



NEA is working to provide great public schools

Directors' Newsletter

February 2019

Stocks preps for transition to new NEA role

President Eskelsen Garcia says his successor 'must hit the ground running'

It became apparent to the NEA Board of Directors that President Lily Eskelsen Garcia had something of significance to share with the gathering as she prepared to introduce NEA Executive Director John Stocks to share his report. She asked the group to provide her with undivided attention and requested electronic devices to not be used while she spoke.

As attention zeroed in on the President, she shared the contents of a conversation she and Stocks had early in the fall of 2018. During that conversation, he confided in her he planned to step down following the midterm elections. She recalled telling him, only half-jokingly, "That's just not possible. We can't allow that to happen."

In the end, it did not. Stocks is still the Executive Director – for now.

Eskelsen Garcia announced the NEA Executive Committee has authorized the announcement of an opening for the Executive Director position. Stocks will remain in that role until a replacement is hired at which time he will transition to the role of Senior Adviser through



NEA Executive Director John Stocks has served in that role since his appointment in 2011. President Lily Eskelsen Garcia announced a transition plan during the Board of Directors' February meeting.

January 31, 2021. His work as Senior Adviser will be to continue doing much of what he did in the lead up to the midterms: leveraging relationships he's developed with deep-pocketed donors to help fund progressive movement

organizations' work around the 2020 election cycle.

"He will be the Senior Adviser to Save Democracy," Eskelsen Garcia quipped.

Continued on page 6

Membership trending above projections

NEA Secretary/Treasurer Princess Moss is fond of saying "Organize, organize, organize" whenever she is asked about ways to strengthen the National Education Association.

When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Mark Janus on June 27, 2018 in the landmark *Janus v. AFCSME* case, there was a fear that the NEA might see a precipitous drop in membership due to the loss of fee payer status. With 31,000 known fee payers, the NEA budgeted for a 214,000 full time equivalence membership loss this year. At the moment, projections are a drop of just 36,000.

No wonder Moss was so pleased when she informed the Board that membership is, in fact, up over last year. As of the end of January, mem-

bership reports showed total membership at 3,009,252 which is nearly 11,000 more than last year.

Much of this positive growth can be attributed to organizing. The NEA's New Ed Campaign was used in more than 4,100 locals nationwide. It yielded an increase in new member recruitment has increased 7.4% from last year for a total of 188,886 new educator members.

Yet even with this positive news, the Secretary/Treasurer was far from declaring victory.

"As Eric Brown (from the NEA Executive Committee) told us earlier this week, we are not out of the woods yet," Moss said. "We are just entering the woods."



Board Receives Implicit Bias Training

The NEA Board of Directors devoted the final four hours of its February meeting to learning through implicit bias training. The training, entitled, *Sticks & Stones: Understanding Implicit Bias, Micro-aggressions & Stereotypes*, was facilitated by Hilario Benzon, manager in the NEA's Human & Civil Rights (HCR) Department; Makeda Harris, a staff member in HCR; and Lisa Jennings, an elementary school secretary and NEA member from Sioux Falls, SD. The Board worked through a series of activities designed to help deepen its understanding of what implicit bias is and how to confront it when it's identified. Benzon encouraged the group to "Name it. Claim it. Stop it. Words have consequences; lack of words also have consequences." Further, the Board began to develop an understanding of three types of micro-aggressions: micro-assaults (deliberate acts which are intended to hurt, oppress, or discriminate), micro-insults (typically unintentional and occur due to underlying biases and prejudices outside of awareness), and micro-invalidations (also unintentional these acts exclude, negate, or nullify an individuals' thoughts or feelings). The trainers closed out the afternoon's activities by sharing the viral Ad Council video *Love Has No Labels* (see it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnDgZuGIhHs>). NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia also reminded the gathered group why the Association takes the time for this type of training and how best to answer those who wonder why the NEA is so involved in racial and social justice: "If you care about students and being the best professional you can be, it is our work."

