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Highlights of the 2011 NEA Convention in Chicago

The NEA Representative Assembly opened in Chicago on July 2nd with 7,321 delegates, a number education union watchdog Mike Antonucci said was “by far the lowest number” since he began covering the conventions in 1998. Nonetheless, union leadership worked hard to create an enthusiastic political rally atmosphere and the important business of keeping massive amounts of money flowing to their Democrat allies was accomplished.

Support for Obama Half-hearted but Well-funded

NEA members remain unhappy with the Obama administration, but nonetheless approved an early endorsement of the President’s re-election bid. Though seemingly strong, the 72% margin of victory is actually an historic low for NEA presidential endorsements. Fort Myers, FL middle school teacher Bertha J. Foley explained her support for Obama by saying, “All of the Republicans are worse on education than Obama . . . You have to pick the least evil, the one who will do the least harm.”

The approval opens the coffers of NEA PAC dollars toward Obama’s re-election; union leadership said they are

prepared to spend up to \$60 million on the campaign. President Dennis Van Roekel said the early endorsement would give the group more leverage to push for favored policies with the administration, particularly regarding the overhaul of No Child Left Behind, which is due for renewal.

“13 Things We Hate about Arne Duncan”

The union isn’t comfortable opposing President Obama directly, so they aimed much of their frustration at the man charged with overseeing Obama’s policies — Education Secretary Arne Duncan. Still, convention delegates stopped short of approving a call for Duncan’s ouster, primarily because they didn’t want to deal with the bad PR such a move would generate, according to *Education Week* reporter Stephen Sawchuk. A delegate from Delaware summed up his argument against the measure by saying, “Let’s not give those who would destroy us any ammunition.”

On the other hand, delegates weren’t shy about approving a resolution directing the NEA President to “communicate aggressively, forcefully, and immediately to President Barack Obama and U.S.



Posters and buttons from the 2011 NEA Convention

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan that NEA is appalled with Secretary Duncan.” The resolution went on to lay out 13 charges against Duncan, including focusing too heavily on charter schools, failing to respect and honor the professionalism of teachers, weighing in on local hiring

decisions, and focusing too heavily on competitive grants (*i.e.* Race to the Top). This resolution was submitted by the union’s board of directors, which lends it even more weight as the union’s definitive view.

Hypocrisy Alert

If there is one thing NEA members can count on, it’s that their union will scream bloody murder when schools lay off teachers and support staff in the wake of budget cuts. In typical liberal “do as we say, not as we do” fashion, the NEA responded to a \$14 million budget shortfall by downsizing its national staff. Secretary-Treasurer Becky Pringle said the move would save the union \$4.8 million next year. Asked how many employees would be let go, Pringle replied “about 20”— a whopping \$240,000 saved per staffer. Pringle also said the union “has worked hard to reduce benefits” for remaining employees.

Wisconsin 14 Win ‘Friend of Education’ Award

NEA delegates enthusiastically welcomed the 14 Wisconsin Democrat state senators who fled the state in an unsuccessful attempt to block a bill that would limit state employees’ bargaining rights. Delegates chanted “union busting, that’s disgusting” and held up “thank you 14” signs as the formerly AWOL senators came to the stage to accept the union’s annual “Friend of Education” award.

The 14 were hailed as heroes for holding up for three weeks at the Clock Tower Resort adjacent to the CoCo Key Water Resort in Rockford, Illinois. The senators had plenty of time to enjoy amenities that included satellite TV, waterslides, and scantily clad waitresses at the hotel’s Tilted Kilt Pub and Eatery while their colleagues dealt with angry demonstrators at the Wisconsin state capitol.

(*The Wall Street Journal*, 7-4-11; eiaonline.com/intercepts 7-1-11 through 7-5-11; blogs.edweek.org, 7-1-11 through 7-4-11; *The New York Times*, 7-4-11; businessinsider.com, 2-18-11)

Delegates Vote to Double Political Dues

The NEA lost more than 39,000 active members during the 2009-2010 school year and projects they will lose another 21,000 in the coming year, but they are determined to maintain maximum political capital. In his keynote address, President Dennis Van Roekel tried to rally his troops with assurances that the NEA is “standing strong” against “all of those union-busting, greedy CEOs and their political pals.”

