

*"A great public school for every student"*

# Directors' Newsletter

September 2022



**"Welcome  
to the  
House of  
Labor"**



NEA President Becky Pringle welcomes members of several unions to the NEA building for President Biden's visit.

## Top Three Moments of President Biden's Visit to the NEA Building



First-generation college student and Aspiring Educator Dajsha Williams (OH) kicked off the Labor Rally at the NEA building on September 23, 2022. She said, "My greatest hope is to dedicate my career to inspiring young mind and listening to, catering to, and understanding the wants, needs, and dreams of my students."



President Biden addressed the crowd for nearly half an hour, focusing on drawing a clear contrast in the upcoming election. He shared an expression his dad used to tell him: "Don't compare me to The Almighty, compare me to the alternative." In his speech, he made the "alternative" clear: Social Security, Medicare, a ban on assault weapons, and even democracy itself is on the ballot. He closed his remarks by returning to his father's expression by defining the choice this November: "You have to choose...to be a nation of hope, unity, and optimism, or a nation of fear, division, and darkness." To view Biden's full remarks, [click here](#).



NEA President Becky Pringle welcomed the union members that packed the room. She reminded them, "When we stand together as union siblings--unafraid, unwavering, and unapologetic--there is absolutely nothing we can't achieve." She added, "We have just 45 days...to ensure each of our students can look forward to living in a nation where equity, justice, and freedom are the norm, not the exception."



# Julie Chávez Rodríguez on Restoring the Soul of Our Nation



**Julie Chávez Rodríguez**

César Chávez and Helen Fabela Chávez, and her parents, Linda Chávez Rodríguez and Arturo Rodríguez, were also full time volunteers with UFWA.

Growing up in the farmworkers movement taught her the value of grassroots organizing and coalition building. It helped her learn and develop the courage to lead and instilled the determination to win.

Born of both labor and civil rights movements, Julie Chávez Rodríguez continues her family legacy: the social change uplifting families and workers.

Currently serving as Senior Advisor and Assistant to the President and Director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Chávez Rodríguez presented the 2022 Hispanic Observance. She joined the Biden team in May 2020, and now serves as the highest ranking Latina in the Whitehouse.

Chávez Rodríguez grew up entrenched in the organizing work of the United Farm Workers of America. She is the granddaughter of famed labor leaders

“We have to experience defeat before victory,” Chávez Rodríguez reflected on the hard lessons for labor to learn in movements for change. “You can be the first and not the last,” Chávez Rodríguez continued, “Be a trailblazer.” She remembered her mother, who pushed her to work for change, and Chávez Rodríguez still holds her mother by her side as she works with communities impacted by the COVID pandemic. Chávez Rodríguez spoke about the students still working through the traumas of lost family members and the struggle to make ends meet. In their need, she sees as a call to step up and “restore the soul of our nation.”

Throughout the pandemic Chávez Rodríguez helped to reopen schools, connect communities to employment programs, and get resources to local governments in her role as Director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. “We hit the ground running ... but we know we have more to do,” she said. “What we have done will fuel the work ahead. Educators will help.”

This work has directly resulted in organizing Latino families and leaders and those who continue to champion issues that benefit Latino communities. Chávez Rodríguez stressed that together NEA can show the country what it is made of: people who are committed to their communities and students. Organizing for better outcomes is the pathway for change and restoration of the nation's soul.

She reminded NEA Directors of what her grandfather once said: “Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore.”



**Christine V. Trujillo, Chair of the NEA Hispanic Caucus, introduces Chávez Rodríguez as part of the Board's Hispanic Observance.**



**NEA Hispanic Heritage Poster & [Resources](#)**

## Rev. Dr. David M. Wilson Rocks the Native Vote



**David M. Wilson**

Wilson began his presentation with a CNN graphic displaying presidential election voter information by race. The graphic included voter percentages for “White,” “Latino,” “Black,” “Asian,” and, disturbingly, “Something Else.” This graphic, along with the poignant poster for the observance, captures need for American Indian and Alaskan Native engagement and visibility.



