



NEA is working to provide great public schools

Directors' Newsletter

February 2021

Leading in a Virtual World

Join Now New Ed Digital Advertising Pilot



NEA is using new digital methods to make joining more user-friendly than ever before. The pandemic has increased the urgency for our association to meet the needs of members in innovative ways including the new Join Now digital advertising pilot going on in many states.

TELEPHONIC JOIN PILOT

- 11 States Participated
- 106 Locals
- 2,416 telephonic contacts with potential members
- 574 New Members
- 28 NEW PAC donors in one state pilot

Changes to Uniserv Program Proposed

The Uniserv Review Committee met twice in February to look at membership projections, Uniserv grants, and several other changes to improve the program.

Over the last several months, the committee met virtually in subgroups to make improvements to various areas of the Uniserv program. The first subgroup met with the Center for Organizing to review and provide input on the Uniserv Core Competencies. The goal was to ensure NEA's commitment to racial and social justice was fully embedded within with document, which had been reviewed before the pandemic. The Center for Organizing then met with Uniserv Managers to solicit additional input, and then finally with a cadre of Uniserv staff trainers at the state affiliate level. Finally, staff from the Center for Organizing compiled the feedback and met with the Human and Civil Rights department to refine the changes. All of the changes were submitted back to the Uniserv committee and approved.

A second subgroup was tasked with developing recommendations about how NEA can support affiliates in advancing diversity in hiring goals. The group met with Chaka Donaldson, NEA's Director of Human Resources, to discuss strategies relating to the hiring process. The suggestions were compiled and will be refined and made into a "best practices" document about hiring for diversity that will be shared with affiliates and used in training. While the committee hopes to have the document ready for the

full board to vote on in the spring, it felt that the importance of "getting it right" justified possibly extending the timeline.

During the Uniserv's second committee meeting in February, Michael McPherson, NEA CFO, met with the committee to review membership projections and possible Uniserv rebates. While the committee stressed that its projections are preliminary, and final numbers would be available during the May board meeting, they projected the Uniserv Grant amount would increase by 1.63% from \$40,481 to \$41,141. Overall, this represents an increase in the amount that NEA will be returning to its affiliates of \$1,111,440.

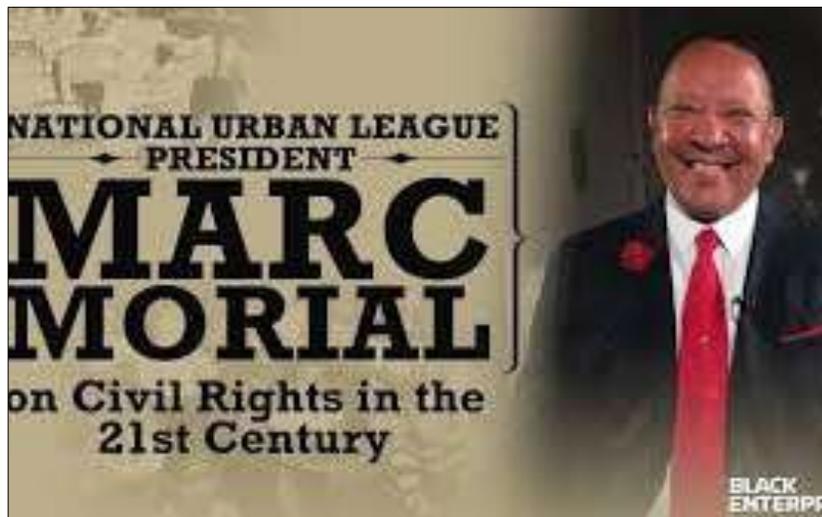


Black Observance

On Saturday, Marc Morial, President and CEO of the National Urban League- the nation's largest historic civil rights and urban advocacy organization joined the Board. During her introduction, President Pringle noted that Morial partnered with the NEA in a town hall providing "much-needed discussion about our communities and how we can advocate for reopening our schools to in-person learning safely and equitably." They also discussed how educators can make their voices heard in the fight to secure PPE, health protocols, and funding.

Cecily Myart-Cruz, NEA Black Caucus Chair, informed the Board that the National Urban League has been around for over 110 years. It is dedicated to economic empowerment, equality, and social justice in its dedication to Black people in underserved communities. She noted that the organization has published reports highlighting the issues of systemic racism the pandemic has exposed. It has shown that we must speak truth to power for our most marginalized communities.