Post-Janus Lawsuits vs. NEA Now Number 24

NEA General Counsel Alice O'Brien provided the Board an update on various matters involving the Association's legal team. Presently, there are 24 cases pending against the NEA and its affiliates as a by-product of last June's Janus ruling. These cases range from seeking back dues to challenges to membership drop windows. Still others challenge the concept of exclusive representation. O'Brien noted that lower courts have

handed down favorable rulings for the NEA's affiliates when it comes to exclusive representation. She did add, however, that certificate-petitions have been filed in many with a goal to get cases to the U.S. Supreme Court as expeditiously as possible; to date SCOTUS has not taken up the question. O'Brien also shared the makeup of courts from trial courts to SCOTUS. At the trial court level, 10% of all judges are appointments of the current President. At the Federal Appellate level, 19% are appointees of this administration. And, of course, SCOTUS is comprised of 22% Trump appointments.

2018 NBIs 12 & 17 Acted Upon by Board

The NEA's Annual Meeting Review Committee (AMRC) brought forth two items emanating from the 2018 RA in Minneapolis. New Business Item 12 requested the ability to conduct floor votes via either smart phone or tablet be explored. After studying the feasibility the AMRC does believe it is viable at this time due to security of the vote, ensuring the authorized delegate is casting the vote, and challenges with connectivity. The other was NBI 17 which made the request that delegate accomplishments (such as PhD, RN, EdS, etc.) be printed on name badges. The AMRC recommended not doing this because it would be difficult to be exhaustive with all possible accomplishments. Both actions of the AMRC were concurred by the NEA Board.

Maine's NEA Director

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Positive Membership Report

Continued from page 1

Moss noted that 5-year trends from those states that underwent such fee payer losses, payroll deduction losses, or faced "right to work" legislative or legal challenges, saw some of their steepest membership declines not in the initial year but in subsequent ones.

2019/20 Dues Amount Set: Moss also brought forward for Board consideration the 2019/20 Dues Amount. As part of the 2-year budget passed last year, dues were estimated to be \$195 for active professional staff and \$118.50 for active ESP. The dues, however, are established through a formula outlined in Bylaw 2-7 and are based on the average salary of both professional staff and ESP. Each average salary rose more in the past year than was predicted during the proposed budget cycle. As such, the dues for 2019/20 will be \$196 for active professional staff and \$119.50 for active ESP.



Moss



*Great Public Schools
for Every Child*



Executive Committee brings forward several items for Board consideration

Bylaw amendments covering disaffiliation, trusteeship, among items acted upon

The NEA Executive Committee brought forward several items for the Board of Directors to take action on during its February Meeting.

The Executive Committee brought forward draft language to create Bylaw 8-21 which provides a process for a state or local affiliate to disaffiliate from the Association. At the moment, there is no language in the NEA governing documents that defines this process. Proposed Bylaw 8-21 would require an affiliate to conduct an election, by mail, overseen by a qualified third party, and have a two-thirds majority of voters support disaffiliation. Language is also included that outlines the timelines for notification, general membership meetings, and the election. Additionally, the Board approved language modifications to Bylaw 8-12 which sets guidelines for affiliates entering into trusteeship.

Additionally, the Board green-lighted language on how the proposed Constitutional Amendment #3, which seeks to establish the Community Ally Membership Category, and the related second Bylaw Amendment, would be implemented. These guidelines includes the membership application process, rights and limitations of membership, the annual dues

and benefits, as well as a process for censure, suspension, and expulsion.

The Board also approved a recommendation from the Executive Committee to allocate up to \$15 million from the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crisis Fund to be used by the Campaign and Elections' Behind the Wall Team (BWT) during the 2020 election cycle to pay for public communications and activities supporting ballot measures and related education policy issues in targeted states. This will allow the BWT to begin implementing a comprehensive strategy to defend against qualified anticipated negative measures and issues, such as attacks on voting rights, expansion of charters, and other anti-labor and anti-tax proposals. The allocated funds will also be used to support proactive initiatives like expanding voting rights, fair redistricting reforms and education funding. These activities will complement the NEA's legislative and gubernatorial election goals by motivating and turning out pro-public education voters in key states and districts.

Finally, the Board approved modifications to policy regarding representative assembly hotel selections. The first provides a process of hotel selection when large meeting/conference hall space is needed by large-delegate states (500 or more delegates) to choose their primary hotel first then join the regular selection process based on accrued points. The second provides an opportunity for a state that voluntarily chooses not to send a delegation to a RA. It will be given the same number of points accrued from the most-recent year it attended the RA. (The latter policy clarification became necessary with New Hampshire's decision not to attend the 2019 RA in Houston.)