**Rev. Dr. David M. Wilson, NEA officers, members of Executive Committee, and members of the AI/AN caucus pose for a picture after the AI/AN Observance.**

Rev. Dr. David M. Wilson serves the Assistant to the Bishop of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of The United Methodist Church, as well as Director for Rock the Native Vote, a non-partisan voter engagement organization focusing on Native Americans in Oklahoma. He addressed the NEA Board as the American Indian/Alaskan Native Observance.

[Rock the Native Vote](#) aims to engage Native voters across Oklahoma and beyond. Education is a key part of this work. Wilson shared that “78% of all American Indians and Alaska Natives live off of reservations with over 70% living in urban areas” and “40% of all native voters live in 36 cities.” His organization focused its work in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. With the help of the National Urban Indian Family Coalition, Vote Your Values, Cherokee Vote and AARP Oklahoma, Rock the Native Vote now has 30+ people working to engage the 423,000 American Indian/Alaska Native eligible voters in Oklahoma. Oklahoma is second in the nation for highest population of voting-age Native peoples behind Alaska.

One method for engaging these eligible voters in Oklahoma is focus groups, identifying important issues to those 18-24 years old. Their priorities include civil rights, police brutality, climate change, mental health, missing and murdered indigenous people, and student loan debt. Their work with youth took them to various college campuses, where they registered first-time voters.



**Native American and Alaska Native Heritage Month [Resources](#)**



# President Pringle's Report



President Becky Pringle

President Pringle urged the NEA Board to steep its work in the mission and vision of the organization and to articulate objectives for the work that can be revisited later. She congratulated Directors for the comments she received from partner labor organizations after the Biden event. The work staff and leaders

created a welcoming, organized, and fun event for everyone who attended President Biden's labor address at the NEA building. It was noted and appreciated by leaders of the other unions who attended.



President's Vision for the NEA

Pringle's strategic vision for the NEA is to create dynamic alignment to leverage the power of the collective both internally and externally. She defines dynamic alignment as "structures,

systems, processes, practices and people that support and promote a culture of continuous collaboration among and between all systems (internally and externally). Arranging and adapting resources (Strategic Plan and Budget), effectively aligning leaders and staff to support alignment based on shared values, partnership principles, and a clear, compelling vision and strategy so the NEA enterprise can organize for power, reach its full potential and achieve unprecedented levels of success."

Through dynamic alignment, Pringle knows NEA can meet the needs of its members, the needs she heard articulated across the country last year during her [Joy, Justice and Excellence tour](#). She explained, "We the educators must be creating the visioning process focusing on professional respect, authority, rights, compensation, and excellence for all educators." Pringle predicts that if NEA creates the visioning process, the educator shortage will be solved. "When I asked educators what they needed to stay in the profession, the one word was 'respect'... We are going to lean into that this year," Pringle recounted.

Dynamic alignment also helps educators find new and creative ways to address challenges using the knowledge that only comes from the daily experience of educators. She acknowledged how hard it can be to stay optimistic and excited about the challenges educators face but understood the need to stay in the

visioning space. "We can always say what we don't want, but can we say what we do want? We need every educator [and] every student to succeed." It is through collective action that real change happens.

Pringle also discussed how important elections are up and down the ballot. Elections must be the NEA's top priority until November. All members must do everything they can to ensure that pro-public education candidates are elected across the country. She went on to explain how governors' races and state legislature races in all states must matter to every member because it could be the governor or state legislature in another state that determines the next election or determines if voting rights are upheld for the entire country. She explained, "The Senate races in all states will determine if women have the right to health care and if LGBTQ rights are upheld nationally."

President Pringle asked the board to journal about where they see themselves in the policies approved at the 2022 NEA RA including Implementation of Educators Organize to End Gun Violence (NBI A) and Implementation of the vision and recommendation in the Safe Just and Equitable Schools Policy. With the support of the RA, these new policies will move the work of the Board and members to impact students in every school.