President Morial began by describing the situation that the country has found itself in. Educators and social workers have had to completely pivot the way they



Marc Morial is President and CEO of the National Urban League, the nation's largest historic civil rights and urban advocacy organization. As Mayor of New Orleans from 1994 to 2002, Morial led New Orleans' renaissance, and left office with a 70% approval rating.

teach and provide services to young people. Like Myart-Cruz, he noted that the pandemic brought disparities to light that existed in the nation. He shared with Board members "These challenges now are the challenges of our time and our generation. And we can't shirk this responsibility. We can't step away from this essence and this duty."

Morial discussed the COVID vaccine and underscored the importance of not only making sure the vaccine is available on an equitable basis, but also acknowledging the distrust over it and providing enough legitimate information to allow people to make informed choices.

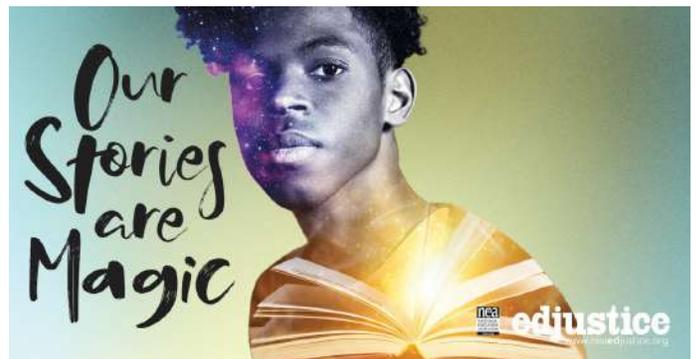
Morial reflected on George Floyd, describing the reaction of people to his death as spontaneous, real,

and meaningful all across the nation. Some of the outrage and energy found its way to the ballot box, and Morial said we have to meet that moment by both demanding what we believe is needed and supporting those that make proposals that we agree with.

"We have the responsibility to help, hold accountable, and recognize the difficult path ahead for the things we want," he said, "There is no more important public job in the world than being an educa-

tor. Parents, grandparents, and caregivers are entrusting the most precious thing in their lives to somebody else to guide them, to nurture them, to carry them from infancy to womanhood, from infancy to manhood. In your profession -- the profession of educators, you deserve respect and honor and adulation because your work is difficult, demanding, and it is hard."

His words reflected the importance of this moment and the solidarity that will take the National Urban League, along with the NEA to a new, more just, more equitable, and more cohesive society built on our knowledge of the past and dedication to doing better in the future.



Legal Landscape

NEA Chief Counsel Alice O'Brien informed the board that the United States Supreme Court declined to take up six cases regarding recovery of "fair share" fees before the *Janus* case. This is good news for members. For the last three years, NEA lawyers have been litigating post-*Janus* cases. In March of 2018, the first post-*Janus* case was filed against the Washington Education Association, and over the next few years, a total of 28 cases were filed against NEA and its affiliates. Many of these cases sought awards for agency fees that NEA and its affiliates had collected in good faith before the *Janus* ruling. Had they been successful, plaintiffs' awards would have cost the Association million dollars. NEA spent hundreds of hours making sure that it was in lockstep with other labor unions making exactly the right arguments to the right courts by the right advocates.

NEA won every one of the cases against in district court and every one on appeal. Finally, this past month, the Supreme Court denied cert, meaning declined to take, the only two of the NEA cases that have reached the Supreme Court at this point. This, along with previous victories in the courts by NEA and its affiliates, will help end post *Janus* litigation once and for all. Additional cases are pending, but it seems less likely that any will result in judgments against NEA, its affiliates, or other public sector unions. The full court participated in the denials, including Trump's final Supreme Court nominee, Justice Barrett. It sent an extremely strong signal to the lower courts, that all the decisions to date have been correct. Other *Janus* related litigation continues, focused on membership cards and drop protocols. It remains critical for a successful defense against those attacks that NEA and its affiliates follow best practices in our membership sign-up and drop procedures.

