a> <a href="https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Support-Students-Implementation-Guidance.pdf">https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Support-Students-Implementation-Guidance.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.isbe.net/supportallstudents">https://www.isbe.net/supportallstudents</a>
Nevada	2021 Law - Resources being developed. <a href="https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/curricular_laws">https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/curricular_laws</a>
New Jersey	<a href="https://www.teach.lgbt/">https://www.teach.lgbt/</a>
Oregon	<a href="https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/Documents/LGBTQ2SIA+%20Student%20Success%20Plan.pdf?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_source=govdelivery">https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/Documents/LGBTQ2SIA+%20Student%20Success%20Plan.pdf?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_source=govdelivery</a> <a href="https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/LGBTQ2SIAStudent-Education/Pages/default.aspx">https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/LGBTQ2SIAStudent-Education/Pages/default.aspx</a>

The tenor of the subcommittee conversations shifted dramatically in 2022, as we witnessed an unprecedented attack on LGBTQ+ youth and educators unfolding in most states across the country. There is a well-coordinated effort among some political groups that are advancing measures that prohibit the teaching of critical race theory, silence classroom discussions on gender and sexual identity, ban books that promote honesty in education, deny the existence of institutionalized racism and some even target social emotional learning because they see this as a back door to teaching students about equity.

In this climate, we must first address these attacks with the same precision and coordination before we can advance the equity work towards more inclusive curriculum. Even the seven states with the inclusive curriculum laws are experiencing pockets of local school board resistance and refusal to follow the new state guidelines.

The messaging campaign of this hateful misinformation is prevailing and we will have to shift from defense to offense so that we can protect and advocate for the diverse students that we serve.

**Recommendations:**

1. NEA should provide a guide for lobbying and organizing to assist state and local affiliates in their efforts to combat anti-LGBTQ+ legislation.
2. NEA should create and promote talking points and model language to support thriving school climates for LGBTQ+ students and staff including, but not limited to, the implementation of inclusive, racially and socially just curriculum and school policies.
3. NEA should provide quarterly virtual office hours in conjunction with the Office of General Counsel and Office of Government Relations in order to lift-up LGBTQ+ issues and achievements.
4. NEA should find more ways to prominently promote

the LGBTQ+ community, issues & concerns, and accolades through direct and reliable member communication, inclusive of state and local affiliates.

**Charge 2**

Assist in the development of resources regarding the importance and use of pronouns that can be shared with NEA and its affiliates.

**Committee Discussion:**

During virtual and in-person meetings, the subcommittee for Charge 2 researched the following LGBTQ+ organizations: The Human Rights Campaign; the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network; The Trevor Project; Gender Spectrum; Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays; Race Forward; Time to Thrive; Learning for Justice; Rethinking Schools; and the American Psychological Association. The subcommittee then reviewed the following resources that address the education and importance of using pronouns:

- <https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns/>
- <https://www.learningforjustice.org/search?query=pronouns>
- <https://www.mypronouns.org/what-and-why>
- <https://www.glsen.org/activity/pronouns-guide-glsen>
- <https://www.thehrcfoundation.org/professional-resources/talking-about-pronouns-in-the-workplace>
- <https://www.thehrcfoundation.org/professional-resources/all-children-all-families-pronouns-101>
- <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/pronouns-usage-among-lgbtq-youth/>
- <https://genderspectrum.org/articles/framework-for-gender-inclusive-schools>

With this information, the SOGI Committee was able to draft a comprehensive pronoun document (Appendix A) that addresses the importance of pronouns for NEA’s various membership categories. The draft document was given to SOGI staff liaisons so it can be reviewed and edited before being published. SOGI understands that the education of pronoun usage cannot stand alone, and believes that NEA should establish an inclusive communicative community and culture throughout the association, our schools, and classrooms by engaging members on the importance of pronouns and modeling the use of pronouns.

**Recommendations:**

- 5. NEA should adopt and use the “Pronoun” document (when finalized) at all levels of the Association to educate members and staff about the purpose of pronouns, and it should be shared with state and local affiliates.

- 6. NEA should create or develop a pronoun explanatory video to accompany the document to be utilized at all NEA conferences/meetings, including the registration process.

**Charge 3**

Review input from the SOGI hearing and identify broad themes that will help inform implementation of the NEA’s Strategic Objectives.

