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MEMO

TO: Delegates to the 2025 NEA Representative Assembly

FROM: Rebecca S. Pringle, President
National Education Association

DATE: June 2025

RE: NEA Media Campaign Fund

Attached is the annual report on the NEA Media Campaign Fund for the 2024 – 2025 NEA fiscal year as required in Bylaw 2-7n.

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

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

This report provides a summary of fund activity since the 2024 NEA Representative Assembly.

Attachment

NEA MEDIA CAMPAIGN FUND

ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 2025

SUMMARY

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

NATIONAL BRAND PROMOTIONS

NEA's Brand campaign continues to engage parents and grandparents of public school students and educators. Our efforts leverage a cross-channel paid media strategy to reach BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) caretakers to educate them about the vital issues facing schools in this country.

This year, public education faces a unique threat from the Trump administration, which has called for the dismantling of the Department of Education and attacked the rights of marginalized students and educators. In response, we have evolved the brand campaign to address these topics head-on while inspiring more advocacy and activism. Our new tagline, All In For Public Schools, encapsulates the renewed focus for building a coalition of support for public education, particularly among parents.

To date, our ads program has delivered over 34 million impressions to 3.6 million parents and educators in the 2024 – 2025 fiscal year (FY). Notably, our strategy shifts to focus more on creating action has helped drive 52.9 thousand leads so far—37 percent higher than the total Brand campaign leads driven in FY 2023 – 2024. 26.1 thousand of these leads involved messaging Congress, and 26.8 thousand were registrations to the Ed Action list.

Compared to last year, a significant portion of our budget is now used for rapid response moments, such as the Linda McMahon confirmation hearing. In February, NEA launched a multi-channel initiative prompting parents, educators, and the D.C. community to advocate for lawmakers to reject McMahon's nomination to the office of Secretary of Education.

Leading up to and during the NEA Protect Students and Public Schools Rally at the U.S. Capitol Building, we used social ads to urge BIPOC parents to message Congress and push back against executive overreach. Our digital out-of-home ads played on taxi tops, bus shelters, outdoor panels, and other screens geo-targeted to key focal points like the U.S. Capitol, Union Station, Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, and NEA's headquarters. On the day of the rally, mobile display ads geofenced to the Capitol area targeted rally attendees to submit their message to Congress. The Reject McMahon campaign helped generate momentum and further build our advocacy base by delivering over 800 thousand impressions and over a thousand leads.

In addition to rapid response, our campaign continues to support annual tentpole events such as Read Across America, Teacher Appreciation Week, and Back to School. This year, in addition to celebrating schools and educators, we are activating our audience to take specific actions to speak out in defense of public education. For example, although Read Across America received a reduced investment and limited channel mix compared to last year, our acquisition ads drove over 33.7 thousand leads using petitions and social media. The campaign was incredibly efficient, generating a Cost Per Lead 57 percent lower than our NEA benchmark (\$1.75 vs. \$4.08). Influencer content remained our top-performing narrative creative across platforms.

PUBLIC AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

The NEA engaged in several projects to promote public education initiatives and defend against attacks on public schools and our members.

The fund helps shape numerous campaigns and initiatives through intense listening of key audiences, so we understand where they are, what they care about, and how to persuade and mobilize them. We've invested these funds to better understand various audiences.

As part of our continued issue work, we are creating content to drive our narratives around public education, pushing back against the attacks on education from the federal government, protecting essential federal education programs and inclusive education and delivering this content via paid and social media to key audiences, including parents, activists, allies, and educators.

NEA utilized the media fund as part of an issue accountability campaign to help educate public audiences about the impacts of federal legislation on students, educators, and public schools. In partnership with the Center for Advocacy, the Center for Communications used paid digital advertising to target key audiences to ensure they were aware of the broad impacts of federal decisions being made, and how individual members of Congress had voted on specific bills.

NEA continues to partner with a host of organizations to help hold media accountable, shine a spotlight on disinformation and misinformation and to ensure that bad actors who have an anti-public schools/union agenda are exposed. Over the last year, we partnered with several affiliates to expand this effort and equip activists to push back against false narratives.

We have also utilized the media fund as part of our counter-disinformation strategy by funding in depth and ongoing digital scans to track trending of dis-/mis-information and gives us analysis of what may or may not be breaking through into different audiences.

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

NEA MEMBER INFLUENCER PROGRAM

NEA has continued our member creator program into 2025 as creators have proven to be the best source of authentic storytelling about issues that impact educators, students, and public education. The member creators make content about a wide array of issues, including political advocacy and action around Trump's executive orders, encouraging fellow educators to join NEA, and raising awareness about issues that impact students such as universal school meals.

Since launching in 2022, influencers have published over 400 pieces of content across TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Creators also provide content for NEA's organic social media channels and for NEA advertising. In 2024, influencer content resulted in 2,710,963 total engagements, 5.11 percent engagement rate, and 2,579,221 views. Top performing content included content around the voucher ballot measures, universal school lunches, and assessments.

Continuing into 2025, the influencer program is focusing on expanding to new platforms, such as YouTube shorts. Additionally, creators are responding to the current administration and political attacks on public education. We are also adding a non-member influencer campaign to expand the reach of the program and bring a new perspective from creators with policy expertise to supplement member creators talking about their lived experiences.