O'Brien then discussed NEA legal's work on COVID-related mandates, including guidance distributed to affiliates on bargaining obligations and liability issues. Specifically, she referenced *GAE v. Kemp*, in which a district has failed to enforce masking and distancing requirements. The lawsuit contends that

the state has a Constitutional obligation to provide a safe school system.

On February 3, the New Jersey Supreme Court unanimously ruled that public school districts do have authority to enter into agreements with unions for release time. According to O'Brien, the court found that school districts have the statutory authority to enter into release time arrangements with local and state associations. The agreements serve a public purpose since it provides better opportunities for labor disputes to be resolved effectively and efficiently. There is a similar case being litigated in Minnesota, but this victory gives NEA and its affiliates some firm legal footing to move forward.

NEA has also submitted an amicus brief in *Jones v. Becarra*, which challenges the constitutionality of California's laws restricting firearms sales to individuals younger than 21. O'Brien said the brief explains the devastating effects of gun violence on children and how it affects their ability to learn.

NEA and its partners are continuing to work on helping members find student debt relief. As of the board meeting, approximately \$1 million in student debt has been forgiven, with another \$232 million on track to be forgiven. Many NEA members with significant student debt have been unable to get relief due to barriers put in place by loan servicers as well as by the Department of Education. Over the past few years, NEA has worked with NEA Member Benefits to develop broad systematic approaches to the problem, including the development of the SAVI tool, which helps individuals get into the right loan programs to bring their loan repayments down and to qualify for loan forgiveness. More than 15,000 members have benefitted from the work done by staff in multiple departments, and NEA continues to provide webinars to all interested affiliates and members to help members eliminate their student debt.



O'Brien

Women's Observance

Lynda R. Williams, President of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives spoke for the Women's Observance. She is currently a professor of practice at middle Tennessee State University in the department of criminal justice administration. With this appointment in 2017, she became the first individual with this title in recognition of the breadth and depth of her knowledge and expertise in the field of criminal justice and executive security. In her role within the department of criminal justice administration, Williams's curriculum subject matter includes foreign and domestic terrorism studies, criminal justice processes, community and public service engagement, and executive law enforcement leadership speaker symposiums.

Before joining the faculty at Middle Tennessee state university, Williams led an accomplished career as a veteran of the United States Secret Service which began in 1988 when she started as a uniform division officer assigned to the White House branch.

In 1997, Williams was assigned to the Vice President Protective Division during the Clinton Administration, and for the next four years, she executed executive protection and venue security for Vice President Al Gore domestically and internationally.

Williams entered the supervisory ranks in 2003. She was promoted as the Assistant to Special Agent in Charge of the Washington field office. Her promotion served as a milestone distinguishing her as the first African American female to serve as a supervisor of this field office. In 2004, Ms. Williams transferred to the Secret Service where she served as the national recruiter in the security clearance division. In 2008, she was once again promoted to the Secret Service's resident office in Pretoria, South Africa. In this capacity, she was responsible for all secret service operations in sub-Saharan Africa and five countries in West Africa.

Williams returned to Washington, D.C. in 2011, upon being promoted to the special agent in charge of Congressional affairs serving as a liaison to members of Congress. She retired as the Deputy Assistant Director in 2017.

Many Board members voiced concerns about the content of the presentation given. NEA leadership is working to address the concerns raised. President Becky Pringle is committed to moving the dialogue forward and creating a culture that allows the Board to engage in deep and respectful conversations that further the mission of the NEA on behalf of our members and students.



Board Engagement: COVID 19

Executive Committee member, Hannah Vaandering, and Daaiyah Bilal-Threats, Special Assistant to the Executive Director and Senior Advisor, presented NEA's recent learning beyond COVID survey. The survey reiterated our work reclaiming public education as a common good and focused on six areas:

Equity: The COVID pandemic compounded impact on students with disabilities, students of color, and students with economic challenges. The role of educators in creating a just society requires changes in the content and delivery of curriculum. Content must be accessible to all and reflect the contribution of ethnic and racial minorities in society. Educators can mitigate the impact of COVID by providing equitable, quality instruction via distance learning.

Family and Community Engagement: The recovery process from the pandemic must occur both in our schools and the surrounding community. Establishing and maintaining consistent communication with parents is critical. There was consensus around the notion that social-emotional supports are—and will continue to be—necessary for students and their families. Responses also highlighted the importance of teachers and administrators who reflect the diversity of the communities in which they work.

