

Dear NCHE Colleagues,

As a middle school special education teacher who has collaborated with our local Highline college as the Post-Secondary Liaison, and helped elect two higher ed WEA members to school board, I am well aware of the need to fully fund our Higher Education Institution, but to also illustrate the issues within NEA and for the public in general. With my experience as the former Chair of the NEA Legislative committee and Budget Committee members, I understand the need to increase state and national organizing resources for Higher Ed. Generations and our democracy depend on it! In this time of intensifying censorship and fascism, our Higher Ed award winners from Florida beautifully lifted that up at the 2022 NEA HCR Awards.

In the role as NEA Executive Committee, I would be striving to implement the NCHE positions alongside our 150,000 Higher Ed members. From where I stand as a local president of a K-12 local (ESPs and Certs), organizing planning would be extremely beneficial to help all of our members understand the issues and coalesce in action. Some ideas include:

- Inviting NEA Higher Ed members to more NEA committees, as experts of the discipline
- Ensuring NEA Higher Ed members are speakers and presenters at conferences (and are compensated for this work)
- Increasing opportunities for amplifying Higher Ed member voice in legislative fights (including affordable college for all who want it) and opportunities to run for office
- Hosting Higher Ed 'briefings' for NEA Board members and state governance to learn more about the specific issues facing Higher Ed and now to engage in that struggle
- Differentiating the racial, social and economic work and trainings to be relevant for our Higher Education members
- Creating and disseminating model bargaining language and legislative language for Higher Ed members and state staff, especially in this time of attacks on free speech and higher education
- Highlighting and organizing around compensation, including equitable tenure. No-one should be living in their car or driving to three campuses a day. Period.
- Higher Ed ESPs are also critical parts of the learning community, and also deserve thriving wages, benefits and healthy working conditions.

In this particular moment, I am very energized to explore the potential of increased Aspiring Educator and Higher Ed member collaboration, especially in the wave of Teaching Assistant, Library and other organizing. There are international models that we could learn from to help engender a deepened solidarity on all of our campuses, and incentivize that culture (especially if faculty freedom of speech is limited in that state). When students, faculty and student workers stand together, and the local EAs join the, we are unstoppable and will change this country for generations to come.

In solidarity,

Shannon McCann