**Committee Discussion:**

The NEA SOGI Committee received the input from the 2021 hearing forms and organized the comments based on the previous year’s charges. The committee reviewed and summarized the input into broad themes in order to develop the following recommendations.

**Recommendations:**

- 7. NEA should develop an ongoing webinar series that focuses on topics including, but not limited to, the current LGBTQ+ political climate, trans youth in athletics, suicide risk, and banned books to help members support and advocate for their students and themselves. These webinars should be promoted to all members through direct communication and social media.
- 8. NEA should create specific LGBTQ+ professional development targeted to support different categories of members including, but not limited to, education support professionals, early childhood/elementary classroom staff, secondary classroom staff, higher education staff, and retired.
- 9. NEA should create a tutorial video to guide members through the new NEA website so that they can more easily access the LGBTQ+ resources and professional development that currently

**Charge 4**

Provide input to the Conference on Racial and Social Justice Planning team through the SOGI Chair.

**Committee Discussion:**

The committee wanted to make sure that there is increased visibility of LGBTQ+ advocacy within the Conference on Racial and Social Justice session offerings. There are opportunities to enhance and highlight intersectionality within many of the sessions developed for the RSCJ. SOGI is a willing partner to help to consult with the planning committee for RSCJ to make sure that relevant LGBTQ+ training opportunities are available to members throughout the schedule of the conference. Recommendations:

- 10. NEA should establish a RFP process for the Conference on Racial and Social Justice that is inclusive of LGBTQ+ issues to help increase intersectionality topics for all sessions.

Committee Recommendation	Relevant Charge	Board of Directors Action
1. NEA should provide a guide for lobbying and organizing to assist state and local affiliates in their efforts to combat anti-LGBTQ+ legislation	Charge 1: Identify current states with LGBTQ+ inclusive curricula and compile strategies and/or practices that can be shared with and utilized by NEA affiliates to develop and promote LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum.	Adopt



Committee Recommendation	Relevant Charge	Board of Directors Action
2. NEA should create and promote talking points and model language to support thriving school climates for LGBTQ+ students and staff including, but not limited to, the implementation of inclusive, racially and socially just curriculum and school policies.	Charge 1: Identify current states with LG-BTQ+ inclusive curricula and compile strategies and/or practices that can be shared with and utilized by NEA affiliates to develop and promote LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum.	Adopt
3. NEA should provide quarterly virtual office hours in conjunction with the Office of General Counsel and Office of Government Relations in order to lift-up LGBTQ+ issues and achievements.	Charge 1: Identify current states with LG-BTQ+ inclusive curricula and compile strategies and/or practices that can be shared with and utilized by NEA affiliates to develop and promote LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum.	Adopt
4. NEA should find more ways to prominently promote the LGBTQ+ community, issues & concerns, and accolades through direct and reliable member communication, inclusive of state and local affiliates.	Charge 1: Identify current states with LG-BTQ+ inclusive curricula and compile strategies and/or practices that can be shared with and utilized by NEA affiliates to develop and promote LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum.	Adopt
5. NEA should adopt and use the “Pronoun” document (when finalized) at all levels of the Association to educate members and staff about the purpose of pronouns, and it should be shared with state and local affiliates.	Charge 2: Assist in the development of resources regarding the importance and use of pronouns that can be shared with NEA and its affiliates.	Adopt
6. NEA should create or develop a pronoun explanatory video to accompany the document to be utilized at all NEA conferences/meetings, including the registration process.	Charge 2: Assist in the development of resources regarding the importance and use of pronouns that can be shared with NEA and its affiliates.	Adopt
7. NEA should develop an ongoing webinar series that focuses on topics including, but not limited to, the current LGBTQ+ political climate, trans youth in athletics, suicide risk, and banned books to help members support and advocate for their students and themselves. These webinars should be promoted to all members through direct communication and social media.	Charge 3: Review input from the SOGI hearing and identify broad themes that will help inform implementation of the NEA’s Strategic Objectives.	Refer to Executive Director
8. NEA should create specific LGBTQ+ professional development targeted to support different categories of members including, but not limited to, education support professionals, early childhood/elementary classroom staff, secondary classroom staff, higher education staff, and retired.	Charge 3: Review input from the SOGI hearing and identify broad themes that will help inform implementation of the NEA’s Strategic Objectives.	Refer to Executive Director
9. NEA should create a tutorial video to guide members through the new NEA website so that they can more easily access the LGBTQ+ resources and professional development that currently exist.	Charge 3: Review input from the SOGI hearing and identify broad themes that will help inform implementation of the NEA’s Strategic Objectives.	Refer to Executive Director
10. NEA should establish a RFP process for the Conference on Racial and Social Justice that is inclusive of LGBTQ+ issues to help increase intersectionality topics for all sessions.	Charge 4: Provide input to the Conference on Racial and Social Justice Planning team through the SOGI Chair.	Refer to the Conference Alignment Team/ Planning Team for Conference on Racial and Social Justice