## NEA President's Priorities for 2022-2023

- Advancing our Strategic Vision:** Unite our members and the nation to lead a movement to reclaim public education as a common good, as the foundation of this democracy, and transform it into a racial and socially just and equitable system designed to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.
  - Continue and engage others in the visioning process (transformation of the professions and student learning, the future of assessment systems, enterprise-wide leadership development system)
  - Identify, support, and create a narrative around affiliate efforts to advance:
    - Equity, access, opportunity and excellence for all students;
    - Professional respect, authority, rights, compensation and excellence for all educators;
    - Shared responsibility to support public education at every level of government.
  - Educate about, advocate for, and organize around the above as solutions (long term and short term) to the Educator Shortage Crisis
- Uniting our Members:** Organize to grow membership, increase member activism, identify leaders, and build stronger relationships among and between NEA Board members, our affiliates, constituency groups, and members to grow and strengthen our members' connectedness to our union and to each other for the purpose of advancing our strategic vision.
- Securing the environment:** Elect and influence leaders and policy-making processes that demonstrate care for our students; respect for educators; belief in public education as a common good; understanding and support of the rights of workers to organize and collectively act; and commitment to taking on racial, social, education, economic justice, and strengthening our democracy.
  - Partner with affiliates and allies to impact Election 2022
    - Reelect pro-public education Governors
    - Protect and grow a Pro-public education Senate Majority
    - Protect our pro-public education House Majority
  - Continue to build a coalition, pro-public education majorities (at every level), and enhance affiliate capacity while strengthening members' activism, advocacy and influence in driving the Strategic Vision
- Creating Safe, Just and Equitable Schools:**
  - Implementation of Educators Organize to End Gun Violence (NBI A 2022).
  - Implementation of the vision and recommendations in the Safe, Just and Equitable Schools Policy Statement recommendations (2022)



# Executive Director's Report



Executive Director Kim Anderson

Although Executive Director Kim Anderson was not able to give a full report at the NEA September Board meeting, her presentation gave important information of the Association's work.

technology, and active monitoring of operations and COVID risk management, the Association continued to build more capacity.

NEA was positioned well to listen to its members and apply its learning with intention. President Becky Pringle's *Joy, Justice, and Excellence Tour* allowed NEA to build relationships and better understand the climate in our schools directly from members. The labor-management collaboration connected communities engaged in systemic innovation regarding educator voice, professional excellence, and student outcomes. Through pandemic resilience, NEA was still able to execute every program contained within the Strategic Plan and Budget. The Association also saw significant legal victories by defending 32 NEA affiliates against post-Janus claims while defeating millions in payout liability. NEA legal staff prevailed in every case at every level of the court system by defeating 19 certification petitions to the U.S. Supreme Court seeking review of cases against nine NEA affiliates.



## 21-22 in Review: Our Challenges Have Been Massive

From tragic gun violence to educator shortages, ongoing COVID considerations, the MAGA movement, and voter malaise, 2021-2022 was a challenging year. NEA has a clear vision and support system for students to be prepared for their next journey, educators to be prepared for professional excellence throughout their career continuum, and schools to be supported by their communities and local, state and national governments.

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## NEA Continued to Organize & Build Capacity

NEA leadership and 33 state affiliates have engaged directly with the Biden Administration. The membership continued its dedicated work to racial and social justice by engaging in advocacy through [NEAEDJustice.org](https://www.neaedjustice.org), the NEA [Transformational Journey for Racial Justice Co-Conspirators](#), and a record-breaking 4000+ registrants for the national LGBTQ+ Blended Learning courses. The Association also deepened partnerships and working relationships internally with governance and staff at headquarters and in affiliates.

Through a stronger execution of year-round recruitment nationally, enhancement of membership value, development of NEA and affiliate leadership training, expansion of

The NEA Representative Assembly passed the Strategic Plan and Budget, the Safe, Just and Equitable Schools policy statement, and NBI-A (Educators Organizing to End Gun Violence). The RA also pioneered new technology to give every elected delegate a chance to exercise their voice.