With all the righteous indignation he could muster, Van Roekel intoned, “Our

country is not for sale to the highest political donor or the wealthiest corporations.” Perhaps someone should let him know that the NEA and its state affiliates were ranked number one for spending on state and federal campaigns, political parties, and ballot measure committees for the 2007 and 2008 election cycles (the most recent data available). See the August 2010 issue of *Education Reporter* for more on NEA political spending.

To make sure they maximize their political purchasing power, NEA Assem-

bly Representatives passed a measure doubling each active member’s annual political and media fund assessment from \$10 to \$20. About 60% of these special dues will support the Ballot Initiative/ Legislative Crisis fund, and the remaining 40% will pay for state and national media buys to support messaging and calls for action against things like anti-collective bargaining legislation.

The union is already the nation’s top political contributor, and this measure will raise an additional \$40 million per election cycle, according to Mike Antonucci, director of the Education Intelligence Agency. Antonucci noted that the increase alone is more than all but two other groups spent during the entire 2007-2008 election cycle.

Of course, the Legislative and Media funds figures constitute only a portion of NEA political spending. Members voluntarily contributed over \$1 million in PAC money during the convention to add to the \$3.1 million raised earlier in the year. State and local affiliates spend additional monies on elections and legislative issues that aren’t included in these figures.

Convention delegates also sent 18,500 messages to Congress during the convention, reminding legislators of the union’s ability to pressure them through its 3.2 million members. Clearly, the NEA is preparing for a bruising electoral season, amassing ammunition and mustering the troops for political war.

(eiaonline.com, 2-22-11; followthemoney.org database; blogs.edweek.org, 7-4-11)

Teacher Evaluation Double-Speak

One of the NEA’s major squabbles with Arne Duncan is the administration’s policy emphasis on tying teacher evaluation to student performance, as measured by standardized test scores. “NEA is and always will be opposed to high-stakes, test-driven evaluations,” said union secretary-treasurer Becky Pringle to the delegates assembled at the national convention.

But the push to make teachers accountable for student learning is coming from all quarters, so the NEA apparently felt it necessary to at least look like they are on board with needed reform efforts — especially since many local chapters have already consented to the use of test scores and the smaller American Federation of Teachers has conceded that student test scores “based on valid assessments” are a legitimate part of teacher evaluation.

In light of that background, NEA delegates passed a teacher evaluation resolution that theoretically permits the use of standardized test scores as one measure

of teacher performance — but there is a big catch. The new policy states that only those standardized tests that are “developmentally appropriate, scientifically valid and reliable for the purpose of measuring both student learning and a teacher’s performance” may be used. Segun Eubanks, the director of teacher quality for the union said “We believe that there are no tests ready to do that.” Since NEA leadership repeatedly assured the rank and file that no tests currently meet those qualifications, the policy shift is window dressing at best and duplicitous at worst. Some teachers said the resolution was meaningless anyway. “It’s already too late,” said Priscilla Savannah, a 7th-grade science teacher from Shreveport, LA. (*The New York Times*, 7-4-11)



EDUCATION BRIEFS

The NEA has joined forces with World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) for a social justice and anti-bullying campaign. The mission is to “ensure a positive and equitable social environment for everyone,” but it’s hard not to wonder if this is a joke. Bloggers had a field day compiling video clips showcasing WWE’s misogynistic and not-so-tolerant representations of women and homosexuals juxtaposed with the campaign slogan “Be a STAR,” which stands for “Show Tolerance and Respect.” (aaeteachers.org, 6-24-11)

As usual, many of the NEA convention business items clearly demonstrated that its leaders have a far-left agenda that has nothing to do with improving education. Delegates voted to support amnesty for illegal immigrants (through the DREAM Act) and government-run healthcare. Delegates also asked the executive committee to consider throwing NEA support behind radical Van Jones’ “Rebuild the Dream” campaign and the leftwing group moveon.org.

