

## NEWS AND VIEWS FROM D.C.

*The Newsletter of your NEA Directors: Grace Leavitt and Dan Allen*  
December 2009

**URGENT:** The survey for gathering data needed from individuals on **GPO/WEP** is now available in Maine. Please go to [www.maine.nea.org](http://www.maine.nea.org) and on the left under “Issues Forum,” go to “**Social Security Penalty Survey.**” Please take a few minutes to do this right now! (For more information on the work to repeal GPO/WEP, see below; but first, take the survey!)

### **IMPORTANT DATES:**

**2010 Northeast Regional Leadership Conference--“Today’s NEA: Hope...Innovation...Transformation”:** online registration for this conference (in Boston, January 22-24) will be open until **January 11th**. Go to [www.nea.org/members/nrlc.html](http://www.nea.org/members/nrlc.html); a variety of workshops will be offered—there is something for everyone!

Deadline for **proposed changes to the NEA Constitution and Bylaws** is **March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010**.

### **READ ON FOR the latest news on:**

- Lobbying on Capitol Hill
- GPO/WEP update
- NEA Board of Directors’ meeting, **December 11-12, 2009**  
*and more!*

**FIRST AND FOREMOST:** Although it may now seem that Election Day happened long ago, remember that NEA was instrumental in helping us to defeat TABOR II. **Let’s do our part by increasing the number of our members who contribute to political action!** The **NEA Fund for Children and Public Education** is used to help elect pro-public education candidates. With so many governor’s races in the coming year (including ours!), we need to step up our commitment to the Fund!

Go to [www.neafund.org](http://www.neafund.org) and make a contribution **TODAY!**

### **ON CAPITOL HILL:**

On Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, Dan and Grace met with staff members from the offices of Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins as well as Representatives Mike Michaud and Chellie Pingree.

We discussed the current health care debate and the NEA’s opposition to the Senate proposal to fund their version of the bill with an excise tax on so-called “Cadillac plans.” The excise tax would impact insurance coverage for millions of educators and other Americans in the near term and place the burden of funding health care reform on the middle class. A number of other funding options exist, including the House proposal to tax those with incomes over \$500,000 and efforts to push large businesses to fund some of the cost. Senators Snowe and Collins continue to support the excise tax, while representatives Pingree and Michaud do not.

We also urged support for the creation of a new federal jobs package with an Education Jobs Fund to help save and create jobs in the next two years. This would essentially extend the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund created in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act which certainly saved the jobs of many educators in Maine this past year.

NEA also pushed support of an infrastructure investment program with a dedicated funding stream for school construction and modernization, or in lieu of that, reauthorization of \$25 billion

in school construction bonds to modernize schools, put Americans to work, and help students learn.

NEA also seeks a significant boost in funding for IDEA and Title I, both of which helped save or create tens of thousands of education jobs through ARRA.

**GPO/WEP UPDATE (GOVERNMENT PENSION OFFSETS/WINDFALL ELIMINATION PROVISION):**

**Everyone--please be sure to complete the survey (see above). The information will be used by the consulting firm that NEA has hired to gather data to help to push for repeal.**

*As of December 3rd, H.R. 235 (the Social Security Fairness Act) has 313 cosponsors in the House and the corresponding bill in the Senate, S.R. 484, has 30 cosponsors.*

This is still a top priority for NEA; at the Board meeting President Van Roekel reaffirmed NEA's commitment to addressing this issue. The Board was reminded of how the GPO/WEP negatively impacts many members in every state. A video was made by the committee members (including Grace) that will be used to continue to inform Congress.

FMI, go to [www.socialsecurity.gov/WEP-CHART](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/WEP-CHART) and [www.socialsecurity.gov/GPO](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/GPO).

Also, if you need copies of the updated folder with talking points and other important information, just let us know!

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:**

**Headline News:**

**Karen White, Campaigns and Elections,** gave an overview of the 2010 elections; states will need an integrated PAC fundraising plan; she emphasized the importance of the member-to-member effort in elections.

**Andy Linebaugh, Public Relations,** gave an overview of plans to prepare for the reauthorization of ESEA, the help on ballot measures, and the upcoming "Read Across America."

**Dorothy Harrell, Constituent Relations,** reviewed the organizing efforts to begin and to grow higher ed units and reviewed the growth in the student program.

**Roxanne Dove, Director, ESP Quality** reviewed the six-point strategy of her department's work and spoke about H.R. 2377, a bill to recognize the national ESP of the year.

**ESEA:**

Christy Levings of the Executive Committee and Kay Brilliant of NEA gave an update on ***Race To The Top*** and the other competitive grants (for assessment, for innovation, for school improvement), on Phase II of the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds, and on the upcoming (at some point!) reauthorization of ESEA. NEA was able to influence the final criteria for these grants. They emphasized that state and local associations have a role to play in the application processes for the competitive grants and need to use what leverage this can provide them. There are four key components to reform: teacher and principal effectiveness and distribution, standards and assessments, data systems, and turning around low-performing schools.

For more information, go to [ed.gov](http://ed.gov) to see the documents on RTTT.

### **Presentations:**

Dr. Scott McLeod, Assoc. Professor and Coordinator of the Educational Administration Program at Iowa State University and Director of the UCEA Center for the Advanced Study of Technology Leadership in Education (CASTLE), spoke to us on “Teaching and Learning in an Era of Disruptive Innovation. We want our students to be socially functional, to have mastery of the information landscape, and to be economically productive, yet currently our schools are still preparing students for yesterday when routine cognitive work was more important, rather than for tomorrow and non-routine abstract cognitive tasks. The information revolution has impacted all aspects of our lives and is impacting the education profession. There was then a great discussion among the Board members with the presenter on the implications for our schools and for our association.