Responsibility for and Assessment of Students' Academic and Social-Emotional Learning: The pandemic shed light on the impact our current assessment system has on BIOPIC students and students with disabilities. The goal is to build a system that focuses on equity, student academic, and social-emotional learning and provides educators flexibility and authority to use student learning time effectively. The system must build trust with families and provide the appropriate data to all stakeholders. There is concern about the fairness, usefulness, and appropriateness of standardized assessments. Suggestions included reimagining assessments to be authentic and to considering social-emotional learning as a component. Many suggested holistically designed district-level or classroom-based assessments closely aligned with learning standards.

Systems Change: The pandemic severely disrupted students' access to educational resources. An excellent public education system provides quality conditions for teaching and learning, is equitably and inclusively designed, supports resilience, addresses trauma, and has a diverse and prepared workforce. Systems change can include calendar, time, schedule, or curriculum adjustments. Responses considered schedules, extended instructional time, and school calendar (year-round school models, summer school, four-day classroom week), and advocated for smaller class sizes.

Resources and Funding: This includes course offerings, class size, human resourcing: tutors, counselors, nurses, ESP, classroom teachers, technology equipment, and internet access resourcing. Responses emphasized the importance of non-instructional staff in creating environments that facilitate student learning. Any extension or enhancement to the school day would require "extra hands". Additional funding is vital to make this happen. The allocation of resources a gateway to providing equitable access to education.



Educator Voice/Role of our Union: Reimagine and transforming schools post-pandemic will require bold leadership and tough decision-making. Our communities need public schools that can powerfully serve, be inclusive of, and create a caring, respectful learning environment for every student. Our schools must fully engage students and educators in a way that support educational excellence, resilience, student trauma. Educators must be active participants in all aspects of decision making, including policy development and implementation. Educators need autonomy so they can do what they know is best for students. Professional respect and public perception of educators must improve. Specific actions by state and affiliates can foster collaborative relationships that might prove to be key in transforming public schools after the COVID pandemic. Through collaboration and building relationships with the community and legislators, the union can elevate the voices of educators.

Bilal-Threats discussed opportunity the pandemic presented -- a chance to relook and reimagine the educational system. "We can create working environments that rejuvenate students and replenish our educators," declared Bilal-Threats. This survey outlines the resources we need to do it. However, it takes more than funding for education to secure our students' needs; it takes each of us.

Hanna Vaandering added, "This last question is the crux of our work: What are you going to do to help your members, your locals, and the NEA move to a more safe and just post-pandemic future?"

President Becky Pringle concluded the presentation with encouragement to all members

"I need you to be at those tables in your school districts. Our voices need to be at the table to say what we need to spend that money on. Nothing is more powerful than when you say specifically 'This is what we need; this is how much it will cost, and this is how we will make it happen over time.' I need YOU - our practitioners, our teachers, our ESP, our higher ed, all hands on deck. I expect the NEA to LEAD on how we will bridge the gaps for our students."



Read Across America 2021

NEA Director, Christina Bohringer (Virginia) chairperson of the Read Across America committee, presented the committee report to the NEA Board of Directors. The committee met to review grant applications and is pleased to award five states Read Across America grants. They are North Carolina Association Educators, Connecticut Education Association, Federal Education Association, Iowa State Education Association, and the National Education Association of New Mexico.



Bohringer

Read Across America is celebrated on March 2nd of each year. NEA members can visit the website www.ReadAcrossAmerica.org to explore the newly revised resources and tool kits with diverse, leveled book selections and ideas that can help inspire reading in classrooms throughout the year. This year President Pringle demonstrate some hats with the author of Tiara's Hat Parade, Kelly Starling Lyons as part of NEA's commitment to supporting literacy. This year's Read Across America day ambassador is writer and activist, Marley Dias who will help with the online festivities.