2019 Representative Assembly Important Dates

The following will all be conducted in a virtual format *prior* to the start of the RA:

- ◆ June 12 – Delegate Tele-Town Hall, 8-9 p.m. EDT
- ◆ June 18 – Strategic Plan & Budget Hearing, 8 -9 p.m. EDT
- ◆ June 20 – Resolutions Hearing, 8-9 p.m. EDT
- ◆ June 24 – Legislative Hearing, 8-9 p.m. EDT
- ◆ June 26 – Constitution & Bylaw Amendments Hearing, 8-9 p.m. EDT

The following will be *at* the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston:

- ◆ June 28-July 1 – NCUEA Summer Meeting
- ◆ June 29-July 2 – Aspiring Educators of NEA Conference
- ◆ June 30-July 1 – NEA-Retired Annual Meeting
- ◆ July 1-2 – Conference on Racial & Social Justice
- ◆ July 2-3 – Resolutions Committee Meetings
- ◆ July 3-7 – Shuttle Buses Running to Convention Center
- ◆ July 3-7 – State Delegation Meetings
- ◆ July 3 – NCHE Meeting
- ◆ July 3 – NCESP Meeting
- ◆ July 3 – Human & Civil Rights Awards Ceremony
- ◆ July 4-7 – RA Business Meetings



NWLC President Goss Graves lauds partnership with educators

The NEA Board of Directors conducted its annual Women’s Observance during its February meeting. Fatima Goss Graves, President and CEO of the National Women’s Law Center (NWLC), was the guest and featured speaker during the Observance.



Goss Graves

Goss Graves, who has served in various roles at NWLC the past 10 years, noted the importance of her education in undergirding her life’s successes.

“I was a child who did not like rules,” she recalled. “I got them, I understood their importance, but I challenged rules both written and unwritten.

“I was really lucky along the way to have educators who supported and believed in me. That is what I want for *all* of our students – even the rule-breaking ones!”

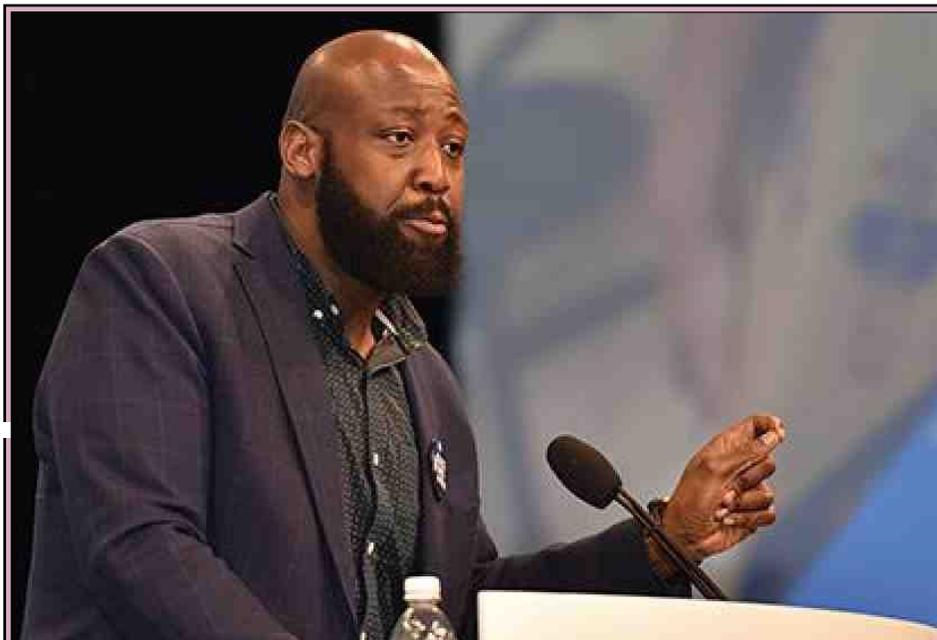
The NWLC was founded in 1972 and has been an integral part of expanding opportunities for women and girls. With so many women involved in education, it has been a natural for the NEA to partner with the NWLC on many issues.

“We work on things together,” NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia said. “We help fund the NWLC and are happy with what we can contribute both financially and with our legal team.”