And now we forge ahead with even greater clarity

We move forward equipped with our learnings and deepened strength



- Strategic Budget and Plan
- Visioning Work
- President's Vision and Priorities for 2022-2023



# Budget Committee Elections Held

Congratulations to the new budget committee members (Bill Farmer & Brenda Robinson - 2-year; Turquoise LaJeune Parker, Wil Page, Dana Livermont - 1-year)! This committee has already begun its work.

NEA Directors and members are encouraged to reach out to Budget Committee members with questions, concerns, or suggestions.

First	Last	Position	State
NOEL	CANDELARIA	Chair	TX
PRINCESS	MOSS	Vice Chair	VA
WILLIAM	FARMER	Member	IL
DANA	LIVERMONT	Member	SD
WILLIAM	PAGE	Member	CA
TURQUOISE	PARKER	Member	NC
BRENDA	ROBINSON	Member	AR
JAMES	FEDDERMAN	NCSEA Member	VA
IVORY	SMITH	ESP Member	MD

# A Night with Sir Elton John at the White House



30 NEA Directors prepare to head to White House for Elton John concert.



Directors Rebecca Gamboa (IL), Christina Bohringer (VA), Rachella Dravis (IA), and Lisa Jennings (SD) are all smiles at the White House.



Directors Charlotte Hayer (VA) and Christina Bohringer (VA) enjoy themselves at the White House concert.



Directors Tara Jeane (CA), Matt Gresick (MD), and Andy Slaughter (MO) take a picture with Secretary Cardona and his wife, Marissa Perez Cardona.

## 2022 NEA RA New Business Item Update

The NEA Board voted to approve \$1,279,876 from the contingency fund to support the New Business Items approved at 2022 NEA Representative Assembly.

The NBIs referred on the floor are being considered by the Executive Committee. Further action is needed to fund referred NBIs. There remains \$1,720,124 in the contingency fund.

A preliminary update on NBI progress can be found [here](#).



2022-23 Contingency Fund		
Amount	Governance Approval	Purpose
\$ 3,000,000		Beginning Balance 9/1/2022
(1,279,876)	Pending approval at the September Board of Directors' Meeting	To fund the implementation of 2022 Representative Assembly Approved New Business Items
\$ 1,720,124		Remaining Balance Upon Approval



# NEA General Counsel Report



Alice O'Brien

The NEA General Counsel, Alice O'Brien, gave the NEA Board of Directors a clear picture of the stark legal landscape ahead, after the conservative majority took over the reins of the Supreme Court at the end of the Trump administration. In the year ahead, the Court will hear cases about the partisan gerrymandering of voting districts, affirmative action in college admissions, business discrimination against LGBTQ+ persons based on their identification, and the rights of state courts when it comes to hearing elections related cases. It is likely that some of these cases will lead to an overturning of the status-quo and a regression of rights for minority voices.

Chief Counsel O'Brien highlighted the importance of elections when it comes to the selection of members of the federal judiciary. The previous administration was empowered to fill hundreds of judicial vacancies. The judges appointed during the Trump administration were overwhelmingly conservative, and young, and they will make decisions that will impact the nation for decades to come.

In support, the NEA wrote two amicus briefs: one to support affirmative action in college admissions, and another in support of the civil rights of LGBTQ individuals. The first argues that race should be considered as one factor, among many, when considering the admission of college students. The latter argues that requiring a business to serve all clients equally is not a violation of the First Amendment and would amount to a loss of decades worth of civil rights progress.

The courts have upheld many recent lower court rulings on *Janus* in favor of the NEA in regards to retroactive agency-fee repayment. There are several other cases attempting to seek the same relief, but as the NEA has been successful in defeating a score of similar challenges, the outlook on these is promising. The NEA has also won a case supporting a local in its right to exclusive representation in bargaining contracts.