Executive Committee Report /

Ballot Measure and Legislate Crisis Fund

The NEA Board of Directors considered and approved expenditures from the Ballot Measure and Legislative Crisis Fund. Four states submitted requests -- Arizona, Minnesota, Missouri, and Montana. Three of these requests focused on supporting the successes secured in previous election cycles, while one focused on new legislative challenges. The requests were evaluated by the Oversight Committee and brought to the Board for approval. The fund, created in 2000 by the NEA Representative Assembly, is dedicated to providing funds supporting affiliates' state legislative work. From Arizona's successful passage of the Invest in Education Act to working cooperatively with Minnesota's "education" Governor, state affiliates continue to use elections to strengthen and support schools across the country.

Secretary– Treasurer's Report

In his report to the NEA Board of Directors, Secretary-Treasurer Noel Candelaria focused on the work at hand. He reviewed how the tone from the top drives culture throughout an organization. He stated,



Candelaria

"The tone at the top is the message and attitude and image of the highest level of our union. It is how we live and embrace our commitment to the principles, values, and character of our union."

Candelaria reviewed NEA's modified 2021-2022 budgetary timeline. He noted January's successful virtual financial forum kickoff, additional upcoming Zoom budget engagements, the Executive Committee's acceptance of an independent and clean audit, and updated membership counts. Candelaria emphasized that careful consideration of how we allocate resources for our members is the highest responsibility of the budget process. In his words,

"Our members entrust us in these positions. For some, it is a financial sacrifice for us to do the work."

Candelaria reiterated the profound trust our members place in us to do the work of our association.

The second part of Candelaria's report celebrated NEA's successful adaptation to the digital world: "We are using the tools we have at our disposal." These tools include webinars, toolkits, customizable videos, virtual conferences, telephonic join, digital advertising, hustle campaigns, and more. Additionally, Candelaria shared the successful *2020 New Educator Campaign. Adapting. Learning. Supporting.*

"People don't join organizations; people join other people," emphasized Candelaria. "When we invite colleagues to join us in the work when we engage and recruit members, it's the personal touch that leads to a strong association."

As he wrapped up his report, Candelaria explored the challenges we have to do our jobs professionally and as union leaders "We will lay a foundation and rise to the challenges of the work we have ahead of us."

2020-2021 MEMBERSHIP COUNTS		
Active Certified	2,090,439	(5,021)
Active ESP	443,933	(14,969)
Active Life	35,911	(616)
Total Active*	2,570,283	(20,606)
Retired	322,991	1,204
Aspiring Educators	36,598	(11,797)
Others	7,432	(537)
Community Ally	32	(395)
Total	2,937,336	(32,131)
Member Ed	140,000	(6,781)

Dues Action

In his presentation of the expected 2021-2022 dues adjustment, Secretary-Treasurer Candelaria defined what it means to unify members "It's how we organize people and how we organize money because we have an agenda." Candelaria shared how the preliminary numbers were based on estimates and that the current change was determined after considering the increase in the average salary from the 19-20 and the 20-21 school year, the estimated salary averages of teachers and ESPs across the nation, and the states with the largest impacts. "We use the average salary to calculate dues, adjusting to remove the unusually high salary outliers," explained Candelaria. "We also look at data from a bit of historical perspective since that data lags by one year." For example, the data from the 19-20 and 20-21 school years reflect the impact of the Red for Ed movement.

Our NEA Bylaws state that the dues amount is determined by contributions to the general budget (average salary multiplied by .00225), Uniserve (average salary multiplied by .00055), the NEA Foundation, the Great Public Schools Fund, and the Media/Ballot Fund. The current proposals are a decrease from the preliminary amounts for teachers and ESP members for the 2021-2022 school year. Secretary-Treasurer Candelaria moved the 2021-2022 dues structure, and the Board of Directors approved it, under the provisions in the bylaws.



Building NEA Organizational Capacity

Standing Rules for the 2021 NEA RA

The NEA Board held a virtual meeting on Monday, February 22, 2021 to pass the following motion:

That the NEA Board of Directors suspend the NEA Standing Rules in their entirety, other than as noted in the temporary Rules of Procedure, for the duration of the 2021 virtual convening of the Representative Assembly and adopt the following temporary Rules of Procedure for the purpose of conducting business at the virtual convening of the 2021 NEA Representative Assembly to be held on June 30-July 3, 2021 as well as for the purpose of conducting the mail ballot elections to the NEA Executive Committee and At-Large Board of Director seats.

Summary of Proposed Change

Standing Rule 1- Mostly unchanged with the exception of dates of registration and filing of challenges.