A few thousand teachers and supporters gathered near the White House on July 30th for a “Save Our Schools” march to protest test-based accountability and “to organize and reclaim control of our schools.” Reclaim for who?, asked union watchdog Mike Antonucci, noting supporters included the usual suspects. “The rally has called upon noted school classroom teachers such as Matt Damon, Richard Dreyfuss, Jon Stewart... as well as the usual parent organizations, such as the Freedom Socialist Party, Radical Women, and 56 labor unions,” he said. (eaionline.com, 7-28-11; edweek.org, 7-30-11)

A recent survey found that 60% of college freshman in 2009 rated their intellectual ability as “above average” compared with 39% in 1966. Study authors say intellectual confidence was likely bolstered by grade inflation; in 1966, only 19% said they earned an A or A-minus average in high school, versus 48% in 2009. “It’s not just confidence,” said researcher Jean Twenge, “It’s overconfidence.” (boston.com, 6-17-11)

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Web site: <http://www.eagleforum.org>
E-mail: education@eagleforum.org

Biggest Cheating Scandal in American History Unfolds

It took three top investigators ten months to crack a massive case of cheating in Atlanta public schools. But this time it wasn’t students who were cheating — it was teachers and principals. Atlanta school professionals have been cheating to achieve higher test scores since as early as 2001. Principals from 44 Atlanta schools and 178 teachers were accused in the investigator’s report; 82 people have confessed.

A couple of years ago, officials saw a dramatic rise in test scores from some of the poorest schools in Atlanta’s public school system and decided to investigate, starting with schools that turned in tests with suspicious amounts of answers that had been erased and changed. The Governor of Georgia, Nathan Deal, released the investigator’s report in early July. Only two weeks into the investigation, five teachers confessed that they had changed students’ answers on the state standardized achievement tests because of strong pressure to raise the school’s test scores. The 400-plus-page report indicates that widespread cheating was tolerated, encouraged, or enforced by many principals who were pressured by area superintendents.

Dr. Beverly L. Hall was the school superintendent throughout the time the cheating occurred. She retired last month, just before the report finding that she knew or should have known about the cheating came out. Although Hall denies any knowledge of the cheating, she did in fact benefit from the higher test scores that resulted, receiving \$600,000 in bonuses in addition to her annual salary of \$400,000 during her 12-year tenure. Hall was praised by the Secretary of Education for evaluating her schools based on their test scores and received superintendent of the year awards from two organizations.

Teachers and principals under Hall’s superintendence tell a different story. According to the investigator’s report, school administrators feared Hall because she used humiliation tactics to coerce principals to report higher test scores — no matter what it took to get them. Hall denies all allegations and will not take any blame for the cheating that went on during her watch.

In some schools principals held “changing parties” in which teachers would change the wrong answers on tests to correct ones. Teachers confessed that they cheated out of pressure from higher-ups and said they feared being punished, isolated, or fired.



Dr. Beverly L. Hall

Interim superintendent Erroll Davis has already fired four area superintendents and two principals. He told other school administrators named in the cheating scandal report to resign or face termination. Most teachers are fighting for their jobs, although more than 40 have resigned or retired so far. Going through court hearings and possible appeals with each of the implicated employees is likely to be a very costly process that will take months and millions of dollars to complete. Some teachers could face prison sentences for tampering with government documents and lying to investigators.

The school district, already smarting from state budget cuts, may have to pay back hundreds of thousands of dollars it received from the federal government as a reward for the falsified test scores.

It is not only the budget and intimidated educators that were hurt by the cheating scandal. Thousands of students were promoted to the next grade without the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in that grade. Parents feel that the artificially high test scores gave them a false sense of security in their child’s education, and that they were robbed of the opportunity to fix any problems accurate test scores would have revealed. Atlanta parents can no longer trust school officials to tell the truth or to put education above money, reputation, or job security.

Now taxpayers who paid the illegitimate bonuses will also bear the burden of paying for the prosecution, hiring new teachers, and attempting to truly educate the students who were pushed through a failing system without receiving an education.

(*New York Times*, 7-17-11; *USA Today*, 7-12-11; *Associated Press*, 7-16-11, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 7-19-11; *huffingtonpost.com*, 7-25-11)

Book of the Month



Set Our Children Free, Tony Caruso, self-published 2011, 298 pages, \$18.99.