A case attacking union release time is currently being litigated in Minnesota. In this case, a group of taxpayers asserts that tax dollars should not be used to support union work.

The NEA has submitted comments in support of expanding the [Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program waiver](#). The current waiver expires on October 31, 2022.

Click below to visit the NEA Action Center and urge Secretary Cardona to extend the waiver.

## Secretary Cardona: Extend the Limited Public Service Loan Forgiveness Waiver

The Limited Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Waiver has provided billions of dollars in debt relief, but the waiver is set to expire October 31, and many more educators need help.

The Association is currently waiting on a ruling from a judge on the New Hampshire "Anti-Honesty in Education" Bill case. The law, passed last year, would charge any educator who discusses banned topics like race, sexual orientation, or gender identity with their students with an ethics violation, which could lead to a loss of certification. Another anti-honesty case is taking place in Tennessee where an educator was charged for teaching a poem about white privilege to his students. The NEA is supporting Tennessee Education Association in the appeal and is planning to file an amicus brief for the case.

## Elections Engagement

**I made a plan to vote!**

I'll be voting early, in person.

- ✓ Confirmed my voter registration and home address
- ✓ Previewed my ballot and compared the candidates at NEA.org/Vote
- ✓ Confirmed my polling place's hours and location
- ✓ Signed up to receive reminders

Make your voting plan at **NEA.ORG/VOTE**

EDUCATION VOTES

President Becky Pringle highlighted the importance of the 2022 midterm election for educators and for our students. "The stakes are high and our opponents extreme," she said as she kicked off the session. Similar to the current right wing government in Brazil, some candidates are already saying they will not accept the results of the election if they lose. It is vitally important that we turn out and engage our members to vote for pro-education and pro-democracy candidates.

President Pringle pointed out that our members are overwhelmingly trusted by the general public and that we can use that trust to counter misinformation, propaganda and lies by simply being credible.

Executive Committee members Gladys Marquez and Robert Rodriguez also highlighted the importance of working over the next month to drive engagement and votes. They then reminded the directors that the EdActivist App can be accessed by texting "app" to 48744.

The Executive Committee and President Pringle then engaged the board with three sessions to highlight what they can do to activate members and the general public: one on the importance of using one's sphere of influence to engage colleagues, family, and friends; another focused on a postcard writing campaign to help encourage NEA members who have typically not voted consistently in prior elections; and a final that focused on how social media videos can amplify educator voices and drive pro-education voters to the polls. "Don't take things for granted and don't believe the polls," President Pringle said as she whipped enthusiasm for the getting out the vote.

Click here to support NEA members running for public office

**NEA Fund PAC**

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# Vice President Moss Reports to NEA Board



Princess Moss

NEA Vice President Princess Moss began her report by celebrating US Department of Labor Hall of Honor inductee, Andrea Beeman. Moss shared pictures of the Department of Labor event that honors Educational Support Professionals as Essential Workers. Moss also

thanked the Board Committee Chairs, Committee Chairs, Social Justice/Constituency Committee Chairs, and the chairs of Board Think Tanks. Moss stated that the rescheduled meetings went incredibly well and looks forward to continued conversations at the next scheduled meetings.

Moss highlighted organizing work around Professional Unionism through the intentional organizing with aspiring educators. The NEA supports educators around instructional problems of practice through offerings such as Education Support Professionals peer mentoring and Blended Learning programs. Last summer's NEA LGBTQ+ Issues Blended learning course had 4001 participants, and Moss promised that the NEA will continue to have offerings around issues important to members. In order to learn more about available professional excellence resources and trainings, visit [NEA's Professional Learning website](#). New NEA Professional Learning promotional videos like [this one](#) are available to showcase these resources.

Moss asked Executive Committee member Hanna Vaandering to give a report on the work being done on the future of assessment. During the Representative Assembly, 155 delegates com-

pleted a survey around assessment. From the survey, 74% of the respondents indicated they would be likely to share the [Future of Assessment Principles](#) with their networks. Vaandering reported that these principles need to be shared more widely. Moss will continue to host conversations about the future of assessment, including panel discussions and listening sessions. In order to be apprised of opportunities to engage in the work on the future of assessment, send an email to the following email address: [futureofschools@nea.org](mailto:futureofschools@nea.org).