ADVANCE RACIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

As part of NEA's ongoing commitment to advancing racial justice in education, our Read Across America program continues to serve as a powerful platform for elevating diverse voices, celebrating culture, and pushing back against censorship and attacks on public education.

This year, we proudly partnered with Newbery Award-winning author Kwame Alexander to celebrate his jazz-infused novel *The Crossover*. Through this collaboration, we brought literature to life—amplifying the power of rhythm, storytelling, and cultural connection to engage students and educators in critical conversations about identity, belonging, and justice.

Read Across America has become more than a reading initiative—it's a movement rooted in equity and inclusion. We are intentionally using literature and the arts to connect with students' lived experiences, foster understanding, and spark dialogue in classrooms and communities. These engagements are part of our broader racial justice agenda—connecting cultural touch-points, the arts, and the voices of our members and students to drive meaningful, systemic change.

NEA also deepened its partnerships with creatives and social justice advocates to produce shareable visual art and storytelling content that uplifts union values and defends democracy. By investing in the creative community, we are supporting local and state efforts that protect educators, students, and the communities we serve.

From school board meetings to social media, we've shared member voices and stories that shine a light on the impact of book bans and the politicization of public education. These efforts reaffirm our commitment to ensuring every student has access to an honest, inclusive education—and the freedom to read stories that reflect their world.

Digital Platforms and Training

Strategically implementing digital tools is critical to deliver on our mission, support our affiliates, and engage our members and advocates more easily and efficiently.

We leveraged these funds to grow capacity and skillsets through the following digital services:

- **Digital tools implementation:** We provided onboarding and ongoing support for enterprise digital tools including Hustle, Salesforce Marketing Cloud, EveryAction, and Sprout Social. We ensure affiliates know how best to use the tools to recruit new members, engage members and public education supporters, and mobilize activists to drive change.
- **Website hosting, support, and development:** We offer our world-class nea.org platform with support from staff with unique expertise and experience working with state and local NEA affiliates.
- **Digital tools platform selection:** We helped affiliates identify campaign goals and select the right tool to support that effort.

In addition, we continue to scale the nea.org/nea-affiliates platform, both onboarding new affiliate websites and launched new features to meet affiliate and audience needs, such as digital membership cards. To date, 18 state affiliates have launched their websites on the NEA platform: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Iowa,

Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, and Vermont. New Hampshire and West Virginia will launch this summer.

State Affiliate Advertising Assistance Program

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

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

State Affiliate Advertising Assistance Advisory Group

- Shannon McCann, NEA Executive Committee member, Washington
- Temika Langston-Myers, NEA Board of Directors, New Jersey
- Rachella Dravis, NEA Board of Directors, Iowa
- Megan Tuttle, president, New Hampshire
- Carrie Lucking, executive director, Minnesota
- Kynesha Brown, communications director, Alabama
- Keoki Kerr, communications director, Hawaii
- Kelly Hagen, communications director, North Dakota
- Sarah Cooke, digital communications content coordinator, Minnesota
- Anitrá Speight, interim senior director, NEA Center for Communications (Advisory Group chair)

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

After the 2024 report was printed, eight applications, with requests totaling \$2.328 million, were reviewed for the 2023 – 2024 budget year. The following seven states received \$1.621 million in partial or full funding:

CONNECTICUT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$204,373
FLORIDA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$250,000
GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS	\$33,000
IDAHO STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$250,000
IOWA STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$150,000
TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$442,000
VERMONT NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	\$291,871
TOTAL APPROVED for FY 2023 – 2024 Round 2	\$1,621,244

*After the printing of this report but before the conclusion of the 2024 – 2025 fiscal year, eleven (11) applications requesting \$2.565 million are scheduled to be reviewed. Approvals will be recorded in the next report.

ENTERPRISE OPERATIONS

Enhancing NEA.org

NEA.org and affiliate sites on the platform are designed to demonstrate the value of membership, serve as a unifying voice for public educators, set a clear agenda for members, and position the union as a relevant and vital organization in the fight for public education.

NEA.org crossed the 10 million visits threshold last year thanks largely to increased paid media investment. Unpaid search engines like Google continue to be the largest driver of traffic, contributing just over 50 percent of visits. Intentional work to rewrite content to succeed in search results has contributed to this growth and allowed us to achieve higher search rankings.

This fiscal year we are prioritizing setting new goals, research, and evaluation of tools that will define the next iteration of the NEA digital experience.

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Member Research

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

Media

We continue to emphasize elevating and amplifying the voices of NEA leaders and members in traditional, new, and emerging media outlets. These voices are critical components in telling our stories, advocating for public education and, ultimately, shaping a narrative to promote, protect and strengthen public education all students deserve. At times, that takes the form of radio and satellite media tours to drive our messages home in local and national media outlets. Specifically, we have leveraged these tools to push key narratives aligned to the issue teams focused on protecting public education in the wake of unprecedented attacks. In addition, we use tentpole moments to reiterate our messages during Teacher Appreciation Week and Back to School.

We have continued our emphasis on lifting voices of members (in partnership with affiliates) to ensure that members who know their students by name can tell their stories about school funding, inclusive education, and educators. NEA has had major success in driving media coverage, and this work was key to that.

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



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