For more information go to: <http://dangerouslyirrelevant.org/> [www.scottmcleod.net](http://www.scottmcleod.net)  
[www.schooltechleadership.org](http://www.schooltechleadership.org)

And two books of interest by Clayton Christensen: *The Innovator’s Dilemma* and *Disrupting Class*.

### **President’s Report:**

President Van Roekel shared his reflections on the past year and its challenges and stated that he is looking ahead to 2010 with optimism. He also spoke about the 2011 World Congress of Education International to be held in Capetown, South Africa, July 19<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>. There will be 1200 delegates representing 401 education organizations from 172 countries and territories. NEA is allocated up to 50 delegates.

### **Vice-President’s Report:**

Vice President Lily Eskelsen announced that NEA is one of the founding members of a new national coalition, the National Coalition of Classified Education Support Employee Unions (NCCSEEU).

The V.P. presented her committee’s “tiered dues” proposal, the result of a charge from the President, as directed by the Board, to study a more equitable dues structure for NEA. The Board discussed the proposal and gave input. There may be action taken at the February Board meeting.

The V.P. also presented proposed Constitutional Amendment 1 (to Article II, section 2.a., the “State Gateway Amendment,” which would allow non-educational employees who are members of state associations but under current language are not able to be NEA members. The Board also discussed and gave input on this; this will be an action item in February.

The NEA Academy (<http://sites.nea.org/academy/index.htmlx>) continues to expand its offerings of courses and trainings; the National Staff Development Council has also endorsed the NEA Academy, and ten accredited universities are working with NEA to offer online master’s programs.

### **Secretary-Treasurer’s Report:**

Secretary-Treasurer Becky Pringle reviewed membership numbers; as expected, the numbers are down overall, but are up in the ESP and higher ed categories, and are on track in the student group. Nonetheless, we remain strong at 3,198,513 members!

The 2010 Budget is being prepared for the 2010 RA; it will be reflecting these membership numbers. We are in good shape financially, despite a slight drop in assets.

\$493,883 has been expended from contingency thus far to implement 2009 NBIs.

The Auditor's Report showed that we are very healthy with a 3.6:1 ratio and NEA received a "clean, unqualified opinion with no material weaknesses" (this is good!).

**General Counsel's Report:**

General Counsel Bob Chanin gave an update on the following cases:

- Pontiac v. DOE--in the latest decision regarding this case, NEA did not win, but NEA has filed a petition for a writ of *certiorari* to bring this to the U.S. Supreme Court; there is a good chance this will be heard by the Court.
- Alabama Education Association v. DOL--regarding the 2003 reinterpretation of the Landrum-Griffin Act; in January we hope to hear a revision of this reinterpretation from Secretary Solis.

At the close of the Board meeting, Bob Chanin was honored with the NEA Auditorium being named after him; he is retiring at the end of this month after 41 years with NEA. In his closing remarks, he reminded us that NEA stands for "quality education, employee rights, and social justice."

**Board Actions:**

- Voted to accept several recommendations of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules committee to address inconsistencies in NEA documents regarding election and campaigning procedures.
- Voted to boycott certain Columbia Sussex hotels on the Unite Here list (this issue was brought to us by our colleagues in Alaska).
- Voted to allocate up to \$500,000 to NEA Human and Civil Rights to move forward with the foundation work to ensure that the Priority Schools Campaign is ready to assist state and local affiliates.
- Voted to allocate up to \$200,000 per year for each of five years from contingency to contribute to establishing the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate in Boston.

FMI: go to <http://emkinstitute.org/>

- Voted to allocate \$550,000 from the ballot measure/legislative crisis fund to the Oregon Education Association to help with measures that will maintain tax increases and protect funding for education and other public services.
- Voted to extend the AFL-CIO/NEA Labor Solidarity Partnership Agreement through June 2010 (when a successor agreement will be negotiated).

**Board observances:**

As part of the Hispanic Observance, we heard a talk by **Ray Suárez**, an award-winning journalist (PBS News Hour) on the changing demographics and the challenges these present; he stressed the importance of raising the education level of the immigrant population as it impacts the overall economic health of our country.

FMI: [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/aboutus/bio\\_suarez.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/aboutus/bio_suarez.html)

**FYI:**

**Read Across America, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010**--FMI--[www.nea.org/readacross](http://www.nea.org/readacross)

**Celebration of Teaching and Learning, March 5-6<sup>th</sup>, in New York City** (a conference sponsored in part by NEA)--for more information, go to: <http://thirteencelebration.org/>

**Global Education Summit, June 30, 2010 (just prior to the Representative Assembly)**--watch for further information in the near future.

**REMEMBER The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education:**

*Please continue to make and to solicit contributions from members to [The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education](#) to support electing friends of education! Contributions via electronic transfer are easy to do! Contact us for forms!*

*Please give what you can, and encourage your colleagues to do so as well!*

For further details on any of the items in this report, contact either:

Grace Leavitt at [gleavit1@maine.rr.com](mailto:gleavit1@maine.rr.com) or  
Dan Allen at [dra@roadrunner.com](mailto:dra@roadrunner.com).

FYI: The next meeting of the NEA Board of Directors will be February 12-13, 2010.

*Grace and Dan*

*CONTINUE TO GET OUR MESSAGE OUT:*

**GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS—A BASIC RIGHT FOR EVERY STUDENT!**

*For more information, go to [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org).*