**Pronouns**

Pronouns are words that function in the place of a name. Instead of saying, “My brother Steve is coming to pick me up in Steve’s car, and we are going to Steve’s favorite restaurant,” a person could instead say, “his car/his favorite restaurant.”

In English, we have two sets of gendered pronouns: “she/her/hers” and “he/him/his” are pronouns that are attached to a particular gender. Men/males have been typically referred to using he/him/his and women/females by using she/her/hers. We likely all grew up assuming we knew someone’s pronouns just by looking at them, or knowing their gender, but that isn’t the case. In an effort

to be more affirming of all, it is important to get out of the habit of assuming pronouns.

Plural pronouns are becoming more widely accepted as gender-neutral singular pronouns. It is grammatically correct to use singular ‘they’ to refer a singular person of unknown gender or to a non-binary person who does not feel gendered pronouns work for them.

Here is a list of the most common pronouns used. Always use the pronouns of the individual once they have told you what pronouns they use. You may see more pronouns outside of this list.

<i>Subjective</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Possessive Adjective</i>	<i>Possessive Pronouns</i>	<i>Reflexive</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself	
He	Him	His	His	Himself	
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves	
Ze	Zim	Zir	Zirs	Zirself	Zim (rhymes with them)
				Zay or Zwee	Zir (rhymes with their)

**TIPS ON USING GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS**

Chances are that you’ve used ‘they, them, or their’ as neutral pronouns when you weren’t aware of a person’s gender. These pronouns are gender-neutral and are used by some transgender and gender non-conforming people. Recognizing that it’s natural to do this can help when a nonbinary person asks you to use gender-neutral pronouns for them. The following are examples when you might have used gender-neutral pronouns without realizing:

- You’re at an event, and someone left a key for you, but you can’t find it. You might ask, “Where did they leave the key?”
- You are awaiting a delivery from a postal worker and wonder, “When are they dropping off the mail?”
- Someone gives your organization a gift, but you didn’t meet the donor. You might say, “Please tell them I said thank you!”

**SHARE YOUR PRONOUNS**

If we want to get out of the habit of assuming pronouns, we need to learn and let people introduce their pronouns.

Role model your pronouns before inviting everyone to introduce theirs.

*“Hi, my name is Meg and I use she/her/hers pronouns. Could everyone please go around and share their name and pronouns.”*

Explain what pronouns are and why you’re asking people to introduce theirs before you do.

*“Hey everyone! So during introductions we are going to introduce our name and pronouns. Pronouns are words that we use to replace names, like she/her/hers, he/him/his, or they/them/theirs. I want to make sure that we are referring to each*

*other in the way that feels most accurate, so we are going to be going around and if everyone could share their name and pronouns that’d be great!”*

A common question and fear that we may have when getting to know someone who has recently changed pronouns or who uses singular they as their pronoun, is that we will make a mistake and misgender the person.

Apologize briefly and correct yourself. For example, *“And I was saying to someone that he’s a really good — sorry, she — that she was a really good painter.”*

Do not over apologize. Over apologizing could sound like, *“Oh gosh I am SO sorry, I really am. I know it’s wrong and this must happen all the time. Gosh pronouns are so difficult!”* You’re doing a few things when you over apologize. Instead of the moment being about them, you’ve made it about your feelings.

**IT’S ABOUT RESPECT**

Positive experiences of social gender affirmation are critical to the health and well-being of transgender and gender diverse people. Social interactions where a person is addressed by their correct name and pronouns, consistent with their gender identity, are widely recognized as a basic — yet critical — aspect of gender affirmation. Addressing someone by the wrong name or misgendering them through the use of incorrect pronouns can feel disrespectful, harmful, and even unsafe to the person being misgendered. Misgendering results in marginalization and communicates that a person’s identity is not being seen or respected. So, practice using the pronouns a transgender or nonbinary person requests...yes, even plural ‘they’. It’s a show of respect.