Set Our Children Free is the story of a retired engineer who decided to give back by teaching math and science in America’s high schools. He reveals his shocking experiences to inform parents about what really goes on, even in the “good” schools.

Sharing from his personal experience, Caruso details how little learning actually goes on in schools. With the advent of Political Correctness and Outcome Based Education, less and less is required of students. Teachers feel increasing pressure to dumb down the curriculum and ensure that every child receives a passing grade. Many students believe they are entitled to a good grade without having to work for it, and readily resort to cheating if they aren’t interested in the class. Schools are full of students who refuse to pay attention or study, yet blame bad grades on their teachers.

According to Caruso, every high school student has the same major — sex. Schools are no longer centers of education; instead they serve as a sexual playground for teenagers who are primed by our culture to think of little else. The author shows that sexual assault, suggestive clothing, explicit sex education, student-teacher affairs, and on-campus hookups are all too common in public schools.

Caruso believes that bad behavior “may be the number one problem” in schools. He explains that teachers are rarely able to hold students accountable for their actions because they have no authority to enforce school rules. Teachers, afraid of lawsuits or losing their jobs, usually won’t stand up to students who misbehave. Drugs, stealing, lying, and disrespect of teachers are rampant. Even if teachers have a good case, principals and administrators tend to take the side of the student or their parents to keep the peace. Typically, any punishment actually imposed is so meager that it doesn’t induce any change in the student’s behavior.

In the final chapter, Caruso offers practical solutions for reforming the public education system, including allowing parents to choose their child’s school, allowing teachers to enforce rules, and creating academic and moral accountability.

Anyone who doubts the dismal state of our public schools should read the words of one who has been on the inside, seen the problems first hand, and is willing to blow the whistle instead of going along to get along.

EDUCATION NEWS



Some NEA Resolutions Passed at the 2011 Convention in Chicago, Illinois

A-2. Educational Opportunity for All. The Association believes that all schools must be accredited under uniform standards established by the appropriate agencies in collaboration with the Association and its affiliates.

A-11. Use of Closed Public School Buildings. The Association believes that closed public school buildings should be sold or leased only to those organizations that do not provide direct educational services to students and/or are not in direct competition with public schools.

A-14. Financial Support of Public Education. The Association believes that:

- ◆ Funds must be provided for programs to alleviate race, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination and to eliminate portrayal of race, gender, sexual orientation and gender identification stereotypes in the public schools.
- ◆ Full-day, every day kindergarten programs should be fully funded.
- ◆ Federal, state, and, as appropriate, local governments should provide funds sufficient to make pre-kindergarten available for all three- and four-year-old children.

A-15. Federal Financial Support for Education. The Association opposes any federal legislation, laws, or regulations that provide funds, goods, or services to sectarian schools.

A-25. Voucher Plans and Tuition Tax Credits. The Association opposes voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or other such funding arrangements that pay for students to attend sectarian schools. The Association also believes that any private school or agency that receives public funding through voucher plans, tax credits, or other funding/financial arrangements must be subject to all accountability measures and regulations required of public schools.

A-34. Federally or State-Mandated Choice/Parental Option Plans. The Association believes that federally or state-mandated parental option or choice plans compromise free, equitable, universal, and quality public education for every student. Therefore, the Association opposes such federally or state-mandated choice or parental option plans.

B-1. Early Childhood Education. The National Education Association supports early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight. The Association also supports a high-quality program of transition from home and/or preschool to the public kindergarten or first grade. The Association also believes that early childhood education programs should include a full continuum of services for parents/guardians and children, including child-care, child development, developmentally appropriate and diversity-based curricula, special education, and appropriate bias-free screening devices. The Association believes that federal legislation should be enacted to as-

sist in organizing the implementation of fully funded early childhood education programs offered through the public schools. These programs must be available to all children on an equal basis and should include mandatory kindergarten with compulsory attendance.

B-11. Class Size. The National Education Association believes that excellence in the classroom can best be attained by small class size. The Association also believes in an optimum class size of fifteen students in regular programs and a proportionately lower number in programs for students with exceptional needs.