Added Goss Graves: “We feel as though we’ve been fortunate over the years to have the NEA as such a strong partner in this work. What the NEA does is really a blueprint for a lot of other organizations. We are proud to join our voice with yours and believe it’s never been more important than right now.”



Great Public Schools for Every Child



Keron Blair, executive director of the Alliance to Reclaim our Schools, was the featured speaker during the NEA’s Black Observance at its February Board of Directors’ Meeting.

AROS’s Blair invites NEA members to help unite labor, community

The NEA Board of Directors conducted its annual Black Observance during its February meeting. Keron Blair, the Executive Director of the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS), was the honored featured speaker.

“As an organizer I believe our work is to build power,” he said. “Whenever I get into a NEA space I believe I’m in one of the most powerful rooms in the country. It is for this reason I do not skirt the issues when I am in a NEA space, because I believe in your capacity to deliver on what is requested.”

Blair shared a story of an encounter with a white female TSA agent in the airport recently when she asked about his t-shirt that read “I’m Rooting for Everybody Black.”

“She asked, ‘why aren’t you rooting for me’,” he recalled. “I said, ‘girl, the whole world is rooting for you’.”

Time prevented him from having a deeper and more intentional conversation with the agent, so he chose to have that conversation with the NEA Board.

“Why, in this moment, do we still need to have a Black Observance?” Blair asked. “Why is it necessary to root for everybody black?” Why is it relevant to say Black Lives Matter? Because to be black in America today is to get up every day and say to yourself that ‘I matter’.”

He noted that the shirt he was wearing that day in the airport is not only a declaration – “It’s not about you,” Blair noted – but it’s also an invitation.

“We are inviting people into a struggle with us,” he continued. “While the struggle *is* blackness and black lives, it’s the struggle to unite these United States of America. It’s an invitation for you to shift your perspective.”

The phrase on that t-shirt is also a warning.

“Black Lives Matter is also a warning,” Blair said. “It is people who, for centuries, are saying enough is enough; I’m tired! When you get tired you become (the teachers) of Los Angeles and you say, ‘we’ve had just about enough and we’re about to shut it down’.”

“It is (the teachers of) Denver saying we’ve had enough. It is (the teachers of) Oakland saying we’ve had enough.”

Blair said AROS is trying to be all three of these: A declaration, an invitation, and a warning, in the work it is doing.

“We are trying to build labor and community partnerships rooted in social justice,” he said. “When labor and community unite with NEA locals *that* is how we win. *That* is how we transform education. *That* is how we transform this country.

“Being afraid and being a little worn out, won’t feel too overwhelming if we do it together.”



The NEA Foundation's 50th Anniversary Gala

The NEA Foundation hosted its 50th Anniversary Gala at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC, February 8th. The winners included Cicely Woodard from Franklin, TN, (lower left) who won the NEA Member Benefits Award for Teaching Excellence and \$25,000. Another winner was Education Minnesota's Luke Merchlewitz (lower right) who won the 2019 Harriet Sanford Award for Distinguished Global Learning. The Gala was hosted by Malcolm Jamal-Warner and Soledad O'Brien.



UniServ Advisory Committee announces '19-20 projected grant amount, rebate possibilities

Membership numbers a driver in these increases

The NEA UniServ Advisory Committee had some important news to share with the Board.

Committee Chair Tracy Phillips shared that, with 2018-19 membership numbers holding fairly stable, it will likely lead to positive news for state affiliate treasurers nationwide.

"The formula for funding the UniServ Program is established in the NEA Bylaws," Phillips said. "A specified percentage of the dues of each individual member is set aside to fund the

UniServ Program. As membership increases, that means more money is set aside for the UniServ Program. However, it also means that when membership decreases, less money is available for the UniServ Program. As you may recall, the UniServ grant decreased for the current year because of the projected decrease in membership due to the Janus decision.

"The second major factor that determines the UniServ grant amount is the number of UniServ grants requested by state affiliates. This is the denominator... the available funding is divided by the number of grants to determine the grant amount."

Phillips said the initial projections are for the

UniServ grant to increase by 7% for next year, from \$36,660 to \$39,215. Additionally, Phillips indicated it is likely for the NEA to provide a UniServ rebate for this year due to membership. Current projections call for a rebate of \$1,250. Both the 2019-20 grant amount as well as any rebate will be brought to the Board in May.