Standing Rule 2- No changes

Standing Rule 3- All motions and items of business must be submitted in writing. Blocks of time designated for debate: NBIs: Two (2) hours per day for four (4) days; Legislative Amendments, Policy Statement Amendments, and Resolutions: one (1) hour each. Items not concluded by the gavel will fall to the ground. No yielding will be allowed.

Standing Rule 4- No changes

Standing Rule 5- No changes

Standing Rule 6- NBIs must be submitted in advance, by June 15, with time for modifications to be made by the maker after receiving costing information and potential feedback. NBIs and subsequent maker-initiated modifications will be available for viewing by delegates on the Delegate Website. A modified NBI will be posted after June 25, but still can be amended by delegates during the RA, provided the motion is submitted by noon each day of the RA.

Standing Rule 7, 8, & 9- Deadlines for Resolutions, Legislative Amendments, and Policy Statements will be due by 4:00 PM Eastern Time on June 30. Delegates will be able to submit amendments until noon on the day these items are to be considered by the RA.

Standing Rule 10- No changes

Standing Rule 11- Modifications have been made to accommodate the virtual meeting, such as videotaped speeches, a prohibition of the display of campaign materials on video screens, and the process for using mail ballots.

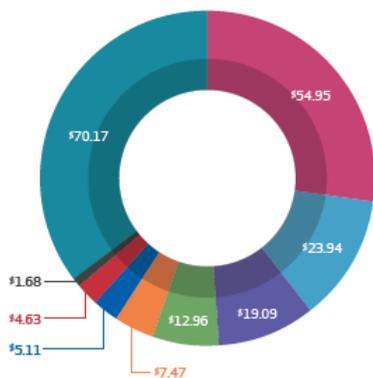
Standing Rule 12 - Does not apply since it deals with activities and behaviors associated with an in-person meeting.

Standing Rule 13 - Remains mostly in effect with the exception of the modification of the term “secret ballot”, to allow the use of electronic voting for amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws. Federal law requires the use of mail ballots for candidate elections.

How are NEA Dues Spent?

How Your 2020–2021 Dues Dollars Are Allocated

The chart below shows how your NEA dues (\$200.00; \$121.50 ESP) are allocated to support and represent members and affiliates in their efforts to achieve NEA's mission.



No dues dollars are used to support NEA Member Benefits programs.

Increase Educator Voice, Influence, and Professional Authority \$5.11 (ESP \$3.10)
Develop and sustain effective structures, processes, and leaders to increase educator influence in decision-making at worksite, district, state, and national levels.

Recruit and Engage New and Early Career Educators \$4.63 (ESP \$2.81)
Identify, recruit, support, and engage new educators in our association, and connect them with opportunities for professional learning, leadership and advocacy.

Advance Racial Justice in Education \$7.47 (ESP \$4.54)
Support members in advancing racial justice in education and improving conditions for students, families, and communities through awareness, capacity-building, partnership, and individual and collective action.

Support Professional Excellence \$12.96 (ESP \$7.87)
Build a system of association-convened, educator-led professional learning and supports for all educators across their career continua to ensure student success.

Secure the Environment to Advance the Mission of the NEA and Its Affiliates \$23.94 (ESP \$14.55)
Use all available means, including organizing, legal, legislative, electoral, and collective action, to secure the environment necessary to protect the rights of students, educators, and the future of public education.

Legal and Insurance Support \$19.09 (ESP \$11.60)
Implement advocacy programs for members, including the Unified Legal Services Program, Fidelity Bond, Association Professional Liability insurance, and a \$1 million per member Educators Employment Liability insurance program.

Enhance Organizational Capacity \$70.17 (ESP \$42.63)
Develop and leverage the collective organizational capacity across our association that is necessary to advance the mission of the NEA and its affiliates, with particular focus on organizing, technology, fiscal health, leadership development, and internal and external partnerships.

Enterprise Operations \$54.95 (ESP \$33.38)
Ongoing functions across the enterprise that support the Strategic Objectives, build lasting strength, and sustain the organizational infrastructure.

Contingency \$1.68 (ESP \$1.02)
Provide funding for emergencies at the national, state, or local levels.

2020 New Ed Campaign

Adapting. Learning. Supporting.