B-12. Diversity. The National Education Association believes that similarities and differences among race, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, geographic location, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, physical ability, size, occupation, and marital, parental, or economic status form the fabric of a society. The Association also believes that education should foster the values of appreciation and acceptance of the various qualities that pertain to people as individuals and as members of diverse populations.

B-13. Racial Diversity Within Student Populations. The Association believes that to achieve or maintain racial diversity, it may be necessary for elementary/secondary schools, colleges, and universities to take race into account in making decisions as to student admissions, assignments, and/or transfers.

B-14. Racism, Sexism, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Discrimination. Discrimination and stereotyping based on such factors as race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, ethnicity, immigration status, occupation, and religion must be eliminated. The Association also believes that these factors should not affect the legal rights and obligations of the partners in a legally recognized domestic partnership, civil union, or marriage in regard to matters involving the other partner, such as medical decisions, taxes, inheritance, adoption, and immigration. Plans, activities, and programs must —

- ◆ Increase respect, understanding, acceptance, and sensitivity toward individuals and groups in a diverse society composed of such groups as American Indians/Alaska natives, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender persons, and people with disabilities

- ◆ Eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in curricula, textbooks, resource and instructional materials, activities, etc.

- ◆ Foster the dissemination and use of non-discriminatory and nonstereotypical language, resources, practices, and activities

- ◆ Integrate an accurate portrayal of the roles and contributions of all groups throughout history across curricula, particularly groups that have been under-represented historically

- ◆ Eliminate subtle practices that favor the education of one student over another on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, ethnicity, or religion

- ◆ Encourage all members of the educational community to examine assumptions and prejudices, including, but not limited to, racism, sexism, and homophobia, that might limit the opportunities and growth of students and education employees

- ◆ Offer positive and diverse role models in our society, including the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of diverse education employees in our public schools

- ◆ Coordinate with organizations and concerned agencies that promote the contributions, heritage, culture, history, and special health and care needs of diverse population groups.

B-16. Hispanic Education. The Association believes in efforts that provide for grants and scholarships for higher education that will facilitate the recruitment, entry, and retention of Hispanics; involvement of Hispanics in lobbying efforts for federal programs; involvement of Hispanic educators in developing educational materials used in classroom instruction.

B-24. Education of Refugee and Undocumented Children and Children of Undocumented Immigrants. The Association supports access for undocumented students to financial aid and in-state tuition to state colleges and universities. The Association further believes that students who have resided in the United States for at least five years at the time of high school graduation should be granted legal residency status, and allowed to apply for U.S. citizenship.

B-30. Educational Programs for English Language Learners. The Association believes that ELL students should be placed in bilingual education programs to receive instruction in their native language from qualified teachers until such time as English proficiency is achieved.

B-39. Multicultural Education. The National Education Association believes that Multicultural education should promote the recognition of individual and group differences and similarities in order to reduce racism, homophobia, ethnic and all other forms of prejudice, and discrimination and to develop self-esteem.

B-40. Global Education. The National Education Association believes that global education imparts an appreciation of our interdependency in sharing the world's resources.

B-42. School-to-Work/Career Education. The National Education Association believes that career education must be interwoven into the total educational system and should include programs in gender-free career awareness and exploration to aid students in ca-

reer course selection.

B-48. Family Life Education. The Association believes that programs should be established for both students and parents/guardians and supported at all educational levels to promote —

- ◆ The development of self-esteem
- ◆ An understanding of societal issues and problems related to children, spouses, parents/guardians, domestic partners, older generation family members, and other family members.

The Association also believes that education in these areas must be presented as part of an antibiased, culturally sensitive program.

B-49. Environmental Education. The Association supports educational programs that promote —

- ◆ An awareness of the effects of past, present, and future population growth patterns on world civilization, human survival, and the environment

- ◆ Solutions to environmental problems such as nonrenewable resource depletion, pollution, global warming, ozone depletion, and acid precipitation and deposition

- ◆ The recognition of and participation in such activities as Earth Day.

