NEA NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION | Health and Safety PROGRAM

Local Advocacy and Action to Protect Students from Digital Risks

NEA local affiliates can play a key role in shaping legislation and policy, building and strengthening partnerships, and guiding and supporting educators.

Local Affiliate Strategies

Sample Goal: Create or revise bargaining language or other labor-management agreements to address student personal device use and media literacy initiatives.

Keep in Mind:

- Develop language and guidance related to media literacy. For example, a letter of agreement between the North Kitsap School District and the North Kitsap Education Association in Washington State notes, "The secondary Library Media Specialists will work with District administration to: Identify, develop, and implement an appropriate framework for instruction in digital citizenship and media literacy and identify staffing resources for supporting the integration of technology into instruction."

Sample Goal: Create or repurpose labor-management committees to include attention to student personal devices and media literacy.

Keep in Mind:

- Check if existing health and safety, violence-prevention, curriculum, labor-management, or other committees already address student personal devices and media literacy. If not, amend existing committee language or create a dedicated committee to bring attention to these topics.

Sample Goal: Develop local expertise drawing on a range of educator experiences and knowledge of student personal device use in schools.

Keep in Mind:

- Be sure to engage a range of interest holders–including, but not limited to, school counselors, paraeducators, librarians, media specialists, nurses, bus drivers, resource officers, and administrative staff–when discussing student personal devices and media literacy. Interest holders will have valuable feedback on how students use their devices and on the appropriate content for district and school policy.

Sample Goal: Obtain implementation plans that include dedicated professional learning time, curriculum development support, and opportunities for educators to lead and shape how media literacy is integrated across subjects and grade levels.

Keep in Mind:

- Consider working toward a phased implementation plan with school administration to encourage buy-in and acceptance for what will be a significant change to the school day for educators, students, and families. **Policy implementation plans are just as important as the policy itself and are instrumental in ensuring that what the policy calls for is carried out.**
- Check out your State Department of Education's media literacy guidance (if available). Some states have adopted media literacy standards or statute, but districts and educators often receive little guidance, time, or resources to bring those requirements to life.
- Use this toolkit and the resources from Media Literacy Now and NAMLE to advocate for what media literacy instruction should look like in schools. These organizations provide state-by-state policy analysis, clear guidance on what educator-supported media literacy looks like, and frameworks that strengthen the case for district implementation plans.

Sample Goal: Develop a local policy or statement on restricting student personal device use in schools.

Keep in Mind:

- Check with your state affiliate and NEA for guidance or policy in place.
- Use state legislative or regulatory requirements or goals as the basis for local policy content, if appropriate.

Sample Goal: Where appropriate, engage with families and students to understand their concerns and needs on these topics.

Keep in Mind:

- Make sure that families and students understand the reasons for and content of policies to bolster implementation and compliance.
- Consider input from students and families during the development and review of policies.

Sample Goal: Use student personal device restrictions in schools as an organizing opportunity—both to strengthen the union and to bring new members into the work.

Keep in Mind:

- Take initiative to ensure educators are not left to manage the problem alone and position the issue squarely within organizing plans. Growing concern across school communities about student personal device use—and the digital harms linked to it—creates a strong opening for unions to lead.
- Advocate to advance these policies to strengthen educator working conditions and contribute to a more positive school climate. New reporting has shown that schools implementing consistent, schoolwide restrictions on student personal devices are becoming more attractive to educators, with some districts using these policies as a recruitment strategy.
- Start by reviewing existing legal requirements; legislative-required standards may already be in the books.