Moss also shared a highlight from her Activity Report: The Columbus Education Association Strike. Moss stated that there were outstanding issues on the table including the lack of working HVAC systems, class size caps, and improved salaries. Moss stood with the teachers on strike to ensure their issues were addressed so they would be able to return to school quickly. She shared photos of the strike lines where she stood to support educators as they stood for students. The Columbus educators voted to approve a new contract with a 4% raise in late August thanks to the power of organizing.



## Secretary of Education Releases 'Dear Colleague' Letter

Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona released a letter in September 2022. He writes, "The purpose of this letter is to remind all who report and interpret student outcomes this year that assessment data has always been meant to be used constructively—to help inform parents and families about their students' schools and to ensure schools receive the necessary resources to help support students. Further, this letter is intended to support our communities in countering efforts to misuse these results by applying them punitively".



Secretary Miguel Cardona

Read the entire letter [here](#).

## Honoring ESPs as Essential Workers U.S. Department of Labor Hall of Honor



# Secretary-Treasurer Report



The Secretary Treasurer opened his report with an emphasis on “tone at the top,” the governance team's commitment to openness, honesty, integrity and ethical behavior through fiscal accountability and policies.

**Candelaria** The Audit Committee members for 2022-23 include Noel Candelaria, Princess Moss, Mark Jewell, Carole Gauronskas, and Ron Mentzer, a CPA independent observer. The timeline presentation outlined that the initial draft is due in November 2022, with the final draft presentation in February 2023. Candelaria reported that NEA consistently has outstanding audits. This is remarkable in an organization as large and complex as the NEA. Candelaria stated, “There is a strong tone at the top with leadership in governance and our staff. We have a fiduciary responsibility to our members, especially with the sacrifices our members make to pay their dues.”

participation in early enrollment nearly 50%. In Indiana, a group of member organizers knocked doors of potential members before the first day of school. Their hard work paid off: 63% of new hires joined NEA!

## 2021-2022 MEMBERSHIP COUNTS as of September 12, 2022

	2021-22	2020-21	YTD Change
Active Certified	2,042,755	2,057,967	(15,212)
Active ESP	419,498	434,013	(14,515)
Active Life	33,551	35,010	(1,459)
<b>Total Active*</b>	<b>2,495,804</b>	<b>2,526,990</b>	<b>(31,186)</b>
Retired	323,986	323,507	479
Aspiring Educators	43,465	41,445	2,020
Others	7,811	7,904	(93)
Community Ally	189	240	(51)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,871,255</b>	<b>2,900,086</b>	<b>(28,831)</b>
*Higher Ed	134,538	139,238	(4,700)



## NEA Director Newsletter Contributors

Thank you to the NEA Board Directors who worked so hard to put together this newsletter. We need your input on this and future newsletters: [bit.ly/nea-dir-sept2022](https://bit.ly/nea-dir-sept2022)



Additionally, Candelaria congratulated the Board and Executive Committee for the passing of NBI A at the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly. He commented on the personal nature of ending gun violence, as he has seen the impact of gun violence in places like Uvalde. NEA is taking a lead as a union to end gun violence by

- updating the [School Crisis Guide](#)
- investing in more social emotional supports for both students and educators
- training by NEA members for NEA members
- supporting local unions with incidents of gun violence
- exploring a possible call center for mental health needs

While there has been an overall membership loss, there has been significant work in recruitment in locals across the country. The back-to-school season is critical when engaging potential members. Almost 60,000 new members were recruited during the back-to-school events. In the spring, 30,000 new members were recruited. This makes the highest early enrollment period that NEA has experienced. Nearly 1,000 member organizers have been organized since April 2022, and it is their collective power that helped NEA increase local affiliate par-

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