# Women's Issues

## COMITTEE MEMBERS

Stephanie Johnson,  
*Chair*  
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Maureen Honan  
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Virginia Mancini  
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Jamila Smith  
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*Staff Liaisons:*  
Makeda Harris  
Carol Mwanthi  
Alexandria Richardson  
Pamela Rios

The Women's Issues Committee (WIC) convened for a virtual meeting on March 5, 2022 and a hybrid meeting on April 2-3, 2022 for the purpose of completing the charges below. NEA membership of the WIC is represented across all categories including retired members, educator support professionals, and six active professionals. The primary goal of these meetings was to complete the charges listed below.

The committee was created to represent the interest and perspectives of women in education allowing unique insights to guide the realization of a great public school for every student. The charges below reflect this continued commitment.

During the meeting in April 2022, the committee divided into subgroups to discuss several concepts related to issues below to inform an analysis of the charges. The small groups also reviewed the previous year's work to generate suggestions on how to move the work forward.

### Charge 1

Identify potential modifications to NEA governing documents needed to further advance women's rights.

Committee members that met in-person reviewed the 2021-2022 NEA Resolutions. As a result, areas of interest and/or issues regarding the governing document included the following:

- Resolution B-53. Sex Education (p. 28): programs should include Consent Education aimed to address sexual violence
- Resolution G-3. Licensure (p. 84): licensing language should include accountability to reporting on sexual harassment as part of professional standards
- Resolution I-65. Sexual Harassment (p. 101): language pertaining to "sexual violence" should be included

Other:

- Training video needed to include grievance processes
- Include body shaming as a form of harassment
- Updated toolkit on sexual harassment needed
- Increased protection on the local level and among UniServ staff is needed regarding reporting process regarding sexual harassment, as well as a step by step process
- Provide link to councils, NEA, State, Local, Council's websites
- Inquire/identify state and local protocols and reporting process for sexual harassment

### Charge 2

Review input from WIC hearings and identify broad themes that will help inform the implementation of NEA's Strategic Objectives.

Committee members who met virtually during the second meeting reviewed hearing forms submitted the previous year. The WIC also gathered resources related to issues and concerns. An emerging challenge raised by members was the issue of Period Poverty. As a result of NBI 11 passed at the 2021 Representative Assembly, cross-sectional work is currently underway across the Association. To increase the awareness of Period Poverty, information has also been shared on NEA social media platforms and other resources. Other themes from the hearing forms are below:

- **Women and Leadership:** How do we support and encourage women of color to lead in the organization?
- **ESP Training Opportunities:** How do we move Educator Support Professionals into additional training?
- **Sexual Harassment:** How can we address sexual harassment in the workplace?
- **Period Poverty**

Resources:

Promoting Gender Equity, NEA

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/just-equitable-schools/core-values/promoting-gender-equity>

Women's Rights, NEA

<https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/action-center/our-issues/womens-rights>

Inclusive Workplaces

<https://www.nea.org/your-rights-workplace/inclusive-workplaces>  
<https://www.nea.org/your-rights-workplace/inclusive-workplaces>

NEA Childcare Guidelines and Reimbursement Form

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/ec3635d6305648018e022621043e5ed9>

Growing Awareness of "Period Poverty" in Schools

<https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/growing-awareness-period-poverty-schools>

The Homeless Period Project

[www.homelessperiodproject.org](http://www.homelessperiodproject.org)

PERIOD

[www.period.org](http://www.period.org)

NEA Social Media on NBI 11:

<https://twitter.com/NEAToday/status/1431352320856629256>

<https://twitter.com/NEAToday/status/1427794879372009472>

Retweeted by NEA:

<https://twitter.com/NPR/status/1436907985016692740>

### **Charge 3**

Provide input to the Racial and Social Justice Conference Planning Team through the WIC chair.

In both their March and April meetings the committee received planning updates concerning the Conference on Racial and Social Justice and provided feedback to the committee chair on workshops and subject matter that should be addressed concerning women's issues during the conference. The committee chair expressed that feedback and input towards the Conference would be accepted on an ongoing basis. The committee chair also fulfilled her role as a member of the Conference planning committee.



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