B-51. Sex Education. The Association recognizes that the public school must assume an increasingly important role in providing the instruction. Teachers and health professionals must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits. The Association also believes that to facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information and knowledge about sexuality and encourages affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs. Such programs should include information on sexual abstinence, birth control, family planning, diversity of culture and diversity of sexual orientation and gender identification, sexually transmitted diseases, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and homophobia.

B-52. HIV/AIDS Education. The National Education Association believes that educational institutions should establish comprehensive human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) education programs as an integral part of the school curriculum.

B-60. Education on Peace and International Understanding. The National Education Association believes that educational strategies for teaching peace and justice issues should include the role of individuals, social movements, international and nongovernmental organizations. Such curricular materials should also cover major contributing factors to conflict, such as economic disparity,

(Continued on page 4)

demographic variables, unequal political power and resource distribution, and the indebtedness of the developing world.

B-66. Standardized Testing of Students. The National Education Association believes that standardized tests should be used only to improve the quality of education and instruction for students. The Association **opposes** the use of standardized tests when —

- ◆ Used as the criterion for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding
- ◆ Results are used to compare students, teachers, programs, schools, communities, and states
- ◆ Scores are used to track students
- ◆ Students with special needs or limited English proficiency are required to take the same tests as regular education students without modifications and/or accommodations.

B-71. Conflict Resolution Education. The National Education Association supports the adoption and use, at all educational levels, of proven conflict resolution strategies, materials, and activities by school districts, education employees, students, parents/guardians, and security personnel as well as the school community to encourage nonviolent resolution of interpersonal and societal conflicts.

B-82. Home Schooling. The National Education Association believes that home schooling programs based on parental choice cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience. When home schooling occurs, students enrolled must meet all state curricular requirements, including the taking and passing of assessments to ensure adequate academic progress. Home schooling should be limited to the children of the immediate family, with all expenses being borne by the parents/guardians. Instruction should be by persons who are licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency, and a curriculum approved by the state department of education should be used.

The Association also believes that home-schooled students should not participate in any extracurricular activities in the public schools.

C-15. Extremist Groups. The National Education Association condemns the philosophy and practices of extremist groups and urges active opposition to all such movements that are inimical to the ideals of the Association.

C-24. Comprehensive School Health, Social, and Psychological Programs and Services. The National Education Association believes that every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health, social, and psychological programs and services. The Association believes that schools should provide —

- ◆ A planned, sequential health education curriculum for pre-K through adult education that integrates various health topics (such as drug abuse, the dangers of performance-enhancing dietary herbal

supplements, violence, safety issues, universal precautions, and HIV education)

- ◆ Counseling programs that provide developmental guidance and broad-based interventions and referrals

- ◆ Comprehensive school-based, community-funded student health care clinics that provide basic physical and mental health, and health care services (which may include diagnosis and treatment)

- ◆ If deemed appropriate by local choice, family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods with instruction in their use.

C-25. School Guidance and Counseling Programs. The National Education Association believes that guidance and counseling programs should be integrated into the entire education system, pre-K through higher education.

C-30. Student Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification. The National Education Association believes that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identification, should be afforded equal opportunity and guaranteed a safe and inclusive environment within the public education system. The Association also believes that, for students who are struggling with their sexual orientation or gender identification, every school district and educational institution should provide counseling services and programs that deal with high suicide and dropout rates and the high incidence of teen prostitution.

C-31. Suicide Prevention Programs. The National Education Association believes that suicide prevention programs including prevention, intervention, and postvention must be developed and implemented. The Association urges its affiliates to ensure that these programs are an integral part of the school program.

D-8. Hiring Policies and Practices for Teaching Positions. The National Education Association believes that hiring policies and practices must be nondiscriminatory and include provisions for the recruitment of a diverse teaching staff.

D-21. Competency Testing of Licensed Teachers. The National Education Association believes that competency testing must not be used as a condition of employment, license retention, evaluation, placement, ranking, or promotion of licensed teachers.

E-3. Selection and Challenges of Materials and Teaching Techniques. The Association deplores prepublishing censorship, book-burning crusades, and attempts to ban books from school library media centers and school curricula.