Additionally, Phillips shared with the Board her committee's review of the UniServ Guidelines (the first since 2008) are nearly complete and that revisions will be presented for the Board's consideration at its May meeting. If approved, these revisions would not go into effect until the 2020-21 school year.



Board recommends positions on amendments

Deadline looms March 4 for Standing Rules, Bylaws

The Board made recommendations on two Constitutional Amendments, two Bylaw Amendments, and two Standing Rule Amendments presented by Committee on Constitution Bylaw and Rules Chair Tom Brenner. The submission deadline for amendments to NEA Bylaws and Standing Rules are due by March 4. The Board will consider any further submissions at its May meeting.

Following are the items submitted and considered by the Board at its February meeting:

- ◆ **Constitutional Amendment #1** – Amend the preamble to the NEA Constitution to add the word “secular” before “public education.” **Board Position:** Opposition
- ◆ **Constitutional Amendment #2** – To update the preamble to replace the word “teacher” with the word “educator.” **Board Previously Took a Position:** Support
- ◆ **Constitutional Amendment #3** – To open NEA membership to public education allies while preserving NEA governance positions for education professionals and active equivalents. **Board Previously Took a Position:** Support
- ◆ **Constitutional Amendment #4** – Modify the deadline for amend-

ments to the NEA Constitution from close of business at previous RA to 70 days following close of business of previous RA. **Board Position:** Support

- ◆ **First Bylaw Amendment** – To provide for solicitation of Active member voluntary contributions to a strike/work action fund. **Board Position:** Opposition
- ◆ **Second Bylaw Amendment** – To set one year as the minimum term length for delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly. **Board Position:** Opposition
- ◆ **Standing Rule Amendment #1** – To allow for deferral to the subsequent day any motion for which proposed amendments are difficult to display in full on screen, and to provide delegate access oversight to any such deferred language. **Board Position:** Opposition
- ◆ **Standing Rule Amendment #2** – To strike language permitting delegates to yield any unused portion of allotted speaking time. **Board Position:** Opposition
- ◆ **Standing Rule Amendment #3** – To establish a process for electronic debate and vote by the Representative Assembly between annual meetings for matters that, due to calendar-based deadlines, cannot be handled during the annual meeting itself. **Board Position:** This was ruled out of order by NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia as it is conflict of NEA Bylaws and, as such, was not considered by the Board

Executive Director Transition

Continued from page 1

During his comments to the Board, Stocks noted he realized it was time to make a change during the 2018 election.

“When I talked to Lily last fall I told her that I had become deeply disturbed by the course of our country and was being called to devote all of my time, my talents, and my energy to the cause of saving our democracy,” he said. “I believe our country is in great danger of losing our democratic norms and institutions.”

Stocks then proceeded to tick off a list of democratic institutions and procedures under attack including, but not limited to the federal judiciary, federal oversight of the environment elections and legislative and legal assaults on worker rights, civil rights, women’s rights, student rights, LGBTQ rights, immigrant rights, and voting rights.

“I don’t believe it is hyperbole to say that our country is at great risk. And democracy is one of our core values,” he added.

It is that core value that Stocks hopes to help preserve in both this new role within NEA as well as whatever his future positions outside the organization may be.

“Too often we overlook the part of our national portrait that celebrates those Americans who are driven by their conscience to make America a more perfect union ... those who are constantly urging America to live up to its promise of equal opportunity and justice for all,” he said. “As Lily mentioned, the work I’ve done over the last few years to help build up organizations and networks that will support our values, has been an unexpected source of pride for me.

“It isn’t so much that I get a thrill out of fundraising. I get a thrill out

“It isn’t so much that I get a thrill out of fundraising. I get a thrill out of seeing great ideas – and great organizations – get support and attention that is long overdue.”

—John Stocks
NEA Executive Director

of seeing great ideas – and great organizations – get support and attention that is long overdue.”

Though Eskelsen Garcia did not indicate a specific timetable for the NEA Executive Committee to hire Stocks’ replacement, it is expected the organization will retain a search firm to assist in the process so it will likely be several months. The President did know one thing about Stocks’ replacement, however.

“Whomever the successful candidate is, they must know our organization forward and backward,” she said. “They must be able to hit the ground running.”