E-10. Academic and Professional Freedom. Academic freedom includes the rights of teachers and learners to explore and discuss divergent points of view. A teacher shall not be fired, transferred, reassigned, removed from his or her position, or disciplined for refusing to suppress the free expression rights of students. Professional freedom includes the teachers' right to evaluate, criticize, and/or advocate their personal point of view concerning the policies and programs of the schools. Furthermore,

teachers must be free to depart from mandated scripted learning programs, pacing charts, and classroom assessments without prejudice or punishment.

F-1. Nondiscriminatory Personnel Policies/Affirmative Action. The National Education Association believes that personnel policies and practices must guarantee that no person be employed, retained, paid, dismissed, suspended, demoted, transferred, retired or harassed because of race, color, national origin, cultural diversity, accent, religious beliefs, residence, physical disability, political activities, professional association activity, age, size, marital status, family relationship, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identification. Affirmative action plans and procedures that encourage active recruitment and employment of ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and men in under-represented education categories should be developed and implemented.

F-2. Pay Equity/Comparable Worth. The "market value" means of establishing pay cannot be the final determinant of pay scales since it too frequently reflects the race and sex bias in our society.

F-49. Medication and Medical Services in Schools. The Association believes that education employees who are not licensed medical personnel should be protected from all liability if they are required to administer medication or perform medical services.

H-1. The Education Employee as a Citizen. The Association urges its members to become politically involved and to support the political action committees of the Association and its affiliates.

H-7. National Health Care Policy. The National Education Association believes that affordable, comprehensive health care, including prescription drug coverage, is the right of every resident. The Association supports the adoption of a single-payer health care plan for all residents of the United States, its territories, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

H-11. Statehood for the District of Columbia. The Association supports efforts to achieve statehood for the District of Columbia.

I-1. Peace and International Relations. The Association urges all nations to develop treaties and disarmament agreements that reduce the possibility of war. The Association also believes that such treaties and agreements should prevent the placement of weapons in outer space. The Association believes that the United Nations furthers world peace and promotes the rights of all people by preventing war, racism, and genocide.

I-2. International Court of Justice. The Association urges participation by the United States in deliberations before the court.

I-3. International Criminal Court. The Association believes that the United States should ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and recognize and support its authority and jurisdiction.

I-9. Global Climate Change. The Association believes that humans must take steps to change activities that contribute to global climate change.

I-12. Human Rights. The National Education Association believes that the governments of all nations must respect and protect equal access to education as embodied in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I-17. Family Planning. The National Education Association supports family planning, including the right to reproductive freedom. The Association also urges the implementation of community-operated, school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling by trained personnel.

I-22. Immigration. The Association opposes any immigration policy that denies educational opportunities to immigrants and their children regardless of their immigration status.

I-33. Freedom of Religion. The Association opposes any federal legislation or mandate that would require school districts to schedule a moment of silence.

I-34. Gun-free Schools and the Regulation of Deadly Weapons. The Association believes that strict prescriptive regulations are necessary for the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale and resale of handguns and ammunition magazines. A mandatory background check and a mandatory waiting period should occur prior to the sale of all firearms.

I-47. Elimination of Discrimination. The National Education Association is committed to the elimination of discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, economic status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, and all other forms of discrimination. The Association encourages its members and all other members of the educational community to engage in courageous conversations in order to examine assumptions, prejudices, discriminatory practices, and their effects.

I-53. Right of Redress for Descendants of Slaves. The Association believes that descendants of those subjected to slavery in the U.S. have the right to seek redress for the injustices inflicted upon their ancestors.

I-58. Linguistic Diversity. The Association believes that efforts to legislate English as the official language disregard cultural pluralism; deprive those in need of education, social services, and employment; and must be challenged.

I-61. Equal Opportunity for Women. The Association supports an amendment to the U.S. Constitution (such as the Equal Rights Amendment). The Association urges its affiliates to support ratification of such an amendment. The Association also supports the enactment and full funding of the Women's Educational Equity Act. The Association endorses the use of non-sexist language.

The above text is excerpted from NEA resolutions adopted at the 2011 NEA Convention. Much language has been omitted, but no words have been changed, added, or put out of order.